

CHAPTER - 2

CLASSICAL DANCE AND GUJARAT

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2.1 RENOWNED CLASSICAL DANCERS AND GURUS OF GUJARAT:

2:1:1 Kavungal Chathunni Panicker:



Figure 2.1.1 Kavungal Chathunni Panicker

Kavungal Chathunni Panicker was an Indian classical dancer, born in 1922 in Thichur near Vadakkancherry in Thrissur district in Kerala, was known for his proficiency

in Kathakali dance style. He was an exponent of the Kavungal School of Kathakali (Kavungal Kalari). Kavungal School of Kathakali is noted for its rigorous training methods. It is also known for its overt physical interpretation of *abhinaya*. He is known to have brought innovations in the dance form, especially in the decorative movements known as *kalasam*. He has majorly contributed in the development of grammar and costumes for the 'Kavungal School'. He started learning Kathakali at the age of eleven in 1933, from Sankara Panicker, his uncle, for three years and later from Katambur Gopalan Nair. He gave his first performance in 1936 at the age of 14. At the age of 20 years he formed his own troupe.¹

In 1947, Panicker and his troupe gave a performance in Ooty, a hill station in Tamilnadu, where he met Vikram Sarabhai and Mrinalini Sarabhai. Next year he received invitation from Mrinalini Sarabhai to join her institution 'Darpana', as its principal. He accepted the offer and stayed with 'Darpana' till his retirement in 1985. He travelled with the Darpana group, performed in the group's experimental productions such as 'Manushyam' and in various countries around the world. He continued his Kathakali performance during his stay at Ahmedabad. He gave several brilliant performances such as Hanuman in 'Kalyana Saugandhikam' and 'Thoranayudham', 'Raudrabhima' in 'Duryodhana Vadham' and *Kattala* (Hunter) in 'Nalacharitam' and 'Kirthanam'. After returning to Kerala, he tried to establish a school for Kathakali, but suffered a stroke. Chathunni Panicker died on 29 November 2007, due to illness in Erumapetty, near his native village of Thichur, leaving his wife, two children and many disciples. He is a recipient of the 'Sangeet Natak Akademi Award' in 1973. He received 'Gujarat Sangeet Natak Akademi Award' and 'Kerela Sangeet Natak Akademi Award' in 2004. He was honored again in 2006, with the fourth highest Indian civilian award of 'Padma Shri' by the Government of India. He was one of the early pioneers to bring Kathakali to Gujarat.²

2:1:2 Guru Shri Pathagudy S. Ramaswamy

(The following information is given by Shri Bijoy Anand Shivram)

Guru Pattakudi Ramaswamy was a renowned scholar and Guru of Bharatanatyam dance style. He belonged to a Brahmin family from a small place called Pattakudi in South India. Guru Shri Pathagudy S. Ramaswamy was born in Karaikal, a French colony at one

time, in Tamil Nadu on 15th May, 1927. He graduated from Pondicherry with French as his medium of learning. At a very young age he started his training in Carnatic music under the guidance of Shri S.G. Kasi Iyer and Shri Chidambaram Nataraja Sundaram Pillai. He then underwent *Gurukulavasam* for seven years and learnt Bharatanatyam under Guru Shri Cheyyur S. Manickam Pillai. Manikyam. Pattakudi Ramaswamy continued with the teaching of *Cheyyur Bani* as a professional artist. He started to accompany many dancers as a *Nattuvnar*. The Cheyyur style is very similar to the Pandanallur style of Bharatanatyam.



2.1.2 Guru Shri Pathagudy S. Ramaswamy

He started his teaching career in 1952 at Madras and taught a lot of students. Some of them are well known artists today, like the Kerala Sisters, Ponvayay Susheela, Nirmala,

Mala, Sasikala, Ranipeta, Hema Malini, Padmini, Priya Darshini, Laxmirajam, Kalaimathi, Nagpur Sisters, Jayshree, Jaya, Uma and Thangamani.

He later joined 'Darpana Academy' in 1969 and served till 1989. He taught a number of students here and travelled worldwide with the academy artists. In 1989 at the request of Shri C. R Pathak, Director of 'Swastik Schools', he started the 'Swastik School of Performing Arts' and served as a Principal till his sudden death on 13th September 1997.

A great Guru, Choreographer, *Nattuvanar* and vocalist, he dedicated his life to dance. He won the hearts of many across the globe. He received many awards such as the 'Natya Kala Ratna' at Madurai in 1957. He was honoured with 'Bharata Kala Praveena' from the 'Nateshwara Academy of Indian Classical Dance & Music', Baden, Switzerland in 1993. He was invited as an examiner at Performing Arts College of The M.S. University for nine years and also by the Andhra University. He received the Gujarat State Sangeet Natak Academy “Gaurav Puraskar” in 1995.

He was regularly invited with his senior disciples for performances at the Chidambaram Natyanjali Festival. Some of his prominent students in the later years were Bijoy Shivram, Sarmishtha Sarkar, Sandhya Ram, Jyothi Ramesh, Darshini Upadhyay, Bhairavi Koshia, Neha Patel, Shobha Poonam Raval, Vanitha Nagrajan, Shashidharan Nair, Vijayrao of Switzerland and many more. His major choreographies were 'Azhaghar Kuravanji', 'Om Sharavana Bhava', 'Om Namah Shivaya', 'Pakshin' and 'Uttara'.

2:1:3 Kumudini Lakhia

Kumudini Lakhia is regarded as a sensitive and sophisticated choreographer; innovator, scholar and expert of Kathak Dance. She has dedicated her lifetime for the Indian Classical Dance Kathak. She was born in a Maharashtrian family on 17th May 1930. She learnt dance and music both. She learnt dance from various Gurus of Jaipur Gharana including Pandit Shri Sunder Prasad of Jaipur Gharana and Pandit Shambhu Maharaj, a stalwart of the Lucknow Gharana of Kathak. She began her career dancing with Ram Gopal. She toured in the Western countries with him, and they propagated Indian dance in the West. She gradually became a dancer and choreographer in her own right. Two people who influenced and inspired her in her journey to be a brilliant dancer were Pandit

Birju Maharaj and Keshava Kothari in Delhi. When she left Delhi, she had honed her skill as a Kathak dancer and acquired a deep sense of appreciation of the aesthetics and all aspects of Kathak dance. She wanted to translate into the dance, the many experiences she had gained while she was exposed to a variety of dance forms when she performed abroad. She wanted to add shape and movements to her emotions and expressions.³



2.1.3 Kumudini Lakhia

After her marriage, she settled in Ahmedabad. She established 'Kadamb' in Ahmedabad, to train students in Kathak dance style and to propagate Kathak dance style through her choreographies. 'Kadamb' reflects her views of teaching. One of these is that

teacher should be a link between the old and the new. She has trained many students like Sandhya Desai, Aditi Mangaldas, Vaishali Trivedi, Daksha Sheth, Prashant Shah, Sanjukta Sinha, Maulik Shah, Ishira Shah, Anjali Patil and Parul Shah. She treats each student as an individual. She does not believe in making zerox copies. She was a Visiting Cornell Professor at Swarthmore College in the academic year 2012-21013.⁴

As Kumudini Lakhia evolved, her ideas began to crystallize, for what she wanted to present and express through the frame work of Kathak. She introduced many innovations in the various productions. Kumudini Lakhia started group choreography and has choreographed more than 60 productions. Some of her excellent choreographies and productions are 'Variations in Thumri' (1969), 'Hori' (1970), 'Davindha' (1971), 'Kolaahal' (1971), 'Duvidha' (1971), 'Dhabkar' (1973), 'Dhabkar' (1973), 'Yugal' (1976), 'Atahkim' (1982), 'Bhajan' (1985), 'Okha Haran' (1990), 'Hun-Nari' (1993), 'Sam Samvedan' (1993), 'Samanvay' (2003), 'Bhav Krida' (1999), 'Mushti' (2005) and many more.⁵

The 'Kadamb' group has executed several performances in India and abroad. The countries in which they have performed include USA, UK, USSR, Germany, Portugal, Indonesia, Thailand, Mongolia, China, Korea, Pakistan, Brazil, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan. She has received many awards and honours such as the 'Padma Shri', 'Kalidas Samman', 'Nagar Bhushan', 'Omkarnath Thakore Award', 'Ahmedabad City Award', the 'Gujarat State Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for dance' in 1978, the 'Sangeet Natak Akademi Award' (1982), and the Padma Bhushan in 2010. Shrimati Kumudini Lakhia is elected 'Tagore Fellow of Sangeet Natak Akademi for her contribution to Indian dance'.⁶

2:1:4 Dharamshi Shah

Kathak exponent Dharamshi Shah at his 'Kalakshetra Academy' in Bhavnagar, Gujarat, teaches Kathak to anyone who loves classical dance, whether a five-year old or an elderly learner. Shah was born on 5th April 1921 to a Jain couple in Mandvi town of Kutch district in Gujarat. His parents died when he was still a child. He later came to Bhavnagar where he was admitted to Dakshinamurti School. The turning point in his life was a visit to Bhavnagar by legendary classical dancer Uday Shankar. In 1935, the Maharaja of Bhavnagar, Krishnakumarsinhji, invited Uday Shankar to perform in

Bhavnagar. He was impressed and inspired by Uday Shankar's performance and decided to become a dancer. That time dancing was considered an activity only for women. He belonged to a trading community, so it was a difficult path he had chosen. People made fun of him initially and called him by various names. But he ignored people's comments and was more determined to continue with his decision. He made people aware about the glories of the divine art of dance. Slowly people began to understand him and began to respect Indian dance. He learned various other classical Indian dance forms, including Odissi, Bharatanatyam, Kathakali and Manipuri, among others. He received training at Shantiniketan, Calcutta, and Uday Shankar cultural center, Almora. The renowned actor Zohra Sehgal was a dance teacher at Almora. He took training under the great Uday Shankar and Guru Moolshankar Bhatt. He learnt Kathak from Pandit Sunderlal Gangani, Baroda, Bharatanatyam from Shri Rajgopalan, Chennai, Kathakali from Shri Kunjunayak Valankada (Malabar) and Odissi from Shri Kelucharan Mahapatra and Shri Raghunath Dutt.⁷

His Guru, Moolshankar Bhatt, asked him to create a culture for classical Indian dance in Bhavnagar. He dedicated his life to this task. He decided to live in Bhavnagar, and propagate Indian Classical dance style. In 1945, he opened his Kathak School, 'Kalakshetra', with just one student in a small room in the town. Eventually hundreds of students joined at this academy to learn dance. In the year 1985, all the parents of his students collected money and built a spacious room, so that he could teach dance more comfortably. He could manage to create respect for dance in Society. He was a perfectionist as a teacher and use to give attention to the minutest details. He created a culture for art in Bhavnagar. 'Kalakshetra' is now affiliated to Akhil Bhartiya Gandharva Mahavidyalaya, Mumbai. He was assisted by his student Jigar Bhatt in teaching dance. His tireless efforts to popularize Kathak among the people of Bhavnagar have earned him a place in the Limca Book of Record as the oldest teacher of classical dance in the country. Shah has received many awards, including "Gaurav Puraskar" and "Pandit Omkarnath Award". In 2005, the Akhil Bharatiya Gandharva Mahavidyalaya Mandal, Mumbai bestowed on him the title "Mahamahopadhyay". He died at the age of 98 in Bhavnagar. Around 150 female students carried the body to the cremator. He used to dance for many hours daily despite his age.⁸

2:1:5 Dr. Mallika Sarabhai:



2.1.4 Dr. Mallika Sarabhai

Dr. Mallika Sarabhai is one of India's leading choreographers, dancers, actress and a social activist from Ahmedabad, Gujarat. She has a Ph.D. in organisational behaviour. She was born on 9th May 1954. She is the daughter of a classical dancer Mrinalini Sarabhai and space scientist Vikram Sarabhai.⁹

Mallika is an accomplished Kuchipudi and Bharatanatyam dancer and performer. She has been the co-director of the institution, 'Darpana, Academy of Performing Arts' which was created by Mrinalini Sarabhai. In 1977, she took over as the honorary director of 'Darpana Academy of Performing Arts'. She has used the arts for many social activity and transformation. She is soloist and has performed in many Dance Dramas in leading role. She performs in India and many countries in the world with her company 'Darpana'. She has created many classical and contemporary works. Mallika Sarabhai has worked in

many Hindi and Gujarati films. Mallika Sarabhai has performed in many dance dramas choreographed by Mrinalini Sarabhai as a leading dancer. She got a lot of appreciation for the role of 'Draupadi', which she played in the play 'The Mahabharata' of Peter Brook.¹⁰

She has choreographed many productions on social causes. The first production that she choreographed was 'Shakti: The Power of Women', which was related to women empowerment. Other productions that she choreographed are 'Sitas Daughters', 'Colours of heart', 'Unsuni', 'An Idea Named Meera', 'In Search of the Goddess', 'Svakranti: The Revolution Within', 'Women with broken wings', 'Kadak Badshahi' and many more. Her production, 'Sitas Daughters' has been performed for more than 500 times in many different countries. She is a social activist and has worked for many causes related to women like education and women empowerment.¹¹

Mallika Sarabhai is also a writer. She writes for Indian national press, magazines, and has written many scripts on many social causes. She has performed in all the major cities of India and many countries abroad like France, North America, Australia, Japan, Scotland, China and many more. She has also anchored many shows on Television. Mallika has also used film and television for many social issues related to women and environment. Through 'Darpana Communications', she has been responsible for the production of three thousand hours of TV broadcast programming, all of which have been shown through Doordarshan, Gujarati. She has received many awards and recognition for her contribution in the field of Dance. She got the 'Golden Star Award' as a best Dance Soloist at the 'Theatre De Champs Elysees', in Paris in 1977. Government of Gujarat awarded her with 'Gaurav Puraskar' for the contribution in the field of drama and dance. She received the 'Padma Bhushan' from the Government of India¹².

2:1:6 Smt. Maheswari Nagarajan

Smt. Maheshwari Nagarajan is one of the very few artists who come from the traditional family. For her art is a lifestyle rather than being a profession. She was born on 5th March 1947 in Madras, Tamil Nadu. She was born in the city of art and culture with every member of the family being an artist. Her grandfather was a great violinist, father was a great actor and sisters are well versed in the field of dance and music. This was

more than enough to make an atmosphere which was conducive to learning art. She won various competitions of different cultural activities at a young age. She took proper training in the field of art.

She received basic training of different classical dance forms from Guru Shri Gemini Ramamurthy. She received her training in Bharatanatyam from great Gurus like Guru Shri Ganesham Pillai and Guru Shri Arunachalam Pillai. She took training for eight years under *Guru-Shishya Parampara* from Guru Shri Adayar K. Laksmanan. She studied Carnatic vocal music and Veena at the Central Collage of Carnatic Music at Madras and received 'Isaikalimani' title. She completed her diploma from 'Kalakshetra'.

At a tender age of ten, she started performing and when she was 16– much before attending 'Kalakshetra' for formal training – she had already started teaching. More than half a century later, she keeps herself busy performing and training students with same enthusiasm.

She was the pillar of strength to her husband Late Shri M. V. Nagarajan, who was an eminent artist in the field of music and dance, after he established his own school 'Nritya KalaKendra' at Adyar (Chennai) in 1976. 'Nritya Kala Kendra' trained hundreds of students with many graduating and going on to become famous dancers and performers. Impressed by the performance and teaching abilities, the Director of 'Darpana Academy' Smt. Mrinalini Sarabhai invited her to join the Academy in 1980. Over the span of 30 years in 'Darpana', she trained many students, choreographed many dance items and dance dramas for Mallika Sarabhai and the academy and also participated as a lead vocalist and 'Nattuvanar' in major festivals in India and abroad.

She re-established 'Nritya Kala Kendra' in Ahmedabad in 1997. The school has produced many well versed artists from India and abroad. As a teacher she has rendered her services for more than 30 years in Ahmedabad, where she has trained number of students from India and abroad and has also completed *Arangetrals* of more than 1750 students. She has trained students like Uma Ananthani, Dolly Desai, Sarmishtha Sarkar and Bharat Baria, who are doing remarkable work in the field of classical dance. Contributing herself to this beautiful art form globally, she has trained 25 foreign students to reach the *Arangetram* level, some of them have opened their own institutions in India and abroad. Ms. Kyoko Miura established 'Nritya Kala Kendra' in Japan. Her students

have performed in many prestigious festivals in India like 'Kalidasa Festival', 'Swami Haridas Festival', 'Khajuraho Festival', 'Elephanta Festival', 'December Arts Festival' in Madras, 'Soorya Festival' and many more. Her troupe has performed abroad in festivals like, 'CIEOFF Festival' (Europe), 'Singapore Arts Festival', 'Perth Festival' (Australia), 'Lisbon Arts Festival' (Portugal), 'Chakra Festival' (London), U.S.A, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Dubai tours.

Some of her students continue to receive National Level Scholarships under CCRT.

The center trains students in Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi and Folk dances of India and Carnatic music. Her center takes children to visit various hospitals and orphanages where they entertain the patients with various forms of art. The center conducted workshop for mentally challenged children. She has created a performing group and choreographed many dance dramas. She has been awarded the prestigious 'Gaurav Puraskar' by the Honorable chief Minister of Gujarat. She has received the 'Sangeet Natak Academy Award'. She has been awarded the 'Udgam Women Achiever's Award'. She has also received award from ETV for her commendable contribution to the field of art. Her daughter Vanita Nagarajan has also devoted her life to Indian classical dances as a choreographer, dance teacher and a freelance performer.

2:1:7 Smita Shastri:

Smita Shastri started taking training in Bharatanatyam classical dance from a very tender age of 4 years. Her father, Mukutbhai Shah, who was a well-known doctor and had a deep interest in reading, dance, music and other art forms, encouraged her a lot to learn dance. She learnt Bharatanatyam under the guidance of Shri Kitappa Pillai and Guru Shri Chatunni Paniker at 'Darpana Academy' in Ahmedabad. She did her *Arangetral* in 1962. She performed and participated in many dance programmes. She was a student of Gujarat University and she won first prize in classical dance event in youth festival organized by the university. In 1964, she won the first prize in classical dance event in the 9th All India inter-university youth festival which was held in Delhi.¹³



2.1.5 Smt. Smita Shastri

In 1963, she started learning Kuchipudi style from the great Guru Shri C. R. Acharyalu. She was a very sincere student, so Shri C. R. Acharyalu taught her some rare and difficult compositions like “*Ganesh Kavutvam*”, “*Mayura Kavutvam*”, “*Simhanandini Nrityam*”, “*Mahalaxmi Udbhavam*” (*Alaya Nrutyams*), “*Sandhya Tandavam*”, and “*Manduka Shabdam*”.

In 1971, she started her dance institute ‘Nartan School of Classical Dances’, to give training in Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi dance style. She has trained numerous students in the Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi dance style in her institute. Her students are propagating Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi dance style in different cities of India and also abroad like her senior student Smt. Rita Chokshi in Surat and Smt. Ritu Daga in Kansas City, U.S.A. She has been imparting training in Kuchipudi dance for many years. In 2007 she started a classical dance competition for the age group of 16 to 24 years, “Lila Mukut Nartan Vijaypadma”, to encourage students of Classical Dance.¹⁴

2:1:8 Smt. Ratna Ghosh

Smt. Ratna Ghosh is a very senior Odissi dancer, teacher and choreographer. She is a very senior student of Guru Shri Kelucharan Mahapatra. She had performed in many programmes of Guru Shri Kelucharan Mahapatra in many cities in India. She had performed in many programmes with the legendary dancer Smt. Sanjukta Panigrahi. Her dance style was also similar to Sanjukta Panigrahi's dance style. After marriage she has settled in Anand. She conducted her private classes in Anand, and trained many students in Odissi dance style. She was one of the first few dancers to teach Odissi in Gujarat. The present researcher learnt Odissi from Ratna Ghosh at Anand.

2:1:9 Dr. Uma Anantani:

Dr. Uma Yashesh Anantani is a scholar, educator and Choreographer. She has a Master's degree in English Literature; she later received her Master's degree in Bharatanatyam from the 'Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya', Mumbai University and obtained Ph.D. in Aesthetics under the guidance of Padmabhushan Dr. Kanak Rele. She is the former Principal of J G College of Performing Arts, Gujarat. Uni. Ahmedabad, and a recipient of Senior National fellowship of Government of India, for researching the *Nayikas* in *Bhakti* Songs of Narasimha Mehta, with special reference to the *Natyashastra*.

Uma's dance philosophy and teaching pedagogy reflect her long academic experience as well as choreographic activities under the aegis of 'Rasadhvani', a performing arts institution in Ahmedabad that she has established in 1990. She has several productions to her credit, based on Sanskrit and Vedic literature and that of other languages including English and has redefined mythology in her dance productions namely 'Shodashopachar', 'Rasaraj Krishna', 'Gopi Geet', 'Rasaranjani Devi', extracts of entire 'Geet Govindam', 'Nartanmay Kavan' (poems of saint poets of Gujarat) 'Abhangas', 'Ekanek', Umashankar Joshi's poem- 'Shabari', Ode to Peace, Auravindo's 'Savitri', 'Vishvodbhavam', 'Tat- Sat', 'Panchali from Fire to Fire', (based on an English Novel by Chitra Divakaruni), 'Aatithya', 'Daridra Charudattam', poems of contemporary poets like

Rajendra Shukla, Madhav Ramanuj, Rituparna Ghosh along with traditional repertoire with fresh dimension to name a few.



2.1.6 Smt. Uma Anantani

On the invitation of Govt. of Gujarat she has extended her service as Show Director and choreographer to 'Vibrant Navaratri' and 'Ranotsav Events' since 2003. Under the auspices of Govt. of India and State Govt. Uma has organized various seminars, festivals, produced thematic productions, visited few countries and have presented papers in national seminars. Many of her students are continuously performing at national festivals and international forums. Dr. Uma's Dance productions reflect her versatility and her interest in music, literature, theatre, folk dance, and spirituality. Dr. Anantani is a 'Gaurav Puraskar' recipient of the Gujarat Government. She has been honored for her contribution in Sanskrit by Shri Kanchi Kamkoti Pithha (Kanchi), Shri Amrutam Veda Sanskrit Pathshala (Shola), 'Marakand Bhatt Memorial' (Vadodara), Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, to name a few.

2:1:10 Smt. Harinakshi Desai (Dolly Desai)



2.1.7 Harinakshi Desai

Smt. Harinakshi Desai is a renowned Bharatanatyam dancer. She is known as “Dolly Desai” off stage. She is a disciple of Guru Elakshiben Thakore of Ahmedabad and Padmabhushan Guru Shri V.P. Dhananjayan of Chennai. She is a degree holder of “Nritya Alankar” (M.A.) Gold Medalist in Bharatanatyam. She is a recipient of the Gujarat State award ‘Gaurav Puraskar’ of the year 2003 for her contribution in the field of classical dance. She was also felicitated by the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation as an ‘Outstanding Artist of the City’ in the year 2013. She founded her own dance institute ‘Bharatkalanjali School of Dance’ (Ahmedabad) in the year 1984. Many have completed

‘Rangpravesham’ under her able guidance. She established herself as a professional dancer and performed all over India and countries like Italy, Germany and Ethiopia. She has performed at many prestigious festivals and events like, National Festival of Dance and Music at Kalidas Samaroh in the year 1991 and 1998, in the year 2014 in Ujjain, at Modhera- ‘Uttarardh’ National festival of classical dance in 2002 and 2004, at Somnath Temple for the event 'Seminar of Gujarati and Sanskrit literature', in Amreli in the 'All India Sanskrit Seminar' and at Moraribapu’s Chitrakootdham in 1997 and 2014. Doordarshan- Ahmedabad has recorded and transmitted her many performances.

She has conceived, scripted, choreographed and performed many dance dramas on different subjects related to social issues and based on classical literature like Aartanad, on the issue of Dowry, 'Uttarayan' showing three different stages of human life interrelated with “Kite”. Her dance drama 'Madhav Geetam' was based on the Spiritual love of Radha & Krishna, on the poems of the renowned *Bhaktkavis* of Gujarat, her dance drama 'Ramayan' is a unique creation with Uttar Hindustani music. This dance drama was created for 'All India Sanskrit Seminar', performed in front of great scholars of Sanskrit at Amreli. Later it was also performed at “Mahuva” on invitation of the great kathakar of Ramayan – Shree Moraribapu. Her production ‘Ashta Swaroopa’ is from very well-known play by Kalidas, ‘Abhigyan Shakuntal’, which was performed at Ujjain at 'KALIDAS SAMAROH' -National Festival of Dance and Music. Her dance drama, 'Shivastuti' is based on the work of Poet Hemachandracharya’s 'Shivstuti', choreographed and performed at Somnath Temple for the 'Gujarat Sanskrit Meet'. She specially choreographed dance drama Ashtanayika for Doordarshan, Ahmedabad. Her latest production is ‘Shree Ramnatakam’ which was performed at Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar. She has immensely contributed in the field of Sanskrit Theatre. She has worked as visiting faculty for the two years diploma course in ‘Sanskrit’ Theatre’ at Ahmedabad. She was appointed as a director of ‘Angika Abhinaya’ and ‘Aaharya Abhinaya’ by the doyen of the Sanskrit theatre in Gujarat, late Prof. Shri Goverdhan Panchal, for his three Productions namely 'Dootvakyam', 'Bhagvad Ajjukiyam' and 'Prabuddha Rohineyam' in *Natyashastric* style.

2:1:11 Shri Bijoy Anand Shivram



2.1.8 Bijoy Anand Shivram

Shri Bijoy Anand Shivram started his training in classical dance at a very young age in Bharata Natyam and Kuchipudi. He has trained under renowned Gurus like Guru Smt. Kalamandalam Mythili in Chennai, Gurus Shri Bhasker Menon & Smt. Radha Bhasker at Mudra School of Classical Dances, Ahmedabad and Mrinalini Sarabhai's 'Darpana Academy' where he trained under Guru Shri Pathagudy S. Ramaswamy and Smt. Maheshwari Nagarajan and Smt. Radha Ramchandran in the *Guru Shishya Parampara*. Born in 1961, he has since 1980 been giving performances all over the world as an accomplished classical and folk dancer. In 1993 he created a record by giving 144 performances in 120 days that he toured Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland. He has performed all over India and abroad in countries like USA, Canada, UK, France, Spain, Italy, Luxembourg, Holland, Germany, Belgium, Portugal, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Moscow, Leningrad, Odense, Kiev, Japan and Muscat and many more. Bijoy in 1991 started 'PREKSHA' for the Promotion of Art & Culture to create a platform for upcoming artists and invite renowned artists to Ahmedabad for workshops and performances.

Bijoy has also directed and produced many dance-dramas like, 'Pakshin', 'Khoj', 'Aakanksha', 'Adi Sankaracharya', 'Keshav Maya', 'Meera' and many more on various themes including mythology and various social issues.

He has been honoured with many honours and awards like, the "*Sringar Mani*" title by the 'Sur Sringar Samsad', Mumbai, the First Prize from the Gujarat State for Sangeet Natak Dance Competition, Stood First consecutively for two years at The M.S. University youth festival. In 2007 he was awarded the prestigious '*Gaurav Puraskar*' by the hands of Smt. Anandiben Patel through the Government of Gujarat – Sangeet Natak Academy. He was one of the three non-Gujaratis and the only Keralite to receive it that year. In 2013 the Mayor of Ahmedabad Shri Asit Vora and the Municipal Commissioner of Ahmedabad Shri Guruprasad Mohapatra bestowed on Bijoy the highest award of the city '*Sanskar Chora Award*' at the Narsinh Mehta Arena during the celebrations of Ahmedabad's 603rd birthday.

In the past 50 years he has performed and given many solo and group performances at many festivals such as the 'Tagore Festival' in Japan, 'Festival of India' in USSR, 'Meera Festival' in Udaipur and Chittorgarh, the 'Midhilalaya Festival' in Trivandrum, the 'Brahmotsavam' at Hyderabad, 'Kalidas Sammelan', Ujjain and also at the prestigious Tata Theatre, NCPA. He has given performances for the Leprosy patients, dialysis patients, and spastic children. His latest production 'Adi Sankaracharya' received very good reviews in London, Ohio-USA, and in India. Bijoy at present is working as the Vice Principal at the J G College of Performing Arts, Ahmedabad and as Asst. Director (Operations). Through him the college has performed in Spain, UK and the US at prestigious venues and the college has received rare reviews for the performances. Bijoy has been a Senate Member of the Gujarat University. He was elected uncontested, a Member of Gujarat State Sangeet Natak Academy, Gandhinagar, a member of Lions Club International and has been the President of Lions Club of Ahmedabad South in 2011. He was commended for great leadership during his tenure, a Trustee of 'Sankhya Charitable Trust', a Mumbai based trust headed by renowned classical dancer Vaibhav Arekar, a Member of the 'Gujarat State Lalit Kala Academy', Ahmedabad, Assistant Director, (Operations) of the 18 Colleges under JG Group of Colleges.

2:1:12 Ishira Maulik



2.1.9 Maulik Shah and Ishira Parikh

Maulik Shah and Ishira Parikh are Kathak dancers from Ahmedabad. They are renowned dancers and choreographers, having exceptional command over the *nritta* and *nritya* aspect of Kathak dance style. Together they have choreographed many innovative dance compositions in Kathak dance style, like ‘Nar Nari’, ‘Megh’, ‘Splendour’ and ‘Deewangee’. In the year 1995, they created a school named ‘Anart’ to train students in Kathak dance style. They have trained a number of students in their institute. They conduct the Kathak appreciation course at institutes like the 'Department of Tourism and School of Architecture', Ahmedabad. Ishira is very creative and innovative artist; she has written poems, songs and scripts for her dance compositions.¹⁵

They have performed at many festivals throughout India in many events and prestigious festivals. They have performed in more than 30 countries around the world. The India Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) New Delhi has designated both Maulik and Ishira as artists of outstanding category. They have performed in many prestigious events like Asian games in China, the event ‘India Night’ in Germany to celebrate 50 years of independence of India, in the 25th 'Khajuraho Dance Festival'. They were invited in the event ‘Indo-European Dance Encounter’, which was the part of German Festival in India at NCPA – Mumbai. They performed in the closing ceremony of the festival of India

in Russia, which was held at the Kremlin Theatre in Moscow, in a Kathak ballet as principal dancers.¹⁶

They are “Top” grade artists on “Doordarshan”. Their production “Roopamati Bazabahdur” was telecast nationwide, which was recorded by Central Production Centre (New Delhi). They have received many prestigious awards like the “Sringarmani” award by 'Sursringar Samsad' and “Navdeep” award by 'Navdeep Pratisthan', for their achievements and contribution in the field of Kathak Dance. They were honoured by Pramukh Swamiji for having choreographed all the dances of 'Mahila Diwas' during their '*Shatabdi Mahotsav*' (100 years' celebrations) in Ahmedabad wherein people in lakhs came from all over the world. They have contributed hugely in Ahmedabad by training many students in the Kathak dance style. They have propagated Kathak dance style in India and abroad through their unique compositions.¹⁷

2:1:13 Vanitha Nagarajan

Vanitha Nagarajan is a Bharatanatyam dancer, teacher and choreographer based at Ahmedabad. She was born on 29th May 1972 in Madras, Tamil Nadu. Vanitha Nagarajan hails from a family of artistes. She is the daughter of Bharatanatyam Guru M. V Nagarajan and Maheshwari Nagarajan who were trained in 'Kalakshetra' Chennai. She has taught as a senior Guru at the 'Darpana Academy', Ahmedabad. She received basic training in Bharatanatyam dance form from Guru Shri. M. V Nagarajan, Guru Shri Kittappa Pillai and Guru Shri Pathagudi Ramaswamy. She received training in Kuchipudi from Guru Shri Vempatti Chinasatyam in Chennai and Guru Shri C. R. Acharayalu in Ahmedabad. She learned basics of 'Mohiniattam' from Kalamandalam Sita Sridhar and Odissi from Smt. Priyamvada Rai. She received training in folk dance from Guru Chandrahas Shikari and Guru Bhagavanbhai. She completed *Visharadh* and *Nritya Alankar* from 'Akhil Bharatiya Gandhavar Vidhayalay' in Bharatanatyam dance style. She completed MPA from Bharathi Dasan University.

She has conducted Workshops in Bharatanatyam in Ireland, Australia, Portugal, South Africa and UK. She has travelled widely and performed in several dance festivals including 'Kalidas Festival' and 'Omkareshwar Festival' in Ujjain, 'Natyanjali Festival' in

Chidhambaran, 'Elephanta Festival', 'Singapore Arts Festival', 'Lisbon Arts Festival' in Portugal, 'Perth Festival' in Australia and 'Chakra Festival' in London. She is a panel artist for Doordarshan Gujarat. She has propagated Bharatanatyam in various countries like Central and South America, UK, Singapore, Australia, Dubai, Bahrain, Honk Kong, Portugal, Australia, Israel, Egypt, South Africa, Japan and Greece.

She has received many awards and honours like, 'Natya Kala Bhushanam' in 1984, 'Shringaramani' title in 1990, 'Aaj Ke Kalakar' title in 1999 and received 'Nrityakalashiromani Award' in 2003. In 1997 she started teaching at her mother's academy, "Nritya Kala Kendra", in Ahmedabad. She. At present she is training students in various art forms including Bharatanatyam and folk dance. She is working as a visiting lecturer in JG College of performing Arts and also at Gujarat University.

2:1:14 Dr. Ayswaria Warior



2.1.10 Ayswaria Warior

‘Kalashree’ Dr. Ayswaria Wariar is a Mohiniattam dancer, educator, research scholar and a choreographer. She hails from the family of artistes. She was initiated into the art of classical dance at a tender age of 5 years, by her mother Shreebala Menon. Subsequently she was trained in two dance styles namely Bharatanatyam and Mohiniattam, by eminent Gurus such as Dr. Sucheta Bhide Chapekar, Udhayogamandal Vikram, and Kalamandalam Saraswati. Ayswaria learnt the finer aspects of *netrabhinaya* from Margi Usha. She obtained guidance in 'Sopana Sangeetham' under Padmabhushan Shree Kavalam Narayan Panikar. Ayswaria Wariar has performed extensively in India and abroad. She has been honoured with several awards.

In 2019 she was awarded Ph.D. from Bharatidhasan University, Tiruchirappali. In 2018 she was awarded senior research fellowship by the Department of Culture, New Delhi. In 2017 she was empanelled in the Ministry of Culture for 'Festival of India'. In 2015 she received A grade as an artist of Doordarshan. She has made immense contribution in increasing the awareness and appreciation of Mohiniattam outside Kerala, through her performances, talks and writings. Currently she is working with Indira Gandhi National Center Arts, Government of India, as the Regional Director, for the Regional Center, Vadodara. She has received many awards like ‘Kalashri’ from 'Kerela Sangeet Natak Akademi', Government of Kerala, 'Shashimani Devi Puraskar', 'Devadasi Nritya Mandap Bhubneshwara', and 'Yuva Shreshtha Kala Puraskar'. Her notable choreographies are 'Bherkar Bherkar Jogmaya', 'Shakti' and 'Shakuntala'. She has performed in many festivals like 'Uttaradh Utsav', 'Modhera Festival' Gujarat, 'Uttara Purva Nritya Parva', 'Central Sangeet Natak Akademi', Agarthala, 'Navratri Mahotsavam', and in many festivals abroad in countries like Bhutan, South Korea, Malasiya, and UAE. She is the Artistic Director of 'Nrityodaya School of Classical Dance', which she established in 1997. She has trained more than 500 students till now. She has given lectures and conducted workshops in many schools, universities and institutions. She is the curator of “Nrityaslavam”, 'Dance and Music Festival'.

2:1:15 Shri Jignesh Surani

Shri Jignesh Surani is a dancer, performer, choreographer and educationalist based at Rajkot. He has done Master's course in Bharatanatyam from the 'Upasana School

of Performing Arts', Ahmedabad. He has also done, 'Alankar' in Bharatanatyam from 'Akhil Bharatiya Gandharava Mahavidhyalaya' and 'Visharad in Kathak' from 'Bruhad Gujarat Sangeet Samiti'. He has learnt Bharatanatyam from Gurus like Smt. Maheshwari Nagarajan, Smt. Radha Bhaskar Menon, Smt. Khamma Shah, Shri Bijoy Shivram, Smt. Vanita Nagarajan and Shri Vaibhav Arekar. He is the founder and director of 'Tandav Nartan' the institute of Classical dance in Rajkot. He has given training to many students. He has performed in many dance events and festivals like 'Phuldol Utsav-Nrityamahotsav' at Shardapitham, Dwarka 2007, 'Saptadhara Mahotsava' organised by Doordarshan Kendra for 150th anniversary of Swami Vivekanand in Rajkot in 2012, 'Kerala Festival' in Kerala in 2015 and many more. He has choreographed many productions like 'Sakhi', 'Shivoham', 'Shivji no Vargodho', 'Bodha Katha' and 'Shiv Shakti'. He has choreographed many annual functions and programmes of various prestigious schools in Rajkot and events of few colleges. He has received awards like 'Girnar Ratna Award' and 'Nataranjali Nrityashree Award', Calcutta.

2:1:16 Smt. Purvi Sheth

Purvi Sheth is a Bharatanatyam dancer and teacher from Rajkot. She started her training from Shri Shrinivasan Shinoy. In 1989, she finished her Visharad in Bharatanatyam. Later on she took further training from Elakshi Thakore. She presented her *Arangetral* in 1991. She took advance training in Bharatanatyam from Uma Antani.¹⁸ She established her training institution 'Srujan' in Rajkot. Many students have taken training in Bharatanatyam from this institute. She is also training students in Bharatanatyam dance style in 'S. N. Kansagra School'. She has performed in many prestigious programmes and dance festivals. She has a good knowledge of folk dances, and has presented folk dance programmes in many festivals and functions in Gujarat.

17. Eminent Dancers who belong to Gujarat:

2:1:17:1 Dr. Kanak Rele

Dr. Kanak Rele, is today one of the eminent dancer-scholars of India. She was born on 11th June 1937 in Gujarat. She has been given the honour of "A pioneering dance

educationist and topmost Mohiniattam exponent” by The President of India. She has been working for more than 30 years for the revival of Mohiniattam Dance. She started taking training in Kathakali from a very early age from renowned Guru ‘Panchali’ Karunakara Panikkar. She is a much respected educationist. The University of Bombay introduced the Bachelor of Fine Arts, Master of Fine Arts and Ph.D. Degrees in Dance on the recommendation of Dr. Kanak Rele. She is the Founder – Principal of 'Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidhyalaya'. 'Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidhyalaya' is the first exclusive college of Classical dance affiliated to the University of Bombay. The 'Nalanda Dance Research Center' has won international appreciation, which was founded by Smt. Kanak Rele and recognized by the Ministry of Science and Technology, as a research institute. It is recognized as a category 1 institute by the Department of Culture, Government of India.¹⁹



2.1.11 Dr. Kanak Rele

Dr. Kanak Rele has trained a number of students who are now doing great work in the field of dance. Dr. Kanak Rele is known for her creative and unique choreographies. The unique feature of her choreographies is the projection of ‘Body Language’ to express emotions and moods. Another big contribution by Dr. Kanak Rele is to produce a video serial “Nritya Bharati” for 'Nalanda'. It is one of the finest serials made on the traditions of Indian classical dance styles.²⁰

2:1:17:2. Smt. Sonal Mansingh:

Smt. Sonal Mansingh is a leading dancer, choreographer, teacher, researcher, orator, and a social activist of India. She was born on 30th April 1942 in Bombay. She has mastered the classical dance styles of Bharatanatyam and Odissi. Smt. Sonal Mansingh was born in Mumbai, in a very open minded family. Her father was Arvind Pakvasa and mother Poornima Pakvasa. Her mother Poornima Pakvasa was an Indian independence activist, social worker and a 'Padma Vibhushan' winner. Her grandfather Mangal Das Pakvasa was a freedom fighter and one of the first five Governors of India.²¹

Initially she started learning Manipuri dance at the age of four in Nagpur. Later on she started learning Bharatanatyam from various Gurus like Kumar Jayakar belonging to the Pandanallur style in Bombay. At the age of 18 years, she went to Bangalore, to learn Bharatanatyam from Prof. U. S. Krishna Rao and Chandrabhaga Devi. She learnt the art of *Abhinaya* from Mylapore Gowri Ammal. In 1965 she started learning Odissi from Guru Kelucharana Mohapatra and other renowned Gurus. She has also taken training in Indian Classical Music.²²

She has choreographed dances with themes based on mythology and various social issues like environment, women empowerment and many more. She established 'Center for Indian Classical Dances (CICD)' in Delhi in 1977 to impart training to students in Indian classical dance styles. She has given her services as a member of the Executive Board and General Council of 'Sangeet Natak Akademi', National Cultural Fund, and Ministry of Culture. She is also a trustee of the 'Indira Gandhi National Center for Arts'. She has received many honours and awards like 'Padma Bhushan', 'Singar Mani', 'Nritya Choodamani', 'Sahitya Kala Parishad', New Delhi, 'Natya Kala Ratna', 'National Cultural Organisation', Delhi, 'Sangeet Natak Akademi', New Delhi and many more. To mark the completion of her 40 years in dancing in 2002, noted Hindi film director, Prakash Jha made a documentary film on her, titled 'Sonal', which also won the National Film Award for Best Non-Feature Film for the year. She has been nominated by the President of India as a Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha.²³



2.1.12 Guru Smt. Sonal Mansingh

2:1:17:3 Dr. Sandhya Purecha:



2.1.13 Dr. Sandhya Purecha

Dr. Sandhya Purecha is an eminent scholar, dancer, author, researcher, choreographer, Guru and is a recognized and respected authority of Bharatanatyam dance style in the world. She is the Managing Trustee and Honorable Secretary of 'Shri Sarfojiraje Bhosale Bharatanatyam Training and Research Center'. She is the Director of the institute 'Kala Parichaya'. She is the pioneering figure in the establishment of the

'Bharata College of Fine Arts and Culture'. Dr. Sandhya Purecha, took training in Bharatanatyam in *Guru-shisya Parampara* from the renowned Guru, Acharya Parvati Kumar. She is the senior most disciple of Acharya Parvati Kumar. She earned her doctorate in 'Natyashastra' in Theory and Practice of Angika Abhinaya in Bharatanatyam. She is proficient in all the various aspects of like *Nritya*, *Abhinaya* and Choreography. She has performed all over India, and is today considered a renowned and well-known artist of Bharatanatyam Dance style. She is giving training to students for the last 35 years in her institute 'Kala-Parichay', and trained more than 5000 students in Bharatanatyam dance style in India and other countries as well. An authority on classical dance and Sanskrit, she is affiliated to several universities offering her expertise as an Expert Advisor on the Academic Council and Board of Studies, conducting lectures, demonstration and seminars.²⁴

In 1986, she presented in audio-visual form, the 324 shlokas of 'Abhinaya Darpanam', a dance treatise in Sanskrit written by Nandikeswara. It has been recorded by the 'Indira Gandhi National Center for the Arts', New Delhi for archival purposes and she has performed it all over the world. She has authored many books like 'Bharatmuni Virachit Natyashastra. Volume I', 'Theory & Practice of Kalasa Karanas & Sthanaka-Mandala Bheda', 'Theory & Practice of Angikabhinaya in Bharatanatyam', 'Nrityadhyaya of Sangita Darpanam'. She has been invited as a scholar to universities and for international seminars, conferences like 'International Conference on Natyashastra, IGNC-Varanasi'; 'WDA', Taiwan; 'Century of Indian Dance', Toronto to name a few. Her innovative presentation of '*Shastra and Sampradaya*', an application of Sanskrit verses in practice, has been praised as a pioneering effort. Verses from Sanskrit texts like the 'Abhinaya Darpanam', 'Natyashastra', 'Sangita Ratnakara' and 'Sangita Darpanam' have been transmitted into the vocabulary of dance to enhance the learning process.²⁵

As an intelligent dancer with contemporary sensitivity, with her grace, radiance and technical proficiency, she draws the viewer into the inner spaces that she paints, leaving the audience deeply touched in each of her performances and choreographies. She has performed in the major festivals in India and abroad like 'Narmada Seva Yatra', 'Vibrant Gujarat', 'Siddhi Festival', 'Simhastha Kumbha Kala Utsav', 'Khajurao Festival', 'Konark Festival', 'Natyanjali Chidambaram', 'Modhera Festival', 'Ellora Festival', 'Taj

Festival', 'Mammallapuram Festival', 'Hampi Festival', and 'Jhansi National Festival' in India and Internationally in Netherlands, Dubai, London, Edinburgh, South Africa, Moscow, Toronto, New York and Taiwan. She has received many honours and awards like, the 'Cultural State Award' in 2006, and the 'Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Award' in 2007, and 'Gujarat Sangeet Natak Akademi Award' in 2007.²⁶

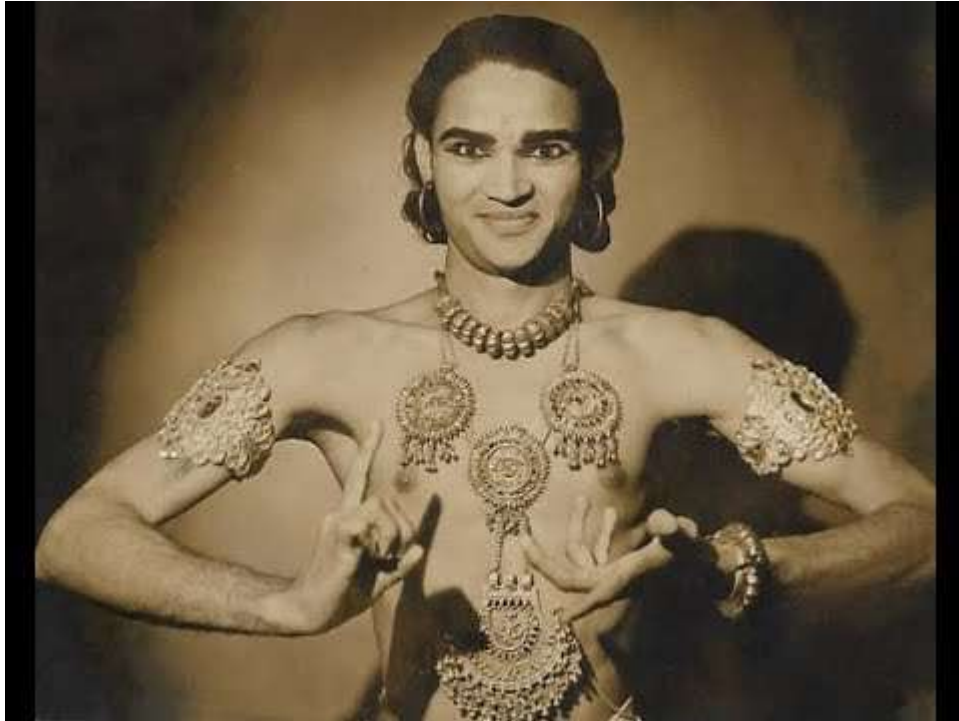
2:1:17:4. Damyanti Joshi

Damyanti Joshi was an eminent Kathak dancer born on 5th September 1928 at Mumbai. She took training in Kathak from a very early age, from Shri Sitaram Prasad of Jaipur Gharana, Shri Hiralal Maharaj of Jaipur Gharana, Shri Lacchu Maharaj and Shambhu Maharaj at Kathak Kendra, Delhi.²⁷ In 1930 she joined Madame Menaka's group and travelled to many parts of world for performances. She has also taken training in Bharatanatyam, Kathakali and Manipuri from renowned Gurus, and performed these forms of dances at many places. She has performed in countries like China, Japan, Sudan, Egypt, Syria, Iran, Turkey, Greece, Gaza, Poland, Russia, Nepal, UK, France, Germany, Austria, Hungary and the continent of Europe. In 1969 she had been to Afghanistan as a member of the Prime Minister's Delegation and in the same year had performed at the 'Gandhi Darshan Exhibition' at Delhi.²⁸

Smt. Damayanti Joshi, in the beginning of her dancing career, performed in All-India Music Conferences. She has given performances before their Majesties of Afghanistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Spain etc. Her *Tala* aspect and *Nritya* aspect was very strong. She was acknowledged as the best exhibitor of the *Ashta Nayikas*, which was a solo ballet. She studied and choreographed the sculptures at Khajuraho for her solo ballet on the 'SURASUNDARI' in Kathak technique. She also choreographed Dhrupad, Khayal, Thumris, Trivat, Taraua and Chaturang in Kathak.²⁹

She also taught Kathak at 'Indira Kala Vishvavidyalaya', Khairagarh, and 'Kathak Kendra' in Lucknow. She has been honoured with the 'Sangeet Natak Akademi Award' (1968) and the 'Padma Shri' (1970).³⁰ She has been featured in the documentary on Kathak in 1971 by Films Division, Government of India, and another film entitled "Damayanti Joshi" directed by Hukumat Sarin which was made in 1973. She passed away on 19 September 2004 at her home in Dadar, Mumbai.

Shri Yog Sunder Desai



2.1.14 Shri Yog Sunder Desai

Yog Sunder Desai (16th July 1921) was born as Yogendra Gopaldas Desai, son of Darbar Gopal das Desai and Bhakti ba, in Limbi Gujarat into a princely family. Darbar Gopaldas Saheb was ruler of the Dhasa state in Gujarat. He was the first king to give up his rule in 1922 before independence. He joined Gandhiji's freedom movement. Darbar Saheb was the founding member of the Indian Constitution. His signature is in the constitution of India. His Nana Zaverbhai Amin was the Deewan, of Limbi State.³¹ His Grandfather Ambadas Jiva Bhai and ancestors were administrators in the Kingdom of Mughals and the Gaekwads. His Ancestral haveli in Vaso is three hundred year old and is known for its fine wooden carving work. He had the opportunity of growing under Sardar Patel and Gandhiji. He went to Bardoli and Borsad Satyagraha as a part of varnar sena.³²

His love for the dance began very early in life when he had a chance to see the performance of Shri Uday Shankar in the Royal opera house of Bombay. He studied at national institutions like Gandhiji's Bardoli Ashram, Dakshinamurti (Bhavnagar), Gujarat

Vidyapith (Ahmedabad) and Tagore's Shantiniketan. Later he joined the Sangeet Bhavan to learn Kathakali from Guru Kelu Nair. He also learnt Krishnanattam from Shri Krishna Kartav, and Mohiniattam from Kochumaru Amma. He took training in Manipuri dance and Kathak from Guru H. Atomba Singh and Pandit Bhure Lal. He also learnt painting from Shri Nandlal Bose. It was Guru Kelu Nair who advised him to go to Kerela to learn Kathakali. He went to Kerela Kalamandalam and met Poet Vallathol Narayan Menon. He stayed in Kerela for four years and learnt Kathakali from Padma Shri Kunchu Nair.³³

Shri Yog Sunder Desai is amongst first few pioneer dancers who took dance as a profession in the pre- Independence era. In 1945 he started his career in dance by performing the lead role of Raja Bhimadeva in K. M. Munshi's Jai Somnath produced by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan in Bombay, with Nayana Jhaveri as Choula Devi. He also performed in the dance productions by eminent dancers of that period like Ram Gopal and Sadhana Bose. Later, Shri Desai focused on the regional dance forms of India and travelled around the world presenting them at prestigious dance festivals. He led the Indian Ballet progressive group on a collaborative basis in Calcutta, which was the most productive period for him. The first show of the group was in Kalka theatre and was a huge success. The brochure was designed by Satyajit Ray.³⁴ He founded The Indian Revival Group in Delhi, and was appreciated for his dance-dramas in the early 1950s. Shri Yog Sunder's productions include Rhythms of India, Festivals of India, Kirat Arjuna, Shree Ram Katha, Krishna Leela, Mahabharata, Call of the Country, Voice from Beyond, Lakshmibai, Chandaliika, Shyama, and The Man Divine. In 1950 he went to Egypt with his group to perform in a chartered cruise ship. In 1955 his group was selected to visit the Soviet Union. In 1966 Shri Desai produced the popular Ramlila for Shriram Bharatiya Kala Kendra.³⁵

Yog Sundar Desai, worked continuously for seven decades, has done 5000 shows in more than 250 countries. He was honoured by the Delhi-based Music Drama Academy of the Government of India in 2009 for his exclusive promotions and publicity of Indian art-dance. He has been awarded the Triveni Samman by Triveni, Baroda, in 1995 and an Achievement Award by the Delhi Gujarati Samaj in 2000. Shri Yog Sunder Desai got the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for his contribution in the field of dance.³⁶ He passed

away on 27 November 2020 at Delhi after completing a century's ideal life-journey.³⁷

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2:2 Renowned Classical Dance Institutions of Gujarat

2:2:1. Darpana Academy of Performing Arts

Darpana Academy of Performing Arts was established in 1949, by Mrinalini Sarabhai and Vikarm Sarabhai in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. Initially Darpana Academy started with three departments of dance, drama and music. Training was given in classical dance styles like Bharatanatyam, Kathakali, folkdance and other art forms. The Drama wing was started in 1959. Now it is directed by their daughter Mallika Sarabhai who is an esteemed Bharatanatyam dancer. In 1962, Achyut Kanvinde was assigned the work to design the building. From 1960, Darpana started using arts for social causes, like women upliftment, dowry and many more. Mrinalini Sarabhai used the art form of Bharatanatyam and Kathakali and created dance productions to create awareness for issues like dowry. In 1967 a course of puppetry was introduced in Darpana. The shadow-puppets of Andhra Pradesh were used in it. Kathakali appreciation club called Kathakali Darshan, the city's first film society called 'Darshita', a club for experimental theater called 'Shatak' were created by the initiative taken by Darpana.¹

The Darpana Academy offers courses in the arts forms like Bharatanatyam, Mridangam, Violin, Flute, puppetry, martial art Kalaripayattu, yoga, theatre, folkdance etc.² The Darpana Performing Group has performed many productions in Indian and many countries abroad. The members of group are highly trained artistes proficient in dance and other arts forms like music, theatre, martial arts and other related art forms. The rehearsals are done every day by the group members. Variety of productions are created with classical or contemporary theme, which are very creative. Sometimes some guest performers also join in and make the performance very unique with their special touch. In 1982 Darpana established 'Janavak' for the revival and preservation of the folk forms and Darpana for Development was established for various social issues, for community and child development, environmental conservation, women's empowerment and human rights issues.³ In 1994, Natarani which is Darpana's open-air amphitheatre was inaugurated. It was a multi-cultural art centre and performance space, which various art forms. It was renovated in 2018.⁴

Since 1949 many Kathakali artists and musicians who have worked with Darpana are, Guru Vazhenkada Kunchu Nair, Kavungal Shankarankutty Panicker, Guru Kottakkal Gopi Nair, Kottakkal Appu Nair, V.P. Ramakrishnan, Chandramana Govindan Namboodiri, Mankombu Sivashankara Pillai, Kalamandalam Govindan Kutty, Kalamandalam Murali, Kalamandalam Gopinath, Kavungal Chathunni Panikar, Kalamandalam Ravindra Warrior, Kalamandalam Madhavan, Kalamandalam Bhaskara Menon, Thakazhi Kuttan Pillai, Kalamandalam Unnikrishna Kurup, Kalamandalam Subrahmanian, Kalamandalam Sukumaran, Kalamandam Hari das, Kottakkal Narayanan Namboodiri, Kavungal Gopala Panicker, Kavungal Krishna Panicker, Kalamandalam Narayanan, Kalamandalam Ananda Narayanan, Kalamandalam Sasi Poduval, Kalamandalam Balaraman, Kalamandalam Anandan, Thichur Vasu Variar, V.P. Shankara Narayanan, Kalamandalam Shivaraman Nair, Kalamandalam Devaki, Kalamandalam Sitalaskmi, Painkulam Narayana Chakkyar, Kalamandalam Hariharan, Kalamandalam Kalyanikutti Amma, and Kottakkal Sasidharan Nair.⁵

The Darpana troupe has performed in more than 90 countries. The troupe has given more than 25,000 performances. Around 24,000 students have graduated in dance, drama, music and puppetry from this institution. Darpana has revived 17 art forms which were on the verge of distinction.⁶ Since more than three decades now, the academy is directed by Dr. Mallika Sarabhai.

2:2:2. Kadamb

KADAMB, Center of Dance and Music, a leading and reputed institute in Ahmedabad today was established by Kumudini Lakhiya in 1967 in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, to promote Kathak dance style. It imparts training in Kathak since last 50 years and develops a holistic view of dance education in students.⁷

When Smt. Kumudini Lakhia came to Ahmedabad, people of Ahmedabad didn't have much knowledge and information about Kathak dance style. People were curious about classical dance due to the Classical dance courses started at The M. S. University of Baroda and Darpana. Though there were uncertain views about the Kathak classical dance, there was also a desire to learn the dance form. Smt. Kumudini Lakhia started teaching

three students in beginning and in the next few years she trained seven students, who performed in her creative productions, and was able to inspire in these students a feeling of commitment towards dance. While teaching, she also developed her unique creative ideas about choreography, which resulted in beautiful productions. With the musician Shri Atul Desai, Smt. Kumudini Lakhia choreographed many outstanding productions. Kadamb is established as a private institute. It is run as a trust with board members. Kadamb has contributed significantly in propagating Kathak in Gujarat and creating good Kathak performers like Maulik Shah, Ishira Shah, Sandhya Desai, Vaishali Trivedi, Prashant Shah, Daksha Sheth and Aditi Mangaldas.⁸

Kadamb has crossed milestones in creative imagination in dance choreography, incorporating new elements of abstract dimensions within the format of strict classicism, which is presented by the talented students of Kadamb. Kadamb's dance company is known nationally and internationally for its outstanding performances, choreographies and productions. Kumudini Lakhia has developed her unique style of Kathak. Kadamb's dance company has produced around 70 dance productions, which are performed in the dance festivals in India and abroad. Kadamb offers diploma and full time professional courses in Kathak dance style like CCCD (Certificate Course in Dance). Some of the countries which Kadamb has travelled are USA, UK, USSR, Sweden, Germany, Seychelles, Portugal, Indonesia, Thailand, Mongolia, China, Korea, Pakistan, Brazil, Italy, Bangladesh and Srilanka. The Kadamb institute has many facilities for students like a studio, classrooms, library, Kitchen, waiting aisle library, and musical instruments.⁹

2:2:3 Nrityabharati

Elakshi Thakore established Nrityabharati in the year 1960 in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. Elakshi Thakore's main purpose to start the academy was to propagate Bharatanatyam dance style, and to conserve its traditional form. Elakshi Thakore completed her graduation and post-graduation from 'The College of Indian Music, Dance and Dramatics', Baroda. She is one of the senior most students of Guru Shri Kubernath Tanjorkar.¹⁰

The credit of making Bharatanatyam popular amongst the middle class people goes to Nrityabharati. As at a time when only rich could afford the high fees of learning

classical dance, it was due to the nominal fees taken by Nrityabharati that students from the middle class and lower middle class could also afford to learn dance. Nrityabharati is a very well-known institute of learning Bharatanatyam in Ahmedabad. The academy gave platform to many students to perform. The academy trains the students for Arangetral. In the beginning Elakshi Thakore used to train students for the Arangetral functions, under the guidance of Guru Shri Kubernath Tanjorkar. Guru Shri Kubernath Tanjorkar, did the nattuvangam and singing in the arangetral function. About 18000 students have taken training from Nrityabharati. Around 1800 students have performed Arangetral. Around 135 students have been awarded with government scholarships. Many students of Nrityabharati like Smt. Binal Wala have started their own dance academy now and many are dance teachers now. Every year Nrityabharati organises, annual function, where students are given opportunities and platforms to perform. Lecture demonstrations are also arranged for the students. Elakshi Thakore's son, Chandan Thakore and his wife Nirali Thakore are now teaching at Nrityabharati.¹¹

2:2:4 Nartan School of Classical Dances

Nartan School of Classical Dances was established in 1971, by Smt. Smita Shastri, a renowned Guru of Kuchipudi and Bharatanatyam dance styles in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. It is a registered charitable trust and Smita Shastri is the trustee of this trust. In Nartan School of Classical Dances, intensive and authentic training is given in Kuchipudi and Bharatanatyam dance styles since more than 45 years. More than 200 disciples of Smita Shastri have graduated with the title 'Nritya Tirth' from the institute. More than 100 students have graduated in the Kuchipudi dance style from the institute. Instead of Arangetral, the Nartan School of Classical Dances organises a 'Dikshant Samaroh' since 1980. This is a major change made by Smt. Smita Shastri. These programmes are blessed by some renowned Guru or an eminent dance critic, who understands dance. The institute has presented more than 100 students in Kuchipudi dance style through the 'Dikshant Samaroh'. The institute has trained more than 25 Kuchipudi performers who are actively performing. The senior students of the institute Rita Chokshi in Surat and Ritu Daga in Kanas city U.S.A imparts training in Kuchipudi dance since many years. To encourage the dance students to learn and perform, Smita Shastri has started a dance competition since 2007, 'Leela Mukuta Nartan Vijaypadma' for the age group of 17 to 24 years. The

winners of this competition get to perform at platforms like Doordarshan Kendra, Gujarat State Sangeet Natak Academy's 'Kal-ke-Kalakar' festival and others with the recommendation of Nartan Institute of Performing Arts. Nartan also has a folk dance troupe called Nartan Nritya Vrind.¹²

2:2:5 SCOPA (The Sarvajanic College of Performing Arts)

The Sarvajanic College of Performing Arts was established in June, 2010. It was inaugurated on 8th October, 2010 by Smt. Sarita Joshi, an eminent actor of Gujarati and Marathi Theatre, in the presence of the then University vice-chancellor Dr. B.A. Prajapati. The first batch of 27 students was admitted in June, 2010. The institution is commonly known as SCOPA. It is the first and the only college of Performing Arts in the whole of the south Gujarat, which is officially recognized the Veer Narmad South Gujarat University. The college offers degree courses in performing arts viz. Music, Dance and Drama up-to post-graduation. There are many courses in the Music Department. The department of Music offers three years of under-graduate degree course and two years post-graduate degree course in Classical Vocal Music. It also provides six years Diploma of Classical Vocal Music. Small duration courses like, one year certificate course of light and semi-classical singing is also provided at Scopa. Smt. Archana Dixit was a faculty at the music department, who is a very well-known name in the field of music.¹³

The department of Dance provides three years of under-graduate degree course and two years post-graduate degree course in Bharatanatyam. Besides, five years of Diploma of Bharatanatyam and Kathak, which is equivalent to Visharad, is also rendered. The present researcher, Jalpa Patel was a pioneering teacher at the Department of Dance. She had contributed a lot to the department in the initial days. Smita Sathe and Purvi Desai were other teachers, who also gave training in the Department. The department of Drama offers three years of under-graduate degree course and two years post-graduate degree course in Drama. It also provides one year Diploma of Acting. The college has good physical facilities such as AV studio and auditorium. The college also gives performance opportunities to students. Under the guidance of proficient masters of the college, numbers of students have shown their talent on state and national level as well. And a few brilliant

students have also made their debut in Gujarati and Hindi film industry in their respective field of learning.¹⁴

2:2:6 J G College of Performing Arts

JG College of Performing Arts, Ahmedabad was established in the year 2004 and is affiliated to Gujarat University, Ahmedabad. It has successfully brought out several batches. It offers a full time Bachelors and Master's Degree course in Bharatanatyam. One can pursue a degree in one of the fields of music, dance and drama. The mission of the college is to the enrichment of the artistic life of students, the community, and region. The curriculum offered at JG College of Performing Arts is designed to equip students with the tools necessary to pursue careers in the areas of music, dance and drama.¹⁵

The faculty for Bharatanatyam dance is Bijoy Anand Shivram, Disha Modi, Sonal Vyas, Shivangee Vikram and Nilima Thakar and Kadam Parikh for Kathak. Varma Sheela teaches Karnatic Music and Dinesh Shaikh Mridagam. The three year intensive Bachelor degree course includes theory and practical study of the performing art subject selected. Classes are from Monday to Saturday. The students are taught from the basics of the performing art selected. Till the student finishes the graduation, student learns all the aspect of the performing art selected in detail. So the student has a strong base of the subject selected. The subjects offered are Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Pakhawaj and Sitar.¹⁶

JGPA is dedicated towards the promotion of career oriented education for the populace, and brings the multifaceted media & entertainment industry under one roof. The infrastructure & media-skilled manpower available with the College has made it possible to offer its audience with in-house productions, facilities along with the training environment conducive for imparting practical education. To cope up with the ever-increasing demands of the booming industry, JGPA, strives towards unearthing the hidden talent in each personality, groom the dexterity & facilitate the individual by making his/her flair to become his or her forte.¹⁷

The JG College of performing arts was established as there was a keen interest in the field of Performing Arts whether it was dance, drama or music over the past many years, there was no institute in Ahmedabad which offered graduation and post-graduation courses in the performing arts in Ahmedabad. No doubt there are many institutes

imparting training but none affiliated to the Gujarat University. The JG College of Performing Arts was designed offer curriculum for formal education in the field of performing and visual arts. It has a very humble mission to promote excellence in the field of Performing Arts and to create opportunities for informed teaching and learning. JG College of Performing Arts endeavours to provide such a platform for quality education in a manner that encourages professionalism as well as the individual's desire to excel in their chosen idiom.¹⁸

2:2:8 Upasana School Of Performing Arts

Upasana school of Performing Arts is affiliated to Gujarat University, Ahmedabad, was started with the aim to educated youth about culture and rich performing arts of India. It gives formal education in the Performing Arts. Full time Masters Courses are offered in the performing arts in the subjects of Music, Dance and Theater Arts. In Dance, Bharatanatyam and Kathak dance styles are offered as subjects at Upasana School of Performing Arts. Upasana school of Performing arts has artists like Prof. C.V.Chandrasekhar, Pandit Rajan Sajan Mishra, Sushree Shaswati Sen and Amol Palekar on its panel. The course co-coordinator is Viraj Amar, who is a vocalist of high calibre. It has highly qualified faculty members like Manju Mehta, Ishira Parikh, Hetal Mehta, Nimesh Desai, Khamma Shah and Vanitha Nagrajan.¹⁹

It offers short term certificate courses like Television, Acting, Anchoring, Instrumental Music, Studio techniques, Music Appreciation, Film Appreciation, Theatre Make up, Photography and Television Camera Operating, Sugam Sangeet, Theatre production, Sound engineering, Folk music-lok Sangeet, Haveli Sangeet, TV Program Production and event management. It arranges workshops of eminent artistries like Sandhya Purecha for the dance students. It gives platform for the students to perform in various programmes of the Department and University. Upasana School of Performing arts uplifted the level of education of the Gujarat University even more and added the dimension of culture, arts and aesthetics to it.²⁰

2:2:9 Madhur Jyoti Nartan Akademi

Madhur Jyoti Nartan Akademi was established by Madhu bhai Patel, in Baroda, Gujarat to impart training in Bharatanatyam Dance style. It was one of the most well-known institutions in Baroda; Gujarat. Madhu Bhai Patel was a student of Guru Shri Kubernath Tanjorkar. He had done his graduation from the 'The College of Indian Music, Dance and Dramatics'. He has trained a number of students in Baroda. He had conducted a number of Arangetrals of his students under the guidance of Guru Shri Kubernath Tanjorkar. For more than 35 years, Madhur Jyoti Nartan Akademi trained students in the art of Bharatanatyam. Madhur Jyoti Nartan Akademi was one of the first private classes, to make students appear for the Bharatanatyam exam. The students who got highest marks in the last exam were given 'Madhurjyoti Chandrak' from the Akademi. Today many of his students are conducting private classes to impart training in Bharatanatyam dance style, like Nattu Kareliya, Nilam Pathak, Mythili Desai to name a few. The Akademi also gave programmes of folk dance in Gujarat and all over India. Students of Madhur Jyoti Nartan Akademi have presented programmes of folk dance in many states like Jammu Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and main cities of Assam state. Students of Madhu Jyoti Nartan Akademi also got an opportunity to perform at the occasion of the birthday of the King of Nepal. The students of Akademi also performed dandiya raas brilliantly at the prestigious 'Asaid 82' event and was honoured for that. Many students like Ami Patel, Chetana Pahade, Nanda Pahade, Ulka, Nattu Kareliya, Nilam Pathak, Nattu bhai, Maithyli ben Desai, Dharini Shah, and many more have taken training from Shri Madhu Patel in Madhur Jyoti Nartan Akedemi.²¹

2:2:10 ECPA (The Ellora Center of Performing Arts)

ECPA, The Ellora Center of Performing Arts, is a renowned institute established by Smt. Rema Shrikant, in Vadodara in 1975, to impart training in Bharatanatyam dance style. Smt. Rema Shrikanth is an internationally renowned dancer, Guru and choreographer of Bharatanatyam dance style. She is an empanelled artist with ICCR, Ministry of External Affairs, and Govt. of India. She has trained many students in her institute. It gives advance training to students in Bharatanatyam, trains students for Arangetral, choreography, teaching dance and prepares students to be good dancers. It

gives training in the traditional Gurukul system and provides many opportunities to students to perform. Many good productions like, ‘Andal’, ‘Ganesh’, ‘Maya’, and ‘Nitya Nivedanam’, which are conceived and choreographed by Smt. Rema Shrikanth are performed by her well trained students of ECPA. The productions, music of productions and programmes which are thoroughly well rehearsed, and technically of very high standard, have won the hearts of people of Baroda over the years and are appreciated wherever they perform. Smt. Rema Shrikanth has contributed a lot through her institute ECPA. She has trained good dancers like Meenakshi Venkataraman, Ulpa Desai, Samviti Brahmabhatt and many more at ECPA. Rema Shrikanth has also received many awards like the ‘Gaurav Puraskar’ from Sangeet Natak Akademi, ‘Kalashree’ from Kerela State Sangeetha Nataka Akademi, and ‘Anjali Memorial Gold Medal’, from M.S.University. Students of ECPA have performed in many national festivals like Gujarat Sangeet Natak Festival, Modhera, Uday Shankar dance festival, Kolkata, Kalamandalam Vallothol Nagar, Kerela, Anaya dance festival, Delhi, Kalamandir, Chennai, Chidambaram festival, Swaralaya festival, Palakkad, Soorya Festival, Triuvandrum and many more.²²

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