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## **Bharatanatyam: A Reflection of the Past and Evolving Embodiment of the Times**

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BHARATANATYAM: A REFLECTION OF THE PAST AND EVOLVING EMBODIMENT  
OF THE TIMES

This Paper was selected under double-blind peer review as one of the best academic papers in dance of 2020-2021 by a review committee consisting of members of the LMU National Dance Education Organization Student Chapter, Dance department students, William H. Hannon Librarians, Dance faculty and an external scholar.

Tulsi Shah  
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## **What is Bharatanatyam?**

Bharatanatyam is the pinnacle of Indian classical dance that brings together music, art, and movement through the lens of storytelling. Formerly known as sādīr up until the 1930's, bharatanatyam is the most well-known Indian classical dance form practiced in India today according to Janet O'Shea, professor in the Department of World Arts and Culture/Dance at UCLA.<sup>1</sup> The idiom hails from Tamil Nadu and Madras State in Southern India, with roots in Tanjore temple dancing performed by dēvadāsis (translated as “servants of god”) as stated by internationally acclaimed Indian classical dance artist, Rajika Puri.<sup>2</sup> Building upon the legacy of dēvadāsis, bharatanatyam's training methods, audiences, performance settings, gender norms, and dancers' status is recontextualized throughout shifting historical contexts of colonialism and the post-colonial era. Intricately tied to Hindu devotionalism, bharatanatyam can be subject to presenting a narrow conception of Hinduism equated with glorified notions of Indian nationalism. In light of contemporary issues and phenomena, bharatanatyam's strong sense of origin and tradition is enriched by modern day content. The form's structure allows for artistry that stays true to conventional practices while fluidly interspersing artistic freedom that has pushed the form into an ever-evolving craft. Serving as a mirror to past traditions yet a window into the future of endless possibility, bharatanatyam's trajectory of infinite development draws upon its rich history while present-day artists mold the form to ensure relevancy and progression.

## **Key Features of Bharatanatyam**

A bharatanatyam dancer's costume consists of six yards of hand-woven silk accompanied by a minimum of ten pieces of gold jewelry.<sup>3</sup> The dancer's hair is braided down the back with a brightly-colored tassel attached at the end and twisted in a chignon encircled with flowers.<sup>4</sup> A

brooch-like ornament called the chandra (moon) and sūrya (sun) is worn on either side of the head.<sup>5</sup> The dancer wears a strand of bells around their ankles which can be heard as the dancer's bare feet hit the bare floor of the stage.<sup>6</sup> Make-up for a bharatanatyam dancer consists of "heavily-kohled eyes, darkened eye-brows and lipstick as well as the red tilakam (spot) placed at the center of the forehead" - a sign of a Hindu married woman.<sup>7</sup> Dancers' hands and feet are covered in henna which is a red dye used to paint intricate designs on the skin - a symbolic characteristic of a bride at her wedding. Although this costuming and make-up is known all throughout India to be associated with bharatanatyam dancers, it also resembles the dress of a typical South Indian bride and is considered to be the most ornate costume a woman wears during her lifetime.<sup>8</sup> A bharatanatyam performer's costume is reflective of the normal clothing worn by dēvadāsis who became the bride of the deity.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to costuming, some other key features of bharatanatyam include mudras (hand gestures), facial expressions set to rhythmic cadences, portrayal of Hindu deities, and miming elements as specified by Dr. Katherine Zubko.<sup>10</sup> This south Indian dance form draws upon a "semiotic lexicon" that brings to life well-known Hindu mythological stories as well as other tales of the choreographer's choosing.<sup>11</sup> The lack of scenery on stage complies with the conventions of Sanskrit theater where the performer is expected to suggest changes of scenery or objects through skillful use of hand gestures.<sup>12</sup> Although bharatanatyam comes from devotional dancing, contemporary artists create a vast range of work including both secular and non-secular pieces. A primarily solo dance form, bharatanatyam's repertoire and vocabulary is subdivided by nritta (abstract rhythmic choreography) and abhinaya (dramatic dance).<sup>13</sup> Both abhinaya and nritta are included in the word, nrtya, the term closest to the idea of "dance" in India.<sup>14</sup> "Abhinaya," writes Rajika Puri, "refers to the mime element of dances in which facial

expressions and hand gestures in particular are used to convey, dramatic, narrative, and spoken language meanings.”<sup>15</sup> Bharatanatyam is a combination of dancing and acting that allows the dancer to flow seamlessly between multiple identities.<sup>16</sup> It is common for dancers to assume a stance where the knees are bent and the legs rotated outward, showcasing the grounded use of weight and gracefully erect and floating torso looming above dynamic feet.<sup>17</sup> Scholar of Indian classical dance, Kapila Vatsyayan, states that “Dance interprets in movement, what music interprets in sound; the postures and the stances it attains are the poses which the sculptor models; all these the dancer imbues with a living spirit of movement in a composition of form which is both sensuous and spiritual.”<sup>18</sup> Bharatanatyam conveys a unique crossroads of artistic expression that enlivens viewers and demands a thorough understanding of the body’s relation to sound from its practitioners.

Music is an integral part of every bharatanatyam performance. The instrumentation used in bharatanatyam follows the South Indian Karnatic style.<sup>19</sup> Typically, a nattuvanār (dance master and often the dancer’s guru) beats the rhythms made by the dancer’s feet with a small pair of cymbals called the tālam.<sup>20</sup> Other musicians include a drummer, one or more singers, and two or more instrumentalists that play the vina (similar to the sitar), bamboo flute, or violin.<sup>21</sup> The musicians begin with a prelude that introduces the rāga (musical mode or scale) which invokes the mood of the dance.<sup>22</sup> Each piece of music is set to a specific tāla (metrical cycle) and may include sāhitya (lyrics or words).<sup>23</sup> It is the dancers’ job to interpret the rāga, tāla, and sāhitya through their movement.<sup>24</sup> These three musical elements are arranged in a hierarchy for the dancer, with the first priority being the lyrics.<sup>25</sup> If sāhitya is present, the dancer interprets this with their hands and face while continuing to beat the rhythm with their feet.<sup>26</sup> When there are no lyrics, a dancer will use their entire body to depict the rhythmic components of the music.<sup>27</sup>

Sections of the performance that include all three musical elements are deemed as the highlights of the program.<sup>28</sup> One can consider “the Bharatanatyam dancer as a musician who uses the medium of movement in order to interpret the music.”<sup>29</sup> An accomplished bharatanatyam dancer is required to have a deep understanding of the music in order to improvise their movements during a performance.

The choices dancers make during their improvisation, a major facet of bharatanatyam, sometimes make their way into a set version of a performance piece.<sup>30</sup> Musically, dancers explore various ways a musical phrase may be interpreted through movement, and the musicians repeat the phrase until they receive a signal from the dancer to move on.<sup>31</sup> The basic skeleton of a piece is determined beforehand, and a skilled dancer is expected to improvise their movements in a way that features the melodies and polyrhythms clearly.<sup>32</sup>

In addition to adhering to musical components, bharatanatyam dancers are almost always embodying a character. Often dancers will present episodes from Hindu legends and mythology where an emotion or mood is evoked while fluidly communicating through the embodiment of multiple characters.<sup>33</sup> “The sung poetic text that accompanies bharatanatyam rests on the traditions of bhakti,” or devotionism, which emphasizes role playing.<sup>34</sup> Songs with lyrics are normally derived from Sanskrit, Telugu, or Tamil poems which mainly address the Hindu deities Shiva and Krishna.<sup>35</sup> Because of Hinduism’s dominance, the form is subject to asserting “homogenizing and hegemonic views of 'great Indian culture' as espoused often by Hindu fundamentalism that ignores cultural differences among minorities on the Indian sub-continent.”<sup>36</sup> This limited view of Hinduism is susceptible to excluding other religions and communities in India who also practice the form.<sup>37</sup> Additionally, since bharatanatyam is allied to South Indian traditions, a South Indian audience is familiar with the heroes and divinities

addressed by the dancer along with the melodies and songs that the performer interprets.<sup>38</sup> Other audiences may have a more difficult time deciphering a devotionally-centered bharatanatyam performance due to their lack of cultural understanding. Nonetheless, the beauty of devotional dancing expressed through the Hindu tradition is integrated through movement, music, and theatrical expression.

### **Dēvadāsis and Anti-Nautch Movement**

The devotional aspect of bharatanatyam lies at the source of its origin called sādīr, practiced by the dēvadāsis. Dēvadāsis were female, solo dancers, as well as “courtesans and ritual officiants” dedicated to temple and court service.<sup>39</sup> Seen as the protectors of the arts, they held a high esteem in society starting from the sixth century leading up to the nineteenth century.<sup>40</sup> Dēvadāsis performed devotional dances and received their salary from the temple in addition to grants from performances.<sup>41</sup> Although dēvadāsis were thought to be married to god, they did not remain sexually abstinent and entered into liaisons with men.<sup>42</sup> These affiliations were nondomestic; dēvadāsis did not perform household tasks for their patrons as they resided in separate homes.<sup>43</sup> Unfortunately, dēvadāsis contributed to a “sexual double standard in which society allowed elite men both wives and mistresses while restricting most women to lifelong monogamy.”<sup>44</sup> Dēvadāsis never married and instead lived in female-headed households along with their mothers, grandmothers, and children.<sup>45</sup> The ritual affirming dēvadāsis’ entry into temple service mirrored that of a wedding ceremony; dēvadāsis married the presiding deity of their temple and were thereafter considered “nityasumangalī” (ever-auspicious women).<sup>46</sup> Dēvadāsis had more liberties than their other female counterparts at the time in the sense that they were able to travel about freely in the outside world, learned how to read and write, and

trained in music and dance.<sup>47</sup> Their unique position at the junction of holiness and impurity sheds light onto the complexities of South Indian society.

British colonizers were very entertained by these dancers, yet they did not approve of the *dēvadāsi* tradition. Thus, a group of English social reformers launched an anti-nautch (anti-dance) movement in the nineteenth century.<sup>48</sup> Many *dēvadāsis* became impoverished due to the withdrawal of their patrons and consequently turned to prostitution which only brought about further disfavor for their craft and role in society.<sup>49</sup> By the early twentieth century, very few *dēvadāsis* remained, and those who did pursue their profession became ostracized and their dancing considered immoral.<sup>50</sup>

The anti-nautch movement unquestionably complicated the *dēvadāsis*' reputation.<sup>51</sup> In Chennai, a group of dance and music scholars fought back against anti-nautch agitations.<sup>52</sup> They argued that the *dēvadāsis*' dance was far from immoral, and served as an inherent part of Indian philosophical, aesthetic, and religious traditions.<sup>53</sup> In the early nineteen thirties, this group caused a disruption within the educated upper-class community by presenting *sādir* on the urban secular stage.<sup>54</sup> Despite initial resistance, these scholars were eventually successful in combating anti-nautch motives.<sup>55</sup> Young girls from respected families began to study *sādir* and the popularity of this idiom quickly spread to North India.<sup>56</sup> The name “*sādir*” was given up and replaced by “*bharatanatyam*,” the term “*natya*” connotes a multi-genre theatre form rather than solo dance - linking *bharatanatyam* to pan-Indian dramatic traditions and distancing it from the solo performance of *dēvadāsi* dancers.<sup>57</sup> A transition occurred that placed *bharatanatyam* in the sphere of “high-art” rather than diversion, and this concept spurred the recontextualization of *bharatanatyam* which involved high-status women in public performances.<sup>58</sup> As a result, the venue of performances shifted from a temple or palace setting to urban theatres, and a massive



expansion of dance schools that taught bharatanatyam technique came into existence.<sup>59</sup> Even so, a typical bharatanatyam recital still to this day follows the customs of the dēvadāsis.<sup>60</sup>

Contemporary bharatanatyam dancers perceive themselves as inheritors of the dēvadāsi tradition and are taught by those remaining from the dēvadāsi lineage.<sup>61</sup>

### **Evolution of Bharatanatyam: Textualization and Rukmini Devi**

Even before the existence of dēvadāsis, dance can be found in ancient Sanskrit texts such as the Śāstras. There is an entire corpus of Sanskrit texts entirely devoted to dance ranging from the common era to the nineteenth century.<sup>62</sup> Some of these texts reference and draw upon the deity Shiva, known as the lord of dance as well as the creator, destroyer, and transformer of the universe. Rooted in divinity, this ancient textual wisdom is inextricably intertwined with the understanding that dance emerged with the cosmos itself. Many scholars have worked to determine “links between ancient theoretical texts and contemporary practices.”<sup>63</sup> Contemporary artists can always come back to these early texts and discover a depth of knowledge that brings scriptures to life while deepening their individual relation to dance and spirit. A bharatanatyam pioneer active during the mid-twentieth century, Rukmini Devi, utilized dance literature as a part of a larger phenomenon called “Sanskritization” or “textualization” of dance.<sup>64</sup> Text became a source of inspiration for Devi’s artistic endeavors and her students transformed verses of text into practical bharatanatyam exercises.<sup>65</sup> This process aims to present bharatanatyam as a legitimate heir of the ancient tradition expressed in Sanskrit literature.

Another way Devi enhanced bharatanatyam training was by engaging with an array of dance forms, giving bharatanatyam international awareness.<sup>66</sup> In 1933 Devi rebranded sādīr and changed its name to bharatanatyam after learning from “traditional male teachers and dēvadāsis.”<sup>67</sup> Devi emphasized technique, long-term immersion, and international exposure in

her school, the Kalakshetra institution. By using methods derived from ballet, Devi was able to invent and recraft traditional practices while managing to not replace the foundation of those traditions.<sup>68</sup> She incorporated ballet training tactics into her practice that influenced the “stylistic rendition of units of movement rather than to alter the vocabulary itself.”<sup>69</sup> Devi was able to augment classical shapes and lines while still preserving the steps and dynamics of bharatanatyam. Throughout the course of her career, “Devi juxtaposed bharatanatyam and ballet,” developing an aesthetic for her institutions that can be seen as “India’s own classical dance tradition.”<sup>70</sup> It is important to note, however, that bharatanatyam was a codified artform before any Western influence from ballet, seeing as the history of ballet is much shorter than the history of bharatanatyam.<sup>71</sup> Elements of ballet did indeed enhance the aesthetic nature of bharatanatyam in the twentieth century, but many of the precepts of bharatanatyam stem from longstanding traditions.<sup>72</sup>

By working with the worldview of colonialism, Devi facilitated transcultural communication by collaborating with international educators and traditional dance and music teachers.<sup>73</sup> She added stage lighting imported from British stagecraft and “recostumed, restaged, and theatricalized” the dance in a way that resembled modern dance pioneer, Isadora Duncan.<sup>74</sup> Incorporating innovative stage elements, facial expressions, and use of full body, Devi challenged the “colonial understanding of Indian culture as limited to fixed traditions restricted by autocratic and authoritative hierarchies.”<sup>75</sup> Students from a diverse range of locations including India, Tibet, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Burma, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Europe, Australia, and America came to study at Devi’s Kalakeshetra school.<sup>76</sup> These students went on to become teachers who returned to their respective homes and thus, started the bharatanatyam diaspora.

The beginning of the twentieth century gave way to a collective Indian national consciousness that promoted a common sense of ethnicity spurred by the struggle for independence from the British.<sup>77</sup> Scholars sought to revive ancient traditions that encouraged a pan-Indian identity that emphasized indigenous pride instead of colonial culture.<sup>78</sup> In this period, bharatanatyam appears internationally as “both an emblem of national and diasporic identity and as a ‘high art’ that transcends national and linguistic boundaries.”<sup>79</sup> The evolution of bharatanatyam grows alongside a global movement of reinventing dance as a respected artform.<sup>80</sup> A few key twentieth century leading artists played a role in the revival of bharatanatyam. American modern dance pioneer, Ruth St. Denis, founded the School of Natya in the early 1940’s, which taught South Asian dance and brought dance in the sphere of religion.<sup>81</sup> Additionally, Russian prima ballerina and choreographer, Anna Pavlova, became fascinated with Indian dance and collaborated with Indian art student, Uday Shankar, to incorporate elements of the artform into her own repertory.<sup>82</sup> These actions performed by progressive artists shifted attention back to Indian classical arts.<sup>83</sup> By the late twentieth century, bharatanatyam had gained its reputation as a respectable tradition that produced a “proliferation of trained and accomplished dancers.”<sup>84</sup>

### **Contemporary Artists and Issues: Fusion of Past and Present**

Today, bharatanatyam artists are challenging traditional practices embedded in the artform. For example, gender norms play an essential part in bharatanatyam since in abhinaya, dancers are demanded to embody both male and female roles through a “codified series of bodily attitudes and gestures.”<sup>85</sup> These impersonations may be used to explore different gender constructs and go beyond a dancer’s actual gender, especially for those who place themselves outside of the conventional dichotomy of male and female.<sup>86</sup> Some contemporary practitioners

are using abhinaya to reshape how homosexual, bisexual, and transgender dancers interact with bharatanatyam, presenting gender as a changeable, cultural construct.<sup>87</sup> The fluctuation between gender boundaries already existent in bharatanatyam could be used as a means to express emotions in a different way than what is socially acceptable, seeing as LGBTQ rights and homosexuality in Tamil Nadu is deemed a crime punishable by law.<sup>88</sup> The act of “queering bharatanatyam” has potential to be a tool to “subvert the rigid heteronormativity characterizing this dance style” and promotes the idea that “a body written by culture, can always be re-scribed.”<sup>89</sup>

Another bharatanatyam artist and longtime activist, Mallika Sarabhai, also addresses gender-based violence in her work among other contemporary issues such as climate change and human rights. Testing the boundaries of what kinds of stories can be presented through bharatanatyam, Sarabhai states that bharatanatyam is an “amazing language to break through walls of prejudice, walls of fear, and also walls of patriarchy.”<sup>90</sup> Bharatanatyam’s complex mudras allow for almost anything to be conveyed with help from facial expressions and other uses of the body, allowing artists to find their voice and present work on any number of topics that they deem important. This freedom of expression and limitless possibility for invention within bharatanatyam’s movement vocabulary is a major aspect of why bharatanatyam continues to thrive today. Believing that her work addressing environmental degradation, gender, and violence was a dire matter thirty years ago, Sarabhai discerns that now these issues are only exponentially worse.<sup>91</sup> Referencing the #MeToo movement, Sarabhai asserts that when she started making work, violence against women was a common occurrence that no one was discussing openly.<sup>92</sup> Sarabhai argues that today, the degree of abuse women face is a fairly well-known matter “but, the way forward is not.”<sup>93</sup> The long-term activism that Sarabhai has engaged

in surrounding these topics has spurred immense healing, and her work is a testament to bharatanatyam's powerful potential. Continuing to educate her viewers and push the limits of bharatanatyam, Sarabhai's activist-centered approach to the artform display how interminable bharatanatyam truly is.

Many present-day bharatanatyam artists grapple with how to make bharatanatyam more relevant to contemporary audiences. What is becoming increasingly more evident is the ways in which artists are able to mold the form to topics and stories of their choosing while remaining in line with tradition. Bharatanatyam artist Savitha Sastry explains how "the physicality and musicality of the artform continues to be relevant however, the content has to be changed to become applicable to the times of today."<sup>94</sup> The drive to innovate bharatanatyam helps the tradition stay alive, and artists are constantly seeking ways in which to make their art meaningful in the context of the world they experience without sacrificing the conventions, discipline, technique, and rigor of training bharatanatyam is built upon.

Due to shifting historical contexts, post-colonial frameworks, and pioneers of the form, bharatanatyam has undergone tremendous developments while still managing to stay true to its cultural origins. With roots in ancient Sanskrit literature and a foundation in the devotional dancing of the *dēvadāsis*, bharatanatyam's lineage is linked to longstanding traditions. Bharatanatyam's far-reaching diaspora and international acclaim have enabled it to become a respected global art. Modern-day practitioners are widely attempting to fuse the traditional with the modern to ensure bharatanatyam remains a relevant, vibrant artform. Those who have found success in this fusion of past and present express originality by showing fidelity to the past, utilizing key features of bharatanatyam and in doing so, tapping into the vast range of possibility. Although it may be reflective of the past, as all art owes its origins and pioneers much credit,

bharatanatyam also displays promise to future practitioners because of its transformative essence. How can we ignite bharatanatyam's healing modalities at a time when the world desperately needs to feel whole? There will always be stories to tell, and the beauty of bharatanatyam lies in its ability to convey the trials and tribulations of humanity, no matter the era.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Janet O'Shea, "At Home in the World?: The Bharatanatyam Dancer As Transnational Interpreter," *TDR (1988)* 47, no. 1 (2003): 178.

<sup>2</sup> Rajika Puri, "Bharatanatyam Performed: A Typical Recital," *Visual Anthropology* 17, no. 1 (January 2004): 45.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>10</sup> Katherine C. Zubko, *Dancing Bodies of Devotion: Fluid Gestures in Bharata Natyam* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2014), 8.

<sup>11</sup> O'Shea, "Transnational Interpreter," 176.

<sup>12</sup> Puri, "A Typical Recital," 48.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>16</sup> Zubko, *Dancing Bodies of Devotion*, 10.

<sup>17</sup> O'Shea, "Transnational Interpreter," 176.

<sup>18</sup> Ketu H Katrak, "Cultural Translation of Bharata Natyam into Contemporary Indian Dance. Second-Generation South Asian Americans and Cultural Politics in Diasporic Locations," *South Asian Popular Culture* 2, no. 2 (October 2004): 84.

<sup>19</sup> Puri, "A Typical Recital," 52.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>30</sup> Janet O'Shea, "Tradition and the Individual Dancer," in *At Home in the World: Bharata Natyam on the Global Stage* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2007), 27.

<sup>31</sup> Puri, "A Typical Recital," 54.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>34</sup> O'Shea, "Individual Dancer," 26.

<sup>35</sup> Puri, "A Typical Recital," 54.

<sup>36</sup> Katrak, "Diasporic Locations," 86.

<sup>37</sup> Zubko, *Dancing Bodies of Devotion*, 10.

<sup>38</sup> Puri, "A Typical Recital," 60.

<sup>39</sup> O'Shea, "Individual Dancer," 29.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 47.



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- <sup>50</sup> Ibid., 47.
- <sup>51</sup> Ibid., 29.
- <sup>52</sup> Puri, "A Typical Recital," 47.
- <sup>53</sup> Ibid., 47.
- <sup>54</sup> Ibid., 47.
- <sup>55</sup> Ibid., 47.
- <sup>56</sup> Ibid., 47.
- <sup>57</sup> O'Shea, "Individual Dancer," 36.
- <sup>58</sup> Ibid., 32.
- <sup>59</sup> Puri, "A Typical Recital," 47.
- <sup>60</sup> Ibid., 47.
- <sup>61</sup> Ibid., 47.
- <sup>62</sup> Elisa Ganser, "Thinking Dance Literature from Bharata to Bharatanatyam," *Rivista Degli Studi Orientali*, Nuova Serie, 84, no. 1 (2011):146.
- <sup>63</sup> Ibid., 146.
- <sup>64</sup> Ibid., 148.
- <sup>65</sup> Ibid., 148.
- <sup>66</sup> O'Shea, "Individual Dancer," 41.
- <sup>67</sup> Avanthi Meduri, "Bharatanatyam as a Global Dance: Some Issues in Research, Teaching, and Practice," *Dance Research Journal* 36, no. 2 (Winter 2004): 12.
- <sup>68</sup> O'Shea, "Individual Dancer," 43.
- <sup>69</sup> Ibid., 43.
- <sup>70</sup> Meduri, "Issues in Research," 13.
- <sup>71</sup> Prathiba Natesan Batley, "Introduction to Bharatanatyam Dance, Culture, and History" (lecture, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, September 22, 2020).
- <sup>72</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>73</sup> Meduri, "Issues in Research," 14.
- <sup>74</sup> Ibid., 13.

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- <sup>75</sup> O'Shea, "Individual Dancer," 43.
- <sup>76</sup> Meduri, "Issues in Research," 15.
- <sup>77</sup> Puri, "A Typical Recital," 47.
- <sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.
- <sup>79</sup> O'Shea, "Transnational Interpreter," 176.
- <sup>80</sup> O'Shea, "Individual Dancer," 32.
- <sup>81</sup> The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Ruth St. Denis," *Encyclopædia Britannica, inc.*
- <sup>82</sup> Judith Mackrell, "When Anna Pavlova Met Uday Shankar – and Changed Dance for Ever," *The Guardian News and Media*.
- <sup>83</sup> O'Shea, "Transnational Interpreter," 178.
- <sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 179.
- <sup>85</sup> Sara Azzarelli, "Dancing across Gender Boundaries: An Exploration on the Process of Gender Identity Construction through the Indian Classical Dance Bharatanāṭyam," *Acta Ethnographica Hungarica: An International Journal of Ethnography* 60, no. 1 (June 2015): 78.
- <sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.
- <sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.
- <sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.
- <sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.
- <sup>90</sup> Dhanya Rao, "Dancing Truth to Power: Q&A with Bharatanatyam Dancer Mallika Sarabhai - Assembly: Malala Fund," *Assembly*.
- <sup>91</sup> Rao, "Dancing Truth to Power," *Assembly*.
- <sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>94</sup> "Let's Talk Dance: "Interview with Bharatanatyam Dancer Savitha Sastry, Origins of Bharatanatyam Part 1," *YouTube*, NatyaSutraOnline - Learn Indian Dance.

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