

# THE CHARLEBOIS POST

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## Review: Encounter



Sindhoor (I) and Natyaveda in a thrilling pas de deux



### The River Theatre

*I have never seen anything quite like Aparna Sindoor's company.*

by Gaëtan L. Charlebois

There are certain works of art you must allow to wash over you. I am reading Proust's gigantic *Remembrance of Things Past* and it is one of those works. Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* is another. Tonight I saw *Encounter*, a Teesri Duniya production, imported from India to help the company celebrate its 30 years and it is definitely one of those works. It is a play filled with dance but as if to underline the fact the moments will be allowed to breathe, actual breath is part of the soundscape of the initial images. The subsequent images, sounds and movements wash over you, if you allow them to.

To say this was an evening of exotica, for me, would sound faintly racist. But the fact is that I (and I suspect most in the house and many readers who should rush to see the short run of the piece) have never seen anything quite like Aparna Sindoor's company, Navarasa Dance Theatre, in action. There is not only a fusing of dance and theatre, here, but even within the different arts an explosive fusion of cultures. The dance is definitely rooted in the traditional, but they have incorporated into the movement elements from occidental modern dance (there is a stunning pas de deux that would be at home with Alvin Ailey's company) and even more eclectic suggestions than that: I couldn't help thinking, at one point, of the propagandist ballet/operas of Mainland China like the iconic *Red Headed Girl* - fascism as art.

The 70 minute evening—with its silences, explosions of sound and movement, and eruptions of music—passes quickly.