

Kishkinda Kandam and Sundara Kandam were jointly presented as 'Parishvanga Pattabhishekam' at this sabha on December 11. The two-hour dance recital was an exceedingly structured combination of dramatics and Margam (narratives). All the dancers (32) exhibiting all aspects of abhinaya -- aangikam vaachikam, saaththvikam and aaharyam -- turned each scene vibrant.

The opening showed both Rama and Sugreeva in the same mood -- grieving the separation of their wives. Rama sees his consort in everything around him - animals, insects, plants and even the river.

Hanuman, prompted by Sugreeva, comes to enquire about who they were and apt was the raga Punnagavarali to the lyric 'Deevargala Neengal'. In the varnam format, Lakshmana and Rama narrate their story -- birth of the children, Rama's marriage, Kooda's conspiracy, Kaikeyi's demands, the exile of Rama, Soorpanaka's interest in marrying Rama, Mareecha vadhnam and Jatsyu's narration of Ravana's abduction of Sita. Wonderful were the jati korvais that were interspersed in the varnam and executed to perfection by Lakshmana (Aishwarya Balasubramaniam) and Rama (Janaki Rangarajan, student of Padma Subrahmanyam). It ended with the sealing of the Rama-Sugreeva friendship.

The 'Maramaram' episode was explained in the form of a sahitya jathiswaram by seven girls. Here, Rama pierced seven trees with a single arrow to show his prowess over archery. As the arrow flew from Rama's bow the girls (trees) standing in a row swayed gently but swiftly evoking a thunderous applause from the audience.

In the Vaali-Thaarai (Medha) dance, swaraksharam was evident in the lyric 'Samama Yenakku Everum Samama' set to Ritigowla. Seeped in sringaram, a coy Thaarai kept pace with Vaali's advances. A sharp cry from Sugreeva turned the scene tense.

Choreography of the Vaali-Sugreeva fight was interfaced with roudram and haasyam. Thiruchelvam (Vaali) and Madhusoothanan (Sugreeva), both alumni of Kalakshetra, perfectly imitating ape-like movements grunted, snarled, bawled and wrestled to the beat of the tabla, mridangam and rhythm pads. Especially the throes of death were well-brought out by Thiruchelvam.

As Sugreeva is crowned king, the vanaras rejoice rain-



Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan

ing rhythm in the thillana, the highlight of which was the sole use of mudras such as mukulam and kapitham. Equally impressive was Rama's depiction of roudram, unlikely of his character, when Sugreeva forgets his promise of helping him to find Sita.

'Sundara-kandam' begins with Hanuman flying towards Lanka. Saathhivika Shankar as Hanuman stole the show from this point. Her meeting with Lankini, (Sumithra, student of Jayanthi

Subramanyam), who guards Lanka, was impressive. Anita Guha's voice intonation to bring out Lankini's fearful laugh deserves special mention here. Humorous was the way Sumithra rolled her eyes before hitting the ground, as Lankini is knocked down by Hanuman.

Next Lanka was perceived by Hanuman as one synonymous with riches and opulence. There was apt visualisation by the choreographer of the different types -- beautiful, ugly, tall, short, angry, calm, thin, fat and others -- of the rakshasis of Lanka. It was presented in a Mallari format in Rasikapriya. Pavithra Bhatt as Ravana turned the scene vibrant with her majestic gestures and wooed Sita with subtle romance all the while establishing her mastery over aritrya.

Poignant was the scene when Hanuman and Sita exchange Rama's ring and Sita's

Choodamani. A sorrowful Sita (Aishwarya) bids adieu to Hanuman, refusing his offer of uniting her with Rama, with the hope that Rama will come to rescue her in a month.

On his way back, a quiet Hanuman is disturbed by Indrajit and is taken to Ravana who orders his tail to be set on fire.

Here Saathhivika (Hanuman) revealed her talent, lending more appeal to the presentation by effectively using her eyes. It was a fine blend of haasyam and veeeram. In a perfect backdrop and dancing with gay abandon, Saathhivika

spun the stage as Hanumani sets Lanka on fire before crossing the seas towards Rama.

It was a tear-jerking moment when Rama sees the choodamani and thinks of how he can

repay Hanuman for all that he has done for him. The dramatic element stood out as Rama embraces Hanuman -- Parishvanga Pattabhishekam. With this the troops proceed to build a bridge to Lanka as Sita awaits on the opposite shores.

Throughout the recital it was a sensitive journey of rasa and bhava all the while preserving the musical brilliance of the lyric and what stood out was Anita Guha's crisp and impressive choreography.

Lyrics were penned by Keyvel Santhanagopalan and also sung by him along with his daughter Sri, Ranjani, Gayathri Venkataraghavan and Nisha Rajagopal. The ensemble consisted of P.R. Venkatasubramaniam (keyboard and recording management), Ranjani Ramakrishnan (violin), Bhargavi (Chitraveena), Sruthi (flute) and Suresh (tabla and mridangam).

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Kanchipuram Murugan Silk Coop Society

Under the control of Dept. of Handloom & Textiles, Govt. of Tamil Nadu

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Schedule

- Sri Krishna Gana Sabha: Dec. 17 & 18, 7.15 p.m.
- Brahma Gana Sabha - Dec. 25
- Bharat Kalachar -- Dec. 29
- Thyaga Brahma Gana Sabha: Dec. 30
- Indian Fine Arts -- Jan. 1
- The Music Academy - Jan. 5