



Piyush Raj

Dr Piyush Raj - a Ph.D in Pharmacy and a MBA in marketing, was in the medical industry for 20 yrs and now is pursuing his interest of Interiors and Furniture Design. However, even with his busy schedule, he has still maintained his passion for Performing Arts and has been constantly pursuing the same.

Training in Dance-

A Nritya Visharad in Kathak dance form under **Dr Shveni Pandya**, (disciple of Pandit Lacchu Maharaj of Lucknow gharana) he has had his advanced kathak training for more than 17 years from his Late **Guru Shri Bireshwar Gautam**, (disciple of Guru Bandana Sen, Padmashri Gopi Krishna and Padmashri Damayanti Joshi of Lucknow Gharana,) who was also a very well known kathak dancer and an ace thumri singer.

Attended various Kathak workshops conducted by **Pandit Birju Maharaj** and also by **Guru Pratap Pawar** from London. Also have an in-depth knowledge of Indian Folk Dances, he has performed and assisted in choreography of many ballets based on Kathak and Folk dances.

Few Accomplishments listed :

- Have graduated as Nritya Visharad in Kathak from the Akhil Bharatiya Gandharva Mahavidyalaya, Miraj.
- Have performed at many prestigious dance festivals with his guru – Festivals like Kala Ghoda Festival and the Ellora Festival by MTDC, Purush Festival – Bombay, Nehru centre, , Spirit of Unity Concerts for International Integration- Chennai, in the 'Basant Utsav' of the institution Kalashram, organised by Pt. Birju Maharaj in Delhi and others.
- Have acted in the theatrical dance production- "Shyam Sakhi", directed by Late Shri Chetan Datar and conceptualized by Guru Rajashree Shirke and Shri Vaibhav Arekar staged in Prithvi Theatre, Mumbai.

- Founder Secretary and a trustee of his own charitable institute called as KATHAK DARPAN CULTURAL CENTRE, conducting Kathak classes for students besides conducting various other activities related to Classical Performing Arts.
- Have organized festivals like SWARANJALI – a festival of Music and Dance, PHAGUN- a festival of Dance and Music on Holi, SHAAGIRD- a Dance festival featuring young disciples of renowned Gurus.
- Have assisted in choreography many Dance Ballets and is creatively involved in evolving a new project to convey the finer nuances of Kathak: Ballets which were conceptualized and choreographed by his Guru Shri Bireshwar Gautam were-
 - COSMOS – Rendered in the Nehru Planetarium, this composition depicted the creation and destruction of the universe.
 - RAAG MILAN– A synthesis between Rabindra Sangeet and pure classical music, set against the back-drop of Kathak.
 - KATHAK AUR THUMRI KE RANG – Brings out and elaborates the similarities between Thumri and Kathak.
 - SHAKTI- Salutations to the supreme power- Shiv and Durga and Kali.
 - SURABHINAYA – A dance-drama which brings out the tension and conflict in the mother-son relationship between Karna and Kunti.
- A key member in the SANSKRITA FOUNDATION, a charitable institute founded by Guru Shubhada Varadkar, promoting Odissi Classical dance art form and other performing arts and working towards a noble cause of collecting funds for poor cancer patients.
- General Secretary and key member of Dancer's guild- NARTAK MILAN, and organized events and competitions in Indian Classical Music and Dance for various schools and colleges of Mumbai to help to popularize classical art forms amongst the youth.
- Was also the General Secretary of Nrityanjali- An institute of Dance, Music and Personality Development, Mumbai. Intensive training and performances in Indian Folk Dances and dance ballets.
- Written a thesis on Personality Development through Performing Arts- which was presented at the end of the Special Personality Development course developed by me with able guidance from Shri Tushar Guha.

Present activities :

- He is the Founder General Secretary of the institution, KATHAK DARPAN, through which he conduct Kathak workshops, thus training them individually as future artistes. He is an accredited Kathak teacher by the Akhil Bharatiya Gandharva MahaVidyalaya and is attached to various institutions teaching Kathak to many students.