

THEWEEK

Natya Ballet Dance Festival 2016 to kick off in Delhi

By Dhriti Gandhi | November 23, 2016

The first edition of Natya Ballet Dance Festival is set to kick off from December 1 in New Delhi. Natya Ballet Centre in association with Sangeet Natak Akademi is organising this three-day event that will include performances, conferences, lecture demonstrations and presentations showcasing established artists as well as ancient and little known dance forms. The festival aims to devise multiple ways of exploring and experiencing the varied dance vocabulary of the Indian subcontinent.

The festival will begin with the Centre's own production *Nirvana*, an Odissi ballet based on the life of Gautam Buddha that touches upon the Buddha's philosophy while encapsulating his journey from birth to enlightenment. The dance drama with English dialogues has been choreographed by Odissi exponents Guru Aniruddha Das and Nibedita Mohapatra. The following day, Aditi Mangaldas debuts *Widening Circles*, a solo performance based on the Buddhist principle of *Pratītyasamutpāda*, which explores the concept of cause and effect. Astad Deboo will present *Eternal Embrace* on the final evening based on the poetry of Bullehshah. The show has been choreographed and performed by Astad Deboo in collaboration with music composer Yukio Tsuji.

The Natya Ballet Dance Festival will also host dance discourses led by eminent practitioners, dance critics and academicians such as Lubna Marium, Ashish Khokar, Sadanand Menon, Anita Ratnam, Gowri Ramnarayan, Ratnottama Sengupta, Helen Acharya and Aruna Mohanty. Rendering five lecture demonstrations and four talks, the discourses aim to reflect on the changing landscapes of dance in the Indian subcontinent pre and post independence. An exciting addition is the exhibition of photographs by the Sangeet Natak Akademi Archive, highlighting landmarks in the history of Indian dance.

Radhika Hoon, Chairperson and Nikita Maheshwary, Creative Director, Natya Ballet Centre, say, "With this festival, we are hoping to initiate a step towards better understanding of our traditional dance practices; furthermore reflecting on the evolution of dance over the past century. Conceptualised with the vision to build a wider audience for classical and traditional dances of the subcontinent, dance enthusiasts and lovers have much to experience."

As part of the two-day conference, the festival will have a series of five lecture demonstrations on little known dance forms of the subcontinent. Showcasing traditional practices like *Ottanthullal* from Kerala, the *Tibetan Opera* from the Tibetan Mainland and *Gotipua* and *Seraikella Chhau* from the Eastern parts of India, the lecture demonstrations aim to ignite a dialogue on the survival of and relevance of these unique dance forms in the present day.

The lecture demonstrations include *Tibetan Opera* by Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts, *Ottanthullal* moderated by Ashok Khokar, performance by Suresh Kaliyath, *Gotipua* dance moderated by Aruna Mohanty, performance by Bijoy Sahoo and troupe, *Seraikella Chhau* moderated by Helen Acharya, a performance by Shashidhar Acharya and *Dance in Indian*

moderated by Helen Acharya, a performance by Shashimala Acharya and *Dance in Indian Cinema: From Menaka to Mallika* moderated by Ratnottama Sen Gupta. Film screenings from Sangeet Natak Akademi archives will also take place.