

# A classical *treat*

The musicians at Chandigarh's 43rd sangeet sammelan hosted by INT highlighted the specialities of different gharanas

MANJARI SINHA

Nothing can warm the soul like calm, seamless swaras on cold winter nights. So it was at the 43rd year annual sangeet sammelan held in Chandigarh recently. Presented by the Indian National Theatre (INT) in association with Durga Das Foundation, the festival in its over four-decade-long journey has become an integral part of the national cultural calendar. Almost every stalwart has performed here and, along with the INT family, has helped sustain the quality of Hindustani music.

The live-streaming of this year's sangeet Sammelan reached a much larger audience, including Navjeevan Khosla, the INT's 99-year-old founder-president. Though he could not attend the sammelan in person, he remained connected online and did not miss an opportunity to recall his associations with legendary performers. For instance, when Ashwini Bhide, the well-known representative of the Jaipur-Atrauli gharana sang raag Madhmad Sarang, he said, "In 1945, I listened to this raag being sung by Bhurji Khan, the son and disciple of Ustad Alladia Khan, the founder of your gharana."

## Meticulous planning

Ashwini began her meticulously planned concert with Bahaduri Todi, a rare variety of Todi and a traditional raag of her gharana. She sang a traditional Vilambit Khayal 'Mahadeva...' set in slow tempo of Teentaal and then matched it with her own composition invoking Shiva in Drut Teentaal. Raag Bahaduri Todi with both the rishabhs, komal gaandhar and komal dhaivat was followed by Hindol-Pancham with contrasting swaras

and mood that turned the serene atmosphere lively. This jod-raag, a combination of raags Hindol and Pancham, is again a speciality of her gharana. This was followed by a Drut Teentaal Tarana in Hindol in a faster tempo.

The Madhmad Sarang opened with a beautiful bandish, 'Jab se mann lagyo Shyam so', composed by the late Kishori Amonkar, set to Madhya-Vilambit Rupak Taal. Ashwini rendered it in a leisurely manner, exploring the raag gradually ascending through its melodic centres. The popular Chhota Khayal 'Rang de rang-rejawa' was studded with a variety of aakar and sargam taans before the concluding abhang in Bhairavi. Her caressing voice unveiled the expansive landscape of the raags even as she brought out the inherent characteristics while experiencing their emotions. Vinod Lele's unobtrusive support on the tabla and Vinay Mishra's intuitive accompaniment on the harmonium was admirable as usual.

## Well-structured concert

The two also accompanied Shashank Maktedar, who presented a brilliant concert. That Shashank, the disciple of Pt. Ulhas Kashalkar, has imbibed the authentic *gharanedar taalim* was obvious in his scholarly rendition of Kaunsi Kanhada, maintaining the Naayaki Ang all through. If the Bada Khayal 'Naiya paar kar...' set to Vilambit Ektaal had the signature of Gwalior gayaki, the teentaal composition by Ustad Vilayat Hussain Khan, 'Praan-Piya', had the Agra rang. The vintage flavour of Bahar in Jayadeva's Ashtapadi 'Priye Charusheele...' and Tarana Teentaal were part of his well-structured presentation.

Shashwati Mandal, disciple of Bala Saheb Poochwale who further trained under Malini Rajurkar, is a rising star of the Gwalior gharana. Her Tappa Kafi and Sargam Geet vouched for it. Opening her vocal recital with Dhankoni Kalyan, created by Pt. C.R. Vyas, she tried to venture into something new. Introducing the raag, she said that when Pt. Vyas con-

ceived the raag he sought Pt. K.G. Ginde's advice. Even scholar Pt. Ratanjankar approved of the improbable combination of teevra madhyam and komal nishad since it was pleasing. Purists, however, might have felt Shashwati would not have sounded repetitive had she chosen a more elaborate and established raag rather than Dhankoni Kalyan with its limited possibilities.

The festival opened with Dhananjay Hegde's vocal concert and Harvinder Sharma's sitar recital. Dhananjay's Yaman and Jog renditions vouched for his training under Pt. Venkatesh Kumar and Vinayak Torvi, and his rigorous riyaz. A senior disciple of Ustad Vilayat Khan, Harvinder had command over the technique of the Imdadkhani Etawah gharana and played the choicest gat compositions of the famed gharana in raag Khamaj, but his introductory alap, interspersed with his singing of Amir Khusro's kalams, sounded like a preface to Thumri Khamaj.

The Delhi-based reviewer writes on art and culture.



Traditional  
Ashwini Bhide.

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