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Sringara strikes the dominant note at Bhaavaanabhuti

- [P. S. Krishnamurti](#)



packed with bhava Divya Devaguptapu and Sowmya with the orchestral team led by K. Gayathri.



Music and natya combined to showcase Kshetrayya's padams. P.S. Krishnamurti writes

Holding an audience in close attention for onward of two hours with a discourse on only padam is a daunting task, even with the support of the finest lyrical, musical and dance material. Dr. Sowmya emerged eminently successful in the effort of presenting Kshetrayya padams at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan on August 5.

The idea stemmed from Dr. Kanakam Devaguptapu and dancer-choreographer Divya Devaguptapu. With the vocal support of K. Gayathri and Divya on the dance floor, backed by Dr. Sowmya's creative work, the event turned out to be engaging. Sowmya, with her closeness to the school of Dhanammal, and herself a disciple of T. Mukta, lent authenticity to the rendering of the padams.

Justice was done to the production by the orchestra, composed of J. Vaidhyanathan (mridangam), L. Ramakrishnan (violin) and Rajeev Mukundan (flute). With the programme confined only to padam, without jatis, sollus and teermanams, the work of nattuvangam was

restricted only to playing the talam. Jayashree Ramanathan was in charge.

Divya, in her resplendent costume and jewellery, in keeping with the ethos of Kshetrayyas's times (17th century), elevated the mind to soulful levels with her chaste abhinaya.

In the first piece the poetry evoked an ambience thick with erotic passion, as the poet visualises Perundevi, consort of Lord Varada of Kanchi, staggering from her bridal chamber at daybreak. Divya portrayed the concept convincingly. Bharat Sundar's swara-korvai in raga Mohanam, prefacing this item, lent notable support to the dancer.

The second piece brought to life the pain of a woman, pining in separation from her loving husband, gone on a journey. This was set in raga Saveri, rendered in the typical Dhanammal bani.

Raga Saranga, featured in the third padam, brought forth dramatic relief from the emotional stress which characterised the earlier ones. It had to do with the friendly teasing of a mistress of Muvvagopala (Krishna) by her companion (sakhi).

Following a lover's tiff, the Lord and his paramour have temporarily fallen out and the sakhi playfully harps on this.

The padam in Bhairavi owes its musical score to Sowmya. It celebrates the amorous feelings a married woman harbours for Muvvagopala. She is anguished by the contemplation of the days to come when she will be returning to her husband, after her days with her parents when she could give vent to the ecstatic joy in the company of her divine lover. This situation is painted with deep strokes in the padam. Both the music composition and abhinaya made this padam stand out.

Quite in contrast to this situation came the theme in the next piece, in raga Sourashtra. Here the woman worships her man with lavish ministrations for his comfort. While basking in these services, the husband is unfaithful to her, and she knows it. As an example of the highest love, albeit unrequited, this piece distinguishes the philosophy of Kshetrayya's lyrics. Service rendered to one is to be seen as service to Muvvagopala.

Underscoring the dual import of the lyric - materialistic and spiritual – the composer has tuned it with the appropriate kalapramanam.

The programme concluded with a mangalam in Raga Madhyamavati with lyrics composed by Dr. Pappu Venugopala Rao as a homage to Kshetrayya.

It hails his genius, devotion, sringara, natyam and bhavam. Sowmya had set the music for this, adding an element of thillana in Bharatanatyam style.

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