

I also like SagaraSangamam by Vishwanath, which truly depicts of the story of a loser. Same as in Mahanti, this too depicts the ups-downs of life. But mahanati tops for me as favourite movie.

It stars Ulaganayagan (in tamil)/ Lokanayakudu (in Telugu) (title names given by his fans and fellow film fraternity which means “LEADER OF THE WORLD”, because of his true acting potential) KAMAL HAASAN. It was released on June 3, 1983. It’s a musical/dance slice of life film in Vishwanath style with a runtime of 2hour 40 minutes.

SagaraSangamam – title of the film, means Confluence with the ocean.

The plot of the film is as follows:

Balakrishna, fondly called Balu, is an economically disadvantaged but multi-talented dancer, adept at the Indian classical dances of [Kuchipudi](#), [Bharatanatyam](#), [Kathak](#), etc. His simple and very honest soul does not permit him to attain professional success in the commercial world that requires a certain level of moral laxness. Madhavi, a wealthy young woman and a dance patron, notices his talent and acts as his benefactor, helping him secure an opportunity to participate in a high-level classical dance festival.

Balu's aging mother passes away from the afflictions of poverty, two days before his performance. Balu, who was very attached to her, is emotionally devastated and fails to participate in the dance festival. Madhavi nevertheless, gives him support and encouragement and sets him on the mend. Balu gradually develops a fondness for Madhavi as their relationship grows. He hides his love for her but eventually picks up the courage to express it. Balu discovers that, while Madhavi shares his feelings, she is a married woman separated from her husband. Her husband later returns to unite Madhavi and Balu, but Balu decides to sacrifice his love, showing respect for the institution of marriage.

Years pass, and Balu, a disappointed man, has become an inconsolable alcoholic and a newspaper journalist/art critic. Once he critiques a dancer, Sailaja, for a lack of concentration on her form and more towards the audience, which results in them having a fight. The article is in-turn read by Madhavi, who turns out to be Sailaja's mother, and has lost her husband. She finds out about Balu, his medical condition, never ending love for her, and her family. In a bid to revive his will to live and his passion for his art, she tends to his medical needs through his friend, Raghu, and solicits Balu to be the dance instructor for her daughter. She does not come in front of him, worried that he would not be able to cope with the news of her being a widow. However, a situation arises where she saves him from falling into a [well](#). She comes in front of him wearing a [bhindi](#). He later learns the truth about her husband and his condition deteriorates.

As Balu is diagnosed terminally ill , Madhavi plans that his name should survive and his talent should not die along with him . Sailaja, suspecting her mother's behaviour towards Balu , leaves the house but is caught by Raghu who brings her back

Sailaja , still in anger with Balu over his comment, half heartedly continues to be his student while he teaches her the step.

The film ends with Sailaja's on-stage performance with Balu watching her in a wheelchair, carrying over the legacy and talent of his dance on her , as his health completely deteriorates. He dies while watching her performance. A heartbroken Raghu takes him away quietly, without interrupting the performance. Madhavi, devastated, follows them with an umbrella, covering Balu from the rain.

My review:

This is such a beautiful film and although I keep returning to it time and time again to watch the incredible dance scenes, there is so much more to enjoy in this film. To start with the dancing, there probably isn't anyone other than Kamal Hassan who could manage to make it all look so effortless. The classical dance scenes are superb, and even the contemporary song (with that truly hideous yellow suit) is well added in to showcase his skills. Jayaprada is beautiful in her dance scenes and S P Sailaja is excellent, but it's still Kamal Hassan who draws my eye each time. I absolutely love the dance scene in the kitchen which is fresh, spontaneous and makes such good use of the setting.

Leaving aside the amazing dancing, this is a really well told story. An alcoholic 'hero' is unusual and, since I work in the field, I like that it's a useful public health message as well. The romance between Balu and Madhavi develops slowly and naturally considering their joint love of the arts and despite the difference in their social standing. The use of photography to link the story together is cleverly done and every image adds a little more to the story. Sarath Babu is excellent as Balu's long suffering friend, and his generosity provides a stark contrast to Balu's increasing selfishness as he becomes dependant on the demon drink. However Raghu is not a perfect saint either since he doesn't scruple to use Balu's guilt against him as a way to blackmail his friend into teaching the spoilt brat Sailaja. Of course it's all for Balu's own good and the fact that he gets treatment for his sick wife Sumathi is a bonus. All of the supporting cast is excellent here and K. Vishwanath develops their characters in enough detail to make their actions understandable and relevant.

I really like the way each flashback occurs when something which is happening in the present triggers a memory of a past event by one of the characters. It seems very natural and helps to link the past and the present. The film is very much about the arts: Raghu is a writer and poet, Madhavi is a singer and Balu's dream that they all perform together seems a natural extension of their friendship. It's also an excuse to have some beautiful songs and once again Illayaraja provides music that I love and I just wish I knew what the lyrics meant. There are a few things I don't enjoy quite so much. There are some really ridiculous co-incidences and the last few scenes are overly melodramatic. But then again this is a film from the eighties and we all know that wasn't a time for restraint! This is a 5 star film for me.