



COMPANY & BIOS

SPANDA DANCE COMPANY

Spanda Dance Company, a group founded in 1995 that presents works conceived and choreographed by Leela Samson, explores group dynamics in *Bharatanatyam*. Spanda, which means a vibration or pulse, is symbolic of the enduring and perpetual energy that is the life force of the universe.

Bharatanatyam is an art-dance that connects with the earth, taking life from it and returning energy to it. It acknowledges *prithvi*, the earth, as the central source of energy in the universe, and finds resonance in the *nabha*, the womb or core, as being the energy centre of the human body.

The need to rediscover learnt vocabulary challenges and excites Spanda. While retaining the geometry, the variety and grammar of this ancient form one can reduce movement to its truest expression. Spanda deliberates text, musical traditions and movement vocabulary and exposes the dancer and viewer to the stillness within them.

Spanda seeks to establish a relevant dialogue between dance, music and stage craft.

LEELA SAMSON

Leela Samson is a dancer, teacher, writer and choreographer of Bharatanatyam. She joined Kalakshetra as a child imbibing the nuances of Bharatanatyam and related arts at the feet of celebrated gurus. Over years of independent work, her dance metamorphosed from representing the best of her alma mater into a unique personal expression, which is at once unostentatious, serene, philosophical and joyful.

A well-loved and respected teacher, Leela has trained several among today's accomplished dancers. In 1995, she formed a group called Spanda, to explore group dynamics in Bharatanatyam.

Two documentary films - Sanchari by Arun Khopkar and The Flowering Tree by Ein Lal capture her work and philosophy. She has authored several articles, as well as two books - Rhythm in Joy (1987) and Rukmini Devi: A Life (2010).

She has been honoured with the Padmashri and is a recipient of the Sangeet Natak Akademi award. She has served as Director of the Kalakshetra Foundation, as Chairperson of the Sangeet Natak Akademi and the Central Board of Film Certification.

Leela lives in Chennai, where she continues to dance, choreograph, teach and write.



NIDHEESH KUMAR

To be an alumnus of Kalakshetra - College of Arts, Chennai is something every student of dance would fantasize about. Nidheesh has been fortunate to graduate with a Diploma and Post Diploma from this temple of dance. Consequently, his stage performances have always reflected the genuineness of this art form and spectators have been appreciative of his attention to detail. In recognition of his effort he was conferred the Yuvakalabharathi by Bharath Kalachar, Chennai in the year 2015.

ASHWINI VISWANATHAN

Ashwini began learning Bharatanatyam at the age of seven from Jayanthi Subramaniam. She has also trained in abhinaya with guru Kalanidhi Narayanan. Ashwini has four master's degrees: in Economics from Stella-Maris College, in Fine Arts from Kalai Kaviri University, in Professional Accounting and in International Finance from Australia. She is the recipient of several honours, including Best Dancer award (2000-2001) from the Indian Fine Arts Society, the Lakshmi Viswanathan award (2002) from Krishna Gana Sabha, the Yuva Kala Vipanchee award, Natya Chudar and the Natanamamani from Karthik Fine Arts and the Yuva Kala Bharathi from Bharat Kalachar, as well as a scholarship from the Iyal Isai Nataka Manram. Ashwini has had the privilege of working with stalwarts of the arts, including C.V.Chandrasekar and Leela Samson. She has been a member of Spanda since 2013. She also runs her own institution Kala Sadhaka where she imparts training for young budding dancers.

B. HARIKRISHNAN

Initiated into dance at an early age, Harikrishnan started learning Bharatanatyam from Smt. Jayashree in Kerala. He has learnt both classical and folk dance forms, including kathakali, Bharatanatyam, kuchipudi and ottamthullal. He later specialised in Bharatanatyam and received intensive training at Kalakshetra, where he completed his post-graduation. While at Kalakshetra, he performed at several prestigious platforms such as the Konarak Dance Festival, the Ananya festival in Delhi and at the National Centre for Performing Arts in Mumbai. Also a teacher of Bharatanatyam, Harihrishnan has been part of Spanda since 2012 performing extensively in India and abroad at major festivals.

SATYAPRIYA MOHAN IYER

Satyapriya's love for dance brought her from Pune to Kalakshetra, where she was awarded the best outgoing student of the year award in 2009 and received a first-class diploma. She also has a post-graduate degree from the same institute. As a member of the Kalakshetra repertory, Satyapriya participated in dance dramas and Bharatanatyam margams. A teacher of Bharatanatyam, she runs her own institution. She is the recipient of several awards the latest being the Natyakala Vipanchee. She has also won the district and state level youth festival competitions in Maharashtra. Presently being a



member of Spanda dance company she's touring India and abroad and continues training and working under Leela Samson and Bragha Bessell.

RADHE JAGGI

Radhe Jaggi is a Bharatanatyam Dancer who was introduced to the art form by her mother at an early age. She underwent rigorous training under reputed gurus at the Kalakshetra Foundation, all along guided by Leela Samson. She recently received the title of "Natya Kalai Arasi" from the Tamil Isai Sangam. Radhe has performed extensively throughout India, as well as internationally in the USA, Malaysia and South Korea. Her style rests on her understanding of movement and expression obtained through her study with her teachers as well as through years of study and practice of yoga. In addition to her diploma in Bharatanatyam from Kalakshetra Foundation, she also holds a post graduate diploma in Arts Management from DakshinaChitra and has completed a course in Journalism and Business Leadership at Harvard Summer School.

SARVESHAN KUMAR

Sarveshan Kumar is a young, dynamic Bharatanatyam artist from Cape Town, South Africa, currently based in Chennai. In a society where dance does not share equal respect as mainstream professions, Sarveshan carries marvelous devotion, commitment and steadfastness in pursuing his dreams. He upholds the values and ideals of Indian culture in a time where these are being increasingly absent. Sarveshan brings much needed expertise to help bring about a revival of the ever dwindling appreciation for the classical arts in South Africa. Having imbibed the best of The Dhananjayans and other creative minds such as Veenai Karaikudi Subramanian, Leela Samson, Maxwell Xolani Rani, Joaquin Ruiz, Savitri Naidoo and Alfred Hinkel, Sarveshan continues to explore the potential of classical and contemporary art forms through performing, teaching and choreographing."