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VIDYA SARANYAN

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Divya Devaguptapu. Photo. M. Moorthy

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Philosophy and abstract ideas are often suggestive of solemn expositions, but this was not the case with Divya Devaguptapu's Bharatanatyam performance for **The Music Academy.** Though the artist dealt with weighty concepts which was presented in Margam, the vim and vigour that pervaded her dancing lent a refreshing air to the recital.

A senior disciple of the Dhananjayans, Divya is a member of the Faculty of Dance at the University of California, San Diego.

One of the highlights of Divya's dance was the sprightly usage of rhythmic combinations which was evident not just in the jatis, swarams and other pure dance portions but also in well-defined thattimettu. These distinctive features were present through most of the performance with the exception, understandably, of the padam. Permutations of different counts of three, five, seven etc. were established through forceful tapping of the feet and not only ran concurrent with nritta and nritya but also accentuated them.

A holistic approach in portraying concepts in the lyrics was seen to best advantage in the varnam, 'Saverihatanuja', a Swati Tirunal composition in Saveri, Adi.

Divya had chartered a clear road map by means of which she characterised Devi's effulgence. The poet's favourite descriptions from the lotus feet to the smiling face of the Goddess, her caring glance which encircles all her devotees and her beautiful black tresses were essayed by Divya cogently. In her interpretation of the lines, the dancer emphasised the spiritual side, specially the need to shed ego, fear, lust, and envy. She also elaborated on the ideology that the true residing place of the Supreme was not in the corporal world but within the heart of the pious. The composition of the varnam was set with jatis that divided space methodically with apt adavus, edgy finishes and spirited descriptions that packed quite a punch.

In the padam credited to Kshetrayya, Divya depicted a nayika who is deeply in love with Lord Varada such that, even in his absence, she imagines him to be constantly with her. But 'Naa Manasu Vantide' in Kalyani, misra chaapu, while done with involvement could not accomplish the same effect as the preceding number. This was an ambiguous picture where the nayika's feelings became overwhelmingly inward looking and could not reach out to the audience easily. The visualisation for the padam needed greater clarity in demarcating one dialogue from another and in separating imagination from conversation.

A Lalgudi Jayaraman thillana in Khamas was the final piece where Divya's meticulous execution of the korvais bestowed vitality to the recital.

Sreedev Rajagopal, the vocalist, Venkatakrishnan on nattuvangam, K.P. Ramesh Babu on the mridangam, Eashwar Ramakrishnan on the violin and J. B. Sruti Sagar on the flute lent admirable orchestral support.

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