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INDIA FEATURE

HEAVEN IS A FARM



RICH SHOULD PAY MORE



Balaji temple hosts cultural function to observe Mahasivarathri



Balaji temple presented unique classical and contemporary dance performances

BY A STAFF WRITER

On the auspicious occasion of Maha Sivarathri 2012, Sri Venkateswara Swami (Balaji) Temple in Aurora, IL, organized spectacular cultural celebrations 'Shivoham' on Saturday, February 18th, 2012, at the temple auditorium.

"Shivoham" unique classical and contemporary dance performances by professional teachers of Chicagoland, in the Indian classical dance forms of Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, Mohiniyattam and Kathak, were presented in the Veluchamy auditorium.

The event began with the beautiful chanting of Siva puja by students of Dr. Hemalatha Burra, a versant Sanskrit scholar and a retired professor from Sri Sathya Sai University.

This was followed by the devotional

bhajans of Lord Shiva rendered Chicagoland Bhajan group. Chanting the name of the lord the audience experienced divine vibrations with the bhajan singing coordinated by Sri Gopi Jagarlamudi.

Highlighting the evening was a unique presentation on Lord Shiva in Mohiniyattam dance style from the beautiful state of Kerala. Siva Sthuthi was presented by Smt. Sandhya Radhakrishnan, artistic director of Bharatanjali school of dance.

"Ardhanareeshwara" in the 'Odissi' dance style was performed by Smt. Ipsitha Satpathy, Director, Utkala Centre for Dance.

Vibrant Kuchipudi performances 'Natesa Kauthvam' followed by 'Enneramum' by Dr. Sangita Rangala, a professional Kuchipudi dancer enthralled the audience.

Presenting the grandeur and beauty of the north Indian dance style Kathak - "Shiv



Aradhana and Triwat" hailed the blissful and wondrous Lord Siva. The presentation was beautifully rendered by Smt. Gauri Jog, Director of Indian Dance school, and Isha Jog.

Yet another unique and dramatic presentation of BharataNatyam's traditional repertoire in praise of Lord Siva is 'Amma Anandadayini Varnam' performed by Bhavya Kumaran and choreographed by Smt. Sowmya Kumaran, Director, Nrithyasangeeth School of dance.

Contemporary presentation in Bharatanatyam dance style 'OM Shivoham' by students of Jinoo Varghese created a ton of excitement in the audience. The high energy was highly evident for this item and it was a solid entertainer. Anjal Chande, Director of Soham Dance space offered 'Prostrations to Lord Shiva' in contemporary Bharatanatyam dance style.

Bringing out the fervour of Mahasivaratri, Smt. Sushmita Arunkumar and students of Nrithyanajali presented 'Sankara - An Ode

to the Dancing Lord'. This presentation was executed with grace and poise and received very well by the audience.

Combining elements of Tandava and Lasya along with talent and synergy, 'Natanaanadam-The Dance of bliss, with original choreography by Smt. Janaki Anandavalli Nair and presented by the guru and her students, in Kuchipudi dance style, was one of a kind and made a lasting impression among the audience.

Stage props with original creations by Ravi Tokala added a beautiful touch to the stage decor. The relentless efforts of the Balaji Temple Cultural committee were appreciated in the vote of thanks delivered by the cultural committee chair, Smt. Usha Pariti.

Balaji Temple cultural committee will be hosting a grand Bharatanatyam presentation by renowned artist from Chennai, India, Sri A. Lakshman with live orchestra on Saturday March 3rd, 6pm at the temple auditorium.