

# **Kala Sankul Hosts Engaging Symposium on Indian Art and the Role of CCRT**



## New Delhi.

The central office “*Kala Sankul*” of Sanskar Bharati hosted a meaningful symposium that brought together artistic perspectives, creative expression and cultural dialogue under

one roof. The event marked *three successful years of the Kala Symposium Series*, making the gathering a moment of both reflection and renewal.

The program commenced with a traditional lamp-lighting ceremony performed by the Chief Guest **Dr. Vinod Narayan Indurkar** (Chairman, CCRT), Symposium Convener **Shruti Sinha**, Co-convener **Vishwadeep Ji**, Program Coordinators **Sakshi Sharma** and **Sneha Mukherjee**.

With the theme "**The Role of CCRT in the World of Art from an Indian Perspective,**"

Dr. Indurkar delivered the keynote address. He emphasized that:

*"Indian art is not merely an act of expression – it is a worldview, a way of life. Our responsibility is to carry this consciousness forward to the next generation through structured institutional efforts."*

He highlighted CCRT's contribution in preserving India's **folk and classical traditions**, supporting artists, and strengthening cultural awareness at the national level. His address offered a deep insight into how **policy, pedagogy and cultural values** interconnect in shaping India's artistic future.

## **Artistic Presentations Enrich the Dialogue**

The symposium was further elevated by soulful performances.

**Ujra Akshara, Prof. (Dr.) Rachna and Sadhit Kaushal** presented musical renditions that echoed the cultural spirit of India. **Aparna Sarathe and Aman Pandey** expressed philosophical ideas through **Kathak**, transforming thought into movement and emotion.

These artistic offerings ensured that the gathering was **not**

only intellectually stimulating but also emotionally resonant.

## A Gathering of Artists, Scholars and Young Voices

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from artists, cultural practitioners, scholars, students and young art enthusiasts.

The symposium concluded with a shared resolve to **revitalize cultural awareness and sustain the continuity of Indian artistic heritage.**

## Organizing Team and Contributors

The successful execution of the monthly symposium was supported by:

**Harshit Goyal, Sneha Mukherjee, Garima Rani, Pradeep Pathak, Priyanka, Nidhi Tiwari, Deepti, Brijesh Kumar, Vijender Kumar, Sushank and Mrityunjay Ji.**

**Kuldeep Sharma** skillfully conducted the proceedings.

## Kala Sankul's Commitment

*Kala Sankul reaffirmed its mission:*

*"This platform will continue to recognize and encourage artists and institutions that bring forward the sensitive, meaningful and socially relevant questions of art, culture and the nation with a constructive and courageous vision."*

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# Dance Tribute at Kala Sankul: A Divine Confluence of Navaras and Navadurga



On 28th September, 2025, at the auspicious time of the festive season, the monthly stage art symposium organized under the aegis of Sanskar Bharati transformed the **Kala Sankul** premises in New Delhi into a vibrant cultural celebration. The theme "Navaras and Navadurga: Harmony of Emotion, Devotion and Art" brought together diverse performances and reflections that illuminated the depth and spiritual essence of Indian culture.

The evening commenced with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp by **Padma Shri Shovana Narayan**, whose presence added grace and solemnity to the occasion. The aura was filled with devotion and beauty, as though the blessings of Goddess Durga herself sanctified the gathering.

The first performance came from **Sh. Abdul Khalid**, whose Kuchipudi presentation vividly portrayed the essence of the nine sentiments (navaras). Following this, **Ms. Muskan Nagpal** enthralled the audience with her Kathak recital, embodying the nine divine forms of Goddess Durga. Her mastery of rhythm, expression, and movement captivated the audience, drawing prolonged applause that resonated throughout the auditorium.

In her keynote address, chief guest and veteran Kathak danseuse **Padma Shri Shovana Narayan** remarked:

*“Art is not merely a medium of expression; it is a bridge that unites emotion, devotion, and social consciousness. The union of Navaras and Navadurga is a living testimony to the vastness and profundity of Indian culture.”*

Her words inspired the gathering to reflect deeply on the spiritual and cultural dimensions of art.

Art connoisseurs, students, and intellectuals in attendance experienced a rare blend of Indian classical dance and the spiritual power of culture. The performances were met with appreciation and admiration, leaving an indelible impression on all.

The Kala Sankul family of Sanskar Bharati expressed gratitude to the participants and guests, affirming that such events would continue to be organized regularly, preserving and promoting the invaluable heritage of Indian art and culture.

The event was successfully coordinated by **Sneha Mukherjee**, with stage comparing by **Garima Rani** and a gracious vote of thanks by **Shruti Sinha**. Valuable contributions were also made by **Raj Upadhyay**, Senior Announcer **Bharti Dang**, tabla maestro **Pradeep Pathak**, **O P Sagar** along with **Harshit Goyal**, **Raman Kumar**, **Mrityunjay**, **Faizy Abdul Kalam**, **Lavanya**, **Brajesh**, **Satyam** and others, whose collective efforts added grandeur to the evening.

Ultimately, the symposium held on 28th September, 2025 emerged

as a spiritual dance offering to Goddess Durga, leaving the audience with a sense of fulfillment and cultural pride.

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## □ **Antaryatra – When Art Becomes a Journey Within**



# **An evocative evening of imagination, meditation, and Indian aesthetics at Kala Sankul**

**New Delhi, July 27**

There are evenings that entertain, and then there are evenings that elevate. The recent **Monthly Art Symposium** hosted at **Sanskrit Bharati's central office, Kala Sankul**, was undoubtedly the latter. With the theme "**Antaryatra: Imagination, Art and Meditation**," the gathering blossomed into an intimate and deeply reflective cultural experience – one that resonated with the soul.

Anchoring this vibrant dialogue was **Smt. Vaishali Gahlyan**, Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Miranda House, University of Delhi. In a keynote address that seamlessly wove aesthetics with spirituality, Dr. Gahlyan explored the essence of Indian art as a form of **inner sadhana** (spiritual practice), stating:

*“Indian art is not merely a display of beauty, but a meditative discipline – a trinity of imagination, creation, and contemplation that draws the artist closer to self-realization.”*

Her thoughts echoed through the hall, reaffirming the ancient Indian perspective of art not just as expression, but as **realization** – a means to connect the microcosm with the macrocosm.

The event commenced with a traditional **lamp-lighting ceremony**, presided over by **Smt . Vaishali Gahlyan** along with symposium convenor **Smt. Shruti Sinha**, co-convenor **Sh. Vishwadeep**, Delhi Prant's stage art convenor **Sh. Raj Upadhyay**, and programme director **Sh. Shyam Kumar** – each a dedicated torchbearer of India's living art traditions.

## □ *Monsoon Melodies & Cultural Echoes*

As the gentle drizzle of **Sawan** graced the capital, the atmosphere inside Kala Sankul mirrored the rhythm of the rains. A soulful **Kajri recital** swept through the venue, filling hearts with seasonal nostalgia. Led by **Sneha Mukherjee**, along with young vocalists **Lavanya Sinha, Manya Narang**, and **Ruhi**, the performance paid homage to the **folk spirit**, evoking memories of lush fields and festive homes.

**Amit Sridhar's** deft touch on the synthesizer and **Tushar Goyal's** crisp tabla beats added texture and depth, making the musical interlude a celebration of India's rich rural music heritage.

## □ *Dance as Devotion*

What followed was nothing short of poetry in motion. **Kathak dancer Neelakshi Khandekar Saxena** transported the audience with a presentation that captured the grace, strength, and rhythmic prowess of Indian womanhood. Her recital was a vivid tapestry of *bhava*, *laya*, and *gati* – a visual meditation that perfectly embodied the evening's theme of "**Antaryatra**."

## □ *Presence of Stalwarts & Artistic Solidarity*

The event drew an impressive gathering of eminent personalities from Delhi's cultural milieu. Among those in attendance were **Kathak legend Pandit Rajendra Gangani**, noted flautist **Pandit Chetan Joshi**, and **National School of Drama Registrar Shri Pradeep Mohanty**. Their presence lent gravity and warmth to the event, as did the attendance of various scholars, researchers, young artists, and art lovers.

Adding to the smooth flow of the evening was the poised anchoring by **Sh. Kuldeep Sharma**, whose narration stitched the various segments with thoughtfulness and flair.

## □ Behind Every Great Evening...

Behind the artistic grace of the evening lay the quiet dedication of many. **Pradeep Pathak (tabla)**, **Shraboni Saha**, **Garima Rani**, **Harshit Goyal**, **Saurabh Tripathi**, **Brijesh**, **Shivam**, **Vijendra**, **Mrityunjay**, **Sushank**, **Sakshi Sharma**, **Priyanka**, and **Kala Sankul's devoted manager Shri Digvijay ji** – each played a vital role in ensuring a seamless, dignified, and heartfelt celebration of Indian arts.

## □ *A Living Space for Thought & Tradition*

With each passing month, **Sanskar Bharati's Monthly Art Symposiums** are evolving into a sacred space for **dialogue, tradition, and creative introspection**. More than a platform for performances, they are becoming vibrant forums where **Indian art finds contemporary voice**, where **aesthetic experience meets spiritual insight**, and where the **soul of Bharat breathes freely** in brushstrokes, rhythms, and reflections.

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# **Guru Purnima Celebration at Sanskar Bharati, Delhi – A Sacred Confluence of Art, Devotion, and Tradition**



On the auspicious day of 10th July 2025, the Guru Purnima Celebration held at the Kala Sankul premises of Sanskar Bharati, New Delhi, transformed into a vibrant cultural

expression of India's eternal guru-shishya tradition – not just in words, but through the language of dance, music, and soul.

The program began with Nataraja worship and Guru Vandana, infusing the atmosphere with a rare spiritual luminosity. The sacred invocation was not merely a ritual—it became a journey of surrender, discipline, and artistic elevation.

To confine Nataraja merely as the “Lord of Dance” would be to overlook His cosmic magnificence. This deeper essence came alive in the words of Chief Guest, Sh. Murari Sharan Shukla, who eloquently remarked that Nataraja is not a symbol bound to art alone, but the embodiment of motion and universal consciousness itself. His reflection echoed through the hearts of the audience:

“The posture of Nataraja resonates with the movement of the cosmos—it is the rhythmic expression of Shiva’s creative power.”

Though Sh. Shukla’s address came at the culmination of the event, its philosophical resonance permeated every segment of the evening.

The musical trio that followed offered a melodic glimpse into the richness of Indian ragas. Yagyata Gaba’s performance reflected youthful innocence intertwined with musical maturity. Then came Urja Akshara, who rendered a composition in Raga Desh, evoking the musical aroma of the monsoon. Finally, the ensemble presentation by disciples of Sneha Mukherjee – Manya Narang, Ruhi Jaiswal, Lavanya Sinha, and Siddh Jaiswal – stood as a living testimony to the bond between guru and disciple.

Their collective performance glowed not only with technical finesse but with grace, harmony, and discipline. It was an offering, filled with sweetness and reverence, a melody wrapped in devotion.

The sequence of dance performances that followed created a visual symphony for the soul. Nandini's Kathak recital, a tribute to her guru Smt. Shruti Sinha, was a dance of devotion – an artistic pranam. Through the rhythm, expression, and precision of Kathak, she sculpted an unspoken homage to her teacher. The event was anchored gracefully by Garima Rani, whose poised compering added charm to the proceedings.

This celebration was far more than an annual ritual – it emerged as a sacred yajna, where each disciple offered their art in heartfelt tribute to their guru. Every act on stage was not just a performance, but a living sentiment – of respect, surrender, and the continuation of a timeless legacy.

This Guru Purnima will be remembered not only for its artistic brilliance, but because it upheld a profound truth:

That the Guru is the light of life, and Art is the language of that light.

Sanskrit Bharati must be lauded for keeping this flame alive – not just on stage, but in the spirit of every participant. In honoring the guru, they honored the very soul of Indian cultural heritage.

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## **Three Days of Percussion Magic: Kala Chaitanya's Tabla-Dholak Workshop in**

# Priyadarshini Vihar

New Delhi, Priyadarshini Vihar –From May 27th to 29th, **Kala Chaitanya Society** organized a grand three-day Tabla and Dholak workshop at the *Priyadarshini Vihar Club*. The workshop was conducted by **Dr. Shrikant Shukla**, an awardee of the Uttar Pradesh Sangeet Natak Akademi and a distinguished expert in Tabla and Dholak. Art enthusiasts from Delhi-NCR and nearby regions participated with great enthusiasm.

The workshop was completely free of cost and open to individuals of all age groups. Participants received intensive training in the fundamentals of Tabla and Dholak, including basic techniques, understanding of rhythmic cycles (taals), hand coordination, and practical aspects of rhythm and tempo.

**Sh. Vishavdeep**, the President of Kala Chaitanya Society and an internationally acclaimed Kathak artist, shared that the objective of this workshop was not only to impart training but also to preserve and pass on vanishing art forms to future generations. He remarked, "Just as ancient languages like Prakrit and Pali faded away due to lack of preservation, many art forms are also nearing extinction. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that cultural conservation does not remain confined to words, but is practiced at a grassroots level".

The Society's Secretary, **Sh. Pradeep Kumar Pathak**, emphasized that the initiative aimed to connect people from all walks of life with music. He believes that engagement with the arts positively influences one's mindset, sensitivity, and social behavior.

The workshop commenced with a ceremonial welcome by **Sh. Ashok Tiwari, Secretary of Sanskar Bharati** – Kala Sankul, who felicitated **Dr. Shrikant Shukla** with a traditional angavastram. The event was graced by several esteemed

personalities, including senior Kathak guru **Sh. Subhash Chandra**, renowned theatre artist and Head of the Theatre Department at Modern School, Delhi, **Sh. Raj Upadhyay**, Secretary of Priyadarshini Vihar Club, **Smt. Shikha Sotgi**, and Head of Dance at Mata Gujri School, **Smt. Ruchika Bagga**.

Over the course of three days, the workshop fostered an atmosphere of inspiration and deep emotional engagement. Participants described the experience as invaluable and expressed a keen desire for more such initiatives in the future.

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**Sanskar Bharti Kala Sankul Once Again became the Witness of a Mesmerizing Journey of Art, Devotion, and Dialogue**



The monthly symposium began with a heartfelt tribute to the innocent civilians martyred in the recent terrorist attack in Pahalgam. All present members observed two minutes of silence, expressing their emotions in an unspeakable way. The entire atmosphere seemed to be immersed in a silent prayer.

On the auspicious occasion of the lighting of the lamp, all distinguished guests performed the lamp lighting ceremony, illuminating the stage.

Following this, a melodious stream of music began. The soulful singing by Mr. Vijay Rawal and Mr. Veer Mani Trivedi touched the hearts of everyone present. Their mastery of voice filled the atmosphere with unseen compassion and hope.

The main attraction of the symposium was the analytical discussion on the theatrical presentation '**Arey Gadbad Ho Gayi**', inspired by the Sanskrit play '**Bhagavadjukkam**' by Bodhayan, directed by Raj Upadhyay, and performed by Navras Group.

In this discussion, the depth of the story, authenticity of the acting, the liveliness of the stage arrangement, and the artistic features of the entire presentation were examined in detail. Critics appreciated the dedication and effort of the Navras Group artists, stating that the presentation not only entertained but also sparked deep contemplation.

The Navras Group artists were deeply moved after hearing such a heartfelt and in-depth review of their performance. They expressed that such analytical discussions inspired them to further deepen their theatrical practice. They also expressed their gratitude to Sanskar Bharti for providing such a valuable platform.

To elevate the dignity of the event, the presence of several distinguished guests was noteworthy. Dr. Prashant Upadhyay, Delhi Province Minister, Senior NSD theater artist Mr. Pradeep Mohanty, Mrs. Shashi Prabha Tiwari, educationist Dr. Ruchika,

and Mr. Manish Jha honored the event with their esteemed presence.

The success of the program was greatly aided by the contributions of Delhi Province's stage art coordinator Mr. Raj Upadhyay, senior theater artist Shyam Kumar, Shraboni Saha, Garima Rani, Vishwadeep, Sneha Mukherjee, Raman Kumar, Saurav Tripathi, Pradeep Pathak, Mrityunjay, Brijesh, Shivam, Sushank, and Sakshi.

The event was skillfully and warmly conducted by Bharti Dag, and Mrs. Shruti Sinha concluded the art-filled evening with a heartfelt vote of thanks.

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## **Cultural Extravaganza Marks Hindu New Year at Kala Sankul**



New Delhi, March 30, 2025- The central office of Sanskar Bharati, 'Kala Sankul,' witnessed a grand celebration on the auspicious occasion of the Hindu New Year with its Monthly Art

Symposium. The event showcased an exquisite array of Indian cultural performances, leaving the audience spellbound.

The program commenced with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp, followed by a mesmerizing Kathak performance by the Alaknanda Cultural Group, which highlighted the grandeur of the Indian classical dance tradition. Subsequently, Kuleshwar Thakur and his group captivated the audience with an enthralling Chhau dance performance, characterized by its unique style and expressive gestures.



Renowned Odissi dancer Kavita Dwivedi, addressing the gathering, emphasized that the Indian New Year is not just a date but a significant representation of cultural identity, natural lifestyle, and deep-rooted traditions.

Vijay Kumar, North Zone Organization Minister of Sanskar Bharati, elaborated on the scientific significance of the Indian New Year, highlighting seasonal transitions, the commencement of new academic sessions, financial year changes, and the overall transformation in nature. He also underscored

India's pioneering role in developing an artistic system of timekeeping, which has influenced the world. Additionally, he detailed the importance of the Indian calendar, lunar dates, and festivals.

The event saw an impressive turnout of artists, culture enthusiasts, and distinguished guests. Among the notable attendees were senior playwright J.P. Singh, theater artist Rohit Tripathi, Chandrakanta Tripathi, dancer Ritu Shree, art critic Shashi Prabha Tiwari, NSD Secretary Pradeep Mohanty, and Kathak dancer Raksha Singh DeWitt, along with several other prominent figures.

Promoting environmental conservation, Mr. Joginder distributed flower seeds and Tulsi saplings, urging attendees to plant them as a symbolic gesture for the New Year and contribute to ecological preservation.

The success of the program was attributed to the collective efforts of Delhi Province Stage Art Coordinator Raj Upadhyay, senior theater artists Shyam Kumar, Shraboni Saha, Garima, Sneha Mukherjee, Raman Kumar, Vishwadeep, Pradeep Pathak, Mrityunjay, Brijesh, Shivam, Sushank, Nandini, Kathak dancer Sakshi Sharma, Priyanka, and Sakshi. The event was expertly hosted by Bharti Dag, while symposium coordinator Shruti Sinha delivered the vote of thanks.

Sanskrit Bharati's 'Kala Sankul' continues to host such events regularly, ensuring the preservation and promotion of Indian art, culture, and traditions.

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# Celebrating Art and Culture: Highlights from the Monthly Art Symposium at 'Kala Sankul'



The monthly art symposium organized by Sanskar Bharati at its central office, 'Kala Sankul,' on Sunday, December 29, 2024, was a resounding success. This cultural gathering celebrated the diverse aspects of Indian art and culture, making it a perfect blend of education.

The symposium's highlight was the keynote address by the esteemed art critic and cultural activist, Shri Arvind Ojha Ji. His insightful discourse on "*Indian Artistic Traditions and Contemporary Art Trends*" captivated the audience. Shri Ojha eloquently explained how all art forms are interconnected and serve as powerful carriers of knowledge. He emphasized that art enhances the quality of life, restores balance during times of disruption, and brings a sense of purpose and justification to human existence. He also pointed out that

conveying knowledge through art has always been an effective method of reaching society. Shri Ojha's remark that beauty and morality have always been closely aligned in our traditions struck a deep chord with the attendees.

Adding to the charm of the event were mesmerizing stage performances. Yajyata Gaba Ji's group delivered a soul-stirring sitar recital, while Niharika Safaya and her troupe presented a vibrant dance ballet. Both performances were met with overwhelming appreciation from the assembled art connoisseurs, leaving an indelible impression.

The event attracted several prominent artists, art teachers, and a large number of art enthusiasts from across Delhi-NCR. The program was seamlessly hosted by Garima Rani, and a heartfelt vote of thanks was delivered by Vishwadeep, acknowledging the efforts of all contributors.

The success of the event was made possible by the collective efforts of numerous dedicated individuals, including Raj Upadhyay, Shyam Kumar, Pradeep Pathak, Raman Kumar, Anchal Kumari, Tarushi, Anjali Kumari, Sakshi Sharma, Saurabh Kumar, Harshit Kumar, Raman Kumar, Brajesh Vishwakarma, and Satyam Kumar. Special recognition was given to the 'Kala Sankul' management team, led by Digvijay Pandey, Mrityunjay Kumar, and Sushank, for their impeccable organization and coordination.

This symposium was not only a celebration of artistic excellence but also an inspiration for artists and cultural enthusiasts alike. By fostering greater awareness and appreciation for the arts, the event reinforced the enduring relevance of India's artistic heritage in contemporary times.

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# Divine Evening of Music and Dance at 'Shakti Mahapith' Kamakshya'



The time was just evening, the place was the courtyard of *Shakti Mahapith Kamakshya*, and the air was filled with the *Shabda Brahma* created by Pandit Ram Kumar Mallick and his team. Pandit Mallick ji, a Padmashree awardee for his contribution to the Darbhanga Gharana of Dhrupad, orchestrated the musical tapestry. The architect of that great moment was Sangeet Natak Akademi, which initiated a festival of Music and Dance titled '*Shakti*', set to resonate across all the *Shaktipiths* of India. This was the inaugural event of this series.

Listening to Dhrupad by Mallick Ji live is a rare artistic experience, and Sangeet Natak Akademi receives heartfelt

gratitude from the audience for curating such a program in Guwahati. Dhrupad, a genre of Indian classical music, is practiced by a select few artists, and public recitals are comparably infrequent. Pandit Ram Kumar Mallick, renowned in this field, is one of the prime representatives of the Darbhanga Gharana. In this concert, he was accompanied by Dr. Samit Kumar Mallick on vocal and Mr. Rishi Shankar Upadhyay on Pakhwaj.



Pandit Ram Kumar Mallick

In this concert, Pandit Mallick performed Aalap and Chautal in Raag Yaman and a Durga Vandana 'Jaya Mangala Sarba Mangal Kar Nihari'. His baritone voice, infused with the ritualistic sensitivity of prayer, transcended the earthly realm, captivating the audience. The melodious utilization of Gauhar Vani and Khandar Vani was evident in his singing. Alongside his gorgeous vocal delivery, the harmonious blend of detailed Aalap, Meed, Gamak, intricate rhythmic patterns, clear pronunciation of Bandish's verses, and other layakari, made his recital an extraordinary auditory experience. His rendition of Durga Vandana paid homage to the *Shaktipith*, his

voice echoing the strength and aesthetic beauty akin to a philosophical interpretation of a forceful waterfall on a hill, retaining its melodious appeal even after it falls on the ground. Pandit Ram Kumar Mallick's performance elevated the recital into a spiritual pilgrimage through resonant melodies.



Another significant performance was *Suknanni Ozapali* (a traditional religious song from Assam with rhythmic body movements resembling dance) and *Deodhani Nritya* by Drona Bhuyan and his ensemble. Drona Bhuyan, a leading artist of *Ozapali* and *Deodhani*, was honoured with the Padmashree by Govt of India. The presentation comprised *Ozapali*, involving singing, and *Deodhani* Dance, with Bhuyan playing the lead role in both performances as a singer and drum player in the dance. The team's performance paid tribute to Shakti through song and dance, resonating with the energetic beats of traditional drums, dynamic movements with war-fighting props, and spirited choreography, crafting a soul-stirring reverence to the Devipeeth, the eternal Shakti.



Two other performances in the evening included the Kathak Dance by Dr. Ruchi Khare and her team and Garva Dance by the Sanskar Group of Bhabnagar.

In closing, as an enthusiast of music and dance, I fervently urge Sangeet Natak Akademi to arrange another enchanting concert featuring Rudra Veena in this sacred Shaktipith.

Photo **UTAPL DATTA**

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=search&v=795010365395664>

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## **Shiva-Shakti: Divine love and**

# power personified on stage



**Ria Gupta** delivering the Bharatanatyam recital titled 'Shiva-Shakti'.

*Shiva, in Hindu philosophy, the dynamic interaction between the feminine and male energy in the cosmos is symbolized by the profound idea of Shakti. It represents the coming together of Shakti, the divine feminine energy that animates the entire creation, and Shiva, the cosmic awareness. The manifestation, maintenance, and disintegration of the universe depend on this union. Shiva Shakti encompasses a multitude of Shakti aspects or expressions, each with distinct attributes. The divine couple Shiva-Shakti, viewed from a metaphysical perspective, represents two fundamental aspects of the One: the feminine principle, which stands for Its Energy, the Force that acts in the manifested world and life itself, and the masculine principle, which represents the enduring aspect of God. Here is where Shakti is.*

It was a personification of divine power on stage as Ria Gupta, disciple of Guru Smt Sindhu Mishra, presented a Bharatanatyam recital titled 'Shiva-Shakti – The Cosmic Union'.



**Guru Sindhu Mishra** explaining the concepts of the Dance

The recital, organised by the cultural society Aayam at Delhi's LTG Auditorium, mesmerised the audience with its harmonious blend of tradition and innovation, technique and artistry.

Ria presented a compelling exploration of Shiva and Parvati, the cosmic pair representing the opposing forces of destruction and creation that form the eternal cycle of the universe. Equally compelling were the creative choreography, unusual choice of poetic texts, and juxtaposition of Carnatic and Hindustani styles of music.

Conceived and choreographed by Guru Smt Sindhu Mishra, the presentation described aspects of Shiva and Parvati through little known verses from the Ramcharitmanas. Ria's talent and training were on full display as she portrayed the contrasting deities with layered precision and emotion.

In her first solo recital, Ria proved herself as an accomplished Bharatanatyam dancer. Her passion and dedication were evident as she created an ambience of divine love and power through her nuanced abhinaya and intricate jatis.

The evening unfolded with a Ganesh Kriti, 'Ananda Narthana Ganapatim Bhaavaye'. Marked by vivacity and depth, the piece described the divine bliss emanating from Ganesha's dance, which accompanies the captivating music of the gandharvas playing the lute, mridangam and veena. The choreography was an energetic blend of rhythmic and expressive movements, executed with ease by Ria.

*Growing up, Parvati—the daughter of Himavan and Mainavati—heard stories about Lord Shiva. In addition to her curiosity about who this Shiva was, Parvati also harbored dreams of marrying him as she had begun to adore him. According to folk lore Parvati did penance for thousands of years to please Lord Shiva and woo him. Finally the Lord was pleased and married Devi Parvati!*

This aspect of the epic tale was enumerated by a Pada Varnam, created especially for this presentation. The poetry, from Baal Kand of Tulsidas' Ramcharitmanas, describes the episode where Parvati is encouraged by Narad Muni to undergo penance

in the forest to prove her love to Shiva and become his consort. Seeing this, Shiva sends the Saptarishi to test Parvati's devotion. Ria explored the narrative with intense expressions and sophisticated rhythmic patterns. Set to Ragam Shahana and Talam Adi, the composition was composed and sung by Shri Nitin Sharma.

The following piece was a Keerthanam – the well known 'Natanam Adinar'. In a vibrant rendition, Ria portrayed the joyful dance of Lord Shiva in the golden halls of Chidambaram, which was so powerful that all eight directions trembled, the head of Adishesha swayed, and drops of Ganga's water scattered all around from his matted hair. Set to Ragam Vasantha, the Shri Gopalakrishna Bharatiyar composition was sung by Shri G Elangovan.

The Padam was another unusual excerpt from Ramcharitmanas. In this, Ria explored an episode from Shiva and Parvati's wedding celebrations, where the people of Himachal, upon seeing Shiva's wedding procession, were shocked to see a terrifying band of ghosts, demons, spirits. Maena, the mother, attempted to convince Parvati into abandoning the wedding, to the extent that she was ready to give up her life for it!

*The tale of Parvati imparts to us the significance of metamorphosis. She endured great penance in order to gain Lord Shiva's favor because of her undying devotion and love. Her path of introspection and personal development highlights the capacity for transformation that exists in all of us. It motivates us to welcome change*



**Ria Gupta**

The evening concluded with a scintillating Hindolam Thillana, composed by Shri Dandayudhapani Pillai and sung by Shri G

Elangovan. The charanam was an invocation to Shiva, the lord of dance, the one whose auspicious feet are cherished by his devotees. It was a fitting end to a powerful performance, which elevated the audience with its richness and depth.

The distinguished orchestra included Shri G Elangovan on Carnatic vocals and flute, Shri Nitin Sharma on Hindustani vocals, Shri Sachin Sharma on the tabla and Dr Ramamurthy Kesavan on the mridangam. Nattuvangam was by Guru Smt Sindhu Mishra.

Ria's mastery of Bharatanatyam techniques as well as nuanced understanding of literature were evident throughout her performance. In her first solo stage appearance, she succeeded in making an impact, with her dedication and dynamism apparent. She presents yet another young artiste flowering under the tutelage of Guru Smt. Mishra.



File Photo of **Guru Sindhu Mishra** as a young Bharatanatyam Danseuse

Guru Smt Mishra distinguished herself as a performer in the

classical milieu under the guidance of eminent Gurus Shri KN Dakshinamoorthy, Shri KJ Govindarajan and Smt Kamalini Dutt. She emerged as a choreographer with a unique and compelling style, and played a vital role in conceiving, organizing and choreographing high-profile events and festivals across the country. The recipient of awards and fellowships from the central and state governments, she is also the founder of the cultural society Aayam.