

They were a hit in India

S'pore music ensemble wins hearts, ready for home premiere



PHOTO: JADE GROUP INTERNATIONAL

FLUSH with its success in India, *Upasana – A Homage* (above) will premiere in Singapore on Aug 23. Third-generation Singaporean Lalitha Vaidyanathan is looking forward to the show.

The Singapore Indian Orchestra and Choir conductor since 1985, Ms Lalitha also leads a 13-member group, LalitAnjali, a musical ensemble with vocalists, violinists, flautists and percussionists.

This talented group has been working very hard for its performance that was recently successfully showcased at Ananya Samarpana in Bengaluru in June. But the members have had to

work doubly hard as it was not just an orchestral performance – they had to collaborate with India-based dancers Shijith Nambiar and Parvathy Menon in a production commissioned by Samarpana – the Asian Festival of Classical Dance.

Where did this idea to blend an orchestra with bharatanatyam dancers come from? “The idea”, as Samarpana producer Gayatri Sriram says, “has always been to push boundaries. Artists at the top of their vocation need something new that will challenge them, disrupt their thinking, and from this comes forth a creative product, beautiful and unique. This year, with

the celebration of Singapore’s 50 years of nationhood as well as of India’s ties with Singapore, we wanted a clear Singapore-India collaborative performance that raised a toast to this milestone and the relationship. Hence *Upasana – A Homage*.”

Kalakshetra alumni Shijith Nambiar and Parvathy Menon, the talented stage-and-life partner duo, are a coveted bharatanatyam pair. Without eating into each other’s space and artistic department, theirs is a chemistry that emerges from putting their soul into their art.

Naturally, with both collaborating parties bringing in so much talent and

hard work, the performance in India had excellent reviews. Said *The Hindu* in its review: “The orchestral ensemble and the dancers combined beautifully with a rousing juxtaposition of swaras, jathis and instrumental interludes, and attractive choreography...”

The reviewer goes on to conclude: “Perfect understanding between the large number of musicians and the dancers, the balance between the aural and the visual components, the focus on the mellifluous and the energetic, along with a succinct Abhinaya component, and appropriate lighting contributed greatly to the success of the performance.”

Upasana will be performed at the Esplanade Theatre Studio on Aug 23 from 8 to 9pm, as part of Samarpana – the Asian Festival of Classical Dance. For more details on Samarpana 2015, log on to www.samarpanafestival.net or call 9753-0531. Tickets from SISTIC.

Win tickets

To stand a chance to win a pair of tickets to *Upasana*, answer the following question. Write in with the correct response to info@samarpanafestival.net with your name, mobile number and NRIC.

Closing date: July 22
The talented stage-and-life partner duo Shijith Nambiar and Parvathy Menon are trained to perform in:

1. Kathak
2. Bharatanatyam
3. Odissi