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### When substance met style

RUPA SRIKANTH



Renjith and Vijnna. Photo: K. Pichumani



Renjith and Vijnna. Photo: K. Pichumani

#### ***Renjith and Vijnna wowed rasikas with impeccable execution and dynamic movement patterns***

Under the eagle eyes of Guru C.V. Chandrasekhar, who, as the straight-backed patriarch, was both choreographer and nattuvanar, Renjith and Vijnna's Bharatanatyam recital turned out to be a visual and musical delight. The dancers wowed the rasikas with their impeccable execution and dynamic movement patterns. Taking advantage of a twosome, the dancers filled the vast and overwhelming stage space drawing diagonal, horizontal and vertical lines in a meticulously drawn-out plan.

The dancers burst upon the scene with energy, creating diagonals in the invocatory verses to Ganesha penned by Avvaiyar and tuned by Guru Chandrasekhar in Navarasa Kanada, misra chapu. The jathis in the 'Chalamela' varnam (Nattakurinji, Adi, Moolai Vettu Rangaswami Nattuvanar) sparkled with the dancers' placement at right angles, marking circles and parallels using mirroring steps and starting in subsequent beats, thus visually layering the crisp rhythmic sequences.

There was quiet expertise all around, as the softly-intoned Nandakumar Unnikrishnan (vocal) tiptoed his way into melodious harmony, assisted by an enthusiastic flautist Sruthi Sagar and an alert violinist Eashwar Ramakrishnan. The Nattakurunji opening had Sruthi Sagar taking the lead and Eashwar adding highlights in perfect unison. Ramesh Babu (mridangam) gave the jathis and the musical passages grandeur with nimble-fingered drumming, staying always in sync with the nattuvanar.

The only grey area was the emotive aspect of the Bhakti-Sringara varnam. As the dancers switched roles from devotees, to god and devotee, to pining female-devotee, the intensity of the sthayi got diluted. Renjith's role was also nebulous in the Sringara portions... was he just a devotee or a female devotee who also wanted Rangayya's special attention?

The ensuing pieces did just that, showcase the dancers' emotive prowess. As a woman who has been let down by her love interest, Venkateshwara, Vijnna had the intensity in her anger and sarcasm in the javali, 'Vagalaadi Bodhanalaku' (Behag, Rupaka, Tirupati Narayanaswami, visualised by Indira Kadambi). There was an element of humour when she tried to convince him about the other woman's loose character - that she entertains many men at the same time, hiding them under the bed or behind furniture.

While Renjith's agility was on display in the rhythmically-well arranged kriti 'Idathu Padam' (Khamas, Adi, Papanasam Sivan), the finale, the Surdas bhajan 'Bhojath Shyam Kaun Tu Gori' (Chandrakauns, Adi, tuned by Guru Chandrasekhar), when Krishna first meets Radha, was the best of the recital. It brought out the best in both dancers, as a simple conversation turned into friendship and romance.

'Soft and stylish' aptly summed up the show.

Keywords: [C V Chandrasekhar](#), [Bharatanatyam](#), [Renjith](#), [Vijnna](#)

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