

Friday Review Delhi

Published on Fridays

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Voices of the season

MANJARI SINHA

Three venues. Three musicians. Mixed results.



High expectation Bela Mukherjee.

Suranjana Bose from Kolkata who performed at the India Habitat Centre recently, may have been a new name for many of the Capital's music lovers, but her impressive vocal recital regaled them all. A senior disciple of the renowned couple of the Patiala gharana, Prasoona and Meera Banerjee, Suranjana is further groomed by Girija Devi in the genre of the light classical

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thumri-dadra. Endowed with a fine sense of pitch and a melodious voice with open throated (*khulaa*) aakar, she sang with conviction and admirable aesthetic insight.

Her choice of Puria Dhanashri was most appropriate, time wise. The unhurried treatment of the popular evening raga during the bada khayal "Dhyaan dharo..." set to slow Ek tala, saw a systematic elaboration during the alap badhat and an impressive spray of sargam and aakar taans also in the pleasing chhota khayal set to medium tempo Teen tala. The thumri in Mishra Khamaj, dadra in Pilu and the seasonal kajri had the nuances of both the Purab and the Punjab ang. Equally striking was Paromita Mukherjee on the harmonium, an instrument that is largely the domain of male accompanists. Prasoon Chatterjee's mature tabla support also enhanced the powerful performance.

Love ballads

The Attic presented 'Love Ballads of the Rainy Season' in a vocal recital by Pooja Goswami, this past week. An M. Phil and Ph.D. from Delhi University, Pooja was initiated into Hindustani classical music by her musician father Surendra Goswami. She continues training in semi-classical music under Shanti Hiranand, the eminent disciple of the legendary Begum Akhtar. Gifted with a sonorous voice, Pooja has also worked on it to imbibe the delicate nuances of this inimitable gayaki.

Pooja opened her recital with a thumri in Mishra Tilak Kamod, "Abke saawan ghar aaja" immortalised by Begum Akhtar. Normally the antara — the latter half of the lyrics — is composed in the upper half of the octave (saptak), but this was an unusual composition in the sense that it has its antara only in the poorvang (lower half of the octave). In it, the nayika (heroine) tells the messenger bird, I would get your beak gold plated and would write on your feathers "come home my beloved" as a love letter. The dadra that followed in Bhinna Shadja was a good contrast, with the mukhra or opening itself starting in the uttarang (upper half of the octave). Thereafter, Pooja sang a number of ghazals of classical poets like Ghalib and Zauq, opening with Shakeel Badayuni's "Kaise kah doon" in raga Charukeshi. She had the best of accompaniment in Vinay Mishra on the harmonium, Arshad on the tabla and Ehsaan on the sarangi.

Sitar recital

The Epicentre organised a sitar recital by Bela Mukherjee the other day. A graduate from Rabindra Bharati University, Bela received her earlier training from her brother Panchanan Bannerjee and later trained under Pandit Kashinath Mukherjee, a disciple of Ustad Vilayat Khan. She opened her recital with raga Puria Dhanashri, rendering a detailed alap-jod-jhala followed by a Maseetkhani and a Razakhani gat set to slow and medium tempo Teen tala respectively. She also played a Razakhani gat in MiyanMalhar, preceded by a brief alap. Vishvanath Sahu accompanied her on the tabla. There are very few female exponents of Ustad Vilayat Khan's sitar baaj, hence the discerning audience came with high expectations. But unfortunately the performance turned out to be of a very elementary standard, leaving much to be desired.

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