



November 29, 1996

An ode to Nature

The natural elements of earth, wind, space, water and fire are eternal. No life can exist without them. But we go on without giving a thought to them, only making use of them for our own benefit, without realising that their abuse could destroy us. "Ode to Life" was a dance ballet paying homage to the elements by the students of the Stella Maris College as part of their golden jubilee celebrations.

The ballet had a clever use of dance, music, lighting, film and commentary. While there was a commentary about each element a film was shown at the back of the stage showing the aspects of the element. Only the film on fire was not very effective, girls alternated slow and fast movements; there were hardly any classical movements, though all the

participants have learnt Bharatanatyam, which was reasonably clear from the grace of their movements, which more often than not bordered on aerobics. For the part on wind the film with a tree moving gently in the breeze continued even while the girls were dancing in front.

The costumes were simple and a near absence of jewellery except for the rudraksha like beads for the last piece on fire. The earth segment had maroon and brown sarees and the fire segment had red and orange sarees; the rest of the three elements were depicted with simple dresses in colours to match the mood like grey for wind, blue/green for water and grey and white for space.

The music was an interesting mix of Indian

and Western classical and light, Japanese, Bohemian, etc. The outer space in the universe is silent and so the portion on space came without any kind of music except for the clapping of hands and stamping of feet by the artistes. The lighting adjusted according to the mood was effective too. The efforts of Sangeetha Reddy should be commended for the entire idea was her brainchild; she had taken the responsibility of choreography, selection of music and the desired kind of lighting with the help of her fellow students, Maria Francis, Rukmini Kumar and Nirupama Sharma. Outside agencies like Philips had also pitched in to help them with lighting and sound recording.

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