AN EVENING OF DANCE AND SHEAKSPERE


By Scott Deskin

In an effort to diversify and/or push the limits of theatrical expression, various dance classes joined the Shakespeare Ensemble for a relatively loose, free-flowing evening of performances. The general format of the show alternated a dance number with a selected scene from one of Shakespeare's plays. Although at times the concept of this presentation failed to elude, the variety definitely was enough to hold one's interest.


By Ann Ames

It is unfortunate that the word "fusion" and the phrase "East meets West" have fallen into disfavor as clichés for describing any music with the barest hint of cross-cultural flavor. There is no other way to describe Warren Senders' music than as a synthesis of Indian and Western traditions, yet to do so in common terms seems a compromise of the musician's integrity. This is no pretentious attempt at following the popular multicultural trend. This is real, despite all the efforts of the Senders concert electorate to encourage disbelieve in the validity of his musical credentials.

Friday's performance took place in a small auditorium in the First Congregational Church outside Harvard Square. With a fat Christmas tree on the tiny stage and a table of cider and cookies at the side of the room, the setting seemed more appropriate for an elementary school play than for an exhibition of serious chamber music. Before the program began, Senders came out onto the floor of the auditorium to make a joke about the typical tedium of musicians and assure the audience that they would nonetheless be finished playing in time for the new year.

Every time he spoke it was with this same familiar, Rosenak, vivacious style. Perhaps what he was saying was that he was a commercial artist in the billing of this show as a musical event was merely a stage to the uncommercial audience, it would not have been much of a surprise. But when he and his wife, Vijaya Sundaram, began the first piece, "Yoga Raga," the voice of jocularity lifted to reveal true sensitivity and devotion to the art form.

The lyrical melody of the alap, a traditional introduction to performances of Hindustani music, slipped in gentle contrabass notes over a tambura's drone to create a musical open space of relaxation and introspection. It wiped the mind's slate clean in preparation for an evening of education, as well as entertainment.

Listening with a novice's ear to Indian music played on Western instruments forced an attentiveness that more common types of music don't inspire. The juxtaposition of familiar timbres and foreign tonalities is truly a shock to the ear, but one that makes itself evident only in retrospect. Each musical event passes into the next with intoxicating ease.

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