

MILLENNIUM POST
‘Dance is a form of Sahitya’

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‘DANCE IS A FORM OF SAHITYA’

Says, Padma Shri Ananda Shankar as she gets candid with Millennium Post about the choices that shaped her life





VIBHA NARU *scholar and a bureaucrat, how do you juggle the different roles?*

Celebrated Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi dancer, famed motivational speaker, acclaimed choreographer, dance scholar and top bureaucrat, Ananda Shankar opens up about her passion for dancing and how it helped her combat cancer.

How did you develop interest in classical dancing?

I took up dancing at the age of four. When I was 11, I went to Kolkkhetra in Chennai for a summer workshop - that's where I developed my passion for the art. I immediately took admission there as a boarder. I trained there till the age of 17, while simultaneously pursuing private education.

A choreographer, a dance

my husband was my greatest strength. He maintained a strong and positive environment. I shifted my complete focus to dance and never stopped dancing even during the chemotherapy sessions or surgery days. My passion helped me overcome the disease.

What would be your advice to those combating breast cancer in India?

People are not aware enough about breast cancer. Most women tend to prioritise their families over themselves, and keep away from discussing their discomforts. Also, it's an issue that most people shy away from talking about. My suggestion to men would be, gift a check-up, at least once in two years, to their mothers and wives after they reach the age of 40.

What made you infuse contemporary issues into the classical form of dancing?

Dance to me is like any other language that I speak. I use it to share my worries and even to share humour. I have also used mythological stories in my performances to equate the present condition of women to that of the past, because they are still somewhat relevant.

Share with us some of the most memorable incidents of your career?

Receiving the Padma Shri from Dr (APJ) Kalam and performing before Datta Lams were the two most memorable incidents of my career.

Your advice to upcoming artists?

Youngsters these days, fail to relate to classical art forms. I would suggest them not to compromise with their art at any cost.

Ananda Shankar