



Following in father's footsteps Pandit Nayan Ghosh with his son Ishaan Ghosh (left)

## The melodic power of two

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Tabla maestro Samar Saha's devotion-charged annual tribute to his Guru Krishna Chandra Ganguly (Natubabu), under the aegis of his academy-cum-organisation Sangeet Piyasi, is one of the most eagerly awaited events in Kolkata due to its excellent talent hunt, surprise cast and unrestricted warmth towards all. Another unique feature of his impeccably organized festival has been hearty felicitations of those craftsmen and technicians whose useful services to the cause of music have not been given due recognition and respect.

As usual, Sangeet Piyasi's 27<sup>th</sup> chapter this year, held in Uttam Mancha, saw Pandit Nayan Ghosh being awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award, felicitations of the unsung heroes of classical music world, followed by the young scholarship-winners' short and sweet recitals. The entire fest was spread over one evening and a whole-night session and presented an aesthetically arranged mixed bag of young and veteran artistes.

### Emotional depth

The highlight of the first evening was Sucheta Ganguly. Groomed at ITC Sangeet Research Academy by Pandit Arun Bhaduri and Vidushi Girija Devi, she has already carved a niche for herself as a brilliant young performer of both khayal and thumri. Raga Jogkauns was her choice and armed with her robust, mellifluous voice, she decided to delve into the emotional depths of the raga from the word go! The combination of both Gandhars literally wrenched hearts and she knew it. Even in the Teental bandish (Peer paray), after the slow ektal-based badhat (Sughar bar paayo), she kept referring to the magical phrase of the raga in between fast running taans to keep the lingering mood of pathos alive, supported by renowned harmonium wizard Rupashree Bhattacharya. Sha-

mik Bhaduri, who rarely appears on stage due to job-commitments, helped his father's disciple immensely with his compatible tabla support.

Ganguly's impeccable *tehzeeb* kept her aware of the time constraint and the fact that veteran tabla exponent Tanmay Bose and his Taal Tantra are waiting in the wings. Eager to pay melodic tributes to her beloved Guruma, she quickly but very lovingly picked up the delicate threads of 'Shyam tohe najariya lag jayegi' one of Appaji's favourites and again poured her soul in it, effortlessly.

### Father-son duos

The night-long session, having six items, focused on duets especially a few brilliant father-son duos. Usually, duets demand equally capable musicians; but the father-son-jugalbandis throw immense challenge towards the young progenies who face unequal comparisons. However, since tabla is the most favourite of Kolkatans, Saha very judiciously placed the jugalbandi of the celebrated tabla maestro Pandit Nayan Ghosh with his prodigious son Ishaan Ghosh as the grand finale.

Ably supported by Hiranmay Mitra's harmonium, their vast repertoire was on full display soon after their innovative elaboration-based Peshkar.

To the delight of the audience, they played exquisitely designed compositions treasured by all the four major gharanas namely Farrukhabad, Lucknow, Delhi and Ajrara. The sparkling execution of the unique playing technique of each gharana remained the hallmark of their captivating presentation from which the Young Turk stole a few moments as his very own.

In another unique (fourth) item, sarod maestro Tejendra Narayan Majumdar paired with his son Indrayudh Majumdar while Subhanakar Banerjee and son Aarchik Banerjee joined them as tabla accompanists. Both the youngsters

are coming up as promising soloists, no doubt, but while Aarchik debuted as an accompanist, this was Indrayudh's first with the senior tabla wizard. All eyes, therefore, were pinned on them. Despite the pressure, the young sarodiya stood out for his raagdari while handling a heavy raga like Miyan Malhar (alap-jod-jhala, slow and fast Teental and Ektal gatkaris) and the teedged tabla accompanist turned out to be impeccably layadaar. Technique-wise also this foursome was very impressive, especially while playing three dissimilar compositions of Baba Alauddin Khan in raga Zilla Kafi.

Another pleasing duet of Debapriyo Adhikary (vocal) and Samannay Sarkar (sitar) came up. Ably supported by veteran tabla maestro Sanjay Mukherjee, they presented raga Jayant Malhar very delicately and followed it up with a Kirwani dadra composed by their Guruma Girija Devi. Adhikary sang and Sarkar played it equally sensitively.

Conversely, vocalist siblings Neelanjana-Sheelanjana could do better with softer modulations (raga Dharmavati and a jhoola). A kathak duet by Saurabh and Gaurav Mishra (twins), brilliantly supported by Arvind Azad (tabla), Pandit Dharam Nath Mishra (vocal and harmonium), Umesh Mishra (sarangi) and Guru Ravi Shankar Mishra (bol-padhant), pepped up the night with vibrant footwork. In the penultimate slot, renowned vocalist cousins Ritesh and Rajnish Mishra sang raga Vasantmukhari and concluded with a devotion-charged bhajan to the tabla accompaniment of Pandit Kumar Bose, who is a close companion of their respective fathers (Pandits Rajan and Sajan Mishra) and also played with their grandfather.

"A valid reason behind this 'duet theme' is that there are too many performers raring to showcase their art while there are very few reputed organisations who manage to get sponsorships for big classical events," mused Samar Saha, a passionate ideator of thematic concerts.