

sharon lozwen

Dances of India



ODISSI

BENNINGTON COLLEGE

OCTOBER 29, 1982

PROGRAM

MANGALACHARAN - This is the traditional invocatory item of the Odissi repertoire which begins with the 'Bhumi-pranam', obeisance to Mother Earth, followed by a sloka 'Pada Vande', offering praise to Lord Ganesh for an auspicious beginning. It concludes with the 'Trikhandi-pranam' which is a three-fold salutation to God, the Guru and the 'Rasikas', i.e. the distinguished audience.

ARABI PALLAVI - The most lyrical dance of the Odissi repertoire, pallavi is a pure dance form. Set to the musical mode of Raga Arabi, melodic and rhythmic variations are elaborated through movement.

KURU YADUNANDANA - In this concluding song from the 'Geeta Govinda', the twelfth century devotional love epic by the poet Jayadeva, Radha expresses the triumph of her love for Krishna with a tone of affectionate authority.

"Oh Yadunandana, with your hands cooler than sandalwood, adorn my bosom with designs of musk. My dark eyes, which put to shame even a swarm of bees, are smudged with your kisses; restore their brightness once again with strokes of khol. Flowers fallen, my hair flies like Love's banner; make it lovely as the peacock's crest. My clothes and jewelled girdle must again be set upon my sensuous hips, the cavern of delight."

INTERVAL

BATU NRUTYA - Dedicated to Lord Shiva, Batu Nrutya contains all the pure dance elements of the Odissi technique as may be seen in the ancient temple carvings of Orissa.

PASYATI DISHI DISHI - In this song from the 'Geeta Govinda', Radha's friend relates the suffering of Radha pining for Krishna and exhorts him to end Radha's pain.

"Oh Lord Hari, Radha sadly waits and imagines you everywhere. In her haste, she stumbles. To cool her body, burning with passion, she applies the tender stems of lotuses to her limbs. Her modesty gone, she cries out loudly and waits."

DAS AVATAR - Here, Jayadeva describes the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu to preserve the earth from destruction.

"Lifting up the Vedas in the form of the Fish.
Supporting the world on his back as the Tortoise.
Raising the earth on his tusks as the Boar.
Tearing the demon Hiranyakashipu to pieces as the Man-Lion.
Outwitting Bali as the dwarf Brahmin.
Destroying the Ksatriyas as the Man-With-The-Ax, Parasuram.
Conquering ten-headed Ravana as Rama.
Bearing the plough as Balarama.
Extending compassion as Buddha.
Destroying the barbarians as Kalki, the messiah to come.

MOKSHA - Moksha is the culminating point of a formal Odissi program Through intricate movements and abandon the dancer reaches for the ultimate state of bliss, release.

Music direction and pakhawaj by Guru Kelucharan Mahapatra.

Music composition by Shri Bhubaneswar Misra.

SHARON LOWEN

Sharon's dancing has received critical acclaim both in India and the United States. "...not just a sensitive actress and graceful dancer. She has mastered the technique and its key, rhythm" - Hindustan Times After receiving an M.A. in Dance from the University of Michigan, a Fulbright scholarship took her to India to study Manipuri under Guru Singhajit Singh at the Triveni Kala Sangam, New Delhi.

Her Odissi training has been with the well-known guru, Padmashri Kelucharan Mahapatra, one of the main architects of the contemporary Odissi repertoire and teacher of almost all of today's well-known Odissi dancers. She has also studied Chhau under the guidance of National Academy Awardees, Guru Krushna Chandra Naik in Mayurbhanj Chhau and Guru Kedarnath Sahoo in Seraikella Chhau.

Sharon has performed in India, the United States, Mexico, and Indonesia. In the United States, she has presented numerous school performances, lecture-demonstrations and college residencies as well as solo concerts. She has just returned from an American Institute of Indian Studies senior research fellowship in India.

