

Pleasing Music
Malladi Brothers concert
A Review (July 29, 2002)
By Rasikan

Malladi Brothers, Sriram Prasad and Ravi Kumar, treated the SRUTI audience to some wholesome and pleasing Carnatic music on July 29, '02 at St. Mary Hall of Villanova University. They were accompanied by R. Swaminathan on the violin and Palani Kumar on the mridangam.

Malladi Brothers are among the most promising young vocalists of the last few years. They are the younger torch bearers of the Dr. Sripada Pinakapani school of music. Their alapana and kriti rendering carry the *sukha bhavam* (serenity) associated with Nedunuri Krishnamoorthy. I felt it particularly while listening to their Kedaragowla. Voleti Venkeshwarulu's influence could be discerned in the touches of Hindustani music, although this reviewer felt a tad uncomfortable with the mixture of Bageshri in the Sriranjani alapana.

The Brothers tend to preface an alapana to many of the pieces, which is a welcome feature.

The concert began with the Saveri varnam '*Sarasuda*' of Patnam Subramania Iyer followed by Sivan's '*Gajavadana*' in Sri Ranjani. After a staid '*Sangita gnanamu*', (Dhanyasi, Adi, Thyagaraja), they rendered a pleasing alapana in Kedaragowla for '*Tulasi Bilwa*', a Thyagaraja composition in Adi talam. The team spirit between the brothers, and the nice blending with the accompanists lent a peaceful feeling for this piece.

The Brothers rendered with bhavam the Syama Sastry kriti, '*Parvati ninnu ne*' in the rare raga Kalgada, Adi. This was followed by two quick fillers: '*Bogeendara sayinam*' (Kuntalavarali, Kanda chapu, Swati Tirunal) and '*Vaade Venkatdri*' (Vasanth, Adi, Annamacharya).

They then took up '*Swara raga sudha*' the majestic composition of Thyagaraja in Sankarabharanam, Adi for full treatment including neraval, kalpana swaram with kuraipuu and kanakku. This was followed by a crisp Tani by Palani Kumar, the veteran mridangist.

Perhaps because it was already well over two hours into the concert, the RTP in Shanmukhapriya was quite short. Incidentally this was the first prati madhyama ragam in the concert. The pallavi was rendered in Tisra Triputa talam with short trikalam, tisram and swara kalpana in Mohanam, Kalyani and Kapi.

The post pallavi period consisted of two Annamacharya keertanas (in Revathy and Kurinji), a Puranadara Dasa kriti in Hamirkalyani, a Sadasiva Brahmendra composition in Sindhu Bairavi and Lalgudi Jayaraman's tillana in Rageshri all in Adi talam. The Brothers concluded their concert with the Surati piece '*Pathiki haratheere*' of Thyagaraja.

R. Swaminadhan provided adequate support without being flashy. In fact flashiness was one feature totally absent during the entire concert.

Although the music was pleasant, there was a degree of monotonicity during the concert. In my opinion, two factors may have contributed to it. One was that all except two pieces were in Adi talam. And the other was the lack of any prati madhyama piece in the early or even middle segment of the concert.