

City gears up for Pragjyoti Dance Festival



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Kalpa, a Society for Promotion of Art, Literature, Culture and Social Harmony, founded a year ago is hosting the 'Pragjyoti Dance Festival: A View of Indian Dance' by young proponents for the second time on January 8, 9 and 19, 2010 in Rabindra Bhawan, Guwahati. It may be remembered that the first Pragjyoti National Dance Festival, held in February 2009, covering almost all the major Indian classical dance traditions including *Sattriya* Dance created a susceptible impact among the dancephiles and art connoisseurs of the country. This year's festival, which is being supported by the Sangeet Natak Akademi, the National Academy for Music, Dance and Drama, will be ceremonially inaugurated by Ratan Thiyam, a celebrated theatre personality and Vice-Chairman of the Sangeet Natak Akademi on January 8, 2010 at 6.00 p.m. in Rabindra Bhawan. Renowned *Kathak* exponent and Secretary of the Sangeet Natak Akademi Jayant Kastuar will grace the Inaugural Ceremony as the guest of honour and release the Souvenir, *Pragjyoti*.

The grand dance fiesta will feature young talents from all over the country and even abroad. Artists from the Natun Kamalabari Sattri, Majuli, Kamalabari Sattri, Titabor, Manashri Pathak (Jorhat), Jollymoni Saikia and Dimpy Baishya (Guwahati) will present *Sattriya* Dance. The other artists being featured in the festival are Vrata Chigateri (UK) in *Kuchipudi*, Aligunjan Kalita Mudiya (Guwahati) and Leena Malakar (Nepal) in *Kathak*, Sachiko Murakami (Japan), Shibani Patnaik (US) and Amulya Balabantaray (Bhubaneswar) in *Odissi*, Hemolata Devi (Imphal) in *Manipuri*, Vidyamol T Purusottam (Thrissur) in *Mohiniattam*, Ranjith Babu and Arupa Lahiri (Chennai) in *Bharatanatyam* and Loknath Das (Paripada) in *Mayurbhanj Chhau*.

Planned in solo format, the festival aims at showcasing the young exponents of all classical dance styles. As noted Xatriya dancer Anwesa Mahanta, who is the coordinator of the festival, says: “The festival is also a humble attempt to create a dialogue among the young generation belonging to different parts of the country, to reciprocate the goodwill that I, as a Xatriya performer, receive in different regions of India. Focusing on the young generation who is carrying forward the ancient traditions of dance, the festival also aims in doing away with the misconception lingering in many minds of the country that Assam is only a land known for terrorism and extortion.” The festival will also feature Chau Dance, an emerging dance style from Orissa.

The coordinators of the festival are Shyamhari Chakra (Bhubaneswar) and Anwesa Mahanta.

ARTISTES TO WATCH OUT FOR

Amulya Balabantaray

Initiated in the art of Gotipua Dance by Late Mahadev Rout and Sri Bijay Kumar Sahoo, he later joined Orissa Dance Academy, Bhubaneswar, where he received formal training in Odissi dance under the direct supervision of Guru Gangadhar Pradhan. Aruna Mohanty, Guru Bichitrananda Swain and Guru Manoranjan Pradhan. Over the years, Amulya has given numerous performances through the length and breadth of India at various festivals and functions. Having also performed at the 2nd International Odissi festival in Washington D.C. in 2002, his sole aim is to establish himself as a promising dancer of this generation.

Arupa Lahiry

A passionate dancer from Kolkata, her search for excellence in Bharatnatyam took her to study this art form from the legendary Chitra Visweswaran in Chennai. A senior scholarship from the Department of Culture, Government of India further helped her prove her mettle through solo performances at major festivals and sabhas, which include Madras Music Academy, Chennai, Natyarangam Trust, Chennai; Kartik Fine Arts, Chennai; and many others. An MPhil in English Literature, Arupa has choreographed and danced for a bhakti series 'Main Kaun' aired in Zee Networks and has been featured in reputed tabla player Tanmoy Bose's music album released from the label 'SaReGaMa'

Renjith Babu

A proficient performing artiste among male Baharatnatyam dancers, his body expressions, perfect and stylistic accessibility is extolled by critics and connoisseurs alike. Renjith was initiated into Bharatanatyam at a very young age under the tutelage of Smt Prasanna Prakash. His inherent flair for the art saw him proceeding to the world renowned Kalakshetra in Chennai. Impressing people with his performances all over, he is today a recognized performer who has carved a niche in the minds of classical connoisseurs.

Aiyushman Dutta

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BY AIYUSHMAN DUTTA

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