

# **Bhoomi Pranam – A Report**

BHOOMI PRANAM 2017, an evening of Odissi Dance was organised by Association for Learning Performing Arts and Normative Action (A.L.P.A.N.A.) at Main Auditorium, India International Centre (IIC), New Delhi on 20 August 2017 where Pihu Shrivastava, senior disciple of Guru Smt. Alpana Nayak presented Odissi dance. A.L.P.A.N.A. is registered under the Societies Registration Act 1860. It is working since 2003. The Society aims at promotion of performing arts and working towards equitable human development and growth. The emphasis is on inclusive growth and composite heritage.

**Shri R. K. Sinha**, Hon'ble Member of Parliament, **Shri Rambahadur Rai**, Hon'ble Chairman, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, **Sh. Baldev Bhai Sharma**, Hon'ble Chairman, National Book Trust, **Sh. K. G. Suresh**, Hon'ble Director General, Indian Institute of Mass Communication, **Dr. Sambit Patra**, Hon'ble National Spokesperson of Bhartiya Janta Party, **Sh. Tarun Vijay**, Hon'ble Former Member of Parliament, **Shri Rajeev Bansal**, Addl. Secretary & FA, Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, **Shri Praveen Garg**, Joint Secretary to GoI, Ministry of Finance, **Shri Shantmanu**, Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, GoI, **Mrs. Veena Jain**, D. G. Doordarshan News were the Distinguished Guests of the evening. After the lighting of the ceremonial lamp by the guests the performances started.

Traditionally an Odissi dance recital starts with **Mangalacharana**, where the dancer dedicates herself to the Almighty and begs forgiveness from Mother Earth for stamping feet on her, begs apology from the audience for any shortcomings and pays obeisance and seeks blessings from her Guru. In *Mangalacharana* Pihu Shrivastava, the dancer of the evening started with a prayer to Goddess Saraswati based on the Sanskrit shloka “**Yaa kundendu tushaara haara dhabalaa.....**” followed by an Odia song “**Jaya jaya Saraswati Mata Bagdevi.....**”

The next item was “**Khamaaj Pallavi**”. The word “Pallavi” has been derived from the Sanskrit word “pallava”, which means the bud of a leaf, or the shoots of a tree, which are very tender. As a small seed grows gradually into a large tree, in Pallavi, a tune is sung in a particular raga and it develops gradually into different varieties. In this item equal importance is given to dance as well as music and rhythm. Pihu presented Khamaaj Pallavi based on “**Khamaaj Raga**” and **Jhampa Taal**. Her movements in this item were extremely graceful and lyrical and her postures were as perfect as sculptures in the temples of Odisha.

Then Pihu enthralled the audience with an Abhinaya which is the most important part of an Odissi repertoire. Abhinaya is an expressional dance where a story conveyed to the audience through Hasta mudras or hand gestures, Drishti bhedas or eye movements, Griva bhedas or neck movements and Shiro bheda or head movements. Abhinaya can be performed on verses in Sanskrit or Oriya. Pihu presented an abhinaya based on “**La**” **Champu** “**Leela Nidhi he laaje mu gali ti sadi.....**” This was an excerpt from “**Kishora Chandranana Champu**” written by **Kabi Surya Baladev Ratha** where each poem comes one after the other in an alphabetical form, following the 34 consonants of the Oriya alphabets. Every line of a particular champu starts with the same alphabet. **Leela Nidhi** uses the consonant “**La**”.

**Champu** or **Champu-Kavya** is a genre in Odiya Literature originated from Sanskrit. It consists of a mixture of prose and poetry passages with verses interspersed among prose sections. In simple words, a typical and unusual form of words, which is partly prosaic and partly poetic is known as **Champu**. Thus, tremendous literary expertise is required for every single composition. The main theme of the songs is the love of Radha and Krishna. In “**Leela Nidhi**” Radha tired of Krishna's pranks, comes pleading to him and says: “Oh Lord! the creator of all

leelas, where have you hidden my saree? People laugh at me and I am bereft of dignity. I have accepted you as my dear one. Come, adorn me with jewellery, and decorate my forehead again. Oh My lord, I am melting with shame. Please, give my saree back!”

The next item was **Dashaavatar** which is an excerpt from “**Geetagoindam**”. In this song the poet has depicted ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu such as Meena (the fish), Kacchhapa (the tortoise), Shukara(the wild boar), Narahari(half-man half-lion), Vamana(the dwarf), Bhrigupati(the warrior), Raghupati(or Rama the great king), Haladhara(the tiller), Buddha (the preacher of non-violence and peace) and Kalki the destroyer who is yet to come. Pihu’s rendition of Dashaavtar spellbound the audience.

The Last item for the evening was **Moksha**. Moksha means “spiritual liberation”. This dance represents a spiritual culmination for the dancer who soars into the realm of pure aesthetic delight. The dance moves onto a crescendo that is thrilling to both, the eye and the ear. With the cosmic sound of the “Om”, the dance dissolves into nothingness — just like Moksha or the deliverance of the soul in real life.

The accompanists were Sri Prasanta Behera (Vocalist), Sri Prafulla Mangaraj (Pakhawaj), Sri Dhiraj Pandey (Kiran Kumar) and Sri Lavinya Ambade (Sitar).

All the guests of the evening praised Pihu for her elegant postures, beautiful abhinaya and a complete knowledge of Taala (rhythm) and wished her luck for her bright future as an accomplished Odissi dancer.

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