

Review

Dancers of tomorrow

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January 20, 2013

Sruthy Jayan and Dakshina Vaidyanathan, two upcoming dancers in Bharatanatyam proved their mettle in the 'Artists of Tomorrow' segment of Soorya Festival which happened last week in Thiruvananthapuram. It was for the first time that Soorya introduced the new segment titled 'Artists of Tomorrow' in their year-long dance and music festival. Sruthy Jayan hails from Trichur and completed her PG Diploma in Bharatanatyam from Kalakshetra, Chennai. Dakshina Vaidyanathan is from Delhi and she is the daughter / disciple of well known Bharatanatyam exponent Rama Vaidyanathan.

On the first day of the segment, Sruthy Jayan started with a Mallari and a Ganapathi Sthuthi. The main item of her performance was a Kharaharapriya varnam "*Mohamaginen inda velaiyil...*" set in adi tala, composed by late Dandayudapani Pillai. The nayika who is deeply in love with Nataraja, confides to her sakhi that she can't bear the cupid's arrows any longer. Sruthy successfully portrayed the nayika's pain and pleasure of love and the emotions in between. "*Kamini mani...*", a composition of Swathi Thirunal set in Purvakamodari raga and misra chapu tala, followed the varnam. Seeing that her sakhi returned late after delivering her message to her love, the Lord Padmanabha, the nayika wonders why she looked so tired with disheveled hair and dislocated clothes. The sakhi's excuses were not enough to convince her mistress as the nayika understands that her sakhi is also deeply in love with Padmanabha.

Sruthy herself did the choreography for a few of the items presented which includes the varnam, Murugan Thalattu and Thillana. She portrayed the motherly affection of a woman towards Lord Muruga in Murugan Thalattu composed by Madurai R Muralidharan set in Ananda Bhairavi. Sruthy concluded her performance with a Thillana in Bhoopalam composed by Swathi Thirunal.

Sruthy was supported by Jyotsna Menon on nattuvangam, Deepu Nair on vocal, Anil Kumar on mridangam, Sangeeth Mohan on violin and Vivek Shenoy on flute. Even though they all managed to adequately support the dancer for the most part of her performance, one felt that the mridangist could have followed the dancer's steps with more precision.



Sruthy Jayan



Dakshina Vaidyanathan

On the second day, Dakshina Vaidyanathan started her performance with a Pushpanjali set in Rasikapriya raga and thisra thripata tala. An Adatala Allarippu which has a 14 beat cycle followed. She chose the traditional Tanjore Quartet varnam "*Sami ni rammanave*" by Ponniah Pillai, set in Khamas as the main piece. The varnam tells the story of a nayika, who persuades her sakhi to bring her lover Lord Brihadeeshwara. Dakshina enacted the nayika's spiritual as well as passionate love, utilizing the chances of displaying contrasting sancharis.

Using Papanasam Sivan's famous krithi "*Enna Thavam Saithana!*" in Kaapi, Dakshina portrayed the mischief of Sri Krishna and Yashoda's reactions to them. Varamu Thillana and Adi Shankaracharya's Ardhanareeswara Ashtakam followed. Her mother and mentor Rama Vaidyanathan's influence was evident throughout her performance and the recital of the Ashtakam almost looked like a replica. It was one of the rare occasions where Rama Vaidyanathan was seen on stage as the nattuvanar. Karaikudi Sivakumar's jathis got a new life here through the voice of Rama. Ganesh Prabhu on vocal, Arun Kumar on mridangam and Thiruvizha Viju S Anand on violin were the other accompanying artistes for the evening.

Even though Sruthy Jayan and Dakshina Vaidyanathan followed a similar pattern in their recitals, both were distinct in the way they presented the various *nayika bhavams*. Both performed the in-between jathis with grace and received applause from the audience. The youngsters also displayed their talent in portraying various emotions, but they need to go a long way to make it an engaging experience. The temporary stage arrangement provided little room for them to move around which restricted their movements. It will be too early to judge these young artistes based on their performance here, but one can rest assured that once they fine tune their techniques and find their own style of doing it, both of them will be able to make it big in their dancing careers.