

NEW DELHI INDIA

The Statesman, March 1, 1980

Special Siva Show

By Our Dance Critic

I wonder how many Indian dancers have learnt the intricate grammar of Bharathanatyam with such zeal and perfection as Annie Marie Gaston (Anjali) who gave a lecture demonstration at the Max Mueller Bhavan on Tuesday evening. The subject was Lord Shiva and his varied manifestations that have lent admirably to the dance idiom. Aided by slides depicting his postures in the temples of the North and the South she illustrated her point precisely and lucidly. The impresario, her husband Mr Gaston deserves the highest praise for his pithy, witty and imaginative introductions to the dances.

One had a glimpse of Shiva's Urdava Tandava in the Natanam Adinar number. His uncouth demeanour portrayed caustically in "Peyandi Thanai Vendi". His attributes in the Varnam "Roopam Joosi" and His sculpturesque poses in the finite, the Thillana. One admired Annie's strict adherence to the adavus as prescribed in the shastras except perhaps the sutradavu (circling of the hands in the intermittent finales) and her considerable gifts of Abhinaya. The nine emotions seemed to be at her beck and call except perhaps the smile which seemed to elude her. She need hardly be inhibited with her good understanding of the style.

As regards music it was quite complementary but one failed to understand why the piece "Peyandi" set to the misra-chaputala of seven beats was altered to a five beat cycle disturbing the even flow of the lyrics which got mangled in the delineation. One also noticed a wobbling of tempo in the rhythmic sequences. Strangely, Sankaran's flute did not merge with the sruthi—a rather unusual feature. Despite both Akhila Krishnan (Vocal) and Sankaran (flute) being steeped in classical tradition one failed to understand how the sruthi box was allowed to sport the panchamam note while the ragas Vasantha and Hindolam were in operation.

One hopes that Annie Marie would soon dwell into the exploits of the other gods in the Hindu pantheon and present them.

New Delhi, India

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Special Visnu Show

DANCE

Mrs. Gaston's delectable performance

(By Our Dance Critic)

The sincerity and devotion to Indian arts of young Mrs Anne-Marie Gaston should be an object lesson to many an Indian aspirant. She has learnt the different styles of Indian dancing the hard way, both in regard to theory and practice. In this venture she has been twice-blessed in having an equally zealous husband in Mr Gaston, whose saucy and informative announcements are a great asset to her. Her recital in the Bharathanatyam style at the Canadian High Commission on Thursday evening was delectable.

The centre-piece, Bhavayami, a composition of Maharaja Swati-Tirunal encompassing the Ramayana in a nutshell came off effectively. The way she clinched the sequence, revealed commendable gifts of choreography. The change-overs were smooth and precise. The jathis that were woven into the pattern were fitting and got matching footwork from her. There was grace in the adavus and one could not ask for more. Gaston's introduction was apt and complementary. The padam, Govardhanagiridhari, brought out the attributes of Lord Krishna, how he held the hillock on his fingers to save the people of Mathura from devastating rain. The thillanas was structurally sound and got fine interpretation from her. The illustration by slides served as a useful complement.

Akila Krishnan gave tuneful vocal support and Dakshinamoorthy conducted the recital with competence and confidence. After all, Annie was his first student and their rapport was complete.