

SOULFUL SAROD RECITAL

Covid robbed us of many things -- our health, many of our near and dear ones, legendary musicians, our normal lives and, of course, the pleasure of listening to great music among a live audience. On 30 October last, it was a wonderful experience for music lovers of New Delhi to enjoy top class classical music in a baithak style after more than 20 months, performed by one of our foremost sarodiyas of the present times, Pt Tejendra Majumdar. And no praise would be too high for the organiser, the renowned Sitar maestro Pt Shubhendra Rao and his wife, noted cellist Saskia Rao de-Has, under their 'Unlock the Music' series of concerts dedicated to the artistes we lost during the pandemic. Pt Tejendra Majumdar needs no introduction to music lovers. A strict and faithful proponent of the Senia-Maihar idiom, he had the privilege of receiving taleem from such maestros as Ustad Bahadur Khan (nephew of Baba Allauddin Khan) and Swara Samrat Ustad Ali Akbar Khan who, over the years, chiselled Tejendra into an invaluable gem. He is a 'thinking musician' known for his sensitive and meditative approach to music which, at once, touches the innermost chord of his listeners. The 32 minute alap, jod and jhala in the traditional but extremely sweet and melodious raga Bihag provided ample testimony to the artiste's inner sensibilities which created a surreal experience for the audience. The tonal quality and plucking were of a very high order and the long meends that he coaxed out of his instrument were a treat to the ears. Above all, the way in which he established the raga step by step in its resplendent form was an abject lesson to learners and connoisseurs alike. The Madhya lay gate in Jhaptal

that followed was embellished with striking phrases played to perfection with the adroit accompaniment on the tabla by Ustad Akram Khan of the Ajrada style. This was followed by Chandranandan, a legendary creation of Ustad Ali Akbar Khan more than 70 years ago. Its creator had no preconceived notion about the structure this raga would take and improvised it 'on the spot' during a HMV recording. It's a heady concoction of Chandrakauns, Malkauns, Nandkauns, Kaushiki Kanhra and a liberal dose of JogKauns as well, the alchemy of which

produced one of the beautiful (but difficult master) ragas ever created by the great Ustad. Pt Tejendra Majumdar who learned from the maestro himself treated the raga with utmost care and skillfully brought out its finer nuances in a superlative display of control over his instrument, aggressive but not jarring plucking. The crescendo built up at the end sent the audience into raptures of pure joy. One couldn't ask for a better gift than the lilting sounds of the sarod mesmerizing the audience after such a hiatus.

