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An ode to musical diversity



The Hindu

The Madras String Quartet perform with professor Liu Yuening at the launch of The Hindu Friday Review November Fest. Photo: S. R. Raghunathan



The seventh edition of The Hindu Friday Review November Fest was launched in Chennai. This edition will feature artistes from five countries — China, Australia, Germany, Korea and Pakistan.

The seventh edition of *The Hindu Friday Review* November Fest was launched with a celebration of sounds from East and West at the Vivanta by Taj, Connemara hotel here.

V.S. Narasimhan and his famed Madras Quartet inventively spun melodic passages on violins, the viola and the cello, that reflected both their Indian classical roots and modernist approach. Beginning with the ragtime classic, Scott Joplin's 'The Entertainer,' the foursome moved on to traditional Carnatic pieces set to Western harmonics.

In Patnam Subramania Iyer's 'Navaragamalika varnam', they were accompanied on the yangqin by Professor Liu Yuening from China, who performs on Friday with Mandolin U. Srinivas at the opening concert of the fest in Chennai. Their seamless blend of melody heightened the beauty of the composition.

The Quartet next performed a Tyagaraja composition in Purvikalyani, which was as evocative as the pieces that followed — a Karaikudi Mani composition in Behag and a Lalgudi Jayaraman 'thillana' in Desh.

The evening began with the lighting of the 'kuthuvilakku' (ceremonial lamp) by Carnatic vocalists Sudha Raghunathan, Ranjani and Gayathri, flautist Shashank and Professor Liu.

Speaking at the launch, general manager of Vivanta by Taj, Connemara, Vijay Shrikent, said: "We consider it a matter of great pride and privilege to be associated with the fest from its inception."

Mukund Padmanabhan, Senior Associate Editor, *The Hindu*, said: "The programming philosophy of the Fest is reflected in its commitment to bring musicians and genres of music that are new, unfamiliar and refreshing. The diversity of the musicians we have invited mirrors the diversity of the musical forms in the Fest."

Besides, Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad and Coimbatore, the fest also travels to Kochi this year.

The Chennai edition will feature artistes from five countries — China, Australia, Germany, Korea and Pakistan.

Professor Liu, who heads the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, said she is performing for the first time in India. She described herself as someone who reveres Indian music and culture.