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Dance goes digital with this Bharatanatyam app

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To enable classical dance students practice and hone their skills outside the classroom and provide teachers and gurus with a useful training tool, dancer, scholar, speaker, writer and guru Ananda Shankar Jayant has conceptualised a unique web application Natyarambha.



A screen shot of the dance app; (right) danseuse Ananda Shankar Jayant essential. Many students, find this difficult, for want of guidance at home.

Chennai: "The first-of-its-kind Bharatanatyam practice app was launched on January 22 and is inspired by the Prime Minister's 'Digital India' initiative. It aims to motivate students to practice and rehearse their basic training beyond the classroom," says Ananda, one of India's eminent dancers, who has been teaching and choreographing dance for over four decades. In today's fast-paced lifestyles, formal training in Bharatanatyam, by the teacher, is only feasible for a few hours a week, making practice at home by the student an imperative

"Natyarambha bridges the gap between class room training and home practice. It comes with detailed guidance, mnemonics, music, and visuals, replicating the format of a Bharatanatyam class and a range of practice options that will make practice at home easy, exciting, and stimulating for students; who will now have a ready digital access similar to the dance class, that is also interactive and engaging," says the dancer.

Available across various devices, and based on an annual subscription model, Natyarambha is an online practice tool, that necessitates learning from a guru, and yet provides linkages between the guru and home practice — a digital access to quality practice and training modules for home practice — that will transform the teaching, learning and practice of Bharatanatyam.

"Natyarambha is conceived as an easy practice tool for beginners, even as it is a powerful practice aid for professionals, that bootstraps you with a wide range of practice routines, that can also be personalised and shared — a boon to teachers, stimulating for students, even as it will be a ready reference tool for parents," adds Ananda.

Natyarambha, has been produced and created by Shankarananda Kalakshetra, the Hyderabad-based not-for-profit institution set up by Ananda. Natyarambha has caught the attention of the dance world, and has received praise from senior and iconic dancers and gurus.

Praising the innovation, renowned dance guru VP Dhananjayan says, "I recommend every Bharatanatyam artist to subscribe to this new innovative and meticulously crafted web system by a stalwart." To this dancer, scholar and cultural activist, Anita Ratnam adds, "Natyarambha creates the platform to synergise practice, knowledge, rehearsal and a sense of community on a global cyber dance class."

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