



Page:2
'STAR'
READY TO SHINE
 AFTER THE SUCCESS OF PAYANAM, POONAM KAUR IS ALL-SET TO SIZZLE IN PRABHU DEVA'S NEXT FILM

FILM»

Watch *Muthukku Muthaga* starring Vikranth, Harish, Oviya, Saranya, Ilayaraaja, Director: Rasu Madhuravani, Music: Kavi Periya Thambi at Meena(Tiruchi), Shanthi(Thanjavur), Vijay(Pudukkai)



Watch *Avargalum ivargalum* starring Agathian, Swetha, Vimal Natarajan, Subraja, Manikka Vinayagam, Director: Veerapandian, Music: Srikanth Deva at Oorvasi (Tiruchi), VC Cinema (Pudukkai)



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The mantras, shlokas and bhajans in praise of Shiva, Vishnu and Jesus were chanted in contemporary style at the Festival of Sacred Music, says **Sukanya Chellappa**

Where music forms the soulscape

THE sun gently dipped below the horizon. It was time for *Sandhya vandanam* (twilight worship) on the banks of the Cauvery. But, in this part of the delta, it was time for musical prayer, with a difference. Fr Joseph Thattarassery, a Parish Priest of St Joseph's Church, Tripunithura, and his 16-member choir sang in unison 'Chapel Bhajans'.

The rendition of *Yaeuswae Namo Nama*, *Shree Yaeuswae Namo Nama* commenced the third edition of the three-day musical fete, 'The Festival of Sacred Music', organised by Prakriti Foundation, Chennai, Marabu Foundation, Thillaisthanam and the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), Thanjavur chapter, at the Land of Sangitham-Thiruvaiyaru, recently.

The concert took place at Chettiar Chatharam. This modest traditional house fest-

tooned with marigold, *vaa-zhai maram* and *thennam thoranam* and lit up with the subdued luminescence of *aghavalillakus* and brass lamps presented a picture of festivity.

Again, as though to emphasise the motif of tradition, the audience sat on the multi-coloured *Jamukaalam* spread in the central open space with chairs lined around the *mutham*.

The *bhajans* were in praise of Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Trinity, in simple Malayalam lyrics set in Carnatic and Hindustani ragas. After the concert, an elated Fr Joseph said, "We feel blessed to have sung at Thiruvaiyaru and it was an incredible experience. I also sang *Vaathipi Ganapathim* at Saint Thiyyagaraja's *samadhi*."

It was followed by the concert of Ganesh-Kumaresh whose violin recital was premised on *Ragapravaham* (Deluge of Melody). Ganesh

Prakriti Foundation
 His last name symbolises that of a 'monarch'. Maybe that has got to do with him patronising fine arts in a passionate and grand manner. This 'Shah' conceives, curates and patronises this fest, apart from various cultural fetes that he organises in Chennai. It is surprising that a successful businessman like him has chosen to invest in a fest without losing sleep, over Return on Investments, in a hamlet like Thiruvaiyaru. When the likes of him invest in cars or horses, Ranvir Shah, Founder, Prakriti Foundation, has chosen the arts. He says, "I pursue in something what I believe in and am passionate about."



Marabu Foundation
 Marabu Foundation aims at reviving traditional arts, music, dance, games and cultural practices of this landscape and is determined to impart them to the children of today. Rama Kausalya, Founder, says, "Music is the soul of this landscape and this fete is aimed at reviving the lost glory of Thiruvaiyaru." And, sure it is a noble mission.



also rendered a song in Tamil that underlined the essence of life to be 'Nature'.

Next day, the canvas was something like the stuff of which dreams are made of,

with the stage set on the courtyard of the *Pushya Mahal Padithurai* against the backdrop of the Cauvery flowing quietly, kissing the imposing ancient towers.

Subiksha Rangarajan — spelt vibrancy. The rich and distinctive voice of Susha, along with Pradeep, delighted the audience as they delivered *Ravana's Jataakataa*, *Aadi Shankra's Krishnashtakam* and *Shevatambhara* that surcharged the entire Cauvery ghat with an atmosphere of all that is divine.

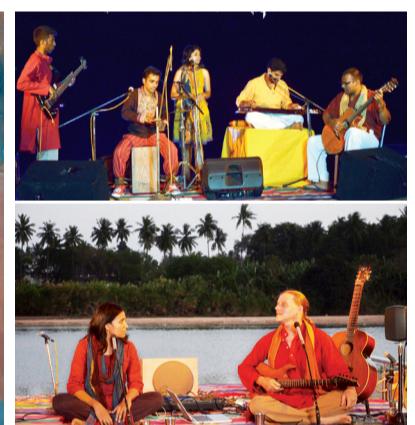
Darbuka Siva played the 'Cajon', a musical instrument from Peru, South America and BJ Chandran on the viola, of the Madras String Quartet, bowed compositions of Muthuswami Dikshitar, Saint Thiyyagaraja, Papana Sam Sivan, Pattinam Subramania Iyer and Laligudi Jayaraman that were received with wide approbation.

On the concluding day, the programmes were conducted at the Panchanatheeswara Swamy Temple where the *mandapam* near the Dharmasavardhani shrine.

VS Narasimhan and Hemantraj Mulaiyil on the violin, VR Sekar on the cello and BJ Chandran on the viola, of the Madras String Quartet, bowed compositions of Muthuswami Dikshitar, Saint Thiyyagaraja, Papana Sam Sivan, Pattinam Subramania Iyer and Laligudi Jayaraman that were received with wide approbation.

As Gopika chanted the Gayathri mantra, the muezzin from a nearby mosque called his followers for the evening prayers. In this intermingling of *naada*, there was a moment of revelation that if music is all about 'catholicity', then this was definitely one.

As with the coconut palms swaying and dancing in the gentle breeze, doves tiptoeing on the insides of the alcoves of the tower, cranes swooping down the river, the fragrance


PUSHPAMALA-2011

Garland of fine arts well woven

In KTV, one sees an artiste, a rasika, a hilarious man with an iron will, a silver tongue and a golden heart, points out **G Krishnamoorthy**

In yet another vindication of their fertile imagination and artistic creativity, the students of AVM Sri Pushpam College, Poondi, near Thanjavur, presented a well-planned and efficiently executed inter-collegiate cultural programme, tagged 'Pushpamala-2011', under the auspices of the Fine Arts Association of the college.

A galaxy of men and women students of about 50 colleges located in Thanjavur, Tiruchy, Kumbakonam, Tiruvarur, Madurai and Pudukkottai, wove a splendid garland of fine arts like dance, drama, music, humour and mimicry.

This telling success of the event has an interesting genesis. In the late 1950s the college had a strength of hardly a hundred and there was any association or cultural competition worth the name. Curiously the judges outnumbered the participants. However, three prizes had to be awarded for each competition. Music competitions were largely vocal and the instruments, were something stranger. However, they did ring harmonies never set to the Orphean lyre.

The College Day was the only major event when the comedies of Moliere were adapted by Prof ST Sarma of the English Department and

acted out by some members of the staff. In 1958 when Prof Sarma staged 'Happy, the Hypochondriac' before the dynamic presence of Dr AL Mudaliar (former VC) he (Prof Sarma) became the 'Fine Star' of the college.

Subsequently every year skits were presented in English and the founder of the college, A. Veeriah Vandayar, was charmed by the hilarity of 'Confusion to Pompus', a skit on the relative merits of a Thanjavur vakil and a Kumbakonam lawyer.

In the 1960s, with the induction of Prof S Raman, a chum of Prof Sarma, into the Department of English, the art of drama flourished in the sylvan campus.

With the passing away of Veeriah Vandayar, K. Thulasiah Vandayar (KTV) became the all-powerful secretary and correspondent. He was a regular guest for college day programmes. He started with a bang and the process of galvanizing began with the formation of various associations.

Prof Sarma had the privilege of holding the control of three of them - the Fine Arts Association, the Literary and Debating Society and the Sports Association.

From Chennai were bought many musical instruments like drums, harmonium, violin, mandolin, bass guitar,

rhythm guitar et al. Many Christian students were enticed to join the college and encouraged to form an orchestra. Three major events in a single academic year, Sports Day in the Olympic style, Shakespeare Festival for three days and inauguration of the college orchestra, with Prof Sarma, the lead player, on the mouth organ!

With the encouragement given by KTV, the students gave All India Radio performances and were invited to play in other schools and colleges.

With KTV giving yet another green signal, the college hosted inter-collegiate competitions, with the participation of half a dozen colleges in 1977, a landmark year in the history of the college. It was literally a fine 'arts' day. When the chief guest alighted

from his car, the drummer became warmer and the piper revelled on the stops.

From then on, the festival became a regular annual event. A rolling shield was instituted and competitions became keener to win the shield. To boost the image of the Fine Arts Association, KTV agreed to invite Shivaji Ganesh. Shivaji did come and the news spread all around Thanjavur. Surging crowds put the police on their toe.

Then came the years when Prof D.Kaliaperumal continued what was begun by Prof Sarma. The expenditure ran to more than a lakh. But KTV never counted the chips. He is himself an artiste, a rasika, a hilarious man with an iron will, silver tongue and golden heart. Students from Madurai to Chennai, a throng of



when Prof Sarma retired in 1992, the fine arts festival was conducted for three days. KTV suggested that the festival should be named 'Pushpamala'. Sivaji Kabilan of the Department of Tamil succeeded D.Kaliaperumal.

President Kalam visited the college in its golden jubilee year in 2006.

The list of worthies who graced the festival down the years is long.

They include S.P. Balasubramanian,

Aachi Manorama, Danal Thangavelu and M.Saroja, Dr. M.Balamurali Krishna, Shankar Ganesh, Radha Ravi, M.S. Viswanathan, Y.G. Mahendran, Swarnamalya, Gangai Amaral, Delhi Ganesh, Sirkazhi Govindarajan,

Sirkazhi Sivachidambaram, Rajesh, Lingusamy, R.V.Udayakumar and Santhanabharathi.

Back to the 2011 edition of 'Pushpamala', with KTV consenting to preside, film director Murali Abbas, actor-director Thiruvarugan, mimicry artiste Sivakaruppu, graced the occasion, rendered great by programmes in Carnatic music, light music, instrumental music, classical dance, western dance, folk dance and fancy dress, with a Kids Orchestra winning many a heart, with their histrionic talents.



LAMPS IN STYLE: Students of Cauvery College for Women tastefully arranging a pattern of lamps as part of Wings 11 Cultural fest in Tiruchy