

Reflection of culture through nrityakala

Divinity is total involvement and the children who took part in the annual day celebrations of Kala Ranga School of Dance, Alwarpet, brought this concept alive through their performance. The event was held at the Sivagami Pethachi Auditorium, Luz Church Road, Mylapore. Unity and affinity reflected in parents and students of the school. Nearly 30 children took part in a thematic presentation 'Pancha Bhoostalam'.

Sudha Seshayyan, Director, Anatomy, Madurai Medical College and writer, who was one of the chief guests, said, "It is good to have a presentation on five elements of nature without which the cosmos would not exist. Srithika has taken care to present even the minute details in the recital. Children were made to feel and be part of our culture through these stories that were told in the presentation." She also expressed that she was happy to be part of the programme and be one with the tiny tots. She elaborated on how the children brought out different bhava and sentiments vividly in the dance.

"I endorse the views of Ms. Seshayyan," said Ms. Nirmala Prasad, principal, MOP Vaishnav College. "Srithika Kasturirangan, director of Kala Ranga School of Dance, has done her gurus (me and Ambika Kameshwar - dance teacher) proud today by her heartfelt efforts to train the children." Ms. Nirmala further added that Srithika had

complettions during her stint at MOP Vaishnav College for Women.

She appreciated the parents who had motivated their children to take part in the show and requested them not to stop their children from learning dance and music during higher studies. "Marks are not everything to a child. There is so much divinity in fine arts. It would help in the holistic development of the personality."

Sri Jaidev, secretary, DAV Group of Schools, said, "Srithika had been instrumental in preserving the rich culture of our country through nrityakala. It is a sort of service."

Gula Ambika Kameshwar was full of joy to see her student presenting a good nattuvangam. She said, "There is no greater joy for a teacher than to see her student being a good teacher." She wished



VIVID PRESENTATION: 'Pancha Bhoostalam' staged during the annual celebrations of Kala Ranga School of Dance.

that all her other students should draw inspiration from Srithika and contribute a lot to the field of dance. The dignitaries distributed certificates to all the participants.

The presentation

'Pancha Bhoostalam' was a thematic presentation in worship of Lord Shiva. It is said that the supreme reality exists in the form of five basic elements (water; wind, space, fire and earth). To establish oneness of nature and God, Lord Shiva manifests himself as these five elements. Lord Shiva exists as water in Thiruvannalkaval - Jambukeshwara, as wind in Thiru Kalahasti - Kalahasteeshwara, as ether or space in Chidambaram - Nataraja, as fire in Thiruvannamalai - Arunachaleshwara, and as Earth in Kancheepuram - Ekambareshwara.

Students presented the story of Pushpadattan and Maliyavan, who due to a curse were reborn as elephant and spider, and were granted the gift of Moksha at Thiruvannalkaval. The fight between the two was brought out well and costumes added lustre to the piece.

Punnagavari reverberated the hall when Lord Shiva forgave the serpent Kalan at Kalahasti, a place well-known for 'Papa Vimochanam.' The serpent is said to have not kept his promise of returning to Kailash after visiting his partner at Bhoolokam. The constant flickering of the flame inside the temple indicates an untraced draught of wind. The mystical concept of nothingness was brought out while telling the story of the Shiva stalam Chidambaram. Nataraja is said to have performed the Ananda Nanda-

ra (cosmic dance of bliss). Children danced to the number "Idadhu paadhan thooki aadam."

At Tiruvannamalai, Lord Shiva in the form of fire (adi mudri kaana jyothi) was portrayed as jothisva-roopam. The younger age-group students of the school presented a wonderful jothi dance. The story of Ekambeeswara and his marriage to Parvati was an emotional scene performed by the older children of the school. Parvati's unconditional devotion when she protected the lingam made of sand from being washed away by the floods, was quite evident.

About the school

Sri Kala Ranga School of Dance for Bharatanatyam was started in the year 2004 (March 27) for imparting the divine art form of Bha-

ratanatyam to students, with branches at Anna Nagar and Alwarpet, there are currently close to 50 students (between five and 27 years of age) who are learning dance at Sri Kala Ranga. The objective of this dance school goes beyond just teaching Bharatanatyam. It wants to provide holistic development and includes activities such as role play and games that involve thinking.

Srithika Kasturirangan, the founder, feels that it would also help to build flexibility and resilience in students through stretches and exercises and also boost their confidence levels. Srithika Kasturirangan has been learning Bharatanatyam for the past 23 years from Dr. Ambika Kameshwar (Founder and Director of RASA).

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