

CITY VIEWS

Dance

'Dance of the Fireflies' in Kathak and Bharatnatyam styles

By Alamelu Mani

'Fire - The Fiery Tale', a dance drama, by Gauri Jog was performed at the Schaumburg Prairie Center for Arts theatre. When you think about 40 or more children under the age of 12 participating, it is really a wonder they started the play almost on time. The dance drama was about the evolution of fire and the importance of it.

The program featured more than 40 dancers. It was choreographed in two different forms of Indian dance style — Kathak and Bharathanatyam. The dance drama was divided into two different parts. The first part introduced the audience to Kathak, Thumri, Bollywood music, etc. The second went on to the main theme, the discovery of fire and its evolution. In Thumri, Thillana, the dance with Jathi, dancing to the beat with movement mainly with the legs, the children all under 10, in Red and white costumes, came and displayed their knowledge of Thala — simple but continuous steps. The children danced with happiness and confidence. It captured the audience, who started clapping their hands to the children's leg thala.

This was followed by a dance to Bollywood music. Then the founder Gauri Jog did Tarana in Kathak style. The music and the beats started slowly and gathered speed and ended with very fast lovely beats. Gauri's form was excellent. Her movements and leg thalas are in unison with the song. At the end of the song when she was twirling fast and, at the same time, going round and round the stage made our heads spin. A very



Caption

good number. Her control over her body movements were displayed when in the end she stood still moving only the 100 bells tied to her leg; moving slowly, one by one she made all the bells stop, except only one bell

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vibrating.

Next, the audience was taken to a mountain. Light breeze blowing, the sun is setting and the night following. In mixed costumes of florescent cloth, the children, dancing like fireflies was a beautiful sight. They jumped, turned and floated to the song beautifully. I have to mention one more thing. In one dance, one of the children's musical instrument fell on the floor from her hand. She never stopped or wondered what to do next. Just continued her dance and, when she got the chance, she picked up the instrument

off and fell on the floor - all the full one meter spread on the floor. The children somehow danced around the cloth without getting tangled in the leg and the girl also picked up the duppatta with a graceful move. It is what a dancer has to do.

The second part of the dance depicts the evolution of fire and its good bad aspects. I felt however that little more explanation of each dance would have enhanced the audience's enjoyment and appreciation and the meaning of the Vedic slokas would not be lost.

In kuchipudi style, the children stood on the rims of the plates and moved around. That was a good dance. The guest artist Shalaka Kulkarni's Krishna Nee in jazz was an apt surrender to Lord Krishna, Christ and Allah. All in all, the Fire - Fiery Tale Drama by Gauri Jog's tutoring and her 40 and odd students was very good.