



**Nishagandhi
Dance Festival**

15-21 February 2024
Kanakakunnu
Thiruvananthapuram

*Evenings of
Exquisite Grace!*

Nishagandhi Dance Festival

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Government of Kerala

NISHAGANDHI DANCE FESTIVAL 2024

15/02/24 Thursday	6.00 P.M 6.30 PM	Inaugural Ceremony Kerala Kalamandalam Major Troupe	'Amba' Specially Choreographed Mohiniyattam Bharatanatyam Kathak
	7.15 P.M 8.15 P.M	Arupa Lahiry Kathak Kendra, New Delhi	
16/02/24 Friday	6.00 P.M 6.45 P.M 8.00 P.M	Pritam Das Arushi Mudgal Manju V Nair	Bharatanatyam Odissi Bharatanatyam
17/02/24 Saturday	6.00 P.M 6.45 P.M 8.00 P.M	Sandhya Venkiteswaran Ananya Parida & Rudraprasad Swain Tribhuwan Maharaj & Group	Bharatanatyam Odissi Kathak
18/02/24 Sunday	6.00 P.M 6.45 P.M 8.00 P.M	Akhila G Krishnan Padma Shri Geeta Chandran Padma Shri Guru V Jayarama Rao & Group	Mohiniyattam Bharatanatyam Kuchipudi
19/02/24 Monday	6.00 P.M 6.45 PM 8.00 P.M	Nandakishore Bhadra Sinha & Gayathri Sharma Dr. Mini Pramod Menon & Group	Bharatanatyam Bharatanatyam Mohiniyattam
20/02/24 Tuesday	6.00 P.M 6.45 P.M 8.00 P.M	Janani Murali Vinitha Nedungadi Bijula Balakrishnan & Group	Bharatanatyam Mohiniyattam Kuchipudi
21/02/24 Wednesday	6.00 P.M 6.45 P.M 8.00 P.M	Madhusmita Bora & Prerona Bhuyan Padma Shri Malavika Sarukkai Dr. Sinam Basu Singh & Group	Sattriya Bharatanatyam Manipuri



**NISHAGANDHI
DANCE FESTIVAL**
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Nishagandhi Puraskaram

Padma Shri Chitra Visweswaran

Chitra Visweswaran is an iconic figure in Indian dance, renowned as a dancer, teacher, and choreographer. Her journey began with early training under her mother and later evolved through Western Classical Ballet, Manipuri, and Kathak. With a profound thirst for knowledge, she delved into interdisciplinary studies while excelling in Bharatanatyam. Her extensive research has expanded the traditional repertoire, resulting in a rich body of work blending tradition with innovation. Honored with prestigious awards, she co-founded the Chidambaram Academy of Performing Arts, shaping generations of artists. Through her holistic vision, she has elevated Indian dance on the global stage, leaving an indelible mark on the cultural landscape.

Kerala Kalamandalam

'Amba' Specially Choreographed Mohiniyattam

Kerala Kalamandalam, India's premier public institution, stands as a guardian of Kerala's rich artistic heritage. Founded in 1930 by Vallathol Narayana Menon and Manakkulam Mukunda Raja, inspired by Rabindranath Tagore's Santiniketan, it imparts rigorous training in Kathakali, Mohiniyattam, Kutiyattam, Panchavadyam, Thullal, Mridangam, and Carnatic Music. Initially facing skepticism, Vallathol's unwavering vision prevailed, and Kalamandalam thrived. Relocating to the Nila campus in 1936, it became a hub for literary and artistic luminaries. Vallathol's legacy endures as Kalamandalam thrives, now in the Vallathol Nagar campus since 1971, preserving the essence of traditional arts and the gurukula system.

15/02/24, Thursday, 6.30 PM



Arupa Lahiry

Bharatanatyam

Arupa Lahiry, a Young Sangeet Natak Academy awardee, is celebrated for her Bharatanatyam contributions, recognized with the ICCR empanelment, "A" grade on Doordarshan, and the 2019 Overall Contribution award. Under Smt. Chitra Visweswaran's guidance, she has graced stages worldwide and directed performances. Besides prestigious fellowships, including a TATA grant, Arupa holds an MPhil in English Literature. As IGNCA's Regional Director in Vadodara, she imparts knowledge through lectures at institutions like IIT Gandhinagar, contributing significantly to Bharatanatyam's enrichment and global outreach.

15/02/24, Thursday, 7.15 PM





Kathak Kendra, New Delhi

Kathak

The Kathak Kendra Repertory, directed by the legendary Pt. Birju Maharaj, stands as a distinguished institution in Kathak dance. Balancing theatrical and musical elements, it is acclaimed for its dramatic expressions and technical mastery. The repertory, formerly the Production Unit, has presented iconic dance dramas worldwide, blending traditional Kathak idioms with contemporary commissions. Recognized for its unparalleled breadth, it enriches the Kathak repertoire, illustrating timeless vision. With landmark productions like Simhasan and Meera Hari Rang Rachi, the Repertory maintains a unique fusion of classic and modern, providing a captivating experience for global audiences.

15/02/24, Thursday, 8.15 PM

Pritam Das

Bharatanatyam

Pritam Das, a Bharatanatyam prodigy, began his artistic journey from the age of four under Smt. Jayita Ghosh and Sri Samrat Dutta. Currently mentored by Smt. Rama Vaidyanathan in New Delhi, Pritam's dance is a divine dedication to Lord Nataraja. With Natyashastra expertise from Kalamandalam Piyal, he holds Master's degrees in Accounts, Finance, and Bharatanatyam. A 'Nritya Visharad,' he's distinguished by Pracheen Kala Kendra and SSOSP. Honored with national scholarships, Pritam, an 'A' Grade Prasar Bharati artist, has earned accolades globally. His recent works include 'Boita Bandhana' and 'Udaan.'

16/02/24, Friday, 6.00 PM



Arushi Mudgal

Odissi

Arushi Mudgal, a leading Odissi talent, seamlessly blends tradition with innovation. Trained by Vidushi Madhavi Mudgal at Gandharva Mahavidyalaya, her performances showcase technical excellence and creativity. Commended by critics globally, she's graced prestigious stages in India and abroad. A Top Ten Dancer of 2018 (New York Times) and a Game Changer of India (India Today), Arushi's accolades include the Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar. Beyond her art, she has co-authored an Odissi aesthetics book and actively organizes cultural events.

16/02/24, Friday, 6.45 PM

Manju V Nair

Bharatanatyam

Manju V Nair, a rising Bharatanatyam artist from Kerala, India, began her journey under the guidance of Sri. Trichur Janardhanan and Kottakkal Murali. Holding a Bachelor's degree with First Rank from Sree Sankaracharya Sanskrit University, Kalady, and a Gold Medal in Master of Arts in Dance from Bangalore University, Manju trained under "Padmasree Adayar Lakshman." Recognized as a B-grade artist on Doordarshan, she has performed globally, receiving awards like the "Ujjain Natya Puraskar" and titles such as "Natwar Gopi Krishna." A dedicated educator, she founded the "Samarppana School of Fine Arts, Ariyallur," and actively participates in seminars and workshops.

16/02/24, Friday, 8.00 PM



Sandhya Venkiteswaran

Bharatanatyam

Sandhya Venkiteswaran is a Bharatanatyam practitioner based in Thiruvanmiyur, Chennai. She holds a Master's in Fine Arts from Kalaikaveri College of Fine Arts and a Bachelor's in English Literature from Madras University. Sandhya is mentored by senior faculty K.P. Rakesh and has received accolades, including CCRT Scholarship and Doordarshan Graded Artist. As Principal Teacher at Bhakti Natya Niketan, she manages group and individual classes, contributing to blended learning initiatives. Sandhya has showcased her talent in notable performances and festivals, earning recognition for her contributions to classical dance.

17/02/24, Saturday, 6.00 PM



Rudraprasad Swain and Ananya Parida

Odissi

Rudraprasad Swain and Ananya Parida, alumni of Orissa Dance Academy under Padma Shri Guru Gangadhar Pradhan and Padma Shri Guru Aruna Mohanty, are adept Odissi performers and emerging choreographers. Founders of “Sanchari School of Dance & Music” in Bhubaneswar, their synergy creates captivating experiences for audiences. With performances across India and globally, including prestigious festivals like Kala Ghoda Arts Festival and Uday Shankar Dance Festival, they’ve garnered acclaim. Rudra, a skilled teacher since 2010, recently premiered a solo choreography mentored by Guru Rama Vaidyanathan. Both recipients of Ministry of Culture scholarships and Doordarshan graded artistes, Ananya is also a Spic Macay empanelled artiste.

17/02/24, Saturday, 6.45 PM



Tribhuwan Maharaj

Kathak

Tribhuwan Maharaj, a vibrant artist from the illustrious Kalka-Bindadin Gharana of Lucknow, is not just a dancer and music composer but a soul deeply connected to his cultural roots. He learned the art under the nurturing guidance of his parents, Pt. Jai Kishan Maharaj and Smt. Ruby Mishra, inheriting the legacy of his revered grandfather, Padma Vibhushan Pandit Birju Maharaj. Beyond stages worldwide, Tribhuwan crafts musical narratives that breathe life into Kathak, earning him honors like the Bharat Icon and Nrityasaarathi Awards. Co-founding the KathakNatyam Academy of Dance, he blends Bharatanatyam and Kathak with a passion that mirrors his artistic journey.

17/02/24, Saturday, 8.00 PM



Akhila Krishnan

Mohiniyattam

Kalamandalam Akhila Krishnan, a dedicated Mohiniyattam artist, holds an M.Phil in Mohiniyattam from Kerala Kalamandalam Deemed University and is pursuing a Ph.D. in 'Natyasamgraham.' Trained under Padma Shri Guru Gangadhar Pradhan and Padma Shri Guru Aruna Mohanty, she earned the title 'Kalamandalam' after ten years of rigorous training. An accomplished performer and choreographer, Akhila has received prestigious endowments, scholarships, and a Guinness Record in Mohiniyattam. Currently an Assistant Professor in Mohiniyattam at REVA University, Bangalore, she has conducted workshops, presented research papers, and participated in numerous national and international dance festivals.

18/02/24, Sunday, 6.00 PM



Padma Shri Geeta Chandran

Bharatanatyam

Geeta Chandran, founder of NATYA VRIKSHA, is a Padmashri-awarded dancer, choreographer, and Carnatic vocalist. Her mission is to “Endance the Universe” through Bharatanatyam, promoting Indian art and culture. Over three decades, NATYA VRIKSHA fosters education, mentoring, and development of young artists. Geeta’s holistic pedagogy integrates dance with diverse disciplines. She champions tradition, transcending linguistic barriers, and creates meaningful choreographies, contributing to societal dialogue. As an arts administrator, mentor, and philanthropist, Geeta supports various causes, emphasizes arts education, and initiates social campaigns. Her dynamic performances and collaborations reflect her vision of interconnected, inclusive, and transformative cultural experiences.

18/02/24, Sunday, 6.45 PM



Padma Shri Jayarama Rao

Kuchipudi

Natyaratna Guru Jayarama Rao, a Padmasree and Sangeet Natak Akademi Awardee, is a prominent figure in Kuchipudi dance. Trained traditionally and under Guru Dr Vempati Chinna Satyam, he enriched the Kuchipudi repertoire with contemporary choreography. Establishing a school in Delhi, he mentored renowned disciples. With dignified performances, poetic movements, and global travels sponsored by ICCR, he received accolades, including Padma Shri and the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award. As a dedicated Guru and performer, his impact on Kuchipudi is profound, evident in his unique compositions and teaching methods, recognized nationally and internationally.

18/02/24, Sunday, 8.00 PM



Nandakishore

Bharatanatyam

Nandakishore, the son of G Sanil Kumar and Kalakshetra Jisha Raghav, hails from a dance-oriented background at Sree Nataraj Dance Academy, Trivandrum. Beginning Bharathanatyam training at age 5, he excelled in the art, completing his arangetram in 2022 and gaining acclaim for his performances. Under Guru Smt Bragha Bessel, he explores abhinaya subtleties and also trains in Kathakali. Alongside dance, he studies Carnatic music and pursues a Literature degree at Mar Ivanious College. Achievements include titles like Kalaprathibha and recognition in various festivals, showcasing his talent and dedication to the arts.

19/02/24, Monday, 6.00 PM



Bhadra Sinha and Gayathri Sharma

Bharatanatyam

Bhadra Sinha and Gayathri Sharma, a dynamic Bharatanatyam duo hailing from Delhi, are dedicated to showcasing India's profound spiritual heritage through their mesmerizing dance. Renowned for their captivating performances at prestigious festivals like Khajuraho Dance Festival and Magic of Dance Festival in Uzbekistan, they seamlessly blend tradition with modern themes. Their groundbreaking presentation, 'He-for-She,' champions gender equality through the ancient 'Adhanaarishwara' philosophy. Masters of classical storytelling, their productions "Sitayana" and "Lankaa" delve into unique Ramayana narratives. With unwavering devotion, they grace revered temples across India, adding a divine touch to Natyanjali and Dev Deepawali festivals. Trained under eminent gurus, Bhadra and Gayathri transcend dance, excelling in journalism and corporate leadership respectively.

19/02/24, Monday, 6.45 PM



Dr Mini Pramod Menon

Mohiniyattam

Dr. Mini Pramod Menon, a professional Mohiniyattam performer and educator for over three decades under Guru Padmasree Kalamandalam Kshemavathy, holds a Ph.D. from Sree Sankaracharya University and an M.A. from Kerala Kalamandalam. Former faculty at RLV College, she's a Committee Member at the Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Academi, a Doordarshan 'A' grade artiste, and a recipient of a junior fellowship and scholarship in Mohiniyattam. Mini's commitment extends to founding the Kalandhika School of Dance, enriching cultural heritage through this exquisite dance form.

19/02/24, Monday, 8.00 PM





Janani Murali

Bharatanatyam

Janani Murali, a seasoned Bharatanatyam dancer, born into an artistic milieu, embarked on her dance journey at age 5 under her mother's guidance. Since her 1999 debut, Janani has excelled as a soloist, ensemble performer, teacher, choreographer, and researcher. Recognized with accolades like "A" grade artiste of Doordarshan and Nalanda Nrithya Nipuna, she's made significant international contributions, blending traditional dance with contemporary themes. Her productions, including 'SAVITRI' and 'Kalpavruksha,' have received global acclaim, showcasing her versatility and commitment to promoting Indian art and culture.

20/02/24, Tuesday, 6.00 PM

Vinitha Nedungadi

Mohiniyattam

Vinitha Nedungadi, a Mohiniyattam maestro from a literary family, holds a Post Graduate Degree from Kerala Kalamandalam. Under Guru Padmashri Kalamandalam Kshemavathy's tutelage, she mesmerizes audiences worldwide with her graceful moves and expressive performances. Beyond traditional pieces, her innovative choreography, including Edassery's Poothappattu and Tagore's Gitanjali, garners acclaim. Recognized as a TOP Graded artiste on Doordarshan, she has received prestigious awards such as Sr. Fellowship from the Ministry of Culture, Jr. Fellowship from Sangeet Natak Akademi, and accolades from Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi and Kerala Kalamandalam.

20/02/24, Tuesday, 6.45 PM



Bijula Balakrishnan

Kuchipudi

Bijula Balakrishnan, an Indian dancer, excels in Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Fine Arts from Bharathidasan University and a Diploma from Kuchipudi Art Academy. As the founder of Sree Bala Meenakshi Kala Kovil in Kozhikode, she boasts 22 years of teaching experience. Bijula has garnered international acclaim, including a Guinness Record in 2006 and recognition in the USA. Felicitated by Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Academy in 2022, she continues to showcase her passion for dance globally.

20/02/24, Tuesday, 8.00 PM



Madhusmita Bora and Prerona Bhuyan

Sattriya

Madhusmita Bora and Prerona Bhuyan, co-founders of Sattriya Dance Company, passionately champion the 500-year-old Sattriya dance tradition from Assam's Vaishnav monasteries. Based in Guwahati, Assam, the sisters-in-law showcase Sattriya's mystic beauty worldwide. Madhusmita, a freelance business journalist and English teacher, debuted in Sattriya at four. Prerona, a proficient artist under the Ministry of Culture, weaves her expertise between the USA and India. Their performances, acclaimed by The New York Times and San Francisco Chronicle, blend tradition and innovation, earning awards like the Art & Change Grant.

21/02/24, Wednesday, 6.00 PM



Padma Shri Malavika Sarukkai

Bharatanatyam

Malavika Sarukkai, an accomplished Indian dancer and choreographer, has made significant contributions to both solo and group choreographies. Renowned for reimagining tradition, she blends originality, intelligence, and technical mastery in her work, bridging classical Bharatanatyam with contemporary expression. Embracing collaboration with poets, musicians, and artists, Sarukkai's productions reflect a fusion of tradition and modernity. Recognized internationally, her choreographies are part of Juilliard's repository. Honored with prestigious awards, including the Padmashree, her impactful and meditative dance style continues to inspire generations, solidifying her status as a legendary dancer and master in India.

21/02/24, Wednesday, 6.45 PM



Dr Sinam Basu Singh

Manipuri

Dr. Sinam Basu Singh, a 'Top' graded artist on National Doordarshan, stands as the first male dancer honored with the SNA Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar for Manipuri dance. Hailing from Manipur and a grandson of the esteemed Maestro Meitei Pung player Guru Late Sinam Bokul Singh, Basu is a dedicated and versatile exponent of Manipuri dance. Trained by Gurus like N. Tiken Singh and W. Lokendrajit Singh, he holds empanelment with ICCR and the Ministry of Culture. With performances spanning the globe and numerous accolades, Basu is also a prolific choreographer, currently contributing his expertise at 'Progressive Artist Laboratory' (PAL).

21/02/24, Wednesday, 8.00 PM





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15-21 February 2024

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