A Heavenly Illumination of body, mind and soul

Description

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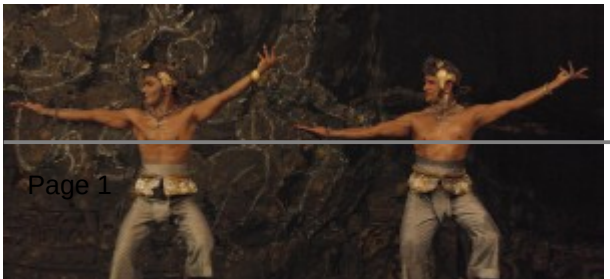
Authentic compositions, innovative choreography, precise *jathis* and stylish performance, Heavenly Illumination was all of this and much more. Suresh Kishna And Ram Kishna, *nattuvanars* of the Tanjore quartet, performed at Aurodhan Gardens on 7 March to an attentive audience. Tanjore quartet comprised four brothers who lived during the 19th century and whose contribution to the Bharatnatyam and Carnatic music is incomparable. Suresh Kishna and Ram Kishna, following the same *parampara* are students of late Tanjore Guru Prof. K P Kittappa Pillai, who is the direct descendant of the Tanjore quartet.

Kishna brothers in the majestic *Nataraja* pose

In their performance, aptly titled Heavenly Illumination, the dancing duo presented some of the oldest and orthodox dance numbers, which seem to be disappearing from the contemporary stages. The highlight of their performance was the seemingly subtle blend of contemporary choreography with traditional compositions. Their performance today included the *Vinayaka Kowthuvam* along with *Allarippu*, an invocation to Lord Ganesha, followed by *Brahma Sandhi* which is a part of the *Nava Sandhis* presented at the *Brihadeeswara* Temple during the *Dvajaroha* festival. The *Brahma Sandhi* belongs to the age old traditional repertoire of the Tanjore Quartet.

As for any traditional *margam*, the *pada varnam* was the central piece of the evening. The



Precise geometric movements are a specialty of their dance

dancers presented an abridged version of *Sarasi Djakshulu Ni Wani*, which describes the blue hued Lord Krishna as the god of eternal love. But the highlight of the evening was the fusion performance, titled *Dandaka* which was a choreography of classical Bharatnatayam steps to contemporary music. An experimental dance conceived, composed and choreographed by the brothers. When talking about their style of dancing, Suresh Kishna said that their compositions like the *Dankdaka* focus on breaking the borders and connecting people across the globe. â??We do not want tyrants anymore. We want people to come together and enjoy the danceâ?•, he said.

Other dances included the *Kriti Nadanam Aadinar* by Gopalakrishna Bharati and a hereditary dance composition of the Tanjore Quartet, the *Samanthar Kowthuvam*. The performance was concluded with a brisk *Attana Thillana* which was originally composed in the courts of a King.

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The unique Dandaka dance

The brothers kept the audience captivated by not just their amazing dancing skills, but also by explaining the key concept behind each of their dance. Coming from a very reputed school of dance, these two dancers seemed to have developed their own unique fashion of dancing which is a mix of traditional and modern styles. Suresh and Ram come from a family of artists and hence their artistic skills are imbibed in every fibre of their body. Their passion and love for the art shines through every movement. Not only do they dance, they also make their own costumes and props. Boycotting the so called traditional Bharatnatyam costumes that are in practice, they design their own costumes which are simple yet elegant.

Heavenly Illumination as the name suggests was simply heavenly. It was an artistic journey, traversing the path of conventional Bharatnatyam with just the right touch of modernity. The dancing duo of Suresh and Ram have kept the age old tradition alive and added their own little creative concepts to give it a new yet authentic finish.

Photos: Krishnaveni I and Tathagata Mitra

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