

Dancer with promise

The formal debut of Priyadarshini Ghosh also took place at Vidya Mandir where she gave a number of Bharata Natyam and Mohini Attam numbers. This being the young dancer's first solo appearance in public, she was naturally a bit nervous to start with. However, she soon regained her composure and though not yet perfect in craftsmanship, showed that she could be involved in her art. To penetrate deep enough into her art to become oblivious of gazing eyes and shed her diffidence.

It was then that she started dancing with passion and also obviously with pleasure. It was at this time that there were moments when I felt that she had the makings of a really true artist which, I expect her to become in the not-too-distant future. This she will certainly be, provided she continues to work as hard as she has obviously been doing so far and, more important, provided her head is not turned by too much praise. When that day comes, she will be another one to do credit to her teacher, Thankamani Kutty.

The 3+4 beat of tala Rupakam was well handled (if one can "handle" with the feet) in the footwork of a Jateeswaram in raga Jhaveri. At times this was so polished that one forgot that Priyadarshini was having her arangetram. There was also a certain ease in her movements that had great charm.

Varnam is the real test of a Bharata Natyam dancer's ability, and Priyadarshini proved to be capable of (literally) taking one in its stride, doing both the mimetic and abstract parts with efficiency. Not to perfection, though, for there were at least two occasions when she slipped up and made a false step. But even so, she effectively expressed the moods of love, hatred and cruelty by her very walk.

The tillana with which she concluded the Bharata Natyam part of her recital was a tremendously exciting bit of choreography (presumably by Ms Kutty) and not too easy to execute either. But this girl did ample justice to it. It wasn't as if she merely unburdened herself of something she had learned by heart, but felt, savoured and relished every move.

After the interval came Mohini Attam. It was watered down all along and in some places, positively flat and tasted like cuisine to which the chef had forgotten to add salt. But the last item, "Panthadikkam Namonnichu" was pleasant. The reason for this was probably the brilliant edakka-playing by K. Kesavan. The voice of Lakshmi Narayanaswami was clear, limpid and articulate after a long time.

By Arany Banerjee