

REPORT

BHOOMI PRANAM 2021 – an event of Odissi Dance recital was organised by Association for Learning Performing Arts and Normative Action (A.L.P.A.N.A.) at CD Deshmukh Auditorium, India International Centre (IIC), New Delhi on 6 March 2022 where talented senior disciples of Guru Smt. Alpana Nayak and Guru Shri Santosh K Swain, Assistant teacher of A.L.P.A.N.A. presented new choreographies in pure Odissi style. A.L.P.A.N.A. is a registered organisation under the Societies Registration Act 1860 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 cultural heritage of India.

H.E. Mrs Katharina Weiser, Ambassador of Austria to India was the **Chief Guest** of the evening. After the lighting of ceremonial lamp by the guest the performances started.

The recital started with Mangalacharana in which Prapti Gupta, Pihu Shrivastava and Disha Kannan, the dancers of the evening presented “jagannatha Swami Nayana Pathagmi..” an invocation to Lord Jagannath followed by Bhoomi Pranam - a salutation to Mother Earth, Deva Pranam - a prayer to Lord Vishnu through sanskrit shloka “Shantakaram Bhujaga Shayanam..... and the Trikhandi Pranam – salutations to all Gods and Goddesses, the Guru and the audience.

The highlight of the event was Charukeshi Pallavi. Pallavi is a pure dance meaning elaboration. In this item the graceful and lyrical movements of the dancers are supported by intricate rhythm patterns of exceptional beauty. Together they create a beautiful tapestry of rhythm, music and movement. This Charukeshi Pallavi has been specially choreographed in Odissi style by Guru Smt Alpana Nayak and Guru Shri Santosh K Swain enlivening the romantic bhava in a moonlit night. It has been conceptualised as an imaginary landscape where nartakis dream about their lover and express their joy, ecstasy, exuberance through lyrical dancing. Guru Shri Santosh K Swain, Prapti Gupta, Pihu Shrivastava and Disha Kannan presented the Charukeshi Pallavi music composition of which has been done by Shri Prasanta Behera and Shri Prafulla Mangaraj.

The next item was Ardhanarishwara which is the cosmic union of Lord Shiva and his consort Goddess Parvati. Ardhanarishwara represents the synthesis of masculine and feminine energies of the universe and illustrates how Shakti, the female principle of God is inseparable from Shiva, the male principle of God and vice versa. Guru Shri Santosh Kumar Swain who has a Master’s Degree in Odissi Dance from Utkal University of Culture, Odisha and a recipient of Senior National Scholarship from Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India presented Ardhanarishwara with great perfection.

Madhurashtakam, the next item of the evening was presented by Prapti Gupta, highly talented upcoming Odissi dancer of Delhi. Madhurashtakam is a composition of Swami Vallabhacharya depicting the qualities and deeds of Lord Krishna. In this song everything related to Lord Krishna such as his lips, his body, his eyes, his smiles, his pranks with Gopies, his flute, his walk- have been conceptualised as being dipped in Madhu meaning honey or nectar. In the eyes of the great devotee poet everything that pertains to Lord Krishna is sweet and graceful as he is the Adhipati of all sweetness. Prapti’s matured abhinaya mesmerised the audience.

After Madhurashtakam, Pihu Shrivastava, a very charming young Odissi dancer presented Ashtapadi “Dhira Samire Yamuna Tire Basati Vane Vanamaali.....” which is an excerpt from Geeta Govindam by the legendary Odia poet Jayadeva. In this Ashtapadi a Sakhi tells Radha: “Oh my dear!

On the bank of river Yamuna in the forest of Vrindavan where the cool wind blows gently Lord Krishna, the God of Love and the God of your heart waits for you. Oh, beautiful lady with lovely hips, make haste. Your lover waits while playing his flute very softly. It calls only your name. Today he welcomes even an infinitesimal grain of dust upon his hands as that grain has touched you and returned to him. When a bird alights upon a branch there is a rustle, a noise and a sound which makes him feel as if you are coming. He is making a place for you to rest and to make love with you. Oh my Sakhi, hurry to the dark silence of love's bower where the God of your heart - Lord Krishna awaits for you." CCRT scholarship winner Pihu Shrivastava enthralled the audience with her beautiful abhinaya skill.

Next item was 'Nava Durga', a prayer to Goddess Durga. In this presentation nine manifestations of the Goddess such as Bana Durga, Maha Durga, Kiri Durga, Jaya Durga, Shuli Durga, Mahisha Mardini, Shakti Durga and Ghoro Durga are praised. It was a very energetic, powerful, electrifying performance by Disha Kannan, the most promising young Odissi dancer of A.L.P.A.N.A.

The recital was concluded with Moksha which means salvation or spiritual liberation presented by all the dancers of the evening. This dance represents a spiritual culmination for the dancers who soar 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 accompanying musicians were **Shri Prafulla Mangaraj on Mardala, Shri Prasanta Behera, the vocalist, Shri Gopinath Swain on Violin and Shri Nikhil Behera on Flute.**

At the end of all performances the **Chief Guest H.E. Mrs Katharina Weiser**, Ambassador of Austria to India praised Guru Smt Alpana Nayak for brilliant choreographies and excellent presentation. She was very excited to witness Odissi dance recital for the first time. She also hailed the role of the brilliant musicians to make the performances so beautiful. She congratulated and wished best of luck for the bright future of the upcoming and very talented dancers.
