

1st Edition of
Cultural Chroma



A Vista of Indian Art, Culture and Dance



INSIDE

Aekalavya Awardees

Lasyakala & Artists

Guru Deba Prasad Nrutyadhara & Artists





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Message

J P Jaiswal, Chairman & Managing Director, Peakmore International Pte Ltd
Past Director, Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry (2014-2018)

Dear Friends,

It gives me immense pleasure to congratulate **Guru Deba Prasad Nrutyadhara, Singapore and the organizers** for bringing the popular production **Aekalavya Season 11**. Congratulations to the esteemed team of **Lasyakala** for co-producing this beautiful act in classical dance form.

It's also a matter of joy that **Padmabibhushan Shilpiguru Mr Raghunath Mohapatra** shall grace the program as Chief Guest.

I also congratulate to all Aekalavya Season-11 Awardees and extend my best wishes to all the performers.

My heartfelt best wishes for a successful performance and wish a joyful evening to all audience.

Finally, once again, I thank the organizers for all the effort that has been dedicated to make this event a grand success.



Cultural Chroma

A Vista of Art, Culture & Dance

2019 EDITION

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Cultural Chroma – A Vista of Art, Culture and Dance

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The Guru Shishya Parampara

Dr Sandeep N Kundu

India has an ancient tradition of art, dance and culture. Classical dance forms like Bharatnatyam, Kathak, Kathakali, Kuchipudi, Manipuri, Mohiniattam and Odissi have all originated from India and are now famous worldwide. Traditionally performed in temples in front of Gods and Goddesses, these dance forms are an effective medium for propagating various mythological stories to newer generations. The *guru-shishya parampara* is the tradition of spiritual relationship and mentoring where teachings, not limited to art and dance, are transmitted from a *guru* "teacher" to a *shishya* "disciple". This relationship, based on the genuineness of the guru, and values of commitment, devotion and obedience, is an ideal mode for knowledge transfer from the Guru to the student. Odissi has a 2500-year history, and has progressed through time emphasizing on the *guru-shishya parampara*.

Inspired by Ekalavya, a mythical character embodying the essence of *guru-shishya parampara* from the epic Mahabharata, three young male dancers came together to launch an annual dance festival to pay respect to their respective Gurus. They were Saswat Joshi, Odissi dancer from Odisha, Unnath Jain, Bharatnatyam dancer from Karnataka and Sourav Roy, Kathak dancer from West Bengal.

Aekalavya is now the flagship event of Lashyakala, a dance school run by Sangeet Ratna Guru Saswat Joshi in Bhubaneswar, Odisha (India) with centres in different parts of the country. The festival, under the leadership of Guru Saswat Joshi, has evolved into a platform where established and renowned classical dancers share stage with talented budding young dancers, extending the traditional *guru-shishya parampara* of classical dance education.

After celebrating 8 long successful years of Aekalavya within India, Guru Saswat Joshi took a leap ahead to organize it at foreign shores, spreading the essence of Indian classical dance and preserving the traditional bond of learning between a guru and a shishya.

In 2017, with the support of Indian High Commission in Malaysia, Aekalavya achieved the distinction to be the first classical dance festival to be organized at the Temple of Fine Arts, Kuala Lumpur. It was also the 9th edition of Aekalavya which was based on the theme of "NAVA RASA", the 9 human emotions, and was highly

appreciated by the dignitaries and the audience present. The 10th edition of Aekalavya was celebrated at Indian Consulate General Auditorium, Dubai (United Arab Emirates) and was in association with Odisha Samaj UAE and Indian Consulate General.



Guru Deba Prasad Nruttyadhara (GDPN), a contemporary dance school, established by Sasmita Pal in 2014, is the flag bearer of this Guru Shishya Parampara in Singapore. GDPN is hosting the 11th season of Aekalavya for its annual event, the GDPN Nruttyotsav on the 13th of April 2019 at Victoria Theatre. Singapore being home to a wide range of cultures, ethnicities and religions, shall grace the cultural evening where both Lashyakala and GDPN artists shall enthrall the Indian diaspora, alongside globally acclaimed artists like Padmashree Ileana Citaristi, Shalu Jindal and Maalika Girish. A pre-event exhibition of traditional Sambalpuri handloom garments and scroll based cloth painting (known as Pattachitra), reflecting the rich culture and heritage of Odisha shall also be organized. On this occasion, GDPN's first publication "**Cultural Chroma**" shall be unveiled to the audience.

About the Editor



Dr Sandeep N Kundu is a Geoscientist with Fugro Singapore and an adjunct teaching faculty at National University of Singapore. He has been a part of the Indian cultural diaspora and has lived in the UK, Germany and now in Singapore since 2011. Email: snkundu@gmail.com

"Dancing is the loftiest, the most moving, the most beautiful of the arts, because it is not mere translation or abstraction from life; it is life itself".

Havelock Ellis

The dynamics of Life & Art are close. Art and culture are two inseparable aspects of human life. Art has kept culture alive for centuries. From the earliest times, Asians have expressed their emotions through various dance forms. Dance has been an irresistible medium of expression of one's inner self for many civilizations and tribes of the world. Characteristically, it has a rustic spontaneity, and is an integral part of social customs. Exotic musical instruments (windpipes and percussions) provided the background for the lively head, neck and limb movements which made dances attractive, colourful and distinctive for each culture. Therefore, a region's culture, customs, traditions and history are all recorded in their dance forms.

Dance reflects the observation of life and activities. You must be open to everything that's happening around you. Dance changes with time, location, climate etc. Dance forms are borrowed, adapted and migrate at unparalleled rates across geographies. Never there has been a time more exciting for anyone who has either danced or witnessed someone dance or wonder the reasons behind someone dancing. It is said that dancing with your feet is one thing but dancing with your heart is another.

Over the years a curious phenomenon has been observed. The art is no longer seen as a luxury for the elite but is progressively seen as an engine to power growth in the present economy. From mere consumption, the art is being re-conceptualised as a cultural capital. The issue at stake is not so much on whether we have the talent and resources to build a cultural industry but whether there is a corresponding audience to reciprocate in the process of artistic communication. Cultural industries are just beginning to develop and we must march with whatever little we have instead of waiting for a critical mass to develop.

It is true that there are varying schools of Indian Dance forms & each of these is represented by a host of teachers

& performers. We need to promote an understanding of each dance form, style & its unique aesthetic appeal. We need to take a pluralistic approach to stress the elements in each style which highlight its distinctiveness from others. We must pay homage to the richness and variety of all dance forms.

"Dancing is just discovery, discovery, discovery".

Martha Graham



About the author



Dr Uma Rajan has successfully combined triple careers in healthcare, volunteerism and the arts in Singapore's grass-roots communities. In 1991, Uma Rajan became one of the first 15 charter members of the National Arts Council, and in 1993 led the institution's first Festival for Asian Performing Arts.

Dance...is a composite art form, enfolding in its range several other fine arts as well. Music goes together with Dance but Dance has visual elements like sculpture, poetry and drama which makes it a complete and comprehensive art form. The art of Dance, flourished in India from the time of the Vedic period with the Vedas and Bramanas referencing to the art of dance and the artists. Dancing is imminent in life; whenever there is an emotional exuberance in a sentient being, it expresses itself in some outer limb; the nimble antelope leaps and bounds out of exuberance of life, the bird sitting on a tree branch at sunrise joyously bursting into song, all of nature expresses itself in many ways, and God too dances in Ananda.

The evolution of Music as an independent art followed much later although originally it was constituted as a part of Dance. Sangita (music) in its earliest stages went together with dance, song and instruments. The earliest treatise on music was found in Bharata's Natyashastra, which is primarily based on Dance, and is believed, to be gifted to mankind by Lord Shiva, the Principle Cosmic Dancer. The book had only a few chapters dedicated to Music. Nataraja, with his Damru (drum) in hand, is seen performing the vibrant, reverberating Cosmic Dance. It is written that Lord Shiva and Parvathi gave us the two greatest styles of Dance – the Tandava and the Lasya. In the Tandava, the movements follow rhythmic patterns, some intricate and subtle with the Tala aspect of the music stressed here. In the Lasya, however, the emotional expressions, the Bhava, is dominant.

Dance as an art form is different in several ways from other arts for which an inborn aptitude (Vasana) is essential. The hands are used to bring out the meaning of the song and the eyes express the appropriate Bhava and the feet keep moving with the rhythm. The great ritual and highly fine-tuned technique of the body and mind is harmonized with the great discipline of Yoga. In the Tandava, the rhythmic, balanced movements of the body, well planned and carefully executed, have tremendous effect on our emotions. In the Lasya or Abhinaya, the Bhava, the feelings and the various shades of expressions, feelings through

postures and poses (Mudras) and facial features, is a crucial in portrayal of messages and stories during recital.

In ancient India, Dance was widely studied and practiced. When Music began to develop as an independent art, the emphasis on the Tala aspect was kept up; so much so that in South India, the display of Tala is much revelled. In Dance, the rhythm is of paramount importance. In mere combination of various rhythmic patterns, lie the unlimited possibilities, of producing various kinds of aesthetic appeal. It is well known that a dancer indicates a time measure with his or her feet, then often changes the pattern, resulting in spectacular visuals. It sends thrills through the audience to hear and see the change of this rhythmic pattern. The footwork marking the Adi Tala with the jathi 'thakdhimi-tharikita', suddenly changes to the pattern 'thakita-thakita-thaka' - the sheer beauty of the changing pitch is simply remarkable.

The system of dedicating some women to the Temples for Dance was a necessity. The Temples being the seat of religion and culture, attached to their service Temple Dancers and Musicians, who dedicated their lives to the Lord and their performance was part of the daily routine in rituals and worship. These dedicated women known as Devadasis, servants of the Lord, protected this ancient art form through the onslaughts, which India faced during history. The purity, discipline, accuracy of technique and true traditions were protected, preserved and practiced by the descendants of these Devadasis and the Nattuvanars of South India, the Dance Masters and Rhythm-keepers for the performers.

About the author



Indra R L Ishwaran has multifaceted interests and her long list of accomplishments include being the only woman President of the Singapore Ceylon Tamils' Association and as the Aesthetic Chairman and design conceptualiser of the Sri Senpaga Vinayagar Temple in Singapore which is now a heritage site. She also was a founder member and committee member of the Singapore Family Planning Association in the 70s.

Odissi dance form is rooted to its soil. Like all other Traditional dance forms of Bharatvarsha, it finds mention in the Natya Shashtra - the earliest treatise of drama, music and dance in the world. The form has all the 108 fundamental dance units mentioned in the Natya Shashtra. Odissi dance comprising of Nritya (pure dance), and Nritya (expressive dance), has both elements of Tandava, vigorous form of dance associated with Lord Shiva, and Lasya, a dance form with soft movements associated with Goddess Parvati.

The origin of the Odissi form is Odra Magadhi, one of the four styles mentioned in the Natya Shashtra. The Manchapuri caves, which existed from the time of Kharavela, first century BCE ruler found in the heritage site of Udaygiri, a Buddhist site in Odisha, has sculptures and carvings of musicians and dancers. The inscriptions of Kharavela in Hathigumpha caves in Udaygiri also mentions of music and dance. Archaeological discovery of a lithophone in Angul, in Odisha, dating back to about 1000 BCE gives a stamp of authenticity to the musical tradition of Odisha.

Inscriptions dating between 6th to 9th century CE from the Assia hill range like Alatgiri, Ratnagiri, and Lalitgiri are evidences of the existing dance practices in Odisha. Icons like Marichi, Vajravahni and Haruka in dancing poses of Odissi are found here. Archeological evidences of the 9th century, found in the Natyamandap's or dance halls of temples in Odisha speak of Odissi dance' distant past with the presence of Maharis or temple dancers. According to scholar Kapila Vatsyayan biographies of Jain Tirthankaras unearthed in Gujarat, found mention of Odissi dance poses like Chowka and Tribhangi, spelling out the popularity of Odissi dance form from antiquity, which has spread far and wide.

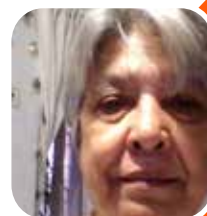
Nandikeswara's Abhinaya Darpana during 4th to 5th century BC, Maheswar Mohapatra's Abhinaya Chandrika written in 15th century A.D. and Shilpaprakasha, an illustrated manuscript of Odisha's sculptures, written between 10th to 14th century A.D., found in the Jagannath temple in Puri; the Brahmeswara temple in Bhubaneswar; and the Sun Temple in Konark give elaborate details of the Odissi form and showcase its sculptures and musicians. The Maharis or Maha-naris, who were temple dancers, underwent rigorous training in the dance form, starting from their childhood. Compositions of Shankaracharya

during the 8th century and Jayadeva from the 12th century has greatly influenced the Odissi dance form that exists today.



During the reign of the Sultanate rulers and the Mughals, dance was generally found in courts. It further degenerated during the British times, when dance was looked down upon. After a period of lull, all forms of Indian Classical dance were restored to its former glory, bringing back their lost prestige. The last one to be resurrected was Odissi dance. The revival and reconstruction of Odissi dance from Mahari, Gotipua tradition to Bandha nritya tradition of martial arts, Chhau tradition and traces found in the sculptural reliefs and pictorial images gave a great boost to Odissi dance as we know it today. The gurus of the Jayantika movement gathered to delve deeper into whatever sources were available to them to reimagine an aesthetic structure, which goes under the nomenclature of Odissi dance. They were also responsible for drawing up the repertoire of the form. Although today performers have integrated creative changes into the dance form to suit the psyche of the modern generation, it has to be remembered that nothing is static. Change and growth are inevitable in every field, including arts. Thus, Odissi dance as a form came to be recognized as one of the classical dances of India from the year 1955. Today, Odissi is a very popular form with many aspirants and is practised globally.

About the author



Tapati Chowdhurie has been working as a dance critic for over two decades for national Indian dailies like The Hindu, The Statesman. Her contribution to take stage performances to common man through media is immense. email: tapatichow@yahoo.co.in

In the first half of the 20th century, when the devadasi tradition had come to an end and the gotipua tradition was looked down upon as cheap and vulgar, a group of talented and versatile stage artists infused new life into the dying dance scene. These performing artistes were male artists who played a very important role in shaping Odissi dance as witnessed today.

The emergence of present day Odissi cannot be totally understood unless we place it in the context of the fertile atmosphere provided by the theatre movement in the first half of the last century and the performing artists of that time which included the likes of Mohan Sunder Dev Goswami, Ramachandra Mania, Laxminarayan Patra, Lingaraj Nanda, Kartik Kumar Ghose, Brindavan Das, Kashinath Sahoo, Durlav Chandra Singh, Kalicharan Patnayak and Dayal Sharan. These artists were totally dedicated and committed to the cause of reviving the performing arts of Orissa, each being an exponent of

clandestinely taking gotipua dance lessons from Balabhadra Sahu, of Ragurajpur, his reaction was "Would you like to dance moving around your hips, with your tongue stretched out, making faces and winking at the zamindar to receive garlands of flowers or banknotes pinned on your chest? This will not do!". Such was the attitude towards the gotipua dance in those days.

Eventually Chintamani sent his son to the only performing arts school he could trust, Ras Leela party, founded by Mohan Sunder Dev Goswami, where his two elder sons were already enrolled to learn acting and playing the dhol. The legendary Radha Krishna Bihari Ras Dal, founded in 1918 by Mohan Sunder Dev Goswami in Puri, served as a training ground for a number of youngsters, aged between eight and eighteen. These youngsters lived with the master and imbibed art of abhinaya, playing the percussion, singing and stagecraft. The training may not have included much of dance as such, but it was meant to mould the youth into a holistic performing artist by offering him not only a technique but also the right atmosphere of discipline and devotion for the arts. The children were made to memorize songs from the Geet Govinda and the Vaishnava poems. They were also taught how to sing, act, move and gesticulate according to the character played.

It is worth noting that, in Goswami's troupe, the most memorable female roles were portrayed by two of its male members, despite the troupe having two girl students (Radharani, daughter of a mahari's sister, who specialised in the character of Brundadevi and Bidhytlata Mohanty, a prostitute's daughter, who used to portray the role of Chandrabali). The role of Radha was depicted by a boy named Basudeva and the character of Lalita was performed by Raghunath Nanda, who had been picked up by guru Goswami while he was singing along with his father on the bada danda (main road leading to Lord Jagannath Temple) in Puri. Both the roles were quite demanding.



multiple disciplines spanning dance, music, drama and craft. Each of them were self-made artists, having acquired expertise more by observation than by formal and systematic training.

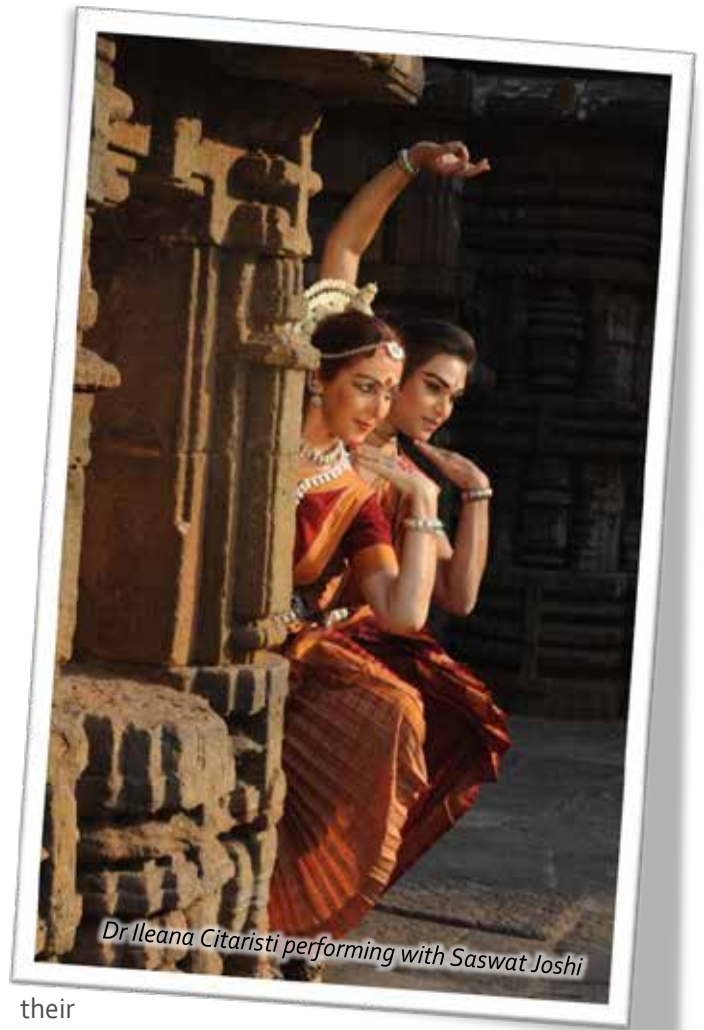
When Chinatamani, Kelucharan Mohapatra's father, discovered in his thirties that his six year old son was

While the former was more intense and introverted, the latter was full of humour and wit which Raghunath was so good at portraying that he used to get medals for 'the best role' each time he performed. This is proof that talent, not gender is crucial in the evolution of an artist.

Another excellent interpreter of female roles was Ramachandra Mania from Gada Rengala in Puri district. A cowherd by caste, he used to dress up as little Krishna as a child, to take part in the laudi khela, a kind of shepherds' dance which is enacted during the dola purnima (Holy Full moon) festivities in his village. Spotted by Somnath Mohapatra from Haripur, he trained vigorously for six months in the gotipua style before he took part in his troupe 'sangeeta dala'. By this time, the Radha Krishna Theatre, Odisha's first professional theatre of Orissa, was founded by Bonomali Pati in Bolonga, Ramachandra Mania was already famous as 'Master Mania', an epithet which stayed with him throughout his life. During his association with the Radha Krishna Theatre, later renamed as the Bonomali Art Theatre, he had the opportunity to not only learn classical music and perfect his abhinaya under guru Brundavana Bihari Das from Balasore, but was also able to develop himself as a teacher. He later taught akhada pilla dance and odissi sangeeta to a number of other male actors, including Kashinath Sahu from Pipli and Kartik Kumar Ghose (younger brother of the dramatist Aswini Kumar Ghose, who was well connected with the theatre).

Master Mania's portrayals of female roles were extremely realistic. He distinguished himself in the role of Bimali in the nataka titled 'Jayadeva', of the nartaki Bandi in 'Ali Baba' and in the role of a maharani in the play 'Harishchandra'. Among the dance items taught by him there was a Shiva Parvati piece which Kartik Kumar Ghose and Kashinath Sahu performed together at the Stewart School in Cuttack in 1931 and the Sri Krishna nrutya, a solo piece which won Kashinath Sahu a golden medal when he performed it during a dance competition organised in 1936 by the Utkal Sahitya Samaj at Ramchandra Bhawan in Cuttack.

When the Bonomali Art Theatre closed down in 1936 due to financial difficulties, another professional group called Annapurna Natya Mandali had started functioning from the village of Khanduala Kota near Balugaon. Founded by Somnath Das, a landlord from the same village, and assisted by Lingaraj Nanda from Lambhadarapur and Bauri Bandhu Mohanty of Jagatsingpur, this Mandal's troupe started quite well and their group toured extensively and became well known all over Orissa. In the first ten years of



Dr Ileana Citaristi performing with Saswat Joshi

their

existence, the group did not have a permanent stage to perform on and used to set up seasonal camps in various districts of Odisha and performed in make-shift pandals. During the rainy seasons, the entire troupe would stay in a rented hall in Cuttack to rehearse for new plays. In 1945 the group split into two groups A and B. Group B continued with the seasonal moving camp while Group A settled down permanently in bada danda, Puri in a three-storied building. The dance masters in the A Group constituted Master Mania, Kashinath Sahoo and Kartik Kumar Ghose (of Bonomali Art Theatre legacy) and Laxminarayan Patra (of the folk-based troupe Prahalad Nataka, Ganjam). Laxminarayana Patra had joined the Group A along with his three brothers - Brindavan, Adhinarayan and Satyanarayan - all of whom were involved in dancing, acting and directing.

Besides learning gotipua dance from Master Mania, Kartik Kumar Ghose, also attended a summer course of six months in 1940, in Almora, where Uday Shankar, the doyen of a new stream in the Indian dance tradition, had just started a centre for imparting art training in various styles. It is noteworthy that, in the early forties all these

various experiences and influences went into the formation of the first group and solo dances in which the young girls, associated with A Group, enacted on stage. Among these was a group item, composed by Kashinath Saho in a style similar to the Manipuri dance and performed by Laxmipriya, Sara and Haramani. This item was the one that later went on to become the Odia song 'manara kotha kohibi kahara sakhi re' ('to whom shall I tell the secrets of my heart, my friend?'). The solo item, performed by Laxmipriya alone was 'Nila Janmuna kule Kalia' ('Krishna on the bank of the dark Jamuna') composed in a folk style by Laxminarayan Patra. With the introduction of female dancers on stage the profits of the theatre increased considerably, presenting a competitive environment for the various theatres. Annapurna and the Orissa Theatre, founded by Kalicharan Pattanayak in 1939, competed alongside to have the most attractive dancers and dance numbers. Coincidentally, in 1946, within a period of few months all three theatre houses introduced in their respective play, a short dance number by a female Odissi artist (even though the appellation of Odissi until then was used to refer more to the music than to dance. In July the

Kumar Ghose, whereas the dance sequence was taught to Haramani Devi by master Harihara Panda.

In the same year, Group B too, inaugurated their new play 'Abhisek', written by Aswini Kumar Ghose, featuring star dancer Laxmipriya performing to the Oriya song, 'janare mo rana parama mita' ('my dear friend, this is my promise'), which was one of the two songs taught to her by gotipua master Krishna Chandra Mohapatra, and the other one being 'nahi ki karidela' ('the one who denied'). The lyrics of both were written by Kishor Kavi Shyam Sundar Das and music directed by Balakrishna Das and Singhari Shyam Sundar Kar respectively. Laxmipriya had been brought to Group B from the other group by Lingaraj Nanda at the time when one female dancer was required for the part of Mohini in the drama 'Devi Bhasmasura'.

Group B had the advantage of not only having in its team the two future doyens of Odissi dance, Pankaj Charan Das and Kelucharan Mohapatra, but also having access to the teachings of another male dancer, who although belonged to a completely different school, happened to play a determinant role in the emergence of the dance scene in Orissa. This other dancer was Dayal Sharan, a Telugu by birth, who had undertaken training in Kathak and Bharatnatyam before joining the India Cultural Centre in Almora, that was founded in the early forties by Uday Shankar. Here Dayal was exposed not only to Manipuri and Kathakali, but also to the eclectic and creative approach in dance-training which was characteristic of Uday Shankar's method of teaching. He had to leave the Centre even before its closing down in 1944, after an attack of tuberculosis. Post his recovery, he founded his own group of dancers with whom he used to perform by hiring theatre halls in different towns and selling tickets for the shows. He had come to Cuttack in 1947 along with half a dozen of his dancers to execute his dance numbers for which he rented Annapurna Theatre hall for three evenings.

Group B had already staged the drama 'Sadhava jhia' ('The merchant's daughter') in which Laxmipriya and Kelucharan paired in the 'Das Avatar' number composed by Pankaj Charan Das. Kelucharan Mohapatra's aptitude to dance had been a revelation for the troupe, since he was primarily known for his performance in 'Devi Bhasmasura' drama. Kelucharan had never disclosed that he had learnt gotipua during his childhood up till that point. When the chance to stage a short dance sequence at the beginning of this drama arose, Pankaj Charan Das, who was the dance



Males Dancers Saswat and Bibhudutta

same year, Kalicharan Pattanayak himself staged his own play 'Abhijan' (directed by Adhwita Charan Mohanty and Durlav Charan Singh) where a female dancer, Sara, enacted a mahari song at the court of King Purushuttam Dev. Almost at the same time, the A Group, presented the play 'Kavisurja', based on the life and work of the Odia poet Kavisurja Baladev Ratha, in which a female dancer, Haramani, performed a short sequence of Odissi at the court of the Raja of Athagara. This play was written by Ramachandra Mishra and directed by Kartik

master of the 'B' group at that time, assigned the role of Mahadev to Kelucharan and kept for himself the role of Bhasmasura, which initially was supposed to be performed in the Chhau style by Radha Krishna Bhanja from Baripada. After the success of his maiden appearance, Kelucharan was entrusted with the main role in the duet dance 'Das Avatar' alongside Laxmipriya whose role was mainly to stand with the anjali mudra in the bhakta attitude.

Dayal Sharan, whose performance had drawn a poor audience crowd on the first two evenings at Annapurna theatre, had the chance to watch the dance rehearsals of Kelucharan and Laxmipriya. He was so impressed that he proposed to Lingaraj Nanda about having a mixed program on the third evening, by combining the dance items of the two troupes. On the third evening, the Annapurna troupe kicked off the performance with 'Das avatar', followed by 'nahi ki koridela' danced by Laxmipriya and the 'Devi Bhasmasura' dance drama, and after the interval, there were the numbers by the Dayal troupe including two solo items by Dayal Sharan, the 'Hunter' and the 'Surya' dances. The audience was much more appreciative of the increased number of performances, showing their support through vigorous clapping.

But in spite of the good turnout on the third day, Dayal failed to raise sufficient money to pay the rent of Annapurna theatre. Hence, he proposed to Lingaraj Nanda that he be allowed to pay back his debt by directing a dance production. By then, he had set his eyes on Kelucharan and was quietly looking forward to an opportunity to groom this promising lad. Lingaraj Nanda, Durlav Chandra Singh and the other directors of the troupe welcomed the idea especially because of the success of results of joint stage performances on day three. The wide variety of styles known to Dayal and the neat presentation of the group was appreciated as a sophisticated upgrade to the existing performances of the Annapurna group. Dayal Sharan was entrusted with the composition of a new dance sequence for the inaugural item of the next drama 'Radhika' which was directed by Durlav Chandra Singh. For Kelucharan, this was the beginning of the most intense learning stage of his career, which led to his transformation into Guru Kelucharan, now a legend in Odissi dance. In Guru Kelucharan's words "*Dayal Sharan showed me the way; he made me conscious of what my body was doing and what more could be achieved through dedicated learning exercises. He made me aware of the use of the different mudras of the hands and of the possibilities of utilising the same hand gestures for expressing various actions (viniyoga).*

Not that I was not using mudras before, but I was not in compete awareness without his explanations of their derivations. He would ask me to observe my hands while I was drinking water or eating food or holding an object and from there he would go to the shastric name of the mudras. He made me understand that although there are mudras classified in the written texts, many more could be derived from one's observation of everyday life. He taught me how to compose small sequences of dance by putting together different steps. He opened the door of 'creativity' for me and I went beyond it to never look back."

After completing the group dance item on Radha and Krishna for the Annapurna group, Dayal Sharan kept returning to Cuttack at regular intervals for the next two years. During each visit, he taught something to the actors and dancers of the troupe, including Mayadhar Rout and Raghu Dutta. Kelucharan continued practising the different body exercises even during Sharana's absence, improving and refining his movements even more. Soon after Pankaj Charan Das left the B Group, it was not difficult for Lingaraj Nanda to choose Kelucharan as the director of the dance sequence for the next play 'Aloka', produced by Priyanath Mishra. The piece, performed by Laxmipriya in three different styles - Manipuri, Odissi and Kathak, was the first dance item to be fully composed by Kelucharan where the style clearly had the learnings from Dayal Sharana.

From 1950 onwards, increasing number of girls came forward to learn dance and the male artists shifted more into imparting private lessons in dance and music, gradually isolating their collaboration with theatre. As more and more female dancers on stage brought popularity to Odissi dance, the opportunity to produce more great male actors specialising in female roles was greatly reduced. The same was the case for other classical dance forms like Kuchipudi and Chhau, where the introduction of female dancers has prevented a new generation of males from concentrating and refining the feminine aspects of the respective dance forms.

About the Author



Padmashree Dr Ileana Citaristi is an established Odissi dancer and a student of Guru Padma Vibhushan Kelucharan Mohapatra. Italian by birth, she lives in Odisha, India since 1979.

"Does it follow the Hindusthani style of singing or is it more influenced by Carnatic Music?", "We have never heard of it!", "Is there any separate entity of Odissi Music?", "Till date we know it is only accompanied with dance? Does it ..." were some of the questions I was repeatedly asked by the critics and musicologists present at the Odissi music evening at Kartik Thirunal Theatre in Trivandrum on 23rd February 1990, organised by Tansen Sursangam; an institution to propagate Indian classical Music. I was very impressed with the healthy gesture and response of the music lovers. However, at the same time I was thinking if I could just make them aware of the great tradition Odissi Classical Music has very clearly. Though I was confident that the purity and sweetness of Odissi music will capture the audience I was doubtful about whether the language barrier would be a hinderance.

But music is music. Regardless of the language, the appreciation of sound lies in the ears of the listener, and how one connects with it. It is the style; the rendition which counts. As Swami Sivananda says "sound is the first manifestation of the Absolute. It has charms to soothe a ferocious tiger. It melts rocks. It enraptures, lulls and energizes. There is music in the running brooks. There is music in the cry of children, there is music in all things, if you have ears to hear it elevates, inspires, strengthens and invigorates. It vibrates in the memory, it generates hormone in the heart. It removes worries and anxieties. It makes one forget the world."

Although 'Odissi' is a recently coined epithet, the geographical region of Odisha has a very long and distinctive tradition in music. Odissi has always had two components, the written and the oral. As a performing art, music is more oral than written orally than written. Of the many treatises written on the Odissi tradition of music, three, Geeta Prakash, Sangeet Narayana, Sangeeta Kalpalata are now available in print and two are in the form of palm leaf manuscripts. These treatises unmistakably point to the fact that Odissi is amongst the few schools of Indian Classical music and has a distinctive system of Raga and Tala with a characteristic rendition style, which is lyrical in its movement with wavelike ornamentations.

As per Bharata's Natya Shastra, art and culture had been divided into four distinct categories namely: Avant Udra-Magadhi, Panchali and Dakhinatya representing the four regions of our country. Present day Odissi Music is the true and only representative Classicism.

Geographically, Odisha is situated in a position that has made it the meeting point of the cultures of the north and the south for decades. It is therefore natural that the Odissi tradition has not only been influenced by the two major schools of Indian



classical music, but it has also influenced them to some extent. This fusion of art and culture certainly enriches the particular styles involved. There are ample examples which show how Hindusthani and carnatic styles of music are fused together over the course of time. The fusion does not make them loose their identity, but rather enriches them and makes them more captivating.

It is very difficult to write about a performing art form because it has technical aspects which needs practical performance. If one hears three styles together, can he easily mark how Odissi music is different from the other two systems? And what is unique about it?

Classical Music - what does it mean in the present context? The answer is as follows: It should have an age old of tradition, a set of Raagas, a system of Taala. the importance of literature and a typical style of its own.

If one goes deep into the study of Odissi music, they will find that Odissi Music fulfils all the characteristics. The tradition of Odissi music dates back to very ancient times. The statues in temples and the history of Jagannath temple educates about the Debadasi tradition of singing and its antiquity. It sticks to the Ragas in their pure form. I have to say that as an artist, many a times following performances I have been asked about which Raga I sang. The answer here is that Ragas are not the property of any system of music. One can say they are both Indian Raag. It is often seen, that the same Raag bearing different names are sung in both Hindusthani and Carnatic style music. The difference is just

the regional name. The same happens in Odissi music. When we go through the books of lyrics we can find certain mentions of Raag and taal and these songs are being sung in Odisha following the mentioned Raag or taal. It is the external invasions and lack of patronage that prevented this rich art form to get its deserved place in the classical music map of India.

The Odissi Classical Music gives importance to the pure form of Raag as well as the intricacies of Taal. It has a taal system of its own, called 'Adatali' 14 beats 4/3 4/3, unique to Odissi only, not found in any other system.

Odissi lyrics is very rich, mainly devotional or spiritual. The lyrics of great poets like Kabi Samrat Upendra Bhanja, Banamali, Gopalkrishna, Kabisurya Baladeba Rath have enriched Oriya Literature. In this style of singing, language plays an important role. The layakeris and Bistaras are done keeping the 'Bhaba', not spoiling the meaning. It does not allow distortion of words into meaningless syllables. An art form is dynamic. This dynamism makes the form popular. One should admit that the Odissi style of music has undergone a lot of modifications as it is being performed and accepted across a wide range of audience. No one will deny the fact that there have been a lot of changes in the style of singing of both the major styles present today.

In Odissi music Mardala or Pakhawaj is the percussion – similar to the percussion of Dhamar and Dhrupad style of singing. There are various points and considerations to take note of, and many demonstrations to be done for this Odissi style of music to get back to its original place.

Special mention must be made here that the melodious rendering style of Odissi Music together with its literary value attracts the Rasikas. Many classical music festivals have been giving Odissi Music slots to perform all over India. The present generation is getting more interested than before. Many individuals, art lovers, institutions and Government have come forward extending their support for Odissi Music, allowing it to flourish and spread globally the inherent qualities of this Music.

About the Author



Dr. Sangita Gosain, is a prominent Odissi vocalist and scholar, who has been associated with Odissi music for the last 45 years. She has performed both in India and abroad and has received many recognitions for her versatile renditions in 17 different languages.

Tahia- The Connection between Dance and Divinity

Bibhudutta Das

The making of Tahia is considered as an art form in Odisha and is known as "Sola Karigari". The process and idea of Tahia has been adapted from the procedure of making Tahia for Lord Jagannatha. The privilege of providing these tahias for the deities is with the Raghava Dasa Matha – a monastery associated with the temple and located on its southern side. A few families of artisans have been traditionally preparing these tahias on behalf of the matha. Presently, family members of Narayana Pradhan in Bali Sahi are involved in this process. They take several weeks to complete the preparation of Tahia carried out in the premises of the matha.

The Odissi *tahia*, is made from dried reeds called sola and is part of the dance form since the beginning. But, there are only a few Puri-based craftsmen, who still make it. The tahia consists of two parts - *ghoba* and tahia. The flower-

decorated *ghoba* is fitted around the dancer's hair, which is pulled into a bun at the back of head. This represents the lotus with a thousand petals that lies above the head in the head chakra. The longer piece that emerges from the



centre of the back piece is called the *tahia*, and this represents the temple spire of Lord Jagannath or the flute of Lord Krishna. Nityananda Moharana is a very famous artist who practises the craft in Puri and is popularly known as Neta Bhai his *tahias* are known as Neta *Tahia*.

The *Tahia* is made from the stem of the reed plants. Reed is a type of plant that grows in wet lands, ponds, fields, etc mostly across the eastern and north-eastern regions of India. Half immersed in water, it looks like a log of a girth of 1-4 inches with leaves. As Odisha is surrounded with sea on one side, the reed plant is found in the coastal areas in abundance. The stem of the reed plant is known as shola pith and is used as the main raw material in different types of crafts. The shola pith is always at demand in Puri because of the rich artistic heritage of the city which is also known as the hub of art and crafts. The artists and craftsmen of *Tahia* and other decorative items reside in Puri, and therefore, shola pith from across Odisha, and Bengal is imported here.

As the reed plant is half immersed in water, the stem is covered with thorns and algae. The ripe shola is uprooted and the skin and thorns are peeled off and they are left to dry. The green stem turns into light brown, with a white mid-layer and an apricot colour in the innermost layer. The shola pith is sliced into thin rolls and from these; the artists make flowers, buds, other decorative items very carefully. The outer brown layer is used for making borders which looks like wood makes the crafts look beautiful. The *ghoba* of the *tahia* is made with a cardboard to give it a strong base which is then wrapped with a cotton cloth to make the base stronger. They use an adhesive made from a citrus fruit called *kaitha*. After applying the adhesive, they let it dry for 2-3 days. However, now-a-days the artists are using the readymade adhesive in order to finish huge orders in a short span of time as they are easily available in the market. Some craftsmen use metallic wire lining on the base to protect it

from breaking. On the base, they paste the outer light brown pieces to give it a wooden look on both the sides and then paste the flowers and buds made from the white shola pith in beautiful and attractive patterns and designs. The shola pith is given the shape of mogra buds as mogra or malli is believed to be the favourite flower of Lord Jagannatha. The longer piece that is worn at the back of the *ghoba* is called *tahia*. The shola pith is carved into different designs and they are aligned in beautiful patterns along with a bud at the top which represents the spire of the Jagannatha Temple. Two pieces of threads are attached to the *ghoba* to tie it around the bun properly. To make the hairdo look fuller and more gorgeous two bands made of shola pith flowers are worn along with the *tahia*.

The *tahia* is available in different sizes to meet the needs of the dancers of different age groups. Not only in different sizes, *tahia* comes in different designs too and varies in price accordingly. In order to make *tahias* in bulk within a



Odissi dancers with the 'tahia' in a devotional stance

short span of time, some *tahia* makers have started making plastic made *tahias*. The plastic *tahias* are easy to make and the makers who are into this just for business purpose make *tahia* out of plastic and fiber which are both feasible, easy to make as well as easy to carry and handle. The plastic *tahia* is decorated with glitters and colourful

laces to give them a lustrous look. The tahia made of shola pith too is decorated with colourful glitters and stones and that raises their costs too. Now-a-days, the tahia makers have started using cloths to make the buds of the tahia. The making of tahia, as well as its texture has undergone a few changes over the years according to the convenience of the makers.

About the Author



Bibhudutta Das is a senior disciple of Lasyakala and has travelled over 18 countries to perform and promote Odissi

Aekalavya: The Emotion of a Dancer

Ananya Mihir

Aekalavya is one of the most prestigious classical dance festival of India. In 11 years, the festival has created its place in society by both promoting Indian culture and preserving the ancient tradition of guru-sishya parampara. Each year, Aekalavya felicitates a guru for his/her immense contribution to art and culture and promotes the legacy of traditional dance culture inspiring many youths and ushering a positive influence in preserving the sacred bond between a guru and a shishya.

The first time I got involved with Aekalavya, was in 2014 when it was held at Rabindra Mandap, Bhubaneswar. As volunteers, we were briefed about our roles and responsibilities a day before and turned up for the festival in a traditional dress code, the Patta or Sambalpuri saree. In those times, I neither had a saree nor was I fond of wearing it. Struggling to understand the rationale behind such a request, I once questioned senior on why such a dress code existed? Overhearing this query, my guru Shri Saswat Joshi responded by saying "My dear, when we promise to promote our art and culture, it's not only about promoting the classical or folk dance and music, but rather it's about promoting every art form we have. Our state Odisha has a rich and diversified tradition and we should proudly flaunt them in each opportunity. Therefore, we should be proud to wear the traditional Patta." This statement of his change my views and the handloom Patta because my fashion style and I never missed the chance to wear it.

Every time the preparations for Aekalavya starts, a hope lights within me, "If I would have the opportunity someday

to perform a solo in this prestigious dance festival?" As someone rightly said, "where there is a will, there is a way" and I finally got my chance to perform a solo dance for Aekalavya 2016, where I performed the recital "MEGHADOOTAM", choreographed by Guru Shri Saswat Joshi. Through huge efforts and rigorous training, I could perform a flawless piece which became the highlight of the program. That season of Aekalavya will always be special to me as it gave me the recognition of a dancer.

It was a matter of great pride for me and the state, when Aekalavya travelled all the way from Odisha to Malaysia to celebrate its 9th edition, making it the first classical dance festival to be held abroad. It was a matter of sheer joy that I got the chance to present the 9th edition for the first time before a huge crowd in a foreign and speaking about my country, culture and art. This boosted and motivated me to explore my passion as an emcee.

This time the 11th edition of Aekalavya will be celebrated by Lasyakala and Nrutyadhara, Singapore at the Victoria Theatre, Singapore, showcasing the rich art and culture of our motherland India. All my best wishes for the team!!! I hope this prestigious classical dance festival continues to celebrate many more editions ahead.

About the Author



Ananya Mihir is a star performer of Lasyakala and has been an Emcee for Aekalavya events.

THE HOST - GURU DEBA PRASAD NRUTYA DHARA (GDPN)

Established in 2014, Guru DebaPrasad Nrutya Dhara is a dance school, founded by Sasmita Pal to fulfil the aspiration of Indian natives and Singaporeans to learn Indian classical and folk dance. The school is named after Guru Deba Prasad Das, an Indian classical dancer considered to be one of the four first generation gurus of the Indian classical dance form of Odissi. Born in 1932, Guru Deba Prasad Das, belonged to the Gotipua dance culture, and later promoted his own style of Odissi, known as the Deba Prasad Gharana. He was a recipient of the 1977 Sangeet Natak Akademi Award and the 1974 Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi Award.

The school currently has about 40 dedicated students, with numbers rising year on year. The school is Pracheen Kala Kendra Centre accredited, and runs classes based on the guru-sishya Parampara, holding annual examinations from Parambhik to Visharad stage. Registered under Ministry of Education, Singapore by Guru Sasmita Pal, the school has been an important instrument in propagating Indian classical and folk dance in collaboration with many local and international schools in Singapore. During one of the Singapore Youth Festivals, Sambalpuri Folk Dance was presented by students, which impressed the judges and got recognition as a “refreshing concept”.



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Odissi is one of the eight classical dance forms of India. It originates from the state of Orissa, in eastern India. It is particularly distinguished from other classical Indian dance forms by the importance it places upon the Tribhangi (literally: three parts break), the independent movement of head, chest and pelvis and upon the basic square stance known as *Chauka* or *Chouka* that symbolizes Lord Jagannath.



The outreach of the students includes several stage performances in Community centres on occasions of Indian festivals, including the ones at Changi-Simei CC, the

Bishan-Toa Payoh CC and Dance Planet annual events in Singapore. Overseas performances by the school include places such as Kuala Lumpur and Johor Bahru, Malaysia.

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Apart from the above, Guru Sasmita Pal has delivered several invited performances in different states in India, along with selected students on behalf of the school.

The school started organizing Guru Deba Prasad Nrutyastov, an annual event in Singapore, aiming to bring together eminent dancers of global repute to perform on stage alongside its students. In 2017, the first such function was held at the Siglap CC, graced by Guru Dr Gajendra Panda and his team from Tridhara.

The 2nd Guru DebaPrasad Nrutyastov brought together Guru Saswat Joshi, Founder of Lasyakala Dance Vision, Guru Gajendra Panda, Director of Tridhara and

THE GUESTS - LASHYAKLA DANCE VISION, INDIA

Lasyakala Dance Vision was founded in the year 2009 by Sangeeta Ratna Shri Saswat Joshi with an aim of promoting the classical dance and nurturing amateurs to stand strong as an individual in the society. Lasyakala

Saswat believes in 3D's: Duty, Dedication & Discipline as the pillars of success and inculcates the same in his disciples. Along with cultural promotions, Lasyakala also aims to work on for the development of underprivileged children in slums, to help them become self-independent and successful. Since few years, Lasyakala has taken numerous steps to work for the betterment of these underprivileged by providing free dance and personality grooming classes, and by organizing shows to provide a platform to exhibit their talents. Since last 8 years Lasyakala has been organizing workshops in many remote areas of Odisha and have trained more than 100 dancers from different areas who have made dance as a source of living. Lasyakala aims to organize such workshops more in number and create a mass awareness that dance can be a means to one's livelihood and prosperity. Apart from this, Lasyakala has worked for the differently-abled children in making them one in a million among all.

Lasyakala organises a summer workshop "KALLOL" every year where the students are given a broader option to pursue their passion. They are groomed and trained by various eminent personalities of the state in different fields like dance, acting, fashion designing, extempore, cooking and even money management.

Few lucky students every year are selected based on their performance irrespective of their background to travel abroad along with Shri Saswat Joshi to promote Odissi

Padmashree Datuk Shri Ramli Ibrahim, Artistic Director for Sutra Foundation.

The 3rd Annual event is being held on the 13th April 2019 at the legendary Victoria Theatre and Concert Hall of Singapore in collaboration with Lasyakala, India and presents a rare opportunity where eminent artists Padmashree Ileana Citaristi, Shalu Jindal, Maalika Panicker, Saswat Joshi and Sasmita Pal herself shall perform on stage alongside the students of the school. Like past editions, this event shall be graced by dignitaries and this year's guests include the Deputy High Commissioner of India, Ninad S. Deshpande and Italian Ambassador to Singapore and Brunei Darussalam Mr Raffaele Langella.

Dance Vision has since become a very reputable dance institution of Odisha and is expanding through its branches from the capital city of Bhubaneswar to other parts of the state and country and beyond.

dance, culture and tradition. Lasyakala has also generated employment opportunities for many by appointing them as the mentor and teacher of the institute. Presently Lasyakala has 20 mentors who are working hard day and night for the betterment of the institute.

Every year it organizes its annual function at Bhubaneswar where artists from all over the state come together to showcase their talent. A 2 days cultural extravaganza has turned out to be the most popular in the state by the huge gathering and scope it provides that encourages artists from all age group to be more passionate about dance.

Apart from this Lasyakala organizes its annual classical dance festival "Aekalavya- a tribute to guru shishya parampara". Aekalavya- A tribute to Guru shishya Parampara is an initiative by Sangeet Ratna Shri Saswat Joshi to pay salutation and gratitude to his guru who has always been guiding him throughout his journey towards the pinnacle of success.

With deep insight Aekalavya was started in the year 2009. Since then the 10years old classical dance festival has kept enthraling the state as well as country. It recognizes the Guru's and amateur artists and honors them for their significant contribution to the art.

2017 has been a remarkable year in the history of Indian classical dance festival. Aekalavya is the first classical dance festival to be organized at Temple of Fine Arts, Kuala

Lumpur, Malaysia with the support of Indian High Commission from India to Malaysia. The 9th edition of Aekalavya based on the NAVA RASA (9 human emotions) was highly appreciated by the dignitaries and the gathering present. The 10th edition of the festival was based on DASA AVATRA and was organized on 6th April 2018 at Indian Consulate General Auditorium, Dubai in association with Odisha Samaj UAE and Indian Consulate General.

With a lot of hope and aspiration, Aekalavya is all set to celebrate its 11th edition at the Victoria Theatre, Singapore on 13th April'2019. It is an amalgamation of different classical dances of India. The festivals start with formal

inauguration and lightening of sacred lamp followed by felicitating the revered guests of the evening.

Along with the classical dance performances comes the most awaited segment of the evening ie, the presentation of Aekalavya Samman-2018 to a guru and a shishya for their immense contribution to the art.

We aim to respect and felicitate the best of people at the best place. Lasyakala dreams of nurturing a child with his/her over all development and help them stand strong in the society with reputable recognition heedless to their caste, color or creed.



THE AWARDEES

Shallu Jindal



Shallu Jindal is a New Delhi based multitalented, charismatic and accomplished personality of subtle substance and sophisticated style. She believes and excels in meaningful and wide ranging, 'direct to the deserving' social, charitable and welfare activity and is a philanthropist in her own right. She appreciates art, promotes culture and has worked relentlessly towards becoming arguably, one of the leading exponents of the great Indian classical dance of Kuchipudi.

Shallu has been pursuing her education in Kuchipudi, a classical dance form from Andhra Pradesh.

A disciple of the great dancing couple Padma Bhusan Raja Reddy and Padma Bhusan Radha Reddy, she keeps up with her rigorous practice of Kuchipudi with concerts held all over India and Abroad.

She feels the passion of dance also allows for a lot of introspection and serenity besides developing a proper work culture for the mind and body. Shallu is passionate about dance in particular and art in various forms. Her grace, beauty, and riveting performances have held audiences spellbound. Shallu's performances have natural rhythm and instinctive flow.

Apart from dance, Shallu has a great contribution in the development of the society and women empowerment. As the chairperson of National Bal Bhavan, she endeavored to develop and improve the infrastructure of existing programs and introduce new cultural change and developments.

The Flag Foundation of India, Under the leadership of Mrs. Shallu Jindal organized the Mahila Swashakti March to create consciousness among women to take ownership of their empowerment and improve the qualities of their lives. In her multifaceted role as a dancer and an art lover, Shallu plays diverse role with confidence. She was the member of the executive council of the Children's Film Society of India (CFSI). She is also actively involved in community development projects. Presently she is working on a museum project in Chattisgarh to promote Tribal Art and craft.

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Hotel Holiday Resort is one of the premium hotels in Puri, Odisha, bejewelled by a bunch of spectacular features. It started in the year 1983 in a small profile but within three decades it has become one of the best Hotel in Puri. The most economical tariffs with all comforts matching to the global standard attract the people from different category.

At the first view from outside, it appears that prolific effusion of rampant romanticism and artistic strokes of brush have synergistically drawn the silhouette of the hotel on the canvas of corporeal reality. It has carved a distinct niche for its esteemed clients. For justified reasons, Trip Advisor has continuously rated Hotel Holiday Resort in the top 5 hotels in Puri. You will never be able to perceive the essence of its inexplicable elegance until and unless you visit over here. A stay over here will make you realize the magical concoction that has turned Hotel Holiday Resort into a peerless place of heavenly elegance.

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Maalika Panicker, a unique soulful Bharatnatyam and Mohiniattam dancer, graduated from the well-known arts institution Kalakshetra in 1993. In 1994, at the age of 22, she successfully choreographed three dance dramas for Chettinad Vidyashramam, Chennai, and Usha Vasanthakumar, prior to her move to Singapore in 1996 as an accomplished dance instructor who has been teaching for the over 25 years. In Singapore, she started as a dance tutor at SIFAS, Singapore Indian Fine Arts Society, where she still holds the record of being the longest serving Senior Dance Instructor, in its history, and where she taught for over 13 years. Now she is the Director of Aakash Ganga, her own institution since 2009.

Maalika's creativity extends from her unique choreography to aesthetic sense of costumes and jewellery. She draws inspiration from her Gurus and other legendary dancers all over the world. She has performed with renowned dancers like Dr Vyjantimala Bali, Savitri Jaganadha Rao, Adayar K Lakshmanan, C V Chandrashekar, Saroja Vydanathan, Lakshmi Viswanathan, Jayanti Subramaniam, and many other Kalakshetra Gurus.

Kalamandalam Kshemavathi was her Guru for her Mohiniattam arangetram in 2010. For that Arangetram, Maalika was honoured by the blessings and support of Mr and Mrs Bhaskhar who very much stood in the position as her own parents.

She has created a legacy that continues to inspire many group and solo thematic dance productions and dance dramas and trains well-known senior dancers in Singapore, and around the world.

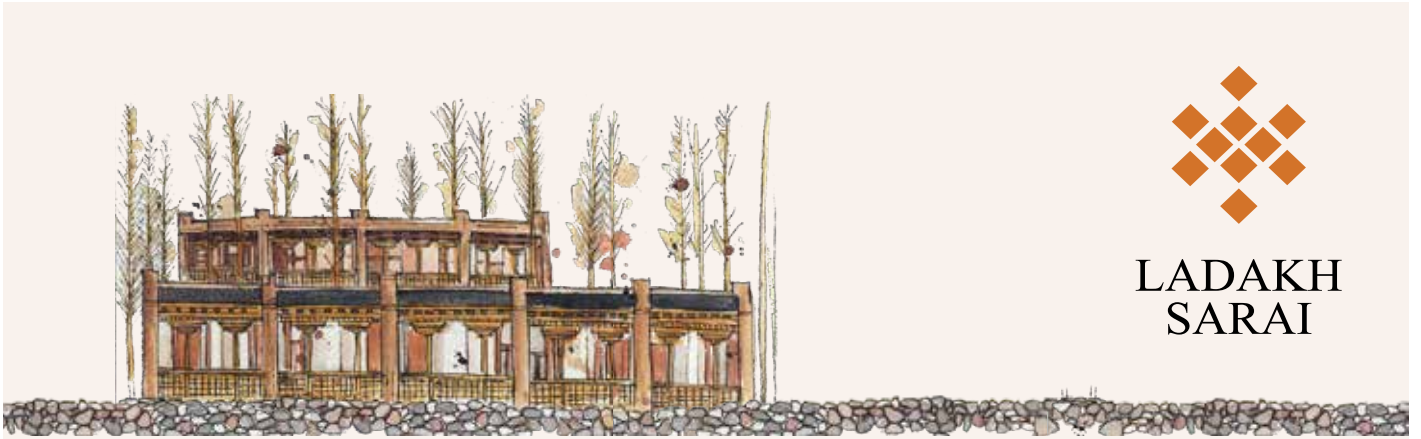
She has been a top choreographer for SYF Singapore, winning Gold and Gold with Honours for many lead colleges and schools of Singapore.

Today, she is a celebrity in Singapore's and India's television channels. She has now successfully completed 39 arangetrams in Singapore, India, and other parts of the world.

Through dance, she now serves the LGBTQ Community of India by training dancers and performing with them.



LADAKH
SARAI



About Ladakh Sarai

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Sasmita Pal



Guru Sasmita Pal hails from Angul, Odisha, India and holds a BSc from Sambalpur University. She started learning Odissi at a tender age of 9 at Tridhara, Bhubaneswar run by Guru Gajendra Panda. As a young child artist, she performed at various places in Odisha.

She discontinued her perseverance towards Odissi to pursue a family and eventually migrated to Singapore. Her passions for dance was rekindled when she met her Guru during a dance event in Singapore in 2010. Since then she resumed her Odissi journey and trained extensively at Tridhara.

She was a volunteer at Chongzheng Primary School from 2007 to 2012 during which she choreographed numerous dance masterpieces for Deepavali Celebrations and Racial Harmony Day and even performed Mangalacharan during their Deepavali Celebrations. She started promoting and teaching Odissi dance, first informally and later, when she received serious interesting students like her first student, Nataranja Niranjana, through Guru Deba Prasad Nrutyadhara, a dance school which she founded in 2014. The motto of her dance school is spreading the parampara of Guru Deba Prasad Das lineage of Odissi hence it carries the tagline 'Art, Culture and Tradition'.

She has also choreographed many dance compositions for events which include for the Singapore Odia Society Utkal Divas annual events of 2015 and 2016.

Her passion and determination reflects in her dance performances. Her performances are akin to a flowing river which leaved the audience spellbound. Since 2014, she has mesmerised the audience of Malaysia, Singapore and India. She regularly gets invitations to perform at the global stage and include the likes of DebaSmruti at Bhubaneswar, Chinese New Year Celebration event at Tanjong Pagar CC, Deepavali Night at Bishan-Toa Payoh GRC, Changi-Simei GRC and Shirdi Sai Baba Centre, Malaysia.

To recognise her effort for Odissi, she was awarded the **International Nrutya Bhusan Award** at International Odissi Dance Festival in 2013. In addition, she has achieved Visharad Certification from Akhil Bharatiya Gandharva Maha Vidyalaya Mandal.

Besides teaching and performing, she has judged Singapore Malayalee Hindu Samajam dance programme Youth Festival - Singapore Yuvajanotsavam 2017 and International Dance Festival organised by Dance Planet.

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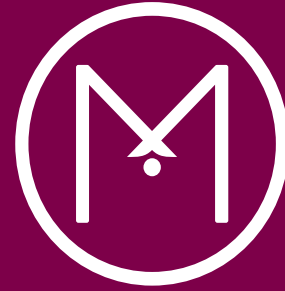
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EMINENT ARTISTS

Ileana Citaristi



Padmashree Ileana Citaristi is an Italian-born Odissi and Chhau dancer, and dance instructor based in Bhubaneswar, India. Ileana, a native of Bergamo, Italy, the daughter of Severino Citaristi, a leading politician of the Democrazia Cristiana party of Italy. She spent five years as an actress in traditional and experimental theatre in Italy before deciding to learn Kathakali.

She went to Kerala, where she spent three rigorous months studying Kathakali before she went to Odisha on the advice of her Kathakali guru, Krishnan Namboodari. Since 1979, she has been living in Odisha. She identifies herself as being "Italian by nationality but an Odia at heart." "Odisha is now my home", Citaristi has said in an interview. She identifies herself as a tourist in her own country- Italy and says she has no plans of going back.

Citaristi studied Odissi under Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra and started her own school of dance in 1994. Citaristi is also an exponent of the Mayurbhanj Chhau, and holds the title of an acharya of Chhau from the Sangeet Mahavidyalya of Bhubaneswar. She founded the Art Vision Academi in 1996, which acts as a platform for sharing ideas between various artistic forms such as theatre, music, dance and painting.

Ileana Citaristi is noted for her innovative choreographic productions in Odissi and Chhau that bring together themes and styles from both the West and the East. 'Maya Darpan', 'Mahanadi: and the river flows', about the history and cultural geography of Orissa, 'Karuna', based on the life of Mother Teresa and Sharanam, a piece on women from three faiths who attain salvation despite their dubious pasts, are some of her notable compositions.

She holds a Doctorate of Philosophy with a thesis on 'Psychoanalysis and Eastern Mythology'. she has authored 2 books ie; The Making of a Guru: Kelucharan Mohapatra, His Life and Times, and Traditional Martial Practices in Orissa.

Citaristi is an 'A' grade artist of Doordarshan. In 1996, she won the National Film Award for Best Choreography for her work in Aparna Sen's Bengali film Yugant (1995). She is empanelled as 'outstanding artist' in ICCR.

She is also a recipient of the 'Raseshwar Award' given by the Sur Singar Sansad, Mumbai. For her contributions to Odissi, she was conferred the Padma Shri by Government of India in 2006. The Italian government made her a member of the Order of the Star of Italian Solidarity in 2008.

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Saswat Joshi is an internationally acclaimed Odissi dancer and choreographer. Born and brought up in Titilagarh, Bolangir, Odisha, he learned Odissi under the able guidance of Padmashree Kumkum Mohanty and Padmashree Ileana Citaristi. He has 30 years of experience and his abhinaya in Astapadi has got many recognitions in the world stage. He is the branding partner for Odisha Tourism and Culture for promoting Odissi and Folk-dance globally. He has received Sangeet Ratna with gold medal in Odissi dance from Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata. He has also received national scholarship from the Ministry of Culture, Government of India.

Saswat was seen in the film "The Journey" by Hollywood director Sandrine da Costa in year 2012. He is a well-known name in the film industry as choreographer and popular as 'Dance Master Saswat' in the reality show industry. His performance in the film 'Koun Kitney Pani Mein' for the Sambalpuri dance 'Rangabati' had got wide acclamation around the globe and made him the 'Rangabati king' of Bollywood.

His own festival Aekalavya, has created a lot of awareness in classical dance in India and abroad through its last editions which were held in Malaysia, U.A.E, Dubai and Singapore. He is currently associated with Tamilnadu tourism for Incredible India project. He has kickstarted many Odissi institutions in India for promotion of classical and folk dance and abroad in Italy, Hungary, Japan, France and United Kingdom.

He is the founder/director of Lasyakala dance vision and works as a guest faculty in Rajasthan's Central University. He has performed already in 32 countries and all over India. He performed and his team performed at the 49th OSA convention held at Michigan last year. He was awarded the "Youth Icon" by Odia society of United Kingdom and "The Artist" by Musee Guimet, France. His performance in the ballet 'Nirvana' as Gautam Buddha on the 2600th birth anniversary celebration of Gautama Buddha got wide acclaim in many Asian countries.

He is the choreographer and trained many actors from the industry like, Radhika Apte, and Kunal Kapoor. Last year, through the movie "The Month of May", he created history which brought laurel for the state. His famous Sambalpuri performance in front of world famous Eiffel tower, Paris, went viral around the world. He also has performed at iconic locations like the Petronas Towers (Malaysia), Merlion Park (Singapore), Kuwait Towers (Kuwait), Burj Khalifa (Dubai), Colosseum (Italy), Red Square (Russia). He is currently the promoter of Odisha Tourism, and brand ambassador of Soulful Odisha, Manyavar, Boyanika and Utkalika.



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CHILD ARTISTS OF GURU DEBA PRASAD NRUTYADHARA



Shefali Dash is only five-year-old and joined the dance school in July 2018. Shefali is fluent in speaking Chinese and has interest in learning various dance forms. She shall perform in this year's GDPN annual event.



Shanaya Rajput is very much active in all platforms. Shanaya loves all types of dance be it classical or folk or western. She loves Odissi's movements and mudras and with time she is getting more acquainted with Indian art and culture.



Sheryanishi Pradhan is a Global Indian International School student and she has been learning Odissi at GDPN along with her mom, T Vani

Harsha Dash, started learning Odissi in September 2016 initially attracted to Odissi's colourful costume and beautiful ornaments. Now she appreciated its value and has participated in the GDPN annual events of 2017 & 2018.



Ayeesha Swain, has been learning Odissi for 3 years. She has participated in the GDPN annual event in the years 2017 & 2018. She's studying at the Cambridge Primary at Dimensions International College, Kovan.



Mihika Musab, has been learning Odissi for two years now. She participated in Guru Vandana at GDON annual event 2018, and took part in a Sambalpuri dance in March 2018. A primary 1 student at Dover Court International School, she has been recognized for Amazing Sentence Writing.



Nikitha Navakkode Sajikumar is 7 years old and studies in Dover Court International school. She has keen interests in learning dance and loves music too.

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The child artists shall perform Ganesh Vandana. According to Daivata Shastra, Shri Ganesha is not only the presiding deity of all branches of Vidya (Knowledge) but also the fine arts and performing arts. He is aptly called "Rangaraj" or the exquisite dancer, performer par excellence. This dance recital is

the Vandana (worship) to the deity. Ganesh Vandana Shloka describes his attributes as a Dancer and the artists express through Hastas (hands) and Bhaba (expressions). This piece of 5 min 53 sec duration is composed by Guru Saswat Joshi and music has been provided by Shankar Mahadevan.

YOUNG ARTISTS OF GURU DEBA PRASAD NRUTYADHARA



Aditi Mishra, has been learning Odissi since 2015 and has performed at numerous events in Singapore. She has also participated in the school's annual dance production in the years 2017 & 2018.

Ankita Panda, aged 22, is a BBA student at National University of Singapore. After learning Bharatanatyam for 7 years she learnt Sambalpuri dance and now Odissi. She had performed Sambalpuri dance at GDPN annual events. Her hobbies include baking, reading, meeting new people and traveling.





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Aiswarya Panda, is an International Baccalaureate graduate from Anglo-Chinese School (Independent). She had learnt Bharatanatyam for about 3 years before she got involved in Sambalpuri music and dance. She has performed Sambalpuri at GDPN and is currently learning Odissi too. Her hobbies include exploring places

Anewesha Tripathy is 17 years old and student of SJI International School. She is trained in Bharatanatyam and has performed in many events like SYF. She has been into Odissi for the last 3 years.



Disha Kiran started learning Odissi since September 2015 initially for staying fit. But now she has developed keen interest in Odissi and participates in events in Singapore including "Mom and me" by SONY TV and GDPN annual events.

Disha Rout, started learning dance when she was 6 and has completed 2 grades from Taal school. She is a winner of Jhankar 2017 and 2018, conducted by GIIS, Singapore. Her performances at different community centre and International dance meets were highly appreciated.



Kriti Krishna Sahoo has been learning Odissi since 2015. She has participated in the GDPN annual events along with other events at Singapore community clubs and in Malaysia under aegis of the dance school.

Priya Dash, aged 13, has classical dance experience and taken part in Odissi dance classes under the guidance of aegis of GDPN.





Puja Priya Mohanty aged 13, studies at Raffles Girls Secondary School. She recently joined GDPN but earlier has learn Bharatanatyam and has performed in her school's Ethnic Dance CCA and at Bukit Panjang Community Club.

Ria Mohanty, a 7th grade student at St. Joseph International School, started learning Odissi at the age of 7. She has participated in all the GDPN annual events and in many others conducted by Singapore community clubs and in Malaysia. She is a winner of Dance Planet Intl. in 2017-18.



Stuti Prangnya Mohanty, aged 14, studies at Raffles Girls Secondary School. She recently joined GDPN but earlier has learn Bharatanatyam and has performed in her school's Ethnic Dance CCA and at Bukit Panjang Community Club.

Shreya Samhita Kundu, 9 years old, has been learning and performing several dance forms since she was 5. A primary 3 students at ESPS, Singapore, she has till date performed Odissi on stage India, Singapore and Malaysia. She too has performed Sambalpuri and Gotipua dance forms at GDPN annual events. She is a winner of Dancing Star of Singapore



Nandini Ray, has been learning Odissi for the past four years. She has performed in the GDPN annual events in 2016 and 2017. She learns to play the guitar too. She studies in grade 5 at the Canadian International School.

Suyasha Sahu is a student of primary 5 and has been learning Odissi and other form of dances for the last 4 years. She has participated in GDPN annual events in 2017 and 2018 and in other events such as Dance Planet International, Deepam nite 2018 at Bishan Toa Payoh CC. She has received several awards for her many performances.





Udayshree Senthilkumar joined GDPN last year but before she had been training in Bharatanatyam for 4 years. Her performances include the GDPN annual event 2018 and Deepami Nite 2018 at Toa Payoh CC. She has represented Chongzheng Primary School in 2 SYF (Singapore Youth Festival).

The young artists shall be seen in Aekalavya season 11 performing Pallavi Sankaravaranam. Pallavi, meaning “blooming” is a pure dance item in which a raga is elaborated through an eye movement and intricate footwork. The dance starts with slow, graceful lyrical movement of eyes, feet and later followed by fast tempo towards the end. The name of the Pallavi is

always based on the Raga of the song accompanying it and the one being performed here is based on Raga Sankaravaran (Sankaravaranam means the ornament of Lord Shiva). This dance item is originally composed by Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra and has been recreated by Guru Saswat Joshi.





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SENIOR ARTISTS OF GURU DEBA PRASAD NRUTYADHARA



Chandrima Chatterjee, 39, a Senior Lecturer at SUTD, Singapore learnt Odissi when a child but had discontinued to pursue her academic career. She resumed her Odissi education in 2015, to introduce the dance to her child Mihika. She performed in Rama Bhajan on stage at the GDPN annual event in 2018 and shall continue performing this year too.

Nataranjan Niranjana began her Odissi journey in 2014 and attended the workshops in 2014 and 2017 conducted by Guru Gajendra Panda and Saswat respectively. She has performed at the Singapore Odia society annual event (2015 & 2016), Racial Harmony Day (Tanjong Pagar CC, 2016), Deepavali Nite (Changi-Simei CC, 2016), Deepam Nite (Bishan-Toa Payoh GRC, 2017) and at the last two GDPN annual events. She was awarded the second prize at the Dance Planet Singapore competition in 2017.



Samiksha Mishra, is an artist and textile designer. Born and brought up in Odisha, she had immense interest in Odissi dance since childhood. She finally got the opportunity to pursue her dream in Singapore in July 2017 when her daughters started learning Odissi at GDPN.

Sucharita Mishra, is a home maker and has been residing in Singapore for over a decade. She started learning Odissi with GDPN since 2015 and since has performed at several events in Singapore.



Lipi Biswal is a Software Professional working in a Multinational Bank, Singapore. Since her childhood, she had a huge interest in Odissi dance and GDPN provided her the opportunity to learn it in July 2016. She has performed and participated in many dance programs like "Mom and me" by SONY TV, "Rhythms In Unity - Sangamam 2018" and the annual GDPN events in 2017 and 2018.



Sunita Pradhan, 32, has been learning Odissi at GDPN since 2017 and has performed in the Ram Bhajan group dance in the GDPN annual event of 2018.



Suchismita Bhuyan, 33, has been learning Odissi at GDPN since 2017 and has performed in numerous events and in the GDPN annual event in 2018.



T Vani is a teacher by profession who has an active stage life during her college days. She reconnected to her passion of dancing again by joining GDPN and has been participating in various dance programmes at community centres in Singapore.

The senior artists of GDPN shall perform Mahari dance and the Mokshya, a dance of ecstasy and spirituality. Moksha embodies the Indian philosophy of life which revolves around salvation. This is the fast-paced

rhythm dance, which is always performed at the end. It signifies the total surrender of dancer to God. This piece is composed by Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra and recreated by Guru Saswat Joshi.



ARTISTS OF LASHYAKALA



Anubha Surya is an eminent Odissi dancer and a popular actress of Odisha. She has been judging several popular reality shows in state television.

Bibhudutta Das is the senior disciple of Lasyakala and has travelled over 18 countries to perform and promote Indian classical dance.



Mitali Sarangi is a senior disciple of Lasyakala. A Lecturer by profession and a mother of 6 years old girl, she balances her creative life by heading the Soro branch of Lasyakala. Each year, she awards a young artist as the "YOUTH ICON" for their contribution to Odissi Dance.

Sagarika Mohanty is a professional Odissi dancer with more than 13 years of experience and has been a part of many national and international festivals.



Sai Arpita is a passionate dancer and a winner of Kallol summer workshop.

Sonal Acharya, a promising performing artist of Lasyakala, is a versatile dancer with more than 8 years of Odissi dance experience and has performed in many national and international dance festivals.



Lashyakala artists shall perform a dance composition titled "Nachanti Range Sri Hari". This dance act or abhinaya depicts lord Krishna's association with the Gopis. Lord Krishna with his Charming expressions and agile feet captures the heart of the Gopis. This dance shows Gopis dancing with Krishna besides playing musical instruments. The setting of the scene is a time when Krishna celebrates his happiness of being around Gopis. This original composition by Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra has been recreated by Saswat Joshi and the music is provided by Shri Bhubaneswar Mishra.

Arpita Chakraborty shall perform a solo dance titled "Ekadasa Rudra". Ekadasa means eleven and Rudra refers to Lord Shiva. Ekadasa Rudra therefore means the 11 forms of Lord Shiva, namely Kapali, Pingala, Bhima, Virupakshya, Bilohita, Ajasha, Shasana, Shasta, Shambhu, Chanda and Dhruva.

Lashyakala artists and GDPN artists shall jointly perform the 'Moksha' on stage.



Suchitra Das is a very talented and creative designer of the state. She promotes the state handloom with various new and modern designs.

Tejaswini Pattnaik is a young dynamic dancer who has displayed her talent at many national dance festivals.



Jagruti Rath is a celebrated anchor of Odisha Television Industry. She too is a talented Sambalpuri dancer.

Antara Chakraborty is a renowned playback singer of Odia Music Industry and a proud recipient of several state awards.



India is a multi-lingual and multi-cultural country. The languages and culture are so numerous and so subtly blend into each other that it is difficult to differentiate them. Broadly, the cultures of India can be divided into two distinct types, Tribal and Non-tribal. Such a division is possible because the tribals could live longer in the forests and hills, away from others (non-tribals), maintaining their distinctive lifestyle without being influenced by the modern world. Odisha occupies a unique position in India with respect to tribals, with a significant (~23%) population of tribals as compared to the rest of India (~7%). Odisha has 62 tribes including 13 Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs), and in some districts these tribes outnumber the non-tribals. The tribal life and culture, especially that of Odisha, is different in many ways from that of the non-tribals. Some salient aspects are discussed in this short article.



Santhals of Odisha in dancing during a tribal festival

The Concept of 'Raska'

'Raska' meaning pleasure, is a concept that pervades every aspect of tribal life. In non-tribals, some may be happy-go-lucky and pleasure loving, but in case of tribals almost all are that nature. Although tribals derive pleasure in the form of tribal dance, music, songs and the 'handia', a country liquor made from rice, but their general state of happy-go-lucky is largely genetic. Poverty never comes in the way of enjoying life. Even while working hard in the fields, under the scorching sun, they are found singing, lessening the pressure of their labour. Jokes and riddles are a part of their day-to-day life. Death and separation hardly affects them. Possibly attributed to their strong concept of 'Raska', one hardly finds a tribal who is mentally stressed or deranged, whereas such ailments are common in non-tribals today.

Less is more: Lifestyle and food habits

For the tribals of Odisha, less is always more. They lead a very simple life, which keeps their necessities to a bare minimum yet hardly impacting their satisfaction levels. Tribals never crave for more, and they find multiple uses for each object they possess. For example, a metal bowl is not only used for eating and drinking but also to dry small puddles to catch fish or even using it as a musical instrument by producing sounds from it. Tribals are innovative and creative in finding new uses for simple objects. This keeps the material possessions in their households a minimum, allowing them to bundle all their items in a single load for each member to carry when they change places. Such examples have given birth to the common Odia proverb "Uthile Bhare, Basile Ghare" meaning, a single bundled load

can be spread

to run a household. It is a common sight in tribal areas to see a family carrying bundled loads on their heads, containing their household materials, accompanied by a dog when they shift to a different place. Contrast this to the context of moving houses in an urban setting where we require the support of professional services to move from one place to another even within the same city.

Tribals diet contains primarily nutritious food which are simply boiled and are mildly seasoned. Their diet comprises drumstick leaves, okra and other locally produced vegetables. Ashes of burnt banana leaves are used for cleaning clothes by boiling them together in water, and meat locally is available to them. Oil prepared from seeds of local plants like neem (Indian Lilac) and karanja (pongamia) are used as body and hair oil which bear medicinal properties too. The rice beer, 'handia' which they prepare and consume is nutritive and medicinal too, which is why it is often referred to as 'Ranu ki Run' in Santhali, a tribal language meaning 'medicine of medicines'.

Tribals hardly consume dairy. According to them milk is for the calf and it is a sin to steal it from the calf. Milk related products, like cheese, butter or ghee and curd do not have its equivalence in tribal languages.

Love, Marriage, Sex and Divorce

Tribals do not have a multiple hierarchy system in their society like caste and class. All are equal, with conditional special status given only to the village head on special occasions. Tribal women always have a higher status than

men, and unlike non-tribal families, they are the prime breadwinner and the head of the family. In Bonda tribe (a tribe found in the Bonda hills of Odisha), the family depends solely on its women as the males work and earn. The Bonda women choose their man, and normally the husband is 10-15 years younger to the wife. The wife takes care of the man as his mother, with the expectation that he will take care of her when she gets old. Marriage is always based upon mutual consent, although pre-marital sex is permitted. Similarly, divorce is on mutual grounds and seldom settled by an outsider or in a court of law. The concept of widowhood is unheard of in tribal cultures and there is no taboo associated with being a widow which is perhaps why such a word does not exist in tribal vocabulary. Similarly, rapes are unheard of in tribal culture and society.

Language and literature

Because of their 'Raska' way of life, filled with songs, music, dance, riddles and storytelling, tribals have a rich oral literature, with a highly developed poetic sense. Tribals children decipher multiple meanings – literal and figurative – in poetry with greater ease, as compared to their non-tribal counterparts. Most tribal languages do not have a script of their own, and the language is propagated to younger generations orally and through song, riddles and music. Therefore, except for some developed tribals like 'Santhals', little written literature is available in tribal languages. Being Austric in origin, most tribal languages are different from major Indian languages which have Dravidian or Indo-European roots. Tribal languages lack aspirated sounds e.g. 'ta' and 'ga' sounds exist but 'tha' and 'gha' sounds are absent, which makes it difficult for tribal learners to learn other Indian languages.

Divide between Tribal & Non-Tribals

There are many differences between tribal and non-tribal communications, primarily because of the distinctively different cultures. Tribals are considered primitive, and sociologically, educationally and culturally backward. But in fact, they are ultramodern in many aspects. As far as marriage, sex and divorce is concerned, they are culturally similar to most advanced nations like USA and UK. Most rural non-tribal families are joint families whereas tribal families are primarily nuclear, similar to western cultures. Tribal children, live separately from their parents once they grow up and get married without any parting pangs with their parents. The solution to many problems of the rich and educated lies in emulating the tribals' 'less is more' attitude in comparison to the 'more is more' understanding of capitalistic life.

Many projects launched by the government and non-governmental organizations for their socio-economic and educational development fail because these projects are led by non-tribals, who lack the understanding of tribal culture. To cite an example, a New Delhi based NGO launched a project to teach the benefits of breast feeding to tribals of Kalahandi, Odisha through videos, talks and discussions. After listening to the videos and talks, a tribal woman asked if there was any other way of feeding the baby. This was when the NGO realised that they have a lot to learn from tribals rather than to teach them things. Another project with an objective to economically bolster the tribals by offering them cows to rear and trade milk, which failed miserably as tribals neither drink milk nor do they sell it based on their beliefs.

I shall now share an anecdote involving a tribal couple from my own village in Mayurbhanj, Odisha. My village has about 40% tribals, mainly santhals, and the rest including the village head and the priest of the Shiva temple are non-tribals. Once the priest of the temple caught a tribal couple, who were to marry but were not yet married, in a compromising situation. He stealthily called the villagers to apprehend them red handed. On knocking their door and asking what the couple were up to, the man answered that they were having tobacco. As the villagers knew he was lying, they were fined Rs 200 (Rs 100 for the improper behaviour and Rs 100 more for wilfully lying). Later in my life, when I went on to research tribal life and culture, I discovered that tribals take the help of riddles when they have to express something unpleasant. If a man is getting old then they would express it as "the man is losing his white marbles". Instead of saying that someone is dead, they would say "he has gone to herd the alligators". Similarly, instead of saying that they are having sex, they would say that they were having tobacco. So, in the village incident, the man was not lying, but was in fact expressing the truth in riddles, which was not understood by the non-tribal villagers who comprehended them.

About the Author



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Sambalpur, the western regions of Odisha, derives its name from the local deity 'Samalai', and has a distinct cultural identity of its own. As the legend goes, the deity was found under a 'simul' (cotton silk) in about the middle of 16th century AD and called 'Samalai'. Sambalpur has an ancient history as it features in the scriptures of Ptolemy and Taverner. In Geographika, Ptolemy refers Sambalpur as 'Sambalaka' situated along the banks of 'River Mahananda' (now known as Mahanadi). Taverner's mention the place as 'Sumelpur' where diamonds were sourced for the Roman empire.

Sambalpur has been home to ethnically diverse communities for centuries, during which several forms of indigenous folk-dances which collectively constitute the Sambalpuri dance. Performed on festivities like 'Sital sasti' (Marriage ritual of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati), Nuakhai (porridge cooked of freshly harvested rice), and other festivals like the 'Ratha yatra' (car festival) and 'Sivaratri' (Shiva's birthday), the Sambalpuri dance has undergone metamorphosis imbibing the climatic, dialectic, cultural and behavioural diversity of the locals. Initially the dance was performed to propitiate the gods, to fight against evil, and to boost one's spirits, but later it was performed during fairs, festivals, marriages and to celebrate new harvest.

Scintillating feet movements, punctuated with teaming pauses, in sync with music from drums, flutes and cymbals are its striking features. The handwoven vibrant colourful attire worn by the dancers has become an identity for the region and also the state of Odisha. These fabrics reflect an original style of craft known as 'Baandha' (saree) which traditionally bore images of flora, fauna or geometrical patterns. Baandha fabric is created using a tie-dye technique and have different designs known as Bichitrapuri, Nakshatramala, Saptapadi and Payola. Along with the saree, a red coloured blouse and handkerchief is worn by the danseuse adding colour to the dance.



Traditional bangles, armlets, bracelets, neck bands, leaves and flowers on the head, earrings, nose ring and anklets are the jewellery and ornaments worn by the female dancers. There is no footwear but their legs are painted with red alta. The males wear a simple khadi cloth and a Sambalpuri short kurta (shirt), and embodies a red towel around his waist. His ornaments include necklace made of herbal produce and a headgear with peacock feathers.

The popular variants of Sambalpuri dance are Dalkhai, Karma, Humo & Bauli and Koisabadi.

Dalkhai Dance

Dalkhai is the most popular form of traditional folk dance of the tribals of Western Odisha and is performed during the common festivals of Bhajijuntia, and Nuakhai, etc. The word 'Dalkhai' in every stanza is addressed to 'girlfriend'. Its songs are a representation of the love story of Radha and Krishna as well as the episodes from Ramayana and Mahabharata. Dalkhai is usually performed by unmarried girls. The drummer or Dholia, beats the drum or Dhol at the beginning of the performance. Young girls, standing in a line sing Dalkhai songs. After singing for a while, they start dancing by bending forward in a half-sitting position. Hands are

moved forward and backward alternately by the girls and during the dance, they place a cloth of red or pink colour on their shoulders. Primary importance is given to different movements of hands, legs, knees and hips. The dance sometimes goes slow and fast depending upon the sound of the dhol. Also, as the dance proceeds, the dancers make circles in clock-wise and anti-clockwise direction. The dance is performed by the females whereas music is provided by men who are drummers and musicians. There is a rich orchestra of folk music accompanied by the dance along with a number of instruments. These include the dhol, nisan (a giant drum made of iron case), tamki (a small one-sided drum played by two sticks, tasa (also a one-sided drum) and mahuri (a type of shehnai or windpipe). The tempo is controlled by the dhol player as he dances before the girls. Women and girls wear a colourful printed Sambalpuri saree. They also tie a scarf on their shoulders holding the ends in both the hands. Various traditional jewellerys such as the necklace, bangles, etc. complete the look of the performers.

Karma Dance

Also, popularly known as Karma Naachis, the Karma dance is performed by the tribes of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar apart from Odisha. This tribal dance is performed during the autumnal festival of Karma Puja. The tribal group presents this folk dance in front of Karam tree that symbolises the KaramDevta. The members of the tribal group try to propitiate Karma Devta with the Karma tribal dance so that Karam, the God of Fate shower his blessings on them. The tribes believe that worshipping KaramDevta brings prosperity in their lives. Karma Devta is the reason behind their good and bad fate. Men and women dance to the tunes of local indigenous instruments like Timki, Chhalla, Payri and Jhumki. The drum locally known as 'timki' is used as the main musical instrument and is placed in the centre around which the dancers dance enthusiastically to its beats. The dancers move their feet in perfect rhythm and in to and fro style. The men leap forward during the dance, whereas the women in the group bend low near the ground. They form a circle and put their arms around the waist of the next the dancer and continue

dancing in a rhythmic manner. The dancers wear the ethnic costume and jewellerys.



Humo & Bauli

Dance

These are two playful dances performed by young and unmarried girls on special occasions who sing and dance in groups. The stepping and movements of the dance are very slow.

Koisabadi Dance

This dance is prevalent among the Gond and the Bhuyan tribes. Male dancers take part, holding a two feet long stick. The songs are mainly based on the immortal love story of Radha and Krishna.

Compared to other folk-dance forms of Odisha, Sambalpuri dance forms provide a unique identity to the state as it is inseparable from the regional identity, its culture, its attire and its festivities. Sambalpuri silk sarees are a national pride and is often presented to guests of the states as an honour. Likewise, Sambalpuri dance has now spread from its roots in Sambalpur to stages around the world where it has garnered attention and appreciation.

About the Author



Priyanka Ray, hails from the district of Puri in Odisha and is an avid follower of the state's art, food and culture. A pharmacist by education, she had been living in Singapore since 2011 and is actively engaged with traditional dance through her nine-year-old daughter Shreya.

Odisha, situated on the Eastern side of India, is an ancient land that has witnessed human habitations since the Mesolithic age. It has a rich history of its natives co-existing with wildlife in the lap of nature. Wildlife is in fact embedded in its art, culture and religion. With increasing human population and rapid urbanisation, most of the wildlife today is now restricted to wildlife sanctuaries and National Parks which are protected under law, to preserve their habitat.

Similipal National Park

Among Odisha's several National Parks and sanctuaries, Similipal National Park is significant as it is one of the first nine National Parks in India reserved to protect tigers under Project Tiger. The park is 320 kms from Bhubaneswar, the capital city of Odisha and is spread over 2750 sq km (4 times the size of Singapore). It has a rich biodiversity of wildlife and has the distinction of being home to melanistic tigers whose colours are predominantly black. Apart from tigers, megafauna like elephants and leopards are found in the park along with marsh crocodiles or muggers. The park has scenic beauty in the form of dense greenery and a two-tiered Barehi pani waterfall that has a height of 399 meters. This is also the Park where Saroj Raj Choudhury, a forest officer had rescued a tiger cub and reared her. Named as Khairi, the tigress grew to garner international attention which made Similipal National Park famous. However, times have changed and today we find poaching of wildlife to be a major danger to Similipal.

Satkosia Tiger Reserve

Satkosia Tiger Reserve is spread over a scenic gorge along the mighty Mahanadi river. Satkosia derives its name from two root words "Sata" meaning seven and "Kosa" meaning 2 miles, which describes the dimensions of the gorge. Satkosia is about 122kms from Bhubaneswar and was once known for its dense primordial forests. Today the human habitations inside the tiger reserve have grown depleting the number of tigers. Now the sanctuary is host to some elephants and a variety of birds. The marsh crocodiles basking in the sun on the sand bars of Mahanadi in Satkosia is a major point of attraction for visitors.

Bhitarkanika & Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuaries

Odisha, has a long coastline adjoining the Bay of Bengal. Several rivers drain into the sea along the coast, providing a suitable environment for coastal and marine wildlife. One such marine sanctuary is Bhitarkanika, famous for its reptiles like King cobra and salt-water crocodiles. The sanctuary is about 150km away from the capital city of Bhubaneswar. The mangroves of Bhitarkanika have about 15 albino salt-water crocodiles. Mangroves play a vital role in coastal ecosystems as they provide refuge to diverse aquatic and amphibian flora and fauna. Mangroves also absorb the impact of extreme events like storms and sea water surges restricting coastal erosion and protecting the state of Odisha from the numerous cyclones it has been witnessing in the wake of global warming. In the present day, the mangroves are fast depleting owing to land conversion and human encroachment. It is essential that the mangroves be protected and preserved as recent research has found them to be 4-5 times more effective in carbon sequestration than any other plant species.



A saltwater crocodile of Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary

Adjoining to the east of Bhitarkanika sanctuary is the Gahirmatha Marine Wildlife Sanctuary, where several thousand Olive Ridley turtles migrate seasonally to lay their eggs. In April 2017 alone, it was estimated that about 200000 Olive Ridley turtles hatched from the laid eggs in a span of 24 hours. The hatchlings swim back to the sea and after attaining adulthood, the females return back to lay eggs.

Chilika

Odisha is host to India's largest brackish water lake. Known as Chilika, the lake is spread over 1100 sq km adjoining the districts of Ganjam, Khordha and Puri. 52 rivers and rivulets bring the monsoon waters into Chilika expanding its extent and volume seasonally. The Chilika lake has a mix of marine, brackish and freshwater ecosystems thereby supporting an amazing biodiversity of flora and fauna. Complex relationships between various species are observed as the lake hosts a plethora of migratory birds who come in millions all the way from Siberia. Their guano deposited into the lake helps in nutrient recycling. The bird droppings have an estimated 33.8 tons of Nitrogen and 10.5 tons of Phosphorus and helps in the high biomass production of macrophytes and increases the fish productivity.

Over 800 species of flora, fauna (vertebrates, invertebrates) as well as avian species have been found in Chilika, including over 100 bottleneck dolphins. An estimated 2.5 lakh fishermen depend on Chilika directly for their livelihoods. It is no surprise that Chilika, hence has a special role in Odisha's history.

Between 1568 and 1733 AD Odisha was repeatedly attacked by Moghul invaders. To avoid any damage to Lord Jagannath, He was hidden in Gurubai island and Chadheihaga hill, an island in the middle of Chilika. Hence Chilika lake beholds a special importance for the people of Odisha from a religious angle too.



Historical Relevance of Elephants

Since prehistoric days Odisha was known for its elephants. Elephants served as a part of the Kings army and the mammal is deeply integrated into Indian culture as the vehicle of Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth. Ganesha, the elephant God, has the head of an elephant and is deemed to be powerful deity who removes our obstacles. Odisha was also earlier known as Oddiyana, in the scripture "tantra peetha" where the elephant is identified with the Prithivi (Earth) Bija in the Muladhara chakra indicating stability.

Today, we find elephants in forested areas all over Odisha. The Chandaka wildlife sanctuary, adjoining the capital city Bhubaneswar is host to elephants who often tread into the city. Elephants are found in 20 of the 30 districts of Odisha. Elephants today are a victim of the man-wildlife conflict with urban development shrinking their forested habitats restricting their migration from one forest to another. Elephants treading into cultivated paddy fields are now very common. Statistics reveal that one elephant dies each week due to various reasons including electrocution from unprotected powerlines, accidents on railway tracks and poaching for their tusks.

Protecting Wildlife

In a capitalistic world, protection of wildlife can be achieved through economic means. Earnings from ecotourism is gathering steam and motivating people of Odisha to protect and preserve their wildlife. However, rampant illegal constructions in wildlife corridors and poaching still pose a challenge we have to overcome, especially if we wish would preserve the endangered species like the Black buck. Or else stories of wildlife shall soon become a fable to our future generations.

About the Author



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I travelled abroad for the first time with my Guru Dr. Ileana Citaristi in 2006, to assist her with an Odissi workshop in South Korea. I was immediately filled with the feeling of a true ambassador of Odia culture, and pride for the tradition I belong to. This feeling aroused in-depth thoughts on certain aspects of my culture that I had always taken for granted. The very first thought was regarding our attire, which to me was the inseparable dhoti I wore throughout the workshop in South Korea. The dhoti, a rectangular piece of unstitched cloth, usually 15 feet long wrapped around the waist and the legs and knotted at the waist, has been my attire ever since I was a student at the Odissi Research Center, Bhubaneswar. The participants of the workshop in South Korea were quite excited to see me each morning due to my traditional attire. Another element of our culture is the "Guru Pranam". Before every dance session, I perform the "Guru Pranam" by touching my Guru's feet, and this is an integral part of the Guru-Shishya Parampara (Teacher-Student tradition) of learning dance, which we are always proud of. Touching the Guru's feet to pay respect and accept blessings is a concept foreign to the South Korean students. What touched me was that on the very last day of the workshop in South Korea, all the students came and touched our feet as part of "Guru Pranam", without any prompting.

During that workshop, Odissi steps and mudras (postures) were introduced to many Korean students. Being unfamiliar with the names, their pronunciations were often inaccurate, comical in ways that often made me laugh.

It was later I realized how difficult it was to learn and adopt a different culture. During the tour, students approached me to learn more about Odisha and Odissi. It was very challenging for me to explain the entirety of our culture and tradition in a nutshell, and there was no way I could give justice to the

enormity of the subject. It was during that moment I realised, I needed to understand more about my own culture to find ways to express it in a justified manner to foreigners. Back then, I did not have the luxury of internet or google for support. But this experience strengthened my resolve to increase my interest and knowledgeable about my own tradition and culture.

But times have changed. Today, every year I travel to multiple destinations within India and overseas to conduct dance workshops, stage performances and lectures. I have now gained a multitude of experiences working with people from different countries and cultures. When I started conducting my own workshops, I started to develop a framework where traditional and cultural content is made more accessible to all participants. When I am abroad attending a ceremony or a festival, I try my level best to showcase my culture and educate people of our mythology and customs. I am also forthcoming in teaching them how to tie a dhoti



or a saree to foreign disciples, but I take care not to impose it for them as learning Odissi is not akin to embracing a foreign

culture. Cultures inspire me and I am always enthusiastic about learning more about local culture of the places I visit. For me it is important to learn and accept foreign cultures with being judgemental. It not only broadens our views but also makes us wiser in understanding the differences between different culture and the historical connotations

Promoting Odissi and the culture of Odisha on a global stage, we need to be aware of foreign cultures and interests. My short stays abroad during workshops may not do justice to the huge scope of Odissi, but in the limited time I endeavour to bring in perfection of what I teach. I do acknowledge that my foreign pupils may have been exposed to other Odissi dance gurus who promote different clans and I believe such exposure enriches the learning of the students equipping them with a wide range of styles. I believe that one should not be forced to adopt a single style of Odissi. Workshops abroad are short and therefore should be used to improve technique of early dancers, and in the case of experiences pupils, focus should be on enhancing the beauty of the art form by making the sessions more engaging. It is

important to keep pupils attracted to the beauty of the dance and culture, rather than pressurizing them to learn more content in less time.

Challenges are still galore which I intend to mediate, a step at a time, improving myself as a true ambassador of Odissi dance and culture. The success of 'translating' cultures is entirely dependent on the guru and his technique of imparting lessons. The true path I adopt can be described with 4 Ds; Devotion, Determination, Dedication, and Discipline; in all my acts and I believe this is the way to grow as an artist.

About the Author



Saswat Joshi is an Odissi dancer, choreographer and model. He runs his dance school under the name of Lashyakala and frequently travels abroad for performances, dance workshops and lectures. email: saswat.joshi@gmail.com

Kathak in a Nutshell for The Unfamiliar

Amrita Despande

Kathak is one of the eight classical dances of India, which despite several transformations over time, has survived and thrived in today's art scenario. Its name is derived from the Sanskrit words "Katha" meaning story and "Kathakar" meaning story teller. In Kathak, the dancer is the "Kathakar" who tells a story to the audience. In fact, every Indian classical dance incorporates this tradition of story telling, and Kathak is no different. However, the story themes in Kathak revolves around Lord Krishna, an Avataar of Lord Vishnu, mostly describing the mischievous childhood of Krishna and His chemistry with Radha, his beloved in Vrindavan. Through Kathak, stories of valour, morality, humbleness, gentleness, love for humanity, animals, and the enemy within and outside are propagated from one generation to another. The dance evolves from the "bhakti ras" or devotional expression relating to the discourses of the "bhakti" (devotion) movement and mixes both the "Nirguna" (abstract and formless) as well as the "Saguna" (with form, and quality) worship of the lord. The emotive

element of the dance is highly emphasised in the dance. The meaning of the whole act thus comes from the "bhava", the emotions in the dancer's expression, visualising the situations through "mudras" or gestures.

Kathak is distinct from other Indian classical dances as it dominantly uses hand gestures, expressions and footwork. The two components of Indian classical dances; the "Nrita" meaning pure movement and dance, and the "Natyā" meaning drama, are used in each dance composition. Hence, any composition in the dance will narrate a story which has a beginning, middle, and end. It will have a plot and a climax. These are often depictions of one situation, one incident, and one moment of time. The climax always comes back to the "sam" which is the starting point. The "sam" is always emphasised with a head movement, a bang of the foot, and the hands showing the direction it is now set to go further.

Kathak has a set language, rhythm and style. Each hand gestures or "mudras" has a meaning, which emotes the message overcoming any language barrier in understanding the message conveyed. Facial expressions on top of the gestures add to the audience's understanding. Traditionally, the dancer performs the "bol" (set compositions in rhythmic language) for the "tatkar" (the footwork) and then proceeds into the story schema, with its beginning, middle and climax. "Teen taal" is usually used as the rhythm for the dance which is emulated by the dancer's "Taali" or claps and "Khali" or one open palms on which fingers are tapped. The rythm is maintained in a cycle of 16 counts. The "taal" swings from slow to fast forms starting with "ek taal", and ending with "teen taal".

Rooted in the Vedic Bhakti movement, Kathak has undergone several transformations as it traveled from the north of India to south, picking up influences from various cultures and traditions, including those brought in by foreign invaders of India. Such influences, including those of the whims and fancies of established dance gurus of the time, gave lineages to several "gharanas" or schools. The original - three gharanas were the Banaras gharana, the Jaipur gharana, and the Lucknow gharana. Each gharana has a unique style that both defines and distinguishes them. Jaipur is the Hindu Bhakti based style with footwork and story telling of Krishna the lord. Lucknow Gharana was highly influenced by the Moghul culture which incorporates both the Hindu and Muslim styles in narrating the stories of Krishna and Radha which was later attributed to the harems in colonial era. The Lucknow gharana of Kathak, which is an evolved form from the mixture of both traditional Hindu and Muslim styles of Kathak, is more prevalent amongst the other two in present day. The Banaras Gharana is considered to be the oldest form where the "bols" were first introduced. This style has differences in the "Thaat" and "tatkar" while the "chakkars"

or rotations are kept minimum, it concentrates more on "bols" recitation and performance.

Several dancers associated with Kathak who have developed new styles and flourished the art, belonged to all these different gharanas. Some notable artists are Kundan Lal and Mohan Lal of Jaipur Gharana, Shambhu Maharaj, Birju Maharj and Lachhu Maharaj of Lucknow Gharana, and Jankiprasad of the Banaras Gharana. Other contemporary dancers associated with Kathak are Rohini Bhate, Sitara Devi, and Kumudini Lakhia.

The dress worn by Kathak dancers was traditionally a "sariee" (a long garment draped on the body). With Muslim influence the dress gradually changed to a skirt with a transparent veil. The modern dress includes a "Chudidar salwar", a frock style flary dress and a "dupatta" or folded cloth to cover the upper body and head.

Today, there are various schools teaching kathak in almost every city and town in India. The dance form is also now taught overseas, particularly popular in the USA, UK, Canada and Australia, where large Indian communities have settled.



A group of Kathak dancers performing in Brisbane

During festivities, the diasporic community showcase their culture through classical dances where Kathak is also

performed. Recently, there has been significant effort of art schools, art and community organizations to promote classical dances and classical music of India. Especially in countries like Singapore, USA, UK, Canada, and Australia, the Indian diaspora has taken upon themselves to establish kathak classes in art schools and community organizations.

In Lethbridge Canada, as a fan and dancer of the kathak, I would bring women together to learn kathak and enjoy the dance as an exercise. We would get together in a community art centre and practice the dance form in a dance studio. It is worth mentioning Rama Manjrekar, who runs a performing art and Kathak dance school called Taurya in North Carolina in USA, founded in 2006 along with her husband Dr. Madhav Manjrekar. Trained under Dr. Manjiri Deo and Taalmani Pandit Mukundraj Deo, Rama holds a degree Nrutya Visharat (1995) from Gandharva Mahavidyalay. Her students range from local Americans to residents of Indian origin who make her proud.

In Brisbane Australia, Helena also has gone through a similar journey as Rama to build her passion for Kathak. A disciple of Prerana Deshpande, she learnt Kathak through the "Guru-Shishya Parampara". Through Infinity Kathak Dance Company, Helena conducts classes promoting Kathak. She has also organised shows with her guru Prerana Deshpande. Helena says, "Kathak is a form of mental, physical, and emotional discipline which has led her to discover herself". Despite pursuing a busy career as a Physician, Helena is

committed on her mission to preserve the art form and pass it on to the next generation.

In Singapore, various Indian curriculum schools such as Global Indian International School offer Kathak and other Indian Dance forms as an Extra Curricular activity for students in primary and secondary levels. Adults too, take advantage of the Co Curricular Activities held on the GIIS campus. The school engages trained teachers provide a platform for the students to showcase their talent at various events island wide throughout the year. Efforts from schools and passionate individuals play an important role in promoting and propagating ancient traditional classical dance forms overseas where the culture is unfamiliar. As a "Rasika", the appreciator and supporter of the art, we too play our role in supporting such efforts by

sending out wards and promoting cultural events involving the rich tradition of India where we hail from.

About the Author



Amrita Deshpande, a Master in Art & Technology from the Art Institute of Chicago, has taught art and media fundamentals at University of Lethbridge and National University of Singapore. She is a trained Bharatnatyam and Kathak dancer. She hails from Maharashtra, India and currently lives in Brisbane after spending years in Canada and Singapore.

Everybody's a Dancer

Pradipto Pal

'The greatest dancer is someone who is willing to dance, not afraid'

Alyssa Edwards

From the very beginning, man danced with joy in enjoyment of God's greatest gift to humanity - Nature. As it rains, man dances with joy quenching his thirst. A fruits ripen in trees, he dances again in joy relieving his hunger. A child is born and man dances yet again with rejoiceful happiness,

welcoming the new soul. Inspired from the flowing river and other sounds of nature, man created musical sound from all the products of nature like stones and wood and danced to the beats of the music.

Dance is associated with human nature since time immemorial and has always been the universal language for expression of human emotions. People connect and communicate through the movement of their bodies through synched rhythms around the music. Dance and

music always help us express ourselves without having to utter a single word. Since pre-historic times, we have been dancing as a form of expression is social gathering for celebrating festivities and performing rituals. Dancing releases endorphins in our body, a chemical which reduces stress and alleviates pain in us providing a feeling of well being.

Dance has several benefits. Regular dancing trains our brain against dizziness and improves balance. Dancing develops our cognitive skills too. Mastering a sequence of steps develops a deep level of concentration. When we allow our bodies to flow with the music, we let our minds work freely expressing ourselves more meaningfully. Dance opens the doors to spontaneity and creativity leading to new answers to our problems through diversion of our minds in new pathways. While learning a dance, students memorize moves, correlating them with the music and vice versa. This process is akin to the kind of cognition a child attains while learning the first letters of the alphabet.

Dancing regularly, and to the best of one's ability, is helpful in lifting one's spirits. Doing the merengue with a partner or a group of friends can reduce stress and at the same time help strengthen our social bonds. Human brain needs oxygen and water to function and dancing is effective in supplying oxygen to the brain. Movements associated with dance produces endomorphins in our body which not only energizes us but also makes us more conducive to learning.

Dance is also a cure to hyperactivity related disorders in children and help them stay focussed and calm. Children who dance not only excel in their academics but also are more creative. Dance helps improves one's sensitivity, understanding, appreciation, and consideration for others. Dance can broaden children's horizons by opening them up to others and relating to situations which helps them address difficult situations in their future careers and life.

The advantage of the arts, such as music and dance, is that they link cognitive growth to social and emotional development. Students who learn dance care more deeply about what they study and can perceive the links between subjects and their lives. This increases their thinking

capacity making them more diligent and effective in collaborative environment. Dance helps children to develop self-confidence and self-esteem too.

Students who can perform complex dance rhythms are more adaptive and responsive to many academic and physical situations in their life. Regular dancing helps develop muscles, tones the body, improves blood circulation and posture promoting better balance, coordination and flexibility. Flexibility is often undermined as a benefit but in reality it drastically reduces the chances of injury during physical activities. Dance helps keep the body conditioned and the mind focused heightening one's ability to perform many other physical activities better.

Dance awakens consciousness of beauty lending a new meaning to movement and form. Combined with Yoga, one can age gracefully and reduce old age illnesses. Dance particularly its creative forms has so many benefits, starting with self-expression but also a form of meditation, sustaining community and pleasurable physical exercise that could be everlasting.

Dancing benefits the Mind, Body and Soul of a person of any age. It is the most pleasurable exercise and therapy to may a illnesses. It makes you physically fitter, emotionally stable and enhances intelligence, all of which are beneficial for an engaging life in a modern society. Dance can keep you healthy and help reduce risk of some of the most horrible afflictions of advanced age.

"The truest expressions of a people are in its dance and in its music. Bodies never lie."

Agnes de Mille

About the Author



Pradipto Pal is a Life Coach, Consultant, and Chef in Singapore. As an evangelist he needs no paper to shape ideas. He has avid interests in pursuing art, culture, yoga and dance in everyday life.

I first started learning dance when I was just five years old. For as long as I can remember, I have always had a special connection to dance – be it learning from a Guru, learning unofficially through online videos, or be it choreographing for others, dance has always been an integral part of my life.

My interest in dance from a tender age, was supported by my parents when they enrolled me for the Bharatanatyam classes at the Singapore Indian Fine Arts Society (SIFAS), under Guru Maalika Panicker. From weekly classes, to annual events and various performances – dance gradually become a paramount part of my life.

Not just classical dance, Bollywood too played a big role in my development as a dancer. Starting off with occasional performances at community gatherings, my performances soon became a part of any function I attended. My skills in performing dance founded my choreographic skills, leading the way for conceptualizing and giving form to many original dance items, both for myself and for others. Exposure to dancing and choreographing at various platforms gave me the confidence needed to improve my techniques and assisted me in influencing others around me to develop interest in learning dance. I must admit that my foundation in classical dance has greatly helped me in my Bollywood choreography.

The last three years has seen me getting increasingly involved with classical and folk-dance forms originating from Odisha, primarily the Odissi and Sambalpuri dance form. As a part of the Indian Diaspora in Singapore, this has helped me establish a connection with my roots and at the same time, it has increased my understanding and appreciation of Odia culture and tradition. Guru Sasmita

Pal's contribution to this has been immense and she has helped me reignite my passion for the art of dancing, bringing back the memories and moments of being a student.

At the time I started dancing, the scope of learning Indian classical dance was very limited in Singapore, as there was a dearth of schools and dance forms were limited to Bharatanatyam and Kathak. However, with time, the horizon has expanded and more schools have emerged which teach other forms of Indian classical and folk-dance forms like Odissi and Sambalpuri.

In my journey so far, dance has shaped me into the individual I am today, and will continue to do so in the future. I sincerely hope other children out there get a chance to experience a similar journey and pursue their own dreams and passion for the performing arts.

This April I am excited look forward to Aekalavya Edition 11, where I finally get a chance to perform under both my Gurus, at an event dedicated to celebrating the Guru-Shishya Parampara.

About the Author



Ankita Panda is a final year Bachelors of Business Administration student at the National University of Singapore. She is trained in Bharatanatyam for 7 years, and is currently learning Odissi. She has delivered several stage performances in Classical, folk and Bollywood dance forms.

Odisha - A Land of Wonders

Odisha, rich in heritage, culture and art, is one of the 29 states of India. Located along the Bay of Bengal, this eastern state is India's 9th largest state by area, and the 3rd largest by population. Initially known as Kalinga, it was renamed to Utkal, then Orissa and recently it was changed to Odisha –

the name it bears today. Known as the land of warriors, Odisha is one of India's handloom export hubs with Indonesia being its biggest importer. In the national Anthem of India, Odisha is mentioned by its ancient name 'Utkal'.

The capital of Odisha changed twice from Jajpur to Cuttack and then to Bhubaneswar. Odisha is best known for the Ratha Yatra tradition. Odisha is a land of potential filled with natural resources, biodiversity, talent and agriculture and its economic growth rates are higher than the national average. It has several ports with the Paradeep Port being the largest.

Odisha is the birthplace of the Odissi Dance form, traditionally practiced by the Mahuris (Temple Dancers). Traditional dance festivals are common in various parts of the state which attracts a sizable number of tourists each year especially to the Konark and Muketswar Dance Festivals. Should you be planning to visit Odisha, here is a brief guide to its historical wonders.

Bhubaneswar

Bhubaneswar, Odisha's capital city, is also known as the Temple City of India. Divided into two parts - New Bhubaneswar and Old Bhubaneswar, this wonderful capital is home to more than six hundred temples with the likes of Lingaraj Temple, Rajarani Temple, Mukteshwar Temple located in Old Bhubaneswar. Lingaraj Temple was built in 11th Century AD, and is dedicated to Lord Shiva. Some of the scriptures that are present in this magnificent temple include those of Lord Shiva and Parvathi dancing in during their marriage. Rajarani Temple is known as "love temple", the name derived from a sandstone. Mukteshwar Temple, also dedicated to Lord Shiva, hosts the famous Mukteshwar Dance Festival each year.

Old Bhubaneswar is home to archaeological and historical sites of Dhauli, Khandagiri and Udyagiri. The Khandagiri and Udyagiri Caves, carved from a sandstone hillock, are significant archeologically and represent a remnant of ancient India. New Bhubaneswar is the modern part of the city and is home to numerous industries. It features in the top 10 Smart Cities in the world in planning. Bhubaneswar

is also home to numerous IT start-ups, along with an abundance of art and culture present within the city.

Puri

About 60 km east of the City lies Puri, a beach city of religious significance which attracts tourists and devotees alike due to the Temple of Lord Jagannath and its scenic beaches. Puri is one of the four 'Dhams' (Abode for pilgrimage) of India which is a must visit for all Hindus. To feed the floods of devotees each day, the temple of Lord Jagannatha is home to one the world's largest kitchen where "Mahaprasad" (56 food items) is offered six times a day. The "Mahaprasad" consisting of pure vegetarian food that ranges from rice to desserts made from indigenously grown vegetables and is a must have for all visitors to the temple.



Each year, Puri celebrates the Car Festival or "Rath Yatra", an event which attracts hundreds of thousands of devotees to witness the journey of Lord Jagannatha from the Jagannatha Temple to Gundicha Temple.

The Jagannath Temple, The Sun temple and the temple city of Bhubaneswar constitute the Golden triangle of Odisha.

Puri is also known for the serene coastline and beaches along the marine drive which leads to another archaeological marvel, the Sun Temple of Konark. This UNESCO World Heritage site is dedicated to the Sun God.

Puri is also home to Asia's largest salt-water lake, the Chilika, a wetland of international importance listed in the Ramsar Convention of 1971. The brackish water lake attracts a wide variety of migratory birds and is home to the only known population of the Irrawaddy Dolphins. The lake has several islands, one of which hosts the temple of Goddess Kalijai which has an eerie fable associated with it. Sudarshan Patnaik, an internationally acclaimed sand sculptor, hails from the district of Puri too.

Cuttack

Cuttack is the former capital of Odisha, which is also known as the Silver City due to its traditional silver filigree work. It is geographically located in an islanded land in between two distributaries of the largest river of the state Mahanadi. Cuttack is also the birthplace of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and has numerous places of historical, cultural and archaeological importance. Some worth mentioning are the Barabati Fort, Katak Chandi Temple, Dhaleswar Temple and Mahanadi River. Dhaleswar Temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva, is located on an island which resides on the Mahanadi River, close to Cuttack. Barabati Fort, built during Gangsa Dynasty, is located on the banks of River Mahanadi. It once housed a nine-storey palace. Apart from being a historical place and ancient city, Cuttack is also recognised as the commercial capital of Odisha.

Baripada

Baripada, the district headquarter of Mayurbhanj district, is well-known for its rich culture, heritage and handicrafts. It holds its own Car Festival of Lord Jagannatha and the Makar Festival. Traditional folk dance of this district and adjoining region is the Chhau Dance and the Jhumer Dance. Baripada hosts the second most popular Ratha Yatra of Odisha known as Dwitya Srikhetra (second Srikhetra-Puri) which is

unique as only women are allowed pull the Lord's chariot. Other attractions of this region include the pristine natural camps of Sanaghagra and Talashri.

Rourkela

Rourkela is the industrial city of Odisha famous for its large steel plants and associated industries. Also known as the Steel City of Odisha, it features as an upcoming Smart City of India.

Balasore

Balasore, adjoining the state of West Bengal to its North, is a coastal district of Odisha. It is famous for its Chandipur beach and the Wheeler's island where long range ballistic missiles are tested. Balasore is also host to the Remuna temple dedicated to Lord Krishna where "rabdi" (condensed milk) is offered to the deity.

Berhampur

Berhampur is the gateway city to Southern Odisha, and adjoins Gopalpur which has its scenic beach and a developing port. It is home to the traditional Berhampur Paata, Sakhi Naha, Danda Jatra and Prahallad Naha.

Sambalpur

Sambalpur, located in Western Odisha, is rich in heritage, culture and tradition. Sambalpur is known for its handicrafts such as the Sambalpuri Saree, arts such as the Sambalpuri folk dance, and internationally recognised music such as Rangabati, Dalkhai, and the various festivals of the district including Nuakhai, Makar Sankranti, Bhai Juntia and Pushpuni. The Samaleswari Temple located in Sambalpur, attracts thousands of believers from around India, while the Hirakud Dam holds international recognition as the world's largest earth dam and produces power for the state.

About the Author



Soham Nath is born in Odisha, but raised in Singapore, has a deep understanding and interest in exploring Odisha's cultural and traditional history. He is currently pursuing a Diploma in Accounting and Finance at Temasek Polytechnic, Singapore.

Some Moments from Past Year Events





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\$200	12	\$2400	\$200	\$2600
\$300	12	\$3600	\$300	\$3900
\$400	12	\$4800	\$400	\$5200
\$500	12	\$6000	\$500	\$6500
\$600	12	\$7200	\$600	\$7800
\$700	12	\$8400	\$700	\$9100
\$1000	12	\$12000	\$1000	\$13000
\$1500	12	\$18000	\$1500	\$19500
\$2000	12	\$24000	\$2000	\$26000
\$3000	12	\$36000	\$3000	\$39000



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