

A seamless blend

Perfect understanding between the large number of musicians and the dancers contributed to the success of Shijith Nambiar and Parvathy Menon's group at Ananya Samarpana

'Ananya Samarpana — a Cross-border Festival of Classical Dance' was organised recently in Bangalore by Ananya in association with Shrutilaya, Singapore, Singapore International Foundation, and National Arts Council, Singapore, with solo and group recitals of Bharathanatyam, Mohiniattam and Odissi.

The third and final day of the Festival featured a composite programme of dance and music titled 'Upasana — a Homage', performed by Bharathanatyam exponents Shijith Nambiar and Parvathy Menon, supported by Srigandha, Lumi and Madhumanti, and the Lalitanjali group of vocalists and instrumentalists from Singapore led by Lalitha Vaidyanathan and comprising Shankar Rajan, Vighnesvari, Thyagaraju, Bhagya Murthy, Lazar, Guhan, Deva, Bhaskaran, Kajan, Sai Kumar, Niranjan, Godha and little Surup, along with Bangalore-based artistes Prasanna Kumar and Gurumurthy.

The evening began with a crisp mallari set to Gambheeranatta raga and adi thala performed by the lead duo, culminating in obeisance to Lord Ganesha with the shloka 'Gajananam Bhoothaganadi Sevitham'. A saptha tala ragamalika composed by Mohan Vaidya saw Shijith Nambiar and the supporting dancers in an exposition of vibrant and vigorous nritta based on an alluring mosaic of melody and rhythm. The orchestral ensemble and the dancers combined beautifully with a rousing juxtaposition of swaras, jathis and instrumental interludes, and attractive choreography that positioned the dancers across the proscenium space in variegated clusters marked by impeccable synchronization.

A composition by the legendary Kerala musician Shadkala Govinda Marar, a paean to Lord Shiva beginning 'Thunga Pinga Jata' in Bouli raga was the basis of a solo by Shijith Nambiar, dancing to recorded music. Interspersed with



▲ ENLIVENING PERFORMANCE *Shijith Nambiar and Parvathy Menon*

copious jathis executed with light-footed grace, the piece portrayed the Lord in all his glory and accoutrements, with an emphasis on his gentler and more benign aspects. Radha's anguish at Krishna's obvious infidelity and his remorse were delineated effectively by Shijith and Parvathy, to brief recorded excerpts from the ashtapadis beginning 'Rajanijanitha' and 'Vadasi Yadi', with the refrains 'Yahi Madhava' and 'Priye Charusheele' respectively, telescoped into a single item. The pair came together once again with live music for an energetic and intricate, yet compact thillana in Khamas raga and adi thala that testified to a fine sense of timing and commendable grip over the technical aspects of the idiom.

Proceedings were enlivened by the inclusion of a sparkling composition set to Bahudhari raga and adi thala, and songs in Kannada

and Tamil by the musicians on stage, concluding with the prayer for wisdom and peace, 'Asatho Ma Sadgamaya'. While high levels of proficiency and professionalism were evident in the concept, arrangement and presentation, better sound management with regard to the vocalists would have enhanced the overall impact considerably, as the voices and lyrics were at times overshadowed by the volume levels of the instruments.

Perfect understanding between the large number of musicians and the dancers, the balance between the aural and the visual components, the focus on the mellifluous and the energetic along with a succinct abhinaya component, and appropriate lighting contributed greatly to the success of the performance.

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