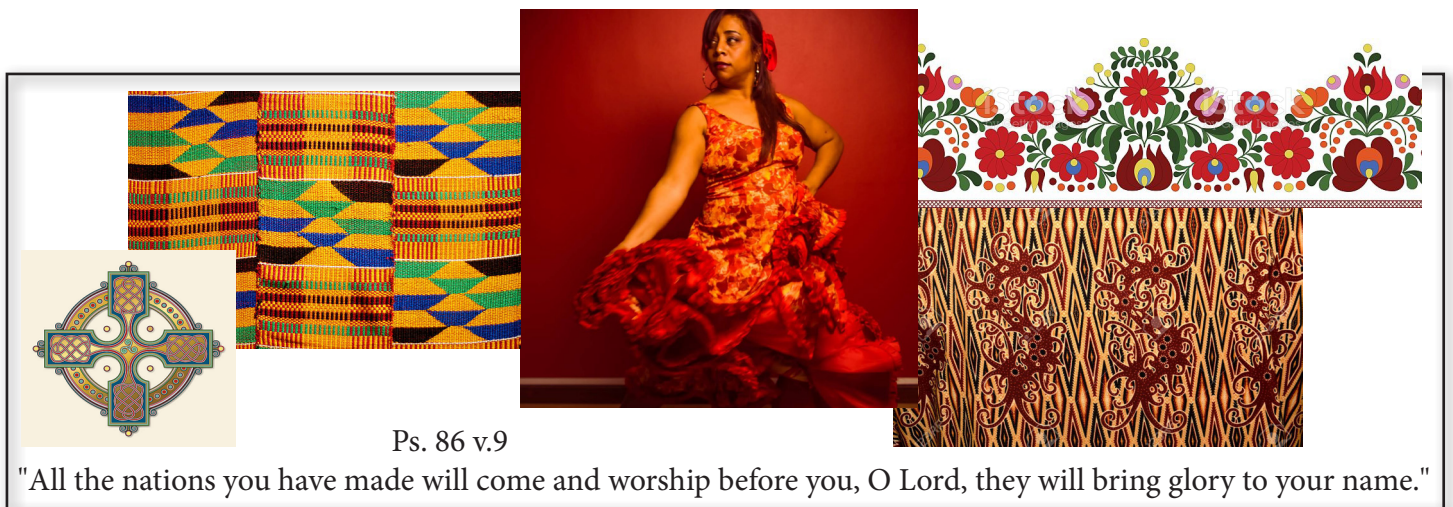




ICDF Networks

August 2021

Network for Cultural Dance



Dance is dance. An impulse that moves from your inner being and is manifested through your limbs. Cultural dance is dance that develops within a specific culture and was originally danced by a specific cultural group. There may be similarities in the dance styles and rhythms in regions but each cultural dance is unique. All cultural dance styles are valid and not one is superior to the other. Their origins can vary and some developed as social dances while others had their beginnings in temples. For us as Christians the question often grappled with is which cultural dances can we draw inspiration from. While working on this newsletter we were struck by the following sentence: "... that a dance can be just a performance and could become a form of worship only if the dancer decided." We believe that all cultural dances originally came from our God who created the seen and unseen world - so diverse in detail that it leaves us in awe. This diversity we celebrate in this newsletter.

The Network for Cultural Dance is interested in exploring:

- . the origins of our cultural dances*
- . meaning, development and change*
- . redeeming our culture*
- . integration and renewal*
- . ministry through cultural dance, sharing the gospel*
- . "breaking the rules", innovation and creativity*
- . clothing/costume*

<https://icdf.com/en/cultural-dance-0>

ICDF Cultural Dance Online Workshop

By August 7th over 70 People had registered for “*Dance Around The World With A Taste Of Cultural Dance*”.

Starting with an Irish jig we moved to Indian Bharatanatyam, Hungarian folk complete with handkerchief, pole and bottle on the head, Papua New Guinean war dance, a Jamaican wake dance, Northern Ghanaian smock swinging regal dance, Ugandan cultural moves, Spanish flamenco finishing with a South African gumboot dance, truly finding "gold"! The rich variety reminiscent of our International Conferences created a longing for face to face presence we hope to enjoy next year in Sweden.

Here are some of the comments received:

Linette, "It was so educative and I'm so happy I was part of it."

Debby, "How wonderful it was to Zoom around the world. We have considered what elements we can use in church and our minister did raise a comical eye when we suggested dancing with bottles on our heads! However we note not only differences in cultural dance but also how familiar some steps felt. How wonderful to praise the Lord in dance in so many varied ways, we loved it. Looking forward to Sweden."

Another person, "That was so much fun, thank you!"

And another, "I really enjoyed the day yesterday - a tour around the world from such a variety of places and peoples and costumes. Lovely to see the hand of the Lord working among his faithful people to whom he is faithful."

Lastly, "Wow, that was great. Certainly learnt some new moves tonight!"

Thanks to Liesl and Rory Townsend in Cape Town for running Zoom and making the recordings which are now available to the public. Classes were about 12 minutes duration giving wonderful tasters of the individual cultures. Please do revisit, share with others and enjoy.

- Alison Bourke

The classes can be found under the date of 7th August 2021 (numbers 13-22) at ...

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3HHuLEvxGCtRcoKuanlqP4xdUSikHZoP>



Melanie Erasmus:
Spanish Flamenco

Melinda Ivanka:
Hungarian Folk



Linnet Tamale:
Ugandan dance



Ivy Meyer:
South African Gumboot



Jude Kurankyi:
Ghanaian dance



Susanna Harrington:
Indian Bharatanatyam



Lies Nurhaeni:
Papua New Guinea
War Dance



Alison Bourke:
Irish Jig



Uncle Patrick:
Jamaican dance

Dance Costumes/Garments

“Put on the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness”,(Is. 61:3) – we are all familiar with the song and with another, “I am covered over with the robe of righteousness that Jesus gives to me”, (Rev. 7: 13-17). Whether it be clothing for praise and worship or repentance and grief, (Matt. 11:21) the image of being clothed in a specific garment is repeated throughout the Bible, its significance indicated by fabric, colour and shape. Indeed a person will not be allowed to the wedding feast of Jesus and his bride, the church, without being properly dressed, (Matt. 22:11), a metaphor for salvation. Even the fringe of Jesus’ garment held power to heal a woman with a blood issue. The robe that Jesus wore has been the subject of intrigue and archaeological quest for centuries, its possible discovery filling a dedicated museum in Notre Dame, Jerusalem.

In the secular world one look at the fashion industry and clothing business leaves one in no doubt as to the importance of garments in life.

When it comes to dance, the shimmer of silk, the rich textured brocades, the vivid colours of Asian costumes, the intricate embroidering of cotton blouses and waistcoats common to European garments, the addition of leathers and feathers to North American costumes are just some of the noted attractions of Cultural Dance costumes. Added to this, body paint and various adornments, jewellery and accessories catch our attention and amazement at the creativity that is so much an intrinsic part of Native dance.

Recently I heard someone say, “In India and West Africa I wore local garments to show solidarity with the people group and it made such a difference.” If that is so then using cultural dance to present the Christian message is a wonderfully effective way of evangelising one’s own people as many can testify.

Alison Bourke

Irish Dance

For traditional Celtic Dance, female dancers wear a blouse and long skirt while male dancers perform in a shirt and kilt (pleated skirt) reflecting the clothing of Irish peasantry of the 8th Century.

Modern Irish female dancers wear beautifully embroidered short dresses with long sleeves and males a shirt and black trousers. For a long time the traditional Irish dance dress was white, green and white being favourite colours. Today the dresses may be any colour and are richly embroidered in Celtic designs based on the Book of Kells (Ancient handwritten, highly decorated 7th Century copy of the Gospels) and Irish crosses (carved with Biblical stories and interlacing patterns). Lace collars came into vogue around the 18th Century. Often hanging from the shoulder is a folded cloak or mantle. Shoes can be either the hard shoe like those worn for tap dance or the soft shoe like a ballet pump. With competition a whole industry has risen up alongside Irish dance with elaborate curly wigs common among competitors. For Ceilidh dances which are community focused people wear their best outfits for social interaction.

- Alison Bourke



Photo: folklife.si.edu

War Dance and Rok Rumbai of Papua, Indonesia

Papua is one of the provinces in Indonesia with the most unique cultural background. One example is their fashion, particularly the “rok rumbai”, which literally translates to “shred skirt”. It is worn by Papuan women as both top and bottom, and by Papuan men as bottom, especially in their traditional practices, including when dancing.

Papuan rok rumbai, although looking a little similar to the Hawaiian hula dress, has a unique story behind it. It is made of dried sago leaf shreds, taken from sago palm trees, which grow abundantly there and also the main source of staple starch in Papuan people diet. The dried leaves are arranged and tied together into a wrap covering for the body. The whole process of material sourcing, material preparation, and final arrangement is done manually without any sort of “modern” touch, representing the people’s long-held cultural values: appreciation to the nature, gratefulness to the Divine Being for the nature, simplicity of life, and communal work.

With its more than 250 indigenous tribes each with their own local dialect, Papua is rich in cultures. Traditional dances are always performed whenever they have any cultural event, celebrating or grieving, inaugurating or commemorating, in good times and not-so-good times. What is common among many indigenous tribes’ cultural practices is the wearing of rok rumbai in those dances. As part of a dance costume, rok rumbai is the covering bottom (or also the covering top for women) worn together with a colourful head ornament made of sago palm tree fiber, feathers of cassowary birds, or webbing of sago leaves. The dancers also hand-draw the skin of their upper body using natural plant-based ink with patterns inspired by the diversity of flora and fauna of Papua.

Fighting in battles and war are part of Papuan tribes’ lives. Especially in the past, they had been engaged in many tribal wars over matters of land ownership, harvest crops, and community disputes. However, war also concerns spiritual matters. Papuans believe in the Great Divine and live in constant war against the dark powers, and for this they have certain dances.

In ICDF Indonesia, we have recently tried to compile several Papuan war dances into a dance of spiritual awakening, warfare, and victory. Using the well-known traditional song, “Yamko Rambe Yamko”, we are delivering the lyric’s message of strength, good spirit, and fight for the greater good of all woven in the energetic and powerful movements. As originally practiced in the war dances, this compiled dance also presents the wear of rok rumbai and head ornament, modified for ease of material sourcing and making for as many as possible.

We shared this colourful cultural item to our friends in other countries in August at the ICDF online workshop.
- Lies Nurhaeni, member of ICDF Indonesia



Papuan dancers in Rok Rumbai



The Invaluable Hungarian Folk Costumes



The Hungarian folk costume is the traditional way of dressing up in the country. Our folk costumes vary by region, but you've probably heard about either the Matyó or the Kalocsa embroidery that have conquered the world.

Back in the day, the costumes were handmade from durable materials so that they could serve several generations. The basic items of Hungarian folk costumes were mainly simple, handmade and versatile so that they could be combined in many ways. These included shirts, trousers, linen underskirt, skirts, aprons, belts, sheepskin to keep the chest area warm, furred animal skin worn on the back, vests, a coat made from sheepskin, different underpants, jerkins. The final look was complete with headpieces (hats, caps, wreaths, corolla, coifs and headscarves), scarves, shoes, jewellery, ribbons and hat ornaments.

But the selection and combination of items were restricted: some could be only worn by brides-to-be, just-married women or housewives, while others were adequate on certain holidays. Regarding women's wear, there are three typical structures. The most common is centered around layered short skirts and under-blouse combinations. It is characterised by different headwear, especially the combination of coifs. Baggy, short-sleeved under-blouses were worn on the waist with a bodice and fringy humerale over. The loose sleeves of the blouse were decorated with ribbons. The look was complete with pearl necklaces or *lázsiás* (necklace made from silver coins). They wore 4-10 or even more baggy skirts over the pendely, with which they "shaped" their hip. Aprons were added on top of the skirts. For footwear, the options included boots, leather shoes and slippers with thick stockings.

For men, a very original item was the "suba" on the Great Hungarian Plain, which is a long, sleeveless overgarment usually made from sheepskin. Its much more common pair was the "szűr", a coat-like overgarment. Folk costumes can also be perceived from a semiologic point of view because people who knew what the different clothing items, colours, decorations meant could find out a lot about the person wearing them: the person's age, class, state, occupation and the festivity he/she dressed up for.

- Melinda Ivanka



Hungarian dancers in different settings

Photo above: Melinda Ivanka

Costuming for African Cultural Dance and their Significance

Africa has over 3000 tribes each with their own unique culture and beautiful language, each authentic but still connected by ethnicity. Each tribe celebrates their culture and tradition with many different ceremonies and all these have one thing in common and, that is, the traditional dances that represent a certain time or season in the life of the community.

Costuming plays a very integral part to the beauty and meaning of each and every traditional dance in every single culture. Most African tribes have a unique fabric that they use to make their costumes, for example Kikoyi commonly used by the Baganda from Uganda and Kente from Ghana.

Colors that are used in costumes represent youth, vibrancy and different phases in our lives like hunting, harvest, marriage, childbirth, and most importantly the coronation of Kings and Chiefs.



Head gear is worn by certain tribes some with specific meanings, for example in the Zulu tribe married women wear significant beaded hats named Izicolo while married men wear beaded headbands. Most head gear is made for beauty and is also key in protecting women's hair during dance processions.

The use of animal skins and hides is very common in dance costuming in Africa because it is a representation of hunting and farming which were the main activities practiced by most African tribes as a source of livelihood. Elephant grass is used to make grass skirts which are mostly used to emphasize movements during dances.

The use of animal skins and hides is very common in dance costuming in Africa because it is a representation of hunting and farming which were the main activities practiced by most African tribes as a source of livelihood. Elephant grass is also used to make grass skirts. Beaded bralettes of different lengths are worn by women in some cultures while in other cultures fabric and beading are used to cover the upper body. Men usually wear shorts.

Footwear such as ankle bells are worn by both men and women are worn to help pronounce the foot movements and rhythms. Many cultures usually wear leather sandals or dance barefoot.

- Nabatanzi Linnet Tamale

Dance Costumes and their Significance in Ghana

Dance costumes are widely used around the world by various nationalities and cultures. To know the origin of people one can mostly depend on the type of costumes they wear. This is no different from dance presentations, especially traditional dances. This introduction focuses on three Ghanaian traditional dance costumes and their significance.

In no particular order, let me first talk about Adowa. This dance was formally done gracefully by queen mothers of the Ashanti kingdom in Ghana. The costume is usually a kante cloth wrapped around the body with gold ornaments and beads on the neck, hands and legs. These are worn to show the wealth and royalty of the Ashanti people.

Dance Costumes and their Significance in Ghana ... continued



Damba Takai dance



Adowa dance



Atsiagbekor dance

The next is Atsiagbekor dance which is a war dance by the Ewe people of Ghana. The costume is usually a red flowing pants with a loose top and another cloth tied around the waist serving as a sword holder. The history of the people from the Volta region of Ghana is fixed in the Atsiagbekor dance.

The last dance I would like to introduce is the Damba Takai from the northern region of Ghana which is performed with a big smock with trousers, long boots, a hat and a small rod in hand. This dance also portrays power and authority among the Dagombas in Ghana.

All these costumes have their own energy, style and mood they bring to the dances they are made for. Costume, I believe has been one of the factors why my evangelism dance performances are welcomed by all tribes and different people in Ghana. Whenever anyone sees us in their native dance costume they get interested in our mission and messages because they feel accepted.

- Jude Arnold Kurankyi

The Costumes from Norway and Sweden

The costumes in Norway and Sweden are slightly different as is when traditional costume will be worn. In Norway it is common for people to wear them on big occasions, like baptism, confirmation, weddings ... and, most importantly, for their National Day on the 17th of May.

In Sweden today traditional costumes are worn mostly for Midsummer, Folk Music festivals, and by Folk Dance groups as part of their dancing program. Many Swedish people think that traditional costumes are from the old days and as a country we are not so proud to wear them anymore.

My husband John's costume is from the west coast of Norway, the area around Stavanger. My costume is from the west coast of Sweden, around Kungälv. This is the area where we live; just north of Gothenburg.

The material is wool. Most common for men are knee length trousers but for John's costume one can choose either way. His shirt is linen, which is the tradition in Norway. My shirt is cotton, which is more common here in Sweden. Norwegian costumes usually have more silver than we have in Sweden, except for those costumes from the area of Skåne which at one time was Danish and where many rich farmers used to live.

- Kristina Rage



The photo shows Kristina and her husband John wearing their traditional costumes. John bought his costume for their wedding and Kristina bought hers some time after that.

Traditional Costumes of Indian Classical Dances

Indian dance forms are as much about grace and skill as about presentation. The costumes, make-up and accessories are a vital part of each of the traditional classical dance styles. The moves and expressions are enhanced and complimented by the outfits that shimmer and give a distinct identity to the dance form. It is hence hard to imagine Kathakali without the elaborate yet distinguishing face make-up or Bharatanatyam without the perfectly pleated unmistakable drape. Interestingly, each of the dances also in many ways represents the region from which they hail. The costumes and accessories are thus further identifications of not only the dance style but also the specific region that hones them.

1. Bharatanatyam

Practiced in southern India, Bharatanatyam is one of the leading dance forms of the country. In olden days the dance was performed on special occasions at kings' courts and in the temples during the festival days.



The costume of a Bharatanatyam dancer is created on the lines of a Tamil Hindu bride. Generally, the costumes of Bharatanatyam have two types. They are Pyjama style and another skirt style. These two styles of dresses are artistic and comfortable to the dancer to perform the gestures according to the 'Tala sounds'. The costumes of Bharatanatyam are prepared by stitching embroidery with different religious motifs and designs. In days gone by people used gold and silk threads to stitch the costumes. The pleats of the sari are stitched with zari work of beautiful designs and motifs. A vibrantly colorful sari with a pleated stitched cloth in the front that fans out during leg and knee movements is the most eye catching aspect of the attire. In fact, the sari is not a single piece but a combination of many cloth

pieces of different varieties. The sari is draped in a special way, where it tightly covers the back and crosses over one shoulder with the pallav or the end of the sari held at the waist by a belt.

The belt is a jeweled accessory and is complimented with jewelry on the nose, ears, neck and sometimes the head. The hair is tied usually in a tight bun or knot adorned with flowers or the gajra. The ghungroos beat away to the moves as the eyes are lined for highlight. Make-up to a Bharatanatyam dancer is very unique and should display the theme of the dance. Heavy lines are drawn around the eyes to darken and extend the eyebrows outwards. The Bharatanatyam performance is mostly based on the movements of the eyes and eyebrows. Eyebrows are decorated to make their movements clearly visible so that the spectators can easily follow the dance. A red dye is applied to the tips of the toes, fingertips, and soles of the feet. This color is also applied to the palm of the hands in a solid circle and to the legs to emphasize the movements of hands and legs.

The male costume consists of a dhoti which is usually stitched with rich silks and embroidery. The upper body is bare.

2. Kathak

Kathak hails from three distinct regions, Jaipur, Lucknow and Banaras. It is also a dance form that cuts across religions and is practiced by both Hindus and Muslims, with the dress varying for each. The Hindu Kathak dancer wears either a sari or a long full skirt that reaches the ankles. The sari is wrapped around the waist and its end hangs down from the left side. A blouse covers the upper body and a tika usually adorns the forehead along with the customary jewelry in the ears, nose and neck. The dancer may also wear an orhni or scarf in some cases.

Traditional Costumes of Indian Classical Dances ... continued

Ornamentations play a special role. Dancers of classic styles Bharatanatyam, Kuchipadi, and Mohiniyattom wear the so called temple ornamentations made of gold and jewels. Nowadays jewels are replaced with artificial stones. The traditionality of a temple set of ornamentation remains up to now. Every element of ornamentation has its name and symbolism. Chandraprabha (the Moon) and Suryaprabha (the sun) are fixed on the left of the hair parting with the purpose of endowing the dancer with their beauty and shining. Chutti emphasize the line of the forehead and hair parting.

Bells, Gungru help to breathe rhythm and protect the ankles. The belt, called Oddiyanam protects the spinal cord



Kathak ... continued

The full long skirt on the other hand is embroidered on the base and is a light weight skirt that twirls with grace during dance movements. The upper body is covered in a blouse or choli in contrasting colors to the skirt and a transparent scarf usually covers the head. When there was dance in the temples at the time of worship then the priests used to dance. In the Mahabharata period, costumes adopted Radha-Krishna's clothing such as lehenga-choli, Banarasi dupatta with fine work, etc. were used.

The Muslim costume also includes a long skirt but a close fitting churidar is worn on the legs. Sometimes an overcoat is also worn to cover the hands along with the head orhni or scarf. The form of costumes changed in the courts of the Mughal period - churidar pajamas, translucent long tunic.

For male dancers a silk dhoti around the waist is covered with a silk scarf tied on the top. The upper torso is either bare to show the Hindu thread or can be covered in a loose jacket.



3. Kathakali

Finding its roots in the art forms of Kerala, Kathakali has one the most elaborate costumes. It takes more than a few hours for the dancing troupes to get ready before a performance. The colorful costumes, highlighted make-up and facial paintings make Kathakali popular amongst kids as well.

Kathakali make up is an elaborate process lasting for 3 hours. It helps in giving a superhuman look to the actors. All colours used in the make up are obtained from natural substances and herbs. For example, a mixture of lime and rice flour serves for white. The make-up is coded as colors represent the type of the character that the dancers are portraying. Green (Pachcha) facial paints along with red lips are depiction of gods, nobles and sages, such as Krishna, Shiva, Rama and more. Red (Tati) is used for those depicting evil, such as Ravana. Black (kari) is the color for hunters and forest dwellers. Sometimes demons are also painted black but with streaks of red. Yellow is for monks and noble men and women, such as Sita or Panchali. White beard represents the one with a virtuous conscious such as Hanuman.

Traditional Costumes of Indian Classical Dances ... continued

The actor lies flat on a matted floor and the expert starts drawing “the designs” on the face. After the face part of the make-up the actor stands up to put on the costume. The skirt is well starched and pressed into frills. Before the skirt is put on there are 20 to 40 pieces of short cloth around the waist held up with the help of a large cloth twisted rope in order to give the skirt an oval shape. The jacket is then put on. The actor is profusely ornamented with garlands of beads, armlets, cupped mirrors, etc. The head dresses are huge and large.

The make-up and colors represent the virtues of the characters and the dance form combines the colors to give deeper meaning and understanding of the characters.

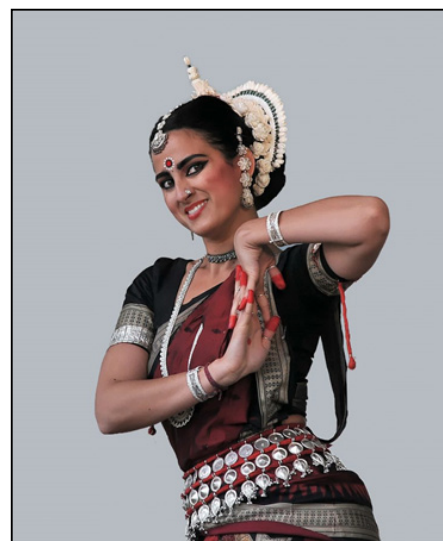


4. Odissi

Odissi from Odisha is a wonderful dance form with costumes similar to that of Bharatanatyam. The Indian classical dance form of Odissi dance is unique among other classical traditions of India in its use of silver ornaments. The artists only wear intricate filigree silver or white jewellery pieces; filigree, meaning thin wire in French, is called Tarchasi in Oriya. Over 500 years old, this art form is traditionally done by highly skilled local artisans on the shores of Orissa in Eastern India. Creating each piece is a collaboration between several artisans, each specialising in one of the many steps that turn a piece of raw silver into a handcrafted work of art.

The sari is colorful and made from the local silk called Pattasari. There are pleats in fronts that are stitched to the garment for greater flexibility but the saris have prints and designs that are traditional to the local handicrafts and culture, such as the Sambalpuri and Bomkai sari. Silver ornaments are worn more since it is a more localized metal covering the ears in what is called kappa that decorate the side of the head too. Necklaces and armlets called bajuband are worn on the upper arm. At the waist the jeweled belt is worn to hold the sari and the hands and toes may be colored in red dye called alta. The dancer's head is also well decorated with allaka a head piece and the hairstyle usually is adorned with a moon shaped flower bun or sometimes a mukoot with peacock feathers.

Male dancers wear a dhoti that is pleated and the upper body maybe uncovered. Sometimes a translucent wrapping over one shoulder is also worn.



5. Kuchipudi



From Andhra Pradesh, Kuchipudi traditionally was performed by male dancers. A dhoti pleated in front was the main costume of the male dancer whereas the female dancers wore a sari with light make-up. However, in modern times the female costume has been drafted along the lines of the Bharatanatyam attire with a pleated sari that is held on the waist with the jeweled belt. The hair style varies, though in both dance forms flowers are worn as ornaments over the head. Yet, some Kuchipudi dance performances may include different costumes, such as pots over the head, gymnastic dancing or head sheets depending on the characters that are depicted. Make-up is generally light complimented with traditional jewellery of the region which adorns her hair, nose, ear, arms and neck. A light metallic waist belt made of gold or brass adorns her waist while a leather anklet with small metallic bells called ghunghroo is wrapped on her ankles that produce rhythmic sounds while she performs brilliant footwork. Her hair is neatly braided and often beautified with flowers or done in tribhuvana style that depicts the three worlds. Her eye expressions are highlighted by outlining them with black collyrium. Sometimes special costumes and props are used

for particular characters and plays, for example a peacock feathered crown adorns the dancer playing Lord Krishna

- Reema Micle

<https://www.caleidoscope.in/about-us#>

<https://www.anuradhaartjewellery.com/the-jewels-of-bharatnatyam/2>

<https://soumyarajan.wordpress.com/2009/05/18/kathakali-make-up/>

Wikipedia

Testimony of an Indian Classical Dancer

Being a trained Bharatanatyam dancer I have composed dance sequences to Christian worship music in the Indian languages using the classical and semi classical genre forms. My deep relationship with Christ and my passion for classical dance led me to the realization that a dance can be just a performance and could become a form of worship only if the dancer decided. Music also plays an important role in deciding what is being expressed in the performance.

Bharatanatyam was originally performed by Hindu devotees in temples and religious ceremonies as a form of worship to the Hindu “gods”. Since Hinduism laid the foundation for Indian culture, art and traditions the conversion to Christianity later by Thomas, the disciple of Jesus, and the Portuguese missionaries did not erase much of the cultural practices amongst the people.

The Bharatanatyam dance form, consisting of intricate movements of the hands, legs and detailed facial expressions to prayer songs, is widely perceived as a symbol of Hinduism. Even today many Christian children learn this dance form for its beauty without realizing that they are in fact bowing down to idols of a heathen faith during class. The advent of movies and secular dance performances however have evolved this dance into semi classical and contemporary genres where “gods” aren’t worshiped but the dance, in these contexts, is rather performed for its beauty.

In my ministry I strive to spread the awareness that Christians can dance in the Bharatanatyam genre to classical rhythms that glorify Christ, using the facial expressions and body movements of this beautiful dance form, and thereby break the myth that this classical dance is Hinduism. Being a classical dancer myself never made me a lesser Christian because faith is from the soul and art is only an expression and never the actual faith itself unless expressed by a devotee to worship. My vision is to teach the next generation to worship our Lord Jesus Christ in these dance forms pertaining to our cultural roots and heritage.

- Reema Micle