

National-level Classical Dance Fest - 1

By Devanampriya

Vasundhara Performing Arts Centre (VPAC), Mysuru, one of the reputed Bharatanatyam and Yoga Training Centre in Mysuru training students coming from across the globe to learn this Indian classical art under the guidance of veteran guru Dr Vasundhara Doraswamy, has been successfully organising National and international level dance and music festivals since three decades. One of the unique festivals among these is Natrajaothsava, giving emphasis to male and couple dancers. This year's Natrajaothsava was held from Oct. 18 to 20.

Mar. 18



Dr. Vasant Kiran, HOD of Department of Performing Arts, Alliance University, Bangalore, is seen lighting the lamp to inaugurate Natrajaothsava-2016, the three-day National-level Male and Couple Dancers Classical Dance Festival organised by Vasundhara Performing Arts Centre (VPAC) at Sri Nadabrahma Sangeetha Sabha on JLB Road in city on Mar. 18 as (from right) Dr. Vasundhara Doraswamy, Musician & Music Critic Dr. Padmavathi Narashiman and VPAC President K.V. Murthy look on.

set in mishra chapu tala, a count of seven beats, elaborated and intense pada varnam portraying various episodes of Sri Krishna, his pranks and also his Vishwakarma Darshana in raga reethi gowla set to adi tala, compiled by Sri Raghavendra Tirumale Srinivas taking the lyrical part from Sri Krishna Ashtottara Shatanamavali. Able guidance, choreography, natuvanga and vocal support by Guru G. Ratheesh Babu could prove his calibre on all aspects of classical dance and music. Deepesh proved to be one of the promising artistes with his forte both in mutta and abhinaya.

Somashekhar Chudanath and Swetha Venkatesh (Bengaluru): Benediction to five various deities for the welfare and success of the performances of

this elite art form, Jarjara Puja, Nataraja, Saraswathi, Vinayaka and Devi were praised among this symbolically. Jarjara Puje was ritually done bending to all the directions of the stage seeking the blessings of Ashtadikpalakas. Next the elaborate Pada Varna - Aditala with the floral benediction to the almighty, and guru as to the margam system next were the alaripu a pure nutta piece



Somashekhar Chudanath and Swetha Venkatesh

was innovatively portrayed by 10 incarnations of Lord Vishnu with good synchronisation and nice chemistry of dancing in duo which closely paved way in portraying the mutta and abhinaya. Amutha Manthana, Balaji Chakravarthi and Vanama's story in the sanchari part was crisp, apt and effective. Choreography of Adavus for mutta and swaras was impressive with a harmonious presentation by both. On to the music ensemble Dr. Suparna Venkatesh on natuvanga and all the well-versed accompanying artistes supported the dancers for the enhancement of their performance.

Mar. 19

Naveen R. Hegde: Starting with a devotional dance piece Adikondano, a krtti in Raga Mayamalavagoula set to Adi talam.

Brisk and perfect footwork with still gesture and postures. Beautiful combinations of adavus with karnas and angaharas, flexibility and facial expressions suited to the sahitya, followed by a Pada Varna in Raga Reeti Goula set to Aditala. Dance choreographed by veteran performer and guru Nirupama Rajendra. Immense potential over Nutta part while rendering the Jathis – Sanchari or story of Vasudeva carrying the infant Krishna in the thunderstorm to Yashoda was eye-catching. Naveen was accompanied on natuvanga by Vid. Anil Iyer, vocally by Vid. Raghuram, midanga by Vid. G. Gurumurthy, flute by Vid. Jayram enhanced the whole performance.

Yogesh Kumar: He started his recital with floral benediction through pushpanjali to the almighty, guru and art lovers. This was followed by a Varna Devadi deva. Brisk & neat Angashuddhi with appropriate Adavus. Simple



yet an effective rendering.
Dr. Sanjay Shantaram and Shekhar Rajendran: The duo started with a Pravesha daru followed by Raagamalike & Tamalalike. Portrayal of the vanquished King Ravana, dance choreography done by guru Namada, Asura Ravana winning the world and with great devotion possessing the Atmalinga to please Lord Shiva, Ravana playing the Rudra veena made of out of his intestine, a great winning, his pride and arrogance was a real visual treat. In the music ensemble, natuvanga by Sajini, mridanga by Vid. Raghunandan, sham. vocal by Vid. Tumakur B. Shashishankar, flute by Ganesh and rhythm pad by Arun.

[To be continued]



Naveen R. Hegde

Yogesh Kumar



Dr. Sanjay Shantaram and Shekhar Rajendran



▲ Anitha Guha's Sundara Kandam. PHOTOS: M. MOORTHY



CHITRA MAHESH

The Ramayana is evergreen and every episode is open to interpretation and the basis for many creative works. It is a storehouse of episodes that invoke devotional fervour and intensity no matter how many times they are dealt with. And it lends itself to an artist's creative impulses.

It is no different for a guru/choreographer such as Anita Guha, whose dance productions are of a certain standard and visualisation. They draw large appreciative audiences and are usually houseful. When it is something like 'Sundara Kandam,' the efficiency with

which it is conceived and implemented ensures that there are hardly any negatives.

The quality of dancing by Anita's exceedingly well trained dancers and accompanying artists, is beyond question.

Given all the positives and the sincerity of conception of the choreography and its execution, the recent presentation at the Music Academy in aid of AIM For Seva, Anitha Guha's magnum opus, 'Sundara Kandam,' originally running for close to three hours, was depicted within two hours to a rather delighted and rapt audience.

Said Anitha, "This is a shorter version, which was presented for an audience outside India." But it also

Choreography, the highlight

In her inimitable style, Guru Anitha Guha interpreted Sundara Kandam through dance once again.

seemed apt for a good cause such as AIM For Seva, which works towards children's education.

The production began with Kishkindha Kandam, where the highlight was the Vali - Sugreeva battle - well done and memorable for the quality of dancing and emoting.

Anitha had chosen dancers of calibre who understood the nuances of the monkey kings and their followers, and

faithfully executed the well-known gestures and movements. Into this wilderness aided by a background filled with visuals of a forest and foliage, walk in Rama and Lakshman in search of Sita.

What was heartening was Hanuman being played by a sweet-faced child, whose resplendence also came from glittering jewels and a silk costume instead of giving in to temptation of dressing

Hanuman like an ascetic and hence, colourless. This actually gave a certain character to the role.

The fight sequence between Vali and Sugreeva was dramatic to say the least. When Rama finally fires that arrow signalling the end of Vali, it was a genuinely moving moment.

The rest of the story moved from Sugreeva becoming the king, forgetting his promise to Rama, then apologising for

his folly and finally getting the Vanara Army to go in different directions in search of Sita. Hanuman crossing the sea (aided by visuals on a large screen) was yet another memorable part that left the audience awe-struck.

Finding Sita, seeing Ravana threaten to eat up Sita if she continued resisting him, setting Lanka on fire, reaching Kishkindha again with Sita's crest jewel, and Rama finally seeing a ray of

hope in finding Sita, brought yet another dance drama by Anitha to a close.

Special mention has to be made of Ravana who brought a certain panache yet oiliness to the character in the bold gold and black costume.

Music (and lyric) by Neyveli Santhanagopalan had some really engaging interludes, especially the rhythmic ones (P.R. Venkatasubramanian on the keyboard) along with pleasing vocals by Neyveli Santhanagopalan, Gayathri Venkataraman, Nisha Rajagopalan and Sri Ranjini. Suresh was on the percussion.

Playing Rama was Mithun Shyaam; Lakshmana and Ravana -- Pavithra Bhatt; Sita - Lakshitha Saravanan;

Hanuman -Sathvika Shankar; Vali - Thiruselvam (the fight sequences choreographed by Thiruselvam); Sugreeva -Yogesh , Thara - Medha Hari and Lankini -Smrithy Krishnamurthy. Other supporting dancers as Vanaras and asuras - were Shruthipriya, Nivedhitha Ganeshram and Priyanka Raghuram.

Since this show was meant for a U.S., audience, there was a short audio visual with compere Revathy Sankkaran explaining the sequences and the nature of each episode. Lighting by Iyappan helped create the mood for each scene while the choreography, costume and certain soundscapes were the brain child of Anita Guha.