

# Double bonanza and sibling revelry

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**A**ctress-danseuse Sukanya has received a number of awards, including the *Kalaimamani*, over the years — mostly for her film roles, which by her own admission, she has never slighted based on their grade or rank.

However, the recent Rukmani Devi award from Krishna Gana Sabha holds a special place in her heart, and with good reason. "Though I have received credits for my dancing, the Rukmani Devi award is very special. My first step into the field of arts was through dance. As a student of Kalakshetra, I have had the honour of growing up under the watchful eye of Srimathi Rukmini Devi herself. My memories of working on her production, *Meera*

I recently choreographed a piece with the 'window' being a metaphor for seeing the world in one's own perspective — SUKANYA



of *Meera*, as a young dancer are still very fresh in my mind. To be bestowed an award in her name overwhelmed me beyond belief. Geetha (her sister who too received one) and I heartily thank Krishna Gana Sabha for this," begins the artiste. Geetha soon joins in the conversation, "There

were often occasions when Smt. Rukmini Devi, whom we would affectionately call *Athai*, would visit our class and offer suggestions, guidance, or genuine appreciation for any special quality that we displayed as young dancers. The very first honour that Sukanya and I received together was when *Athai* came to assess our practical exam, and had to choose between us for the one promotion available per class. Caught in the dilemma of having to choose between two equally talented sisters, she dismissed the idea of double promotion altogether, and blessed us wholeheartedly, suggesting that, as we complement each other so naturally, we should learn together, at the same pace. After moving to the UK in 1992, I have managed to juggle my dance and performances between the two places. It is particularly heart-warming to receive this honour as a NRI."

Theirs is a sibling revelry, not rivalry. The sisters vouch that despite just a few years of age difference, they have always journeyed together as far as the arts are concerned. It is the same story when it comes to churning out creative performances. "I am a fan of novelty. Recently, I did a course on 'site specific' dance. The idea is to create work that is specific to the chosen site that you see as feasible / plausible for expressing your concept. I choreographed a piece using a 'window' being the metaphor for learning, a passage and pathway in to seeing the world in one's own perspective," says Sukanya. Geetha cannot be left far behind — "At our recent performance in the city, I performed tailor-made choreography to suit my personal situation of being widowed. I chose the Bharathiya poem, '*Asai mugam marandhu poche...*' a love poem that interprets a state of being, a juxtaposi-

tion of a lovelorn heroine and a bereft woman. To enhance this concept I chose one other media, that of painting, which was extemporaneously performed by an artist (off stage) in synchrony with the dance. The painting unfolded on a live screen projection as a backdrop on stage."

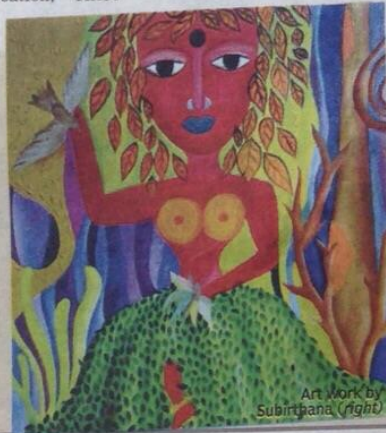
One can't help but prod Sukanya on the subject of any acting assignments in the offing, "I have a project each in Telugu and Malayalam," the pretty actress-danseuse signs off on a concluding note.

Bharatanatyam dancers and sisters Sukanya and Geetha jabber away about receiving the Rukmani Devi Award, being in sync with each other and more

Sukanya and Geetha



PICS COURTESY: AJANS VIDEO



Art Work by Subirthana (right)

## Convergence in conclusion

One always says that the teacher attains greater pleasure when his/her students make them proud and that is true in artist Paul's case. Corner Stones' Sprouts — 2016 has 11 of his students exhibit their paintings. "I always encourage my students to have clarity when it comes to learning art. I don't believe in just teaching — I help my students exhibit their work and create a portfolio considering their future. I went through



each and every creation of theirs and am brimming with pride looking at the professionalism that has gone into the work," gushes Paul. This is the eighth edition of such exhibition of art work and pupil Subirthana MS, a political science student of MCC has picked *Vedic Gods* as her theme. "My work is on iconic women in pre-Vedic Hindu



mythology. I've done *Aranyani, Ushas, Saranyu* and *Urvashi*. I am a great fan of Vincent van Gogh and hence the usage of extreme colour palette. My paintings fall under contemporary art." The other themes that have been explored include *Colours of a Rainbow, Serenity, Culture of Kerala, Converging Truth, Raja Ravi Varma's Kadhambari, Portraits, Joy, Landscapes and Seasons.*

— SV  
(Sprouts is on view from Jan 12 to 22 at Vinnyasa Premier Art Gallery, Mylapore)