

KALASAGARA UK FESTIVAL

An evening that was enjoyable, entertaining and educative

Six of Guru Smt Usha Raghavan's senior students put up an exemplary show of Bharatanatyam on Sunday, 20th Nov 2011 in celebration of Kalasagara UK's annual festival. These seasoned dancers gave an excellent performance on the second day of the celebrations while the first day saw the junior students display their admirable talent to a packed audience at the Winston Churchill Hall in Ruislip, Greater London.

2011 was a momentous year for Kalasagara UK. Under the guidance of Guru Smt Usha Raghavan, there were plenty of performances all year round in addition to a string of successful arangements. The two-day festival held in November 2011 was to celebrate all of that and to encourage the dancers to press forward with similar vigour so that the several projects in the pipeline for 2012 can be successfully realised.

The lineup of dances by the seniors on the second day was joyous, unique and enlightening. The precise and brief demonstration that preceded every composition enabled the connoisseurs as well as the uninitiated to appreciate the nuances in the dance pieces. Usha Raghavan's superb choreographies rendered by the dancers with understanding and precision meant that the evening's experience was not only enjoyable and entertaining but also a highly educative one.

The evening commenced with a Pushpanjali with shlokas addressed to each of the Trinity (Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva) followed by a powerful Alarippu in kandan. The programme was packed with a variety of group and individual dance numbers, wherein the dancers got an opportunity to display their talent synchronised in groups and in individual pieces. The dance numbers that followed showcased rhythmic footwork (Nritta) in items like Jatiswaram, Keerthanam on Shiva and Thillana in Brindavanasaranga that were vibrant and impactful. As Nritta and Abhinaya go hand in glove, some of the evening's highlights included very interesting bhaava based choreographies. The trademark choreographies of Smt. Usha Raghavan provided the artistes abundant scope to express their abhinaya through compositions like Thaalattu on Guruvayur Krishna (Jayashree Sundaresan), Mudhugarey Yasoda (Mathura Thillai Vinayagalingam), Om Saravanabava (Sruji Dupaguntla Rao), Namaramayanam (Meena Rajagopalan), Muzhumudar Porul on 'Thamizh Thaa' (Abbesega Anandavarathan) and Meera Bhajan (Devika Srimal).

The programme was ably compered by Ms Seema Menon. The evening was made special by live music by well-known maestros accompanying the dancers—Sri Vamshikrishna Vishnudas on the Vocal, Sri Padmanaban on Mrudangam, Sri Nagaraju on Violin and Sri Chittoor Raghavaraman on Flute. Guru Smt Usha Raghavan was brilliant on the Nattuvangam, conducting the evening with poise and excellence.

A memorable show indeed.

Usha Raghavan, Director, Kalasagara UK, hails from Chennai, India. She learnt Bharatanatyam under eminent gurus Adyar Lakshman and Kalanidhi Narayanan. A postgraduate in Indian Philosophy, Usha's great senses of pedagogy and sound knowledge of Indian dance and traditions have gained her the reputation as a dancer, choreographer and teacher of exemplary talent. She currently lives in London. Further details: www.usharaghavan.com



A padam on Krishna



Slokam on Vishnu



Usha Raghavan with junior students