

Anwesa Mahanta to perform at Nehru Center, London on Aug 14



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Rini Kakati 31 July 2013 17649 views

You are cordially invited to an evening of Sattriya dance performance by Anwesa Mahanta - "Dancing the Divinity" from Assam. On Wednesday 14, August 2013 at 6:30pm - 8:30pm at The Nehru Centre, 8 South Audley Street, London W1K 1HF (Nearest Tube Station: Green Park)

A dedicated and promising young exponent of Sattriya Dance, Anwesa Mahanta has received accolades from the art connoisseurs and scholars for the grace and liveliness of her dance and the expressiveness of her abhinaya.

Belonging to the Vaisnava monastery of Assam, Sattrā, Anwesa started her formal lessons in Sattriya from her early childhood under the guidance of the eminent maestro and a Sangeet Natak Akademi Awardee Bayanacharya Ghanakanta Bora. Anwesa has been learning, researching and interpreting Sattriya dance, music and theatre since two decades.

She has been an active performer since 2001, presenting Sattriya in its solo form. Anwesa has also worked on many choreographic presentations of her own under the supervision of her mentor. She has performed extensively across India and also abroad, appearing at many prestigious dance festivals. She is an 'A' grade artist in Sattriya dance of Doordarshan and an empanelled artist of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), India International Rural Cultural Centre (IRCEN). Currently, she is pursuing her Ph.D. programme in Performing Arts and Oral Tradition from the University of Delhi under the guidance of eminent folklorist, Prof. P.C Pattanaik.

Born to Ms. Minati Choudhury, a noted litterateur of the region who also served in Doordarshan and Prof Pradip Jyoti Mahanta, an erudite scholar in the field of Cultural History of Assam and Northeastern India and currently, Professor and Head in the Dept. of Cultural Studies, Tezpur University. Anwesa has been pursuing dance, not merely as a pastime but as a chosen path of her growing and devotional journey. During this journey over the years she has been trying with utmost sincerity to enlarge the performance canvas and expand her repertoire constantly drawing resource material from the vast literary corpus of the Vaisnava Renaissance of Assam. She has been giving lecture demonstrations and presented papers in several places and institutions with an aim to reach out to more and more children , scholars and art lovers. The Pragjyoti International Dance Festival , a

festival of young classical dancers, first of its kind in Assam, is one of her attempts through KALPA (A Society for Promotion of Literature, Art, Culture and Social Harmony) which allow the young exponents to speak and share their thoughts and ideas through dance and communicate to the youths the relevance of Indian dance in the contemporary world.

She has thus carved a space in the Sattriya Dance world with her understandings, research, interpretations and outstanding performances drawing applause and appreciation from both the media and the art cognoscenti and established an unfailing record of excellence in her performance career.

Sattriya Dance: Sattriya Dance, an Indian Classical dance that originated from the State of Assam. The word Sattriya is derived from the word 'Sattra', because till then the dance recitals were exclusively practiced within the compounds of a Sattra, a monastery like institution which was the epicentre of the Vaishnavite culture.

Srimanta Sankardev during 15th & 16th century brought about a renaissance which strung the society together into a cultural and social whole and can be said without doubt that it was this resurgence in the society that shaped the present day Assam. It is as a Classical Indian dance which reflects Indian culture, its legacy and heritage of over 5000 years. Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev used the charm of art and culture to intertwine his philosophy of monotheism i.e. Vaishnavism so that it could be used as a medium of instruction.

To spread this art form, Sankardev used as a tool the style of story telling through drama called the Ankia Naat which depicted the life of Lord Krishna & Lord Rama and numerous dances were included in those Ankia Naats created by Him. At later stage, his chief disciple Sri Sri Madhavdev and other apostle created some newer numbers.

With time, many names were used like Nadu bhangi, Jhumura Naach, Chali-Nach, Behar Nach, Sutradhari, Gosain Pravesh, Gopi Pravesh, Ojapali Nach to name a few, but today in common parlance it is known as Sattriya,

thanks to Dr. Maheswar Neog who understood the need for a singular identity rather than the confusion of various names.

The sattriya dance can be classified into two styles namely Paurashik Bhangi i.e Tandav or masculine style & Shtri bhangi i.e Lasya or feminine style.

The dance has every flavour of a matured art form but it does not share the same pedestal as other classical dance forms of India. The reason for its lesser popularity is because the dance stayed inside the Sattras and limited to the Bhakats (disciple) only until the middle of the 20th century.

Finally, the Sangeet Natak Akademi of India, in November 2000, accorded Sattriya dance with the status of a Classical form.

Sattriya dance performance : [http://www.youtube.com/watch?](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MTB3D0X8PRk)

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<http://video.webindia123.com/new/interviews/dancers/sattriya/anweshamahanta>

Performances:

2013

University of Otago, New Zealand, 13, July, 2013

Asia Society, Miller Theatre, Hong Kong , 17 July, 2013

2012

Vaisakhi Mahotsav, Bhubaneswar, April

Series of performances in various parts of Mizoram under IRCEN, February

National Programme of Dance telecast on 26th January, 2012, January

2011

IRCEN series of programmes in Punjab, October

Mydance Festival, Dancing India, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, September

“Dancing the Divinity” an evening of Sattriya Dance with Anwesa Mahanta ,

India Cultural Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, September

SPICMACY series with her Adhyapak in Bangalore, September

“Parama Prema Rupa” – National Centre for Performing Arts in the series of Umang, Mumbai, August

ICCR Horizon Series, in Tezpur University, August
Temple Festival Guruvayur Devaswom, Kerala, March
SPICMACAY Virasat series with her teacher, Andhra Pradesh, February
Nritya Sangam, Sangeet Natak Akademi, Cochin, January
National Programme of Dance by Doordarshan Kendra telecast March 3,

2010

Sattriya Dance Evening of Anwesa Mahanta by Balaji Cultural Trust,
Guwahati, December
An evening of Sattriya Dance at Thrissur, organized by Thalam Cultural
Trust, November
Dharini Kalotsav , 2010, Cochin , November
Navarang – An amalgam of Major Indian Dance Styles, Vigyan Bhavan,
October
National Convention of SPICMACAY at Kanpur, June
National Dance Festival in Vizag , May
National Dance Festival in Mumbai, May

2009

Uday Shankar Dance Festival, Kolkata, December
Nritya Parva, A festival organized by Sangeet Natak Akademi, Guwahati,
November
Avanthika Space for Dance – a 2 day dance festival in Trissur, Kerala, May
Fraternity day, an event to mark the celebration of World Dance Day,
organized by
Prasiddha Foundation in collaboration with Kri Foundation, on 29th
April, 2009 ,
at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, April
India International Centre, New Delhi, in March
6th Annual Dance Festival of Impresario India in the series of From the
Banks of the Brahmaputra, with her Adhyapak in the India Habitat Centre
and the CCRT Auditorum, New Delhi, March, 2009,

The India International Centre, New Delhi, March

India Habitat Centre under the HCL Concert Series, New Delhi, January

2008

SPICMACAY, Virasat series with her Adhyapak in several educational institutions

of New Delhi, in November

National Devadasi Dance Festival, Bhubaneswar, in September, 2008

National Convention of SPICMACAY, Kohima, with her Adhyapak, in June.

2007

National Programme of Dance, Doordarshan, telecast August 26,

Nritya Prabha, organized by Directorate of Cultural Affairs, in April.

2006

SPICMACAY programmes with her Adhyapak in different institutions of Guwahati, October

University of Madras, Chennai, on the occasion of Professor V.Raghavan Memorial programme, September

Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, Bangalore, September.

2005

Virasat 2005 in different educational institutions at Karnataka, Kerala and New Delhi under the auspices of SPICMACAY in October-November, 2005,

Nritya Pratibha, a festival of Indian classical dances for the young dancers by Sangeet Natak Akademi in Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, Chennai in August.

Srimanta Foundation for Culture and Society in collaboration with Assam Academy for Cultural Relations, Guwahati in January

2004

Nimapada Dance Festival, Orissa in December

Nritya Parva, a festival of Sattriya dance by Sangeet Natak Akademi in Pragjyotish Kalakendra, Guwahati in November,

Doordarshan Kendra, Guwahati in October

Maheswar Neog Commemorative Sattriya Dance Recital, District Library, April

Navavarsha Mahotsav at Srimanta Sankardeva Kalakshetra, Guwahati in January

2003

Nritya Parva, Festival of Sattriya Dance of Sangeet Natak Akademi in Rabindra Bhawan, Guwahati in November

Nritya Swarn of Sangeet Natak Akademi with her Adhyapak, held at Nehru Centre, Mumbai in November

Virasat 2003 with her Adhyapak, in different schools at New Delhi under auspices of SPICMACAY in November,

National Symposium of Srimanta Foundation for Culture and Society held at Little Theatre, New Delhi in November

Krishna Festival organized by ICCR (Indian Council for Cultural Relations) in August

Kalakshetra Foundation, Chennai on the occasion of Birth Centenary Celebrations of Rukmini Devi on March 29th

2002

Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan organized by Karthik Fine Arts Society, Chennai in December

Rajah Annamalai Hall organized by Tamil Isai Sangam, Chennai in December

India International Centre, New Delhi, October

Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards Festival 2002, with her Adhyapak at Guwahati in April

India Habitat Centre, New Delhi in February

Navvarsh Mahotsav, Sankardeva Kalakshetra, Guwahati in January,

Rini Kakati

London, UK

BY RINI KAKATI

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