

Traditional Dance form of Kerala

Kathakali

Kathakali is a dance drama from Kerala. Traditionally the name was deduced by joining two words, "Katha" and "Kali" where Katha in Sanskrit means a traditional tale or story, and Kali derived from Kala refers to art and performance.

Kathakali is typically structured around 'Attakatha' meaning the story of attam or dance. 'Attakatha' are plays that were historically derived from Hindu epics like 'Bhagavata Puranas', 'Mahabharata' and 'Ramayana' which were written in certain format that allows one to determine the dialogue portions that is the Pada part and the action portions that is the Shloka part of the performance. The latter is the poetic metre written in third person elucidating the action portions through choreography. A dramatic representation of an ancient play is presented in a Kathakali performance which includes actor-dancers, vocalists and musicians. This age-old performance art traditionally starts at dusk and performed through dawn with breaks and interludes and sometimes for several nights starting at dusk.

Costumes And Make-up

The costume is elaborate and the face is painted in vivid hues. The Vesham or make-up is of five types - Pacha, Kathi, Thadi, Kari and Minukku.

The pomp and magnificence of Kathakali is partly due to its décor, part of which is the kireedam (huge ornamental headgear) and the kanchukam (over sized jackets), and a long skirt worn over a thick padding of cushions. The artists completely immerse themselves and the audience into the story they're describing.

Pacha (Green)

PachaVesham or the green make-up portrays noble protagonists.

Kathi (Knife)

KathiVesham portrays villainous characters.

Thadi (Beard)

There are three types of beards or ThadiVeshams. VellaThadi or White beard for superhuman monkeys like Hanuman. Chuvanna Thadi or Red

beard meant for evil characters. Karutha Thadi or Black beard for the hunter.

Kari (Black)

Kari Vesham is used for she-demons.

Minukku (Prettying Up)

The "MinukkuVesham" is used for female characters and sages.

Head gears and face masks help emphasize the facemake-up which is prepared from colours extracted from vegetables and rice paste. It takes several hours to complete the entire get up of all the actor-dancers of a play thus bringing out the personality of each character.

Instruments & Music

A 'Kathakali' performance includes various instruments that encompass three major drums namely 'Itaykka', 'Chenda' and 'Maddhalam'. Music plays a significant role in this form of classical art creating variations of tones setting and corresponding to the mood of a particular scene. The voice artists also contribute significantly in the entire act with not only delivering the relevant lines but also setting the mood and context of the scene by modulating their voice to express the temperament of the character.

Mudra

Mudra is a stylised sign language used to depict an idea, a situation or a state of being. A Kathakali actor enacts his ideas through mudras. For this the actor follows a systematic sign language based on "Hastalakshana Deepika", a treatise on the language of hand gestures.

Kathakali Training

Students of Kathakali have to undergo rigorous training replete with oil massages and separate exercises for eyes, lips, cheeks, mouth and neck. Abhinaya or expression is of prime importance as is nritya or dance and geetham or singing. Kerala Kalamandalam is among the foremost centres for Kathakali training in the traditional way.

The present Video also shows stages of face Makeover and a team dancers performing Kathakali. The Team is leaded by our senior batch student **Sri. Shiva Prasad M.G.**