

THE DANCE INDIA

A Treasure Trove of Culture & Tourism

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₹ 90

TORCH BEARERS

**THE PROLIFIC ART
ADMINISTRATOR:**

KAMALAKAR MURLIDHAR SONTAKKE

BEACONS OF LIGHT

**AN EPITOME DEVOTED
TO DANCE:**

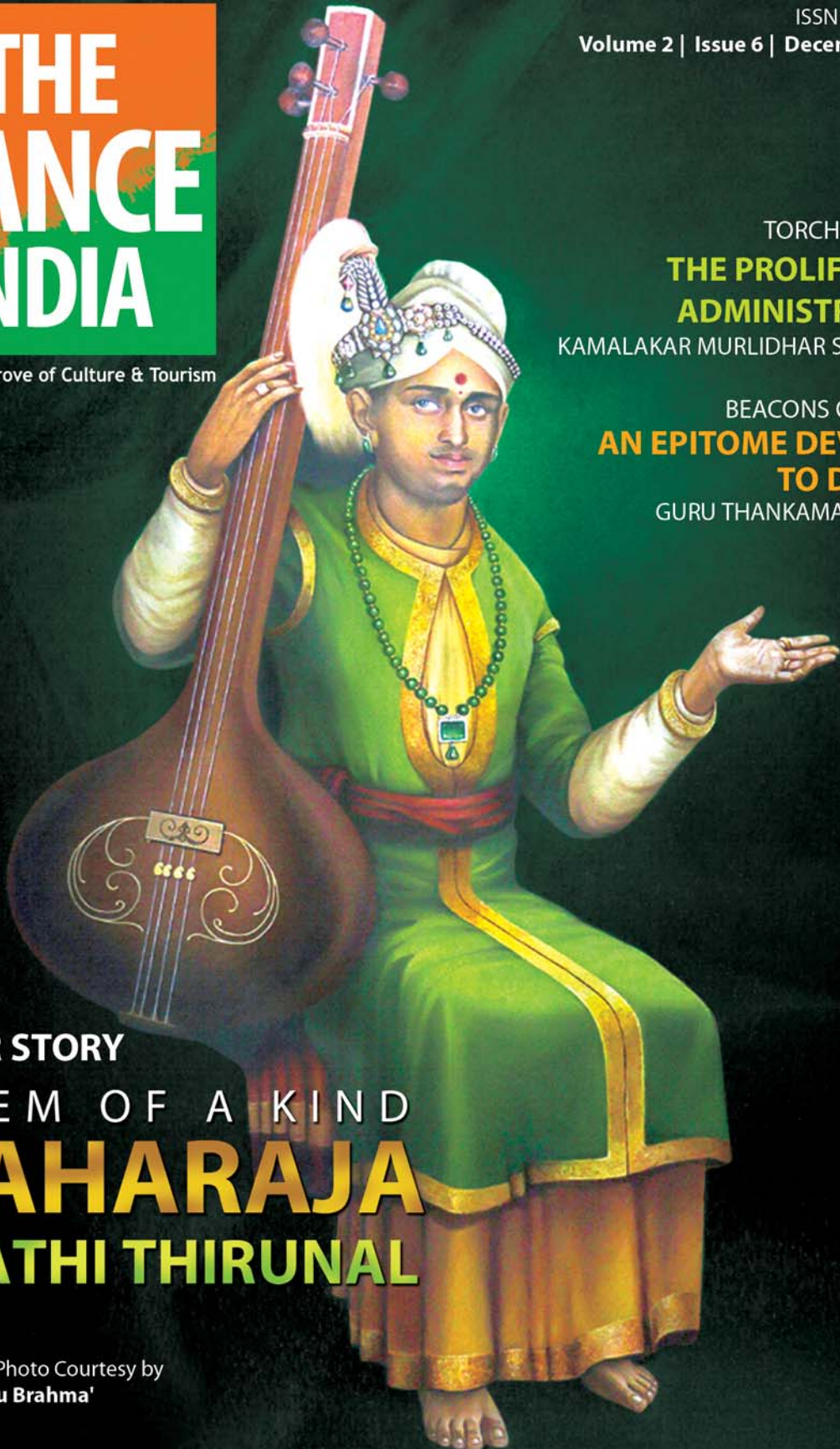
GURU THANKAMANI KUTTY

COVER STORY

A GEM OF A KIND

**MAHARAJA
SWATHI THIRUNAL**

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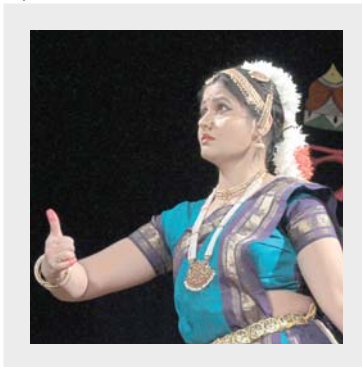
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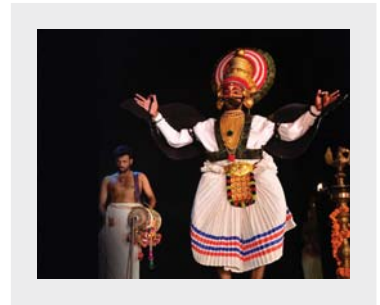
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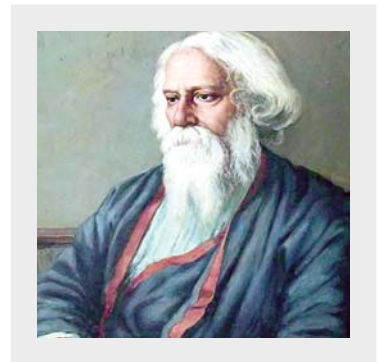
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Editorial

'The Dance India' - a monthly cultural magazine in English is our humble attempt to capture the spirit and culture of art in all its diversity.

"If the art is poor,
the nation is sick."

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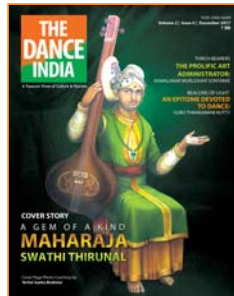
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BR Vikram Kumar
Editor-in-Chief

Traditional art forms of India are a puissant medium that has carried forward the legacy of traditions and made its culture and heritage admirable.

India stands as the 'mahaan' land of traditional arts and crafts. Almost every region of the country has its own significant traditional form of art and artistes skilled in various art forms. We're really blessed to be born in a country with so much diversity and traditions. Sadly, despite various attempts to save them by their practitioners, some of these traditional Indian art forms are fading away. If tallied, as every decade passes, the number of artists is rapidly declining, signifying a clear indication to the future of the art forms and artists in our country

are on the verge of extinction. Some suggestive measures for preserving the art forms and artists at employment level are companies taking art initiatives as part of the Corporate / Collective Social Responsibility (CSR) activities, in case of PSUs and private sector organizations, an exemption may be offered as grant or bonus points to the organization to boost their morale and help them in taking up and maintaining their part of contribution as CSR activities.

Focusing on school and college level, measures such as issuing an exemption on the amount of the fee paid for the tutoring of arts to both parents and the academy at pre-school level, and regularizing of the art forms as part of the syllabus. At university level, there should be mandatory appointment of positions for maintenance of the art department preserving arts forms.

Also, unlike any other quota, artists should also be given appointment under artists' quota in government organizations, PSUs and private sector industries. They should be given sparing and concessional facilities for travel and stay, when travelled for performances along with some exemption for the baggage containing art related material that is being used by the artist for performance. Through this issue, a revered appeal is being made to the Union Finance Ministry in association with the Information and Broadcasting Ministry and Cinematography to join their hands and support the instrumental folk who promote art and culture. Adding to this, if a Member of Parliament can be nominated from the field of arts, it could surely pave a way for smooth conduct and assured implementation of the programs and events.

Better late than never, early initiative from the government would be highly appreciated in real sense from the art lovers, who are also in countable number in vote bank, opine the experts.

Jai Hind!

Editor's Note





PM greets media persons on National Press Day

The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi has greeted the media persons on National Press Day. "My greetings to all friends in the media on National Press Day. I appreciate the hard work of our media, especially the reporters and camerapersons, who tirelessly work on the ground and bring forth various news that shapes national as well as global discourse. The role of the media in giving voice to the voiceless is commendable. Over the last three years, the media has added great strength to 'Swachh Bharat Mission' and effectively furthered the message of cleanliness.

In this day and age we are seeing the rise of social media and news being consumed through mobile phones. I am sure these advancements will further the reach of the media and make the media space even more democratic and participative.

A free press is the cornerstone of a vibrant democracy. We are fully committed to upholding freedom of press and expression in all forms. May our media space be used more and more to showcase the skills, strengths and creativity of 125 crore Indians", the Prime Minister said, according to PIB.

FEE record 14,354 crores with a growth rate of 18% in tourism

The Union Ministry of Tourism estimated the monthly Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEEs) through tourism in India, both in rupee and dollar terms based on the credit data of Travel Head from Balance of Payments of RBI.

FEEs during the month of October 2017 were Rs. 14,354 crore as compared to Rs. 12,100 crore in October 2016 and Rs. 10,549 crore in October 2015. The growth rate in FEEs in rupee terms in October 2017 over October 2016 has increased to 18.6%, compared to 14.7% in October 2016 over October 2015. FEEs during the period January- October 2017 were Rs. 1,44,225 crore with a growth of 16.9% over same period of previous year's Rs. 1,23,329 crore and registered a growth of 13.8% over January- October, 2015, according to PIB.

Tourism records 18.1% growth

The Union Ministry of Tourism compiled monthly estimate of Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) & FTAs on e-Tourist Visa on the basis of Nationality-wise, Port-wise data received from Bureau of Immigration (BOI).

Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs)

The number of FTAs in October, 2017 was 8.76 lakh as compared to FTAs of 7.42 lakh in October, 2016 and 6.83 lakh in October, 2015. The growth rate in FTAs in October, 2017 over October, 2016 has increased to 18.1%, compared to 8.6% in October, 2016 over October, 2015. FTAs during the period January- October 2017 were 79.96 lakh with a growth of 15.8% over same period of the previous year, compared to FTAs of 69.05 lakh with a growth of 9.6% in January- October, 2016 over January- October, 2015.

FTAs on e-Tourist Visa

During the month of October, 2017, a total of 1.76 lakh foreign tourists arrived on e-Tourist Visa as compared to 1.05 lakh during the month of October,

2016 registering a growth of 67.3%. And during January- October 2017, a total of 12.43 lakh foreign tourists arrived on e-Tourist Visa as compared to 7.81 lakh during January- October 2016, registering a growth of 59.2%, according to PIB.

Exhibition of Islamic Calligraphy from Rampur Raza Library opens in Brunei Darussalam as part of Festival of India

An exhibition of photographs of valuable collection of Islamic Calligraphy from the Rampur Raza Library of Ministry of Culture, Government of India was inaugurated as the inaugural event of Festival of India in Brunei Darussalam by the Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports of the Government of Brunei Darussalam, Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Lailaraja Major General Dato Paduka Seri Haji Awang Halbi bin Haji Mohd Yussof.

The exhibition consisted of 36 photographs of calligraphy including of verses from the Holy Quran, and poetry in Persian and Arabic, selected from the over 3000 calligraphy pieces in the Rampur Raza Library collection. The Exhibition was jointly hosted by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports of the Government of Brunei Darussalam and the High Commission of India in Brunei Darussalam.

At the inaugural event, Nagma M Mallick, High Commissioner of India to Brunei Darussalam, described the Exhibition as a gesture of solidarity and friendship of the Government of India to the

Government and the people of Brunei Darussalam on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of His Majesty the Sultan. She described the calligraphy on display as another example of the synergetic culture that amalgamated the ancient Indian artistic traditions with



The Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports of Brunei Darussalam, Mr. Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Lailaraja Major General D

Islamic culture over hundreds of years to produce a cultural flowering under the Mughal Empire, according to PIB.



The Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports of Brunei Darussalam, Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Lailaraja, Major General Dato



Festival of India in Fiji

A Festival of India is being organized in Fiji, Kiribati, Tonga, Vanuatu, Nauru, Tuvalu and Cook Islands from October, 2017 - March, 2018. The Festival will showcase diverse Indian culture, i.e. classical and folk dances, music, cuisine and International Conferences. The events will be held in six cities of Fiji, namely, Suva, Nadi, Lautoka, Labasa, Ba and capital cities of Kiribati, Tonga, Vanuatu, Nauru, Tuvalu and Cook Islands. Events like - 'International Conference on Integral Humanism' to

commemorate birth centenary of Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyay, Food Festival, Qawwali programme by seven-member Sabri Brothers group, Oddisi Dance by Meera Das Group of Gunjan Dance Akademi, Cuttack, Ramayana Episode "Jatayu Moksham" by Kalashetra, International Hindi Conference, Kuchipudi Dance and Yoga Demonstration by Dr. Yashodha Thakore, Bollywood Dance and Musical Group, Folk Dance by Avishkar Akademy of Performing Arts and Folk Band Aarug of Ramanuj Sharma will be showcased during the festival, according to PIB.

Languages should help build bridges of understanding: Vice President

The Vice President of India, M. Venkaiah Naidu has said that language can help good governance because information and knowledge can create an enlightened citizenry. He was addressing the 16th Annual Convocation of Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha, in Hyderabad. Hindi has played a historic role in the development of India's unity, integrity and linguistic goodwill. For the unification of the nation there is no element more powerful than the language spoken by most of Indians.

He further said that in the year 1936, the office of Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha was established in Vijaywada and as the Presidents of this Sabha, freedom fighters such as Shri Konda Venkapapayya Pantulu, Andhra Kesari Shri Tungturi Prakasham Pantulu, Shri Bejawada Gopalreddy, Swami Ramanand Tirtha did a great work. It is heartening to know that Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha has not only promoted Hindi but also prepared a large number of Hindi teachers, translators and publicists, said he and added that the Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha of Andhra and Telangana is celebrating its 16th Annual Convocation and he reminded the audience of Gandhiji's view that no country is independent in the true sense, until and unless it speaks in its own language.

The Deputy Chief Minister of Telangana, Mohammad Mahmood Ali, the Vice President of Dakshina Bharat



The Vice President, M. Venkaiah Naidu addressing the 16th Annual Convocation of Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha

Hindi Prachar Sabha, Chennai, H. Hanumantappa, the President of Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha, Andhra Pradesh & Telangana, B. Obaiiah and other dignitaries were present on the occasion, according to PIB.

Address by the Hon'ble President of India Shri Ram Nath Kovind on the occasion of inauguration of Manipur Sangai festival 2017

The Manipur Sangai Festival, which is the biggest festival of the state. Celebrated for 10 days every November since 2010, this is the perfect showcase for the cultural diversity and richness of Manipur, comprising its various communities and beautiful social fabric. The food and culture, adventure sports and crafts, handlooms and universally-admired dance forms of Manipur cannot find a more appropriate

setting, the President of India, Ram Nath Kovind. He was addressing the gathering after inaugurating the festival.

The President further said that one can travel across the world but rarely come across a location as spectacular as Loktak Lake. It is learnt that it is the largest freshwater lake in the Northeast, with the only floating National Park on our planet. It is a paradise for tourists and I am glad the Government is making efforts to promote the tourism potential of Manipur. The a festival and the state that needs to be experienced at leisure! Manipur's cultural traditions, its social, religious and ethnic mosaic, and its history of courage and resilience are an inspiration.

Manipur is India's window to Southeast Asia and a key player in the Government's Act East Policy. As a result, there is a concentrated effort to quickly develop connectivity projects. The most prominent is of course the India-Myanmar-Thailand trilateral highway. In addition, an air cargo terminal complex is being planned at Imphal International Airport. Rail links are

being enhanced. Jiribam is connected by a broad gauge line, and Imphal railway station has already been inaugurated. Finally, the regional connectivity scheme of the Union Ministry of Civil Aviation is giving a push to affordable air links in the region and particularly in Manipur.

The potential for tourism is immense. And the prospect of international trade, with Manipur linking the Indian economy to Myanmar and the rest of ASEAN, is unimaginably big. It is important that the benefits of such efforts reach local communities here, and provide new markets and jobs to Manipur's farmers and handloom weavers.

Congratulating, the people, Mr. Kovind, wished the Manipur Sangai Festival and all the participants, as well as the Government and people of Manipur, every success. India takes great pride in Manipur's cultural identity, its social diversity - and economic potential. Together all of us need to ensure that Manipur realises this potential. And that every Manipuri, whatever his or her background, benefits. We must succeed. And we will succeed, said Kovind, according to PIB.

Vice President inaugurated Aadi Mahotsav - a Tribal Festival

The Vice President, M. Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated 'Aadi Mahotsav' - a fortnight long Tribal Festival with the theme of 'A Celebration of the Spirit of Tribal Culture, Cuisine and Commerce' at Dilli Haat, INA, New Delhi. The inaugural function was presided by Minister of Tribal Affairs Jual Oram. Ministers of State for Tribal Affairs Jaswantsinh Sumanbhai Bhabhor. Secretary, Ministry of Tribal Affairs Leena Nair, Managing Director, TRIFED Pravir Krishna and other senior officials were present on the occasion.

Over 750 tribal artisans from over 25 States participated in the festival. Aadi Mahotsav was organized at four venues throughout Delhi- Dilli Haat, INA, Dilli Haat, Janakpuri, Central Park, Rajiv Chowk and Handicraft Bhawan, Baba Kharak Singh Marg. Showcasing Tribal Culture, Commerce & Cuisine:



The Vice President, M. Venkaiah Naidu going around the "Aadi Mahotsav" a Mega fortnight long National Tribal festival

The festival went on for a fortnight. The theme of the festival was-"A Celebration of the Spirit of Tribal Culture, Cuisine and Commerce". The festival featured exhibition-cum-sale of tribal handicrafts, art, paintings,

fabric, jewellery and much more through about 200 stalls.

Over 750 tribal artisans and artists from over 25 States participated in the festival. A special feature of the festival is Tribal India cuisine, recreated and presented in delectable forms to suit urban tastes by special tribal chefs.

An attractive stage has been raised at the venue to showcase tribal music and dance every evening from 6.30 pm to 8.30 pm. Nearly 350 artists from 20 States are expected to perform during the festival.

Shopping, Dining & Fine Music

The 15 days Mahotsav had a footfall of over one lakh Delhiites. It promises to be a feast of shopping, exotic dining and fine music from Artists from all over the

Country. The tribal textiles manufactured by Master tribal Craftsmen from Jammu & Kashmir in the North to Tamil Nadu in the South and from Gujarat in the East to Nagaland/Sikkim in the West won the hearts of Delhiites.

The Traditional tribal jewelry, bamboo cane also promise to be the items of attraction. The Tribal handicrafts was sold through about 200 Stalls in the Dilli Haat, INA by tribal Artisans. Twenty five special tribal cuisines were on display and sale during the fortnight and Delhiites were welcomed to sample the exotic Adi Vyanjan.

A team of 350 tribal artists from all over the country presented well choreographed dances, vocal and instrumental music. Four rock bands from North East also gave enthralling performances, according to PIB.



The Director General, National Modern Art Gallery, Adwaita Charan Gadanayak inaugurating an exhibition "PUTUL, Folks Dolls



The President, Ram Nath Kovind inaugurating the 'Manipur Sangai Festival 2017' at Hapta Kangjeibung, at Imphal, in Manipu



The Minister of State for Culture (I_C) and Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Dr. Mahesh Sharma addressing at the



The Minister of State for Culture (I_C) and Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Dr. Mahesh Sharma holding a meeting

AWARDS

Dr. Suparna Venkatesh recognized and honored by Karnataka Government

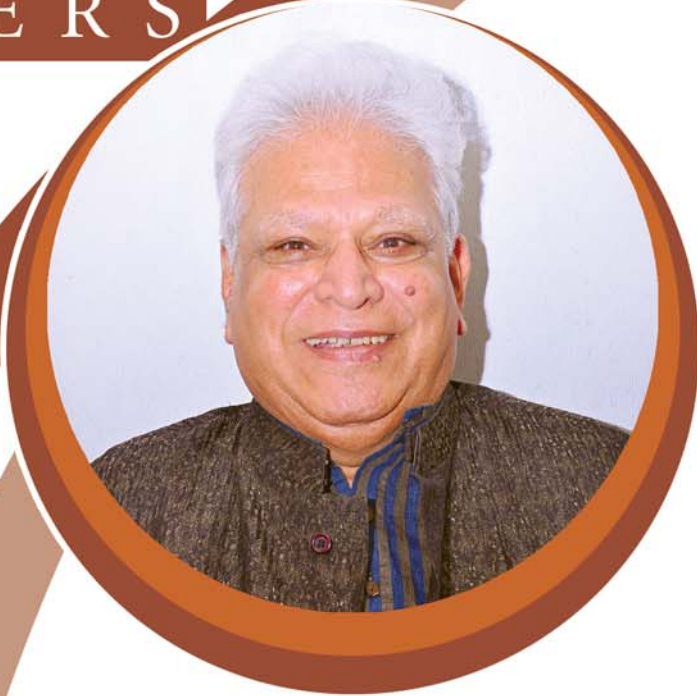
A jewel dazzles every person from its brightness. Likewise a gemstone in the field of art brings prosperity to the art form itself. The dedication an artist puts in an art form to preserve, protect and promote it is applaudable. Such applause worthy person is Dr. Suparna Venkatesh an exponent in Bharatanatyam and Kathak, choreographer and teacher. She has conducted several workshops in India and abroad. She has choreographed ballets and dance features as her home productions and has associated with several educational Institutions in Bangalore and outside

to put up shows based on Indian Classical Dance traditions.

Dr. Suparna Venkatesh has been awarded the 'KARNATAKA KALASHREE AWARD 2017-2018', by Karnataka Sangeetha Nrithya Academy for her contribution in performing Arts in Bharathanatyam. She has been selected by Karnataka Government from Karnataka Sangeetha Nrithya Academy for the valuable services in Bharathanatyam. On 26th of November this prestigious award was presented to her in Ravindra Kala Kshetra at Bangalore.



Dr. Suparna Venkatesh being awarded the KARNATAKA KALASHREE AWARD 2017-2018, by Karnataka Sangeetha Nrithya Academy.



The Prolific Art Administrator: Kamalakar Murlidhar Sontakke



Theatre arts are such an intricate world, a febrile network of human relationships woven in words and expressions, an exhilarating experience to pursue. In this hustling world of opportunists, where administration of such a framework of art is also a cumbersome task, stands a magnificent persona, contributing and managing the world of arts, aiming solely to serve the theatre arts and fortify the cultural scenario of the country through sheer progressiveness and will power.

A veteran actor, a recipient of the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, and a former chairman of the prestigious Nehru Centre in Mumbai, Professor Kamalakar Muralidhar Sontakke is a renowned theatre personality, trained at the National School of Drama, Delhi.

Born in the year 1939, Sri Kamalakar, hails from a remote village, Vadochatha, 9km from Ajantha, and 48km from the city of Aurangabad. He completed his 10th class in Vadochatha, and relocated to Aurangabad for higher education in the year, 1955. His father vernacular final from Osmania University and mother was a home maker.

At school level, he chose the Marathi medium of instruction. During his secondary school, he was fascinated by the uniform, training and parade regime of the NCC cadets and joined in the NCC. He was chosen as under officer in the NCC and played a key role in commanding 1200 NCC students at

state level camps. This gave him a boost to groom his voice, personality and other character attributes.

As a child, always fascinated by the art forms, he stood in awe, watching the performances of local folk and traditional artists at mela's, temple fairs and other village events.

He was admitted into Bachelor's of Arts at Aurangabad, where he chose Economics, Political Science, and Hindi as his selective subjects. He was the first person from his region to have become a post graduate.



Lead role direction - Rakt Nako Maj Pram Have

Steering towards this fascination, while in first year of college, he auditioned for many events. He was rejected in auditions for roles, due to the age and experience factors, when competing with other seniors. However, a professor who thought he deserves a fair chance, asked him to perform; he then amazed the panel with his narration, modulation and vocal skills without taking a second peek into the two pages script. He was then selected for a lead role in the first year.

With his amazing performances, he was selected to play the lead role for the upcoming college annual plays. Though, he never saw an entire professional

play until his third year, in final year, he directed the college play, which was performed at a state level competition, and also won a prize.

After graduation, owing to compulsion from his Hindi teacher, he joined Masters in Hindi. He worked during the day time earning his daily bread and attended night classes for his

masters in Hindi. During his masters, he also studied law in correspondence as it was an independent practicing profession, and also he could take care of the legal issues within his village county.

Upon graduating from master's degree, considering his passion for theatre arts, one of his professors suggested that, he should undergo professional training in theatre arts. It was then prominently being lead by Ebrahim Alkazi, one of the key founders of modern theatre training, Director of National School of Drama, established and recognised by Pandit



Jawahar Lal Nehru as a part of Sangeet Natak Academi. He appeared for the audition and was selected with scholarship along with 18 other students in the Akademi.

However, the admission has a conditional bond related with scholarship with the payment of 1.25 lakh rupees, if the candidate dropped out of the school. A local official of his town, who was fond of Sri Kamalakar, helped him with the signature on the conditional bond without the knowledge of Kamalakar's father, for which he was admitted in to the school. This was his first stepping stone in to the theatre arts.

Though he was a hard working, disciplined and punctual student at the school, his English language and communication skills was a hurdle to him because of his Marathi medium of instruction throughout his earlier education. After a year, due to the language and communication issue, he wasn't



able to adapt to the worldly knowledge of theatre, for which he wanted to drop out of the school.

"Owing to pay money for the conditional bond, I tricked the director of the school with a false telegram of serious illness to my grandmother and to return to my hometown urgently. For which, I was caught red-handedly by the director Alkazi, by the stamp on the telegram which was from Bengali Market, rather than my hometown," he says chuckling at his own innocence.

Then, the director Alkazi, who was very fond of him for discipline and dedication, laughed at his mischief act and assured that he would help him overcome the hurdle and can be contacted in case of any doubt and difficulty.

With such assurance and support, Kamalakar stood as a best student, a gold medallist, an all-rounder and



INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL DA LA MER, MAURITIUS. Direction & Design : Prof.Kamliakar Sontakke. 135 Folk & 35 Classical Artists at 7 venues - Inauguration by Shri P.V. Narsimha Rao, Hon.Prime Minister of India -1988

the Bharat Purashkar winner, throughout his years at school. During his years at the school, he was casted in every play performed for his excellent skill in theatre arts, though his diploma was in direction training.

After his graduation from school, with instruction from Sri Alkazi, he joined the a repertory theatre team representing the school where he taught, acted in plays, managed the event production and was also chosen as a prefect of the school managing the school schedule and other activities. He managed both the school and external activities conducting workshops and shows in cities like, Bangalore and Kerala.

theatre and drama arts. For three years, the academy produced outgoing students who became theatre critics, television actors, and theatre professionals.

Due to his dedicated perseverance and establishment of theatre skills, theatre acting was permanently added to the curriculum of the academy. He gained a lot of critical reception in the media through his earlier contribution to National school of Drama and production of Marathi theatre plays.

In the year 1971, he applied for Colombo fellowship from the British Council of nine months, where he undertook placements at various international repertories. In United Kingdom, he met eminent



JAG UTHA HAI RAIGADH (Hindi) - Direction, Design & Acting - Prof.Kamlakar Sontakke - Cast : Uday Tikekar, Shakti Singh, Janhavi Singh, Kanchan & Manasi Sontakke, Sangeet Kala Kendra, Mumbai - 1977.



JAG UTHA HAI RAIGADH (Hindi) - Direction, Design & Acting - Prof.Kamlakar Sontakke - Cast : Uday Tikekar, Shakti Singh, Janhavi Singh, Kanchan & Manasi Sontakke, Sangeet Kala Kendra, Mumbai - 1977.

During his time at the repertory, few cultural delegates from Mumbai on their visit to the school, requested Alkazi to entrust some of his members from the school establish a theatre institution in Maharashtra. Sri Kamalakar was then introduced formally to the delegates by Alkazi, mentioning the opportunity to work ahead with delegates to work on theatre arts at an academy in Maharashtra.

In the year 1967, he joined the Mumbai Marathi Sahitya Sangh, a private art and literary academy established in 1935, located in Girgaon, Maharashtra which invited auditions for the first batch of 28 students in theatre acting. His course curriculum included technical subjects in theatre, acting and other crafts. Not only the traditional theatre subjects, he also groomed his students to become future teachers of

theatre personalities during this experience at the British theatre.

Comparing the British theatre to Indian theatre, he claims that the Indian theatre had multiple faces owing to regional establishments of theatre whereas British theatre had a realistic face of depiction and portrayal. Also, the professional establishments were differing in factors of work security, payment and welfare of the artists and other production values.

He also claims that theatre industry in India is neglected due to lack of support of establishment with time and appeals for establishment of open-air theatre arenas, adequate green rooms, rehearsal halls, exhibition rooms, and storage rooms for Indian art and theatre practitioners.



ANDHER NAGARI (Hindi) - Direction & Design : Prof.Kamlakar Sontakke - Cast : Digambar Gosavi, Alok Chaudhari, Kumar Deshmukh, Laxman Deshpande, Rustom Achalkhamb & others, Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad - 1973

Speaking of his personal life, Prof. Sontakke says ***"Marriage was a delayed priority in my life as I had gone to the National School of Drama soon after my post graduation"***

Sri Kamalakar met Kanchan Sontakke, his wife at the Mumbai Marathi Sahitya Sangha, when he started a theatre training course. She was trained in dance and had an academic background of science. In 1973, He was married to Kanchan when came back from United Kingdom.

Mrs. Kanchan Sontakke, for the past 36 years has been working with 'Natyashala' a movement that reaches out to the mentally and physically challenged children through dance, drama, and various arts and crafts. She has trained 4000 teachers of disabled schools enabling them to impart knowledge in personality development for the disabled children.

They have two daughters, Manasi Sontakke, an architect and bhartnatyam dancer, currently working



ASHADH KA EK DIN (Hindi) - Direction & Design : Prof.Kamlakar Sontakke, Rajasthani Mahila Mandal, Mumbai - 1982

as bi-lingual host for government protocol and corporate meetings, and Mythili Sontakke, a former behaviour scientist and home maker.

In the year 1972, he was invited by the Vice Chancellor and the members of governing body of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad for an official meeting, if he would be interested to conduct certified theatre workshops a year later for the university.

He then proposed a PG degree course in theatre arts to be implemented in current year. He introduced the similar course curriculum of seven subjects, and taught 22 students per year. He also played a key role



in administering the development and beautification of the University premises.

After working as Director at Drama Department at Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University ,Aurangabad, Sri Kamalakar established a 'Multi-lingual theatre training' program at Indian National theatre in Mumbai focusing on his aspirations of teaching students.

In the years 1983-84, he has been designated as the Director of Culture under the Government of Maharashtra. In the year 1986, he became the Director of South Central Zone, Cultural Centre, Nagpur. Posts the demise of then, Prime Minister Sri Rajiv Gandhi, the cultural centres of India have lost their fair importance, which were established upon keen interest by him.



THANK YOU MR. GLAD (Hindi) - Direction & Design : Prof. Kamlakar Sontakke - Dr. Vijay Thali, Prasad Gurav & others - Kala Academy, Goa - 1980

As Director of South Central zone, in his personal capacity, he conducted 18 national-level theatre festivals all over India to promote theatre arts. He has skilfully managed to conduct all these festivals under his smooth administration inviting all artists from various cultural centres of India.

He also worked as creative director for importance of folk, tribal and traditional theatre artists platform shows at open air-arenas in Mumbai and Delhi. In support of the folk and traditional tribal artists, he appeals that there is a dire need of a spokesperson at individual state level for their growth and sustenance.

His contributions as the Director of Culture were innumerable and he never criticized on lack of funds, opportunities or other infrastructure, and only emphasized on strengthening the program



ZEE TV Awards-Awarding - Madhukar Toradmal as Member of the Governing Body Member



61 MUMBAI UNIVERSITY : LOKAKALA MOHOTSAV: Prof. Kamlakar Sontakke greeting Tablanawaz Ustad Zakir Husain at the Akademy Festival.

committee of performing arts under the leadership of Sri Rajiv Gandhi.

"The current scenario of India has everything that is need, only that lacks is imaginary leadership skill to promote the traditional arts" says Professor Sontakke.

Contributing to the theatre arts and focus to derive best results of the every position that he held, overcoming all critical situations, and planning every task under his responsibility are memories he cherishes for life.

Shri Kamlakar Sontakke was awarded the prestigious Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in the year 2013 in the field of Direction, at the investiture ceremony of the Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowships.



Prof Sontakke Receiving Sangeet Natak Akademy award at the hands of Shri Pranab Mukharjee, Hon President of India at the Darbar Hall, Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi (2013)

COVER STORY



A GEM  F A KIND

MAHARAJA SWATHI THIRUNAL

“The Maharaja of the Kingdom of Travancore, a brilliant music composer both in Carnatic and Hindustani, born in the Chera Dynasty of the matrilineal royal family of Travancore and the second child of Queen Gowri Lakshmi Bayi, Maharaja Swathi Thirunal is an epitome of music for South India.”



His mother Rani Laxmi Bayi, the Queen Regent, breathed her last when the child was hardly two, leaving him in the care of her sister, Rani Parvathi Bayi, who superseded as the Queen Regent, the period of his childhood days. Regent Parvathi Bayi was cautious about the education of the young prince. Tutors were appointed for teaching him different subjects and language. She was far-sighted about the need for having knowledge of different languages in the context of an emerging multilingual polity and administration.

Thus, languages like Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Persian, Hindi and Marathi were taught to him, besides their mother-tongue. The extraordinary intellectual exuberance of Swathi Thirunal and the deeper interest and insight that he showed in music and literature, amazed his tutors, and the British personalities who visited the state. Rama Varma was very attached to his aunt and shared a very special and warm relationship with her till the end.



Swathi Thirunal with his father Raja Raja Varma
(Portrait in Kaudiar Palace, Thiruvananthapuram)

During his reign, he established an English medium school which was **Maharaja's government free school**, which later became a University. The existing State central library in Trivandrum was once Oriented Manuscript library which was started by Swathi Thirunal.

Swathi Tirunal, since his childhood was fondly interested in music. Besides being a ruler, he was a

patron of music and was a musician himself. His education in music started with the first lessons from Karamana Subrahmanian Bhagavathar and Karamana Padmanabha Bhagavathar.



Uthraathi Thirunal Rani Gouri Parvathi Bai - Aunt of Swathi Thirunal (Painted in Fort Palace, Thiruvananthapuram)

Later, he studied music from the then English scholar, Thanjavur Subba Rao as well. He continued to learn music by listening to accomplished musicians and practicing himself. He encouraged both systems of Indian music, Hindustani and Carnatic music, though he was essentially a connoisseur of the Carnatic music tradition.

As a Monarch, Swathi Tirunal was incredibly hardworking and supremely committed to his kingdom and people. The death of his father, elder sister and his wife Narayani gave great grief to the Maharaja. He sought severe silence and solitude, weakening his mind and body, at the age of 33.

Maharaja Swathi Thirunal died on 27 December 1846, creating a history with his unparalleled and incomparable accomplishments in a short span of time; he stands as a precious gem in the golden crown.

The imperial history of the glorious royalty, Maharaja Swati Thirunal

Maharaja Swathi Thirunal's official royal title was **"His Royal Highness Sri Padmanabha Dasa Vanchi Pala Swathi Thirunal Rama Varma Kulasekhara Kiritapathi Swami Rama Raja Manney Sultan Maharajah Raja Ramaraja Bahadur Shamsheer Jang"** who ruled the erstwhile princely state of Travancore (now part of Kerala), for more than 17 years till Dec 1846, has been aptly described by art

lovers and exponents as 'a prince among musicians and a musician among princes.'

He was an enlightened and liberal minded ruler, and introduced several lasting progressive measures and administrative reforms for effective governance. At the same time he was a great lover of arts, his patronage extending to music, dance, painting, sculpture and architecture, among others.



Maharaja Swathi Thirunal in his early twenties
(Fort Palace, Thiruvananthapuram)

The Maharaja not only promoted these art forms, he also invited artists and scholars from various parts of India and patronised them by providing them with various

facilities, including financial assistance.

Posterity will remember the Maharaja as a person of astounding intellectual and artistic acumen, and a prodigious scholar and linguist, besides being a popular ruler. He was a musical genius, a complete artiste. As a composer, he occupies an important place in the history of Indian music. His reign symbolized the golden era of artistic excellence, with promotion of various art forms in the kingdom.

A connoisseur of the Carnatic music tradition, he also had the distinction of encouraging Hindustani music. With his untiring efforts and contributions in these fields, Swathi Thirunal has become one of the immortals of Indian Music.

Ever since a child, Swathi Thirunal was intensely interested in music. Profound education in music and persevering practice in his young age, helped in the flowering of a musical genius. The young prince began his music education under the guidance of the palace musicians Subrahmania Bhagavathar and Padmanabha Bhagavathar. Later, he studied music from Thanjavur Subba Rao, who was also an English scholar.

According to Shri Marthanda Varma, Elaya Raja of Travancore, Swathi Thirunal took to music seriously and most conscientiously, practised it assiduously and attained high professional standard - in addition to the cares and task of ruling the State. There was a rich variety in his creations. Eminent scholars and musicologists have rated his compositions among the highest.

Among the musicians in his kingdom who influenced Swathi Thirunal to a great extent were Shadkaala Govinda Marar, Irayimman Thampi, Parameswara Bhagavathar, Maliyekkal Krishna Marar, and Mukundaram and Nandaram from Mysore, two experts on Veena.

In the following years, Swathi Thirunal's achievement as an outstanding music composer came to be known far and wide, even outside his princely state of Travancore. Besides music, other fine arts like dancing, painting and architecture also received the Maharaja's patronage. Famous dance exponents like Nagarathnam of Sri Rangam and Kanakamala of Tanjore received his special encouragement. He also maintained a Hindustani dance troupe of eight artistes, according to chroniclers.

Swathi Thirunal has been credited with having developed **Mohiniyattam** and a number of **Padams** and **Padavarnams** were composed by him in Malayalam for use in Mohiniyattam. Even the elegant dress which the **Mohini Attam** artistes use at present was designed by Swathi Thirunal.

The most celebrated among the music stalwarts at the Maharaja's court was Meruswami, who was an authority on the theory and practice of Carnatic music. One of the leading palace musicians, Shadkaala Govinda Marar, used to sing to the Maharaja the enchanting musical compositions of Saint Thyagaraja in his own



inimitable style. The Maharaja sent Marar as an emissary to Saint Thyagaraja at Thiruvayyaru to persuade him to come to his royal court.

Marar could not succeed in his mission. Thyagaraja, it is said, was so impressed and ecstatic when Marar sang the Jayadeva Ashtapadi ***Chanda na Charchita Nilakalebara*** from Gita Govinda, that he instantaneously composed his immortal song '***Entaro Mahanubhavalu Antairiki vandanamu***' (there are

ever so many great men in this world and I bow to all of them). This famous composition is part of the Saint's famous ***Pancha kritis***.

Swati Thirunal's palace thus became a leading centre of classical music and dances in South India. It also was home to many musicians and artistes of the period, including Thyagaraja's disciple Kannayya Bhagavathar, and a Maharashtrian singer Ananthapadmanabha Goswami (known as Kokilakanthameru swami).

One outstanding attribute that distinguished Swati Thirunal from other Indian composers, was that he patronized Hindustani musicians also. They came from Punjab, Oudh, Bengal, Banaras and Poona. Among the Hindustani classical musicians were Punjab Ramarjun, Kasi Govinda Das. North Indian dance





Ayilyam Thirunal Rani Gouri Lakshmi Bayi - Mother of Swathi Thirunal (Tanjore Painting in Fort Palace, Thiruvananthapuram)

experts like Hyderabad Khansa also adorned his court.

The compositions of Maharaja Swathi Thirunal are precious treasures of Indian music and dance. He concentrated mainly on devotional themes and while composing the songs (Padavarnams, Padas, Tillanas etc. for Bharata Natyam and Mohiniyattam) he had in his mind the ragas, talas, choreographic patterns and images for the particular song.

A versatile scholar and a linguist, the Maharaja was fluent in Sanskrit, Marathi, Telugu, Kannada, Hindustani, Bengali, Tamil, Oriya and English, besides his mother tongue Malayalam. He was proficient in Persian, too.

Swathi Thirunal is credited with composing over 400 compositions in Carnatic and Hindustani music in five languages mainly Sanskrit, Malayalam, Hindustani, Telugu, and Kannada.

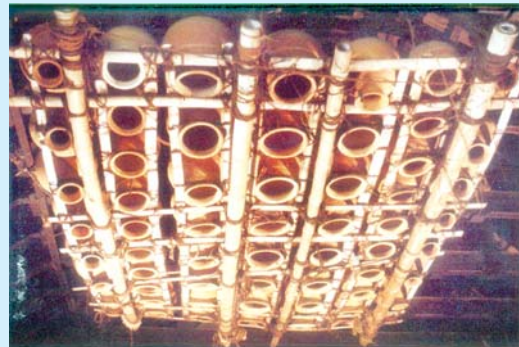
His compositions, which varied in form and structure, included Tanavarnam, Padavarnam, Swarajati, Kriti, Kirtanam, Ragamalika, Javali, Tillana, Bhajan, and even some Hindusthani styles, such as Drupad and Tappa. Some of his favourite compositions were Padmanabha Pahi, Deva Deva, Devanke, Sarasijanabha and Sree Ramana Vibho.

The Maharaja who dedicatedly studied Hindustani music and mastered it, composed Dhrupads, Khayals, Tappas, Bhajans in the Hindustani style. His prime Hindustani music compositions were Bhajans (about 25), followed by Dhrupads (seven), Khayals (three) and Tappas (two).

Most of Swathi Thirunal's compositions denote the deity "Padmanabha" and his synonyms. The Maharajas of Travancore ruled their kingdom as 'dasas' (servants) of Lord Padmanabha (Vishnu) and governed the kingdom as His representative.

According to researchers, Swathi Thirunal was the first music composer to adapt Sanskrit and Malayalam in a Varnam format. **Kirtanams** (devotional songs composed with raga and tala), numbering about two hundred, form the bulk of his musical compositions. There was a rich variety in his music compositions which were evaluated and highly rated by eminent scholars and musicologists.

About fifty **padams** attributed to him are said to have come to light, though some scholars say,

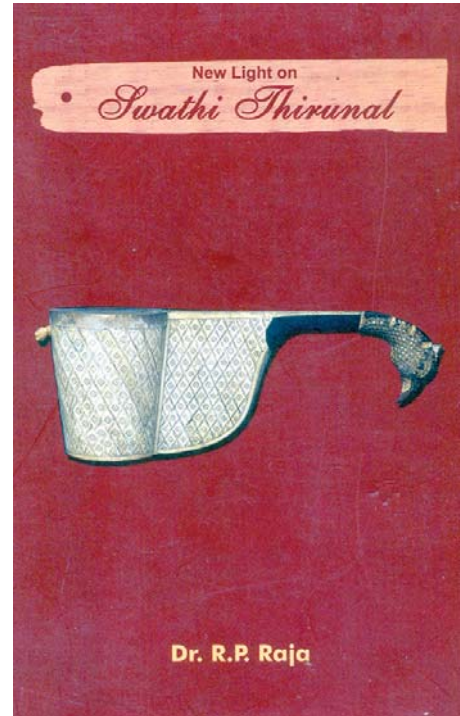


Earthenware Pots in Navaratri Mandapam, Thiruvananthapuram (from below)

these are compositions of Irayimman Tampi, as he collaborated with the Maharaja in this field.

According to the famous music maestro, Mysore Vasudevacharyar, the secret of the greatness of the Maharaja's compositions is that "they are verily the very essence of the expression of the Maharaja pouring out his heart to his maker" Lord Padmanabha, the presiding deity of the Travancore royalty. **"Each of his composition is a perfect piece of artistic creation. He is the one composer who has touched the entire range of structural composition in Carnatic music. This is an exclusive greatness of this Vaggeyakara".**

Unlike other rulers, Swathi Thirunal lived a simple life. The prince was generous, gentle, and courteous and music was an apparatus of worship. Lord Padmanabha was his real preceptor, for which he explains **"All that I write, whether poetry or music, centre's around God. It is an act of faith with me. Music is not worth its name otherwise".**



Ivory Swarabath- a musical instrument used by Maharaja Swathi Thirunal

New light on Swathi Thirunal

This work sheds new light on the life and works of Swathi Thirunal (1813-1846) based on archival evidences, hitherto not fully analysed by historians and connoisseurs of music. Besides the Mathilakom (Temple) records, printed materials available between the years 1839 and 1992, are chosen for the study. These documents provide ample proof on events and achievements related to the life of the Royal Composer.

About the Author

Dr. R P Raja, a member of the Ulsavamadam Kottaram, Mavelikkara was born on 16 May 1933, at the Sundaravilasom Palace, Fort, Thiruvananthapuram. After his graduation in science, from the St Berchman's College, Changanacherry, and M B S from the Thiruvananthapuram Medical College, he joined the Kerala Health Services and retired as Deputy Director. He was an active member of Kerala Government Medical Officers Association and was its State President in 1979. He regularly contributes articles related to history and religion. This is his first book.



The picture shows the Ivory Swarabath, a musical instrument used by Maharaja Swathi Thirunal.

While other music composers and geniuses devoted a life time to music, with creation of musical compositions as their only pre-occupation, Swathi Thirunal was a person whose main vocation in life was to rule the State and attend to the royal duties, even though he faced pressures from the British colonial administrators. Severely distressed Swathi Thirunal, who had occupied the throne of his kingdom when he was just 16 years, breathed his last on December 27, 1846, at a young age of 33 years. Had he lived longer, he would have achieved miraculous progress in the field of music.

It is said that once the great musical sage Narada asked Lord Vishnu, **"Oh Lord! Where do you actually reside? In Vaikunta? In the hearts of Yogis?"** and Vishnu sang,

Descendant's opine: PRINCE RAMA VARMA

"Naaham vasaami Vaikunte,
Yoginaam hridaye na cha,
Mad bhaktaa yathra gaayanthi,
Thathra thishtaami Naarada."
("I don't live in Vaikunta, or in the hearts of
Yogis.

I am present where my devotees sing
tunefully about me.")

While most believers would agree, that we need the grace of God for our well being, it is equally pertinent that God needs His or Her Devotees too, to sing his or her praises! The amount of popularity enjoyed by Sri Rama today for instance would be significantly less without the contribution of great devotees like Valmiki, Tulasidas, Thyagaraja, Bhadrachala Ramadasa and others.

Our own Lord Sri Padmanabhaswamy is no different in this respect. Despite having had a long line of Padmanabha Dasas to serve Him, the place that Maharaja Sri Swathi Thirunal has, is utterly unique and special, not just in the history of the temple, but in the history of Indian culture itself.

Sangeetha Pithamaha The Great Grandfather of Music, **Sri Purandaradasa wrote,**

Malagi paadidare, kulitu keluvanu - If you lie down and sing, I'll sit up and listen
Kulitu paadidare, nintu keluvanu - If you sit and sing, I will stand up and listen
Nintu paadidare, nalidu keluvanu - If you stand and sing, I will dance and listen
Nalidu paadidare, Swargasure bittenembe, Purandara Vittala ! - If you Dance and sing, then it is indeed Heaven, Oh Purandara Vittala!

Maharaja Swathi Thirunal personified the sentiment contained within this verse. Music pleases one the moment one hears it, whereas poetry gives pleasure after one contemplates it or analyzes it." Maharaja Swathi Thirunal personifies this too and could be rightly called "Saraswathyputhra" or the "Son of Goddess Saraswathy": somebody who embodied Music, Dance and Poetry in equal measure.

Like most people who are more evolved than others and who are visionaries ahead of their time, he had to suffer a lot and was forced to lead a tragic and frustrating life. But within this short life, his accomplishments in various areas like music, literature, administration, astronomy, social reforms, spirituality, languages and temple administration to name a few, literally boggle the mind!

The Swathi Heritage

How a composer king led renaissance of music and dance in 19th century



Prof. Achuthsankar S Nair,
Head, Dept of Music, University
of Kerala

The 1760-1850s was really a special period in history of Carnatic music. Beside the

Kaveri River, we had the three suns shining together bringing up the high noon of Carnatic music. Towards the end of the period, farther down south, beside the Karamana River, the Swathi star appeared, shining brightly but briefly.

This period saw many more famous composers and musicians - Irayimman Thampi, Veena Kuppayyar, Subbaraya Sasthri, the Tanjore Quartette, Goapala Krishna Bharathi, Shadkala Govinda Marar, Palakkad Parameswara Bhagavathar and many more. It is also a happy coincidence that Beethoven's productive life also overlapped this period.

"Omanathinkal Kidavo" (famous after Life of Pi Controversy) is a lullaby traditionally believed to be composed for the young Swathi. He is well known as an administrator who brought modernity to Kerala. English education, modern hospitals, libraries, legal system, astronomical observatory, banning of barbaric punishments... the list of his achievements is elongated. He was recognised worldwide, for instance, he was elected fellow of Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland in 1843, describing him as great promoter of science in the east.

His administrative achievements are easily overshadowed by his achievements in music and literature. He had a two-fold contribution in field of music and dance - as a versatile composer and also as a patron. While he churned out songs of various forms in various languages and Ragas, he also attracted musicians and dances from all over India like a magnet.

For a decade, the status of cultural centre of South India was usurped by the sleepy town of Thiruvananthapuram. His courtiers included the famous Tanjore Quartette (of whom Vadivelu stayed in Trivandrum for most of his short life), Shadkala Govinda Marar who impressed even Thyagaraja, Kannaya Bhagavathar, disciple of Thyagaraja etc contributed to the transformation of music and dance in Kerala and worked as ambassadors of Kerala music in Tamil Nadu. This is evident from publications in Tamilnadu during late 19th century.

Deekshithar's descendent Subbarama Deekshithar wrote a glorious biography of Swathi Thirunal in Telugu

and published his songs in notation. Tachur Singaracharulu, disciple of Shayamasathri's son and Thyagaraja's student (Subbaraya Sasthri), also published Swathi Songs. This inter-state interaction has a great value when we look back.

As a composer, he is first noted for his variety. He composed Varnams, Padams, Krithis, Javalis, Thillanas, Ragamalikas, Harikathas, and many Hindusthani forms. The languages included Sanskrit, Malayalam, Telugu, Kannada and Hindi. On his Hindustani songs, he was influenced by Kabir dohas as evidenced by presence of Malayalam transliteration of Kabir dohas in Swathi Archives in Kerala University Manuscripts Library.

Swathi Thirunal's master skill was in the technique of Swarakshara. Oriental Music in European Notation, a monumental work published in Madras in 1893, contains songs of Swathi Thirunal and refer to Swarakshara ability thus, "A certain musician who had composed a melody in this style [Swarakshara] appeared before the Maharaja and boasted that he had accomplished an extraordinary feat such as had never been attempted before. His Highness at once produced a number of pieces of the same kind, to show that he himself was capable of doing great deal more without difficulty." He along with Vadivelu rebooted the Kerala dance form of Mohiniyattam, adapting elements of Sadir. Swathi's padams are an inevitable part of Mohiniyattam stages till date.

It is not well known that the longest surviving music festival in south India (or perhaps the world) is the Navarathri music festival in Trivandrum, initiated by Swathi Thirunal in 1839. The songs set for each day by him are continuing to be rendered without break for 180 years now. Six years after his demise, a book with 82 songs of his was printed in Trivandrum. This author had the fortune to unearth it. This is arguably the first printed book in Carnatic music (Sangeetha Sarvartha Sara Samgraham (1859) in Telugu came 6 years after and interestingly contains the song "Sarasasamamukha" of Swathi Thirunal).



For a unique reason we can consider it just to place Swathi Thirunal as a worthy contemporary Trinity. Swathi Thirunal, through his own music and through his patronage, established Carnatic music in Kerala (this is a criticism as well - many Sopana admirers feel that he put an end to the Sopana tradition). The Dwi-Thrimoorthy -Thyagaraja, Deekshithar, Shyama

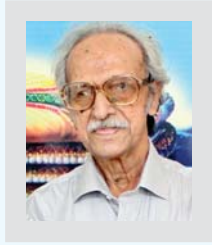
Sasthri along with Purandara Dasa, Annamacharya and Swathi Thirunal would be a cynosure to all South Indian eyes. The cause of Carnatic music is well served when it is iconically connected to all states of South India.

Divinity in Swathi Thirunal's Musical Compositions

The '**Musical Compositions**' of Maharaja Swathi Thirunal are strongly devotional in nature and hence are an expression of '**Divinity**'. Such compositions could be created only by persons who are spiritual in nature, who themselves have a spark of divinity in them, and that is why their compositions are laced with divinity. In the case of Swathi Thirunal, this divinity is evident irrespective of the language of the composition, and the forms of compositions whether it is a Keerthana or a 'Sringara Pada'.

To Swathi Thirunal, Sree Padmanabha Swamy, the tutelary deity of his royal dynasty was everything. Even when he composed musical compositions on other deities, they were qualified as deities praising or pleasing Sree Padmanaha Swamy.

Now, coming to the compositions themselves, when one takes as an example, the 'Navaratna Malika' krithis, they deal with the 'Nava Vidha Bhakthi', the nine forms of devotion which kindle and develop as well as express Bhakthi.



Dr. R. P. Raja
Author & Retd.
Deputy Director,
Kerala Health
Services

Naturally, the compositions contain and deal with divinity. All the Sanskrit Keerthanans contain prayers, glorifications and praises of Sree Padmanabha and are thus laced with divinity.

Many compositions contain philosophical concepts drawn from the Vedas and Upanishads, and references to stories from the great Puranas thus embellishing the divine nature of the compositions. In 'Sringara Padas', Sree Padmanabha is the 'Nayaka' and the Maharaja is the 'Nayaki' with an expression of intense divine love as of the 'Gopis' to 'Sree Krishna'.

Though a king with temporal powers, with natural state and political problems, the Maharaja did not seek for material gains, but through all his musical compositions, one finds his constant prayers for increasing his Bhakthi for the Lotus Feet of the Lord in prosperity and adversity, seeking the constant presence of the Lord in his heart, praying for opportunities for 'dasya vrithi', service to the Lord, to love the lord, and so on, qualifying the compositions as 'God Filled', thus making the

"Divinity in the Musical Compositions of Maharaja Swathi Thirunal, Absolute"



BEACONS OF LIGHT

An epitome devoted to Dance: **Guru** **Thankamani Kutty**

Guru Thankamani Kutty is a leading exponent of Bharatanatyam and Mohini Attam in India, especially in Eastern India, where she, along with her husband, Guru Govindan Kutty, a Kathakali maestro, popularized these classical dance forms among the art lovers.

In the year 2017, Kalamandalam Kolkata is celebrating its Golden Jubilee with round the year performances of classical dance and special dance productions at various centers, all over India and abroad.

Born in a family of art lovers in Kerala, on September 4, 1940, Thankamani Kutty was fascinated towards classical dance at a young age, after she happened to watch a live Bharatanatyam performance. The performance completely "mesmerized" her, Thankamani Kutty told **The Dance India** in an interview.

She later joined the Kerala Kalamandalam, a premier institution of performing arts, located at Cheruthuruthi, near Trichur, in Kerala, where she received training in Bharathanatyam as well as in Mohini Attam.



She was trained in Bharatanatyam by gurus like Rajaratnam Pillai, Maruthappa Pillai, Arunachalam Pillai and Rajalakshmi Ammal, while Chinnammu Amma groomed her in Mohiniyattam. She graduated from Kerala Kalamandalam, securing diplomas in Bharatanatyam and Mohiniyattam.

During her young, formative years, Thankamani Kutty used to watch the performances of leading Bharatanatyam artistes of the day, including Kumari Kamala, disciple of Ramiah Pillai. Later on, she drew inspiration from Yamini Krishnamurthy, Padma Subramaniam and Santa Rao.

In 1958, she married Shri Govindan Kutty, who had trained in Kathakali at the same institution, and the young couple moved to Kolkatta. They made Kolkatta their **'karmabhoomi'** and held performances of their classical dances, receiving high appreciation from the audiences. Encouraged by the good response to their pioneering efforts to showcase these classical south Indian dances, Smt Thankamani and Shri Govindan Kutty started teaching these dances to the local aspirants.

The first phase of their dream project came to fruition in 1968, when Smt Thankamani Kutty and her husband established 'Kalamandalam Calcutta', where these art forms are being taught. The institution, through its various activities, has played a major part in popularizing south India's rich cultural heritage in north eastern India.

In due course, Kalamandalam Calcutta (now Kolkatta) became famous and expanded with addition of six more centres, having a total of 20 teachers and 1,500 students on its rolls. It has now become an arts institution of international repute and has so far trained 30,000 dancers, many of whom are professionals while some are gurus in well known dance institutions. Currently, Kalamandalam Kolkatta celebrates its Golden Jubilee with year round classical dance performances all over India and abroad.



Kutty couple posing for a Newspaper interview photograph

Speaking about their challenges so far, Guru Thankamani Kutty said she and her husband Guru Shri Govindan Kutty, had their share of difficulties and challenges in building up the institution and having own building with all facilities under a single roof. Unfortunately in January 2007, Guru Shri Govindan Kutty has passed away. The land for the building had been acquired, but the building plan had still not been approved.

The construction of the building at this stage, without help from her husband, was a big challenge faced by her.

Today the school has its own building of 22,000 sq. ft. covered area with spacious class rooms, auditorium, library, students' hostel, and other facilities.

In her views about the role of dance in society, Guru Thankamani Kutty says that, a student of Bharatanatyam (and other classical dances) will be well versed in India's cultural heritage in the course of her dance education. Secondly, classical dances impart discipline among the youth and thirdly, it helps development of personality.



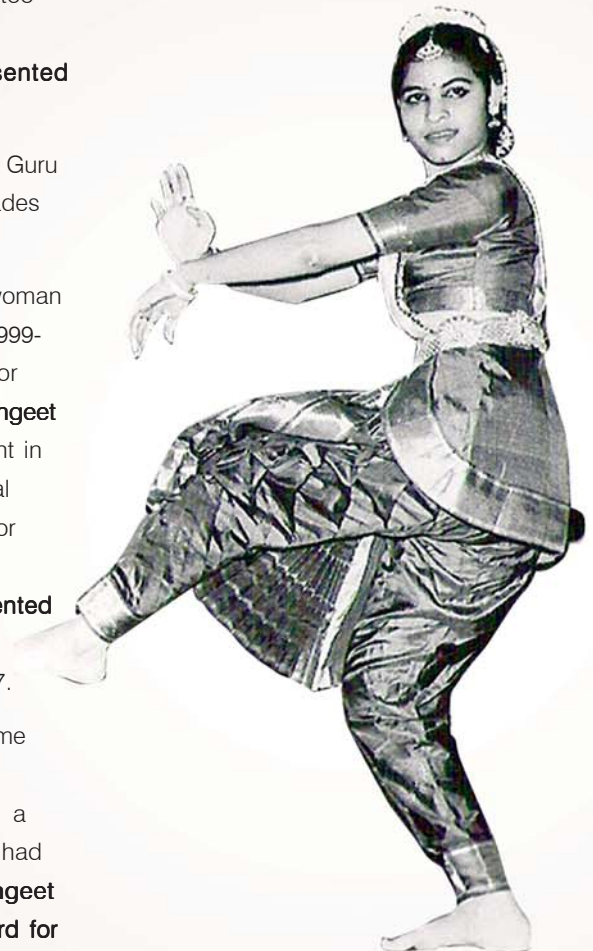
practising with students

She says the classical dance forms and traditions in India are too deeply rooted. However, she added, **"I look forward to experiments and fusion if they are aesthetically presented and are soothing to the eyes and ears."**

In appreciation of her contribution to classical arts and dance, Guru Thankamani Kutty has received numerous awards and accolades from various government and social organizations.

The dance guru received the award **"Shatabdir Nari"** (The woman of the Millennium) at the Biswa Banga Sammelan, Kolkata in 1999-2000. Earlier, she was recipient of **"All India Critics"** award for Bharatanatyam and Mohiniattam in 1998, **"Nriya Natak Sangeet Drishya Kala Akademy"** award of West Bengal Government in 1993, the **"Prashastika"** award instituted by the West Bengal Government's Information and Cultural Affairs Department, for contribution in the field of dance, in 1995, the Asians Paints **"Shiromani Puraskar"** in 1992, and **"Bharat Nirman Talented Ladies"** award from **"Build India"** (an All India organization promoting constructive programs in all spheres of life) in 1997.

Guru Thankamani Kutty also received accolades from her home state, Kerala too. She felt very exhilarated when she received **"Kerala Kalamandalam Award for Mohiniattam"** - 2008, a prestigious award from her alma mater. Two years earlier, she had received **"Kalaprathibha Puraskaram"** from **"Kerala Sangeet Natak Academy"**. She is also a recipient of **'Pravasi Award for**



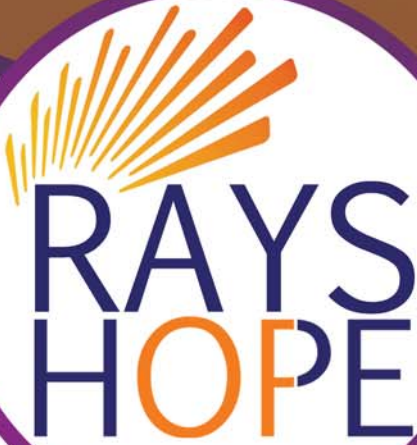
Dance' from the Kerala Government's Department of Information and Cultural Affairs.

Guru Thankamani Kutty was conferred with an honorary "Degree of Doctor of Literature" at the 36th Annual Convocation of Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata, in 2011. In Orissa, she was awarded "Kelucharan Mahapatra Smriti Purashkar" by "Nandanik" in 2007 and "Bharatmuni Samman - 2008" by Kalingayana Touryatrikam, Bhubaneswar, Orissa.

Other awards received by her in recent years include "Heritage Sanman - A creative personality" award from

Heritage World Society, Kolkata in 2010, "Life Time Achievement" award by Indo Occidental Symbiosis, Kolkata, on the occasion of 150th Birth Anniversary of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, at Kolkata in 2011, "Life Time Achievement Award" from Rotary International through Rotary Club of Calcutta East Central, in 2011, "Vibhakar Puraskar" from Bangiya Sangeet Parishad, Howrah in 2012, "Bangabibhushan" Award from Information & Cultural Department, Govt. of West Bengal in 2013, and "Nazrul Puraskar" from Nazrul Academy, West Bengal, in 2016,.





**RAYS
HOPE**

**A progressive
persona**

MALLIKA JAYANTI



Through several generations, the traditional dance form Bharatanatyam has been propitious to find performers who have held the flag high at all times. We have come across one such quintessential Bharatanatyam dancer, striving to become the finest governess of Indian classical dance culture by spreading the knowledge of the dance form while creating an indelible mark through her performances, both in India and overseas. She is a performer and a teacher who believes that imparting the knowledge of the valuable dance form is the best way of promoting it.

In an exclusive with **The Dance India**, Mallika Jayanti talks about her dance journey and the aspiration to keep Bharatanatyam alive in the diasporas. Mallika Jayanti is an exponent of Bharatanatyam dance, one of the oldest known classical dance forms of the world.

Born in the year 1980, in a typical traditional Hindu Brahmin family as a second daughter, Mallika was an active child. Her training in Bharatanatyam started at an early age, when she was only 3 yrs old. She was tagged along with her elder sister to the dance class upon compulsion from her mother. As child, she was more interested in playing around and having fun, where she used to bunk classes, while her sister was more focused in dancing.

Fairly trained with basics at early age, her actual trail towards dance started after relocating to Bangalore city post marriage in the year 2004. She started her training under the esteemed guidance of Guru Mrs. Vijaya Marthanda, a true task master who has offered her valuable lessons of the dance form, for which Mallika stays indebted forever. As a student, it was a challenge for Mallika to find words of praise from her Guru Mrs. Vijaya, but her detailed feedback on every dance move was preciously vital and helpful.

Mallika adores her guru Mrs. Vijaya for blessing and encouraging her to become a dancer. Reminiscing her wonderful appreciating moments with Mrs. Vijaya, Mallika felt the warmth of her mentor in the hug she received from her after Mallika's first performance.

"While in a dance class, she complimented on how graceful and good-looking I was, when dancing. Her advice on the maintenance of good physique for the dance to seem more aesthetic is definite."

Mallika aspires to resemble her guru Mrs. Vijaya Marthanda, in skill, grace and as an influential and dedicated supporter of dance form and dancers.

Guru Jyothi Mohan of Shanmukhananda Fine Arts located in Mumbai is also one of Mallika's mentors in

Bharatanatyam. Speaking of her mentorship, **"Guru Jyothi Mohan taught me how easy it is to be giving and not expecting anything in return." Every time I doubted on my ability to perform, she had only one response 'Why do you think you can't do it?',** says Mallika.

Mallika believes that Guru Jyoti is one of the most wonderful people she has come across and praises her willingness and openness to share her knowledge of dance form.

She bows down to both her gurus' to their patience, time and consideration in training her to be the best. Mallika proudly asserts about her gurus **"I have a long long way to go, I have not even taken a baby step in this ocean of art and aesthetics, but with my gurus' blessings, I think I will make a few memorable steps in this dance journey"**

Despite her parent's disapproval to learn dance after wedding, Mallika acknowledges her mother-in-law, Mrs. Savitri Jayanti for her immense steady support in managing both household and dance classes, encouraging her to have a smooth ride towards her dream of dancing.

Hailing from a family of renowned classical vocalists, sanskrit scholars and veda-pandits, Mallika mentions about her elder sister, who once stood a Karnataka state topper in Bharatanatyam Junior-level examination and currently is a happy home-maker.

Mallika has been performing since the last 15 years on several stages across India, Australia and USA. Many newspapers reviewed her dancing and said that she is the most promising and talented dancer of recent times. Currently, she teaches Bharatanatyam for Gurukulam in Omaha, USA.

She has received intensive training in Bharatanatyam and in Kuchipudi as well. She currently practices Bharatanatyam and Tanjore bani, and believes that these dance forms accredit to the cultural fabric of the country. She learns Kuchipudi, whenever she visits





Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh from Nataraj Music and Dance Academy and recently started learning the Kathak dance form.

As a personality, Mallika is a very self-motivated and disciplined dancer. Her most inspiring moments as a dancer was when she saw her senior at dance class, Anitha, perform for "Kanchadalayataakshi" under Mrs. Vijaya's choreography.

She stood in awe watching the performances of **Priyadarshini Govind** in her perfect Aramandi position, and **Sudharani Raghupati** performing for "adhuvum sollluval".

Apart from dance, drama has been one of the passions to pursue for Mallika. She was also selected for National School of Drama, New Delhi and that believes she is born with a talent to perform on stage. Being a multi-linguist, she enjoys reading poetic literature influenced by her father. She watches dance performances and listens to music, if she isn't dancing.

Her daily routine is as simple as for everyone. She prefers homemade food and does not binge eat on

snacks in order to maintain good physical health. She indulges in some form of physical exercise some way or the other.

Mallika is dedicated to promote the art form across globe; she has performed and conducted workshops, lecture demonstrations, classes in three different continents and various countries. For this, she travels extensively, organizing and participating in various events. She aspires to expand her knowledge base in Bharatanatyam while appreciating for other classical dance forms too.

Novice in the teaching field of dance, she aspires to share her knowledge and craft to many others. As a student of art, she does a lot of research on theology, mostly Hinduism and dance. Her mission is to promote quality talent and art.

Speaking of her challenging moments, "**Dolling up for the performance has been most challenging**", says as she chuckles. However, on a serious note, she considers that sometimes views of society are more challenging as they believe that performing arts is complimentary and effortless. She claims that it is critically challenging to make people understand that there is lot of labor, creative work, time and money invested in creating a marvelous performance.

Also, the next biggest challenge is the true identification of the classical dance form. People fail to recognize the difference between pure classical and semi-classical dance forms. It stands as a key task on the shoulders of the dancers to educate public about the authenticity of the dance form.



On a lighter note, she recollects her best moments through her dance journey, were being appreciated in the international print media, despite minimal space for inter-cultural reporting, and also being acknowledged by an appreciation letter from the dance festival organizers of Australia for her spectacular performance.

Mallika stands unbiased to the idea of fusion experiments with traditional dance forms, believing that traditional dance always has its own niche audience and connoisseurs which can pose no threat from any experiments, retaining their purity and sanctity.

In her view of dance as a professional career, she feels unlike any other profession, dance or any art needs much more investment of money, time and hard work. As ideal is the thought of pursuing passion as a career, in reality the earnings from it are barely enough to get a square meal for a day.

Respecting the passionate dance practitioners, she feels that it is always necessary to have a regular income job that keeps the flow of money to take care of one's bills, while one can pursue dance as a full-time career if its earnings cover all their financial necessities.

Mallika agrees with a resounding, yes, that there is a lot that can be done for the society and environment

through dance forms. She says that mythological consequences of characters in the puranas and historic tales can be explored and explained through the lens of modern day problems we face or a Kalindi Mardhanam of Sri Krishna relating to water and other environmental pollution.

Mallika has earned a national recognition of "Natya Sri" in the year 2008 and an international recognition of "Nrutya Praveena" in the year 2012 at International Dance Congress, for her contribution in the field of "Bharatanatyam".

In her view, dance festivals provide artists a common platform in showcasing new talents and in welcoming inspiring forthcoming artists. For connoisseurs and art lovers, it enables the chance of witnessing various types of dances forms creating to feast their eyes.

As an international acclaimed dancer, Mallika always feels special to be contributing and worthy for her homeland witnessing all the love and appreciation. She feels proud to be a part of the great culture and never misses a moment to represent her country and the dance form reflecting the incredible culture of the country in the world arena.

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"The Vibrant 'Tarang' Mahotsav"

The Prabodhankar Keshav Sitaram Thackeray Mini Auditorium at Borivali (w.), Mumbai was filled with vibrancy and mystic aura where many dignitaries and artists united to witness the **"Tarang Utsav 2017"**, organized by renowned artist Smt. Kashmira Trivedi of Takshashila Nrityakala Mandir, Thane.

As every year, this year also the utsav witnessed various dancers from different classical forms like Bharatanatyam, Kathak and Odissi were given opportunity to showcase their talent.

Simran Kavugoli and Deepika Venkatesh, disciples of Smt. Chitra Viswanathan gave solo performances in Bharatanatyam. Smt. Manjula Manoj, disciple of Giri S.P. Srinivasan & Guru Shankar Hembal performed Bharatanatyam.

Students of Sri Krishna Kala Mandir led by Guru Smt. Gayathri Gopi from Chennai and students of Shanmukha Arts led by Smt. Kala Srinivasan performed group Bharatanatyam recitals respectively.

The solo Kathak performers were Medha Shah - disciple of Pandit Triloki Prasad, Purva Pandit - Disciple



Performance by Disciples of Shri Kashmira Trivedi



Disciples of Dr Neeta Surve Performing Kathak in Tarang Utsav

of Dr. Suchitra Harmalkar and Laxminarayan Jena - disciple of Guru Mysore B Nagaraj. The group Kathak presentation was by students of Dr. Neeta Surve of Bessein Academy of Performing Arts.

All the performances were appreciated and encouraged by senior dignitaries like Guru Shri. Deepak Muzumdar, Dr. Smt. Uma Rele, Shri BR Vikram Kumar, Shri. Jeevanlal Lavidiya IRS and Smt. Shipra Shrivatsava from the CISF.



Smt Manjula Manoj performing in the Utsav

Graceful performance by Purva Pandit in Tarang Utsav





Bharatanatyam Exponent Guru Deepak Mazumdar felicitating Commandant of CISF Shipra Shrivastava at the event



Shri Laxminarayan Jean performing a Kathak item

All the dignitaries spoke about the significance of classical dance forms and its implications of one's personality. Their words of wisdom were an eye opener for the younger generation to pursue classical art forms as part of their regular curriculum and retain its rich culture and heritage of thousands of years.

Guru Shri Deepak Mazumdar magnificently spoke about the Guru -Shishya relationship and its essence. Shri Vikram Kumar and Dr. Smt. Uma Rele shared their thoughts of about encouraging and inspiring the parents and students to learn the art forms with sincerity and commitment.

Shri Jeevanlal, who hails from a non-dancer background, had much reverence to our Bharatiya culture and highly appreciated the efforts of Smt.Kashmira Trivedi for bringing together so many people and giving budding artists such a wonderful platform to present their talent.

Smt Shipra Srinivas being in the uniform services spoke about the goodness of our BharataSanskriti and said the richness of the ancient traditions has in fact kept our country at a far higher grade in the world for crime and offence. All artists who performed were awarded "**Tarang Padma**"

Tala Mani

Organized By
Smt. Kashmiri Trivedi
(Founder & organiser)

NEWS

Students of Smt Kala Srinivas performing in Tarang Utsav



memento along with a certificate of appreciation.

The function concluded with a mesmerizing vocal rendition by Shri Shiva Prasad who was accompanied by a fantastic support on mridangam by Shri Satish Krishnamurthy, Violin by Shri Balamurli, Ganjira by Shri Arjun Elavle and Ghatam by Shri Vinit Ashtamurthy. He sang the famous '**Vaataapi Ganapatim**' for about

20 minutes which was interwoven with amazing kalpanaiswarams and a scintillating taalavadhyam. Shivaprasad was awarded the "**TarangSur - Tala Mani**" and honored by Guru Shri. Deepak Muzumdar and Shri. Vikram Kumar.

To summarize, there was ideal co-ordination and sequence of events in terms of organizing and



Disciples of Smt. Gayatri Gopinath from Vellore who participated in this festival



A mesmerising performance by Shri Shiva Prasad along with his team - Satish on Mridangam, Vinit on Ghatam, Arjun on Kanjira, Bala Murthy on Violin



Smt Gayatri Gopinath performing in the Utsav

execution by Takshashila team. The students of Smt Kashmir Trivedi who performed for invocatory Mallari performance was a treat to watch. It was quite smart move by them to be teamed in uniform attires to work as volunteers throughout the event. Their warm and respectful conduct deserves applause.

The Dance India team extends heartiest congratulations to Guru Smt. Kashmir Trivedi for her commitment, sincerity, devotion and hard work for recognizing and encouraging potential artists and bringing them forward in classical art forms in this era of western influence.



Rupika Kodam Odissi dancer performed Ardhhanarishwar in Tarang Utsav



Shri Deepak Mazumdar is honouring the chief guest Shri Jeevanlal Lavadiya IRS in Tarang Utsav

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A riveting "Palukae Bangaaramaye" drama recital for the theatre admirers

In the year 1975, 42 years ago Sri Dadi Veerabhadra Rao penned the first essence of the dramatic sketch "Palukae Bangaaramaye".

In this modern era, this drama was enacted syncing with important aspects of the society on the occasion of 80th birth anniversary of Sri Ravuji, who rendered his colossal services through Amma Sanskruthi Sansthan. The program was organized on 7th November, 2017, with the interest of The Leaders People Service and the Writers Academy.

The drama portrayed societal evils such as corruption, victim suicides, dowry, poverty, and unemployment, unequal distribution of wealth and over population prevailing in the existing society.

Critically important characters of the drama were Girisam, Bangaru, Kantamma, which were the imaginary characters portrayed by the very famous artists, writers, and poets of the country. The drama showcased various emotions conveying sympathy, empathy, innocence, guilt and shades of sense of





humor. The depiction of the drama was highly appreciated by the local art and theatre enthusiasts. The audience enjoyed every scene of the drama, stirring themselves in to a trance of triumph and adversity.

The essence of the drama was to express a social message to the public about the socio-political and economic aspects of the society, where humans live. They also highlighted the fundamental duties and rights of a common man, which are left idle. Humor scenes entertained the crowd throughout the drama. With the universal opinion of people, this drama has been conceptualized according to the daily conditions of the society, the functioning of the governing bodies, the increase rate of social chaos, the status of the people. Consequently, the choice of showcasing the drama to various categories of audience has been thought-provoking for the society.



PARINITHI

a grand fiesta!!

So many ideas pooled into solidity, so many thoughts converged to positivity, so many hands worked to synergy, so many hearts thumped for energy, so many feet jumped in joy, so many eyes witnessed the awe... Yes indeed!!!

It was all possible in the grand two day dance extravaganza organised at Sagara, Karnataka, a serene place of Art & Culture spreading the glory of incredible India. As the name suggests, Parinithi was indeed a celebration of mastery in dance forms of India.



Senior Advocate Shri Divakar is Inaugurating Parinithi National Dance festival



The event was organised by Parinithi Kala Kendra lead by Vid. Gopal. Mand co-ordination with Sai arts International lead by Sri Sai Venkatesh.

The National dance festival- Parinithi was inaugurated delightfully by Mr.Divakar, SeniorHighCourt advocate and spokesman, Karnataka Congress, Chief Guest Smt.Veena Beleyur, Honorary President of Parinithi Kalakendra and Vikram Goud Bathina lighting the lamp on 25th November, 2017 by eminent local leaders and connoisseurs. The organising schools Parinithi Kalakendra and Sai International presented their dance shows in the beginning and set a perfect platform for the exhibition of true talents in highest spirits. The first day of the festival witnessed some great Bharathanatyam performances of Takshashila Kalamandir headed by dancers Kashmira Trivedi,

Nrityaganga Pradarshaka kala kendra, Guru Roopashree Madhusudan, excellent Kathak by Niranthara dance ensemble lead by Sri Somashekhar and Smt. Sowmya enchanting Kuchupudi performance by vid. Archana Punyesh and team.

The second day of the celebrations, Ex-MLA Halappa commenced the programe by blooming the flowers on lord Nataraja and ChiefGuest S.S.Ramesh president of Parinithi NationalDanceFestival and SaiVenkateshwitnessed in 26thNovember,2017.Again some brilliant performances that lured audience with sheer allure of excitement and entertainment.Vidushi Pushpa Krishnamurthy and team presented the first programme that was followed by a divine performance of Ananya Kala Nikethana headed by Guru Karnataka Kalashree Vid. K.Brinda. Parinithi Kala kendra proved

Karnataka KalaShree Suparna Venkatesh students performed Bharathanatyam in Parinithi National Dance festival



their artistic skills on thesecond day by a solid performance. Next was the performance of Drishtinandan Dance team lead by Internationally acclaimed dance artiste Kush Kushari presenting

some of his traditional Bharathanatyam numbers. This was followed by an enchanting and graceful Odissi performance by Nrityantar dance ensemble headed by Guru Madhulitha Mohapatra. Next was the highlight of

Parinithi kalakendra students performing Pranavaakara siddhinaayaka



the whole event Koodiyaattam by Kalamandalam Remith Ramesh and team which powerfully presented the strength of our Indian dance forms. This vibrant dance form was spectacular with its gorgeous costumes, elaborate stunning make up and splendid performance. Energy and grace blended into a fine mixture was Kudiyaattam, a traditional dance form of Kerala, the god's own country.

The finale of the whole festival was a neatly presented duet Bharathanatyam performance by young and energetic Sri. Yogesh Kumar and Kum. Sneha Narayan. They danced with vigour and joy.

Both the days were studded with short formal proceedings in which artistes Kashmira Trivedi, Aishwarya Narayan, Pushpa Krishnamurthy and

Hema Vagmode were felicitated with the Parinithi Puraskar. The event was efficiently anchored by Vid. Roopashree Madhusudan.

The LED screen as the backdrop ushered good wishes of many art loving local leaders and the whole city of Sagara had thronged the vast place of Gandhi grounds to witness this dance extravaganza.

Sri Vikaram Goud of Dance India Magazine and Sri Vikram Soori, an eminent artiste were present during the occasion.

Parinithi was indeed a great success in communicating the divinity and diversity of dance forms of India and enlightening people with great joy and respect for Indian art and culture.

Soma Sekhar group performed kathak in Parinithi Internal Dance festival



An emerging fine art prodigy: K. Sujana



"**A**s flowers bloom, so do you". This citation stands apt for our multi-faceted doll Kumari. K. Sujana who is blooming like a flower contributing to the world of arts and culture. Sujana started learning dance and music at the tender age of 5 years, currently in her teens Sujana is a burgeoning versatile artist, acquiring talents in dance and music of traditional Indian arts & culture.

Sujana was born to Mrs. Aruna & Mr Ashok, who recognize the importance of the virtue of the classical art forms despite having learnt dance for quite a while missed the opportunity to come in into the field of dance due to personal constraints and circumstances. So, they encouraged their daughter, Sujana to make a way into into the world of arts and culture, ever since she was a toddler. Especially Mrs. Aruna, who aspired for her daughter, admitted her into dance and music classes.

Sujana was nurtured in Kuchipudi dance under the esteemed guidance of her guru KV Lakshmi, Principal of Nataraj Music and Dance Academy and BR Vikram Kumar, the founder of NMDA. She performed on stage since 5 years of age and gave numerous performances on behalf of the Nataraj Music and Dance Academy (NMDA) and her school, Sri Prakash Vidyaniketan. Currently, she completed her Intermediate education and is planning for her bachelors.

Apart from showcasing many performances, she also portrayed characters in dance ballets like Chenchu Vishnu in "**Chenchu Lakshmi Nursimhaswamy Kalyanam**", and also enacted characters of Kammusa, Vasudeva and Kalinga "**Yasodha Krishna**".

Sujana participated in various events like "Ugadhi Sambharalu", "Bhagiradha Vilasam", "Sathyabhama Yuva Nrithotsav" and performed in Maha



brindadanatyam Silicon Andhra, Yogini Dance festival in Bhubaneshwar, Guru Smarananjali Nrithya samarpana dance festival in Cochin. She also has performed for the swearing ceremony of the Chief Minister of the Andhra Pradesh in Guntur organized by Kuchipudi Siddhendra Kalapeetham in 2014.

She was awarded with "Naaty Krithika Award" in 2013, "Naaty Taranga Bala Puraskar" in 2014 from NMDA supported by ICCR, "Naaty Manjari Award" in Classical dance festival for youth in 2014 and 2017. Apart from these, Sujana also is learning Carnatic Music from 7 years and has participated in the prestigious Tyagaraja Aradhanoshvally event, 2014.

She also possesses flair in playing keyboard instrument, where she secured a second prize in keyboard competitions held by Kalavahini Music Academy at Visakhapatnam. The grace, confidence and enthusiasm Sujana shows in learning and performing the arts enable her reach heights in near future. Such path-breaking young aspiring artists, always stands a good sign for sustenance of traditional Indian arts and culture



KOODIYATTAM

The only surviving specimen of the ancient Sanskrit theatre, Koodiyattam [kutiyattam], meaning "combined acting," signifies Sanskrit drama presented in the traditional style in temple theatres of Kerala. It has an attested history of a thousand years in Kerala. They were treated as an integral part of worship services alongside the singing of tevaram and prabandam hymns.

Traditionally, Koodiyattam has been performed by Chakyars (a sub caste of Kerala Hindus) and by Nangyaramma (women of the Ambalavasi Nambiar caste).

Koodiyattam has traditionally been an exclusive art form performed in special venues called 'Koothambalams' in Hindu temples and access to these performances were highly restricted to only caste Hindus. Also, performances are lengthy taking up to forty days to complete. UNESCO has called for the creation of a network of Koodiyattam institutions and gurukalams to nurture the transmission of the art form to future generations and for the development of new audiences besides fostering greater academic research in it.

Frozen- in-Time



Pic By: V. Srinivas Rao



The Linguistic link of India

Text by Nikhitha Challapilli

"Language is the light of mind" quotes John Stuart Mill, an English Philosopher

As the English philosopher's quote leans towards linguistic determinism, he advocates that language enables us to communicate with each other; it allows us to exchange our ideas and opinions. It sheds a light on one's sense of understanding. Without light, one's mind is at darkness suggesting that you cannot understand anything that one perceives without language. One such beautiful language, embraced and woven with harmony, globally is the **English language**.

Developed over a course of 1400 years, English language stands as a globally spoken imperative language, also considered as the Germanic language. It is the official language for about 54 sovereign states and 27 non-sovereign entities and almost spoken by 400 billion people as their first language.

Acquiring great importance in this advanced world, learning English has become the need of the hour in order to seek employment and an effective communication medium. To succeed in the competitive global economy, it is practically a necessity for workers in numerous positions of employment to understand

English. It is the international language of diplomacy, business, science, law, entertainment, technology and even seafaring and aviation. English has become the language of Lingua Franca of the modern age: a key to being a global citizen, and also a means to the medium of business lingo.



English usage comprised of stages such as Old English, Middle English, Early Modern English and Modern English. In the very beginning, breathed three tribes like the Angles, the Jutes and the Saxons during the late period of 15th century. This led to the formation of Anglo-Saxon or Old English which reverberated like the German.

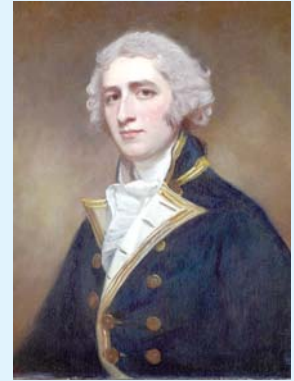


From the influence of North Germanic languages, evolved the Middle English era which was spoken by the Scandinavians. Early Modern English was also specified as the language used by Shakespeare. It incorporated many linguistic aspects from Latin, Ancient Greek, French, German and Dutch and saw a great vowel shift which led to the era of Modern English.

Thereafter, the English language has been a channel to various parts of the world through British colonialism and currently the predominant language in Britain, Ireland, United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India and many other countries.

A very common perception amongst Indians is that English has been acknowledged in India only during the time of the British rule, but it has been recognized even during the pre-independence period. Thomas Babington Macaulay played a crucial role in

introducing English accent and Western education in India which he also emphasized in his argument, "**Macaulay Minute**". The argument was published in the year 1835 which spoke of spending 'a lakh of rupees' for the introduction of English literature and teaching of English language to Indians. He was the first person to experiment English language as the medium of instruction in all schools and trained many Indians into proficient teachers.

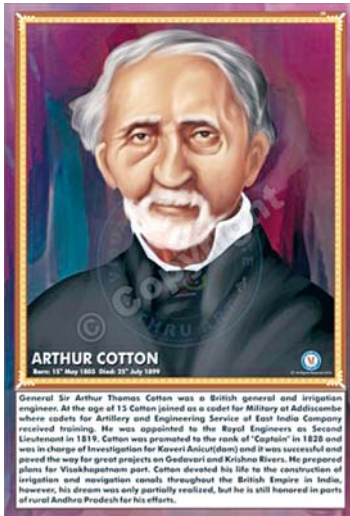


The Pre-Independence Period

The British have been one of the reasons for the introduction of English language in India, owing partial credits. It was one of the strongest intuitions that, India has been exposed to the English language when the prestigious company of British- "The East India Company" has been established during 1600's and the country stood still with the 53 educational policies proposed by Lord Macaulay.

Timothy J. Scrase, a famous economist, commented on the status of English in India during the pre-independence era stating that **"Since the day of the British rule, English remained the language of domination, status and privilege in India. The hegemonic colonial project in India was to create and maintain a class of administrative**





officers, clerks and compliant civil servants to carry out the task of ruling the vast and expansive subcontinent".

He meant that English was the language of rulers in India and as colonial

subjects of the country were prone to no other choice, rather than to learn English. This stood as the root cause of the British incursion in India where the British administrators ignored the cultural needs of the country. Though the British were not interested in spreading European type of education in India, their strategy was to implement an absolute political vision, so that this initiation of western education would enable the Indians to challenge the alien rule, similar to the case of United States of America, where it was a complete socio-political and economic necessity to the Indians.

The induction of English language saw a smooth beginning where few natives of India such as the orientalist, advocated the revival of Sanskrit and Persian language. Some Hindu leaders like Raja Ram Mohan Roy also escorted the medium of instruction in English with the help of other missionary firms.

After the proposal by Mr. Macaulay, necessary order on the medium of instruction in English has been issued on 7th March, 1835 by Lord William Bentinck, who was the then Governor General of India. After going through a long rhetoric minute written by the Macaulay on 2nd February in the same year. This led to the formation of the **'The English Education Act, 1835'** which is a complete legislative act of the Council of India during the year 1853.

This act was established in order to raise funds from the East India Company to spend on the education and literature in India and also paved path for publication of literature in mother tongues such as Sanskrit and Persian. Later, not only English was the medium of instruction, it has been the language of the administrators, language of the law and courts and as one of the language of the country.

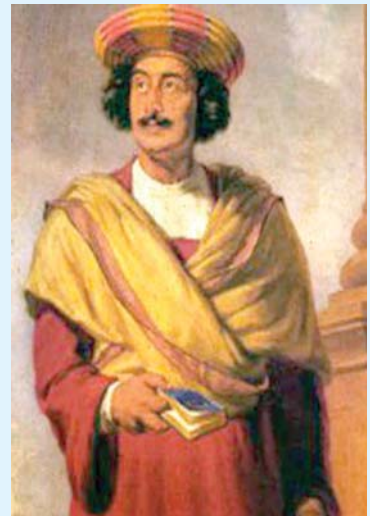
During the late 1840's and early 1850's a fair number of primary, middle and high schools have been established in many districts of British India. In the year 1857, some features of the University of London were adopted and established in educational institutions in Bombay, Kolkata and Chennai.

All the way long with the crown rule in India, amidst the era of 1858 to 1947, many Indians have been recruited in the many government services as a result of English as a medium of instruction which finally became the only functional language in the country.

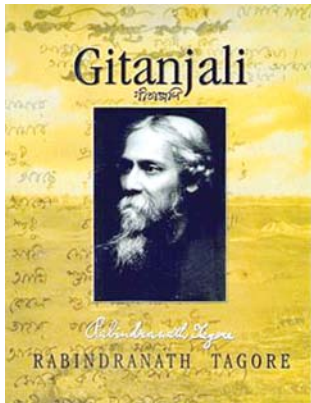
The Post-Independence Period

In the sphere of education, a good grasp of English language became

vitaly important and has also become the practical epitome of employment. As a result of its importance, it became a usage medium in many occupations and stood as the international language of academia, where even the



education ministries of the country mandated the teaching of English language to a certain level of competence. It showed adverse necessity socially, politically, economically and educationally. As the



country has witnessed industrialization and modernization in its daily routines, English language has become the Lingua Franca-Business language. It is highly commendable that English has become a global language in

order to hold international relationships, exports, imports, trade and commerce.

Post independence in the year 1947, Hindi was declared as the first official language but this did not last for many years as people from Tamil Nadu and other non-Hindi speakers agitated against this proposal during the year 1965. Therefore, English language remained as official language. With this thought in mind, the English Language Amendment Bill declared English language to be an associate language as this has been only way of medium to communicate among the people of central government and non-Hindi speakers. Earlier, English has been used only by few limited group of people but gradually, the usage number has increased drastically. As a result, it paved way for establishment of many universities, schools and colleges. In fact, it gave an adverse shift to the status of the country.

Later in 1990's, the situation was likely to identify the status of English language as it has become a link language among the educated people and the few elites of the society. Though Hindi language has been declared the official language of the country, English has developed vogue in the people. On contrary, it resulted in the creation of a class of vernacular-educated native to occupy lower position both in education and administration. English language was taught effectively in many universities, schools and colleges as a medium of instruction.

Constantly, the English speakers have increased to a large number, where the social status of the society was dependent on the usage of English language. A good command over the English language yielded a good employment opportunities' and was instrumental in creating employment for its people. According to **'The Official Language Act, 1963,'** English language was entitled as a subsidiary official language.

In India, either English or Hindi language was used for any parliamentary proceedings. Along with the population, the usage of English also gained popularity. It has acquired national importance and proved that it stands nowhere less efficient or less effective in any manner. It became an idea medium of communication to correspond the world.

Hence, India became a country with superior linguistic adaptability, where people are warm hearted and diversified in culture, religion and tradition irrespective of their geographic conditions, caste, creed, color, sex and religion. The evolution of English language has been since pre-independence, with the focal point of it being, not just to inculcate and revolt to the hideous acquisitiveness of the British rule, rather to evoke a positive effect on the linguistic adaptation of the country in moving ahead.

This English style of education proved to be beneficial for the people of India, as it gained recognition as an important global language which has been one of the reasons for professional employment and a key component in building international relationships.

The view of the English language among many Indians has stimulated from associating it with colonialism to associating with economic progress of the country. Indians have always strived to protect and conserve its innate culture and nativity, along with sustaining the status of Hindi language as the first language, allocating the next supremacy to English language, so that, it would contribute to build of the nation, promoting harmony and peaceful relations, creating effective communication between individuals and endorsing brotherhood.

An enriching commemoration of dance: The 45th Nirtha Sangeetholsavam

Regatta Cultural Society unveiled its sapphire anniversary celebrations which commenced on the 28th of September, 2017 and was organised till 3rd October, 2017 October 03 at the Priyadarshini Hall, East-Fort, Trivandrum.

The **45th Nirtha Sangeetholsavam** flaunted performances of *Regatta's* blooming artistes as well as of numerous renowned artistes across the country. From the six day long cultural extravaganza, the dilettantes and connoisseurs reaped the rich and vibrant fruits of seeds sowed painstakingly by the *Regatta's* students and teachers alike.

The **45th Nirtha Sangeethatholsavam** was inaugurated by *Prof. C. Raveendranath*, the Minister for Education, Govt. of Kerala. The event was graced by the presence of *Shri.Narthaki Nataraj*, the maverick *Bharatanatyam* Dancer and choreographer.

Following the inaugural session, the senior students of *Regatta* presented their '**Natya Samarpanam**'. Some of the authentic pieces choreographed at the institution were also presented that day. With the alluring facial expressions and intricate foot works, the dancers seized the spectator's heart and adulations.

The *second day* was awakened by the soothing voice of music and grace of *Regatta's* singers. *Dr.T.N.Seema*, the MP of Rajyasabha, was the guest of honour. *Narthaki Nataraj*, the senior disciple of Guru K.PKittappa Pillai, presented couple of original dance pieces which were paintings enriched with contrasting colours and kaleidoscopic range of expressions. The



day came to an end with the brilliant performances of the institution's students.

Sri.V.S.Sivakumar, MLA Trivandrum Constituency, was the chief-guest of third day. The day saw the scintillating dance repertoire of the leading proponent of Bharatanatyam *Smt.Parvathi Ravi Ghantasala* and her troupe. With their poised stride they took and veils that hid their features, yet seeming to show profound expressions through the eyes beyond, were poetry for the spectators.

Sri.Vikram Goud Bathina -Editor in Chief, *The Dance Magazine*, **Smt.Shyamala Surendran** - Director, Dharani School of Performing Arts,Kochi and **Sri. A. Lakshman Swamy** - Director, *Nriyalakshana* graced the occasion and shared words of wisdoms. Regatta's gifted young dancers' paid homage to the lineage of gurus and sought their blessings by offering them a 'Guru Dakshina' - **Nirtharchana**.

The pre-eminent guru **Prof.N.S.Jayalaksmi** - Kalakshetra, Chennai who was the chief-guest, encouraged and enlightened the audience with her inspirational speech. One of the most sought after male Bharatanatyam dancer's of India and an empanelled member of the ICCR and the Doordarshan, **Sri.A. Lakshman Swamy** was the headliner of the day. His recital was lauded by the spectators for its manly, yet refined moments.

The last day of the fest was attended by **Sri.PV.Gangadharan**- Director, *Mathrubhumi* and

Veteran Film Producer, **Sri.S.Karthikeyan** IAS - District Collector, Kollam and **Dr.K.Vasuki** IAS - District Collector Trivandrum.

On this day, Regatta's several young, promising dancers made their very first stage appearances. As these budding talents become united with music and danced around the stage weaving confidence and courage for their future performances, their gurus where showering them with blessings. Their movements flowed with a childlike, yet dazzling grace took away the breath of everyone in the audience. The finale dance composition '**Kaadu (Forest)**' has not only entertained the audience, but also enlightened them the need of protecting our nature.

The heavy leathern curtain falls by its own, ending the **45th Nirtha Sangeetholsavam**. But the event concluded with a promise for a new beginning - the beginning of several promising dancers and numerous experimental choreographies.



Scintillating Somu's recital

Text by: **Gopal Sagar**

On 26th of October 2017, we witnessed a spectacular Bharatanatyam recital by **Somashekhar Chudanath** at Seva Sadan as a part of the Samarpana series conducted by Sai Arts International Bangalore.



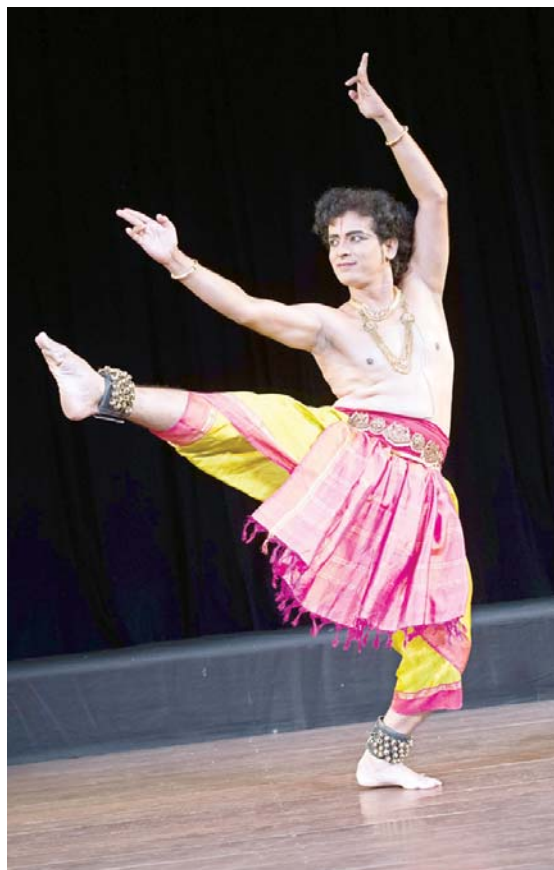
Somu, as he is fondly nicknamed within the dancer's guild is a senior disciple of **Guru Dr. Suparna Venkatesh**, started with an obeisance to Lord Ganesh, followed by a **Khanda Jathi Druva Tala Allarippu**. One could see the precious moves with 'Angashudha' and an energetic matured performance, which was followed by a kruti "**Yaro Lvar Yaro**" from Ramanatakam composed by Arunachala Kavi. Somu portrayed the dignified character of Rama, while Sita was played with soft delicate movements and subtle expressions. The highlight of the program was the **Varnam in Raga Athana and Aaditala**, composition of **Sri Turrayuru Rajagopal Sharma**.

Somu portrayed scintillating **tirmanams** with precision of foot work and neat **korvais**. The Abhinaya was apt to the lyrics.

The padam "**Ennathavan saidanai yeshoda**", a composition of **Sri Papanasam Sivan in Raga Kapi set to Aditala** demonstrating varied emotions was a challenge to any male dancer to portray a female role. Somu's performance harmonized to the feelings of a mother to the child (Vatsalya Rasa), where one could find the reflections of the Veteran dancers performing the same in recent days.

The program concluded with a '**Thillana**' in **Raga Durga and Aditala**, a composition of Dr. Nagavalli Nagaraj.

The dancer made an instant impact on the audience and art lovers by his deft performance. The brisk foot work and brilliant '**Nritya**' was brought to the fore. Overall, it was a fascinating evening to see young generation of dancers, considering dance as a profession, and promoting dance to a wider audience educating and entertaining equivalently.



Non-issue of formal appointment letters to Kuchipudi Teachers

"The appointment of Kuchipudi teachers in Government schools, where guidelines for specific task allotment were mentioned, but never taken into action, making it completely confusing and defective", expressed the agitated coordinator of Andhra Pradesh State Government Kuchipudi Dance Teachers Federation, Dr. P. Sai Jyothi.

In the press meet which happened on Monday at VJF Press Club, Dr. Sai Jyothi said that the 'promise of appointing eligible and deserving candidates as teachers through DSc. has being delayed since the past four years'.

Even though this promise has not been fulfilled, the teachers have been informed that they would be offered teaching positions on contract basis in the area of Kuchipudi. Despite their acceptance of the offer, no formal appointment letter was issued, except a word of instruction to report all of them to the specified schools.

Upon approaching the specified schools, the teachers were ill spoken as the principal heads of the schools, demanded for a letter of appointment, for which they had no issued document to acknowledge.

For the honorary salary of rupees twelve thousand, the teachers were informed to teach in three to four schools, in and around their Mandal, but when they were finally informed they were allotted schools which were at a distance

of 50-100 kms, said Sai Jyothi, who expressed her concern that it would be quite difficult for all the female teachers to commute such long distances managing their households.

Relating to this, she questioned that how reasonable it was to allot teachers randomly to schools, not considering their age, educational qualifications and experience.

Dr. Sai Jyothi felt grateful for the effort, where "Years of struggle to incorporate Kuchipudi into the curriculum of children's education for the next generation to represent the culture and tradition has been successfully implemented by the Government". She also mentioned that adding to this achieved goal, teachers who teach Kuchipudi should also be given equal importance and respect, as other subject teachers.

She appealed to the Chief Minister of the State, 'to not forget the promise of promoting and protecting the culture and tradition of Kuchipudi, made in various events.'

On a final note, she politely, pleaded to the media to publish her demands of justice to be identified to the notice of Honorable Ministers, Sri Ganta Srinivasa Rao and Bhuma Akhila Priya Reddy.

Aruna Paramesh and others delegated were present in the press meet.



Kuchipudi Teachers at the press note regarding their issues with the posting given to them at Government school

The Eastern Ghats Hot-air balloon Gala!

Text by Sandhya Parimala V

A new facet into tourism and adventure establishment by the Andhra Pradesh tourism was the hot-air balloon festival, stood as an attraction in the village fields of Araku, the Eastern Ghats hill station. The fact that the balloon pilots fancy flying over visually appealing locales makes this hill station just the right spot to fly over.

To see the stunning undulating landscapes of the Eastern Ghats in Araku Valley from a hot air balloon is a once in a life time experience. Launching the festival on 14th of November, it was a treat to some people

who enjoyed some good picturesque sights and flight ride. The evening view of balloons blown up was delightful.

However, the weather played a spoilsport on the second and third day (15th Nov and 16th Nov) of the Araku Balloon Festival, even as scores of people headed towards the picturesque valley was increasing to witness the colorful balloons soar in the skies.

Stating the outcomes of the festival, despite the first day flying and launching being successful with 15 colorful balloons soaring in the sky and being lit enchantingly by dawn, contradicting to this, the drawback stands as failure in prediction of climatic conditions, where most rides didn't last for more than ten minutes due to the blow of the gushing winds on the first day. Though the balloon flights disappointed the audience on the



next two days, they were smitten by the beautiful landscapes of the region like always. They did not leave a chance to spend their day-out amidst greens and the tribal culture.

However, we expect the tourism experts and stalwarts to take extra concern and efforts in making such festivals a grand success. Above all, it stands as a great honour for the Andhra folks to choose Eastern Ghats as venue for this prominent festival. We also appreciate the pilots hailing from 13 countries who were a part of this gala



An advertisement for Natraj Souvenirs. The background is a bright yellow-orange gradient. On the left, there is a silhouette of a palm tree and a stack of colorful sarees. Each saree has a red tag that says '650 SALE'. The sarees have various patterns and colors, including green, purple, and blue. In the center, there is a white box with the text 'Natraj SOUVENIRS' and 'Visakhapatnam | +91 8897987445'. To the right of the box, there is a man with a mustache and glasses, wearing a white shirt, with his hands in a prayer gesture. Below the man, the text 'Rs.650/- Only' is written in a large, stylized font. At the bottom, the text 'Dance Practice Sarees' is written in a white font. The overall theme is dance practice sarees.

Telugu folk urge to save the motherly language

Text By: **Krishnaveer Abhishek Challa**

Telugu, popularly known as the Italian of the East, is now at crossroads. Telugites are belittling their own language and are giving more importance to foreign English. They say that Telugu doesn't lead to one's development; they say that Telugu is not techno-friendly and they say that Telugu doesn't fetch employment. But the fact is that Telugu is the most scientific language and is the 3rd most spoken language in India. Telugu film industry popularly known as Tollywood, which is business and production wise just next to Bollywood, has shown the power & beauty of this language to the entire World. Telugu Dandu Satyagraha is a movement led by Sri Phanasaina Suri who is a passionate devotee of Telugu Language. He's doing Nirahara deeksha a.k.a. Fasting Initiation for 25 days as of now. The objective of Telugu dandu is to save Telugu Language that is being ignored and less prioritized when compared to English language.

When approached for an Interview, Sri Phansaina Suri answered every question in a detailed manner. He talked extensively about the dominance of English Medium schools over Telugu Medium schools and how it is creating low self-esteem in students that lack the skill sets to be an efficient English speaker and English writer. This in turn causes an insurmountable amount of stress in students' minds, which in some extreme cases, causes them to commit suicide. He cited many examples that exposed the bias shown all over the State for a Telugu speaker compared to some English speakers.

He pointed out that Learning English is indeed an essential task, but it should not be done at the expense of losing our own Mother tongue, Telugu in the



Sri Phanasaina Suri in Satyagraha

process. "People should stop circulating propaganda that only an efficient English speaker and writer can gain a profitable job. Only when they stop ingraining all these logic less notions into everyone's minds, the survival of Telugu Language will be possible," he quoted.

He acknowledged and appreciated all the participants in this movement for joining hands with him to propel it forward every day. He said he was baffled over the fact that the Government did not yet acknowledge or respond to this Satyagraha on a very crucial issue.

When asked about the alternative in case if the Government won't respond, he shared his idea of visiting every Government school and talking with the authorities to allot extra hours for training students to learn Telugu in a very efficient and productive way. He hoped that they would understand and empathized with everyone who's concerned over survival of Telugu and take appropriate measures.

Advisory Member of Central Hindi Council, Former Chairman of the AP Hindi Academy and former MP, Yarlagadda Lakshmi Prasad was one of the few prominent personalities to acknowledge the Telugu Dandu Satyagraha movement. He showed his support to the movement and commended everyone participating in it. He said that the dangers being imposed upon our Mother tongue Telugu Language are real and they should be dealt with immediately.

"Telugu Language is our mother and all of us in Andhra Pradesh & Telangana should be her noble sons & daughters striving for the welfare of our mother," he quoted. He stressed that this issue should be addressed in assembly and subjected to detailed discussion. He pointed out that Telugu Dandu Satyagraha's objective is not something new but the same old problem that has been in our state's Chief Minister's manifesto since he got elected.

He condemned those who are working towards the development of English only and ignoring our language which has a rich history behind it. He hoped that this movement will be able to enlighten everyone in our state who have no idea whatsoever about this burning problem in the current scenario of Andhra Pradesh.



Padma Bhushan Awardee Shri Yarlagadda Lakshmi Prasad is Initiating the Satyagraha Movement and pulling the Telugu Talli Choriata for Promoting the telugu language

He also emphasized the fact that this Satyagraha isn't something to oppose English language existence entirely but a soulful and selfless motto to have both languages complement each other without harming each others' survival. Finally he added that a proficient Telugu Speaker can easily acquire any language including English and opined that a bilingual person is more objective in approach and more tolerant as he is exposed to the culture of both the languages.



Former IAS officer and LokSatha founder Dr Jayaprakash Narayan is in Support to Satyagraha for promoting telugu language

Sounds on Sand, a boon or bane in tourism entertainment?

An extravagant event titled as "Sounds on Sand" was organized on the Vizag sea shores by the Andhra Pradesh tourism department on 11th and 12th of November, 2017 at Ramakrishna Beach, Visakhapatnam. It was a splendid two-day event in the city of destiny which enthralled huge crowd with a blend of classical and contemporary styles of music.



The morning sessions were comprised of the Hindustani and Carnatic music including Qawaali, Sufi, Bhajans and Kirtanas. Great renowned music maestros like Usha Uthup, Leslie Lewis, Baiju Dharmajan, Ameya Dabli, Mohammed Irfan, Asees Kaur and Revanth has mesmerized the audience at a great level.

The performance of the artist's reverberated in the hearts of the Vizagites. Country's renowned music maestros have performed with popular musical numbers including classical, rock band, melody, fast beats and other forms of music. The morning ragas were scheduled at 7:00am during the dawn and the evening show started at 6:00pm at the sea shores where audience from various sectors witnessed the musical treat. The Andhra Pradesh Tourism



Department has conducted this cultural event on a large scale, which spent almost twenty lakhs of rupees.

The critical question arises on the core purpose of organizing this show. "Did the event bring in the real essence of music or was only performed with partial aspects of music in order to entertain the public?" People from different sections of the society opine that tourism should have focused on nurturing the music culture among the people instead of spending a large amount of money only to entertain public. The choice of venue has been wise as it is a common place for everyone to enjoy the show.

Many distinguished guests from the district administrative departments, control forces, families, youngsters and print media have graced with their presence. The tourism department should have been able to attract the tourists by organizing such shows but it was only the local folk who turned up for this musical event, which failed to attract the tourists from other states. However, vizagites are expecting many such outstanding events which would bring awareness on the importance of Indian heritage and culture by continuing the legacy of our tradition.



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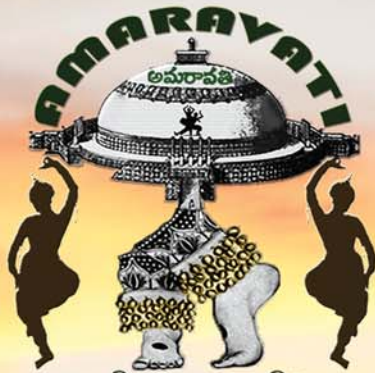
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