

Sam scintillates as Krishna



Chandrabhanu Bharatalaya Dance Academy put up a stunning night w night with Sam Goraya's scintillating dancing talent and captivating moves. On March 21, an audience at Richmond witnessed something that they could have only imagined. Six perfect performances of Odissi, one of the most sensuous and ancient dance forms were accompanied by the soothing sound of an Indian orchestra.

Sam has achieved his highly artistic skills under the auspicious tutelage of four gurus and the performances were a portrayal of his high state of consciousness through dance, as well as the teaching of all his gurus. He named the event *Marg Darshan*, which means showing the right path.

I am glad I attended this magical performance, as missing it would have been regrettable. Sam dressed like Krishna, resplendent in peacock feathers as headgear and traditional Odissi dress. The stage looked serene with a life-size image of Lord Jagannath, one of Krishna's incarnations. The performance began with meditation to the Goddess of Earth, Saraswati, followed by a bow before Lord Jagannath. The salutation performance was called the *Mangala Charanam-Manikya Veen*, dedicated to the God, Gurus and the audience.

The next performance, *Pallavi*, with a soothing *raag bilahari* was an unfolding of rhythm and melody and its highlights were the lyrical movements of both, eyes and body postures, akin to sculptures of temples in Orissa. *Geeta Govinda Ashtapadi* was a beautiful portrayal of a fight between Radha and Krishna, as she is jealous

of Krishna talking to the gopis and rejects his love. Krishna reclines on a cool couch of moist lotuses, while Radha cries in hollow despair. This dance depicts the disagreement, sadness and final reconciliation as they fall back in love.

It was hard to take one's eyes off the stage as Sam's moves, gestures and postures were superlatively perfect. The following performance was rather a naughty one, in which Krishna takes away Radha's sari. To save herself from embarrassment, Radha tries to please him in a scintillating performance.

Panchakshara Stotram, a performance dedicated to Lord Shiva raised goosebumps in the audience. The lighting, music and dance were outstanding.

The concluding performance was the *moksha nata and sarva mangla*. *Moksha* is the dance of release, the ultimate aim in life. It was a pure dance and a finale par excellence. Homage to *Narayana* and a prayer for everyone's well being marked the end the great evening.

Sam is a man of many talents with a PHD in mathematics, four Masters' degrees and a trained dancer. At 47, Sam dances like a 20 year old and brilliantly balances a regular job, teaching maths and dancing. When asked how such different spheres draw his interest, Sam replied, "I believe mathematics and dancing are very close; maths helps me perform better. I calculate and count moves." I don't disagree with Sam, but Isaac Newton, Archimedes and Aryabhata might not agree on viewing his performance. Dancing since the past 40 years, Sam began under the guidance of his mother, who was an Odissi dancer. He believes his training at Gandharv Mahavidyalaya added to his love of the art form. Sam said that dancing has always been a hobby. "It is like meditation, I do it because it keeps me alive," he remarked candidly.

Sam left India in 1987, but he continues to visit his homeland. "I love India, I don't know, there is something that makes me keep going back, even my family has migrated, I still make it a point that I go back to where my roots are," he said.

Sakshi Kapoor



Mystic melodies from the Mysore brothers

The Mysore Brothers recently performed at the BMW Edge Auditorium, in a violin concert organized by InConcert. The exceptionally talented Manjunath and Nagaraj Mysore were accompanied by Sridhar Chari and Arjun Kumar on the *mridangam*. They enthralled the audience with their virtuosity and demonstrated the importance of *sadhakam* in the fast tempo in which they delivered some segments. BMW Edge, offering a view of the birds in the Yarra River as a backdrop, set a great atmosphere for the music of the virtuoso duo. A collection of splendid paintings from *Shrishti* Muralidhar also provided the right mood for the evening.

Nattakuranji *pada varnam* Chalamela (Adi) was the first piece which set a brisk pace for the rest of the concert. Nagaraj played a brief *alapana* of Kapinarayani and this was followed by the *kriti* Sarasa samadhana in a racy style. Bahudari was the first raga to be elaborated in detail by Nagaraj: The *alapana* brimmed with raga bhaava and was a truly detailed rendering which focused on the aesthetic aspects of the raga. After this, one is tempted to say that the duo is one of the finest exponents



of Bahudari ever. *Kriti* Brovabarama (Adi, Tyagaraja) was presented, exploiting the nuances of the raga in the sangathis. The racy *kalpanaswaras* added to the delight and their speed was matched by both Sridhar and Arjun on the *mridangams*. Bhairavi was the main *raaga* of the evening and was superbly elaborated by Manjunath. The raga offers vast scope for a musician with artistic and technical excellence and

Manjunath fully explored the complete gamut of the raga, lending the concert a sense of completeness. *Upachaaramu kriti* of Thyagaraja was presented and it was embellished with the *raktbi* aspects of the raga. The dual *mridhangam thani* was a fine display of the *laya* prowess with a mix of punch and vigour. It was truly enjoyable and pleasing to see both Sridhar and Arjun complementing each other to present tonal

variations. Popular compositions such as *Enna thavam seidanai*, and bhajans of His Holiness Ganapathi Sachidananda Swami Kesari Nandana and Pahi Pahi Gajanana were the concluding pieces.

The *rasikas* had enough time to get back home, discuss the music that still lingered in their ears and get ready for their work week ahead.

Maheshwaran Bhuvaneshwaran