

Her demeanour spoke volumes

RUPA SRIKANTH



EXPRESSIVE: Divya Devaguptapu

An unusual repertoire, clever rhythm and thought-provoking mature interpretations made Divya Devaguptapu's recital well-thought out.

There is always this challenge to be unique and unforgettable, especially for a Bharatanatyam dancer who showcases his or her skill through a centuries-old classical style that has little elbow room for creativity and a long list of contenders.

For Divya Devaguptapu, a senior student of dancer-gurus, Shantha and V.P. Dhananjayan, it was maturity that set her apart. It was a well-thought out recital, with an unusual repertoire, clever rhythm and thought-provoking interpretations. It was not all perfect though -- the steps composition requires variety and the araimandi needs attention.

It was interesting to see how Divya conveyed the philosophical context of 'Aum' in the padavarnam 'Omkaara Pranava' (Shanmukhapriya, Adi, Dr. M. Balamuralikrishna). Having set out the ideas clearly in the introduction, she went on to elucidate them without ambiguity while emoting. This clarity of thought and expressive ability are her biggest strengths. There was a moment in the interpretation that caught this beautifully. Krishna as a manifestation of Aum, is playing the flute and mesmerising all around Him. Girls playing in the Yamuna hear the music and come running to sit by Krishna. A gopi is filling water in a pot when she hears the flute. She is at once coy, her reaction so different from that of the young girls.

Team effort

The mood shift in the padam, 'Chaarumati Upachaaramu Letike' (Kanada, Misra Chapu) from an upbeat happy one when the friend is helping the heroine get dressed, to a sorrowful one when the heroine realises the futility of looking good when her hero has not come, was a combined team effort with R. Satishkumar (violin), Deepu Nair (vocal) and the dancer timing it well.

With excellent support from V. Vedakrishnaram (mridangam) and Sajilal Narayanan (nattuvangam), Divya used the teasing offbeat over and over again to dramatic effect in the Nagaswaravali Mallari (misra jhampa, K.P. Ramesh Babu) and in the varnam. Here too there was clarity, in the footwork and in the percussion.

It could not have been easy for Deepu, for the two rhythmic pieces contained challenges in the music as well. While he made no mistake then, he came into his own post-varnam, to sing the Kanada piece soulfully.

The finale, a Nat-Bhairav tarana, was an inspired choice with its beautiful music composed by Pt. Ravi Shankar, but its visualisation was the least inspiring. It looked like the dancer-choreographer had run out of steam and creativity by then.

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