

THE DANCE INDIA

A Treasure Trove of Culture & Tourism

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TORCH BEARERS
DR CHELLAPPA
A POETIC BUREAUCRAT

BEACONS OF LIGHT
**SHASHADHAR
ACHARYA**
THE CHHAU MAESTRO



COVER STORY

KALANIDHI

**A TREASURE TROVE
OF ABHINAYA**



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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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EDITOR'S DESK

India is moving ahead with its eyes set on development. Politicians, bureaucrats and citizens have been reiterating it repeatedly. It is great to rejoice in this development but culturally, India has been recoiling. Some patrons of art and culture question if the government really has resolved to protect and promote Indian classical and traditional folk art forms. They feel that in every budget, the government allocates the smallest pie to culture; the decision-making ability regarding culture has been poor, corruption in the cultural bodies has become unstoppable, and the culture minister has lost hold on the functioning of cultural bodies.

India is a unique amalgamation of classical and traditional art forms and it has attracted people from other countries. Any country that neglects its art and culture will be doomed. Keeping this in mind, if the government shows interest in developing Indian classical and traditional arts, thereby helping the artistes, there would still be a chance to revive the lost vibrancy of the Indian culture.

Jai Hind!

BR Vikram Kumar

CULTURAL BULLETIN

'Natana-kulapathi' Puraskaar to The Dhananjayans

Dubai-based Kalalaya and Kerala-based Naadam jointly honoured The Dhananjayans with title and award of 'Natana Kulapathi' on November 17 in Dubai during the Nritya-Kalaa-Keli festival. The

Malayalam superstar and Member of Parliament (MP) Suresh Gopi gave the award in a vibrant ceremony held at the New World Private School Auditorium in Dubai.



Source: PIB

Government of India to observe the remembrance of 100 years of the historical Jallianwala Bagh Massacre

The Government of India has decided to mark the remembrance of 100 years of the historical Jallianwala Bagh Massacre next year. Minister of state for culture(I/c) Dr Mahesh Sharma visited Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar, Punjab on November 23, along with minister of state (IC) for housing and urban affairs Hardeep Singh Puri and officials from ASI and NBCC to review the preparations for 2019.

A number of commemorative as well as constructive activities will be taken up during the remembrance

period. A commemorative coin and postage stamp will be released on April 13, 2019 (the day the incident took place 100 years ago). The ministry of culture will organise cultural activities such as kavi sammelan, plays, exhibition, seminars, etc. across the country.

The ministry of tourism has already earmarked an amount of Rs 8 crore under Swadesh Darshan Scheme for development of virtual reality theme based show at the memorial which will be spent under the supervision of the committee and ministry of culture will provide additional funds, if required.



The Minister of State for Culture (I/C) and Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Dr. Mahesh Sharma along with the Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs (I/C), Hardeep Singh Puri inspecting the site at Jallianwala Bagh as the Govt. prepares to observe the remembrance of "100 years of Jallianwala Bagh Massacre" in 2019, in Amritsar, Punjab on November 23, 2018.

'South Asia Regional Youth Peace Conference' held in New Delhi

Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti (GSDS), functioning under the ministry of culture, Government of India, organised a 3-day 'South Asia Regional Youth Peace Conference' in partnership with UNESCO-MGIEP and Standing Together to Enable Peace from November 28-30, 2018. The conference was held at Gandhi Darshan, Rajghat, New Delhi. It was organised to mark the beginning of celebration of 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

Shrikrishna G Kulkarni, great grandson of Mahatma Gandhi and member of the Government of India's committee to celebrate 150th birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation was the chief guest in the inaugural session held in Gandhi Darshan, Rajghat.

This conference focused on building a network for young leaders from South Asian countries working on various social issues, to identify avenues for partnership

and collaboration, support and show solidarity towards each other's initiatives, nurture relationships and promote global citizenship to work towards achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The thematic thrust areas include gender; interfaith issues; food security in the context of the Gandhian vision of village economy; digital media; arts, democracy and dialogue. An action plan in the form of a declaration was developed at the end of the three-day conference to power Sustainable Development Goals through the lens of love and kindness.

About 100 youth leaders from South Asian countries like Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka and different parts of India came together to discuss different dimensions of 'peace'. The 150th birth anniversary celebrations offer the right climate for the young people of South Asia to further the peace agenda in the region.

Shrikrishna G Kulkarni



Government of India to commemorate the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev in a big way

The Government of India has decided to commemorate the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev from November 2018 at a national as well as international level in a befitting manner. The year-long celebration starting November 23 this year will include a number of commemorative as well as constructive activities.

A number of religious activities like kirtan, katha, prabhat pheri, langar and educational activities such as seminars, workshops, lectures etc. will be organised. SGPC, Amritsar, will be the knowledge partner of the Government of India. Commemorative coin and postage stamp will also be released. Chairs in the name of Guru Nanak Dev will be set up in UK and Canada. An

international seminar will also be organised. A National Institute of Interfaith Studies will be set up in Punjab.

Doordarshan, Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha TVs will live telecast programmes on Guru Nanak Dev. Gurbani in different Indian and world languages will be published.

Sultanpur Lodhi will be developed as a heritage city incorporating 'Pind Babe Nanak Da'. A high-powered telescope will be installed in Indian territory to view Kartarpur Sahib, Pakistan.

Sultanpur Lodhi railway station will be upgraded. A train will run passing through places associated with Guru Nanak Dev Ji.



The Minister of State for Tourism (I/C), Alphons Kannanthanam visiting after inaugurating an exhibition, at the 7th International Tourism Mart 2018, in Agartala on November 22, 2018. The Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Rashmi Verma is also seen.

TORCH BEARERS



DR CHELLAPPA A POETIC BUREAUCRAT

Text and Pics: **Paul Nicodemus**



He is a bilingual poet who writes in Tamil and Telugu. He is also an exemplary bureaucrat who has done some pioneering work in the South Indian states. Dr Susai Manickam Chellappa has made a name for himself with his poetic excellence and down-to-earth administrative approach - someone who used the pen for both poetry and bureaucracy to equal effect. His poem 'Indra Kaviyam' received the Best Poetry Award from the Tamil Nadu Government.



Dr Chellappa at his office



Born on February 8, 1952 in Kottur, a small village, now under Tuticorin district, Dr Chellappa was the son of a village leader and homemaker. His mother did agricultural work and took care of the children. Dr Chellappa had nine sisters, and he was the youngest. Chellappa was educated in a Roman Catholic Mission School with the help of the village. He got his primary education from the school and then moved to the Government High School in Kottur. In high school, he secured a gold medal in the SSC examination. However, after secondary education, he did not know what to do. Neither his father nor Chellappa had a vision. Initially he thought he would become a teacher, but since his scores were high, they thought he should pursue higher education. A Catholic priest named Rev S Francis guided him to go to St. Xavier's College in Palayamkottai to pursue PUC (Pre University Course). There he studied English Literature and did well. Unfortunately, he did not get a seat in MA Literature and stayed at home for 1 year. This break helped him study Tamil Literature independently, without a teacher. He studied Tamil classics. This learning helped him later when he opted for Tamil as one of the subjects in IAS and scored high.

A sudden instance made him pursue civil services. On October 2, 1975, when the great politician Kamarajan passed away, Chellappa was in Chennai. He was reading the news when he came across an

Dr Chellappa

advertisement regarding IAS and recalled how his mother had asked him to become an IAS when he was a child.

"When I was child, my mother would always ask me to become a collector. But back then, I did not know what a collector meant," he says.

He applied on seeing the advertisement and to his surprise, he got an admission into a training centre in Chennai. At the same time, he got an offer to join the ministerial staff in the department of irrigation at Chirugali. As his mother advised him to take the job than prepare for IAS, he obliged.

While working as a ministerial staff, he attended an interview at Chennai. Chellappa again topped the list and secured a job. He joined as an instructor in English at the Government Polytechnic College in Tuticorin. After working there for few months, he wrote a letter to his professor in Madurai University, now Madurai Kamaraj

University who took him as an assistant professor of English in the Department of District Education. While working at the university, he wrote the IAS examination, and was selected as a Class 1 Income Tax Officer in 1977. He entered service of the Government of India on July 20, 1977 in the Indian Revenue Service - Income Tax Department.

During the training, he again took the IAS examination in 1978 and got selected. He later became IAS, 1979 Batch under Andhra Pradesh Cadre. He was the first person to write the exam in Tamil and also get selected. After the selection, he was given training in the Cuddapah district and allotted to the Andhra Pradesh Cadre. He then worked as the collector of Srikakulam and Hyderabad.

Some of his important assignments include Food Corporation of India where he planned and executed 5 lakh tonne capacity godowns to store wheat and rice in the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh. It was a unique contribution to the state of Andhra Pradesh. "Those days



Dr Chellappa doing Yoga

Dr Chellappa with his spouse Rajeswari



we were securing around 30 lakh tonnes of wheat and rice and we supplied rice to Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka and Pondicherry," he said. It was he who started supplying rice to Andaman and Nicobar during his tenure. The district office in Andaman and Nicobar was inaugurated during his tenure. Former chief minister of Andhra Pradesh, NTR, addressed him as a brother and had a one-to-one conversation with him. He worked as a sub-collector, collector and district magistrate of Srikakulam and Hyderabad, Food Corporation of India, commissioner of Panchayati Raj, principal secretary (school education), agricultural production commissioner, additional director general of HRD Institute. He retired from service on February 29, 2012.

His dad was a Balladeer who used to sing during festivals and his mother encouraged him to recite poems when he was a child. Whenever a guest turned up at the house, his mother persuaded Chellappa to showcase his talents. That helped him a lot. In 2002, he wrote 'Indra Kavya', an epic poem in Tamil, dealing with Lord Siva and core Hindu philosophy. The Government of Tamil Nadu honoured him with a prize and he received it from the then chief minister O. Panneerselvam. He has worked mostly on poetry and penned 22 books.

"Poetry is in my blood. Poetry is like a seed, a seed contains all the characteristics of a tree. Poetry, in a nutshell, brings emotions, imageries, history, customs

Dr Chellappa with his Family





Dr Chellappa at his residence

and traditions all in few lines, whereas prose is like a growth of a tree. Take the example of a Banyan tree. Though the seed is small, it occupies a large portion once it grows up. Two Banyan trees, one in Jagadish Chandra Bose Garden, Kolkata, and the other in Adyar, Tamil Nadu speak about the difference between poetry and prose," he says.

His book Naga Natyam was appreciated by Jnanpith awardee C. Narayana Reddy. Dakshinayanam in Telugu is a philosophical poem about human life's journey. It is a general perception in the Telugu world that Uttarayanam is considered great but Dr Chellappa as presented a journey of a person towards the south pole.

"A sudden idea flashes your mind, and it is converted into a poem. Initially, I wrote in rhyme and metre but now that generation is gone. So, I now write in pre-verse. There is no particular time to write, inspiration can come from anything - a bird, a blade of grass, a setting sun or a rising sun," he explains.

Talking about his family, he says, "My marriage is a legal story. I am a Hindu and my wife, Rajeswari is a Christian.

I did not know how to make both things match and read the law. I have gone through the Hindu Marriage Act and Christian Marriage Act and finally opted for a Special Marriage Act. Unfortunately, in India, in certain parts of the country, if people belonging to two different religions want to get married, sometimes the case goes to a High Court and Supreme Court and becomes a social problem. It is unwarranted. In our case, there is no controversy, I take her to church, and she comes to the temple with me. Our daughter Rachel is a lawyer and son Arulappa an engineer," he says.

He believes the moment the mood of writing a poem grips him is the best moment of his life and there have been many such moments. Every day is a good day, according to Dr Chellappa. "Like good days come and go, so do bad days. They too pass," he says.

Dr Chellappa adheres by a disciplined lifestyle. Every day he wakes up early morning at 5 am and chalks out his plan for the day and accommodates time for surprises. When something crops up, he does not panic. This helps him approach any challenge in a cool and

comfortable frame of mind. He is against violence and follows BR Ambedkar's philosophy of universal peace.

Dr Chellappa's wife ran a school from 1990 to 2015 under a charitable organisation, and he spent some of his time educating children, especially girl children.

He says the medium might be different, but the goal is an encounter with the truth. "When you take a painting, outwardly it makes you think and gives you pleasure but finally takes you to a greater level. Take dance, the colour, rhythm, song, light, costumes and other techniques create an impression. It takes you from a mundane world to a different world - again to see the truth," he says.

Pointing towards Telugu, Tamil and English literature, he says, "Literature is governed by space and time. Tamil poet Kamban wrote 12,000 poems and people had

time to sit and listen but today when you look at Tamil poetry, it is going towards Thulippa or Haiku."

In Tamil, Kamban, Bharati, Bharati Dasan and Thiruvalluvar; in Telugu, Kandukuri, Jashuva and C. Narayana Reddy and in English, Milton, Shakespeare, Wordsworth and Keats are his favourite poets.

Apart from studying literature, Dr Chellappa has also done Bachelor of Law from Osmania University and PhD in Applied Economics from Andhra University. He is well versed in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu and English languages.

Dr Chellappa is the founding member of The Dravidian University, recipient of the Best Poetry Award from the Government of Tamil Nadu (2002), Tamil University at Thanjavur Awardee for Service to Tamil Language (2016), honoured by the Tenali Literary Conference for service to Telugu Language (2018), first to take steps to tap

Dr Chellappa



groundwater potentials with the brand name Jeevan Ganga, which was later adopted by the Government of India as Jeevan Dhara (1988). He designed, executed and created 500,000 metric tonnes godown in Andhra Pradesh, a lifetime achievement (1991-1995), started the first college girls' hostels for backward classes (2004-2005) and brought out the first cultural policy doctrine of Andhra Pradesh (2010).

Apart from these, he was also member, Bar Council of Telangana, Honorary Patron of Sree Narayana Guru Dharma Paripalana Yogam, he drafted the AP Devadasi

(Prohibition) Act - Act 10 of 1988, drafted the Telangana Panchayat Raj Act - Act 5 of 2018, Director of NABARD (2008-09) and Director of Indian Coffee Board (2008-09).

He has visited the USA, France, Switzerland, Nepal, Singapore and Malaysia.

His message to the younger generation is, "The younger generation is dynamic and forward-looking, but then to achieve goals they have to use conventional tools such as hard work, commitment and understanding."



Dr Chellappa

LITERARY WORKS OF DR CHELLEPPA

Chengadal
Ullakkumural
Udirip Pookal
Odaik Kavidaigal
Kootirku Veliye
Meendum Illavenil
Vidaiye Illatha Vinakkal
Puthu Vellam
Cholla Cholla Inikkudada
Pullil Thoongia Pani (Autobiography - Part 1)
Iral Meen Valarpu - Varavum Chelavum (English)
Indra Kaviyam (received Tamil Nadu Government's Best Poetry Award)

Naga Natyam (Telugu)
Thiruvallur Kalak Kumuga Varalaru (History)
Koovu Kozhiye (This is translated into Telugu by the Potti Sreeramulu Telugu University)
Maraikkappatta Mamallar Varalaru
Dakshinayanam (Telugu)
Vavalin Payanam (Translation of Gurram Joshua's Poem 'Gabbilam')
Then Kinnam
Kanavil Chiritha Kattu Pookal
The Cuddapah Roots - (Autobiography - Part 2)
Nizhar Kanintha Kanigal

"The conspiracy of the sun god
Shall not scorch us and fully forever.
The rain god also is not going to forget the earth
forever.
This is the truth.
Even before the rain becomes copious
Let us create the reservoirs and canals.

If all the villages put their might together
A hundred reservoirs indeed shall be made."

From Indra Kaviyam - a poem that received the
best Poetry Award from the Government of Tamil
Nadu.

Dr Chellappa with his spouse Rajeswari in the garden

COVER STORY



KALANIDHI A TREASURE TROVE OF ABHINAYA

Pic: Kartik Pashupati

While Balasaraswati, Kamala and Rukmini Devi revived Bharatanatyam in the 1940s, it was Padma Bhushan Kalanidhi Narayanan, who was instrumental in the rebirth of the Abhinaya in the 1970s. Kalanidhi Mami, as students called her had revolutionised the art form. Students and artistes from all over the world queued up and trained under her.

KALANIDHI NARAYANAN



Pic: Avinash Pasricha

KALANIDHI

A TREASURE TROVE OF ABHINAYA

Text: Paul Nicodemus



Kalanidhi Narayanan was one of the greatest representatives and teachers of the art of Abhinaya. She was an eminent Bharatanatyam exponent, Padma Bhushan Awardee, Sangeet Natak Akademi Awardee, Tagore Fellow and a teacher par excellence. Her mastery over the navarasas and her expressive eyes and face conveyed myriad moods and left her indelible imprint as a teacher.

Her dance journey could be divided into two phases - between the age of 11 and 16 and reentry into the dance in her late 40s. Kalanidhi Ganapathy, as she was known before marriage, had her arangetram at twelve and performed in several concerts until she reached sixteen. She was successful and garnered critical acclaim from all quarters. She got married into a conservative family and her dance career came to a halt as she completely focused on building a family. She again resumed her career in dance after a long gap of 30 years and founded her school Abhinaya Sudha in Chennai in 1973.

A chance meeting with YG Doraiswamy, a dance connoisseur made Kalanidhi Narayanan return to teaching classical dance. She took on the assignment of teaching abhinaya to Alarmel Valli, a young dancer. It was not an easy task for someone to get back to dancing after such a long gap but Kalanidhi took it up as a challenge. Thanks to her strong will and love for Bharatanatyam, she embarked on a new journey. She was even known to have enrolled in a course conducted by Dr Padma Subrahmanyam to fine tune her dance theory. She soon reached the zenith and became the most sought-after teacher of abhinaya. Alarmel Valli, Malavika Sarukkai, Protima Bedi and Pratibha Prahlad were some of her early students.



Kalanidhi Narayanan



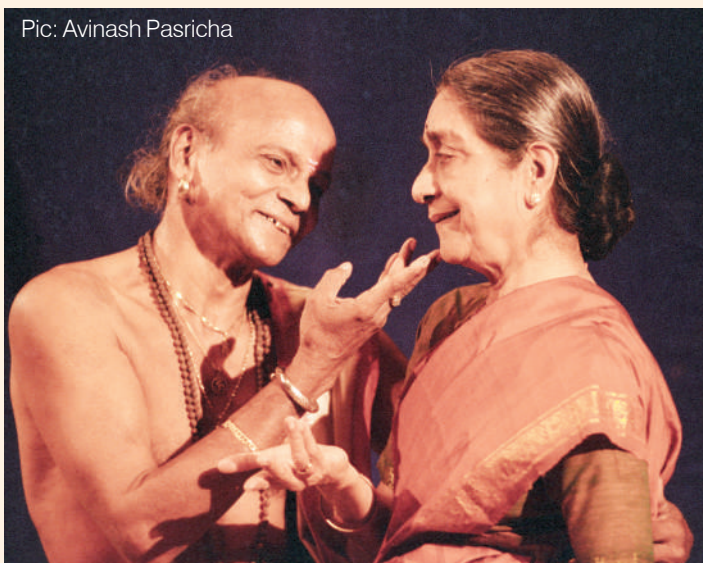
Kalanidhi was a revered teacher and created hundreds of students who are spread all over the globe. She established dance schools all over the world and frequently travelled to monitor them. Her workshops attracted a lot of interest in Europe and North America. She nurtured her students to have an inner understanding and encouraged them to have their own interpretation. She was known for maintaining a wonderful relationship with her disciples.

She also published and released several CDs and DVDs on the various aspects of the dance form, and most of them contained live demonstrations by her. Today, these serve as valuable references to those interested in learning dance in its most pristine form. She was a treasure trove of abhinaya.



Rear Geetha Gopaldaswamy, Shantha Balachander, Kalpagam Balakrishnan, Kalanidhi Narayanan.
Front Saraswathi Sreenivasan, Ananda Rajam, Jayalakshmi Swaminathan

Pic: Avinash Pasricha



Kelucharan Mohapatra and Kalanidhi Narayanan



Young Kalanidhi

'KALANIDHI NARAYANAN'

A NAME THAT CAN CONNECT YOU WITH ETERNITY

Text: **Dr Smruti Vaghela**, Assistant Professor (Dance), Faculty of Performing Arts,
The M.S. University of Baroda



Padmabhushan Kalanidhi Narayanan was born on December 7, 1928. Her name has been added to the golden page of history of Indian classical dance. 'Kalanidhi' - a treasure of Art - has become a synonym for Abhinaya today. When hearing the word abhinaya the picture of Kalanidhi Narayanan flashes in our mind. No student of Indian classical dance is unaware of her name.



Kalanidhi Narayanan

This Brahmin girl was the early non-devadasi girl to learn the dance from various gurus. Her mother had seen the renaissance era of the 30's and 40's. She was very keen that her daughter learn dance. She took Kalanidhi to Mylapore Gowri Ammal, the last of Devadasis of the Kapaleeshwar temple in Madras when she was seven years old. She was trained under various gurus such as Kannappa Mudaliar of Kanchipuram, Chinnayya Naidu and Mylapore Gowri Ammal. Her passion for dance lead her towards the search for padams and javalis and she met Kamakshi Ammal. Her teaching gave her new dimensions to abhinaya.

It was a memorable moment for me when I met her for the first time in a workshop of 'Abhinaya' in my own city Vadodara. She had treated me like I was her own child. She made me very comfortable through her eyes and words. One can feel that her words came from within. I was surprised when she gave a



Kalanidhi Narayanan



token of love, hangings for kurti, to all the participants after the workshop and it became a very precious gift for us.

I received a warm welcome when I went to her to learn more aspects of abhinaya in Chennai. I was fortunate to learn many methods of abhinaya along with few items. Though mami could not give much time due to her illness but whenever we had sessions on learning abhinaya she used to give 100 per cent wholeheartedly. She used to teach without worrying about her health. She emphasised on the awareness of lyrics and the three progressive stages of abhinaya, Shabdartha, Vakyartha

and Padartha. I can never forget her three Padams 'Krishna ni', 'Chaliye kunjnamo' and 'Choodare'. She could show hundreds of ways to approach a single situation. How to explain the process of abhinaya was her expertise. I actually used to feel the connection and the purity of the relation between her and her disciples.

"Eyes should speak while dancing" and this proverb truly holds for Kalanidhi Narayanan. She could communicate through eyes. She had a very good command on teaching and her expertise lay on the process of teaching the abhinaya. The way she taught, teaching the minute details of abhinaya and going in

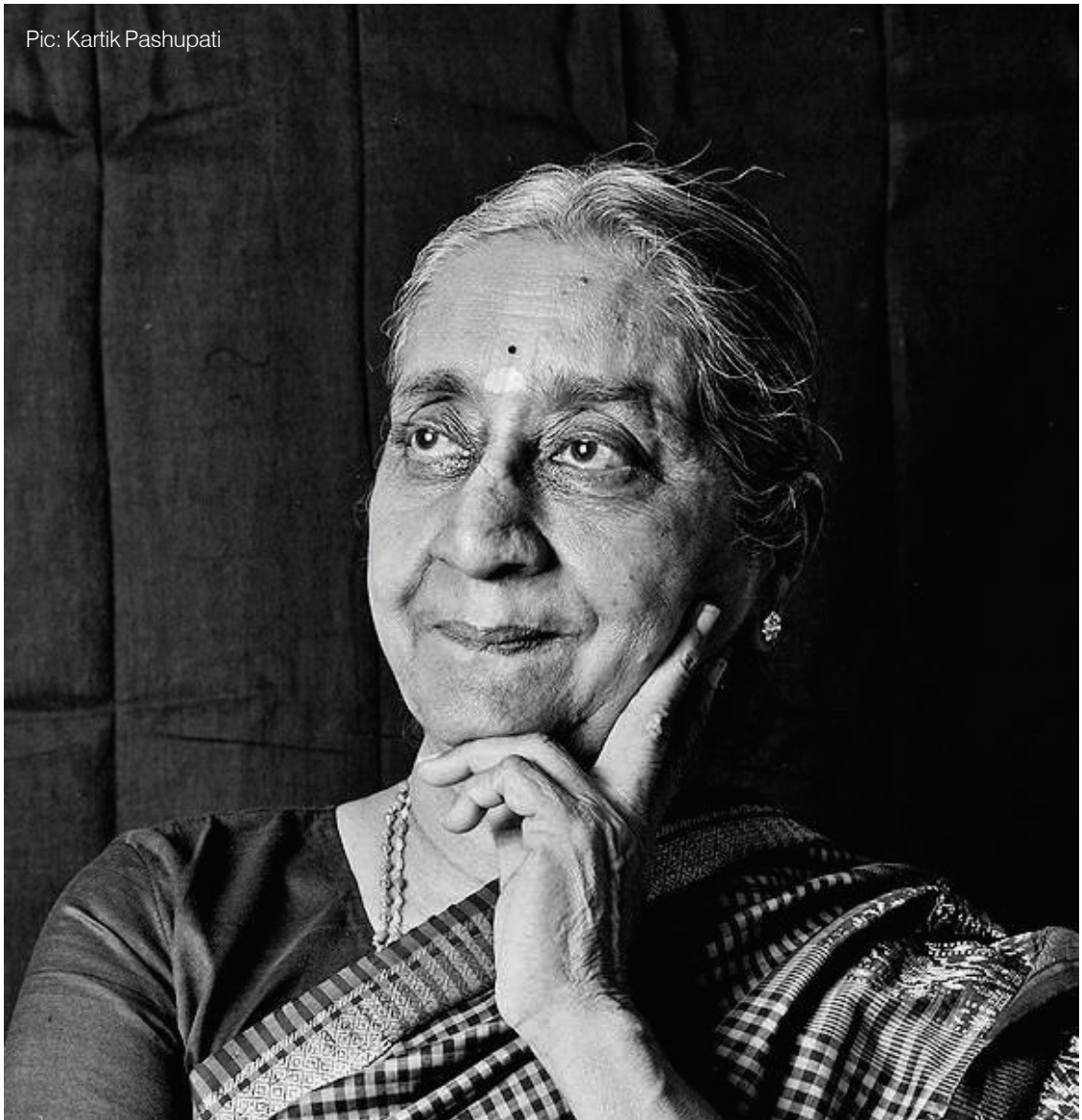
depth was remarkable and she could hold the interest of her disciples throughout.

Her method of teaching abhinaya was totally different from others. She developed a very revolutionary approach for abhinaya, which I found in her own senior disciple 'Bragha Basse!'. Apart from Braghaakka, Priyadarshini Govind, Alarmel Valli, Malavika Sarukkai, Jayanthi Subramaniam, Shanta Rati Mishra, Pratibha Prahlad and many more popular dancers were trained in Abhinaya from mami.

Her dedication for dance earned her many prestigious awards like the Padma Bhushan Award from the President of India Giani Zail Singh in 1985, the Nritya Choodamani Award from Sri Krishna Gana Sabha in 1990, the Kalaimamani Award from the government of Tamil Nadu in 1990, the Central Sangeet Natak Academy Award in 1991, the Kalidas Samman award from government of Madhya Pradesh in 1998.

Through her abhinaya we could actually feel eternity. At the age of 87 years on February 21, 2016 we lost the great abhinaya guru Kalanidhi Narayanan.

Pic: Kartik Pashupati



Kalanidhi Narayanan

SUBSCRIPTION FORM



An English Monthly

Documentation of cultural heritage is indispensable for any country.

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

The magazine is an umbrella for various art forms in the fields of dance, music, literature and theatre that have existed for thousands of years. It also highlights the struggles and success of artistes across the globe. Like the 'mudras' in all dance forms, we have through our articles tried to express the importance and significance of art as well as to entertain.

It is our honour to document lives and times of dancers, musicians, authors, various artistes and critics who have made art popular. We salute their efforts and endeavour to pass it on to the next generation.

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SHASHADHAR ACHARYA THE CHHAU MAESTRO

Text: **Paul Nicodemus**



He has played an immense role in the evolution and development of Chhau, a traditional dance-theatre art form of India. His devotion made him a consummate performer, a devoted teacher and an exemplary artiste. Guru Shashadhar Acharya is an eminent exponent and choreographer of Chhau Dance of Seraikella. He has often stretched his knowledge to use the technique in innovative ways both in dance and theatre. He is a Chhau Maestro.

Shashadhar Acharya was born on May 5, 1960 in Seraikela under Singhbhum Dynasty in Jharkhand into a family of traditional performers. He is the fifth generation dancer and his son Shubham Acharya has become the sixth generation dancer of the art form. "I was born in Seraikela, from where the art form Saraikela Chhau got its name. Now, it is in Jharkhand but previously it was in Bihar and before that in Odisha. So basically we are Odia people," he says.

Shashadhar has been attached to the art form since his birth and started dancing quite early in his childhood. There has always been activity related to dance around him. At the age of 6, once he got awareness, he requested his father to teach him to dance. His father agreed and asked him to join the class along with other students and never taught him separately.

Though he was initiated into Chhau dance by his father Lingaraj Acharya, he went on to learn the art form from five other gurus. He continued his training under Natashekar BB Pattanaik, Padma Shri awardee Siddhendra Narayan Singh Deo, Vikram Kumbhakar and Padma Shri awardee Kedarnath Sahoo. He has also studied the Chhau dance of Mayurbhanj under Alok Niranjan Bisoi and has had training in Dhol-playing under Surmukhi. His father never objected him from learning. "Earlier, we had to learn rhythm, swara,



Shashadhar Acharya training students of Theatre



movement and many other things. Now things have changed, but I learnt in Guru-shishya Parampara. In that tradition, some people only dance two or three items till the end of their careers. But our generation is different, we learnt to play both male and female characters and much more," he says.

His father asked him to go everywhere and learn and then think about Chhau. He learnt simultaneously from different gurus at different times of the day. "All of them knew I am learning from the other guru but I never told them. They loved me because right from my childhood I was passionate about Chhau," he says.

He was associated with theatre and dance from his childhood. He stood first in every cultural competition at his school in Seraikela in singing, dance and drama. "Everybody born in Seraikela has Chhau in them," he says.

Earlier, performers of Chhau were restricted to two or three items. According to them the physical appearance of the character mattered and they believed that not everyone can play every character. Characters were portrayed only if they suited the artiste. "Now, we have aharya and even if I do not look like Ravana, I can make myself look like Ravana with the help of ornaments and makeup," he elaborates. In 1974, one of his gurus died, and he started learning Indian Combat techniques from Guru Vikram Kumbhakar. The art form of Chhau draws its technique from Indian Combat Arts, Bharatiya Yudha Kala.



Shashadhar as Hamsa

Shashadhar as Mayur



Shashadhar as Chandrabagha



Shashadhar Acharya gave his first performance around the age of 12 years in Chaitra Parva, the annual festival of Chhau in Seraikela. It was his Manch Pravesh. After that, he ventured out to perform at varied venues. The earlier tradition saw accomplished students of Chhau perform at Chaitra Parva in front of the people of Seraikela after getting a nod from their guru. The people of Seraikela certified the performer. But now, the teaching and schooling system is different. Earlier, guru would call for a practice at any time of the day. There was no fixed time. Learning was more practical than theoretical. "Earlier, gurus would give a concept and asked the disciple to think over it, instead of spoon-feeding them. 'Today, you think about it and share your experience, and tomorrow, I will share my experience,' was the system," he says. It gave him ample scope for improvisation.

Seraikela Chhau is an art form different from all the other art forms of India. Some art forms have started

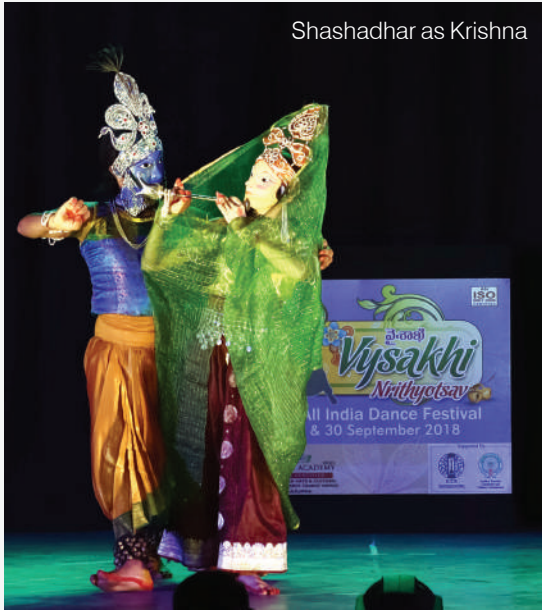


from temples, some from a king's courts and some from festivals but this art form started from a Military Cantonment. "In the beginning, we train as a soldier. The total body language would be of a soldier. But when we dance, it is different. If I perform Bharatanatyam, Odissi, Manipuri or Kathak, people will see me doing Krishna or Radha. But because we use the mask in Chhau, I lose my identity on stage and

Shashadhar and Group



Shashadhar as Krishna



get the identity of the character. I am not against any art form, I am just speaking about my art form,” he says. Chhau literally means mask in Odiya. The combative movements of attack and defence mixed with an imitation of animal, bird movements and daily household work brought into the theatre and dance became Chhau.

The most prominent difference among the three subgenres is the use of masks. While the Seraikela and Purulia styles of Chhau use masks during the dance, the Mayurbhanj Chhau uses none. “Before the 19th century, Chhau was a single art form, and it did not have various styles. After 1947, the region of Chhau was divided into three states — Bengal, Odisha and Bihar. Purulia performers in West Bengal are still farmers, Mayurbhanj had performers from a lower caste and got rid of the mask,” he says.

Chhau does not have a verbal language but has a body language. And body language is a universal language. “We have a great chance of going abroad because Chhau does not have a language. You can throw me anywhere and I will perform,” he smiles.

In 1987, Shashadhar moved to Mumbai and worked as a teacher. During his stay at Mumbai, Veenapani Chawla, popular art director, asked him to choreograph an English play with Chhau movements and he did. They staged the play at Prithvi Theatre and Ratan Thiyam, the then director of the National School of Drama (NSD) and Dr Suresh Awasthi, chairman of NSD happened to attend it. After the show, they enquired

about the choreographer and came to know about Shashadhar. They gave him an opportunity to come to the National School of Drama and he moved to Delhi in 1988. “Initially, I thought I would get an admission at NSD but when I went there, I was asked to teach the second-year students. Since then I have been teaching,” he says.

Shashadhar has done extensive research in Chhau which is believed to exist from 1200 AD. He iterated that the teaching method has always been oral and nothing was in the written format. When he realised it, he has focused on the teaching method. The survival of a tradition depends on its transition from one generation to the next and contributing towards its continuity is the responsibility of every practitioner of a traditional art form. Shashadhar Acharya teaches with a passion. Devoting a large part of his time to teaching, he nurtures each student to develop as an artiste while respecting the tenets of tradition.

Performing Chhau runs in his blood. He never wanted to enter the field of dance but did so because of circumstances. Apart from his general studies, he is a graduate in literature and has completed law. He gave up three jobs - two central government and one state government — to freelance. “One of the best things to happen in life was that all my four brothers and my son are with me and we have been performing Chhau together. It is a great thing,” he says.

When he left Seraikela, teaching dance to students and forming his own dance troupe was on his mind. But when he approached dance institutions looking for teaching opportunities in Delhi, they told him he was

Shashadhar as Garudavasuki



Shashadhar receiving Sangeet Natak Akademi Award from former President of India Dr APJ Abdul Kalam



too young to teach. Upon knowing about Shashadhar's father, Dance Institutes in Delhi asked him to call his father to teach in Delhi. He says his father came down to Delhi and stayed with him for a year. In the meantime, Shashadhar prepared his ground.

He has been performing for the last 40 years and has given over 3000 performances in 75 countries. Apart from performing, he also gives lec-dems and seminars. "At present, I am doing something interesting. I am associated with theatre and teaching on how an actor should have a disciplined body and what needs to be done for a disciplined body," he says. He has been teaching at the National School of Drama and Film Institute.

For him, there is not much of a difference between theatre and dance. "Theatre has dialogue and dance does not and all the other things are similar — space,

timing, design, lights," he explains. The deep-rooted knowledge of his art gave him the confidence to use it in collaborative works with dancers, actors and directors of both traditional and modern discipline.

He served as an expert in various committees for selections of scholarship, fellowship and other awards in Chhau dance. He also served as an expert for the film production on Chhau for several organisations.

For his sustained and innovative work in Seraikella Chhau, Shashadhar Acharya has received many awards including the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award; Rajkiya Samman by the Government of Jharkhand; Guru Dev Prasad Das Samman by Government of Odisha; Lifetime Achievement Award and Jharkhand State Samman by Government of Jharkhand; Unity in Diversity PhD Art & Culture Samman in PHD House, New Delhi and Natyashree Award by Nataraj Music

and Dance Academy, Visakhapatnam. He has performed in over 75 countries at Festivals of India and other major Theatre Dance festival in Asia, Europe, USA and Africa.

Shashadhar Acharya teaches at Triveni Kala Sangam, New Delhi. He has established Acharya Chhau Nrutya Bichitra in Seraikela for the promotion of Chhau dance

in Jharkhand. The institution houses a library and a museum displaying articles on Chhau dances. He has trained both students of dance and theatre for the last twenty-five years and has been responsible for bringing Chhau to New Delhi. He also heads a project funded by Central Sangeet Natak Akademi to train dancers for creating a performance repertory based in New Delhi.



Shashadhar as Ratri



“NRITYA DHAARA” TO CREATE MAGIC IN THE CITY

Dance is not something that can be explained in words; it has to be either danced or experienced. The city audiences shall prepare for one such unique experience. Titled "Nritya Dhaara", this upcoming Kathak concert has the power to mesmerize you and transport you to a world that is beyond your imagination.

All the artists are master dancers in their own right! Hailing from the same family of dancers, Pandita Maneesha Sathe, her daughter Shambhavi Dandekar, daughter-in-law Tejaswini Sathe and grand-daughter Sarveshwari Sathe, representing three different generations.

Pandita Maneesha Sathe has been trained under the legendary Nataraj Pandit Gopi Krishna and is the torchbearer of the Benaras Gharana. With her artistic sensitivity and creativity, she has contributed immensely to the field.

Apart from being her mother's disciple, Shambhavi has also received special training in Laya-Taal from Taalyogi Pandit Suresh Talwalkar. A perfectionist and an all-rounder, she has great mastery over technical dance and Abhinaya.

Tejaswini started learning under Maneesha at the age of 16. She is a strong believer of tradition and training and that reflects in her choreography and performances.

It is hardly a surprise that Sarveshwari got inspired by her family of dancers. However, it is her own grit and determination that has brought her to where she is today. She trains under her grandmother, mother and aunt.

The concert will showcase the traditional repertoire of Kathak which includes Vandana, Taal presentation, Hori, Tarana etc. Maneesha's solo Abhinaya piece.





Vishakha Nrityalaya organizes

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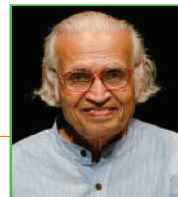
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PARAMPARA ACADEMY AHMEDABAD'S FESTIVAL OF INDIAN DANCE AND OTHER ARTS



Text: **Dr Sunil Kothari**

Bijal Haria, a disciple of Guru Dr Sandhya Purecha organized a Festival of Indian classical dances and other arts at The Nehru Foundation recently. Bijal has received training in Kuchipudi under Guru Smita Shastri, a disciple of CR Acharyalu and also under the celebrated Kuchipudi gurus Raja and Radha Reddy. Bijal has studied Bharatanatyam under Guru Dr Sandhya Purecha, SNA Awardee for overall contribution to dance. Under her guidance, she has been preparing for PhD on Nrittaratnavali text of Jayasenapati.

In the recent years, Bijal has extended her horizons. Along with Kuchipudi and Bharatanatyam, she has trained in martial arts of Kerala viz., Kalaripayattu under D. Padma Kumar. Besides herself, she has also trained her students in this traditional physical dance vocabulary of Kerala arts. Generally mentioned under the category of contemporary dance, it has helped dancers to expand their horizons and explore physical traditions of martial arts and also Yoga.



Bijal Haria honouring Dr Sunil Kothari



Bijal performed Ganapati Vandana in a devotional mood in Kuchipudi style, enhancing its quicksilver quality. The godly figure of Lord Ganapati came alive in her stance. She had put on an excellent cream colour costume with befitting ornaments and gave an impression of a bronze statue. The aharya was stunning. It further enhanced the visual appeal of her vivacious dance.

Dr Sandhya Purecha on account of indisposed health could not join other dancers. But her





Bijal Haria



Chitra Dalvi



Duet choreographed by D Padma Kumar



brilliant Bharatanatyam disciple Chitra Dalvi performed Swati Tirunal's padam in praise of Lord Shiva. Though petite and of delicate build, Chitra moved on the stage with speed and energy belying her figure. The image of Shiva as described in Swati Tiruanl's composition is that with trinetra, three eyes, and body besmeared with ash, he in the heavenly abode of gods, goddesses and saints look divine, his dance with wonderful sounds of ankle bells resounding fills the hearts of his devotees with joy. These were depicted by Chitra with alacrity and scintillating nritta. She did her guru proud by a joyous dance.

Chetan Joshi's name in the field of classical music as a gifted flautist is well known. He played raga Bhupali in a serene manner, evoking pleasant mood full of devotion. He was accompanied on tabla by Jajwalya Shukla and on Pakhavaj by Ankit Parekh from Varanasi.

A surprise came from the presentation of contemporary dance by four dancers, who with their sound training in Kalaripayattu. The number titled 'Search' included 'Kandisa' by trained students on Indian Ocean music.

Duet by Puja and Hiren was performed with control and power, agility, covering floor movements and creating interesting visuals.

D. Padma Kumar's solo Vismay to the live music of Jayan Nair was easy in expressing a sensitive human being's sense of wonder.

The finale sprung another surprise where Bijal's students with Bijal performed a group dance incorporating Kalaripayattu movements with classical Bharatanatyam in a mixed bag of Tillana, which looked quite interesting. I was told that the young Bharatanatyam students were trained in a short period of three weeks only. If so their dancing was commendable.

Looking at the present dance scene in Ahmedabad, there is an openness with which the young dancers of Parampara Academy are learning martial arts like Kalaripayattu and Yoga and are evolving an interesting language of dance. Along with these activities, the study of Natya Sastra texts under the guidance of Dr Sandhya Purecha augurs well for the young generation. Bijal Haria deserves accolades for taking such an initiative.



Flute recital by Chetna Joshi

THE EPITOME OF GRACE AND BEAUTY WITNESSED AT SAI NRITYOTHSAV I 14



Text: **Kavitha Krishnamurthy**

On November 1, 2018, as Karnataka celebrated its 63rd year of Kannada Rajyotsava, many artists from Bangalore paid tribute to the state at Sai Nrityothsav. Diya Uday, a disciple of Karnataka Kalashree Guru Dr Suparna Venkatesh, inaugurated

the programme with 'Hacchevu Kannadada Deepa', which happens to be Karnataka's Rajya geethe or state song. She expressed her love for the state and hoped to light the lamp of Kannada and keep it glowing forever.





After the inaugural dance, Nivedita S Dandina performed Bharatanatyam. She began with a Pushpanjali sung in praise of various gods and goddesses namely Lord

Ganesha, Lord Kartikeya, Goddess Saraswati, Goddess Lakshmi and Lord Shiva. The pushpanjali was in Raga Gambheera Nattai set to Adi tala. Next, she presented a Varnam 'Nee Indha Mayam' narrating the story of a Virothkhandita Natali who is deeply in love with Lord Krishna. Composed by Papanasam Sivan, the Varnam was in Raga Dhanyasi and Tala Adi. She ended with Aigiri Nandini an Adi Shankaracharya composition sung in praise of Goddess Shakti. Music composed in Raga Malika was set to Adi tala.

Next was Chitra C. Warriar who presented Bharatanatyam. Starting with a Mallari in Chaturashra Eka tala, Chitra continued with a Shloka followed by a Kouthuvam on Lord Nataraja. She moved to present one of Rama Vaidyanathan's special choreography work called 'Divine Cowherd' where the dancer depicted various episodes of Lord Krishna. She ended with a Bhajan 'Thumaka Chalata Ramachandra', a composition of Tulsidas. All items were wisely chosen and well executed by Chitra.

What came next was something that Bangalore hadn't witnessed before. Kathak exponent Durga Arya gave the spectators a visual treat with her grace and subtle expression. Durga Arya has carved a niche for herself in the world of Kathak. She currently practices the Lucknow Gharana style of Kathak which was taught to her by Pt. Birju Maharaj. She commenced her recital with a Shiva Vandana called 'Ardhang', a composition of Pt. Birju Maharaj. Next, she presented 'Dhamar' a rhythmic composition set to 14 beat time cycle of Taal Dhamar. Joining her in this were Sampada Pillai and Veena Bhat who

had been trained by Durga Arya in a workshop. She concluded with 'Krishna nee begane baro', a Devaranama composed by Purandara Dasa. She chose to present this as a tribute to Kannada on Rajyotsava day. As a token of love, students of Shweta Venkatesh performed 'Raag Taal Maal', a Kathak item in front of Durga Arya. They won a lot of love, blessings and appreciation from her. The evening ended with a felicitation to all the artists by Sai Venkatesh.



A POWERFUL BHARATANATYAM BALLET



Text and Pics: **Paul Nicodemus**

It was a blissful performance of Bharatanatyam packed with some powerful display of technique and abhinaya. Shweta Venkatesh and Group from Bengaluru presented 'Maha Shakthi', a dance feature during the monthly festival organised by Siddhartha Arts Academy at Siddhartha Auditorium in Vijayawada

on November 30. The ballet with its mesmerising presentation inspired the youngsters who attended the festival in large numbers. Siddhartha Academy has been organising the festival every month to instil cultural values and educate the next generation about Indian art forms. Every other educational institution in the

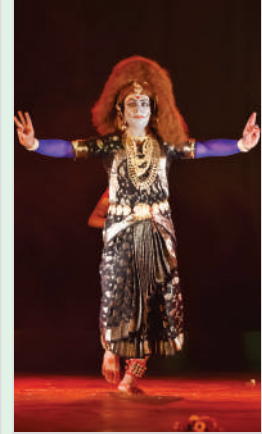
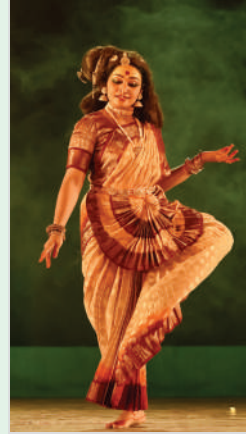


Shweta Venkatesh and Group

country should take a cue from Siddhartha Academy and initiate such value-adding programmes under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

The dance feature - Maha Shakthi - explored the belief that the supreme Godhead Shakti is the divine energy. She is the creator of all the Gods including the Trimurthis. Dancers got into the skin of the characters and presented how she manifests through her gunas as Maha Saraswati, Maha Lakshmi and Maha Kali. In Karnataka's format, Devi's Gyana Shakti, the ballet delved in the Bhakti of Akkamahadevi, as Iccha Shakti, she empowers Queen Shantala, and Kriya Shakti was seen at its most powerful state as Obavva.

The ballet employed Carnatic music as its medium to bring about the spiritual strength of Devi and her manifestations. Bharatanatyam dance style served as the perfect platform for these artistes to add to the dignity of the divine play. Elaborated costumes, inspired



by the Indian Iconography - makeup and coiffures inspired by Chitra Sutras made the dance production beautiful and elegant.

Shweta Venkatesh as Maha Shakthi, Krithi B Shetty as Maha Saraswati, Archana Punyesh as Maha Lakshmi, Nishant Aravindakshan as Maha Kali, Megha as Akkamahadevi and Obavva and Shivani as Shantala Devi brought the characters to life with their aharaya and abhinaya. Ashitha R Kumar, Kavitha Krishnamurthy, Vidisha Sirivara and Suchita Venkatesh shined as dancers who knit the ballet together.



The ballet was well choreographed by Guru Suparna Venkatesh and technical direction was provided by popular lighting artiste Sai Venkatesh. Musical direction by Praveen D Rao, concept by Mysore B Nagaraj and costumes and properties by Shakthi Rai and Nishant proved to be apt for the vibrant ballet. The future of Indian performing arts looks promising with the brilliance of these young dancers.

DAMAYANTI JOSHI A DOYEN OF KATHAK

Text: **Tejasri Bathina**



Where art rises above skill and virtuosity, the name of Damayanti Joshi, a leading exponent of Kathak occurs to the lovers of Indian dance. She was born to Vatsala Joshi in Mumbai on December 5, 1932, and the people got a cultural treat. She was adopted by the well-known scientist of the time, Col. Sahib Singh Sokhey and his famous dancer-wife Madame Menaka as their own. Menaka has lost her own child and she has decided to adopt Joshi. She was a noted Indian classical dancer in the Kathak dance form.

Damayanti began her career as a young dancer in the troupe of Madame Menaka in 1930s and travelled to



Damayanti Joshi

many parts of the world. After 10 years, at 15, she had performed in major European cities. Joshi learnt Kathak from Sitaram Prasad of Jaipur Gharana and became an adept dancer at a very young age. After training under Acchan Maharaj, Lacchu Maharaj and Shambhu Maharaj of Lucknow Gharana, she imbibed nuances from both the traditions.



She became independent in 1950s and achieved prominence in 1960s, before turning into a guru at her dance school in Mumbai. She was the first student at Mumbai's Sri Rajarajeswari Bharatha Natya Kala Mandir, where she learned Bharatanatyam from Guru T.K. Mahalingam Pillai, doyen among nattuvanars. She was the first person to introduce 'Saree' as a costume in Kathak dance.

She had many feathers in her cap and has been honoured with the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1968 and the Padma Shri in 1970. She was also the guru to Bireshwar Gautam and had remained director of the U.P. Kathak Kendra in Lucknow.

For her excellence in the field of dance, she has been featured in the documentary on Kathak in 1971 by Films Division, Government of India, and another film entitled 'Damayanti Joshi' directed by Hukumat Sarin was made in 1973. She passed away on September 19, 2004.

Frozen- in-Time

Photograph by Paul Nicodemus



Ratikant Mohapatra, dancer, percussionist, guru and choreographer of Odissi in performance during the Vysakhi Nrithyotsav, an all India dance festival organised by Nataraj Music and Dance Academy at Visakhapatnam.

A GRAND FESTIVAL

The Sangeetha Nritya Academy organised a National Music and Dance Festival at Sagar, Shimoga district, in Karnataka on November 17 and 18. The festival was inaugurated by Hartalu Halappa, MLA of Sagar, and presided over by Ustad Faiyaz Khan, president of Karnataka Sangeetha Bharathi Academy. Veena Parameshwar, president of town municipality graced the occasion on the first day. The programme commenced with Nadaswaram by Vidwan Nataraj and team Devanahalli, Carnatic music concert by R.K. Padmanabha, Bangalore; Kathak dance by Niranthara School of Dance; Bharatanatyam



by Sai Arts International, Bangalore; Sugama Sangeetha by Inchara Sugama Sangeetha Samsthe, Bangalore; Sundari Vandana by Bhimanna Jadhav, Maharashtra and Hindustani vocal concert by Pandit Rajguru Guruswamy Gadag.



On the second day, Gamaka Vachana by Dr Sanat Kumar; Kuchipudi dance by Nupura Fine Arts Academy; Bharatanatyam by Parinithi Kala Kendra, Sagar; Violin duet by Akkarai Sisters, Chennai; Bharatanatyam by Tandava group; Fusion Music by Sandeep Pillai and troop, Kochi, Kerala; Hindustani





music by Vidushi Sangeeta Katti Kulkarni; Sitar by Ustad Rafique Khan and Shafi Khan were showcased. The festival was managed by Ashok N Cheluvaadi, registrar of Karnataka Sangeetha Nritya Academy, M Gopal, member of Karnataka Sangeetha Nritya Academy, Anand Madalagere, member of Karnataka Sangeetha Nritya Academy, and Roopa Rajesh, member of Karnataka Sangeetha Nritya Academy.

- Gopal, Sagar



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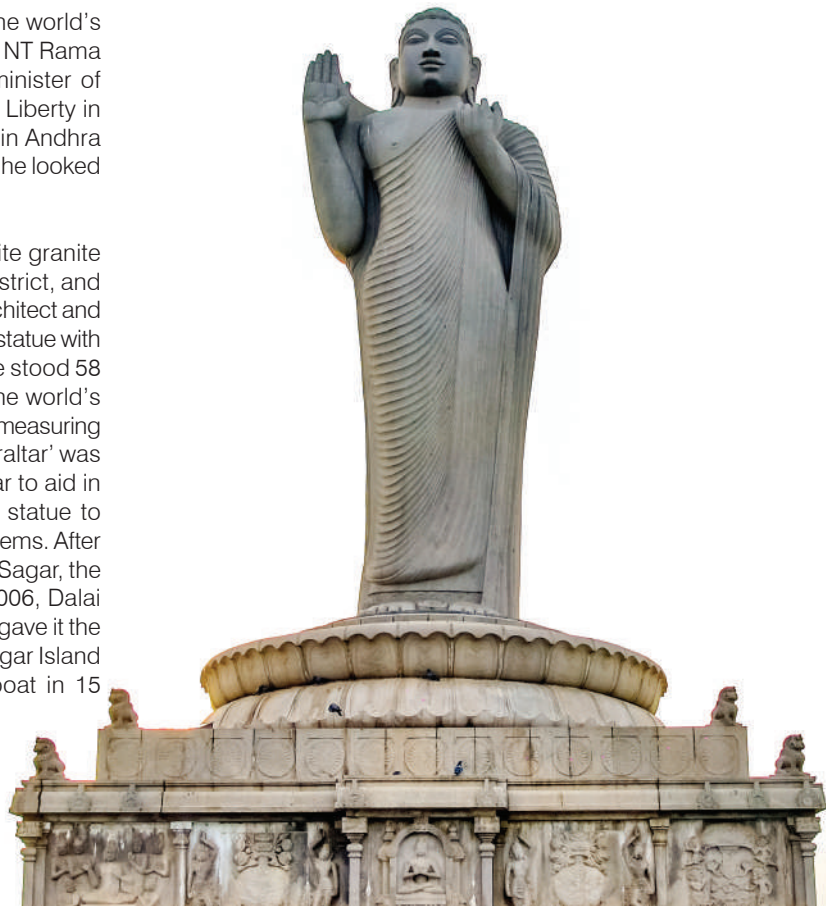
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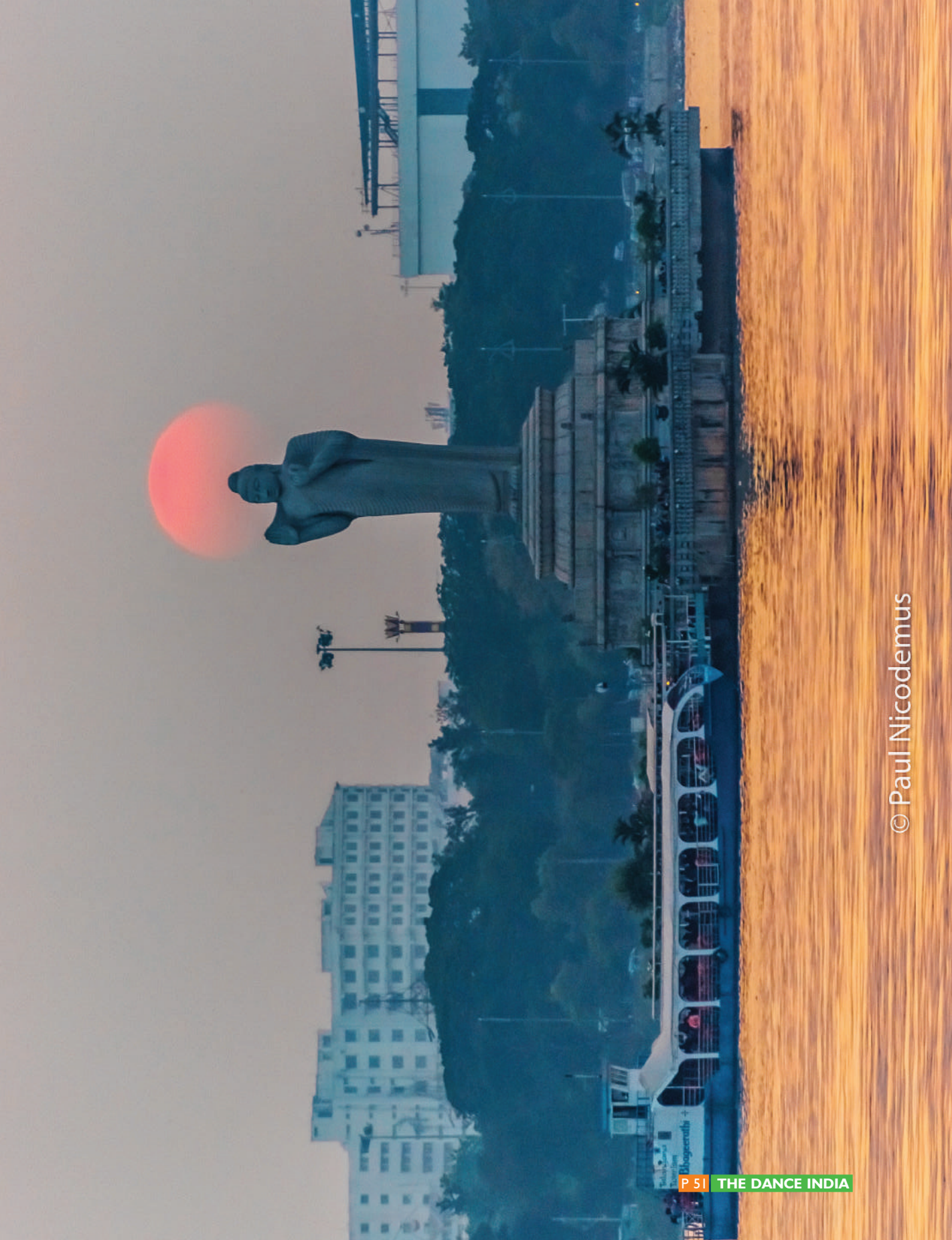
THE BUDDHA STATUE OF HYDERABAD

Text and Pic: Paul Nicodemus

The Buddha Statue of Hyderabad is the world's tallest monolith of Gautama Buddha. NT Rama Rao, film actor and the then chief minister of Andhra Pradesh, inspired by the Statue of Liberty in New York wanted to build a symbolic icon in Andhra Pradesh. He depicted Gautama Buddha as he looked at him as a humanitarian.

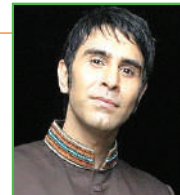
After a long search, NTR found a solid white granite rock near Raigiri in Bhongir of Nalgonda District, and the work started in October 1985. Temple architect and builder SM Ganapathi Sthapati sculpted the statue with the help of hundreds of workers. The statue stood 58 feet tall and weighed 350 tons making it the world's tallest statue of Buddha. A concrete platform measuring 15 feet, now referred to as the 'Rock of Gibraltar' was constructed in the middle of Hussain Sagar to aid in erecting the statue. They transported the statue to Hyderabad in November 1988 but had problems. After being submerged for two years in Hussain Sagar, the statue was erected on April 12, 1992. In 2006, Dalai Lama visited the statue, consecrated it and gave it the status of a holy pilgrimage. The Hussain Sagar Island can be reached from Lumbini Park by boat in 15 minutes.



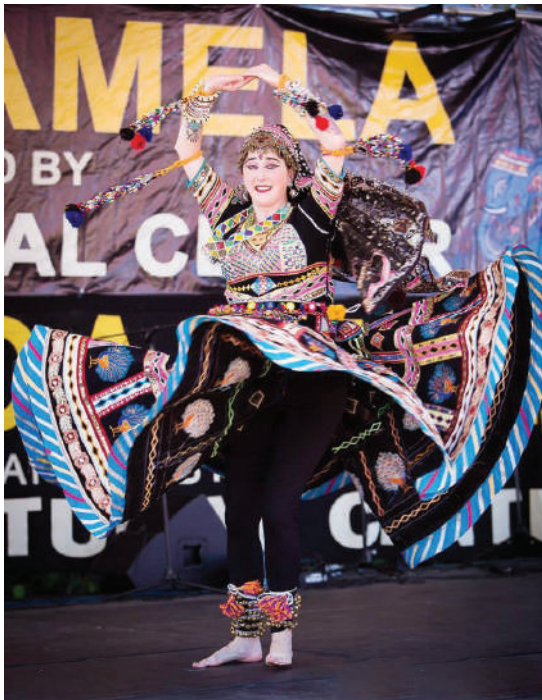


SPREADING INDIAN CULTURE IN USA

Text: Sandip Soparrkar, is a world book of record holder, a well-known Ballroom dancer and a Bollywood choreographer. He can be contacted on sandipsoparrkar06@gmail.com



I have always believed that a dancer is the luckiest person, not only because they are creative and can make all their imaginations come alive through their dance moves but because whenever they travel they make friends very easily and the relationship that



develops is only because of the medium of dance that gets them to bond with other people.

I had mentioned before in my article that I was invited to perform at the Seattle India Dance Festival in the USA recently, and on this trip where I spent 3 weeks, my assistants Supriya Shah, Manasi Desai and me met a very interesting person. Someone who connected with us because of the love for dance, and not just any dance, her love was for Bollywood dancing.

I was introduced to her as one of the dancers who would be performing for me in my dance segments, my dance piece had total 22 performers and she was one of them, but the first thing that caught my attention was her name 'Katrina Ji'. Well, first I thought that she has named herself after Katrina Kaif, but when I spoke more to her I realised that it was a coincidence that her



name and that of the bollywood super star were same. So my next question was why 'Ji'? That too I realised was her real surname. Katrina Kaif may be a star but Katrina Ji has been in the dance scene for longer than Katrina Kaif in Bollywood.

Katrina Ji started dancing at the age of 4 years and by now she has a wealth of dance experience. She is a Certified ATS Belly Dance Instructor by Carolena Nericcio of FCBD, she is also certified in Entry Level Flamenco by the Spanish Dance Society. Her childhood dance foundation has been in ballet, tap and acrobatics. But what she loves most is Bollywood dance and Bhangra.

Though Katrina cannot speak Hindi, she watches every Bollywood film and loves Rani Mukherjee. Her love for Bollywood dance has got her to India many times and she has trained under many experts from the film world. I was surprised to visit her dance studio in Seattle by the name 'Culture Shakti Dance Company'. Without being an Indian or a Hindu she has the word 'Shakti' used in her company as she believes that 'the power' 'the shakti' of love of dance has helped her set up a dance school and performance company.

Her entire studio has a very Rajasthani feel, with puppets, the famous kathputli everywhere, the main door welcomes the guest with a toran, and symbol of 'Om'



along with a diya kept near the music system for praying before classes. Being a person who is born and brought up in Seattle, she seems more Indian to me than most Indians living in India.

Katrina has been teaching ATS Belly Dance since 2001. In 2007, she was amongst the first group of teachers to become a certified Sister Studio ATS Belly Dance Instructor by Carolena Nericcio of Fat Chance Belly Dance. In 2010, she began Bollywood dance classes in Seattle and post that her institute has been nominated as the best in Western Washington by King 5 / Evening Magazine, which makes me feel proud that she is taking so much interest in promoting our films and dances in another faraway land.

Each year Katrina travels to Rajasthan along with her students and goes to remote places of the colourful state of India learning Rajasthani folk dances from locals. She has special love for kalbelia dance as well as Tera Tali and often invites local kalbelia dancers to the USA to perform along with her team. In fact, recently she along with dancers from India took part in USA Dance championship and was highly appreciated for their efforts.

What I liked the most about Katrina and her Culture Shakti dance school is that at her dance class where she teaches, Bollywood, Rajasthani folk and belly dance, she has many schemes to promote Indian culture. There are times where students have won a trip to Vienna, India and Austria along with Katrina and her troupe. She leaves no stone unturned for people to come to class so that she can spread the Indian culture into their lives.



People like Katrina Ji are rare gems, who willingly adopt another culture and everything about the country and place only because they love it from bottom of their heart. The love for India and Indian culture is so clear in Katrina Ji's lifestyle that it is touching. The only regret she has is that she is trying her best to learn Hindi but is not very good at it and so she has not been able to speak in the right accent and the correct manner.

When I meet dancers like Kartina Ji, I sometimes wonder how pure their souls must be to be accepting and changing oneself completely to fit into a new culture. My heart is all for Katrina and the love affair she has with Bollywood music and dance moves. She is superbly dynamic, graceful, and passionate about her art. I hope and pray that she keeps the hard work going and promotes Indian film culture even more in other places in the USA and at the same time I wish to thank Katrina for loving India and Indian films and calling us her own.



THE DANCE INDIA MONTHLY PROGRAMME

@ANDHERI

The inaugural function of the western centre of The Dance India was held at Andheri on November 24 at the Shri Rajasthani Seva Sangh Hall, J.B. Nagar, Andheri (East). The event was graced by Dr Vinod Tibrewala, chancellor of Shri JJT University; Milind Dighe, head of SRSS dance academy; Samidha Shinde, founder of Samidha's Institute of Performing Arts.

Performances for the day were Bharatanatyam by Guru Anuradha Sakpal-Lad and her disciples and a flute concert by Kiran Vardam, a disciple of Pt. Murlī Manohar Shukla accompanied by Uday Mopkar on the tabla.





The programme began with a flute concert by Kiran Vardam. He played soft music in Hindustani Shastriya Sangeet (North Indian classical music) and light music, played over Bansuri (North Indian Bamboo Flute) accompanied by tabla in different styles. The melodious music turned the atmosphere in the auditorium soothing with a mesmerising ambience. It was followed by a Bharatanatyam presentation by Guru Anuradha Sakpal-Lad and her disciples. Panch Mahabhoot was explained through dance and the audience was fascinated by the variations exhibited in all 'Panchatattvas'. The movement of water depicted through dance was outstanding, Agni symbolised by different 'Mudras', 'Vayu' variation by

use of props and 'Aakash' with graceful movement, 'Prithvi' with various 'Jathis' were also presented. Melodious music and choreography by Anuradha Sakpal stunned the audience. The whole event was held for an hour with the audience still longing for more.

The aim of the monthly programme is to preserve and propagate classical music and dance while providing a stage to different sections of artists. It also educates the audience on classical dance and music. This is a free platform provided to all artists of the southern and northern parts of Mumbai and western suburban areas.

- Samidha Shinde





The Dance India's Monthly Programme was held in collaboration with Mudra Dance Academy headed by Vrunda Upadhyay at Dombivli on November 18, 2018. The programme began in the presence of Kashmira Trivedi, chief coordinator of Maharashtra and Gujarat. Atul Ghansham Godse began the proceedings by playing the tabla with ease. It was followed by a

Kathak recital by Alaknanda Mukherjee and her disciples. Her guru, Jyoti Shidhaye, a Kathak exponent came down to bless her. With a wonderful audience, the programme concluded with the felicitation of artistes. The Dance India presented artistes with a certificate of appreciation.

- Vrunda Upadhyay







The Dance India Magazine in collaboration with Atharva School of Fine Arts, Mumbai, under the guidance of the Maharashtra and Gujarat coordinator, Kashmira Trivedi presented its first monthly programme on the November 17 at Venus Towers, Nehru Nagar, Kurla (East) in Mumbai.

The artists of the day were Fazal Abbas Jafari and Pooja Malkar. Fazal Abbas Jafari, a disciple of Pt. Murlī Manohar Shukla presented Hindustani Vocal and was accompanied by Dhaivat Mehta on tabla and Vinay Dalvi on harmonium. The Thumri presentation mesmerised the audience. Pooja Malkar, a disciple of Dr Manjiri Deo



presented traditional Kathak. The audience was awestruck with her performance. The artistes were overwhelmed with the platform provided by The Dance India and thanked the magazine's editor, BR Vikram Kumar, Kashmiri Trivedi and Atharva School of Fine Arts.

- Shamal Pawar





@NAVI MUMBAI

The Dance India magazine organised its first session of the monthly classical dance programme in Navi Mumbai on November 19 in collaboration with Meenakshi Nritya Vidyalaya, Navi Mumbai. The last month saw its gala inaugural programme with all gurus and teachers of classical dance and music joining hands with The Dance India, to propagate the legacy of classical dance and music in India.

The first session consisted of an instrumental recital by violinist Satish Seshadri, a disciple of Seetha Ramakrishnan. He has been associated with the Shanmukhananda Fine Arts Centre, Mumbai as faculty and has won accolades like the Shanmukhananda Sur Shringar Samsad. He began with a demonstration of the violin, talking about its introduction in Indian Classical music and how it was adopted as a major accompanying instrument in all vocal and dance performances. He played several short pieces, beginning with fusion music, to semi-classical as well as light classical pieces. He concluded the programme with a Tillana, a pure classical item. The ease with which





he played made a mark on the minds of all present there and his versatile and mellifluous renditions was a witness to his mastery over the instrument.

This was followed by a dance demonstration by the students of Navarasa Dance Academy, Nerul. Five of the new talents performed a wonderful item on Lord Vishnu under the able guidance of Guru Sushma Gopinath. The artists were Sneha PM, Parvathy S Menon, Jayalakshmi KJ, Anagha Anil Kumar and Akshara Prakash. After the skilful delineation of the tales of Lord Vishnu, the artists gave a detailed demonstration of the Mohiniyattam dance style, beginning with the meaning of the term - Mohiniyattam, to the different postures used and the costume worn. The pleasant presentation by the dancers made the evening extremely enjoyable and enriching.

The concluding speech given by Kashmira Trivedi informed the artists that this platform is now open to artistes, who can apply directly to The Dance India Magazine in order to showcase their talents. The programme was organised by Kashmira and KV Rajan, of the Meenakshi Nritya Vidyalaya, was well coordinated and planned.

- Julia Gosh



IN SIGHT

Colouring Aesthetics of Indian Dance Forms will take place as part of the 52nd World Congress of Dance by Dadar-Mumbai Section, the first official Section of the International Dance Council in India at the Tata Theatre on Dec 14 from 6.30 pm.

Madhavi Mudgal and Troupe will be presenting **'Sankalam'** in Pravaha Dance Festival at Tata Theatre, NCPA on December 16 from 6:30 pm.

Mallika Sarabhai and Troupe will be presenting **'Sva Kranti'** and Geeta Chandran and Natya Visakha Dance Company will be presenting **'Anekanta'** in Pravaha Dance Festival at Tata Theatre, NCPA on December 21 from 6:30 pm.

Umang will present **Sukanya Kumar (Bharatanatyam) and Rupali Kadam (Odissi)** at Godrej Dance Theatre, NCPA on December 21 from 5 pm.

Shanta Dhananjayan will be giving a **lecture demonstration on the subject, Nritya Karana or Abhinaya Karana based on Bharataarnava and Natyashastra** at Music Academy Kasturirangan Auditorium on 25 December at 10 am.

Sreelatha Vinod will be assisting her in the demonstration.

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TRIBUTES



Banamali Maharana was born on May 16, 1941 in Raghurajpur of Puri district. He was an Indian percussionist famous for playing 'Mardala'. He had an affinity for music from a young age but did not receive any specific training in childhood. Attracted to the 'Rasaleela' performed by Mohan Sundar Deb Goswami and his group, Banamali began playing Khol and Dholak with Deb Goswami. His formal training commenced after he joined Annapurna Theatre where he learned percussion from Singhari Shyamsundar Kar and Kshetramohan Kar. Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra was his related brother from the same village and accompanied him in most of his dance performances. Banamali started teaching Mardala first at Kala Vikas Kendra, Cuttack and then at 'Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalaya'. He introduced a seven-year course in Mardala music at the Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalaya before retiring as head of the Mardala department in 1999. Maharana was the most sought-after Mardala player for Odissi performances in his time. Besides Kelucharan, he accompanied Sanjukta Panigrahi, Priyambada Mohanty Hejmadi, Sonal Mansingh, Aruna Mohanty and Sujata Mohapatra in their dance performance both in India and abroad. He was awarded the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 2004. He passed away at the age of 77 in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, on November 17.



Kunhiraman Nair, popularly known as Parassini Kunhiraman Nair, was born on May 3, 1933. He was a popular Kathakali artist of Kadathanadan style of Kathakali, who performed different characters on many stages all over the country and at various prestigious temples in Kerala. He received his initial training in Kathakali under Kochi Govindan Nair. Later, Sankaran Nair and Ravunni Nair trained him. His major roles include Keechaka in Keechaka Vadham, Duryodhana in Duryodhanavadham, Narakasura in Narakasuravadham, Roudra Bheema in Duryodhanavadham, Ravana, Rama and Hanuman in Ramayana. He was also a teacher who imparted training to young exponents of Kathakali in Kerala. He received Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 2015. He passed away at the age of 85 on November 13.

