



LEISURE
Rooting for
tradition!
Pg4

Exploring facets of *sudha nritham*

Bala Devi Chandrashekar, an exponent of Bharata Nrityam was in the city to perform at the Margazhi season. She is a choreographer, teacher and researcher working on the study of movement technique investigating the relationship of the archive and the repertoire through an interdisciplinary approach. She speaks to *CT* on her strong connection with her roots, her work and ambitions.

ON CHENNAI VISIT

I have been visiting Chennai during Margazhi season for the past 10 years. Every artiste longs to be

here which is considered as the Mecca of Carnatic music and dance. I think wherever you are, one should keep in touch with the roots.

ON BHARATA NRITYAM

I am a student of Padma Subramanyam — a performer, teacher, scholar and researcher. My works are on developing and perfecting the style that would be seamless and fluid, while retaining the precision, power and purity of line — typical of classical dance. I had the opportunity of learning the core components of 108 *karanas* (tem-

ple sculptures), which are governed by artistic laws of permanent value of *Natya Sastra*, which is a speciality of my guru.

ON HER RECENT PERFORMANCES IN THE CITY

I did *Garland of Gems* for Mylapore Fine Arts where I incorporated pure dance, *nritya*, *abinaya* and *karanas*. The *sudha nritham* (where the dancer actually communicates with the musician and percussionist) composition was the highlight of the programme. I am happy that my *lec-dem* on *karanas* and its adaptability to *bharata nrityam* was well received. I was able to send across the message that the *karanas* are versatile and how our *marga* is so flexible that we can incorporate it in different performances. *Srikrishna Smruthi*, another presentation that I did, took the au-

dience on a journey through the sanctum sanctorum of Krishna temples.

CHALLENGES OF THEMATIC PRESENTATIONS

Whatever techniques or creativity we use, one needs a source to fall back upon, which is a must. Otherwise, such innovations will not stand the test of time. Thematic performances take a lot of time and research. It is team work. We need people who can think with us. The role of musicians is very important. It is very creative and more scholarly than a regular *margam* performance. But I will say that everything sprouts from *margam*.

THE CITY AND THE CULTURAL SCENE

The city is evolving. The audience is highly educated and their expectations are also very high. The audience expects techniques with creativity but based on tradition.



Bala Devi
Chandrashekar

SINDHU
VIJAYAKUMAR