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Bharatanatyam dancer Jaya Krishnan of Kalakshetra proved himself a seasoned exponent, with perfect stances in the Alarippu. His complex footwork and fine-tuned body established him as an excellent dancer. His last piece, Simhendra Madhyamam Tillana, left the audience hankering for more.

Kalahridaya — a brainchild of the Jesuits — has been conceived as The Universal Home of Art and Culture. Recently, it celebrated the 200th year of the restoration of the Society of Jesus at the St Xavier's College auditorium. They celebrated an evening of Sangeet replete with vocal and instrumental music and dance in Kalahridaya Prangan at Bakeswar, where they plan to build a one-of-a-kind institution to pursue the performing arts. Father Benny Thomas, principal, St Xavier's Collegiate School, was chief guest. At the outset, Father Shyamal Makhali led the chorus with a Brahma-sangeet from the Puja Section of Rabindranath Tagore's Gitobitan Aji pronomi tomare chalibo nath sansaro kaje. The platform was then given to young dance disciples of Father Saju George. He and his senior disciples started a full-fledged Bharatanatyam recital with Pushpanjali — flower offering to the Almighty to seek blessings for success. His co-dancers were Emanuel Mathew, Anjana Thakurta, Satyen Sur, Gloria, Megha and Melany Proser. In the present scenario dancing with live music is a luxury. Thanks to vocalist Sukumar G Kutty, violinist Vishal from Visakapatnam, mridangist Surya Narayana and Nattuvanar Mohana Iyer, the live music made a traditional start in praise of modakapriya gajanana to ward off all obstructions.

Rare dance forms, which I had not seen, opened my eyes to various possibilities of Bharatnatyam. Melany, a German student under George, danced to a keertanam requesting Lord Jesus Christ to protect humankind. It was superbly rendered. Her emotive powers are remarkable.

The dance in praise of Rukmini Devi Arundale, who resurrected dance from its inglorious days, was an apt choice. Ananda Tandavam — in praise of the lord of dance — by Anjana and George delineated the philosophy of Nataraja who helps one access the untapped potential within. Keertanam in praise of the pure soul of Jesus is a rare dance form. "Come with your aparup — unparalleled — Jyoti," was the cry of the devotee. Jesus's crucifixion was heart-rending and Saju aesthetically rendered the resurrection on the third day. The grand finale before Mangalam was in praise of Velankeny Mary. The audience, comprising mostly local people who came in large numbers, watched the show spellbound.