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Her sangita had invisible charm



M. S. ... epitome of bhakti.

THE BEAUTY of music is beyond logical comprehension. So was the invisible charm of M. S. Subbulakshmi's sangita.

To her expression was the periphery, contemplative experience the core of Carnatic music.

She had several dimensions — melody, patantara purity, reverential rendering of songs of great vaggeyakaras — all well integrated to the

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consistent principle of ruminative exposition.

Her emphasis was pronounced on this aspect. She believed that sangita has to be transparent to bhakti. The spiritual inspiration contained in kirtanas was basic to her and not any ritualistic pre-disposition.

Every item she rendered in her concerts was her heart's homage to the composer. She had the potent power of musical intuition wedded to her honeyed voice which gave her enormous scope for aesthetic accomplishment — an accomplishment not for seduction but for *santham*.

Music manifests itself through kirtanas, ragas and swaras and its roots lie in transcendence. This invisible source formulated the ecstasies of her performances. She always had the promptings of inwardness and whatever she sang was harmonised to the satisfaction of her *self*. Her example for young musicians today is the manner in which she upheld the sangita gnana, bhakti and vairagya as the only way to sublimate music.

The career of M. S. Subbulakshmi always showed the marga to elevated anubhava. Effort is human; grace is divine. They converged in her music. In her concerts we had clear intimations of the lofty values of sangita.

If the final aim and purpose of a dedicated musician is to seek out the true joy of sangita it was in a good measure to be experienced in her recitals. Her supremacy extended beyond the circumscribed ritualistic content.

It echoed the reverberating spirituality that vaggeyakaras have implanted in their songs. She was therefore one who realised that music was much more than an intellectual exercise.

As a seeker her quest was to gain an unerring vision of music's piety and this endeavour cast radiance on her concerts which made a direct impact on the minds and hearts of listeners. At no time did she feel that music was an end in itself but only a means to self-elevation to higher levels of spiritual evolution.

On the part of the rasikas reflections on her exposition ripened into a realisation of her uniqueness. The outward charms of her voice gradually led those in the audience to feel her inward sensitivity. This does not lend itself to any definition.

Her mind set on the sublimation of music set her apart from other performers. This saranagati to sangita's spirituality led her to the summit of the meditative potential of Carnatic music.

SVK

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