

Saswati Sen

Saswati Sen is the foremost disciple of Pt Birju Maharaj and stands tall amongst her contemporaries in the way she has embellished Kathak by integrating the sacredness of a tradition with the creativeness of a contemporary approach.

Born to a family of doctors, Saswati took to dance at an early age. She received her initial training at Delhi's Kathak Kendra under the guidance of Srimati Reba Vidyarthi. She received the National Scholarship in Performing Arts and graduated to become the prime disciple of Pt Birju Maharaj.

Saswati has presented dance recitals at the RIMPA Festivals (Varanasi), Kathak Prasang (Bhopal and Jaipur), Kathak Mahotsav (Lucknow), Sri Krishna Gana Sabha (Chennai), Dover Lane Music Conference (Kolkata) and the prestigious Khajuraho Festival of Dance. She has featured more than once on the National Programme of Dance by Doordarshan. Saswati has extensively toured abroad rendering recitals and lecture demonstrations in the USA, former USSR, UK, France, Japan, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Nigeria and the UAE.

She is a recipient of the Sanskriti Award, the Shringar Mani Award and the Critic's Recommendation Award and recently the once-in-a lifetime Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for 2004-5. Saswati today is regarded as an artist with immense versatility and talent and one of the best exponents of the famed Lucknow gharana.

She has trained a large number of students, many from overseas. She has acquired the true style of her mentor and incorporates into her own presentation both the lyrical grace and rhythmic virtuosity. However, her forte is *abhinaya* which has always received high appreciation.

Saswati today is the driving force behind Kalashram, Pt Birju Maharaj's dream institution and is its Secretary. She also finds time for her primary avatar as Guru, and teaches the nuances of Kathak to all seekers. Saswati travels extensively at home and abroad disseminating the knowledge she has gained over years of hard work and keeps the Kalashram biradari together. She has choreographed several group compositions as well as dance-dramas.

Some of Saswati's many choreographic works

Dance Dramas/Ballets

Kathak Yatra [The Journey of Kathak]

Kathak dance through the ages, starting from the form of storytelling in temples , through the courts of muslim rulers who patronized the art form, to the present day.

Dasavataar [The Ten Reincarnations]

The ten reincarnations of Lord Vishnu, in order to save the world and his devotees from injustice.

Kartik Vilaas [Birth of Kartik]

The story behind the birth of Lord Kartik.

Kshudita Pashan [The Hungry Stone]

An adaptation of the work of Pt. Ravindra nath Tagore, delves into the realm of mysticism.

Romeo and Juliet [The Immortal Love Legend of Shakespeare]

An adaptation of the famous work of Shakespeare in the form of a Kathak Ballet, with a unique blend of music by the stalwarts Pt. Birju Maharaj (Indian Classical) and Louiz Banks (Western Jazz).

Short Productions

Durbar [Mughal Court]

Capturing the ambience of the Mughal Courts, through colourful dances set

Adaab [Bowling in obeisance]

An item depicting court dances of the Mughal Era

Surya Pranam [Hailing The Sun God]

Invoking The Sun God from the time of dawn to mid-day.

Mehfil

Jalayagna

Dance Drama creating an awareness of clean drinking water in the villages.

Ganga Avataran [Descent of Ganga]

Descent of the Holy River, Ganga as Shiva holds her in his tresses.

Kalashram

Kalashram focusses on imparting training mainly in the field of Kathak, along with various other associated disciplines i.e. vocal & instrumental music, Yoga, Painting, Sanskrit, Dramatics, Stagecraft etc.

Our activities, includes workshops, master classes, lecture-demonstrations, seminars, and of course performances, and festivals.

Kalashram, under the guidance of the legendary maestro Padma Vibhushan Pt. Birju Maharaj has been working extensively towards promoting and preserving traditional Indian Arts & Culture through its various activities, which include seminars, lecture-demonstrations, presentation of traditional and contemporary works.

Pt. Birju Maharaj has brought about cultural renaissance through his creative works over the past 50 years. He has given a new approach to the rich tradition, by presenting innumerable abstract and thematic choreographies, which have inspired scores of young imaginative choreographers of this generation in India and abroad. Maharaj-ji has also extended his teaching programmes to other metropolises and several small towns.