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Praveen Tyagarajan

BALA DEVI CHANDRASHEKAR

Audiences in Chennai are discerning; they know about art

Praveen Kumar S

To me, Margazhi means a festivity of dance and music. I think it is probably the most glorious festival of Carnatic music and classical Indian dance," says acclaimed Bharatanatyam dancer Bala Devi Chandrashekar. She adds, "It is just the emotional fervour that people bring to the season that makes it special. The joy that is in the air during Margazhi is very exciting for me."

Ask her if Chennaiites are spoilt for choice during the season, and the dancer says, "Yes, definitely. The festival is enormous, and the variety on offer is huge. I think one has to be quite selective as the choices are aplenty during Margazhi. I only wish the season was celebrated twice a year. But I suppose, if we split it into two seasons, it may not resonate as much with *rasikas* as it does now."

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6 An artiste has to be truthful to the art. It doesn't matter if there are three people or 3,000 people in the audience, you have to give it your everything

MAYAKKUM
Margazhi

Bala Devi: People who live abroad are more intrigued with our art

Praveen Tyagarajan



Bala Devi
Chandrashekar

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Bala Devi continues, "I think the audiences in Chennai are discerning; they know about art. So, I think here the artiste finds the audience and vice-versa".

The Bharatanatyam exponent also says that Indian classical dance has a huge fan-following overseas. "People abroad are more intrigued with our art, and they really want to understand the Indian classical dance," she claims.

On whether the current trend of learning classical art online is feasible in the long run, Bala Devi says, "To me, learning an art is a very osmosis process, and I think during the formative years of learning, one should be in the guru's proximity and learn it in

person." However, she does admit that circumstances do play a role in how a person decides to learn an art.

Moving on to what she would tell youngsters who are trying to come up in the field, she says, "This is a very innate question one needs to ask themselves. They should know if they are cut out for this. For, on this path, they will need a lot of persistence and effort, and it is important to not get discouraged. Because there's no overnight popularity in classical art, there's a lot of studying that one needs to do to sustain. People are going to look at the amount of research one has done about what he or she is presenting, the technique that they are bringing, and the capability to articulate the composition and woo an audience."