

Popular performance

SOORYA'S STAR-STUDDED dance and music festival featured two extremely popular performers from Chennai this week - T. M. Krishna on October 3 and Sudha Raghunathan on October 5. Both the concerts were held at Tagore Centenary Hall and on both occasions, the hall was full. Inclement weather did not seem to have kept people from T. M. Krishna's concert.

Krishna is one of the most interesting vocalists of the modern generation of Carnatic musicians. He started his music training under Seetharama Sharma in Chennai and still continues to be instructed by Seetharama Sharma. He also received instruction from the late Semmangudi Sreenivasa Iyer. Krishna has a sweet voice with a full range of expression, an enviable mastery of his medium, and a large repertoire at his command. He particularly excels in his rendering of *rakthi* ragas such as Thodi, Kharaharapriya, Varali, Ritigowla and others, sung to a slow tempo (Vilambitha kala), and he enchants lovers of music with his stately performances. Of late, however, one perceives in him a certain temptation to play to the crowd, which he would do well to keep under check.

Krishna began with a varnam in raga Saveri. This was followed by Tyagaraja's famous eulogy of Lord Kovuri Sundare-



*The concert of
T. M. Krishna
during the Soorya
dance and music
festival in
Thiruvananthapuram
was well-received by
the audience.*

sa, *It Vasudha...*, in raga Sahana, which was rendered with excellent sensitivity to the raga bhava. Krishna next launched into a spirited version of the fast-paced Tyagaraja composition, *Nena runchinanu...*, in raga Malavi. This was a crowd-pleaser, as evidenced by the deafening applause at the finish. However, it was the next item that was exceptional - a fairly detailed *alapana* of raga Varali, followed by *Eti Janma-midi ha...*, again a *kriti* of Tyagaraja. With commendable skill, Krishna brought out the tragic possibilities of this *rakthi* raga: The great composer's anguished cry, "O Rama, What a life is this! How long must I bear it?" Mesmerised by the soul-stirring strains, even those who

did not understand the meaning of the words appeared to grow still. On the whole, it was a masterly performance and the centrepiece of the programme - a Ragam Tanam Pallavi in raga Bhairavi - failed to match up to the former. T. M. Krishna was accompanied on the violin by Bangalore Ganesh Prasad. Poonkulam Subramaniam kept pace with him on the mridangam, even if it was a bit too loud at times.

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Photo: S. Mahinsha

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