



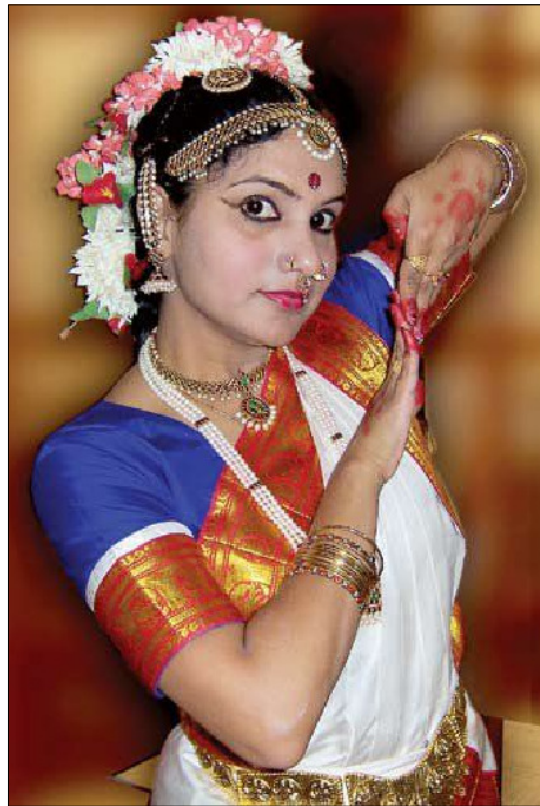
Davie Dance Studio Celebrates the Grandeur and Diversity of India

BY DEBBY TEICH

Last month, Davie's Rhythms School of Dance provided an exciting look into a little known part of Indian culture. More than 60 dancers from the school performed "Festivals of India" at the Hollywood Performing Arts Center. The high-energy performance was filled with colorful sights, sounds and intricate dances. It was the school's first large-scale production, focusing on the vast symbolism of India.

The 2 1/2 hour musical was tied around the universal theme of "strength in diversity." The show was staged through the eyes of a young American girl, who wanted to learn more about India's soul and spirit. She traveled through different parts of India to get first hand information, attending the various festivals and learning about the symbolisms in all the rituals. The show brought India's culture to life, blending diverse music, dance scores, small skits and detailed narrations.

India's folk dances typically express joy and are performed to celebrate every possible occasion, like the arrival of seasons, birth of a child or a wedding. "Festivals of India" showcased classical, contemporary and folk dance, including such styles as Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi and Mohiniyattam and folk dances like Garba, Bhangra, Kerala folk, Tamil Folk and more. Performers wore traditional clothing and danced to music which represented the many regions and languages of India. Ranjana Warier, owner of the Rhythms School of Dance, is hoping that the show helps to build understanding among cultures.



Ranjana Warier, owner of the Rhythms School of Dance, is a classically trained dancer.

"The purpose is to help educate and to explain this in a fun-filled way," said Warier.

Rhythms School of Dance is a training center for Indian Performing Arts which promotes the artistic traditions of India through professional training and student performances. Warier is a classically trained dancer who has been choreographing and staging an average of 12 performance arts based shows every year since 2004. In Jan. and Feb. of last year, she worked with the Town of Davie to teach community participants Indian folk dances and drama. They performed in Feb. at the Town of Davie theatre in the Pine Island multi-purpose center and received rave reviews. She also worked with the South Florida Hindu Temple to stage "Dances of India," which was also well received.

There are many people of Indian or Indian/Caribbean origin who reside in South Florida. Warier says that the diversity of India is very hard to comprehend, even for people who originate from this area. She hopes that her projects will help everyone gain a deeper understanding of their culture and help the Asian-Indian community re-connect with their roots. She recognizes that many of these lessons are universal. "The Broward County population is continually becoming more diverse," said Warier. "The lessons learned about the tolerance, understanding and respect for diversity are universally applicable on any demographic."

For more information, e-mail festival@erhythms.net or call 954-472-6004.



Dancers from Davie's Rhythms School of Dance performed "Festivals of India."