

Dhwani lives up to its promise

The organisers of Dhwani 2016 (the 13th BKF-Mallikarjun Mansur Hindustani Music Festival) held in Bengaluru at the JSS auditorium on 17 and 18 September, seemed to have admirably had a multiple focus to raise funds for the foundation, conduct classical (Hindustani) music programmes with an eye on class and promise, and honour eminent contributors to this art form. Each received a memento, a citation and a handsome purse. The larger objective seemed to be to give the Hindustani music enthusiasts an opportunity to have a great weekend at a paltry outgo of 49 rupees.

Three sessions packed with vocal and instrumental artists saw the young, the very young, the old and the very old on the stage.

The first session on 17 September featured vocal music by Kaushik Aithal accompanied by Gurumurthy Vaidya (tabla) and Guruprasad Hegde (harmonium). Coming from the glorious lineage of Basavaraj Rajguru and trained by his direct disciple Parameshwar Hegde—after his early training by Humayun Harlapur—Aithal did not disappoint. Gifted with a high quality voice across the range of octaves, no doubt the result of endless riyaz, he came across as an artist of the future (as the organisers have chosen to classify him) and the near future at that. In the opening Multani, in executing



Jyotirmoy Roychoudhury and Tarun Bhattacharya

the swara patterns Aithal seemed to sail between the base and high tones with consummate ease. His second rendering in raga Yaman (Jhap taal) was arresting in its exploration and enthralling in the execution. Surely a youngster to watch out for. The seasoned accompanists in Vaidya and Hegde joined hands to elevate the programme with balance and composure.

Santoor maestro Tarun Bhattacharya from West Bengal and of the Maihar gharana set off with Ragesree moving through the alap with gentle manipulations of the strings with the mezarab, fingernail and creating the unique undulating hum with the fingers. Bhattacharya displayed extraordinary sensory-motor coordination. It was melody all the way with the young but ingenious Jyotirmoy Roychoudhury, just 24 years old, who matched the maestro's low pitch meend from the santoor

with a unique manipulation of the daga almost making for a single sound of music—two completely different instruments producing an identical note in unison. Such was the precise anticipation shown by Jyotirmoy that he seemed to be spot-on with every nuance, be it a subtle reduction in volume or a sudden burst of speed. The sawal-jawab that Pandit Bhattacharya chose towards the end, was testimony to the maestro's acknowledgement of young Jyotirmoy's calibre. A misra Keeravani and the Bhatiali dhun brought the recital to an end.

The morning session on the 18th was a treat. Ratan Mohan Sharma took centrestage with his disciple, the diminutive, eight-year old Amba Shankari in tow, wielding the electronic tanpura. Atul Phadke on the harmonium and two percussion instruments—tabla by Kalinath Mishra and pakhawaj by

Kalinath Mishra, Sridhar Parthasarathy, Ratan Mohan Sharma, Amba Shankari and Atul Phadke



Sridhar Parthasarathy—made up the ensemble. The Gurjari Todi alap featured breathtaking voice modulations that resonated across the auditorium. The ensemble put out a fare that was at once gripping and entertaining both to the discerning ear and the layman. Sharma presented the Haveli Sangeet item *Manmohan ati sohan* and followed it up with a tappa which he raised this piece to new heights with voice modulations and breath control. The tarana in Megh Malhar was nothing short of a measured and calculated thunderstorm of melody and music. A melancholic *Ramdhun* and *Govinda Damodara Madhava* rang the recital to a fitting end.

The evening saw young Vijeta Anati (disciple of guru Rajiv Taranath) wield the sarod, accompanied by

Gurucharan Garud on the tabla. Vijeta has the talent and the promise but he must guard against appearing too self-effacing and buck up his bearing to showcase his prowess with greater clarity.

The highlight of the evening was the octogenarian, Padma Bhushan awardee, Channulal Mishra. Close your eyes and you cannot believe that the powerful and resonating tone sans the least shake or tremble belonged to an artist of his age. His humility not only enhanced his stature as he did his *koshish* in so resplendent a fashion that the audience were left spellbound. Starting with Poorva Kalyan, Mishra gave a glowing account of his mastery in his rendering of the vilambit khayal *Bahut dina beetey*, followed by the dhrut bandish. He endeared himself to

the packed audience with his constant emphasis on the lyrical significance of each piece, the depth of meaning contained in it and how in a show of classical scholarship some of these fundamental aspects could easily be lost. The programme was embellished by apt accompaniment on the tabla by Ramkumar Mishra—worthy son accompanying an illustrious father. Vyasmurthy Katti, playing the harmonium, smiled his way through the seamless *saath* always upto scratch and repeatedly appreciated by the preeminent vocal lead.

The main take-away of the Dhvani music festival was the need to be aware of the spiritual fundament on which Indian classical art is built.

B. CHANDRASEKHAR
(An industrialist who is an art critic,
nattuvangam artist and compere)