

**INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL
OF EDIMBOURGH**

DANCE : Padukha The Divine Feet
— Hill Street Theatre

THE Dance-Theatre of India has brought one of its soloists Nirmala, to the Festival.

She weaves extracts from Hindu mythology into a shimmering garment composed of incense, bells, steps, and gestures. Enormously expressive eyes tell the audience volumes. Each intricate movement of her face or hands is made to look easy and natural. Indeed, when her lips quiver one wonders if Marilyn Monroe had ever been to India, so universal is the meaning.

The rhythms stamped out by her feet are in perfect accord with the music. A brief narrative, explaining the gods, accompanies her dancing. I think they will have been pleased by her offerings. The audience certainly were.

● Until September 2.

KAREN MARKS

THE EVENING TIMES

**PADUKHA, THE
DIVINE FEET**

In a darkened attic-theatre, heavy with the smell of musk and joss-sticks, Nirmala performs five pieces in the most ancient of the classical Indian dance styles, Baratha Natyam. Traditionally, this solo dance form contains 108 basic movements which are embellished and choreographed into a narrative form.

Nirmala brings her own inventiveness to the performance, whilst remaining minutely faithful to tradition. The movements are both absolutely precise and expressively relaxed, with each finger and turn of the foot following strict choreography. There can be few dance forms which command such power through facial expression and controlled eye



movement. One of the pieces incorporates Rasa, the nine basic emotions, which are deftly brought alive through mime and symbolic gesture.

Complicated rhythms in the music are accompanied by bold footstamping and beautifully curved arm movements — one can see how the Rajasthani gypsies influenced Flamenco — making this a proud yet ironical dance form. It is a shame this wonderful performance was accompanied by recorded rather than live music. (Jo Roe)

Paduka, The Divine Feet (Fringe) Dance-Theatre of India, Hill Street Theatre (Venue 41), 225 7294, until 2 Sept, 12.30pm & 3.45pm, £4 (£3.50).