

His dreams are unlimited...

Continued from FR-1

Do you spend a lot of time with your family?

Yes, I do get to spend lot of time with them. I love them lots, especially my son and my daughter, not to say I love my sister and my wife less. But suddenly the newest love affair in my life is with my son and daughter. I really love them because... they still don't know how bad I am. The other day somebody was asking me how much do you love them? And I said like life. I would die for them. And this kind of emotion I have never had for anybody else — strangely, not even for my mom and dad.

What about this film you are doing right now? "Devdas"?

There are already so many versions...

But what do you feel about it?

I know it is an interesting character. It's like you reach a stage — I've done a bit of black, I've done a bit of white—I don't know what it means to be Devdas... I read the book... I have a strange interpretation of Devdas, which is rather different from what I have seen in films earlier. When I look at the beauty of the films I do, it may go wrong — because if you are going to choose anything which goes right it will be predictable and boring. Yes, I have to do one predictable super-duper hit film in a year so that I can survive — but also would like to do stuff that is different. And this is a big film — perhaps one of the biggest being made in terms of expenditure. A lot

is at stake because a classic is being remade. The director is fantastic. He has done a film like "Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam" and he goes to make a film like this with his reputation on the line, with two great actresses... both wonderful in their own way... I am trying to do something that Dilip Kumar perhaps excelled in — the best role that he's played in his life. So you feel quite stupid to try and do that... it can fall flat on its face... but it may be saved because of the interpretation which is different from those of the 1960s and 1970s.

Does he have relevance today? This kind of a character? That whole ambience?

Does Ashoka not still have relevance? His values? Maybe this film has no relevance. You do not do films for relevance. You do them for telling a story.

Would you ever contemplate directing a film? Would you like to do it?

I want to make films. Yes I will make films but right now I am restricting myself.

But would you sometime?

Hmm. but I don't have a story to tell. I don't know what I want.

Do you think you will enjoy directing?

Well I have done it in bits and pieces in some of my films — directed the action sequences and I am quite involved in most of the films that I do. But I don't have a story to tell — (laughs) I think I will make films like James Bond.



Neelima Raju... delicate and intricate patterns.

Poised performance

ELAN AND aesthetics marked Neelima Raju's dance recital at the Kalabharathi recently. She has been a student of the Visakha Kuchipudi Kalakshetram (an off-shoot of Kuchipudi Art Academy established by Vempati China Satyam in Chennai in 1963) for about a decade.

The programme started with the traditional invocatory song, "Vaniparaku", followed by "Jayamujayamu", seeking the blessings of Lord Nataraja, Goddess Saraswathi, Rithuraju and the cognoscenti.

The next item, comprising two slokas from 'Narayaneeyam' and the song, "Manasa Sancharare" of Sadasiva Brahmendra, delightfully visualised the appearance of Krishna as the 'Vatapatrasayee', and also as an endeared child of Brindavanam.

"Marakatamanimayachela" of Uttukad Venkatasubbayyar, highlighting the childhood pranks of Krishna, stood testimony to the danseuse's ability in striking an aesthetic balance of nritta and nritya. She concluded the item with a dance she performed on a brass plate, with intricate jathi patterns. Neelima continued her recital with 'Lekha' and 'Siggayane' daruvus from 'Bhamakalagam', 'Lakshmi Pravesa' daruvu from 'Ksheerasagamadhanam' and 'Sivashtakam' of Vedavyasa.

The musical backdrop comprised Kanaka Durga (vocal) supported by Nagarajan (flute), Suryakanthilal (mridangam), Chandrasekharan (violin), Phanikumara (ghatam) and Satyanarayana (veena).

The function was organised by the Academy to confer 'Natyavisarada', along with a gold medal and a memento to accomplished students. Chief guest Prof. J. M. Naidu, AU Registrar, presented the award to Neelima and Vempati adorned her with the gold medal.

An evocative nattuvangam by Vempati along with his disciple Hare Rama Murthy (principal of the Kalakshetram) was a special attraction.

• RAMALINGA SASTRY

On love and commitment

ON LOCATION

VEERU K. showed glimpses of promise with his directorial debut, "Aro Pranam", a runaway hit. Now he is all set to regain the magic spell with Sri Raghavendra Krupa Creation's, "Chandu", a triangular love story starring Pawan Kumar, Preeti and Archana in the lead and Lahari in a major role. The film's talkie part has been completed and the remaining song sequences are being filmed. A song on the lead pair has already been filmed at Ramanaidu studios, Icrisat and at Golconda Tombs.

It was choreographed by Brinda and was shot for four days. I am sure it will be a greater hit with the youth than my previous hit "Makkanare" from the film, "Aro Pranam". Music plays a major part in this film and 12 pop singers have rendered eight songs for the movie, says Veeru.

"Though it has universal appeal, the theme has been targeted at the youth. Today, for many youngsters it is fashionable to say that they have fallen in love and for some, it is a mere passion. But the film aims at proving that love is a commitment and he or she should ultimately achieve the goal of love in spite of the hardships.

"Pawan Kumar plays the role of a railway booking clerk. Of the two heroines, Preeti has been cast in a traditional role and Archana, as a girl influenced by Western culture. We have a third heroine, Lahari. The hero falls in love with one of these girls. But his parents want to get their son married to their family friends' daughter, as promised earlier.

"Among the two heroines, the hero falls in love with one of them, while the other girl develops a crush on. And the hero is caught between these two. It is an entertainer without any cliché scenes or dialogue. I think this film will provide a turning point to my career," says Veeru.

"We have picturised three songs on the lead pair in Bangkok and Phuket Islands. After completing the re-recording and other post-production work, we plan to release the movie in July", informs producer Manepalli Manikyala Rao. Chalapathi Rao, L. B. Sriram, Sivaji Raja, Uttej, Venumadhav, Pratap Singh and 'Kallu' Chidambaram are also in the cast.

Lyrics are by Seetharama Sastry and Gurucharan, and screenplay by Vallabhaneni Janardhan. Apart from taking credit for story, dialogue, music and direction, Veeru K. has also done the screenplay. The film is presented by M. V. L. Kumari.

• M. L. NARASIMHAM