

The concluding half of the Uday Shankar Shatabdi Samaroh included items not only of choreography, but mime-theatre as well.

*Post Mortem* by Sudarshan Chakraborty depicted a world which is filled with the frustrations and miseries of life. He used dice, maps and taut strings to establish his idea. The choreography had a western slant, but at times was repetitive.

Debkumar Paul's *Illusions* used the "illusions" technique of mime to represent objects which were not physically present. The theme was divided into three parts, 'Imagining', 'Play for me' and 'The Refusal'. The first two pieces expressed the actors' love for nature, animals and the disabled. Paul is successful in combining the different aspects of dance and orthodox mime. The third piece dealt with exploitation and humiliation, but the roles of the sexes were reversed in the synopsis and in what was performed.

Geeta Sharma's *Gandhari* — *Ek Pratibimba* drew two images of the woman who was married to Dhritarashtra. She lost all her sons in the war of Kurukshetra and was shattered. The way her character changes — from that of a loving mother to that of a bereaved one — during the different phases of life, finally sinking into tragedy, is well brought out by Sharma. Thematically, this issue has contemporary relevance, as wars are fought between men, but women are the silent sufferers who live in fear and die a thousand deaths. Using

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masks as representatives of women, Sharma and her dancers described the tragic situation of women even in the contemporary world. The metaphoric content of this production was successfully handled.

*Swadesh, Sati and Grahan* dealt with radical patriotism, *sati* and pollution in a stereotypical manner. Sudipto Kundu, the choreographer, used a poem by Joy Goswami but the dance itself was appalling. *Sati* gave a narrative version of the bride-burning system and *Grahan* gave the causes and effects of pollution due to smoke, but they led nowhere.

*Fragility* by Padmini Chettur was no better. Chettur dealt with the different emotions in her piece. Her style and performance were excellent, more so in view of the fact that the modern dance form she used demands immense concentration and physical stamina. But it was a bit too long and slow for the audience's patience.

Priyadarshini Ghosh's *Jeeva* gave us a glimpse of man's ego and the freedom of the soul. She conveyed the idea that the source of all creation is pure consciousness. We are born in complete harmony with the supreme power and then slowly given different shapes. Liberation of man's self comes only with realisation of the self. Ghosh used poems by Lao Tzu and Kahlil

### DANCE

#### Sulagna Mukhopadhyay

Gibran, and verses from the *Rig Veda* to establish these ideas. The dancers used Mohiniattam, Bharatnatyam and Chau to choreograph *Jeeva*. This production was

worthy of special mention.

*Joddha* by Maitreyee Pahari was an abstract performance using different folk forms of Bengal like Raibeshe and Dhali Nritya. Gautam Bhattacharya's lighting gave the show a different colour.

*Stealing Spaces* and *Teesra Paksh* by Tripura Kashyap and

Bharat Sharma were nothing extraordinary. Similarly, Ratnabali Kant's *My Body is an Extension of Earth* was a confusing piece, made worse by inadequate rehearsal.

Sanjiv Bhattacharya's *Jeevan Darpan* sought to hold a mirror up to our lives. He enlisted doctrines from all religions to portray the confusions besetting contemporary man. The production work was among the best seen at this festival. The concluding song was hilarious.

Sougit Das's *The Essence* contained a mishmash of various kinds of modern dance, seasoned with a confused score and topped off with bizarre burlesque. Navtaj Singh Johar drew from a variety of images from traditional dance forms to express the austere and sensual in his *The Place of Path*.

Geeta Chandran's *Her Voice* and Daksha Seth's *Snapshots* impressed the audience. *Her Voice* wove together two art forms, dance and puppetry. The prime object of the artist is to raise her voice against war as it achieves nothing at an unacceptably high price. Chandran used the example of Draupadi, one of the causes of the battle at Kurukshetra, to depict this. She incorporated the *jetis* of Bharatnatyam, along with puppets, to condemn war.

Seth's production was a montage of items entitled *Bhukhamp*. Daksha's themes were the heroic spirit, the effects of cosmic energy on us, and sensuality. Her daughter Isha Sravani was amazing in the last one *Sarpachakra*, dealing with the union of two beings.



NOTEWORTHY: Priyadarshini Ghosh's dancers perform *Jeeva*