

The Telegraph REVIEW

CALCUTTA SATURDAY 20 FEBRUARY 2021

Where melody can flow freely

MUSIC

PAYEL SENGUPTA

The saying, *l'art pour l'art* — art for art's sake — came to mind with a new dimension when Rashid Khan (picture, left), with his unique voice texture and artistic traits, struck the audience with the Raga Sohini at the finale of the 69th Dover Lane Music Conference. Starting with Jog, Rashid gradually created an atmosphere of absorption. Nayaki Kanada and Sohini followed. Rashid wrapped up with “*Yaad piya ki aaye*” and Bhairavi; the music itself was a poetic verse, beyond performance and criticism.

The festival became ethereal with Amaan Ali Khan's sarod. The *alaap* of Saraswati was the beginning of a musical journey that flourished in the *ektaal gat* with a unique rhythmic movement. Amaan (picture, right) slowly immersed himself into the *alaap* of Lalita Gauri. He touched the notes especially in the lower and middle octaves, and highlighted the *raga's* quintessential attributes. Amaan's expertise in both prolonged and small *taans* created a beautiful blend of melody, speed and compactness. He concluded with Malkauns and in his limitless fashion brought out the *raga's* beauty through the *vistaar*, *taans* and complicated *thais*. Shubhankar Banerjee's tabla enhanced the performances of both Amaan and Rashid.

Jayteerth Mevundi's vocal recital and Anupama Bhagvat on the sitar also evoked a magical mood. Shuddha Kalyan flourished with Mevundi's originality along with its own charm; it was followed by Vasant with varied *taans* and *vistaars*. Anupama's fingers expressed the soulful charm of Jhinjhoti. The *alaap-jor*, full of wonderful *mirs*, showed her training under the famous Im-



dadkhani *gharana*. In the *madhyalay* and *drut gats* she made a balanced bridge between musicality and the technical aspects. The Kathak performance of the father-daughter duo, Deepak and Ragini Maharaj, was a visual treat that displayed the *tatkar* heritage of the Lucknow *gharana*. Deepak showed expert footwork and poise especially in the *bolparans* in *dhamar*. Ragini's impromptu footwork with the tabla caught the audience's attention. Kumar Bose's bright yet balanced tabla elevated the entire performance. However, the Kathakali performance by the Uma Memorial Kalamalayam did not leave an impact. The senior artist and Sangeet Samman awardee, Ajoy Chakraborty, entertained listeners with Bageshree and Bhairavi with Abhijit Banerjee's tabla.

Bharati Pratap, in her generous voice, presented Shree with all its nuances, although the audience expected more variety. As a sincere Agra *gharana* follower, she beautifully rendered the *nom tom alaap* in Nand in the traditional style as well as a Meera *bhajan*. Jaunpuri on Abhishek Lahiri's sarod with Ishaan Ghosh's tabla was arresting. Raga Patdeep on Debapriya Chatterjee Ranadive's flute and Nandini Shankar's violin was sweet to the ears. The resonance of *talbadya* by Tanmoy Bose (tabla), Patri Satish Kumar (mridangam) and Gridhar Udupa (ghatam), with Sarwar Hus-

sain's perfect sarengi, was enjoyable.

A much better portrayal of the flavour of the *ragas*, Marwa and Tilak Kamod, was expected from Omkar Dadarkar. Sanjeev Abhyankar's generous voice and the skilful flute of Shashank Subramanyam evoked satisfaction with Madhuvanti followed by Bhupali. Yet, later, Shashank's mellifluous flute needed more space to proliferate. Mita Nag melodiously rendered *alaap-jor* in Lalita Gauri, *madhyalay gat* in Purvi and *drut* in Puriya Kalyan. Shiraz Ali Khan tried his best with Hem-Behag and Madhumalati, but the audience expected more sincerity considering his heritage.

Shubhendra Rao and Saskia Rao-de Haas's sitar-cello combination started promisingly in Vasant Pancham but lost its appeal eventually. Satish Vyas's santoor was charming in Madhuvanti and Kirwani. The well-trained voice of Armaan Khan, the son of Rashid Khan, in Puriya was a discovery. Atri Kotal's vocal rendition and Indrajit Basu's flute were the sparks of new talent. The festival was enriched with the harmonium of Hiranmoy Mitra, Sanatan Goswami, Rupasree Bhattacharya, Gourab Chatterjee (and others) and the sarengi of Murad Ali. Barring a few weaknesses, the Dover Lane Music Conference became a canvas of free-flowing art and the coming together of various aesthetic spheres for Rashid and Amaan.