

Highlighting the ragas' beauty

A scholarly and entrancing performance was offered by veteran Hindustani vocalist Pt. Ulhas Kashalkar.

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The significant drone of the two tanburas drew the attention instantly when the curtains went up. It was, indeed, a fitting finale for the concerts series in Carnatic music to conclude with the other genre of Indian classical music; a scholarly and entrancing vocal performance was offered by veteran Hindustani classical vocalist Pandit Ulhas Kashalkar. Ulhas enjoys a unique distinction of being trained under three distinctly different gharanas of Gwalior, Jaipur and Agra. Because of his established eminence, he is considered the legitimate representative of all the three schools. At present, Kashalkar is a guru at the ITC Sangeet Research Academy in Kolkata.



SHINES WITH CLARITY: *Pandit Ulhas Kashalkar.*

Ulhas's voice has something special which shines with clarity and mellowness. That does not prevent him from executing piquant passages which are essentials in the delivery of traditional Hindustani vocal. He has developed the ability to integrate the eclecticism without causing any blemish to tradition. In the concert, Kashalkar was accompa-

nied by Suresh Talwalkar on tabla and Arvind Thatte on harmonium.

Ulhas started the concert with raag Poorya which went for nearly an hour as the main piece. The alaap which was initiated from the mandra sthayee with soft, slow and subtle phrasings, slowly moved up and gathered momentum and was followed by a khayal. Several facets of

the raga were brought out by Ulhas impressively and artistically through soaring flights, eddying swirls and gleaming oscillations with a refrain finally landing on catchy taans. Poorya is a melody that could open the floodgates for improvisation for an artist who has the capacity to explore and deliver. It was an enthralling experience to hear the

presentation of Poorya as Pt. Ulhas exhibited his extraordinary expertise in the raag conception and deliverance.

The second item was raag Hamir with two compositions one in vilambit ek taal with the landing on 'Balam Mat Jao' and the second followed in durit mode in teen taal. The amazing range of Hamir could be heard and savoured in the enviable vocalisation of Pandit Ulhas here.

A bandish in raag Kamaj was a lively and vivacious addition with the several sojourns of the raag landing on the refrain 'Koyaliya Koka Sunave. The longish phrases and finer motifs, spectacular akaras all flashed in and out with perfect precision. Sahana Kanada brought with it the lilt of Kanada and the smoothness of Sahana seamlessly laced. More aaye filled the air with the innumerable layers of the raga's exquisiteness sensitively tapped by the vocalist.

Raag Bhairavi unfolded colourfully in the thumri 'Jamuna Ke Teer' and concluded the concert after several manoeuvres of the entire melody of the raag.

The supporting artists always share the glory of such fine concerts as their contribution turn significant. Arvind Thatte deployed the keyboard of his harmonium to shadow the vocalist in different levels of raag elaboration and demonstration. They were smooth sailing and supporting with subtlety. Suresh Talwalkar on tabla extended enticing beats of rhythm and at the same time, rose remarkably to the occasion with faster percussion whenever the tempo picked up.