

Sri Krishna Gana Sabha, Madras - 17

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 10th NATYA KALA CONFERENCE

15th December 1990

Dr. Padma Subramaniam delivering the Key-note address at the 10th Natya Kala Conference at Krishna Gana Sabha on the subject, "Indian Classical Dance-past, present and future tradition and the emerging trends" given to her by the Convenor Smt. Sudharani Raghupathy, dealt with the post-independence development (i.e.) about 4 decades in four aspects.

1. Technical

In Bharathanatyam, Kathakali and Kathak came to prominence in that order.

Kuchipudi Natya became Kuchipudi Nritya (i.e.) individual solo dance.

2. Sociological

The State and Central Governments have promoted the dance in India and abroad. She pointed out that there was too much of which in Madras and too little in other parts of Tamilnadu.

3. Economic Factor

Under the Economic Factor, she hoped that the financial aspect would improve, in due course.

4. Ethical

The teacher student relationship should become stronger and it is the responsibility of each of us artistes to spread tranquility amidst turmoil.

The Second session was presented by Sri V. S. Muthuswamy Pillai who demonstrated very effectively the Mallari and

Pallavi Mela on the Nadaswaram and Thavil. He began with the Mallari in Ragam Gambira Nattai - Talam Misrathruputai followed by Vinayaka Kavuthuvam in Chatusra Eka Talam and Chidambra Natesa Kavuthuvam. The final was a 'Thani' with Tavil (ie) a Jugalbandhi with Thavil and various Nritta sequences which was very well appreciated. He was ably assisted by his students Indian and Foreign. He himself demonstrated some adavus and a padam 'Soodukara kalli' to a very receptive audience. Smt. Sudharani Raghupathy thanked all the artistes for their co-operation and participation at the 10th Natya Kala Conference. Shri R. Yagnaraman presented a memento to Dr. Padma and Sri Muthuswamy Pillai.

16th December 1990

The second day of the Conference began with a lecture by Sri T. S. Parthasarathy on "Kavi Kunjara Bharati and his works." He pointed out that Kavi Kunjara Bharati created a special niche of Tamil songs of which "Azhagar Kuravanji" was very popular. His songs are noted for sweet music, fine lyrics and creative ideas.

Kuravanji is essentially of Tamil origin though there are some in Telugu. As the name suggests, the heroine of the drama is the Kurathi and the whole story woven around her.

Shobha Natarajan with a few other dancers demonstrated the Azhagar Kuravanji.

The second lecture was given by Bharati Shivaji on Mohini Attam. Mrs. Bharati

Shivaji gave the background of the art form and demonstrated with her disciple the exercises, "Wai Vazhakkam" and "Chowudu Sadhanam." She latter sang herself the song "Unni Ganapathy" in Ragam Kedaram, Talam Adi and demonstrated the same item.

The second session was on "Choreography" by Maya Rao, a famous Kathak dancer from Karnataka. She said that choreography was "art of visulization of a dance drama - designed in space, motivated by rythm and melody." In her demonstration by her pupils, from Natya Institute of Choreography at Bangalore, demonstrated a few pieces from Hoisala Vaibhava, Vadhu Dahan (bride burning) Surdas and Anir Khusrau. This programme was co-sponsored by the Department of Kannada & Culture, Government of Karnataka.

17th December 1990

On the third day of the Conference Vidya Vachaspati Dr. Nagaswami presented a lecture-demonstration on 'Dance in Tamil Literature, 2000 years of Tamil Literature'. He stressed that Music and Dance were essential and a must to understand Tamil literature and spoke on the Tholkapiam, Cilapadikaram extensively with talented young dancers demonstrating Ganapathy Kappu, Ottakuthar 1000 years - Chola period - in Kandachapu Talam, Natai Ragam and a few other items, Sekizhar and Thirumanthiram etc.

18th December 1990

On the fourth day Smt. Chitra Vishweshwaran speaking on the melody and the mystical approach of Jayadeva said that the poet and mystic cannot be studied as two separate individuals but they are two parts of the whole. In her eloquent exposition, Chitra said that 'Prema' or

'Love' was the core of life. She demonstrated "Priye Charusheele" in Rageshri ragam, Misrachapu talam and Lalitha Lavanga in Ragamalika, Adi talam soulfully sung by her husband, Shri Vishweshwaran.

In the second session - "Abhinaya" was by the legendary exponent Smt. Dr. Venkatalakshamma from Karnataka. She began her demonstration with Hayagriva Stuthi. Amaru had composed a 100 romantic verses called "Amaru Shatakam." Dr. Venkatalakshamma performed a few of these to a very enthusiastic and appreciative audience. This programme was co-sponsored by the Department of Kannada and Culture, Government of Karnataka.

19th December 1990

On the fifth day Smt. Rajeswari speaking on "Thillanas of Madurai N. Krishnan" said that thillanas were part of Harikatha and Isai Kutcheris and the origin could be traced to Prabandhams, 14th and 15th centuries. She was ably assisted by a few talented dancers Rajeshri Gautam, Shylaja, Kundavi and others. Rajeswari chose Mohanam in Rupaka talam, Simhendra Madhyamam in Adi talam, Valaji in Misra chapu and Revati in Adi talam which she sang in a very melodious voice. She pointed out the lakshanas in each composition.

In the second session, Smt. Krishnaveni Lakshmanan spoke on the heroines (nayikas) of the Sangam Literature (500 BC - 200 AD). She chose Pragalba Nayika (matured lady) as her main theme and divided her demonstration into 3 divisions :-

In the first she depicted Abhisarika Virahothkaatitha, Proshitabhatruka and Vasakasajja Nayikas taken from Naidal, Paalai, and Mullai.

The second division was from the Maruda Thinais of the Kalithohai depicting Vipralabda, Kandita and Kalaraatharitha.

In the third from Muffai Thinai the episode was the Swadeera bhantrita and the hero and heroine were finally united. The demonstrations were by Krishnaveni Janardhanan and Ambika Butch from Kalakshetra which were much appreciated by the audience.

20th December 1990

On the sixth day, Swamimalai S. K. Rajarathnam was felicitated by Sri Yagnaraman, Secretary, for his having received the award of Sangeetha Kala Shikamani from the Indian Fine Arts Society.

In the morning session Shri Shambu Hegde from Karnataka gave a lively lecture demonstration on the techniques of Yaksha Ganam. He along with his troupe, demonstrated the poorvanga with drums; the Raja's entry and Kirata's entry both of which were performed in full costume.

His son showed the basic steps and a twelve year old boy did the role of Balagopala in full costume. Shambu Hegde himself demonstrated the "Sthree Vasha", the "Karuna rasa" by depicting Karna's lament at the fall of Kauravas and the "Sringara rasa" when Basmasura sees Mohini for the first time in an enchanting manner.

21st Decembr 1990

The 7th day began with the release of Smt. Sudharani Raghupathy's audio-cassette 'Sounds of Bharatanatyam'. It was released by Dr. John Marr and the first cassette was received by Nrithya Choodamani Kalanidhi Narayanan. Mr. T. S. Parthasarathy and Mr. V. A. K. Ranga Rao felicitated Smt. Sudharani Raghupathy.

The morning session opened with a Karana demonstration by Swarnamukhi. The thrilled audience watched the various

vrischika sthana karanas as Swarnamukhi performed them. Sudharani Raghupathy gave the commentary. Swarnamukhi feels that all the karanas are done in all the four directions. She began with talapushpaputa followed by the first 15 karanas. Then came the difficult ones Bhujangadrasita, Garudapenta, Halata tilaka etc.

The second session was a lecture by Dr. John Marr, Honorary Secretary, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, U.K. Centre. London, In his topic "carnatic music and bharatanatyam," he viewed the terms 'Classical' and 'Classic' in the context of European art and architecture and literature, moving to Tamil literature and Carnatic Music. Classical he felt is that which re-furbishes an art form at any one time.

24th December 1990

On the 8th day of the Conference Shrimathi Kalanidhi Narayanan and Aasan Gnanasambandam gave a demonstration on the "Love in Ahattinai in Sangam Literature."

Aasan spoke on the antiquity and greatness of Tholkappiyam and the demonstration was on the Aham poetry which was a part of the Ettuthogai. (Modes)

Shrimathi Kalanidhi began her invocation with a dance item and she demonstrated Shringara Abhinaya from.

Kurinji Thinai	—	Kalyani Ragam
Paalai Thinai	—	Atana Ragam
Maruda Thinai	—	Suruti Ragam
Mullai Thinai	—	Sahana Ragam
Neidal Thinai	—	Nadanamakriya Ragam

In the second session Rajkumar Singhajit Singh explained the origin of Manipuri dance by Shiva and Parvathi. Though ancient, it is still practised as form of worship and part of ritual. 400 years of Vaishnavism still exists, and he explained

the 5 types of ras and all the training was imparted through Sangeerthana. The navarasas were understood in 64 episodes from Krishna as a baby to Krishna in Kurushetra. He emphasised the Guru-Shishya relationship which is very important in arts.

26th December 1990

On the 9th day of the Conference Dr. Choodamani Nandagopal, Art Historian, Chitrakala Parishad, Bangalore gave an interesting lecture on the sculpture and painting in Dance with shade projection tracing the development for 1000 years upto the 16th century i.e. Vijayanagaram period. She pointed out that the Indian art and culture synthesized in the Chola bronze Nataraja and expressed the aesthetic beauty and harmonious composition of the Nataraja bronze, highest in art expression and the most vibrant.

In the second session, Smt. K. J. Sarasa herself danced a composition of Papanasam Sivan: "Easanai Inda Eyzhiaikkum" in Chakravakam; at the audience request she did the pallavi of "Netrandi Neratife" Her disciples performed Kanal vari from Silappadikaram through a careful selection of songs.

27th December 1990

On the 10th day of the Conference Padmashri Adyar Sri K. Lakshman in his lecture demonstration - "Mridangam in Bharathanatyam" said that the Mridangam was an indispensable part of the dance ensemble. It not only maintains the laya but enhances the recital. He demonstrated how Mridangam playing varies for various ragas. eg. for valour, anger etc. it is more vigorous and for lasya and rasas like shringara it is gentle.

Adyar Lakshmanan demonstrated the Alarippu to a very appreciative audience and at the audience request he did the padam 'Nee Uraippai Hanumane' in Ragamalika. A few of his disciples did the other demonstrations.

In the second session, Chandralekha who has done research in the fusing of the traditional Bharathanatyam form with contemporary energy stressed on the principle that the spine is the most important factor in movement and the consequent energy. In her lecture demonstration in "Prana", her latest production, she explained the relation between the breath and movement and likened it to the cosmic breath. She said there were multiple physical traditions in India and we should tap it and do more research.

In the demonstration by her disciples, two Navagraha Kritis of Dikshitar were performed with nritya sequences in between the two kritis. Chandralekha emphasized the vilamba (slow) kala and the energy produced in the holding of the movement.

28th December 1990

On the concluding day of the 10th Natya Kala Conference the First Session was compositions of Sahaji of 17th and Sarfoji of 18th century by Mrs. Sucheta Chapekar from Bombay. She said that Sahaji had composed 4 prabandhas and some 400 padas of different types like sirunkara, bhakthi. The Prabandhas had various types of dances and she demonstrated the Vigneswaracha Dance. Sarfoji had composed 18 Nirupanas-A Nirupana has a single theme or the Ekartha pattern. The 18 Nirupanas had a similarity to the Bharata natyam repertoire from Alarippu to Tillana.

The panel discussion was balanced and well received. The panelists were Mr. M.R. Dinesh, Mrs. Sulochana Rajendran, Mr. M. Srinivasan, Mr. V.A.K. Rangarao, Mrs. Anita Rathnam, Prof. Sundaram and Dr. Sunil Kothari. Mr. Yagnaraman, Secretary, Krishna Gana Sabha gave the vote of thanks and complimented Smy. Sudharani Raghupathy as the convenor. ★