

After fifty eventful years in music; Arun Datey is still young

Iconic figure in lyrics-based light music, the singer says, he enjoyed each and every moment of his melodious journey

■ Staff Reporter

SEVENTY EIGHT years old Arun Datey's looks belie his age. And once he steps into the stage and starts singing his most beloved songs, one realises how young he is, by heart. Datey, one of the most revered singers of Marathi light music was in the city on Sunday evening to perform his trademark 'Shukratara' concert at Khode Udyan in Chinavisipura. The singer who recently completed fifty years in professional music industry, appeared in his 2,372nd live concert on Sunday.

Datey rendered around 20 of his famous songs, right from the semi-classical 'Swargangechya Kathawarati', to the simple and sweet composition 'Bhatukichya Khelamdhii'; with his signature ease. What empowers this man to make the most difficult note look so effortless? "Practice, of course," he exclaims. "I enjoy each and every moment of singing - may it be on stage or during my practice sessions."

Music pleases him the most and he considers himself fortunate that the Almighty has blessed him with a capacity to sing in live concerts, that too, quite regularly, at this age. The song 'Shukratara', which was immortalised by him is also completing fifty years next year. His son Atul Datey, who also is into the music industry since twenty years, has planned fifty concerts with poet Mangesh Padgaonkar to mark the Golden Jubilee of this song. "We have already completed 37 concerts, and by next year, we will achieve the golden figure of 50," Datey *Sahab* says.

Here remembers his long-time companion music director, Shrinivas Khaley, who composed this magical song. "Being trained in Indore, I used to sing Hindi and Urdu songs. Khaley *Sahab* was the first music director who insisted me to sing in Marathi, and he composed this song for me," he recalls. "With Khaley *Sahab*'s exit, an era came to an end. Those days are now over. They will never come back," says nostalgic Arun Datey.

Stressing that a good poem is must to make a memorable song, Datey, who always did justice to the compositions of renowned poets right from Padgaonkar to Suresh Bhat, lamented that a very few poets have the real caliber in present age. "Instant success is what they want, and this desire makes them short-lived in industry," he says about the present generation. However, Datey *Sahab* looks towards Swapnil Bhandodkar as the most promising singer in present generation. After fifty eventful years in the musical industry, Datey has become an institution within. He still loves to sing Urdu and Hindi songs, but, rarely gets opportunity to sing them. He is probably the only singer who never ever performed some other singer's song on stage. Educated as Textile Engineer, Datey resigned from his executive job to pursue his career in music.



Iconic Marathi light music singer Arun Datey during his performance at Khode Udyan in Chinavisipura on Sunday evening. Datey completed fifty years in music recently. (Pic by Satish Raut)