

“Bhava Rasa” – A captivating performance

On December 2nd 2007 the rasikas in New Jersey were treated with a note worthy Bharata Nrityam performance by Bala Devi Chandrashekar (senior disciple of Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam). Bala’s performance was followed with a performance by her disciples.

The Guest of honor for the evening, Cleveland Sundaram spoke highlighting some aspects of the performance. He stated “Bala’s Guru Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam’s scholastic research facilitated a clear understanding that our dance styles are ancient and dynamic - in that it is steeped in history, and has been handed down from time immemorial and is constantly evolving”.

Mr. Sundaram observed - “Bala’s skill for abhinya was evident in the invocatory piece “Sri Shyamaladhandakam” interlaced with a unique number in Nalinakanthi, comparing Swara sthanas and Nrita sthanas, Gamakas in music and Rechakas in dance. In the Sukhalasyam piece, Bala’s excellent execution of Nritta was immaculate and assertive in rhythm bringing out the synchronization of music and movement in dance. In the Angaharas, Bala executed carefully woven intricate moves depicting the beauty of the temple sculptures with grace and beauty”.

The highlight of Bala’s performance was “Sabhapathiku”, Bala’s technique was so well internalized, that the flow of the sanchari for the anupallavi line – “Kripa Nidhi Ivarai Pola” portrayed masterful execution and interpretation of the Lord’s compassion coming to the rescue of the true devotee. In the song “Chinnachiru Penpole”. Bala’s narrative description equating the Goddesses eyes to a beautiful Lotus petal, the fish, the deer etc., was very engaging. The audience experienced the sheer bliss of watching Bala bringing alive the little Goddess Durga in all Her Glory!

In Bala’s splendid portrayal of the raasa padam “Muddhukrishna”, one was transported to the divine dance of Lord Krishna with the Gopi’s, bringing out the exquisite beauty of Lord Krishna. Mr. Sundaram commended that the “Nritta” part was seamlessly integrated into Abhinaya to the extent that the undercurrent of Nrita only enhanced the Abhinaya. Bala concluded her recital with the song “Kurai Ondrum Illai” bringing out the content of visualizing the everlasting grace of Lord Venkateshwara of Tirupati. The distilled fragrant essence of Bala’s performance was crystal-clear as one had the visual treat of the song. Perhaps it is the involvement of the dancer and the melody!!!

The performance of the students were also very well received. In her teaching methodology, Bala has trained and connected all the basics in a *Natya Shastral* approach which was very evident from the students’ performance, reiterating the

fact, that the teaching process at Shree Padma Nrityam Academy of Performing Arts, enables the student to have a strong foundation in dance.



