

Cosmic Sounds of Drupad by Gundecha Brothers: Sunday, September 29-2024

Post-Concert Review by Shuchita Rao

Today the Gundecha family gave a wonderful Dhrupad performance as a tribute to the late Vidushi Manju Mehta ji, senior disciple of sitarist Bharat Ratna Pandit Ravi Shankar ji and organizer and co-founder of Saptak music festival that has been happening in Ahmedabad for 45 years. The two hour long concert happened at Florida Atlantic University's Davie Campus and was sponsored by Association of Performing Arts of India in partnership with FAU.

Recalling a very long, close association with Vidushi Manju Mehta, Pandit Umakant Gundecha said that she was a multifaceted performer, teacher, organizer and good human being whose strengths could not be described in just two minutes. "We were fortunate to be able to sing for her when she was unwell. We consider it one of our life's best works that we can sing today to honor her memory." A short film on the life of Vidushi Manju Mehta was presented to the audience.

Pandit Umakant Gundecha and Shri Anant Gundecha began with a powerful and yet, heart touching alaap, jod and jhaala in Raag Patdeep followed by two compositions in Chautaal and brisk tempo Sool taal respectively. Compositions created by Pandit Umakant Gundecha and his brother, the late Pandit Ramakant Gundecha in the ragas Bhoopali, Saraswati, Charukesi and Adaana were presented next. A short interactive exercise with the audience in Raga Charukesi on the request of Smt. Bharti Chokshi was welcomed by the audience! Pandit Akhilesh Gundecha provided energetic sangat on the pakhaawaj and Dhani Gundecha provided excellent vocal support.

The depth of Pandit Umakant Gundecha's voice, the varied voice textures and ornaments, rhythm play, vocal dynamics as well as harmony and counterpoint that were created with his nephew Shri Anant Gundecha in the jugalbandi performance were marvelous. It was a wonderful treat for the audience to hear a live performance of Dagarvani style Dhrupad in South Florida. Many thanks to Bharti Chokshi ji and Dr. Deenbandhu Chokshiji as well as APAI volunteers for taking the initiative to host a performance by the Gundecha family."