

What a beautiful way to spend one's anniversary. At this stage in our lives, I decided I am not cooking and not worry about my classes or other organizational commitments if any. And that's what The Almighty planned for us. Having Sri Sanjay Subramaniam concert. On the one side, you can say I am a huge Sanjay fan and steadfast in my opinion for a very long time. And if you think I am partial to his music, and you visited the concert, the crowded hall and people who were rooted to their seats are testimony for my feeling. Once you listen to him you would rather not listen to any other artist for a few days. I know he publishes his song list, but didn't want to look at it as I wanted to be surprised. But of course, I had to peak in between to see what song he might have chosen.

Now for the Concert :

Oh My God. What an outstanding concert. Mesmerizing, goosebumps, Aaahaaa moments filled with some surprise and fun elements bringing a slight laughter at the gimmicks. That kind of Azuttam, clarity, gamakams, superb innovations, glides and all the nuances possible and the bhavam and the power of singing.. all in one. Simply fantastic. HTGC sound system was perfect today too. Neiveli Venkatesh was simply superb and Varadarajan simply and ably matched Sanjay sir's voice. This was one of the concerts that will go down history as one of the Best. You think you know the song and start to sing along in your mind, and suddenly you hear a beautiful innovation or twist creating a Aahaa moment.

As I was entering the hall the concert started with my favorite : Saveri Varnam. Caught a couple of nuances which sounded so beautiful. Hopefully I can incorporate in my lessons.

Mamava sada Janani : A very beautifully rendered kriti of Sri Maharaja Swati Tirunal.

Iha paramanu in Simhedramadhyamam by Sri Papanasam Sivan with outstanding Manodharmam. How he is able to hold a note for several avarthanams is mind boggling.

Krishna Ena barade : in Kathanakuthuhalam set to music by Sanjay Sir himself was another classy western music sounding piece. I think Sanjay Sir composed this tune keeping western music enthusiasts in mind. The perfect swarasthanams made this rather very traditional Narajanma bandaga very unique and different and pleasing to the ears.

Chalamelara : Superb with some beautiful innovations on the Chalamelara sangathis. I just had tears. Somebody said, it is a simple kriti. A simple kriti can be made more embellished and unique by only such a great artist.

Aarendru Raghavanai in Yadukulakamboji was another classy song. I have not heard this song before and this beautiful piece by Arunachala Kavi and music by Ariyakudi was very interesting. I assumed it would be like a thukkada, based more on melody. But this was another rendu kalai

heavy Yadukulakamboji.

Then came RTP in Bhageshri which was just out of the world. Several years ago, when he had visited Chicago, I had requested him to sing Kani nilam Vendum which had Bhageshri as one of the ragams. That portion was sooo beautiful. To my disappointment he chose Harikamboji. Of course, it was beautiful nonetheless but I had wanted Bhageshri. I was thinking about it this morning and then as though God's were listening Bhageshri happened. Main Ragam in RTP is Bhageshri. That would be a rarity atleast for me. Ragam was simply gorgeous. So many Aaahaa moments. Some phrases in Bhageshri reminded me of the song from the old movie Navrang. Thanam in Bhageshri can be very tricky again IMHO and it was just gorgeous. At one point I decided, this is Devaganam and I just watched mesmerized. Ninaikkada neramillai was the surprise Pallavi. and other ragams in between were Nattakuranji, Sahana, Purvikalyani, Begada, Sindhubhairavi, and may be couple of more that I am missing. There were several surprise moments and one that sticks out in my mind was the "Annakkiliye unnai thedudu" swarams.. May be as a tribute to Ilayaraja Sir on his 50th anniversary in music ? My head and hands were swaying without my knowledge and suddenly I became conscious and saw that I was not the only one. Violinist was superb too and created several Aaahaa moments too.

Then came an outstanding Thani avartanam with double mridangam technique if I am not mistaken. Nobody moved. Throughout the concert I was thoroughly enjoying the mridangam by itself. Normally I would take down some notes. This time I didn't want to so I don't miss anything while writing.

Next song was : Enu madidarenu bhava hingadu by Sri Purandaradasa. I remembered this song from a old Kannada movie. What a beautiful Purandaradasa Keerthana. This was a 2nd Purandaradasa song. I remember the year when I asked for Kani Nilam, many kannada patrons reprimanded me for requesting a Tamil song and there was no time for a Kannada song. And we had dinner afterwards at Jaya Ramaswamy's house and I had thanked him at that time. I think I also mentioned that I am glad my song was chosen over a Kannada song just for fun to my Kannada friend. Sanjay Sir had said, "hey don't say that." I am a huge Purandaradasa fan and love his songs. It's nothing to do with that. Anyways, remembered that incident when he sang the 2nd Purandaradasa song.

Then came the very famous Ramasami dutan nanada which was not part of the list. It was vibrant and fun.

Aahaaa... or Ayyooyooo. .. or Oh My God, Mohanam. It had overtones of Jyoti kalash of Lata Mangeshkar ji. Bansivale in Mohanam by Maharaja swati Tirunal was outstanding.

Maanaada mazuvaada by Muttutandavar was just simply outstanding. As I am typing my hands are shivering. I just reread the lyrics and I have goosebumps, may be because of my recent visit to Chidambaram. This was in ragamalika, an outstanding rendition packed with bhakti and

emotions on Natarajar and surprise surprise, this was followed by Kana vendamo in Sri Ranjani. Everyone gasped when they heard Kana vendamo. I have heard KVN Sir's Kana Vendamo and it has been sitting in my bucket list for so many years now.

Jaggi had requested Aarumo Aval and to his disappointment, RR didn't see it on time to pass it on. Jaggi has requested him to sing it in NJ and he will get a recording.

People were not ready for the concert to end. The concert ended with Pavamana and thunderous applause and standing ovation.

ON THAT NOTE One and Only Sanjay Sir. .