

Published: July 31, 2014 16:32 IST | Updated: July 31, 2014 16:32 IST

This love missive was magical

Vidya Saranyan



A TREAT FOR THE SENSES: Meghadootam: The Cloud Messenger. Photo: R. Ravindran



Meghadootam. Photo: R. Ravindran



Meghadootam. Photo: R. Ravindran



Meghadootam. Photo: R. Ravindran



Meghadootam. Photo: R. Ravindran



Meghadootam. Photo: R. Ravindran



Meghadootam. Photo: R. Ravindran



Meghadootam. Photo: R. Ravindran



Meghadootam. Photo: R. Ravindran



Meghadootam. Photo: R. Ravindran



Meghadootam. Photo: R. Ravindran



Meghadootam. Photo: R. Ravindran

Supple dance structure, great music and luminous lighting enhanced the dramatic aspects of Kalidasa's 'Meghadootam.'

The great Kalidasa's lyric poem, 'Meghadootam' has inspired poets, writers and artists over the times since 5th Century. Clothed as a love missive, the work spanning over 100 verses has been hailed as a masterpiece of Sanskrit literature for its richness of language and poetic imagination.

The operatic dance ballet, 'Meghadootam: The Cloud Messenger' staged recently at The Music Academy, was a trendy telling of this story. The event was presented by Aim for Seva, an initiative of Swami Dayananda Saraswati. Effervescent music direction by Bombay Jayashri Ramnath and lithe dancing choreographed by Shijith Nambiar and Parvathy Menon conjured up the Yaksha's message of love into a bubbly dance production.

The music displayed clarity of thought that ensured a cogent narration. The sections featured different ragas placed

around one main raga such as Mohanam and Desh, along with sollukattus in different nadais and an essay of instrumental music. The melodious vocal music sung by Bombay Jayashri Ramnath in the lead, supported by Satyaprakash and a host of others, carried the mood forward.

The English narrative by Baradwaj Rangan and the voiceovers not only aided appreciation of the Sanskrit verses but also enhanced the dramatic sense. The verse selections by Dr. S. Revathy were the mainstay of the dance drama. While the period flavour was ushered in through elegant costumes designed by Lakshmi Srinath, the contemporary treatment came through in the supple dance structure, luminous lighting and background.

The story materialised through slim dancers who glided, stretched and whirled with complete synchronisation. A multi-dimensional effect that kept the eye moving, was possible due to the varied placements of groups of dancers. The dance content emphasised grace, as the compact hard-core adavus of the Bharatanatyam grammar were used selectively.

Glowing scenes of descriptions of Nature such as the dialogue of the bees, squirrel and creeper, the peacock dance or the flow of the river, added to the feel good factor. Other than the few scenes of the Yaksha pining for the beloved, the mien of the main protagonist, the cloud, was a cheery one.

'Meghadootam' was staged for the first time in Chennai close on the heels of the Coimbatore premiere. By and large, it tipped the scale with plenty of positive points where the present format of the dance drama was a totality of enjoyable scenes that were performed very well.

But to attain perfection, the production has to be honed into incisive storytelling. Apart from the sections devoted to the Yaksha's viraha, scenes with apt content that would ensure deeper and lasting impact, need to be included creatively. Likewise, the depictions of Ujjain though vigorous became too prolonged after a point. Incorporating other hues of clouds like grey and iridescent shades of the sunlight in the pure white gauzy long scarf donned by Shijith as a motif would have generated visual piquancy.

For artists of Shijith and Parvathy's calibre, prudent editing and sharpening the expressive content should be easily accomplished. Shijith, as the cloud messenger, steered the dancing with his expertise and lively persona. The troupe of talented dancers that comprised Pavithra Srinivasan, Aarabhi Badri, Bhavajan Kumar, Sudharma Vaidyanathan, Sharanya Sarma, Bhagyalakshmi, Season Unnikrishnan, and K. M. Jayakrishnan performed with sprightly energy. The production, conceived and produced by the Cleveland Cultural Alliance, is scheduled to tour the U.S. in the coming weeks.

Keywords: [Meghadootam](#), [operatic dance ballet](#), [Meghadootam: The Cloud Messenger](#)

amazon.in

Search

Search for your favourite learning/education products on Amazon.in

Go

Printable version | Aug 1, 2014 3:54:24 PM | <http://www.thehindu.com/features/friday-review/review-of-operatic-dance-ballet-meghadootam-the-cloud-messenger/article6267749.ece>

© The Hindu