

Bridging cultural barriers

RUPA SRIKANTH

EVENT Crisp execution of steps and smooth flow of emotions came easy to Natalia, Eva and Mariann. RUPA SRIKANTH



ENERGETIC: Eva, Mariann and Natalia. Photo: K.V. Srinivasan

Sri Parthasarathy Swami Sabha recently hosted three East European Bharatanatyam dancers, Natalia Butyrskaya (Russia), Eva Berki and Mariann Adasz (Hungary), all disciples of senior dancer Meenakshi Chitharanjan. One could see that they were passionate dancers and were driven enough to surmount cultural and linguistic barriers.

While the enthusiastic 22-year-olds, Eva and Mariann, aced the steps with good timing and well-defined hand gestures (mudras), one got to see a smooth flow of emotions from the more mature Natalia (a post-graduate student of Bharatanatyam).

Sans awkwardness

The dancers played to their strengths -- the energetic duo presented Natesa kavuthuvam (Hamsadhvani), jatiswaram (Chakravaham, Rupaka, Thanjavur Brothers) and thillana (Hamirkalyani, Adi, Pandanallur Srinivasa Pillai), while the more sedate soloist presented the time-honoured classic 'Mohamana' varnam (Bhairavi, Rupaka, Ponniah Pillai) and a padam ('Yaarukkagilum Bhayama,' Begada, Misra Chapu).

As Meenakshi guided the dancers skilfully, they executed the crisp sequences without missing a step or being awkward. The twosome struck poses in tandem as they evoked images of the dancing deity Nataraja. Their mandi adavus and attamis (neck movements) were particularly impressive, as were their well-timed entries and exits during the jatiswaram as each of them got solo korvais. Their basic training under Meenakshi and her student Ildiko (Hungary) is obviously strong.

Dignity marked Natalia's compact execution of crisp korvais and rhythmic arudis in the varnam. The expressive component, though truncated, was clear and she never got out of the character of a yearning heroine during the piece. Her description of the Tiruvarur temple, the sculptures and the sanctum proved her capacity to speak through Bharatanatyam. This felicity of expression continued in the padam to convey a confident and bold heroine, who is untouched by the gossip around her.

Nagai Narayanan's expert drumming where he guided the dancers was remarkable. Gomathi Nayakam (vocal) and Kalaiarasan (violin) comprised the melodious team, with enjoyable individual performances.

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