

>> IN THE SPOTLIGHT | *anjana raghu ram*

The Natya Princess

The world of Bharatanatyam is all set to welcome a rising star. Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev's daughter, Radhe unravels her relationship with the dance form and how the Kalakshetra experience shaped it, on the eve of her second solo performance

In a city that has established its status as a cultural citadel, a flower blooms every now and then to enrich the dance scene. Days from now, the spotlight will shine on one such budding artist - Radhe Jaggi, take a bow.

Radhe, a young, city-based Bharatanatyam dancer, who is also the daughter of Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev, (founder of the Coimbatore-based Isha Yoga Foundation) will grace the stage at the Music Academy on March 23. Speaking about her forthcoming performance, an energised Radhe turns back time to recall how her tryst with Bharatanatyam began. "I only recently learned that my mother had always wanted to be a dancer. When my parents visited Kalakshetra, years back, my mother had hoped that if she ever had a daughter, she should become a dancer," she says.

Radhe, 21, joined Kalakshetra in June 2006, after completing Class 10 at the Rishi Valley School near Hyderabad. She says she was able to negotiate the transition from a model of alternative education to the rigid and sanctified traditions of Kalakshetra. "The basics are so well-grounded at Kalakshetra. You imbibe from the environment and Kalakshetra offers a wonderful environment that helps develop a certain aesthetic." In the backdrop of her standard margam performance, Radhe



PHOTO: P. RAVIKUMAR

expounds on the learning process, "My teachers at Kalakshetra changed every year. So learning from four teachers across four years helped me develop a holistic approach to dance." She recalls her performance at the Isha Foundation last month: "I performed at the Devi temple there. The place was wonderfully illuminated with diyas." Radhe also says that her father has had a significant impact on her life: "My father has always let me make my own decisions. When I was young, I told

KALAKSHETRA OFFERS A WONDERFUL ENVIRONMENT THAT HELPS DEVELOP A CERTAIN AESTHETIC

him one day, that I wanted to chop vegetables. He showed me a knife and said that one side was sharp and the other, blunt. If I used the wrong side, I would get hurt. The learning began from then on. There is something more to the man than just my father. There is an inner strength to him."

The story of Radhe's growth as a dancer would be incomplete without mention of her guru Nirmala Nagarajan, who will be performing the nattuvangam. "Radhe is a natural dancer and she is replete with grace, so one doesn't have to struggle to teach her," says the Senior Lecturer at Kalakshetra, who has been teaching Radhe for the past year. Radhe dashes off to her guru's place, after classes for the one-year Arts Management course she is pursuing at DakshinaChitra. "Dance is the anchor in my life right now," she says emphatically.

anjanarr.times@gmail.com