



有志深造的舞者（左及右圖）可接受最長12年的訓練

Dedicated kathak dancers (left and right) train for up to 12 years

IN TWO OF Bengaluru's oldest neighbourhoods – Malleswaram and Basavanagudi – early evenings bring the clinking sound of ankle bells as countless young dancers troop to studios for their classes. They wear the dancer's uniform of a loose tunic and trousers that taper down to a narrow ankle. Hair is pulled back into a braid, or chignon, and a red bindi is usually affixed on the centre of the forehead. Most of them are studying kathak, the city's most representative classical dance form.

"Indian dance is a way of life," says Anjana Gupta, the Founder and Director of Sampoorna Academy of Culture and Education, a kathak school. "It permeates all aspects of life – the way you dress, the way you speak, the way you interact with others. It is deeply rooted in Indian culture, for traditional classical dance forms go beyond dance alone."

Kathak is one of the eight officially recognised forms of Indian classical dance. The earliest kathak dancers were storytellers who related, through dance, stories from Hindu mythology. Performances often tell tales of the flute-playing cowherd god Krishna teasing his consort Radha, or Shiva catching the Ganges River in his matted hair. These themes are still popular today.

To a first-time audience, kathak may seem very different from other forms of classical dance. For one thing, dancers – who may perform as a group or solo – stand mostly in a straight-legged position. One of the most distinctive aspects of kathak is rapid footwork in complicated rhythms, slapping and full-soled, sounded out with thick rows of ankle bells – up to 150 bells on each ankle – and accompanied by hand drums. Then there are the spins, most likely the influence of the Sufi "whirling dervish" meditation practice.

Bengaluru has long produced renowned dancers. In the 1930s, the Maharaja of Mysore, who ruled over southern India, spotted and supported Ram Gopal, who went on to become the first Indian dancer to achieve international fame, according to dance historian Ashish Khokar. "Then came others. U.S.K. Rao, who played drums for Ram, became a dancer



入 夜後，印度班加羅爾相鄰的兩個舊區 Malleswaram 及 Basavanagudi 響起清脆的腳鈴聲，無數年輕舞者魚貫進入練舞室上課。他們全都身穿舞衣，上身是寬鬆的長袍，再配搭束腳燈籠褲，頭髮往後梳成辮子或髮髻，通常前額正中央會有一顆紅痣。他們多數是城中最具代表性的古典舞蹈kathak的學生。

Sampoorna Academy of Culture and Education 是一間 kathak 舞蹈學校，其創辦人兼總監 Anjana Gupta 表示：「印度舞是當地生活的一部分，並滲透在各個層面，包括舞者的衣著、談吐及與人互相交流的方式。這種傳統舞蹈深深植根於印度文化中，已經超越舞蹈這個範疇。」

Kathak 是八種官方認可的古典印度舞之一。最早期的 kathak 舞者是說書人，透過舞蹈敘述印度教的神話故事，表演內容有時是吹笛牧牛神 Krishna 如何戲弄他的夫人 Radha，或者細訴濕婆神如何用一頭亂髮接住恆河。這些主題時至今日依然流行。

第一次欣賞 kathak 的觀眾可能會覺得這種舞蹈跟其他古典舞與眾不同。其中一個最大的分別是，不論群舞還是獨舞，舞者站立時雙腿經常要保持筆直；另一個最顯著的特點是步法非常急速，舞者得在複雜的節奏中用力以整個腳掌踏地，震動腳踝上多排腳鈴，使它發出鈴聲（每個腳踝可掛上多達150個腳鈴），再配合手鼓的節奏跳舞。Kathak 還有旋轉動作，想必是受到 Sufi 苦行僧旋轉禪修的影響。

班加羅爾歷年來亦培育出不少鼎鼎大名的舞者。根據舞蹈史學家 Ashish Khokar 指出，1930年代，統治南印度的邁索爾大君，親自發掘並支持 Ram Gopal 學舞，之後 Gopal 不負期望，成為首位蜚聲國際的印度舞者。他表示：「自此，其他舞者先後闖出名堂，Ram 的鼓手 U.S.K. Rao 就和妻子 Chandra 雙雙加入舞者行列。之後，舞蹈界人才輩出，例如前往德里學習 kathak 的 Maya Rao。」

Maya Rao 被視為班加羅爾的元老級 kathak 舞者。1964年，她在德里與其他人共同創辦印度最傑出的舞蹈學校 Natya Institute of Kathak and Choreography，校址後期遷往班加羅爾。該校設有三年制的舞蹈及編舞學士

腳鈴發出的鈴聲為舞蹈表演增添氣氛

Ankle bells, known as *ghungroos*, add sound to a performance



Photos: Main image: India Pictures/UG via Getty Images. Ankle bells: Alamy/Argusphoto



經典舞姿

CLASSIC MOVES

印度舞深深根植於其民族文化中；在班加羅爾，傳統的 kathak 舞蹈既是一種藝術形式，也是生活的一部分

Indian dance is firmly rooted in the country's culture and, in Bengaluru, the traditional kathak style is as much a way of life as it is an art form



課程，年近86歲的Rao依然不時監督校內的資深舞者，他們有不少人均隸屬該校表演團體Natya & STEM Dance Kampni，在印度及世界各地巡迴公演。

有志深造的舞者受訓四到12年不等，每人都要從學習步法開始。隨著年歲增長，他們會學習說故事所需的各種面部表情，包括表達恐懼、憤怒、愛慕、調皮、悲傷等不同情緒。雖然kathak堅守傳統，不過，它跟其他傳統藝術形式一樣備受現代潮流的影響，舞者逐漸探索說故事的新方式。

Natya & STEM Dance Kampni舞蹈團的助理總監Janardhan Raj Urs表示：「班加羅爾見證了這種舞蹈在教育及表演方面的蓬勃發展，觀眾很欣賞各種群舞或獨舞的演出。」

學員學習舞蹈的熱誠和決心，遠遠超越他們為求上台表演的目的。Gupta表示：「經驗豐富的舞者無不舉止優雅、魅力四射，因為古典舞蹈的精神已活在他們的靈魂深處。我們希望學生能明白，古典舞蹈是一種全方位的學習及發展形式，對建立價值觀有很大的幫助，而這些價值不論他們之後在哪个範疇發展，都會終生伴隨。」



港龍航程

班加羅爾：
每日均有航班

DRAGONAIR
Bengaluru: Daily

too with his wife Chandra. Then there were many others, like Maya Rao, who went to Delhi to learn kathak,” he says.

Maya Rao stands as the doyenne of kathak in Bengaluru. In 1964, she co-founded the Natya Institute of Kathak and Choreography in Delhi, one of the country’s most prominent dance schools, which was later moved to Bengaluru. The school offers a three-year degree in dance and choreography. At nearly 86, Rao still oversees the senior dancers of the institute, many of whom join its performing group, the Natya & STEM Dance Kampni. The touring company gives performances across India and around the world.

Serious dancers train for four to 12 years, each studying the footwork first. As they get older, they learn the facial expressions of storytelling that portray fear, anger, love, mischievousness, sadness and other

Photos: Performers: Mark Bryan Makela – UPPA/Photoshot



Maya Rao是kathak舞蹈的代表性人物，其女兒Madhu Nataraj（左圖）也是編舞家及舞蹈員多變的手部動作（左中圖）及豐富的面部表情（最左圖），是傳統印度舞用來傳情達意的基本形式

Acclaimed kathak figure Maya Rao with her daughter, choreographer and dancer Madhu Nataraj (left)

Hand gestures (centre left) and facial expressions (far left) are an essential element of traditional Indian dance

emotions. The basics hold strong, but, as with every traditional art form, kathak is impacted by modern trends, as dancers explore new ways to tell stories.

“Bengaluru has seen these dance forms flourishing in both aspects – teaching and performing,” says Janardhan Raj Urs, an Assistant Director of Natya & STEM Dance Kampni. “There is an audience that is appreciative of these forms when presented in collaboration or individually.”

Studying dance is seen as a pursuit that is greater than the end result on stage. “A seasoned dancer exudes grace, elegance and poise, for classical dance imprints itself on the very soul,” says Gupta. “The challenge is for people to appreciate how the aspect of holistic learning and growth that classical forms impart are essential to build values – values that will stand by the dancer in any field that they choose later on in life.” ■



The Nrityagram Dance Ensemble 曾在世界各地演出
The Nrityagram Dance Ensemble has performed all over the world

百花齊放 Diverse destination

從印度各地蜂擁至班加羅爾的人口，為當地帶來多種地方舞蹈，例如泰米爾納德邦的bharatanatyam舞及奧里薩邦的odissi舞（有可能是現存最古老的印度舞蹈）。

Nrityagram（意思是舞蹈村）距離班加羅爾30公里，建於1990年，原為寄宿舞蹈學院及表演場地，專門教授及演出odissi舞蹈，其Nrityagram Dance Ensemble表演團享負盛名。旅客可到Nrityagram舞蹈村現場欣賞舞蹈員排練的情況，順道享受綠茵處處的自然風光。

Bengaluru has a population that hails from all over India and other regional dance forms are represented, including *bharatanatyam* from the state of Tamil Nadu and *odissi*, which is possibly the oldest surviving style of Indian dance, from the state of Odisha.

Just 30 kilometres outside Bengaluru is Nrityagram, meaning dance village, established in 1990 as a boarding dance school and performance venue. Nrityagram specialises in the odissi style and runs the acclaimed Nrityagram Dance Ensemble. Tourists are able to watch rehearsals and explore the lushly landscaped grounds.

有關印度舞的詳情可瀏覽：
TO LEARN MORE ABOUT INDIAN DANCE

Nrityagram
www.nrityagram.org

Natya & STEM Dance Kampni
www.stemdancekampni.in

Sampoorna Academy of Culture & Education
www.sp-ace.in

Attakkalari India Biennial
www.attakkalari.org

有關各項表演詳情可瀏覽：
PERFORMANCES INFORMATION:
www.buzzintown.com