

A distinct visual feast

JOYOUS CAROLS rend the cold December air; Nativity plays and Christmas Tree programmes and concerts take centre-stage in this festival season. But a full-fledged dance drama with a distinct Indian ethos on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ? Well, "Rose of Sharon" was a novel presentation by the CSI Diocese of Madras and the Department of Ecumenical Relations Saturday last at the impressive auditorium of Ewart

Girls' Higher Secondary School, and a welcome addition to the Chennai Christmas repertoire. The Bishop in Madras, Rt. Rev. V. Devasahayam, in his Christmas message on the occasion, urged the people to empty themselves to be filled with the Spirit of Christ and be messengers of God's peace and goodwill to all men. The Emmanuel Methodist Church choir, San Thome Cathedral choir and the Christian Cultural Academy choir set the mood for

the "ballet" with a good rendition of carols in both English and Tamil, interspersed with a solo in Telugu.

The Krishnaswamy sisters, Lata and Gita, who choreographed the 75-minute long presentation, provided a visual and aural feast combining as they did elements of folk, dance, and mime to recorded music and voice-overs.

The ballet opened appropriately with a chant and the Lord's Prayer in Tamil with the dancers on their knees and in an attitude of awe and reverence.

Gita, who donned Mary's role, emoted beautifully the reaction of the Virgin Mother on learning of the Christ Child. When the fleet-footed

kurta-clad shepherds danced to the ethnic beat for "Marutha nilathil" and even brought in a live lamb perched on the shoulders of one of the shepherds, the crowd's enjoyment was palpable. Soon followed the sober lullaby 'Kanmani' by Mary. Interest was sustained with the enactment of the miracles of Christ in quick succession.

Following the text in the

Beatitudes and Sermon on the Mount proved an interesting exercise for the viewer-listener and the clearing of the Temple was done with elan by Lata. Lata's measured stride in the Palm Sunday procession, her excellent eye movement and deliberate gestures enhanced the aesthetic appeal.

Ending the drama with direct reference to Jesus' Second Coming was a brilliant idea.

The co-ordination of several



**A delectable mix of folk and mime...
"Rose of Sharon"— Pic. by Vino John.**

elements — music, movement, light, dance and mime was very good. One of the highpoints of the evening's programme was the excellent music. T. Samuel Joseph, better known as music director Shyaam, has scored the music and it is light classical in flavour.

All the songs in the album, which is available for sale, are catchy and melodious as well.

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