

NAVODIT

FRI 5 JULY
7.30 PM
RICH MIX

Akādemi
SOUTH ASIAN DANCE UK

NAVODIT is an enriching showcase of emerging dancers from across the UK. The best and brightest young South Asian artists provide a bold and adventurous take on the grass root styles of classical Indian Dance. Navodit showcases work from Elena Catalano, Uma Venkataraman and Jesal Patel as they rise and establish themselves as part the cultural landscape of the UK.

Introductory opening

Taranna

Dancer: Jesal Patel

Choreography: Maulik Shah

Tarana in Raag Puriya Dhanashree

Mallari

Dancer: Uma Venkataraman

Choreography: Pushkala Gopal

Mallari is a traditional dance originating from when the temple deity was taken out in procession. The progressive unfolding of this mallari, like the blossoming of a flower through the four speeds of time, symbolises the dancer's offering to the Lord and her Guru. The disciplined yet graceful movements that she portrays allow her to transcend mind and body as an offering to the divine.

Megh Pallavi

Dancer: Elena Catalano

Choreography: Guru Ratikant Mohapatra

With a ribbon

Of silver and velvet

As a belt around my waist

You brought my pulsing chest

In the garden of our age

Among fragrant creepers,

Of intoxicated bees

With a sudden thunder

The rain melted our eyes

In the lacerated sky

Yaar Aadinaar

Dancer: Uma Venkataraman

Choreography: Pushkala Gopal

The poet asks the question, "After seeing the great Lord Shiva dance, who will dance again?" On a basic level, the dancer praises the exuberant dance of Lord Shiva; on a deeper level the dancer undergoes a process of prayer and worship in the form of dance to enter into a state of bliss.

Hari Riha Mugdha

Dancer: Elena Catalano

Choreography: Padmavibhushan Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra

Under a tree of wild buds, with his flute,

Krishna was resting, the dark lord.

The subtle breeze of the dusk awakened

his mildly drowsy gold-dressed body.

He came in joy among the thousand maidens.

To adorn their silky manes with scented flowers.

To embrace their blossoming breast.

To decorate their yearning faces with sandal paste.

He came, Krishna, the dark lord.

Their earrings dangling against their cheeks in the love play.

Their bracelets tinkling at the clap of velvet hands.

Their voices mingling with his flute's mind-blowing tunes.

Their fresh limbs moving in delight.

He came, Krishna, the dark lord.

He came in joy among the thousand maidens.

INTERVAL (20 mins)

An Ode to Africa

Dancer: Jesal Patel

Choreography: Sujata Banerjee

Tabla and percussion accompaniment: Aniruddha Mukharjee

Through the Indian classical dance form of kathak, we enter the world of Rabindranath Tagore's poem, entitled **Africa**. As the creator roiled by this own discontent, shook his head violently again and again - in this confusion of his disapproval, a piece of land separated from the core of the Earth - hidden by the greeneries like a veiled woman she remains undiscovered by all.



Photo: Nina Edwards

Surrounded by impenetrable privacy and leisure, she unravels the secrets of the uncharted - discovers the nature's magical alchemy and immerses in the joy of its vibrating rhythm - she dances. Suddenly emboldened against its intruders - she protects herself and destroys mercilessly- 'forgive' she pleads and hopes to be forgiven.

Vaishnava Janato

Dancer: Uma Venkataraman

Choreography: Pushkala Gopal

This immortal bhajan, treasured by Gandhiji, asks the question, "who is the true devotee of Vishnu?"

Narada, Vishnu's messenger observes the weaknesses of human beings. He is saddened to see a pious man perceive that his daily prayer has been "polluted" just because a low-caste person has touched him. Narada next sees the doting mother feeding her own child and denying a hungry, low-caste child of food. The mother buries the food, just because the child has laid eyes on it. Dejected after seeing these two scenes, Narada is overjoyed to hear the enlightened words of Narsinh Mehta, describing the attributes of a true devotee of Lord Vishnu. Devotion is not about material wealth, or external beauty, it is about perceiving the pain of others as one's own. One should view every woman as a mother and rid oneself of the base emotions of anger and lust. Thus, in the service of others, by repeating the name of the Lord, and vanquishing desire, will one gain moksha, or salvation.

Moksha

Dancer: Elena Catalano

Choreography: Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra

What is faster than the wind?

The mind

More numerous than grass?

Thoughts

What is more valuable than gold?

Knowledge

More desirable than wealth?

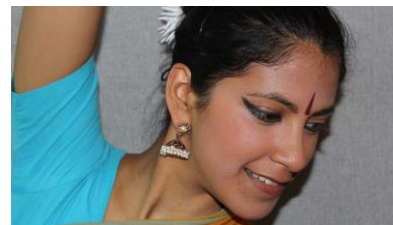
Health

What is the most amazing thing about the world?

Every day creatures die, yet the rest live as if immortal.

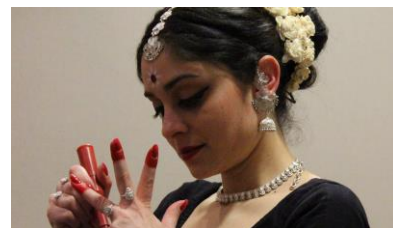
Dancer's Biographies

Uma Venkataraman started dancing at the age of 6 under the tutelage of Mark Hatton of Mrittika Arts, Coventry, UK, and continued from the age of 13 with Srimati Pushkala Gopal in London. Her initial enthusiasm for Bharatanatyam has developed over the years into a passion that continues to take her on a deeply spiritual journey. In the UK, Uma trains with Sri Mavin Khoo. She enjoys teaching her young students Bharatanatyam and regularly choreographs pieces for them to perform. Uma is currently studying at Imperial College, London. Despite her academic endeavours, Bharatanatyam remains an essential and central part of Uma's life.



Jesal Patel is a Kathak Dancer trained for over 16 years by her Guru Gauri Sharma Tripathi. Jesal now trains under Sujata Banerjee. Jesal has worked in multiple productions across the years with Akademi, most recently performing in Sufi:Zen as part of the Alchemy Festival 2013. She continues to work closely on projects with Artist in Residence for the Southbank Centre and curator for Alchemy Festival, Gauri Sharma Tripathi as well as well known South Asian Dance organisations such as Akademi, Milapfest and Sampad. Jesal is a member of Ankh Dance Group. Alongside Jesal's creative endeavours she stays grounded as a Health Care Manager and Medication Dispenser. Her passion is to help people in need in a creative way.

Elena Catalan is a dance scholar and a performer. She has been training in theatre and dance since early age, exploring different movement vocabularies and performative languages. Interested in understanding the relationship between dance and culture, Elena has undertaken her academic education in anthropology and ethnography, carrying out research in Europe, Africa and India. She has trained in Odissi in India, in the guru Kelucharan Mohapatra style, under Srimati Priyambada Pattanaik, from the Nrityagram school, with a scholarship by the Indian Council for Cultural Relationships, and under guru Sujata Mohapatra, Orissa. She is presently completing her PhD with a research on Odissi. Elena's aspiration is to develop an ethno-choreographic language that by using the vocabulary of specific dance traditions is able to explore issues of transcultural relevance.



Akademi South Asian Dance UK

Akademi is a pioneering, progressive arts organisation that exists to enhance the practice, understanding and appreciation of South Asian dance in the UK. Since 1979, Akademi has been taking South Asian dance into unconventional spaces, re-defining the parameters of the art form itself. For more information about Akademi, please visit: www.akademi.co.uk.

Twitter: @akademi or #navodit

Facebook: /AkademiSouthAsianDance

Thanks

Akademi would like to thank the following organisations for their kind support of this event, without which Navodit could not have taken place: Eence Academy of Performing Arts, WAC Arts, Rich Mix London and Arts Council England for their continuing support.