

# Soaked in bhakti

**MUSIC** Suguna Purushottaman's Tamil compositions were enjoyable and Sudha's strong basics in Carnatic idioms came to the fore.

**G.SWAMINATHAN**

Nothing can be as rewarding as experience. Suguna Purushottaman's musical wisdom could be visibly perceived and it was sheer enjoyment listening to her presenting a host of Tamil compositions in the morning slot at this sabha.

A ragamalika 'Gana Nayakane' with the five gana ragas appended with a stretch of other catchy raga swaras and sahityas was her first presentation.

Generally, musicians with more experience understand that the major focus of the Carnatic music lies on the bhakti bhava and therefore, the expression underpinning the devotional aspect takes the first preference.

Suguna's very compact Mukhari alapana and the subsequent rendition of 'Bhava Rogamaravedu' of 'Sivakama sundari' of Papanasam Sivan was an absolute outbreak soaked in bhakti. Next was Khamodi vinyasa through very carefully chosen phrases to underscore the melody of the raga. A few of the sancharas in the upper octave would have sounded laboured but that did not mar the overall impact. Again the Gopalakrishna Bharati's gem 'Thiruvadi Charanam' was full of piety.

There was a moving niraval and neatly fused swaras at 'Aduthu Vandal Ennai Thallal Aagadu' after which Thanjavur Kumar and H.Sivaramakrishnan on mridangam and ghatam respectively performed a thani and their percussion beats were matching the mood of the concert and the singer.

Suguna then changed the



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mood with the main raga Mohanam. It found a stately treatment with very blissful phrases. The composition scored with a lively drift. 'Thirukalyanam Seidu Kondare' by Kavi Kunjara Bharati stood out with some madyama kala charanams depicting the functions of marriage ceremony.

Here, Suguna selected the most winning line 'Chithira Ponnosol Aadi Maalai Maattri' with freshness and the swaras exchanged between her and Hemalatha were as grandeur as our marriage ceremony. Hemalatha was in perfect sync with Suguna in raga alapana, niraval and swaras matching well in quality.

## Tentative and sceptical

If one listens to Sudha Raghunathan keeping aside all predispositions one cannot but admire Sudha for her solid and strong basics and extraordinary computational wisdom as far as Carnatic idioms are concerned. It is unlikely to see her tentative or sceptical. She conquers in her exercises with exceptional outputs.

The ascending, descending or complex notes never scare Sudha. She has an intuitive mind and has trained herself rigorously to fit them in the right slots. Whether it is a customary 'Sarasooda' Saveri



**PERFECT SYNC:** Suguna Purushottaman and (right) Sudha Raghunathan. PHOTOS: K.V.SRINIVASAN

varnam's ultimate mukthayi swaram or a daunting niraval in Kharaharapriya, or an experimental pallavi in Hamsanandi, everything is handled by her with ease.

Quick hops, long trajectories, complex landing, mixed ragas and swaras are under her tight control and she could easily unleash them the way she prefers to. It is an amazing quality she had inherited as a legacy from her guru, MLV.

Not even one second of Sudha Raghunathan's cutcheri is allowed for siesta. Kharaharapriya unfolded in several levels like unpacking the colourful wrappers of a gift pack. Swirling brigas and absorbing akaras are her force. So she is more at home than pitching on a long karvai though they too come effortlessly for her in her sancharas.

The master piece of Tyagaraja, 'Chakkani Raja' and the evergreen line 'Kantiki Sundara' for niraval and swaras was her choice after the detailed Kharaharapriya alapana.

The Ragam, Tanam, Pallavi

in Hamsanandi ('Srinivasa Govinda Hare Mukunda Charanam Abhayamarul') enjoyed all the dispensations of a pallavi after a very engaging tanam supported discreetly by mridangam and ghatam. Swaras are Sudha's highpoint. They leap, jump and slither through numerous jandai and dattu prolygas be it Shanmukhapriya ('Siddhivinayakam'), Suddha Dhanyasi ('Srihari Vallabe Mampahi'), Kharaharapriya ('Chakkani Raja') or Hamsanandi (RTP).

Her alertness and vitality are infectious and the audience, therefore adulate her with admiration. There were a couple of notable additions in her agenda, 'Kanmaniye Solladi' in Saranga (an almost forgotten number from attic) by Mazhavai Chidambara Bharati and vivacious 'Padame Thunai Paramasiva' in Valaji by Papanasam Sivan.

Sudha's performance did not eclipse the brilliance of M.R.Gopinath (violin), Palladam Ravi (mridangam), R.Raman (morsing) and S.Karthick (ghatam).