

# Perfection through dance, yakshagana



Meghala Bhat-Hirasave

By Dr. Manik Beggeri

The 6th day of Vasundharotsava Phase-IV was full of spontaneity and brought forth varieties of Bharatanatyam performances by Meghala Bhat-Hirasave from Melbourne, Australia and solo Yakshagana by Mantapam Prabhakar Upadhyaya.

Meghala is the favourite senior disciple of Dr. Vasundhara Doreswamy of Vasundhara Performing Arts Centre and presently resides in Melbourne, Australia, where she teaches dance and yoga. She also performs regularly through Federation of Indian Music & Dance, Victoria, where she is working as Secretary as well as has been appointed as an advisor for Dance Division.

Meghala started with the traditional Pushpanjali in Ragamalika set to Aditala invoking Lord Ganesha Vakratunda Mahakaya in which the postures of Nartan Ganapati, Vignaharta Ganesha etc. were very near to that of Dr. Vasundhara. Meghala was at her best in her next item Padavarna, a composition of Vid. Pavanje Venkataraman on Lord Lakshminarayana. Music composition by Vidu. Rama in Raga Sumaneshya Ranjani, which is known as 'Madhu-kounsa' set to Aditala.

The inner desire to see Lord Narayana, the husband of Goddess Lakshmi, who is seen differently in his 10 incarnations to protect Sujana (good people) and to punish the Durjana (the bad) was perfectly following the

literature of the composition Sri Lakshminarayana koti namana, endige dorakuvano Srikrishna?

Of all his incarnations, Lord Krishna is the most attractive and always in great demand since ages. Lord Krishna's charm and melody of his flute is immortal. Meghala brought all these aspects on stage. The swiftness, flexibility with beautiful swinging, and rhythmic postures were very much similar to her Guru.

Meghala concluded with a Hindi Bhajan Sri Ramachandra Krupalu Bhajamana, Timira Bavabhaya daarunama composed by North India's famous saint and ardent devotee of Lord

Bhirama in Raga Yaman, set to Mishra Chapa Tala. The perfection was not only in presenting the dance but was also seen in following strictly the time limit of one hour allotted to her. She was beautifully accompanied on Natuvanga by Dr. Vasundhara Doreswamy, vocally by Vidu. Rama, on flute by Vid. Krishna Prasad and mridanga by Vid. Hanumantraj.

The next programme was a unique yakshagana solo performance by Vid. Mantap Prabhakar Upadhyaya in female role. Though one has seen his solo performance many times, there is sure to have something new everytime. It's said that creativity and spontaneity go hand-in-hand and Prabhakar is a living example for this. He has successfully blended yakshagana and Bharatanatyam and created his own style. He is extremely good in abhinaya aspect of dance and literally lives the character.

The direction for the dance was by none other than Shatavadhani Dr. R. Ganesh, who was narrating the incidents in his scholarly way, by which lots of information were provided to the audience on Natyashatra 5th Chapter and yakshagana-purvaranga.

To begin with, entry of Veshadhari or Sutradhar is essential through which necessary qualities of 'Sabha' were brought on stage. Saluting Mother Earth and apologising for hurting her by our footsteps shows concern as well as essence of Indian culture.

Mantap Prabhakar presented Dikpala vandana. The entire presentation was for one-and-a-half hour but not a single minute was boring. There were many surprises and his changing of costumes within minutes was one among them. He changed the dress atleast eight times and

came back to stage within a short time of narration by Dr. Ganesh.

Mantap Prabhakar was equally good while presenting postures of Nartaki through composition Chandrabhama O Chandrabhama in Raga Madhyamavati

dance style, it is meant for common people. Thus Prabhakar becomes popular when he comments through his dance. He is also innovative, which leads to improvisations on the spot. While performing during Vasundha-



Vid. Mantap Prabhakar Upadhyaya

set to Ekatala. The communication between Sakhi through dance was wonderful. Prabhakar's heroines are always bold, aggressive and explosive.

Mantap Prabhakar's observational capacity is of a very high level which results in imitating women's gestures a little excessively. May be because only then it appeals to the mass and mainly yakshagana being a folk-

rotsava, he not only surprised the audience by his special gestures but also created humour. He casually went to Dr. Vasundhara's full size photo on the stage, stood with the same posture and came forward dancing the same steps. No wonder even Dr. Vasundhara appreciated his novel way of performance.

He was equally appealing in presenting Ashtanayikas in which Vasakasajjika, Abhisarika remained in the minds of rasikas. His abhinaya depicting the sufferings of Nayika when moonlight too turns as hot as sun rays with the absence of her lover, when delicate flowers hurt as needle, when food turns poison, was excellent. At the end, Prabhakar presented an incident from Jaimini Bharat on Chandrabhama.

His communication skill in female voice was at the peak during this part of his dance. Many a times his abhinaya in general and romanticism in particular were challenging and provoking. He concluded with Mangalam.

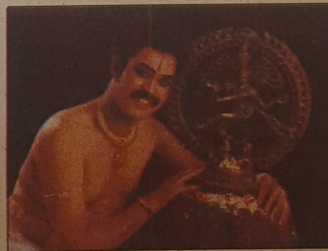
He was accompanied vocally by Vid. Ganapati Bhat. Direction and narration was by Shatavadhani Dr. R. Ganesh, mridanga was by Vid. Anantapadmanabh Pathak and chande by Krishnappa. Mantap Prabhakar was felicitated. [To be continued]

## Hejje Gejje cultural fest on Jan. 29

Mysore, Jan. 25- Sri Nimsamba School of Dance has organised a State-level dance competition on Jan. 28 from 9 am to 9 pm at Jaganmohan Palace here.

Western and folk dance contests (solo, duet and group) will be held and the best teams will be entitled to participate in Cultural Fest 'Hejje Gejje,' the 15th year celebrations of the School to be held at Jaganmohan Palace on Jan. 29 at 5 pm.

DCP (Law & Order) Basavaraj Malagatti, former Mayor and Vidya Vikas Educational Trust Chairman Vasu, Film Directors Sudhakar Saaja & J.K. Sunil Kumar, KEA Chairman B.P. Manjunath, Art Critic S.R. Krishnamurthy and TV artiste



Netra Sindya will be the chief guests at 'Hejje Gejje' function.

Nimsamba School was founded by Vid. Sridhar Jain of 'Aptamithra' fame in 1996. At present, it has seven branches and is training more than 300 Bharatanatyam students.

Profile: Sridhar Jain has a first class diploma in dance and graduated in Vidvat exam con-

ducted by Govt. of Karnataka under the guidance of Guru Sheela Sridhar of Kalakshetra style. His dance-dramas 'Chatrapathi Shivaji,' 'Bharata Bahubali,' 'Sri Nimsamba,' 'Daksha Yagna' etc., have won high ap-

preciation from dance lovers. He has won various awards including National Award in Youth Festival of Kolkata, 'Natasarvabhoma' title by Jain Committee, Mysore; Youth Excellence Award (2005) and Gommateshwara Vidyapeeta Samskruthika award (2008).

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