

We are aware that the story of Karna is relevant even in today's world. Because it proves that if you support adharma, despite knowing its wrong, it will eventually lead to your downfall, no matter how strong and powerful you are.

The dance programme Karna, which premiered in Chennai recently, by Bala Devi Chandrasekar, depicted the qualities of friendship, charity and valour, as exhibited by Karna, who was redeemed from all his sins by praying at the feet of the Lord. It was scripted by Pappu Venugopala Rao with music by Rajkumar Bharathy.



Bala Devi  
Chandrasekar   
Express

It depicted the following: the bond between Karna and Duryodhana, the latter's faith in Karna's friendship, Karna's sermon to Duryodhana that the deceiving ways of Sakuni against the Pandavas should not be accepted, and that a warrior should act according to Dharma and, finally, Duryodhana's love and friendship. The various acts, including the narrative abhinaya presentation, showed strong technical segments. The bhavas exhibited the solid stamping of the artist exploring the Navarasas.

The conclusion, when Krishna tells Karna that despite the number of janma he takes, he will have the heart to give and have enough wealth, and attain Mukti and reach the Lord's feet, exhibited the dancer's ability to portray emotions.

This winner of several awards, including the Nritya Kala Bharathi by Kala Bharathy (Vizag) for her contribution to Bharathanatyam, believes that all the Hindu scriptures have contemporary messages and should be carried out and presented in an interesting manner to the audience but without deviating from the classical Bharathanatyam style. She is emphatic that there is a need to study, research, and come up with themes that can hold the attention of the audiences.

How is she able to grasp the attention of audiences abroad? She insists that the dancers need to understand multiple languages and every programme must have message – spiritual, intellectual and social.

Traditionally, artists confine themselves to stereotypical presentation, but Bala Devi is willing to be innovative, which is the vital link, between tradition and modernity.