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By Venkat Raman 30/05/2010 10:51:00

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A dance programme raises money for charity



A Sydney based Business Consultant and his sister, Auckland based medical practitioner, presented a programme of Bharata Natyam and two other forms of South Indian classical dances, mobilising in the process a handsome amount for charity last weekend in Auckland.

Govind Pillai and Dr Sandhya Pillai danced for more than three hours demonstrating the various aspects of Shakti (Goddess of Power, Valour, Strength, Courage and whatever else you may like to call) in aid of Shakti, an organisation that desperately needs money to fund its Second Chance Programme.

They donated the entire proceedings of the evening- \$8338 to the organisation, putting to shame a number of others, which do just lip service and spend more time in internal bickering and show of strength.

Members of the Indian community in general and those from Kerala in particular, showed their solidarity to the Pillai family by patronising a programme that displayed quality, sincerity and of course sense of purpose.

Shakti was the theme, deftly chosen to highlight the objective of the event held at the Dorothy Winstone Centre, Auckland Girls Grammar School on May 23.

Ganesha Stuthi, presented by Srinidhi Pillai, five-year-old daughter of Sandhya set the pace for the programme, followed by Subramania Kauthvam, depicting the highlights of the bravery and grace of Lord Murugan (or Subramanian), known as the 'God of the Tamils.'

The brother-sister duo displayed their verve, bringing forth the oft-repeated dictum that 'Truth will Triumph' and that 'Strength without Righteousness will be as wasteful as the sweetness of a flower lost in the desert air' (with apology to 'Thomas Gray' and his 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard'). Set to Shanmuga Priya Ragam and Adi Talam, the item was a delight to watch.

Govind returned to present Pushpanjali in Bharata Natyam style, which was followed by Akhilandeswari (Ragamalika Ragam, Adi Talam), a Kuchipudi item presented by Sandhya. Known as the 'Mother of the Universe,' this Deity is worshipped as a Paragon of Virtues, accruing strength and power to women to face challenges in life.

Govind's stupendous presentation of Varnam was arguably the most impressive number in the first part of the programme. He chose a 'Ganesha Namavali' to give vent to his high level of proficiency in Bharata Natyam. Om Ennum Porule, Umaival Magane (Was this a Papanasam Sivan composition?) was not only a tribute to Lord Ganesha, the Remover of All Obstacles, but also a testimony to the dancer's stamina. The 32-minute number, including an initial explanation of the item, was a rarity.

Sandhya's presentation of Tarangam in Kuchipudi style was a sincere attempt to pay homage to the courage and pranks of Lord Krishna, although the artiste could have been more energetic. The item however had high quality choreography (apparently by her Guru Anuradha Ramkumar) and the song, set in Mohana Ragam, was a treat to the ears. I am sure that Sandhya would be able to prove her prowess in such tenacious items in her next programme.

This was no reflection of either the calibre or professionalism of the dancer.


All the other items that followed – Ashtapadi, Fusion, Akhilla Dhaara and Thillana were flawless execution of the art, highlighting the degree of proficiency achieved by the two artistes.

Opposition Leader Phil Goff was the chief guest at the programme, while Waitakere City Council Chief Executive Vijaya Vaidyanath, National Party MP Dr Jackie Blue and her (Mt Roskill) Electorate Chair Ram Rai were Guests of Honour.

Photo:

The Glory of Lord Murugan- Subramania Kauthvam by Govind and Sandhya Pillai
Varnam extols Lord Ganesha – Govind Pillai

Pictures by Siju Jacob

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