

BHOOMI PRANAM 2024 - REPORT

On Sunday (1 Sep 2024) afternoon, the Association for Learning Performing Arts and Normative Action (A.L.P.A.N.A.), a Delhi based NGO organised BHOOMI PRANAM 2024 – an event of Odissi Dance recital at CD Deshmukh Auditorium, India International Centre (IIC), New Delhi where Miss Devika Seth, senior disciple of Guru Smt. Alpana Nayak made her debut as solo Odissi dancer through Manch Pravesh and also a group choreography in Odissi style was presented. A.L.P.A.N.A. is a registered organisation under the Societies Registration Act 1860 since 2003. The Society aims at promotion of performing arts and working towards equitable human development and growth. The emphasis is on inclusive growth and composite cultural heritage of India.

Shri Vivek Bharadwaj, IAS, Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of Panchayati Raj was the Chief Guest. Padma Shri Dr. Jitender Singh Shunty, Member Core Group on Human Rights Defenders & NGOs, National Human Right Commission; Padma Shri Vidushi Nalini Asthana, Director, Sangeetika Institute and Shri Vishwambhar Lal Shrivastava, Former APS to the senior most BJP Leader Shri Lal Krishna Advani Ji former Deputy Prime Minister & Home Minister of India were the Distinguished Guests of the event.

Devika Seth began her Odissi journey in 2003 at the age of 10 under the tutelage of Guru Smt Alpana Nayak. She achieved her Visharad Pratham degree from Akhil Bharatiya Gandharva Mahavidyalay Mandal, Maharashtra in 2017 and has been performing on stage since she was 14. Some of her notable participations, include Rashtrapati Bhawan in New Delhi, Virasat Festival in Dehradun, Maagh Mela in Allahabad, Modhera Dance Festival in Gujarat, International Odissi Festival in Bhubaneswar, International Buddhist Confederation in New Delhi, Kullu Dussehra Festival in Himachal Pradesh, and Ram Mahotsav 2024 in Ayodhya, among others. She was a co artist in an Odissi dance presentation on Doordarshan. Her performances have also taken her to international stages in Bhutan and Vietnam. She travelled to Bhutan to conduct Odissi dance workshop along with her Guru.

Traditionally an Odissi dance recital starts with Mangalacharana, which is an invocation to mother Earth, Gods and Goddesses, Guru and the audience. In Mangalacharana Devika began with a prayer to Goddess Saraswati - Manikya Veena Mupala Layanti..... written by Mahakavi Kalidasa in which the Goddess was depicted as “Jagat Janani”, “Vak Vilasini”, “Sangeet Rasike” and “Kalyani”. Next item was Sthayi Nrutya which was a pure dance. It depicted different sculptural postures of ancient temples of Orissa. In this item equal importance is given to dance as well as music and rhythm. After Sthayi Devika mesmerised the audience with an Abhinaya based on the Sanskrit Song “Chandana Charchita Nila Kalevara...” which was an excerpt from Geeta Govinda written by the legendary poet Jaydeva. In this Abhinaya, Sakhi, a friend of Radha describes the beauty of Lord Krishna who is enjoying “Raasa” with other gopis.

Next item was Kirwani Pallavi, a group presentation by Devika Seth, Ayushi Nayak, Amrit Setia, Disha Kannan, Vaishali Saini and Shreysha Singh, the senior disciples of Guru Smt. Alpana Nayak. The movements in this item were extremely graceful and lyrical.

Next solo item by Devika was “Dashavataar” which is an excerpt from “Geetagoindam” written by the great Oriya Poet Jayadeva. In this poem ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu such as Meena (the fish), Kacchhapa (the tortoise), Shukara(the wild boar), Narahari(half-man half-lion), Vamana(the dwarf), Bhrgupati(the warrior), Raghupati(or Rama

the great king), Haladhara(the tiller), Buddha (the preacher of non-violence and peace) and Kalki the (destroyer) who is yet to come, were depicted.

All the dancers including Devika concluded the evening's performances with Moksha which means salvation or spiritual liberation. With the cosmic sound of the "Om", the dance dissolved into nothingness — just like Moksha or the deliverance of the soul in real life.

The accompanying singer was Shri Prashant Behera. Shri Prafulla Mangaraj was on mardala. Shri Gopinath Swain was on violin and Shri Nikhil Behera on flute.

The guests of the evening praised Devika for her stamina, elegant postures, beautiful abhinaya and wished her luck for her bright future as an accomplished Odissi dancer. They also hailed the role of the brilliant musicians to make the performances so beautiful. Vidushi Nalini Asthana, Padmashri & Sangeet Natak Akademi awardee, Eminent Kathak danseuse spoke about Guru-Shishya Parampara and blessed Devika for her future endeavour.
