

desi TALK

IN CHICAGO

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Dance

Gauri Jog presents dance drama 'East meets West'

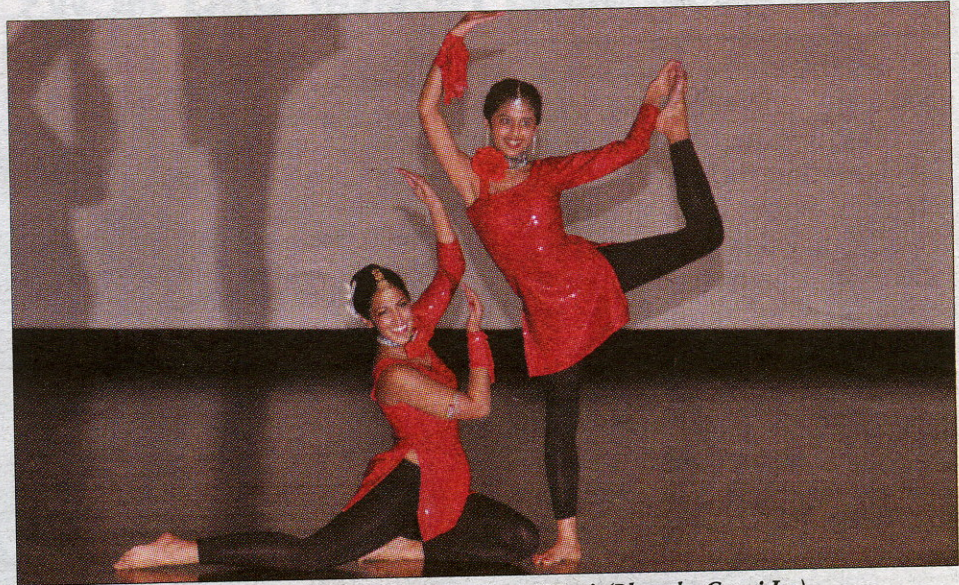
By a staff writer

Recently, Gauri Jog, Illinois based dancer, teacher and choreographer presented her newest creation 'East meets West' at the Prairie Center for the Arts at Schaumburg on October 25. This dance drama depicted the story of an Indian lady Noopur whose passion is in rhythm and dance and her career brings her to US. She loves her new job, but misses India immensely. Dancing helps her to adjust in her new home in the United States. She is introduced to Western culture and dance and learns to enjoy the fusion of westerns style dance with her own kathak dance style. She then realizes that dance is universal and just like love and laughter has no boundaries.

The program featured more than 60 dancers and was presented using six major dance forms around the world including Kathak, Mexican, Flamenco, Belly, Lavni and Folk Dance. The program began with Shiva's dance performed by Gauri Jog and her senior students, this dance was followed by 'Ganapati dance'

Gauri Jog, in her solo, performed pure Kathak on taal Dhamar, a cycle of 14 beat taal, giving glimpses of the many intricate aspects and beauty of Kathak- the chaal, the gats, the tihais, the footwork, tatkar. Her subtle expressions and vigorous footwork proved her ability as a versatile Kathak dancer. She started with Amad - entry of a dancer on the stage, Todas - composition of time beats in a rhythmic cycle, Paran - kind of Toda with bols. She portrayed the three important phases of women's life. First she displayed "Vasaksajja" - the state of women where she adorns herself before meeting her love, "Abhisarika" - the time in women's life when she proceeds to meet her love and finally "Vatsalya Bhava" - motherly love of women.

Another prominent dance from the program to remember was Kathak Yoga.



Artists performing at the 'East meets West.' (Photo by Gauri Jog)

This dance depicted importance of yoga in Kathak dance and displayed fascinating blend of rhythm and movement.

Alisha and Isha started the dance with an invitation, the hands extending elegantly out, like a maiden offering a platter. Then their hands turn in and rise up to the sun, spinning around each other like butterflies as they twist and turn in a whirlwind.

Perhaps the most spectacular part of the program came at the end when the group performed "Deep Nritya" (dance of lights) with lights in their hands and dancing at times on Thalís (on the rim of a brass plate).

This dance was performed on the occasion of Diwali (festival of lights). At the end, the entire sequence took on an intimate, dreamlike quality as Gauri bent gently on the floor to pick up a handkerchief lying on the floor with 'Samai' (a traditional Indian metallic lamp) on her head and other lamps in her hands. It was a moment of true beauty. This program also featured belly dancing by Jasmin Jahal Dance Company

of Chicago, Lavni (a folk dance from India) by students of Gauri Jog, a Mexican dance by Mexican Dance Ensemble and fusion of Kathak and Flamenco between Gauri Jog and Michelle Nascimento. Both Michelle and Gauri danced the fusion between Kathak and Flamenco with often electrifying speed and aplomb.

Gauri Jog established her dance school in Chicago area in 2000, she and her students are performing all over USA with their high energy content driven materials. Recently Gauri also performed at Cities of America pageant in Florida and won 'Modeling and More' championship.

In the past we have seen her finest performances, Jhansi Ki Rani (2005) and Fire - Fiery Tale (2007). Based what we have seen she truly represents what happens when creativity, handwork and education comes together.

As one member of the audience described "Her show is guaranteed not only to lift your spirits, but to stir up the rhythmic pulses deep within your soul".

Ceremony

Chicago Bible Church celebrates pastor's appreciation month

By a staff writer

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