

A real treat of classicism

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As an ardent connoisseur of classical arts in New Jersey and the Tri-state for over two decades, I was one of the fortunate one to witness the Bharat Nrityam Dance performance of Bala Devi Chandrashekar, on Friday, November 17 at the altar of Sri Dakshinamurthi - Arsha Bodha Center. Bala started the program giving a brief overview on Natya shastra and different aspects of Bharata Nrityam. Bala began her recital with an invocation in Raga Malahari followed by Someshwara Bajema a composition of Pujoyashree Swami Dayananda Saraswati in Ragam Hindolam- describing the greatness of Lord Someshwara.

The highlight of the program - To demonstrate the potentiality and technique Natya Shastra offers for creativity was "The Jatayu Moksham" an episode from Ramayana to Tchaikovsky's overture for Romeo Juliet., choreographed by Bala's Guru, the Bharata Nrityam exponent Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam. Bala's demonstration depicted the moving episode of the divine bird. It was amazing to see Bala's Guru Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam's great choreography of the episode for the symphony music without the help of a single word to express the situation. Truly Tchaikovsky's overture took a new meaning through this brilliant Choreography and presentation!

This was followed by Sri Muthuswami Dikshitar's composition steeped in the bliss of Shivananda - Sivakameshwari Chintayeham in ragam Kalyani. Bala's performance clearly reflected upon Goddess Sivakameshwari, bringing the true fulfillment of the sentiment of Shringara Rasa. This was followed by Kaavadi Chindu which was a lighter piece full of exuberance which was expressed by Bala's lightning, crisp fast paced movements. Bala concluded the program with Saint Annamacharya's composition- Brahmam Okate. In this dance we could see vivid exposition of the beauty of Oneness! – "The absolute spirit is one and only one, and it's one's own awareness! Brahman is in everyone, everything and everywhere and one didn't have to know the language to feel what Bala was saying, that every living being is a part of the Supreme energy.

Bala captivates the audience and holds their attention with her dance. While I am truly impressed with the way she depicts the different Characters with the appropriate Bhava and Rasa, her exposition as a performer is extremely graceful. It is Bala's unique ability to move the viewers and make them a part of the whole experience that is truly awe inspiring!