

# THE DANCE INDIA

A Treasure Trove of Culture & Tourism

ISSN 2456-4249  
Volume 3 | Issue 1 | July 2018  
90 ₹

TORCHBEARERS  
**KALAMANDALAM GOPI**  
THE LIVING LEGEND  
OF KATHAKALI

BEACONS OF LIGHT  
**RAMA VAIDYANATHAN**  
DESTINED TO BE  
A TORCHBEARER

COVER STORY  
**SANGEET NATAK AKADEMI AND  
ITS MANY FLAWS**



THE  
DANCE  
INDIA  
**2<sup>nd</sup>** ANNIVERSARY  
CELEBRATIONS

Look like an Angel with our amazing range of  
**WEDDING SILK SAREES & JEWELLERY**  
offered at surprisingly low prices



• GOLD & SILVER JEWELLERY • SILK & FANCY SAREES • CHUDIDHARS  
• MENS & KIDS READYMADES • COSMETICS • FOOTWEAR

• VISAKHAPATNAM • GAJUWAKA • GOPALAPATNAM • GUNTUR • NELLORE  
• RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM • VIZIANAGARAM • SRIKAKULAM

WWW.CMRVIZAG.COM | FOLLOW US ON [f](#) /CMRGROUP [i](#) /CMRSHOPPINGMALL

**CMR**  
SHOPPING MALL

*The joy of life*

# CONTENTS

Volume 3 | Issue 1 | July 2018

**04 EDITORIAL TEAM**

---

**05 EDITOR'S NOTE**

---

**08 MESSAGES**

---

**10 CULTURAL BULLETIN**

Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards 2017  
Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar 2017

---

**16 TORCHBEARERS**

Kalamandalam Gopi:  
The Living Legend of Kathakali

---

**24 COVER STORY**

Sangeet Natak Akademi and its Many Flaws

---

**32 RAYS OF HOPE**

Paris Laxmi: Erasing Boundaries with Art

---

**39 BEACONS OF LIGHT**

Rama Vaidyanathan: Destined to be a Torchbearer

---

**43 FROZEN IN TIME**

**44 REVIEWS**

---

**52 SPECIAL TRIBUTE**

Gauhar Jaan A True Superstar

---

**54 REPORTS**

---

**58 KINDLED SPIRITS**

Tejasri: Dedicated to the Progress of Art

---

**60 PROSCENIUM**

Padamati Gali A Realistic and Revolutionary Play

---

**62 ARANGETRAM**

Dr Shruti Hegde Nuanced Abhinaya her Forte

---

**64 TRIBUTES**

**65 CLASSIFIEDS**



# 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."**



Editor in Chief  
**BR Vikram Kumar**

Executive Editor  
**Paul Spurgeon Nicodemus**

Feature Writers  
**Rajahamsa  
RMK Sharma**

Contributors  
**Dr Sunil Kothari**  
New Delhi

**Avinash Pasricha**  
New Delhi

**Nita Vidyarthi**  
Kolkata

Administration Manager  
**KV Lakshmi**

Circulation Manager  
**V Srinivas**

Systems Administrator  
**K Bhanoji Rao**

Coordinators  
(News, Advertisements &  
Subscriptions)

**Sai Venkatesh** Karnataka

**Kashmira Trivedi** Thane

**Alaknanda** Noida

**Lakshmi Thomas**, Chennai

**Gayathri Gopi** Vellore

**Gopal M** Sagar

**Anurekha Gosh** Kolkata

**GV Chari** New Delhi

**Dr. Kshithija Barve**  
Goa and Kolhapur

**Seuli Chatterjee** Kolkata

**Basu Sinam** Manipur

Articles may be submitted for possible publication in the magazine in the following manner.

- Send in your articles to editor:thedanceindia@gmail.com. Please include your full name, contact information (address and telephone number) and a short bio data.
- Articles are published in the magazine only on the condition that the author agrees to the terms of the Copyright Statement and Policy

Regd. Office: Trivikram Publications,  
D.No. 50-01-50/1, ASR Nagar,  
Seethammadhara, Visakhapatnam - 530 013,  
A.P. Tel: 0891-2525656

The opinions, beliefs and viewpoints expressed by the various writers in the articles and reviews do not necessarily reflect the opinions, beliefs and viewpoints of the editorial team or official policies of The Dance India.

All rights reserved. © July 2018 - The contents published in The Dance India magazine are an exclusive copyright of Trivikram Publications. No part of the magazine may be reproduced in whole or part without the written consent of Trivikram Publications.

All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent courts in Visakhapatnam only.

Edited, Published and Owned by  
Bathina Ranga Vikram Kumar,  
Mobile No. +91-9848137445, on behalf of  
Trivikram Publications from  
D.No. 50-01-50/1, ASR Nagar,  
Seethammadhara,  
Dist. Visakhapatnam - 530 013, A.P. and

Printed by G. Sangameswara Rao, at  
Sri Lekha Power printers  
D. No : 30-20-30 &31, Nehuru Sreet  
Seetarampuram, Elluru Road  
Vijayawada (AndhraPradesh)

Editor: Bathina Ranga Vikram Kumar

The Dance India acknowledges the help rendered by the Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi, by way of a financial grant.

Technical Advise and Graphic Design



**TRIGODEGREE**  
WE FULFILL YOUR DREAMS

+91 9494 06 3456 | tri60degree@gmail.com

Follow us on



thedanceindiamagazine



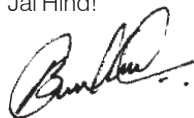


# EDITOR'S DESK

**S**ustainability of a cultural magazine in India is a difficult task, but with the support of artistes, patrons and PSUs, The Dance India magazine has successfully entered the third year. The magazine took its form with a dream - a dream to protect, promote and perpetuate classical, traditional and folk art forms to the next generation. During the period, many amateur and professional artistes were represented under various columns; tributes were paid to legends and many performing art forms have been documented. The magazine also brought forth several problems plaguing the cultural bodies and emerged as the voice of the art community. The magazine has been a first of its kind in striving towards the welfare of the art and artiste.

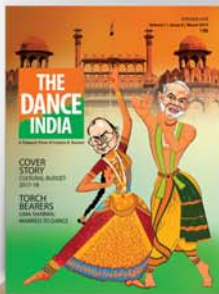
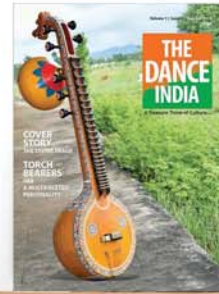
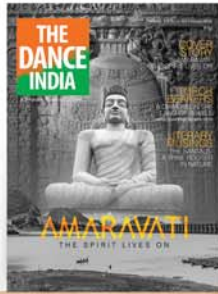
On this occasion, we at The Dance India would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to every well-wisher who has been with us and supported the magazine during the last two years. We want to thank all the readers, scholars, experts, critics, columnists, coordinators, staff, designers and editorial board for their unparalleled support. The magazine's role as a bridge to hand over our rich cultural heritage to the next generation should continue without ceasing and it is only possible with the support of patrons of art and culture.

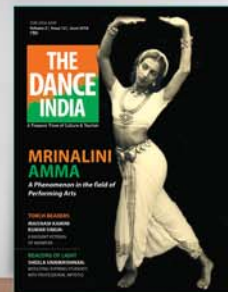
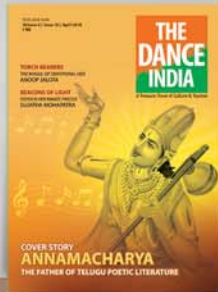
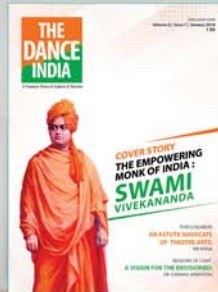
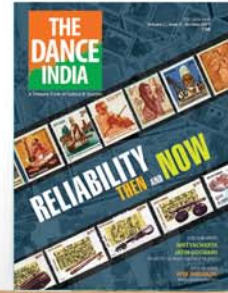
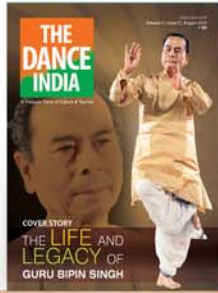
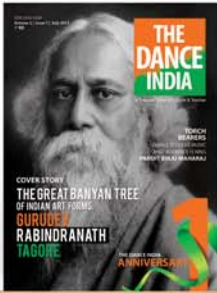
Jai Hind!



**BR Vikram Kumar**  
Editor-in-Chief

# THE 2<sup>ND</sup> SUCCESSFUL COMMITTED YEAR





2<sup>nd</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
CELEBRATIONS  
**MESSAGES**



**Dr Saroja Vaidyanathan**, Bharatanatyam Exponent, Guru, Author, Choreographer, recipient of Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, Kalidas Samman, Sahitya Kala Parishad Award, Kalaimamani, Acharya Choodamani and Founder President of Ganesa Natyalaya.

I am glad that The Dance India magazine published by BR Vikram Kumar to capture the spirit and culture of art in all its diversity has successfully completed two years. I am sure under the able guidance of its editor, the Magazine will rise to new heights in promoting and publishing about all the great dance and music pioneers, scholars, professionals, upcoming professionals of India and their contribution and give awareness about them and the art and culture of India. I am sure this magazine gets good publicity and spreads all over the world.

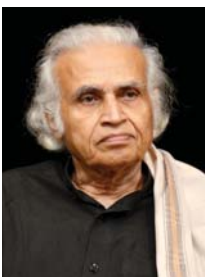
My best wishes.



**Dr Darshana Jhaveri**, recipient of Central Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, Padma Shri by the Government of India and Kalidas Samman by the Government of Madhya Pradesh.

I congratulate The Dance India magazine for having successfully completed two years. It has widely covered impressive interviews and write-ups with good photographs of eminent gurus, dancers and artistes who have immensely contributed towards the promotion of classical arts.

I wish the magazine more success in future to serve our rich classical cultural heritage.



**Dr Sunil Kothari**, Cultural critic, recipient of Padma Shri by the Government of India, Sangeet Natak Akademi Award and a Ratna Sadasya Fellow.

The Dance India, a two-year-old journal on dance edited by BR Vikram Kumar has rendered a great service in creating awareness on Indian Dance. It is important to have such a journal as the space in print media is shrinking. Therefore, the journal needs good support. I request all the dancers and dance lovers to subscribe to it. I wish the editor a great success.



# 2<sup>nd</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS MESSAGES



**Dr S Chellappa**, IAS (Retd.), former Additional Chief Secretary and Advocate & Member TRS Politbureau.

I am glad to know that 'The Dance India' is completing two years. I also know that you started this art magazine in the State of Andhra Pradesh with so many difficulties. But it is worth taking the risk for the great cause of preserving and propagating the rich and varied cultural heritage of the state and the country. I appreciate your efforts to rope in famous artistes of various states in the country to contribute their views in this magazine for the betterment of the art and culture of the respective State. In this regard, "The Dance India" treasures the Guru Parampara tradition. In one of my research work, I wrote that art-form cannot remain static. While retaining its essential thisness of the art, it should also give space for growth. For instance, the Kuchipudi dance of Andhra Pradesh, while retaining its originality has been accommodating, female dancers and the Bharatanatyam features of the Thanjavur style. Hence the Kuchipudi performance as it exists today is a combination of originality coupled with modernity and thus it has become an exquisitely living dance tradition.

Nor is this all. The Dance India also provides space for the development of other South Indian, Northern, North-eastern and Eastern Classical dance forms such as Bharatanatyam, Kathakali, Kathak, Odissi, Satria, Manipuri and Mohiniyattam. While the seniors share their rich experience, the Juniors add beauty and blessedness to the art form. In my view, it is very unique. I have seen that many experienced gurus started learning a lot from other art forms and cultivated an open mind to appreciate other art forms.

Apart from the above, the magazine covers all aspects of modern Indian life keeping itself abreast of the time. The down--to-earth simple English style is another welcome feature of it.

I wish that the magazine, like the TIME magazine becomes one of the landmark things of Art

SUBSCRIBE



For subscriptions contact:

Email Id: [subscribe.thedanceindia@gmail.com](mailto:subscribe.thedanceindia@gmail.com)

Phone No.: +91-8897987445

# CULTURAL BULLETIN

Source: PIB

## Three MoUs signed and Six at an advanced stage under 'Adopt a Heritage' Scheme: Ministry of Culture

In response to certain reports appearing recently in the media regarding 'Adopt a Heritage' Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) pertaining to Red Fort being 'put on hold', the Ministry of Culture has clarified that 'Adopt a Heritage' scheme of the Government of India is making good progress. The scheme is being implemented by the Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Culture and Archaeological Survey of India. The Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Raghvendra Singh said that under 'Adopt a Heritage' Scheme, three MoUs have already been signed and six are at an advanced stage and thirty one more Adarsh Monuments are enlisted for coverage under the scheme. The Project aims to develop synergy

among all partners to effectively promote "responsible tourism", he added.

The project primarily focuses on providing basic amenities that includes cleanliness, public conveniences, drinking water, ease of access for differently abled and senior citizens, standardised signage, illumination and advanced amenities such as surveillance system, night viewing facilities, tourism facilitation center and an enhanced tourism experience that will result in more tourist footfalls, both domestic and foreign.

*The Minister of State for External Affairs, Shri M.J. Akbar releasing the publication at the inauguration of 'Taj Mahal Meets Timbuktu' (An exhibition of the manuscripts of Timbuktu, Mali), in New Delhi on May 24, 2018.*



# Taj Mahal Declaration adopted to Beat Plastic Pollution

The Ministry of Culture held a high-level stakeholders' workshop on the Taj Mahal at Agra. Chaired by the Minister of State (I/c) of Culture and Minister of State for Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Dr Mahesh Sharma, the meeting was called to discuss the issues of pollution around Taj Mahal with a focus on drawing short term and long term measures to deal with the problem and to protect the Taj from environment pollution. The meeting was attended by DG, ASI, Usha Sharma; Additional Secretary, M/o Environment, Forest & Climate Change AK Mehta, representatives of State Government, local administration, local administration of neighbouring districts to Agra, local MPs, MLAs, representatives of UNEP, Central Pollution Control Board and other stakeholders from the public, industry, environmentalists etc.

The meeting was followed by the Taj Declaration to 'Beat Plastic Pollution' made at a press conference, in which a pledge was taken to make areas around the Taj Mahal up to 500 metres around the historic monument litter free and taking immediate steps to reduce single-use plastic near and around the Taj



Mahal. The pledge was taken in the presence of Dr Mahesh Sharma; Executive Director of UNEP, Erik Solheim; UNEP Goodwill ambassador and actress Diya Mirza; local MPs, MLAs, local administration among others.

Earlier, at the stakeholders' consultations, constructive suggestions were made to reduce the pollution around the Taj and its damaging impact on the monument.

Dr Mahesh Sharma, Erik Solheim and Diya Mirza also participated in the Clean Yamuna Programme on the riverfront along the Taj along with representatives of various other agencies.

*The Minister of State for Culture (I/C) and Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Dr. Mahesh Sharma at a program of Adoption of Taj Mahal declaration to beat plastic pollution free area around the Taj Mahal, in Agra, Uttar Pradesh on June 03, 2018. The Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Eric Solheim and the UN Environment Goodwill Ambassador, Dia Mirza are also seen.*



## The 9th edition of 'Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav'

The gala inaugural event showcased an amalgamation of Crafts & Art Forms, Cuisine Fest and Magnificent Cultural Performances.

Continuing its endeavour to promote India's rich cultural Heritage, Ministry of Culture has organised a 3-day long diversified cultural festival 'Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav'. It was inaugurated by Chief Minister of Uttarakhand, Trivendra Singh Rawat at Koti Colony, near Tehri Lake, Uttarakhand on May 25.

The North Zone Cultural Centre (NZCC), Patiala has been entrusted with the responsibility as the nodal agency to carry forward the execution of the National Cultural Festival under the banner of the slogan "Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat". Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat along with other dignitaries also visited cuisine and craft stalls and interacted with artists and artisans.

The inaugural day started with a glittering colourful state's cultural parade followed by a Classical Singing performance by Rashi Pant and Chirak Pant. Presentation of Nritya Natika on Veer Bhad Singh Bhandari related the audience to their core. In the Dance segment, a folk dance performance of Goravara Kuniitha (Karnataka), Phag (Haryana),



*Chief Minister of Uttarakhand, Trivendra Singh Rawat inaugurating 'Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav', a 3-day long diversified cultural festival organised by the Ministry of Culture at Koti Colony, near Tehri Lake, Uttarakhand.*

Siddhi Dhamal (Gujarat) and Chakri (Rajasthan) was showcased. Beside this, a dance drama based on Shiva by Padma Bhushan awardee Saroja Vaidyanathan and group along with a performance of Jagar Samrat Preetam Bhartwan was also showcased. The audience was enthralled with the sound and light show on water screen titled as 'The Tehri Show' at Lake Venue. Guests also experienced an unparalleled shopping journey viz handicrafts, cuisines and sculpture during the festival.

Other eminent guests present were Satpal Maharaj, Tourism Minister, Uttarakhand, Mala Rajya Laxmi Shah, Member of Parliament, Tehri Garhwal and Dhan Singh Negi, MLA, Tehri.

## Good Doodle celebrating Gauhar Jaan

Google honoured Indian singer and dancer Gauhar Jaan on the occasion of the artist's 145th birth anniversary through a Doodle illustrated by Aditi Damle on June 26.

Gauhar Jaan was an Indian singer and dancer from Calcutta. She was one of the first performers to record music on 78 rpm records in India. Her records were released by Gramophone Company of India. She had recorded more than 600 records in 10 languages and popularised Hindustani classical music.



*Google Doodle illustrated by Aditi Damle on the occasion of the 145th Birth Anniversary of Gauhar Jaan on June 26*

## Major conservation, Up-gradation and development work by ASI underway at the Purana Qila complex in New Delhi

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has taken up several important conservation, restoration, up-gradation and development works at the Historical Purana Qila in New Delhi.

In a unique initiative, the ASI has taken up conservation and upgradation of Central Antiquity Collection Section (CAC) which spread in the cells along the periphery of the fortification. The CAC section is being designed into a modern gallery which will display for the first time ever artefacts and pottery from Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro, Taxila,

Chanhu-Daro and Central Asia as well as from Indian sites like Kalibangan, Hastinapur, Arikamedu, Tamluk etc. It has been established that the total collection of pottery and artefacts of CAC Section at Purana Qila is over two lakhs.

The work of conservation of excavated remains is also in progress to protect it from direct environmental effects.

*The Minister of State for External Affairs, Shri M.J. Akbar visiting after inaugurating 'Taj Mahal Meets Timbuktu' (An exhibition of the manuscripts of Timbuktu, Mali), in New Delhi on May 24, 2018.*



## Charminar adopted by NTPC under Swachh Iconic Places Project

Charminar, one of the iconic places in India, has been adopted by NTPC Ltd under the Swachh Iconic Places Project. The initiative under the Swachh Bharat Mission is being coordinated by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation in association with the Ministry of Urban Development, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Tourism and the concerned State governments. NTPC Ltd and the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation have signed a memorandum of understanding for the implementation of development and beautification works under the Charminar Pedestrianisation Project in Hyderabad.



**Sai Venkatesh, The Dance India coordinator of Karnataka handing over the June issue of the Magazine featuring Mrinalini Sarabhai to Mallika Sarabhai**

**Centenary Celebrations of the legendary dancer Mrinalini Sarabhai**



## AWARDS

## SANGEET NATAK AKADEMI AWARDS 2017

### Field Of Activity - Music

**Lalith J Rao** - Hindustani Vocal  
**Umakant & Ramakant Gundecha (Gundecha Brothers) (Joint Award)** - Hindustani Vocal  
**Yogesh Samsi** - Hindustani Instrumental Tabla  
**Rajendra Prasanna** - Hindustani Instrumental Shehnai / Flute  
**M.S. Sheela** - Carnatic Vocal  
**Suma Sudhindra** - Carnatic Instrumental - Veena  
**Tiruvarur Vaidyanathan** - Carnatic Instrumental - Mridangam  
**Shashank Subramanyam** - Carnatic Instrumental - Flute  
**Madhurani** - Other Major Traditions of Music - Sugam Sangeet  
**Hemanti Shukla** - Other Major Traditions of Music - Sugam Sangeet  
**Gurnam Singh** - Other Major Traditions of Music - Gurbani

### Field Of Activity - Dance

**Rama Vaidyanathan** - Bharatanatyam  
**Shobha Koser** - Kathak  
**Madambi Subramanian** - Kathakali  
**Deepika Reddy** - Kuchipudi  
**Sujata Mohapatra** - Odissi  
**Ramkrishna Talukdar** - Sattriya  
**Janmajay Saibabu** - Chhau  
**Aashit Desai** - Music For Dance

### Field Of Activity - Traditional/Folk/Tribal/ Dance/Theatre & Puppetry

**Hemant Vaishnav** - Folk Theatre, Chhattisgarh  
**Kutlekhamanganar** - Folk Music Khartal, Rajasthan  
**Kalamandalam Hariharan** - Maddalam, Kerala  
**Manzoor Ahamedsha** - Folk Music - Chakkra, J&K  
**Ashanegi** - Folk Music - Neoli, Uttarakhand  
**Sarbeswar Bhoi** - Folk Dance & Music Sambal Puri - Odisha  
**Jyoti Nooran And Sultana Nooran (Nooran Sisters) (Joint Puraskar)** - Sufiana Sangeet - Punjab  
**Gopal Habi** - Mask Making - Himachal Pradesh

## USTAD BISMILLAH KHAN YUVA PURASKAR 2017

### Field Of Activity - Music

**Aditya Khandve** - Hindustani Vocal Music  
**Sawani Shende** - Hindustani Vocal Music  
**Rimpa Siva** - Hindustani Instrumental Music - Tabla  
**Amaan Ali Khan & Ayaan Ali Khan (Joint Puraskar)** - Hindustani Instrumental Music - Sarod  
**Prasanna Venkatraman** - Carnatic Vocal Music  
**Trivendram N. Sampath** - Carnatic Instrumental Music - Violin  
**Koti Palli Ramesh** - Carnatic Instrumental Music - Mridangam  
**Mayanglanbam Sobhamani Singh** - Other Major Tradition of Music - Sankirtana

### Field Of Activity - Dance

**Parsh Wanath Upadhya** - Bharatanatyam  
**Vidha Lal** - Kathak  
**Cm. Unni Krishnan** - Kathakali  
**Adhikari Mayum Radha Manbi Devi** - Manipuri  
**Bhavana Reddy** - Kuchipudi  
**Janhabi Behera** - Odissi  
**Sudesh Adhana** - Contemporary Dance  
**Sai Shravanam** - Music for Dance

### Field Of Activity - Theatre

**Kuldeep Kumar** - Play Writing  
**Vyomesh Shukla** - Direction  
**Quasar Thakore Padamsee** - Direction  
**Daksha Sharma** - Acting  
**Devaki Mark** - Acting  
**Bijender Tank** - Allied Theatre Arts - Light Design  
**Rajesh Singh** - Allied Theatre Arts - Scenic Design  
**Tadepalli Satyanarayana Sarma** - Other Major Traditions of Theatre - Yakshagana

# TORCH BEARERS



## KALAMANDALAM GOPI THE LIVING LEGEND OF KATHAKALI



**Text:** Hari Krishnan Menon, a media professional who has a rich experience in cultural reporting with specialisation in art and photography.

**Pics:** Hari Menon, Pavitran Angadippuram and AD Bolland

**K**alamandalam Gopi popular among his followers as Gopiyasan is known to blend the solid body grammar of the highly stylised Kalluvazhi tradition with the more flexible, part-realistic, emotion-laden southern style techniques that he acquired later in his career. As an exponent of Kathakali tradition, his contribution to the art form is unparalleled. He is the living legend of Kathakali.

Vadakke Manalath Govindan Nair was born on 21 May 1937 at Kothachira village in Palakkad District of Kerala. He was initiated into learning 'Thullal', a classical art form similar in facial makeup to

Kathakali. Later, he received Kathakali training under Guru Thekkinkattil Ravunni Nair, his first guru who initiated him into the art form.

Talking about becoming a dancer, he says, "To be frank, I was not very keen to become an actor or dancer." Kathakali was a common affair in those days, especially for local festivals and nearby wealthy houses. He was always a spectator. He started learning Thullal because it was taught in the nearby 'Koodallur Mana' (Namboothiri House). Parameshwaran Nambeesan, his Thullal guru was forming 'Kalari' (a traditional training space) and



asked Nair's family if Govindan would be interested to learn. Somehow, he couldn't complete the advanced training in Thullal and migrated to Kathakali training. "I feel this is because the Kathakali training was administered by the Namboothiris of Mana and my family members worked for them," he says. The Namboothiris noticed an artiste in him and he received 'Kacha' and 'Mezhukk', the first training costume and oil to be applied to learn the first steps of Kathakali.

His parents found it difficult to manage the daily needs of a big family but they wished for the boy to have a life. Especially, his mother was the one who used to take care of his needs. She was the one who took an interest. His father was into agriculture work of the Mana, he used to be a caretaker of their property and was busy most of the time. He cannot forget the name of Parameshwaran Nambeesan who was his first teacher in the field of art. He taught him Thullal meticulously. Guru Thekkinkattil Ravunni Nair Ashan was a class actor who was keen on teaching Gopi. 'Ashan' is an adjective given to respected teachers. For some reason, Kalari, created and

managed by people of Mana had to be wound up. His life was at stake as he had no idea on what to do. That was when the legendary Kathakali singer Neelakandan Nambeesan stepped into his life. Neelakandan was the brother of Parameshwaran Ashan and it was he who initiated Gopi's entry into Kerala Kalamandalam, the institute which later became a part of his name. It was a Mecca of art and he was fortunate to learn under the legendary guru, actor and dancer Guru Kalamandalam Krishnankutty Warriar. He was his first teacher.

He always had high regards for his mentors Guru Kalamandalam Padmanabhan Nair and Guru Dr Kalamandalam Ramankutty Nair who have transformed him into an accomplished artiste. "I cannot live a day without paying homage to my gurus. They literally moulded the finest craft out of me and recreated a new Govindan who transformed to Gopi who became a Kathakali artist in every aspect," he says. Both of them were like Godfathers whom he looked up to with fear, respect and love. "They used to punish me so hard even for my minutest mistakes. I have felt many times to commit





suicide in the nearby Nila, river," he says. It was mentally and physically a strenuous act to learn Kathakali as Gopi left home at a young age and the punishment from gurus was too difficult for him to handle. But he says that the tough learning transformed him into a complete man and actor. "The time of training and living a life of an artiste will always be tough until you become something with any art form. Life is not easy," he adds.

He strongly believes that Kathakali is an art form with a pan-global recognition. "I have travelled with the art to almost all the continents, and the kind of reception which I have received was immense," he says. He was associated with Kalamandalam as a student for more than 10 years, joined in as a junior teacher and retired as a principal of the prestigious art school of Kerala after 36 years. Still, whenever the institution needs him, he runs to his alma mater. He participates in all the functions and celebrations of the school which is now a deemed university. He is an emeritus professor at the institute and felt happy to share that

Kalamandalam has recently documented performances, one of the biggest documentation in duration and the best in quality recently. Kalamandalam and Kathakali are not two different words which work under the ideology of legendary poet and visionary Vallathol Narayana Menon. The presence of Kathakali in the visual representations of India is a proof to show how the art form from the south has influenced the artistic culture of the country.

He is inspired by three things in life, firstly, his gurus, the pain and passion they had towards the art, in turn, to mould and work on him. "I have seen my Ashans literally converting their blood into sweats when they teach and perform Kathakali," he explains. Secondly, the consciousness that he is part of an age-old tradition of artists who took the art form to what it is today. It is like a family where people live with this art. "I am responsible and need to take this forward, rather committed, it is inspiring," he says. Thirdly, even at 82, he feels inspired to see the global audience, men, women and kids who treat him like

RKN and Gopi



Gopi and Padmanabhan Nair



their family wherever he goes. "I have seen young kids call me 'Gopi Muthassan', Grandfather, many take me as their good friend, brother and guru. What else does anybody need to be inspired to take the art form forward?" he says.

Kathakali has always been on his mind and he invested the remaining time on being a good father and grandfather. He has a clear stand on politics and social issues and stays up to date with current affairs. Currently, he stays in Mundoor, Thrissur and participates in cultural activities of Thrissur, within the constraints of his travel and performance of the art.

He has been into a strenuous routine of exercise, practice and performance right from his childhood. Earlier, he got up at three in the morning to start his day with 'Uzhichil', massaging and 'Sadkas', training. Now at 82, he gets up early if he is home and does some basic exercises to keep him healthy. He favours staying at home and adheres to a strict diet. He simply savours whatever his wife prepares.

Gopi has now become more selective with his performances minimised his travel. "My audience all over the world expects me to perform, but I feel I need to rest to manage my health," he says. Currently, he is focusing more on acting manuals and trying to share his knowledge to the upcoming generations. As far as Kathakali is concerned he is a keen observer and critical in his suggestions.

He made his gurus proud with his performances on stage. Last year, when he received a national recognition, the entire state of Kerala celebrated his 81st Birthday in the name of 'Haritham' in Thrissur. "I feel it as the best moment in my career and life," he says.

Though he is of the opinion that artistes as creative professionals need to be smart to take the art forward, he doesn't appreciate fusion as he believes in the purity of his art. He says that entertaining aswadakas is also serving the society and only an artist can do it.

From his decades of experience as a Kathakali artiste who performed both in India and other countries, he says that whenever he visited a foreign country, the attitude of the people in welcoming and showing respect to an artist has always been great.







"I am not sure if they understand our concepts but they learn and prepare before they watch a performance. Their behaviour and conduct in a performance space were beautiful." He also says that dance festivals are important, as the artiste can travel around with his art and showcase it to a larger crowd. He has attended and participated in many festivals.

In a career spanning over several decades, Kalamandalam Gopi has received numerous awards and accolades including Padma Shri by the Government of India, Kalidasa Samman, Central and State Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards, Natya Shiromani and others.

His elder son Jayaraj is into business and younger son Raghuraj is a bank employee and they all appreciate art and are well aware of the pains that Gopi had to go through in life to maintain as a top-notch actor, even at the age of 81. His children support him and his wife Chandrika has been with him through all walks of life. He provided them with a beautiful life as vibrant as his art form Kathakali.



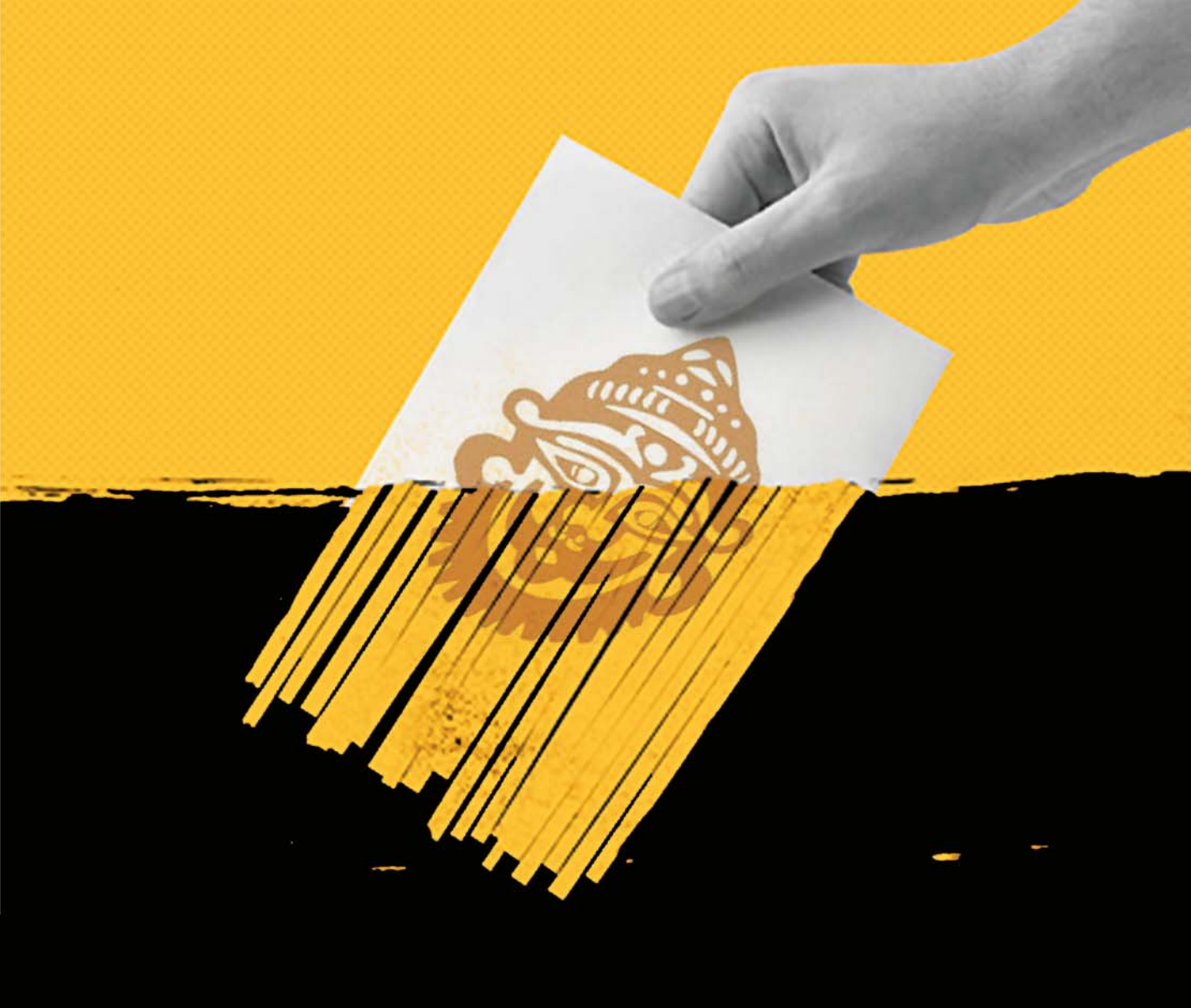
## SANGEET NATAK AKADEMI AND ITS MANY FLAWS



Text: **BR Vikram Kumar**

**Corruption:** A dishonest or fraudulent conduct by those in power, typically involving bribery.

**W**ikipedia says that corruption is a form of dishonesty undertaken by a person entrusted with a position of authority, often to acquire personal benefit. It may include many activities including bribery and embezzlement. It occurs when an office-holder or other governmental employee acts in an official capacity for personal gain.



**JOURNALISM**  
**HAS A**  
**DISTINCT PLACE IN**  
**FAMILIARISING AND**  
**EXPRESSING**  
**PUBLIC OPINION**

- Mahatma Gandhi.

*A photograph from a confidential committee meeting posted on the social media by a member*



We are used to hearing the word 'corruption' quite often in politics and business. But unfortunately, over the years, the demon of corruption has made its inroads into the domain of art and culture, which is expected to be pure and divine. A few years ago, the Government had found out that corruption in crores of rupees had taken place at Kalakshetra and people were aghast at the revelation. Until then, nobody envisioned such high stakes in cultural bodies. Under the current conditions, 'Corruption in Cultural Bodies' became a hot topic in the art community. The Central Sangeet Natak Akademi, an apex and autonomous body under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, promoting performing arts in India, is at the centre of a huge storm with many artistes and exponents of performing arts speaking about the high level of corruption in the Akademi. The long delay in releasing the list of Sangeet Natak Akademi and Ustad Bismillah Khan Awardees even after the approval of the General Council on June 8 exposed many corrupt practices of the Akademi.

The Dance India magazine, through its reliable sources, has acquired the final list of Sangeet Natak Akademi and Ustad Bismillah Khan Awardees approved by the General Council of Sangeet Natak Akademi. Upon receiving the intel about potential lobbying and malpractice taking place in the selection process of the awardees, the magazine chose to publish the list through its social media page, to take it to the notice of the public and the

Ministry of Culture. The release of the unofficial list left no scope for the Akademi and it was forced to stick to the final list approved by the General Council. After a 10-day delay, the Akademi in its attempt to salvage, released the list, first on its social media page on Facebook and later through the PIB (Press Information Bureau). According to the SNA bylaws, the official list is expected to be first released through PIB, the nodal agency of the Government of India established to disseminate information to the print, electronic and new media on government plans, policies, programme initiatives and achievements.

Upon looking deeper into the malpractices at SNA, it came to light that the General Council Meeting, which was supposed to be confidential, lost its credibility when information from the meeting was shared with an individual sitting miles away in another country in real time through the internet. It is shocking to know that a person who was away from the meeting could influence the outcome of the awards. Some officials and members were even pressurised to change the name of the awardee in Kuchipudi. To make things worse, photographs from the meeting uploaded on social media by some members of the General Council expose the lack of seriousness towards the selection process. External influences and selfish motives have been crippling the selection process of these awards. Majority of the members of the council and even some of the employees of SNA including its Chairman have been favouring the near and dear for personal benefits.

Another frequently discussed problem in the art community is the lobbying and influence by senior exponents including some senior dancers and previous awardees settled in Delhi and other metro cities who have been part of various committees, making sure that the members of their family get these awards. This situation has been disheartening for many artistes who dedicate their lives to art and work hard. Some of the artistes have left their art forms in disgust at the Akademi's inefficiency.

The Government of India has allocated a substantial amount of funds in its annual budget towards preservation and promotion of art and culture in North East India. Being an apex body for preservation and promotion of performing arts in India, the job was entrusted to the Sangeet Natak Akademi. Instead of doing the assigned job efficiently, the officials of the Akademi have taken it as an opportunity to swindle public money. The Akademi has state-of-art infrastructure at New Delhi, wherein a General Council meeting could have been held with certain ease. But the Akademi has been conducting meetings in the North East. The particular decision to shift the meeting from New Delhi to Imphal in Manipur comes at a price. Air tickets, accommodation in star resorts, picnicking and arrangements to visit VIPs would add up to be a substantial amount, around Rs 30 lakhs. The costs incurred on the Executive Council and General Council meetings would then be shown as an expenditure under the North East budget. This is a clear-cut misuse of public money and a great loss to the art community in the region. Artistes from the region have expressed their disgust over the misuse of funds by SNA and demanded the Ministry of Culture take action against the Akademi.

### About Sangeet Natak Akademi

The Sangeet Natak Akademi, often referred to as the SNA, was created in 1952 and designated as an autonomous agency under the Government of India (under erstwhile Ministry of Education and Ministry of Human Resource Development and thereafter the Ministry of Culture). It was mandated to function as India's apex autonomous national agency of performing arts; manifested in the forms of music, dance and drama. The founding fathers of the SNA



← Photos from Gummadi Gopala Kris... 🔍

**Gummadi Gopala Krishna** 12 Jun at 09:30 · 🌐

కేంద్ర సంగీత నాటక అకాడమీ అవార్డుల సదస్సు మణిపాల్ రాష్ట్రంలోని ఇంపాల్ లో ఈనెల 8వ తేదీన జరిగింది. చైర్మన్ శ్రీ శేఖర్ సేన్ గారికి శ్రీ కే.వి.రమణ గారు నా గానం గురించి చెప్పి ప్రార్థన పాడే అవకాశం యిప్పించారు. అన్ని రాష్ట్రాల ప్రతినిధులు ఎ.పి.నాటక అకాడమీని అభినందించారు. చైర్మన్ శ్రీ శేఖర్ సేన్ ప్రత్యేకంగానాతో మన నాటక ఎకాడమీ కి కావలసిన సహకారం కోసం ప్రతిపాదన ల తో ఢిల్లీ రమ్మని ఆహ్వానించారు. నాటక రంగ మిత్రులు శ్రేయోభిలాషులు నాటక రంగ అభివృద్ధి కోసం ప్రతిపాదన ల సూచనలను ఎకాడమీ కోరుతున్నది. కేంద్ర సాహిత్య అకాడమీ కార్యదర్శి శ్రీ నివాసరావుతో, కేంద్ర సంగీత నాటక అకాడమీ చైర్మన్ శ్రీ శేఖర్ సేన్, మణి పురినాటకకర్త శ్రీ రతన్ ధియామ్ తో శ్రీ కె.వి.రమణ గార్ల తో గుమ్మడి.



as the nation-builders, Indian constitution-creators and the institution-builders of modern India, had visualised the vital role of the SNA beyond the protector and promoter of the diversity of cultural expressions; as the vibrant institutional mechanism to promote interculturalism, multiculturalism, shared cultural expressions, dialogues, mutual respects and social cohesion; which are the bedrocks of Indian society, Indian culture, Indian polity, Indian democracy and the Indian Constitution.

### Goals of the Sangeet Natak Akademi

- Coordinating the activities of the regional or state academies of music, dance and drama.
- Promoting research in the fields of Indian music, dance and drama and for this purpose, to establish a library and museum etc.
- Cooperating with such similar academies as there may be and other institutions and associations for the furtherance of its objects and for the enrichment of Indian culture as a whole.

- Encouraging the exchange of ideas and enrichment of techniques among the different regions with regard to the arts of music, dance and drama.
- Encouraging the establishment of theatre centres on basis of regional languages.
- Encouraging co-operation among different theatre centres.
- Encouraging the setting up of institutions; providing training in the art of theatre, including instruction in actor's training, the study of stagecraft and production of plays.
- Encouraging and assisting production of new plays by awarding prizes and distinctions.
- Publishing literature on Indian music, dance and drama; including reference works, such as an illustrated dictionary or handbook of technical terms.
- Giving recognition to and otherwise assist meritorious theatrical organisations.
- Encouraging the development of amateur dramatic activity.
- Encouraging the development of children's theatre.
- Encouraging the development of open-air theatre.
- Encouraging the development of rural theatre in its various forms.
- Reviving and preserving folk music, folk dance and folk drama in different regions of the



country and encouraging the development of community music, martial music and other types of music.

- Sponsoring music, dance and drama festivals on an all-India basis and to encourage such regional festivals.
- Sponsoring music, dance and drama seminars and conferences on an all-India basis.
- Awarding prizes and distinctions and giving recognition to individual artists for outstanding achievement in the fields of music, dance and drama.
- Taking suitable steps for the maintenance of proper and adequate standards of education of music, dance and drama, and with that objective to organise research in the teaching of these subjects.
- Fostering cultural contacts between the different regions of the country in the fields of music, dance and drama.
- Fostering cultural contacts with other countries in the fields of music, dance and drama.



It is time for the Central Sangeet Natak Akademi to mend its crooked ways, rectify its many flaws and work towards achieving the goals, before Indian artistes lose their faith in the apex body. Majority of people from the art community demand a resignation from Shekhar Sen, chairman of the Akademi and Dr. Rita Swami Choudhary, secretary of the Akademi, for failing in their duties to curb corruption.

**In the recent past, several eminent personalities from the field of performing arts have expressed their opinions and grievances with respect to the Sangeet Natak Akademi. Here are some of them.**

Padma Bhushan awardee  
**Dr Kanak Rele, Mohiniyattam**  
exponent, Mumbai



I would like to request the government to please look at culture with the same kindness that they are showing towards infrastructure and development because human beings cannot live without culture. Bollywood and Tollywood are not regarded as cultures. Corporates should support the classical art forms, but unfortunately, they do not have the conscience and the government is not pressuring them. The government must have identified a list of genuine institutions across India and that list should be made available to the corporates. 'Nalanda' has completed its Golden Jubilee with a proven scientific record, even then it has been a challenge for us to run the institution and expand because the grants are not being sanctioned. But still, Nalanda does not owe a pie to anybody and follows all the regulations. Maintaining a classical dance institution is a difficult task. With no grants in sight, I heard that some of the institutions in the country are closing down. I do not know the reason but nobody in these cultural bodies seems to be willing to answer and we cannot touch them. Our institution has eligibility to become a deemed university but we need financial support to expand. Once upon a time, the British killed our culture and post-independence things were improving and now once again we are killing our culture.

Padma Shri awardee  
**Padma Sharma, Kathak**  
Exponent, Mumbai



There is a lot of politics in the culture departments which is not good. To be frank, most of the artistes in Delhi have got awards and Mumbai-based artistes are neglected. It is true that deserving artistes are not properly recognised. The gurus, who have been carrying forward the classical art traditions, need to be recognised and honoured by the Government.

**Kumud Diwan, Hindustani**  
Classical Exponent, New Delhi



All over the country, the departments of art and culture are hiring people who are not from the field of art and culture. There is *Babudom* that exists in these departments even up to the level of director; these are promoters who have vested interests. For all the top festivals the selection is poor because of the vested interests and they are compromising on the quality. For example, they repeat artistes. They are extremely discourteous. The babu culture needs to change and this is not only at the centre but also at every state be it Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh or Madhya Pradesh. The problem is most of the artistes don't want to raise their voice because their interests would be sabotaged. They feel that their work is being done and they are receiving programmes and grants. Many artistes even pay commissions and get programmes through these people so they don't want to challenge the system. Eventually, it is neither good for the artiste nor art and culture. I have consistently raised a voice against this kind of unethical culture. I have filed a complaint to the principal secretaries of many art and culture bodies. If I see the babudom prevailing, I watch for 6 months to 2 years and file a complaint letter, sometimes even to the minister of culture. But even at the top level and the principal secretary level, there was no peace because of vested interests. Some of the state government festivals have huge budgets and they pay lakhs of rupees and invite Bollywood and Tollywood groups to perform. I get calls from event management companies asking me to give a quotation to them and not to the government. There is corruption at every level. In state government festivals the centre has no say.

**Dr Ramadevi, Kuchipudi**  
exponent, Hyderabad



Why should an artist apply for an award when his/her contribution or achievements speak about the person whether they deserve or not? Is it not the responsibility of the government or organisation to identify the deserving artists and honour them with the awards? When a committee is employed for the selection of deserving artistes, is it not their responsibility to find out who is who and what is their contribution to preserving and promoting the art form and whether their works are genuine or not. I strongly feel no artiste should ask or apply for an award. We should be recognised through our work and awards should come in search of us.

**Deepak Mazumdar,**  
**Bharatanatyam Exponent,**  
Mumbai



I heard that you need to have a lobby to get an award and I don't have that kind of a lobby. God knows when lobbying in cultural bodies would end. Sometimes it so happens that you have the talent but you don't have the lobby and you would not get an award. On the other hand, you don't have a talent but you have the lobby then you would get an award. Under such circumstances, it is difficult to pinpoint, one particular person. The cultural bodies under the Ministry of Culture should have a record with the files of each and every artiste according to the region. I got the Government of India scholarship, I did my fellowship and was given the top grade by the Government of India. I think it is the responsibility of the Government to honour the artistes who dedicated their lives to art. We cannot reach out to each and every minister. If this year some committee has taken the charge then the next year it has to change. Do not repeat them.

**Some comments on social media about the long delay in releasing the list of awardees by Sangeet Natak Akademi.**

**Pradeep Kumar Ray:** This is very unfortunate. SNA should inquire into the matter.

**Sabita Saikia:** Even in Assam people have been giving money to get the award since the last few years. They don't consider the nominated people, instead they give awards to the one who gives money.

**Brij Mohan Gupta:** Reason - different groups in the Executive and General Council.

**Roneld Tongbram:** Those who beg for awards will never criticise this...SNA kabhi bhi sudhrega nahi (it will never change its ways)... ICCR bhi (is) same... Ministry bhi (is) same... Kalakar to unke jute ke niche hai (artistes are under their feet)... whatever... we, the artistes, hunger for performances aur uska phaida uthane wala karoro main hai (And those who take advantage of them are in crores).

**Sai Venkatesh, President,**  
**Karnataka Nritya Kala**  
**Parishath, Bangalore**



Who will eradicate the corruption in culture departments of our country?

Dr Mahesh Sharma, culture minister has no time to even answer your emails. Sad, to state that our minister is not aware of neither issues nor he is an artiste or has any cultural background. How will he bring changes in cultural field?

Awards are given to artistes, who bring recommendations from MP, MLA. Grants are given to sitting members in the different committees. Sangeet Natak Akademi, zones, culture department have favorite artistes and some bribe, broker to collaborate for awards, grants, programmes, participation in festivals in India and abroad as well. Who will destroy these corrupt babus!

All national awards should be given only with respective state consultation. Dance committee must be separate and total transparency should be maintained. Professionals should vote for the right candidate. Same way grants, scholarship, fellowship should be awarded only to professionals and selection with state artistes forums, academies and senior gurus' recommendations and involvement.

Good governance is the need of the hour. Eradicate corrupt officials; clean the system and department immediately. Stop misusing taxpayer's money.

**In the upcoming issues, The Dance India would be probing deep into various other facets that mar the functioning of the Sangeet Natak Akademi.**

**Did RSS/BJP try to influence the SNA awards? Why did Amaan-Ayaan Ali Khan refuse Yuva Puraskar?**

**Is Gaudiya Nritya neglected by the Akademi? Why is Andhra Natyam being denied the classical status?**

**What happened to the Museum in Sangeet Natak Akademi?**

**Are the official positions at the Akademi nominated, promoted or elected?**



Regd. No. E/2767/Thane

# takshashila nrityakala mandir

## BHARATNATYAM



Since  
**1988**

### Admissions Open

# takshashila nrityakala mandir

With the able Guidance of Guru Shri Deepak Mazumadr



**PROFESSIONAL TRAINING**



**DIPLOMA COURSE**



**SEMINARS & WORKSHOPS**



**3 MONTHS FOLK DANCE COURSE**



Vartak Nagar



Dr. Kashinath Ghanekar



Vijaynagari  
Ghodbunder Road



Learn From

**Smt. Kashmira Trivedi**

CONTACT US :

+91 9820649671

[takshashila.kt@gmail.com](mailto:takshashila.kt@gmail.com)

RAYS  
HOPE



PARIS LAXMI  
ERASING  
BOUNDARIES  
WITH  
ART



Text: Paul Nicodemus

**E**rasing boundaries, she has proved that art has no barriers. Despite being born in a Western country, she not only embraced Indian classical dance and culture but also got married to an Indian artiste. Her artistic pedigree coupled with her passion towards performing arts made her a brilliant dancer. Her Bharatanatyam solos and innovative duet 'Sangamam' with her husband, a Kathakali dancer, brought her critical acclaim and appreciation from various quarters. Paris Laxmi is a professional artiste who has taken up performing arts as her career.

Myriam Sophia Lakshmi Quinio aka Paris Laxmi was born on 16 July 1991 at Aix-en-Provence in France. She was brought up in France by her father Yves, a poet and drama artist and her mother Patricia, a sculptor. Her parents travelled every year to India with brother Theo Narayan and her. She studied in France and completed her Baccalaureate in French literature and arts. Being born into a family of artists, art was part of her everyday life. Though her parents

never pushed her brother and her to take up artistic endeavours, both of them, naturally developed an attraction for dance and music. Her brother became a musician and plays the drums and she became a dancer and an actress. "As far as I remember, I loved to dance. It just came from within," she says.

Though her teachers made her the dancer that she is today, it would not have been possible without the support of her parents. For the love of art and their children, they sacrificed a lot. "My parents are definitely the ones who supported me to become an artiste. They gave up everything for us to accomplish ourselves in the path we had chosen. I owe them everything," she says.

She had many teachers of different dance styles and each one of them gave her a different vision of dance. It was because of what she learnt in Contemporary, Ballet, Jazz, Bharatanatyam, Flamenco, Hip-Hop and other art forms that she became the artist that she is today.







Bharatanatyam is the dance style that she performs actively. Along with her husband Pallippuram Sunil, a Kathakali dancer, she has established Kalashakti School of Arts in Vaikom, an institute where she has been conducting classes since 2012. Together with her husband she has created the duet 'Sangamam' and its first production called 'Krishna Mayam', with which they toured more than 50 times so far. Currently, the couple has been working on a new production with Odissi dancer Abhaya Lakshmi. "I would like to collaborate with other artists more in the years to come," she reveals. She desires to create more content by meeting and collaborating with interesting artistes, taking up new challenges to maintain her artistic level and improving on it.

India is known for its arts and cultural heritage. According to Laxmi, classical art forms are intertwined with the lives of Indians and these art forms should be preserved in their purity while being open to innovation.

Laxmi gets her inspiration from the diversity around her. "I enjoy watching performances by different artistes, observe animals and nature, read, watch movies, listen to music and dream," she lists. These activities inspire and help her in nourishing her creativity.

Apart from dancing, she also proved herself as an actress. "I love acting and am looking forward to exploring more facets of this art," she says. Acting has always been a part of her, even as a child. She started working in the Malayalam Film Industry and hopes to work on new projects in the days to come.

Nourishing the body is equally important for nourishing the soul. Laxmi mostly eats vegetables, fruits, nuts, eggs and fish. She sometimes eats chicken in small quantities but stays away from red meat. Her day begins with exercising - stretching, cardio and fitness training has been a part of the



particular about keeping the purity of the art forms intact. Staying in a classical pattern and using traditional music would assist innovation in tradition.

She has choreographed and performed a contemporary solo called 'Seasons on Earth', about environment and preservation of our planet. "I would love to create more opportunities to connect my art to serve the society and environment," she explains.

She has received awards from different clubs and associations for her efforts in arts and its promotion. She garnered accolades from senior artists, dance critics and art connoisseurs in India and abroad. Though she was happy to receive awards, she does not want to run after them. "I think that at the end of the day, the best award, an artist should look for is the self-happiness and enjoyment to perform. The satisfaction after a well-received performance, the smiles on the faces of the audience, the sound of their hands clapping, people coming after the show to convey their love and appreciation and the respect you see in their eyes are wonderful feelings," she concludes.

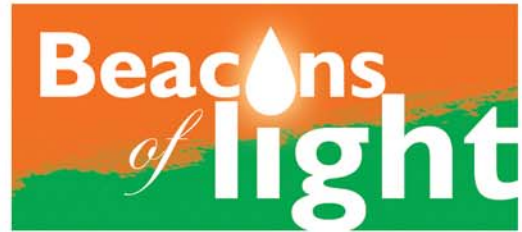
routine. She then moves on to practising her dance pieces and technique. "I usually practice in the morning and keep the evening for choreography and new projects," she reveals. In her free time, she likes spending time with pets, reading books and arranging home while listening to music. Going out with friends and being out in a peaceful natural environment is what she enjoys when she has some free time at her disposal.

She finds it hard to select the best moment of her career as there were many. Performing at the Vaikom Mahadeva Temple on Ashtami for the first time and to see Vaikkathappan coming out of the sanctuary with the elephants during her performance, performing at Kerala Kalamandalam in front of Kalamandalam Gopi Assan and other great artistes, performing the 50th stage of 'Krishna Mayam' with her husband at Guruvayoor Temple and performing in a duet with her soul sister Abhaya Lakshmi were memorable moments out of plenty.

Talking about fusion, she says that meeting other dance forms than yours, for a jugalbandi or classical dance fusion would be interesting. But she is







# RAMA VAIDYANATHAN DESTINED TO BE A TORCHBEARER

Text: **Paul Nicodemus**

Pics: **Inni Singh**



She is a master performer with sublime virtuosity, a brilliant dancer, fascinating storyteller and an eloquent orator. Rama Vaidyanathan has been one of the most celebrated Bharatanatyam dancers of her generation. In an illustrious career spanning across 30 years, she has received critical acclaim for maintaining high levels of excellence and aesthetics. Recently, the Central Sangeet Natak Akademi under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, honoured her with a Sangeet Natak Akademi Award.



Rama Vaidyanathan was born on 17 July 1967 in Pune. Soon, she moved to Delhi. Her father served in the Indian Army and mother was a pious soul who gave spiritual discourses. She completed her B.Com Honours from Delhi University and decided to take up dance as a full-time vocation.

It was her mother's dream to see her become a dancer and it was facilitated by her first guru, legendary dancer Yamini Krishnamurthy. She was further guided by her mother-in-law and renowned Bharatanatyam dancer Guru Saroja Vaidyanathan. The three powerful women, Yamini Krishnamurthy, Saroja Vaidyanathan and her mother played a pivotal role in nurturing her into an accomplished dancer. Yamini Krishnamurthy gave her a strong foundation and Saroja Vaidyanathan honed her skills and taught her how to be a professional artiste.

She trained intensively under her gurus and developed her own individual style without forsaking the core principles of her dance form. She brings to her dance a strong sense of conviction aided by her extraordinary flair for choreography. Her technique is grounded and yet there is a fresh approach to the innumerable dance compositions that she has added to the Bharatanatyam repertoire. Her unique thought process has allowed her to push boundaries to explore new themes in the idiom of Bharatanatyam. "I think any experimental work is okay if it showcases Bharatanatyam in a good light and does not degrade it," she explains.

Rama wants to touch as many people as possible with the power and sensitivity of Bharatanatyam, her classical dance form of choice. One of her desires has been to train the next generation of aspiring dancers into accomplished Bharatanatyam



*Guru Saroja Vaidyanathan, Rama Vaidyanathan and Yamini Krishnamurthy*

performers. She believes that art is essential for the evolution of mankind and a world without aesthetic beauty can never grow. She draws inspiration from anything and everything - a poem, a painting, a raga, a spiritual discourse or even a saree pallu. "I see myself as a teacher and a choreographer so that I am able to make a humble contribution to Bharatanatyam," she says.

She is passionate about her motherland, India, and wants to do whatever she can to steer it towards high ideologies, development and growth. "I think there is tremendous scope, as dance is a strong medium of communication. We can use this medium to address several contemporary issues and to spread awareness," she opines.

Her day starts with a cup of tea after which she does her basic warm-up exercises. She usually completes her dance practice in the morning, before her first meal. Her afternoons are dedicated to research, reading, composing and teaching. In the evening, she spends time with her family. Rama is married to CV Kamesh and has two daughters, Dakshina and Sannidhi. Dakshina is a dancer and Sannidhi, a mridangam artiste.

Her most challenging moment was to get back to active dancing after a knee surgery due to a torn ligament. The best moment of her life happened at the Music Academy in Chennai when her mother watched her perform for the last time. "I can never forget the joy in her eyes when she saw the standing ovation for my performance," she adds.

Addressing the question about a career in classical dance, she says that for any career to pick up the aspiring artiste needs to spend years in training, studying, investing time, money and energy and most importantly having patience. "A career in

classical dance is no exception but the added quality needed is an exceptional talent," she explains.

Rama has performed at every major dance venue for prestigious organisations like the Sangeet Natak Akademi, Sahitya Kala Parishad and IGNCA in Delhi, NCPA in Mumbai, Shanti Niketan in Kolkata, Kalakshetra, Kartik Fine Arts, Music Academy, Krishna Gana Sabha, Narada Gana Sabha, Bharat Kalachar and Brahma Gana Sabha in Chennai. Some of her performances at prestigious venues abroad include Tropen Theater in Amsterdam, Musee Guimet in Paris, National Centre for





Performing Arts in Beijing, National Theater in Seoul, Esplanade in Singapore, Teatro Juarez in Mexico, Edinborough, Brighton and Milap Festivals in UK, Bozar in Brussels, Teatro Fernan Gomez in Madrid, Indo Russian Friendship performance in Moscow, Cita Dela Musique in Marseille, Smithsonian in Washington DC, and World Music Institute in New York.

She has been awarded 'Kalaimamani' by the Government of Tamil Nadu and the 'Kalashree' by the Government of Kerala. Other notable awards were the 'Sanskriti Award' from the Sanskriti Pratishthan, 'Kumar Gandharv Puraskar' from the Government of Madhya Pradesh, 'Nadanamamani' from Kartik Fine

Arts, Chennai, 'Vani Kala Sudhakara' from Tyagabrahma Gana Sabha, Chennai, and 'Nriya Choodamani' from Krishna Gana Sabha, Chennai. Recently, Rama has been declared as the recipient for the Central Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for the year 2017.

As the director of Ganesa Natyalaya, New Delhi, she has been actively engaged in teaching for more than twenty-five years. Rama balances a hectic performance schedule while conducting workshops and master classes all over the world, inspiring a whole generation of dancers. She has been a beacon of light to the aspiring artistes across the world. She is destined to be a torchbearer of Indian Classical Dance in general and Bharatanatyam in particular.



# Frozen- in-Time

Photograph by Sunil Ammadam

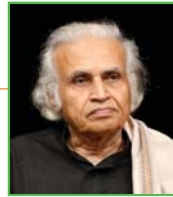
**M**angalampalli Balamuralikrishna born on 6 July 1930 was an Indian Carnatic vocalist, musician, multi-instrumentalist, playback singer, composer and character actor. He was a world-renowned Carnatic Vaggeyakara. In all probability, he has featured in more than 25,000 concerts. He has collaborated with Bhimsen Joshi, Hariprasad Chaurasia, Kishori Amonkar and others. With more than 400 compositions to his credit, he is a gem of a musician. He created innumerable new ragas such as Mahati, Sumukham, Trisakti, Sarvasru, Omkari, Janasamodini, Manorama, Rohini, Vallabhi, Lavangi, Pratimadhtavati and Sushama. He passed away on 26 November 2016 at the age of 86.



# VARSHA DASGUPTA AND ERA DOGRA TWO RISING STARS IN KATHAK

Text: **Dr Sunil Kothari**

Pics: **Inni Singh**



Disciples of Guru Geetanjali Lal, Vidha and Abhimanyu Lal, Varsha Dasgupta and Era Dogra, the rising stars in Kathak firmament gave a scintillating performance at The Little Theatre Group under the aegis of young entrepreneur Tamasha Entertainments on June 2.

Receiving training under the reputed Gurus for the past 12 years, both the budding dancers have now mastered the Jaipur Gharana technique in an admirable manner.

Of the six numbers, they presented their duets were remarkable for complete synchronisation of arms, hand gesture and arriving on the same. What in technical parlance of Kathak is known as 'ang' bodily postures, they executed well displaying its aesthetic beauty. Both these dancers executed youthfulness and with their colourful costumes looked like miniature paintings.

Era Dogra in a Thumri



In Hari Hara opening duet, describing the attributes of Lord Shiva, Hara, and Lord Krishna, Hari, one after another they created their images with *hastas*, hand gestures, appropriate expressions and showing Shiva with his matted locks, Ganga flowing from the Jata, Krishna with his peacock feather and flute, Shiva with tiger skin, Krishna with Pitambar and so on. The word *Adha*, *Adha* - half and the other half was poetically performed. Their entries with flawless chakkars and stances were captivating.

Vidha Lal had choreographed for individual presentation of each dancer thumri. Era with *upaj ang* in thumri 'Dekho hathilo Shyam' in *Desh* raga with tuneless Sarangi enacted in what various ways Krishna teases her and she shows mock anger. She as Mugdha nayika decorates herself with flowers, puts on bindi, ornaments and walks in a graceful manner with allure. Taking palta she showed how Krishna broke her pot when she was carrying it over her head, how he stops her from going, 'maga rokat', when she goes to river Yamuna to fetch water, Krishna came suddenly and broke her *mataki*, pot. Stealing butter, Gopi catches him red-handed and complains to mother Yashoda. Krishna asks forgiveness holding corners of his ears. The gestures were so endearing that Gopi forgives Krishna.

In a sequence, Era stands in the centre and Varsha takes chakkars, pirouettes around her, then Varsha stands in the centre and Era takes rounds around her, creating visual patterns, their costumes also flowing along with their chakkars.

In *ashtamangal* tala, their duet stood out for their *taiyyari*, and command over footwork, execution of *tode*, *tukde*, *uthan* etc. Their *utplavans*, jumps were eye-catching. The joyous mood pervaded their entire frame.

It was in final number Varsha Mangal, rain, in *Megh* raga and *Teen* tala that one saw both of them in their element. Complementing each other while dancing they created the ambience of the rainy season, papiha bird singing, lightning and raindrops gradually falling. With footwork, the imagery of raindrops was beautifully conveyed. Their footwork in nature of jugalbandi won them rounds of applause. 'Garje bijali barse meha' the sound of lightning and of rain were created graphically, the peacock bird dancing, helpless *nayika* missing her heart beats during the rainy season awaiting her beloved, all these nuances were conveyed becoming their young age.

As young *nayika* both of them when they put on ornaments and look into the mirror, they would do well to delineate when decorating themselves, look into the mirror, admire themselves at their own beauty and place the box of ornaments away and then walk and dance gracefully, full of an awareness of their own youth.

Both the dancers did their gurus proud. This was their first attempt to present their recital under a new organisation, professionally and it was heartening to see a full house, as the audience had bought the tickets. That augurs well for the two rising stars but also for the dance scene in general.



Varsha Dasgupta and Era Dogra

# SAI NRITYOTSAV 109

## INSPIRING PERFORMANCES



Text: **Kavitha Krishnamurthy**

"Age is no barrier, it is a limitation you put on your mind." The quote was totally justified by Padmini (57) and Poornima (43) students of Karnataka Kalashree Guru Dr Suparna Venkatesh. The duo recently performed at Shukra Auditorium on the occasion of Sai Nrityotsav 109. They started their Bharatanatyam recital with a Pushpanjali 'Jhem Jhem' paying their ode to Lord Ganesha in Raga Nattai set to Adi tala. Later, the duo performed a Kritis 'Chandra Chooda' where they depicted several episodes of Lord Shiva with absolute grace and finesse.

The evening got better with the performance of Shraddha Nagaraj, a disciple of Guru B Bhanumathi and Sheela Chandrashekar. Her performance was the highlight of the programme. Set in Hamsadhvani raga and Adi tala. Shraddha began her recital with a Mysore Jathi. Delineating her lineage she presented 'Thillai Ambalam' a Shabhdham set in Malika raga and Mishra Chapu tala, composed and choreographed by Guru Vid. KN Dandayudhapani Pillai. She captivated the audience with her abhinaya as a Virohathkhandita nayika. Here the nayika was





Kasimra Trivedi & Group

eagerly awaiting the arrival of Lord Nataraj, meanwhile dreams of her marriage with him and asks her sakhi to say a few consoling words. Shraddha concluded her dance performance with an interesting padam by Kshetrappa. The artist depicted three different nayikas - Mugdha, Madhya and Pragalbha where each asks Lord Krishna to marry her.

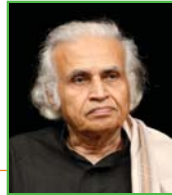
The next artiste for the evening was Vid. Varsha Mohan. She invoked her recital with a Tridevi Kouthwam in Malika raga and Malika tala. Varsha then performed a kriti 'Mahadeva Shivashambho' in Revati raga set to Adi tala, composed by Tanjavur Shankara Iyer. In her concluding item, Varsha presented a Bhavageethe 'Howdene Uma' composed by GS Shivarudrappa. The danseuse conveyed the displeasure of Uma's mother when she gets to know that her daughter is in love with a man that smears ash on his body, a man who begs for food and clothes and asks her how she could do that. The song was set in Ragamalika.

Guru Kashmira Trivedi and group presented a ballet 'Rangu Kirtanache Rangji'. The ballet was based on the nine different kinds of Bhakti. Though the ballet was in Marathi it made a clear connection with the viewers. The joyful dance sequences in between made it worth watching. The concept was conceived and choreographed by Kashmira Trivedi.

The last performance for the day was from Prithvi Jana. She had chosen three items. She started with 'Pradosha Samayadhi', then moved on to a kriti 'Sri Jagadeeshwari' and concluded with 'Vidaimidhil'. Putting her baby steps in dance Prithvi has a long way to go. The evening ended with the felicitating of the artistes.



# TWO ENTERTAINING DANCE RECITALS



Text: **Dr Sunil Kothari**

Pics: **Sanjit Debroy**

**U**nder the title of *Susanskriti, Sangeet Natak Akademi*, to encourage young dancer presented along with a senior dancer two artists at their Meghdoot theatre recently.

## Odissi by Jyoti Shrivastava

Jyoti Shrivastava, the senior exponent of Odissi is a disciple of late Guru Srinath Raut, Guru Ramli Ibrahim and Guru Durga Charan Ranbir, the three celebrated gurus who have been following the style of legendary Guru Deba Prasad Das. As a director of her Vaishali Kala Kendra at Noida, where she trains dancers in Guru Deba Prasad Das's technique, Jyoti is a name to reckon with in Odissi. Performing for over four decades she has won critical acclaim for her dancing.

She chose the thematic presentation of various nayikas, heroines, weaving them in a narrative to the songs of Medieval Odia poets, choreographed by Guru Durga Charan Ranbir. After the prayer in praise of Krishna, she enacted abhinaya to Abhisarika nayika, on way to meet Krishna and as Vasaksajja nayika decorating the kunj, bower, preparing bed, putting on ornaments to welcome Krishna, reminiscing playing Hori and Rasalila with Krishna, Jyoti displayed emotions of anticipation on his arrival, but she tells her sakhī, the confidante, 'Sari bo ke se nishi', the night has ended, but he has not come, projecting the mood of Proshitabhartrika nayika, where the lover is away on a sojourn. In separation as Vipralabdha nayika she speaks to



Jyoti Shrivastava

her friend 'I have prepared this bed with flowers and alas, yet he has not come'.

In various moods of a Virahotkanthita nayika she laments how Krishna addressed her as a jewel among women and recalls several episodes of their being together. However, Jyoti was in her element in the depiction of Khandita nayika as enraged one when Krishna turned up in the early morning. She admonished him calling him a cheat, clever, heartless 'Jaa he lampat, Natavar, shatha, dhita' and showed him tell tale marks on his body, of having spent time with other women. The quicksilver expressions were registered on her visage revealing also her intense agony.

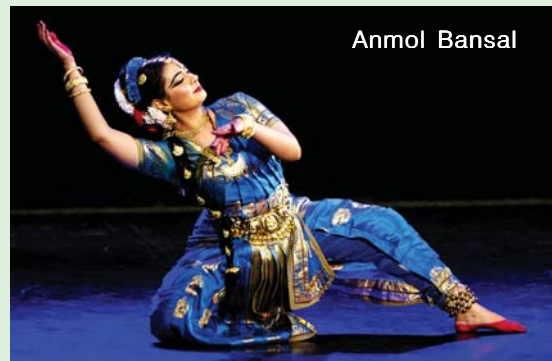
When Krishna left being rejected by her, she began to feel remorse at her own unbecoming attitude and being once again separated from him, as a Kalahantarita nayika, having quarrelled with him, asked her friend: 'Sakhire aha ki koromo kali' what shall I do? But when she listens to Krishna's divine flute inviting her, she forgets her hurt and runs unto him. The reconciliation in one of the finest songs in Odia 'Lila Nidhi his laje mu gali ti sari' was projected with admirable abhinaya telling her friend that when he embraced her and pulled her close in love play, she was overwhelmed. Singing his praise as Swadhinpatika nayika, one whose Lord is at her beck and call and she is confident of his love, nayika also suggests surrender to her Lord. Jyoti did justice to the subtle emotions with her mature abhinaya and succeeded in covering various states of nayika. The songs seemed to have been inspired by the immortal classic Gita Govinda.

The musicians Prafulla Maharana on mardala, Prashant Behera on vocal, Lavanya Ambade on sitar and Dhiraj Pandey on flute have Jyoti an admirable support.

### **Kuchipudi by Anmol Bansal**

Traditional Kuchipudi dance-drama form has a convention of characters introducing themselves, known as Patrapraves Daru. The entrance of the character and introducing himself/herself. Natyashastra in Dhruvadhaya makes reference to these Darus. The Patrapraves Daru, in contemporary presentations of Kuchipudi as a solo dance, is presented by the dancer describing her beauty and who she is.

Anmol Bansal, a disciple of renowned Kuchipudi dancer, choreographer, guru Swapnasundari in her solo recital presented from Bhama Kalapam,



**Anmol Bansal**

Satyabhama's Patrapraves Daru. Anmol has a good stage presence and with a considerable period of long training has studied under her guru the Kuchipudi form well. The arrogance of Satyabhama, as a proud and Swadhinpatika nayika, who has beloved Krishna close to her, one who, as a daughter of Satrajita King, she is of a royal descent, she is not only beautiful, but also has charms and can cast a spell on all with her grace and so on. Interspersed with nritya, pure dance, she danced with lilt and verve projecting Satyabhama's character. She referred to her getting Parijata tree from Lord Krishna who had given Parijata flower to co-wife Rukmini, and she was upset, so to appease her Krishna had bought from Indra from heaven, the Parijata tree and given it to her, so was her supreme power over her Lord. Anmol attempted to show that temperament. However, she needs to display more intense engagement with the character.

Tarangam, the most popular item in Kuchipudi in which a dancer placing her feet on the rim of a brass plate and balancing herself, performs to the mnemonic syllables of the mridanga. The songs from Krishnaleela Tarangini are enacted with appropriate abhinaya describing Krishna's beauty, his various deeds, and how he protects his disciples. In the recorded music Swapnasundari's late mother Sarala Rao had rendered the song in her melodious voice along with the jatis embellishing the item. Before balancing herself on a brass plate, Anmol executed competently, a variety of footwork, placing toes on one another and progressing forward. However, since she was dancing to the recorded music the repartee with bols, syllables, to the sound of mridang did not come off well with a punch.

Her recital was too brief. In future, she would do well to perform a padam and javali to convey her elaborate repertoire.

# INSPIRING MUSIC DAY CELEBRATIONS AT ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE



Text and Pics: **Paul Nicodemus**

"Music can change the world  
because it can change people."

Popular Irish musician Bono must have said these words with a deep conviction. Music has the power to connect people from a different language, culture, race and geography. The World Music Day was one such occasion when people from 120 countries come together every year to celebrate music in one accord.

Alliance Française Hyderabad, celebrated World Music Day 2018 with amateur and professional musicians at its centre on June 24. The evening turned out to be a melting pot of different music styles and genres from across the globe. Music aficionados gathered at the venue in support witnessed Western, Indian, folk and fusion renditions from talented artistes.



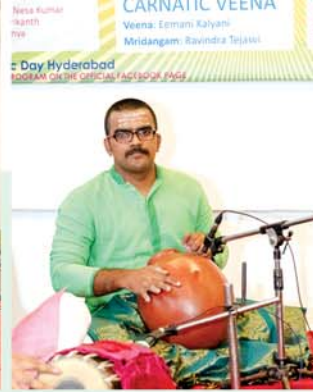
Prafulla Sundar & Koundinya



*Ashrita D Souza*



*Eemani Kalyani*



*Koundinya*



*Dr Ravindra Tejsavi*

The Fête de la Musique, popularly known as the World Music Day, is an annual music festival that takes place on 21 June. Maurice Fleuret, director of Music and Dance on the request of Jack Lang, the French Minister of Culture created the original all-day musical celebration. It was first celebrated in Paris in 1982. They organised free concerts and musicians played for fun and not for payment. The festival evoked interest among people and become an international phenomenon. It has been observed on the same day in over 700 cities in 120 countries, including China, India, Germany, Italy, Greece, Russia, Australia, Peru, Brazil, Ecuador, Mexico, Canada, the United States, the UK, and Japan.

Not departing from the purpose, Hyderabad came alive on June 24, celebrating World Music Day at 20 venues with 200 musicians. The city has been a contributor towards the festival for several years and it has grown from being a small event at Alliance Française to a big music festival. It brought together performers from India and overseas and reflected the whole palette of musical styles and genres. In 2016, by evolving from a centralised concert to several venues across the city, the festival leapt forward to grow closer to the original 'French World Music Day'.

The celebrations at Alliance Française Hyderabad, the heart of the festival, started with western classical

and pop music performances by aspiring musicians under the direction of musician Ashrita D'Souza. Melodic performances by youngsters captivated the gathered audience. Lucile from France collaborated with her Indian friends and kept the spirit of the festival flowing. Soham Pal and friends from Kolkata gave the evening a distinct flavour with their soulful Baul and Sufi renditions. Soham was brilliant with his vocals and in using traditional Baul instruments. Arjit on flute, Srujan on keyboard and Soumo on percussion supported him. The works of Tagore, Kabir, Lalun and Bulleh Shah inspired the group's performance.

After a short break, some established and professional musicians continued to entertain the gathering. The second half opened with Abhangs, poetic Indian music renditions by Prafulla Sundar on vocals, Sai Kalank on violin, MS Pavan Kumar on tabla, Dr R Ravindra Tejasvi on mridangam and Koundinya on ghatam. The classical ensemble has created a meditative ambience in the concert hall. Sundar's melodious and effusive expressions made the audience revel in ecstasy. A Carnatic veena recital by Eemani Kalyani followed it. Her effortless sliding of fingers over the deep frets of the stringed instrument to produce expressive musical notes was an inspiration for many amateur musicians in the arena. On the whole, it was a day when music connected different cultures and its people.

*Lucile from France with Ruchita Vora*



*Soham Pal*



*MS Pavan Kumar*



*Sai Kalanka*



# GAUHAR JAAN

## AN EPITOME OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Text: **Tejasri Bathina**



**G**auhar Jaan was a remarkable artiste from Calcutta in the 20th century. She was one of the most prominent vocalists and the first Indian to record music on a 78 rpm record. She shot to fame as the country's most popular recording star. She lived her life with flamboyance - a true superstar.

Gauhar was born as Eileen Angelina Yeoward into a Christian family in 1873 in Azamgarh, Uttar Pradesh. Her father, William Robert Yeoward, was an Armenian engineer based in India. Her mother, Victoria Hemmings, was an Indian trained in classical music and dance. Her parents' marriage ended in 1879 when Gauhar was only six and things took a turn for the worse for her and her mother financially. Two years later, Victoria took her daughter and moved to Varanasi with a Muslim nobleman, who saw promise in Victoria's vocal talent. Later, Victoria converted to Islam and changed her name to Malka Jaan. That was when Angelina became Gauhar Jaan for the world. Malka Jaan shifted to Calcutta in 1883 as a courtesan.

Later on, she bought Gauhar into the profession of music and dance. Gauhar was just 13 years old when she was raped, and it was music that gave her the strength to go on. Eventually, she became a noted singer and Kathak dancer in Benares. Gauhar's first performance was at the courts, which is today called Bihar, in 1887. She was also tickled pink on to be appointed as the court musician.

Historian Vikram Sampath, who penned a biography on the singer and a well-known Kathak dancer, described Gauhar Jaan as "one of the earliest

women artists who seized the opportunity that came with the advent of recording technology." In years to come, she would go on to make close to 600 records. Gauhar apart of singing and dancing was also fascinated towards flamboyant lifestyle. She was fluent in multiple languages and recorded songs in Bengali, Hindustani, Gujarati, Tamil, Marathi, Arabic, Persian, Pashto, French and English.

Gradually she became an internationally famed artist she was invited to perform at the coronation ceremony Emperor George V at the Delhi Durbar in 1911. Gauhar went on to perform across the country, taking the different genres of Hindustani music.

"My Name is Gauhar Jaan!" - The Life and Times of a Musician by Vikram Sampath is a chronicle on the extraordinary life of this brilliant singer. She went to Mysore on the invitation of Krishna Raja Wadiyar IV and became the palace musician there.

She breathed her last at the age of 56 on January 17, 1930. But her notable music concerts and dance programs are still etched in golden words.



Gauhar Jaan in performance



BEST WISHES FROM

**P ARUNA SAI KUMAR  
SAINADHA KALA SAMITHI**

D.No.39-34-57  
Ambedkar Colony  
Marripalem, NH-5  
Near R&B office  
Visakhapatnam-530018

# PITCHING FOR CULTURAL ACTIVITY IN CURRICULUM



Parinithi Kala Kendra organised Kalamaasika, a monthly classical programme at Shivamaya Sabhangana in Sagar, Karnataka. The festival was inaugurated by MM Jadav, Lecturer in English accompanied by G Manjunath and Nair. All the dignitaries from the dais unanimously reiterated that cultural recitals have been improving the concentration levels and health of children and appealed to the Government to introduce cultural activities in the school curriculum.

The programme began with a melodious prayer song by Aishwarya. Sindhu P Nair presented a memorable Bharatanatyam piece. She performed Puspanjali, Varanam, Devaranamas and Thillana to salute Rangadi Devathe.

- Gopal M, Sagar

# A DECADE OF DANCE 10<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS OF SHANMUKHA ARTS

Shanmukha Arts celebrated its 10th anniversary with pomp on 23 June 2018 at Bhuriben Laxmichand Golwala (New SNTD) Auditorium, Ghatkopar West. The celebrations were formally inaugurated by Guru Jayashree Nair and V Subramanian, Managing Director - Pandi Correspondents Pvt Ltd.



A unique musical ensemble titled 'Swaramalika' was presented by the students of Samrddhi, Chennai under the guidance of Sankari Krishnan, a senior disciple of legendary violin maestro Lalgudi Jayaraman. The mix of folk and classical elements thoroughly entertained the audience. The Marathi folk song Valvre Nakhwa needs a special mention.

Later, 45 senior, junior and sub-junior students of Shanmukha Arts performed traditional Mallari and followed it with a 'Magical Flute' dance recital. The theme revolved around nature and Krishna. The

entire performance was choreographed creatively by Kala Srinivasan, director of Shanmukha Arts.

'Sri Rama Charitham', a dance ballet showcasing the story of Rama, the prince of Ayodhya, choreographed by Kala Srinivasan was the major theme of the celebrations. The ballet was a treat to senses with aptly chosen characters, expressions, script, lyrics, music, audio-visual effects and storytelling. The music was composed, directed and sung by Sankari Krishnan.

The anniversary celebrations were attended by dancers, gurus and art lovers of Mumbai. Special guests include Kalaimamani Guru Kalyanasundaram Pillai, Guru Jayashree Nair, V Subramanian and Laxmi Venkiteswaran. Some of the senior artistes who attended the programme were Padmini Radhakrishnan, Kashmiri Trivedi, Mangalam Krishnan, Sujatha Nair, Jayalakshmi Anand and Anand Satchidanandam.

- Kashmiri Trivedi, Thane



# CELEBRATING CHILD PRODIGIES IN DANCE



**C**hinnara Kalarava - 2018 organised by Shailusham Arts and Creations under the direction of Vid Ananth Vikram and Chaitra Ananth saw 48 child prodigies perform dances with live music at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in Bangalore on June 25.

Vid Ananth Vikram, the director of the festival, provided live vocal and nattuvangam support for all the performances. He was accompanied by Vid SV Giridhar on Mridangam and Vid Gopal on Veena.

Some of the highlight from the festival include Bharatanatyam performance by baby Mahati Ananth aged 5 years, forty five minute performance by disciples of Guru Gowri Sagar, Bharatanatyam



performance by disciples of Guru Bhavana Venkatesh, a Kerala based (Nadodirityam) folklore presentation by disciples of Resmi Srikanth and a vibrant mridangam solo, khanjira and konnakkol by master Prajwal.

Shailusham has also recognised eminent personalities Karnataka Kalashree Guru Vid Dwaraki Krishnaswamy and Dr Yoonas Jones with the Shailusham Ratna Awards.

- Ananth Vikram, Bangalore





Best wishes from

## SHRADDHA PRASADE

Bharathanatyam Dancer, Thane.

The **Dance India** magazine has been spreading the knowledge of art worldwide from the past 2 years every month. The magazine is unique and touches different aspects of various art forms. I congratulate the whole team of the magazine and wish them all the best.



Best wishes from

## SRIDEVI KRISHNA

Kuchipudi Teacher  
**SRI MAYURI NRITYALAYA**  
Vizianagaram





# TEJASRI DEDICATED TO THE PROGRESS OF ART

Text: Paul Nicodemus



The future of Kuchipudi is looking up with the promise of budding talent. Bathina Tejasri, a Kuchipudi dancer from Visakhapatnam, is one such talented youngster who has showcased a sublime skill and indomitable spirit towards the art form.

At the tender age of four, Tejasri's father, BR Vikram Kumar, a well-known dance festival organiser, introduced her to the art of dance. Her initial reluctance to learn dance changed when she observed her seniors perform. Inspired by their performances, she decided to better them by undergoing rigorous training in spite of the obstacles she faced. She also learnt classical music simultaneously, but in her mind, she was preoccupied with dance. Everything else took a back seat. Like any other teenager, she too wanted overnight results.





Teja Sri wishes to dedicate her skills and talent to the progress of the art fraternity.

Her first public performance in Kuchipudi was in the presence of Pratibha Patil, former president of India on 25 September 2010 at Gachibowli Stadium in Hyderabad. She gave performances at Simhachalam Temple and Kali Temple in Visakhapatnam. She performed in Andhra Pradesh's first Formation Day ceremony after the bifurcation of the state, Vysakhi Nrithyotsav, Amaravathi Nrithyotsav, Mysore Dance Festival, Satyabhama Yuva Nrithyotsav, Khajuraho Music and Dance Festival and Jathis National Festival - Tenali and other Andhra Pradesh Government Programmes.

Her achievements include Naatya Krithika Award in Sathyabama Yuva Nrithyotsav, Yuva Natya Sri Award in Vysakhi Nrithyotsav and Godavari Memorial Award at Khajuraho Music and Dance Festival.

However, under the able guidance of her father Vikram and mother Varalakshmi, who exposed her to various artistes performances, she learnt that excellence was important and attaining it would take time. Perfecting her dance style, improving upon her mistakes and creating a space for herself in this art form had become her passion.

Surprisingly, even though it was her parents who introduced her to dance, they never insisted that she should take up dance as a passionate interest. They did encourage her to pursue various opportunities, but she always would fall back on dance. Thanks to a devoted guru in KV Lakshmi, she learnt the fine art of balancing her studies, music and dance and was taught about making the right choices in life. Her guru has been her guardian and well-wisher, helping her savour the fruit of her hard labour.

Being a youngster, she was popular at school. The staff and students figured out that she was a classical dancer from her gestures and lifestyle. Being the only girl who knew Kuchipudi, she was in the limelight and made to perform at various school and college functions. Balancing academics and performing arts is a challenge almost always, but not for Tejasri who learnt how to take things in her stride. Her passion for dance surpasses all the ordinary everyday activities. Movies, chitchats, lazing around have no place in her lifestyle.



# PADAMATI GALI A REALISTIC AND REVOLUTIONARY PLAY

Text: **Bandili Ratan Raju**



Oxygen is a livelihood, not just for humans but also for flora and fauna. If any of the five elements exceed the limit, it would become a demon. Western influence was as powerful as the Bhopal gas tragedy. It has been uprooting Indian roots. Globalisation broke the backs of farmers. It has shown them utopia in the palm and held them by their throat. Globalisation was the deadliest epidemic that maimed the country in the Twentieth century. Farmers have become puppets in the hands of middlemen. The particular scenario reminded the playwright of his social responsibility and it became the context of the play. A school teacher by profession, he emerged into a thespian who taught life lessons from the stage. Noted playwright and



director Patibandla Ananda Rao from Ongole in Andhra Pradesh with his play 'Padamati Gaali' not only changed the course of the history of theatre in Andhra Pradesh but also created turbulence with his thought-provoking narrative. Even after twenty years, 122 shows all over the country with 70 artistes, the popular play's triumphant wave still continues to engulf. The play reflected life. It withstood the test of time and attained universality.



It is common to have characters in a play. Characters revolve around a story. They make the narrative charming. The narrative of the play, Padamati Gali which begins on a lighter note at 'rachabanda', a market square in a village quickly turns immersive. So much so that it made the



audience forget about the outside world while the play was on. Such was the power of the play. The plot which takes place in the Prakasam district was intense with challenging dialogues in a vernacular slang that pierced hearts. Looking into history, on one end of the 20th Century was Gurazada Apparao's Kanyasulkam and at the other end is Patibandla Ananda Rao's Padamati Gali stand tall as towers. Both the playwrights might have a difference of 100 years between them in terms of social conditions and class could have had different views but their perspectives were similar. Both of them are social reformers. 'Girisham' in Kanyasulkam and 'Mayodu' in Padamati Gali, both the characters feed at other's table, move like water under the mat and pokes you with your own finger. Kanyasulkam cannot be understood unless the modern viewer watches it from the social context of its time. But Padamati Gali is different. It spread throughout the country after imperialism's inundation. In the present society, every street has a 'Mayodu', who would build skyscrapers with their words. Just how the earth revolves around the Sun in an elliptical path, his character makes the story revolve around him. The play was a tit for tat to the multinational company culture. To talk about the play is to be critical of the

broker system and expose the true colours of political vultures. The play raised a red flag 20 years ago. Writer and director of the play Ananda Rao's vision was set aside by the critics of that time. The plot was written based on some incidents that took place during the globalisation between 1995 and 1997. The playwright's agony and anguish were presented with powerful dialogues. The play has a satirical tone.



**P Ananda Rao**

Only a multinational company would want to acquire 50 acres of farming land in a village adjacent to the city for a cheap price. The play could be adapted to the current times where many people with greed similar to the character of Mayodu, become rich through illegal methods. After a point, a pressure cooker needs to release its pressure. Ananda Rao was silent for a period post-1995-97 and the play reflected the volcanic amount of pressure that he held inside him. The play with a runtime of four hours doesn't show any traces of lag. The director with the help of 70 characters was successful in giving a realistic representation of farmers mental conflict and exploitation by people in the society. Thanks to its enticing narrative and skilled actors, the play has set high standards in the field of theatre. It is not an easy task to present a play for a period of 20 years without compromising the standards. The play, Padamata Gali with its anti-establishment tone also succeeded in voicing the agony of farmers who have been fighting the unjust acquisition of their farming lands and gave a shimmer of hope in their lives. The play ended on high note with a strong message, ascertaining the existence of farmers and the rights they have on their farming lands.



# Arangetram

## Dr SHRUTI HEGDE NUANCED ABHINAYA HER FORTE



Arangetram is not only the first public performance of a trained dancer but also a test of stamina and the training that the dancer had over the years.

Dr Shruti Hegde's performance reiterated her artistic lineage. Shruti, the daughter of Dr Krishna M and Kamala Hegde, promised to devote herself to dance before the gathered audience at D Veerendra Heggade Kalakshetra, Dharwad on June 10. Natyanjali Nrutya Kala Kendra, Sirsi proudly announced her performance to be the 29th Arangetram of the institute. It was graced by the presence of Basavaraj Horatti, MLC, Padmalata Niranjana, executive director of SDMCMS, Dr Shyamsundar K Joshi, Sai Venkatesh, trustee of Sai International, BR Vikram Kumar, editor of The Dance India, V Gopal, member of Kannada and Culture Department, Sunil Kulkarni, Saakara Samsthe, Dharwad and Dr Pravinchandra KR, Student Welfare Officer, SDM Medical College as guests of honour to inaugurate the program.

Shruti started her performance with *Pushpanjali* and then moved on to present various other routines like *Alarippu*, *Jathiswaram*, *Shivastuti*, *Rama Navarasa*, *Anthapura Geethe* and *Thillana*. Throughout the performance, she exhibited great stamina and put on a power packed show. She showcased sublime grace and poise. 'Abhijnana Shakuntala' an innovative experiment, penned by Pradeep Bhat and choreographed by Guru Vidushi Sahana Bhat was also presented. It was a dance drama depicting the rich cultural essence of our ancient Vedas.

Shruti, through her performance, exhibited her love and devotion towards dance and took the audience into a different world. The evening was filled with her elegant dance moves to the melodious music composition of Vidwan Balasubramanya Sharma accompanied by Balachandra Bhagavath on mridangam, Deepak Hebbar on flute and Ragu Rangadol on rhythm pad. Satish Mooror did a commendable job as the host for the evening.

- Gopal M, Sagar





Best wishes from

**GIRIJA NAIR**

Bharathanatyam Exponent, Thane.

**The Dance India** magazine in a short span of time has captured the imagination of artistes and did a commendable job in promoting art and culture in India. I wish the magazine all the success.



**The magazine** is a wealth of information and it has been doing a fabulous job in promoting Indian cultural heritage

Best wishes from

**KALARATNA**



**Dr KV SATYANARAYANA**

Kuchipudi Exponent, Andhra Pradesh

# TRIBUTES



**Nerella Venu Madhav** born on 28 December 1932 was an Indian impressionist and ventriloquist. He was often regarded as the father of Indian Mimicry who rose to popularity imitating celebrities, politicians, local dialects and Nizams. Venu was the first mimicry artist to perform at the United Nations headquarters. He designed a diploma course at Telugu University, a first of its kind in the world. He began his career

in 1947 and performed in Telugu, Hindi, English, Urdu and Tamil languages. He served as a professor at Potti Sreeramulu Telugu University. 'Mimicry Kala', the art of mimicry was his published work and he had several disciples. Some of his awards include Padma Shri by the Government of India (2001) Rajalakshmi Foundation Award (1981) and Kalapurama by Andhra University (1978). He received honorary doctorates from Andhra University, Kakatiya University and IGNO. He passed away on June 19 in Warangal.

**Thokchom Brindashabi Devi** was a Manipuri dancer and singer. She was born on 31 March 1934 to Th Thaobi Singh and Th Atolshija Devi at Thangmeiband Hijam Dewan Leikai, Imphal. She started learning Manipuri opera, Gouranggalila, Sansenba, Udukhol from various gurus of Manipur at a tender age of 4. She contributed immensely towards the development of Manipuri Opera and received many awards including Manipur State Kala Akademi Award (1989), Natya Bhushan (1999), Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (2007),

Bharatiya Dalit Sahitya Akademi Award (2009), Maipaksana Sanahal Manipur Lifetime Award (2017) and Ngangom Bhanumati Devi Memorial Lifetime Achievement Award (2018). Manipur Gouranggalila and Udukhol and Gostha-Leela were two books that she published. She breathed her last on June 10.



**Kamal Chandra Barbayan** was the seventh child of his parents Maniram Gayan and Reboti Kalita. His maternal uncle Khageswar Bargayan was an inmate of uttar hati. Khageswar requested his sister Reboti to give her youngest child Kamal to the Sattria and thus Kamal Chandra Barbayan became an

inmate of the Sattria. He was one of the most respected burahbhakat of the Sattria and as an Adhyapak he imparted training to the young boys in Sattriya dance. He was part of the first ever cultural delegation to Indonesia led by Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed in May 1975. The inmates of the Sattria have also been invited to France (2008, 2010, 2012), Portugal (2008) and Switzerland (2012) to participate in various festivals. He passed away recently.

**Karaikudi P Sivakumar** was a well-known rhythm guru of Bharatanatyam. He was the nephew of mridangam legend Karaikudi Krishnamurthy. He has accompanied many professional artistes and even trained many aspiring artistes in percussion instruments.

After a brief illness, he passed away in Delhi on June 27. He was 62 years old and survived by his brothers and a sister.



# CLASSIFIEDS

## KUCHIPUDI



### Nataraj Music & Dance Academy

Teacher: KV Lakshmi  
50-1-50/1, ASR Nagar, Seethammadara  
**Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, India**  
Contact No: + 91-9553222969

## BHARATANATYAM



### Geeta Nritya Vidyalaya

Teacher: **Girija Nair**  
'Gurukul' 32/2 Powai Chowk behind  
Shastri Nagar, Saibaba Temple Mulund Colony  
**West Mumbai - 82, Maharashtra, India**  
Contact No: + 91-9867234249

### Takshashila Nrityakala Mandir

Teacher: **Kashmira Trivedi**  
A - 405, Asawari Co. Op. Hos. Soc.  
Pokhran Road No - 1, Varkat Nagar,  
**Thane (W) - 400606, Maharashtra, India**  
Contact No: + 91-9820649671

### Sri Krishna Kala Mandir

Teacher : **Gayathri Gopinath**  
No 5-469 .18th St Sathuvachari Phase - 2  
**Vellore - 632009, Tamil Nadu, India**  
Contact No : 98945 29708

### Shanmukha Arts Institute of Performing Arts

Teacher : **Kala Srinivasan**  
D-309 , Usha Nagar, Village Road  
**Bhandup West, Mumbai- 400078**  
Contact No : 98671 14223

### Nitya Veda Academy

Teacher : **Vidya Sriram**  
E - 404, Krishna bldg. Vasant Sagar  
Complex, Thakur Village  
**Kandivli (e) 400101**

### Nalanda Bharatnatyam Nritya Niketan

Teacher : **Guru K. Shobhana**  
**Centres: Thane, Kalwa, Airoli, Ghatkopar,**  
**Kalyan, Dombivali**  
Contact No: + 91 9820520154  
rohinikhollam@gmail.com

### Atharva School of Fine Arts

Teacher : Mrs. Shamal Pawar  
C-1401, Gulraj Tower, Nehru Nagar,  
**Kurla (E), Mumbai – 400024.**

+91 99690 23246/ 9869272392.

### Bharatanatyam and Folk Dance Classes,

Website-www.atharvaschool.com,  
Email-shamal@atharvaschool.com

### Andaals fine arts

Teacher : **Madhuri Prathap**  
A 804 Suprabhat chs Opp ushanagar,  
Village road Bhandup,  
**West Mumbai 400078**  
Contact No : 9892531605  
cpmadhuri@gmail.com

## KATHAK



### Nritya Tapshya Kathak Dance Academy

Teacher: **Chetan Saraiya. MA, Kathak.**  
Vasai Nallasopara, Kandival. Grand Road  
**Pune, Maharashtra, India**  
Contact No: +91-9821138190

### Nritya Darpanan Foundation

Teacher : **Paullumi B Mukheerjee**  
Alap C.H.S. B woing, Plot No 173  
Sir Bhalchandra Road,  
Opp. 2nd Lane Hindu Colony, Dadar (E)  
**Mumbai - 400014 .**  
Contact No. 9821583004

### Kalanand Nritya sanstha

Teacher : **Bhavana Sanjiv Lele**  
Shop No-2,3,4,5 Rosewood Building  
Prestige Residency, Dongripada  
Waghbil Naka, Ghodbunder Road  
**Thane West, Maharashtra**  
Contact No : 9223440605

### Akshata's Dance Academy

Shivaji housing society,  
Behind JW Marriott,  
Senapati Bapat Road,  
Shivajinagar, Pune- 411016.  
Email id: akshatasdanceacademy@gmail.com  
Contact: 9920990182



Contact details:

Shanmukha Arts

D, 309 Ushanagar CHS, Village Road  
Bhandup West, Mumbai 400 078

Director : Smt Kala Srinivasan

Phone : 9867114223

Email: shanmukhaarts06@gmail.com

Website : www.shanmukhaarts.com



The Dance India magazine has been an inspiration for many aspiring artistes. The magazine is the need of the hour.

Best wishes from

**SWATI  
BADLE**

Bharatanatyam Artiste,  
Thane



IN SIGHT



# THE 6<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL INDIAN DANCE FESTIVAL DANCE FESTIVAL

**20- 22 JULY 2018**  
at 6.30 PM Kalabharati A/C Auditorium  
Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, India

20 JULY 2018 at 6.30 PM



21 JULY 2018 at 4 PM



22 JULY 2018 at 6.30 PM



ORGANISED BY:



**NATARAJ**  
MUSIC & DANCE ACADEMY  
AN ISO 9001:2008 CERTIFIED  
(IN THE SERVICE OF INDIAN ARTS & CULTURE)  
MEMBER OF INTERNATIONAL DANCE COUNCIL UNESCO

**B. R. Vikram Kumar**  
DTA (Direction), P.G.D.T.A. Acting, M.A. Dance  
Founder: NMDA & Sathyabhama Yuva Nrityotsav

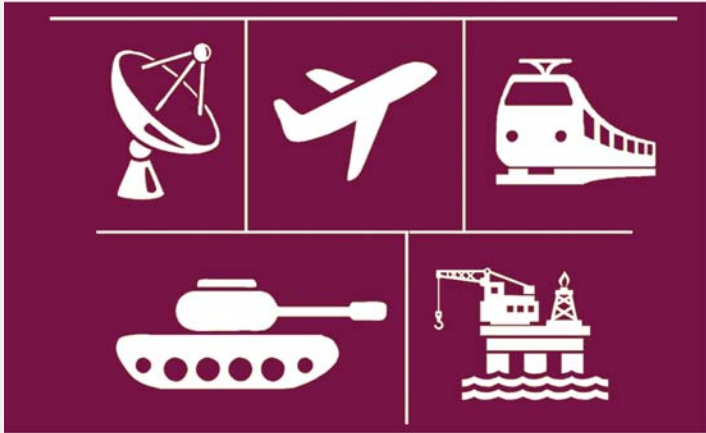
50-1-50/1, SEETHAMMAHARA, VISAKHAPATNAM, A.P., INDIA.  
E-mail: vikram\_natyam@yahoo.com  
MOBILE : +91 98481 37445

Since  
**1977**  
Design. Development. Manufacturing

**HBL**<sup>®</sup>

# ENGINEERING

IS OUR  
**BUSINESS**



BATTERIES, INDUSTRIAL & DEFENCE POWER ELECTRONICS, SOLAR PANELS, & INVERTERS



## PRODUCTS

HBL is a leading designer and manufacturer of Specialized Batteries & Electronics. We produce batteries in Nickel Cadmium and Lead Acid technologies.

Our markets for batteries are Aviation, Telecom, Railways, Solar, Oil & Gas, Defence, Power utilities, UPS, etc.

Our electronics division caters to Industry, Defence & Railways.

## Sales Offices

Delhi	Mumbai	Kolkata
Chennai	Bengaluru	Hyderabad
Cochin	Bhopal	Raipur

**HBL**<sup>®</sup>

**HBL Power Systems Limited.**  
# 8-2-601, Road No.10, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad- 500 034, TG, INDIA.  
website : [www.hbl.in](http://www.hbl.in) e-mail : [contact@hbl.in](mailto:contact@hbl.in)