

CLASSICAL DANCE DAILY

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PRESERVING TRADITION: THE ENDURING LEGACY OF MANIPURI DANCE

Manipuri dance, originating in the tranquil state of Manipur, embodies a timeless tradition untainted by external influences, boasting a cultural legacy steeped in grace and heritage. Rooted in ancient rituals and festivals, this classical art form narrates divine tales and artistic expressions with unparalleled elegance. Its origins trace back to primordial times, deeply intertwined with religious practices, notably those venerating Shiva and Parvati, thus deeply ingrained in Manipuri culture. The Lai Haraoba festival stands as a testament to its earliest manifestations, dating back to the pre-Vaishnavite era. Despite adversities during the British colonial rule, Manipuri dance endured, finding refuge in temples and experiencing a renaissance under Rabindranath Tagore's patronage in the modern era. Today, as it captivates audiences worldwide, Manipuri dance remains a beacon of India's diverse cultural heritage, weaving tales of devotion, spirituality, and artistic brilliance.

MRINALINI SARABHAI: AN ICON IN DANCE AND BEYOND

Mrinalini Sarabhai's journey from childhood discovery of dance to becoming a leading classical dancer and choreographer in India embodies determination, innovation, and social consciousness. Her compositions addressed societal issues like dowry deaths and Dalit oppression, reflecting her progressive upbringing. She mastered Bharatanatyam, Kathakali, and Mohiniattam, breaking gender norms as one of Kathakali's early female performers. Despite controversies, she founded the Darpana Academy of Performing Arts in 1949, contributing significantly to Indian cultural heritage through dance, writing, and social advocacy. Honored with Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan awards, Sarabhai remains a revered figure in Indian cultural history.

★ Create a collage highlighting key moments from Mrinalini Sarabhai's life and career, followed by a brief discussion on her impact on Indian cultural history.



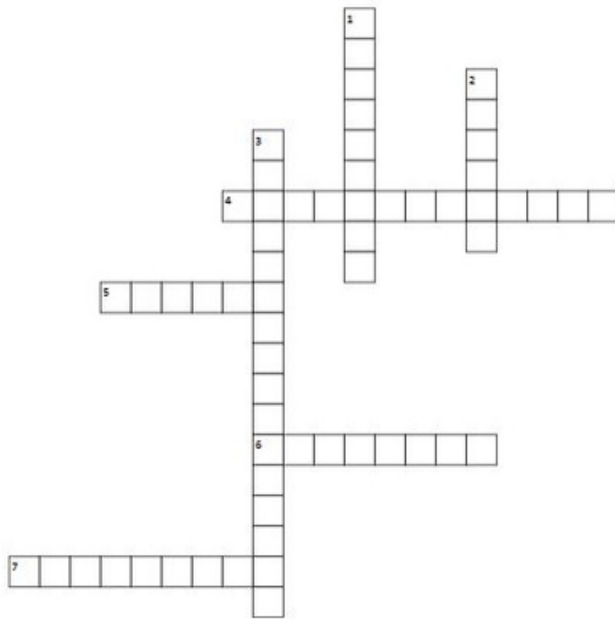
ESSENCE OF BHARATANATYAM ARANGETRAM

In Bharatanatyam, "Arangetram" signifies a dancer's debut, marking years of training and the start of their professional journey. Lasting two to three hours, it showcases mastery through diverse solo and group performances, blending classical narratives with technical precision.

Beginning with invocations to Hindu deities and the guru, the performance progresses through rhythmic purity in Alarippu to intricate storytelling in Varnam. With support from mentors and loved ones, the dancer's emotive depth captivates the audience, culminating in a joyous Tillana and blessings.

An Arangetram isn't just a debut; it's a transformative milestone, solidifying the dancer's role in Bharatanatyam tradition and inviting all to witness its timeless beauty.





Across

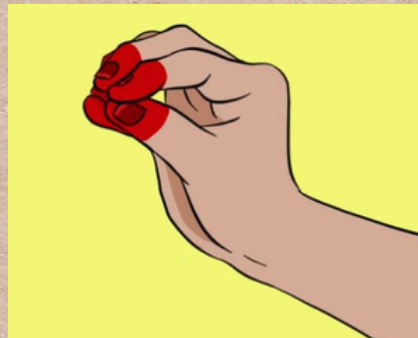
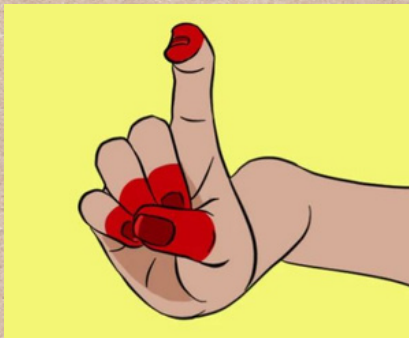
- 4. This is a famous classical dance form from Tamil Nadu
- 5. Oldest performing Indian art form
- 6. Also known as Jogai
- 7. Also known as Bhagavata Mela Natakam

Down

- 1. The literal meaning is "story-play"
- 2. This dance form originated in Uttar Pradesh
- 3. Is the dance of the enchantress. Lord Vishnu and Krishna are heroes of the dance.

SOLVE THE CLASSICAL DANCE CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ANIMAL HAND GESTURES: FIND OUT THE CHARACTERS THESE HAND GESTURES SIGNIFY AND MENTION IT BELOW:



JAPANESE ARTIST KEIKO OKANO MESMERIZES WITH MOHINIYATTAM FUSION

Tokyo-based artist Keiko Okano has captivated audiences with her mesmerizing performances of Mohiniyattam, a traditional dance from Kerala, India, despite her unexpected fusion of cultures. Over 15 years of dedicated practice stem from her profound fascination with Indian culture, nurtured during her time in America. Guided by renowned dancer Nirmala Paniker and driven by a passion for reviving forgotten aspects of the dance, Okano's journey has spanned from Tokyo to Kerala. Despite the challenges of mastering Mohiniyattam's intricate abhinaya, she remains steadfast in blending her Japanese heritage with the dance's timeless grace. Through innovative fusion of Japanese instruments with Mohiniyattam's universal language of abhinaya, Okano's performances promise to be a captivating celebration of cultural amalgamation and artistic expression.



LEGACY OF KALAMANDALAM KALLYANIKUTTY AMMA: REVIVING MOHINIYATTAM ACROSS BORDERS

Kalamandalam Kallyanikutty Amma's indelible mark on Mohiniyattam, the traditional dance form of Kerala, resonates globally. From her humble beginnings in Thirunavaya, she elevated Mohiniyattam from obscurity to prominence, with her expertise and scholarly works shaping its formal structure. Honored with prestigious awards and accolades, her legacy transcends borders, reaching as far as Russia through her disciple Milana Severskaya. Through the film "Mother of Mohiniyattam," her granddaughter Smitha Rajan immortalized her contributions, ensuring that Kallyanikutty Amma's influence continues to inspire generations worldwide, cementing her as a beacon of cultural revivalism in the realm of classical Indian dance.



GRACE AND TRADITION: EXPLORING THE RICH HERITAGE OF ODISSI DANCE

Originating from Odisha's cultural heritage, Odissi dance is a captivating blend of sensuality, spirituality, and intricate movements. With roots dating back to ancient times, influenced by Buddhist sculptures and early Shaivite temples, Odissi has evolved into a highly stylized art form characterized by expressive gestures and fluid movements. Each segment of an Odissi performance, from Mangalacharan invocation to abhinaya storytelling, reflects deep-rooted traditions and philosophies, reaffirming the sacred connection between dance and spiritual liberation through graceful movements and elaborate attire.



★ Find out the Key figures in Odissi dance style that have changed the course of the artform and made notable contributions.

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IIT BHUBANESWAR INTEGRATES ODISSI DANCE INTO B.TECH CURRICULUM

In a groundbreaking move, IIT Bhubaneswar has introduced Odissi dance as a subject within their B.Tech curriculum. Reflecting the rich cultural heritage of Odisha, this initiative marks a significant departure from conventional academic offerings, integrating traditional art forms with modern education. Students now have the opportunity to explore the nuances of Odissi, learning its intricate movements and spiritual significance alongside their technical studies. This innovative approach not only fosters a deeper appreciation for local culture but also promotes interdisciplinary learning, bridging the gap between tradition and innovation in higher education.



KATHAKALI: KERALA'S CULTURAL MARVEL

Kathakali, Kerala's classical dance-drama, invites audiences into a world of timeless tales and captivating performances. Meaning "story play" in Malayalam, it intricately merges dance, music, and acting to depict Indian mythological epics. With elaborate costumes, vibrant makeup, and expressive gestures, Kathakali dancers skillfully embody characters and emotions, captivating viewers worldwide. Accompanied by traditional Kerala instruments, the performance unfolds in captivating sequences, from ceremonial introductions to enthralling portrayals of gods and demons. Each movement communicates a profound narrative, offering spectators an unforgettable experience of divine devotion and dramatic storytelling.

★ Create your own Kathakali mask using colorful paper and traditional designs, then enact a short scene from an Indian mythological story with expressive gestures and movements.

THE ART OF KATHAKALI MAKEUP

In Kathakali, elaborate facial painting known as vesham serves as a powerful tool of expression, with each character distinguished by specific colors, headgear, and the presence or absence of thaadi (beard). For example, Kathi characters, representing malevolence, feature green paint with red or saffron accents, while Pacha characters symbolize piety with a streak of yellow on the forehead. Minukku characters exude gentleness with lighter colors like white and pink, enhanced by kohl-highlighted eyes and brows. Additionally, to infuse femininity, performers apply a red pigment made from the 'flame of the forest' flower to their lips. All Kathakali performers share the tradition of inserting chunda poovu (*Solanum Indica*) seeds into their lower eyelids to redden the eyes harmlessly, regardless of their character portrayal.



KUCHIPUDI

Kuchipudi, one of India's classical dance styles, originated in the village of Kuchipudi in Andhra Pradesh, evolving from the Yakshagaana tradition in the 17th century under the guidance of Siddhendra Yogi. Initially performed exclusively by male actors, the tradition expanded over the years, incorporating female roles with remarkable skill. Over time, Kuchipudi evolved into both dance-drama performances and solo dance recitals, with Lakshminarayan Shastry introducing solo elements and training female dancers in the style. Today, a Kuchipudi recital typically includes invocatory, narrative, and abstract dance segments, accompanied by classical Carnatic music and characterized by intricate footwork and expressive movements.

★ Students can experience Kuchipudi dance firsthand through workshops or performances, while also exploring its cultural significance through research and presentations.



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