

Sydney Kannada Sangha Celebrates Silver Jubilee

Young children dressed in festive attire were singing and dancing in the forecourt of the brilliantly lit Mysore palace. The audience sat in rapt attention enjoying the song and dance. Suddenly, when the lights in the auditorium were switched on, the audience realised that they were not in the regal city of Mysore but far, far away in Sydney's 'Bowman' hall!

Saturday the 26th July marked the Silver Jubilee celebrations of Sydney Kannada Sangha. The majestic backdrop of the famous Mysore palace, glittering with thousands of lights was specially made for this occasion by Sydney's talented artist Mr Dakshinamurthy Anjanappa. The beautiful backdrop evoked nostalgia and pride in every Kannada heart and made them feel as though they were transported to Mysore, the cultural capital of Karnataka.



The opening of the Silver Jubilee Celebrations was marked by the traditional lighting of the lamp by Dr Siddalingeswara Orekony, Chairman of the Silver Jubilee Committee and by Dr (Mrs) Nagamma Prakash, President of the Sydney Kannada Sangha. Mr. Aradhya of Devatha Builders, Bangalore graced the occasion as a special guest.



Hechevu Kannadada Deepa Dance

Mr Pranesh-Humorist

Her Excellency, Mrs Sujatha Singh, the High Commissioner of India, released a commemorative souvenir on this special occasion. The souvenir, edited by Mr Onkaraswamy Goppenalli and Mrs Geetha Gopinath reflected the literary sensibilities of Sydney Kannadigas. Highlighting Karnataka's contribution in the fields of technology, science, literature and sports, Mrs Singh congratulated the Kannadigas on achieving the remarkable silver milestone through their collective efforts.

Mr Laurie Fergusson, Secretary, Department of Multicultural Affairs and Settlement services complemented the Indian Community and Kannada people in particular, for their rich contribution to the tapestry of multiculturalism in Australia. Quoting facts and figures in his energetic voice, Mr Fergusson expressed that Indians in Australia were very well placed both educationally and economically. Many dignitaries including Karnataka Chief Minister Hon Yeddyurappa, NSW Premier Hon. Morris Iemma had sent congratulatory messages to Kannada Sangha.

Dr Siddalingeswara Orekondy, a member of Sydney Kannada Sangha for 25 years, recounted the humble beginnings of the Sangha. What started of as an informal get together of 4-5 Kannada families in 1983 has today grown into a reputed organisation having won Karnataka's prestigious 'Rajyothsava' Award. He outlined the pioneering efforts of the Sangha in bringing together Kannada Associations in all the major cities in the Asia Pacific Region. This has helped foster good relationships between the various Associations and brought the community closer to each other. This has also enabled to sponsor renowned artists from Karnataka and organise their performances in all major cities in the Asia Pacific region.



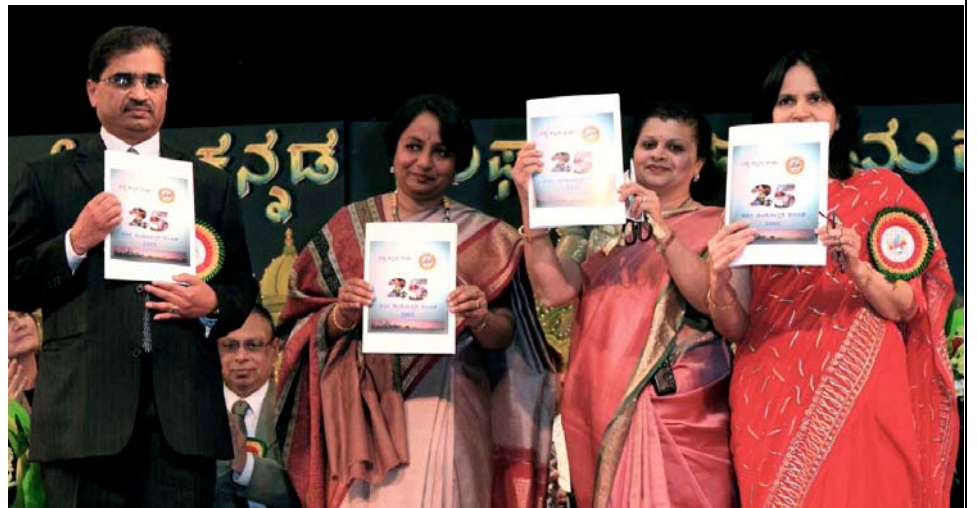
Dashavathara Dance

Speaking on the occasion, Mr Raj Natarajan, a Kannadiga and President of United Indian Associations, delineated the contribution of Kannadigas to the cause of a United Indian presence in Australia and thanked them for leadership that they have consistently provided to the UIA.

The President of the Kannada Sangha Dr Nagamma Prakash described the various activities supported by Kannada Sangha, more importantly Kannada schools in Sydney, starting of the youth wing and supply of Kannada books to the local libraries. She read out the congratulatory message of the Chief Minister of Karnataka Hon. Yeddyurappa to the audience.



M.D Pallavi -Singer



Souvenir Release

Souvenir Editor Onkaraswamy, Indian High Commissioner Mrs. Sujatha Singh, Souvenir Editor Geetha Gopinath, President Dr Nagamma

The next part of the evening was the much anticipated cultural program. A robust group song segment by Mr Ram Kuduva and his team kick started the rest of the colourful evening. This was followed by a well choreographed dance, 'Dashavatara' depicting the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu by the young talent Apoorva, representative of the Youth Committee, and her team. The graceful dancers and the tiny tots dressed to represent the Lord's incarnations together provided a unique touch to the dance drama. A patriotic song by the poet laureate Kuvempu was choreographed and presented by a group of young beauties which was well received by the audience. A humorous skit presented by Mrs Ranjana Kulkarni and her team was well received by the audience.



Drama – Maduve, Maduve, Maduve.....”

Two artists from Karnataka who specially came to participate in the silver jubilee celebrations were Mrs M D Pallavi, the ever popular singer and Mr Pranesh, the well known humorist.



Dignitaries and Sydney Kannada Sangha Executive Committee



Group song by Ram Kuduva group

Having had a foretaste of Pranesh's humour on several TV programs and also in a recent interview with the SBS Kannada radio, the eager audience lapped up Pranesh's jokes. Generally compared to the veteran humorist BeeChi, Pranesh is affectionately called 'Gangavathi Beechi'. He entertained the audience with the narration of his experiences as a hapless judge for an unfortunate music competition that stretched endlessly throughout the night. The auditorium roared with laughter again when Pranesh compared the formal and dull atmosphere of an air travel to that of travelling in an overcrowded bus in the Indian country side and the endless opportunities it provided for interpersonal communication!!

Reluctantly the audience bid adieu to Pranesh but eagerly welcomed the talented singer M D Pallavi onto the stage. Pallavi started her concert with an invocation to Lord Ganesha, the remover of obstacles. Singing in her well modulated, rich voice, Pallavi presented an unforgettable concert that night. She effortlessly presented Kuvempu's " ilidu ba thayi" which is rather complex and challenging to any artist. Carefully pulling out the gems of Kannada poetry from the compositions of Karnataka's renowned poets like Adiga, K.S.N, Da Ra Bendre, Pu Ti Na, Rajaratnam and many more.

Pallavi paused to explain the subtle nuances of each poem, its context and possible layers of its meaning. Such maturity and scholarly erudition came as a pleasant surprise from a glamorous young singer! Cheerfully accommodating audience' requests and singing to their hearts content, Pallavi concluded the evening's program with a song from the Kannada theatre. This was an appropriate gesture considering that she is the grand daughter of Mr A. S. Murthy , the doyen of Kannada theatre.



M.D Pallavi Honored by Councilor Kathy Collins



Mr Pranesh Honored by Dept Of Immigration Representative



The Artist Mr Murthy honored By Brad Headford



Jai Baratha Jananeya Thanujathe Dance

Perhaps Pallavi missed the live accompaniments to her singing as all the instruments were ensconced in the technical confines of her laptop. The Sydney audience did not seem to mind it at all as they stood up and gave Pallavi a standing ovation on a cold wintry night, well past mid night.

The curtains gently rolled down marking the finale of the grand celebrations, as the members of the Sydney Kannada Sangha joined the community's well known singer, Mrs Pushpa Jagadish along with Pallavi, Pranesh and others in singing poet Nissar Ahmed's evergreen song 'Nithyotsava' to their beloved 'Kannada Thaayi'.

Mrs Geetha Gopinath, Vice President of Sydney Kannada Sangha proposed a vote of thanks.



The program presentation was well handled by MCs for the evening, Shubhashri Ravi, Apoorva and Chidananda Murthy.

Under the auspices of the Asia Pacific Kannada Okkuta (APKO), Pallavi and Pranesh performed in Adelaide, Melbourne and Singapore.

-Anu Shivaram
Sydney