



ABHINAVA DANCE COMPANY

Classical and All-Time-New

PRESS KIT

Smt. Nirupama Rajendra & Sri T.D. Rajendra
Artistic Directors

Bengaluru, India
www.abhinava.dance

Company Overview

Abhinava Dance Company is the professional performing arm of Abhinava Arts Centre, based in Bengaluru, Karnataka. Founded in the mid-1990s by classical dance exponents Smt. Nirupama Rajendra and Sri T.D. Rajendra, the company creates original productions that bridge classical tradition with contemporary expression.

Abhinava means “Classical and all-time-new.” The company specializes in Kathak and Bharathanrithyam, drawing on the vocabularies of the Natyashastra tradition. Its work ranges from full-length narrative productions and classical repertoire to research-driven projects and community festivals.

Founded	Mid-1990s, Bengaluru
Artistic Directors	Smt. Nirupama Rajendra & Sri T.D. Rajendra
Styles	Kathak, Bharathanrithyam
Original Works	Approximately 200 productions
Reach	Performances across India and five continents
Recognition	Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (2023); Doordarshan A Top grade; ICCR Outstanding Category

Artistic Directors

One-Line

Smt. Nirupama Rajendra and Sri T.D. Rajendra are a classical dance duo specializing in Kathak and Bharathanrithyam, and the founders of Abhinava Dance Company.

Short Bio

Smt. Nirupama Rajendra and Sri T.D. Rajendra are classical dancers, choreographers, and producers based in Bengaluru. Nirupama performs and teaches both Kathak and Bharathanrithyam. As founders and artistic directors of Abhinava Dance Company, they have created over 200 original works and performed across India and five continents for more than three decades. Their contributions include the research and documentation of 108 Deshi Marga Adavus and the revival of the traditional Madanothsava festival. They are recipients of the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (conferred by the President of India), hold an A Top grade with Doordarshan, and are empaneled in the Outstanding category of the ICCR.

Full Bio

Smt. Nirupama Rajendra and Sri T.D. Rajendra are classical dancers, choreographers, and producers based in Bengaluru. Hailing from a family of educationists, artists, and harikatha vidwans in Karnataka, they have worked as a creative partnership for over three decades. Nirupama uniquely performs and teaches both Kathak and Bharathanrithyam.

As founders and artistic directors of Abhinava Dance Company (established in the mid-1990s), they have created approximately 200 original productions spanning classical repertoire and contemporary works rooted in the Natyashastra tradition. Their dancers are trained for versatility across a wide range of productions. Notable research and creative projects include the development and video documentation of 108 Deshi Marga Adavus under the guidance of Shatavadhani Dr. R. Ganesh; the revival of the traditional spring festival Madanothsava; and the direction, choreography, and video documentation of the 7th-century Sanskrit play *Bhagavadajjukam* (commissioned by the Murty Foundation).

They have performed at major Indian festivals including Khajuraho, Konark, the Music Academy and Krishna Gana Sabha in Chennai, NCPA Mumbai, and various Heritage and Sangeet Natak Akademi festivals, as well as on international tours in the United States, United Kingdom, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and China. They have also presented work for corporate audiences and educational initiatives such as “Class to Classics.”

Their awards include the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (2023, conferred by the President of India), Karnataka Kalashree, Nrithya Choodamani (Sri Krishna Gana Sabha, Chennai), and several other honors. They hold an A Top grade with Doordarshan, are empaneled in the Outstanding category of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, and served as convenors of the Natya Kala Conference organized by Krishna Gana Sabha, Chennai, in 2024 and 2025.

Featured Testimonials

“Magnificent Duo”

— India Today

“I could only see Krishna and Radha.”

— Dr. M. Balamuralikrishna, music legend

“Kathak originally was just as you did it.”

— Pandit Birju Maharaj

“Feels as if I am sitting through a mini-Vegas – Indian Production. Beautiful Music, Beautiful Choreography and Beautiful Dance. They have got a very infectious passion for art.”

— A. R. Rahman

“I am deeply touched by your creativity.”

— Shri Ratan Tata

“Their irresistible style leaves a deep imprint on the minds of people.”

— Hindustan Times

Awards and Accolades

- **Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (Akademi Puraskar)**, 2023 — conferred by the President of India (6 May 2024)
- Karnataka Kalashree Award, Karnataka Sangeetha Nrithya Academy, Government of Karnataka (2011)
- Nrithya Choodamani Award, Sri Krishna Gana Sabha, Chennai (2016)
- Empaneled in the Outstanding Category of performing artists, ICCR
- A Top grade, Doordarshan
- Governor’s Commendation for outstanding contribution to Indian Dance, Oklahoma (2008)
- Recognition by the Mayor of Tulsa for outstanding contribution to Indian Dance (2008)
- U.S. Krishna Rao – Chandrabhagadevi Couple Award
- Sri Krishna Vittalaanugraha Prashasthi, Udupi Sri Krishna Mutt
- Nrithya Nipuna, Karnataka Nrithya Kala Parishath
- Kala Sarathi, Art of Living / World Forum for Art and Culture
- Ananya Puraskar, Ananya Institutions
- Purandara Acharya Award, Indiranagar Sangeetha Sabha
- Natya Kala Ratna, Smt. Indira Gariyali Award
- The BIG Kannadiga, 92.7 Big FM
- Convenors, Natya Kala Conference, Krishna Gana Sabha, Chennai (2024 and 2025)

Selected Performance Highlights

International

- *Krishnaa – Fire to Frost* U.S. Tour (2024) — 10 cities, over 10,000 audiences
- Erasing Borders Festival, New York (2024)
- *Bahurang*, Atlanta (2024)
- *Tad Bharatham* London and U.S. Tour (2019)
- Fringe Festivals, Adelaide and Dunedin (Australia & New Zealand, 2017)
- Performances and presentations in Brussels (Bozar), Poland, Canada, United Kingdom, South Africa, China, and elsewhere

India (selected festivals & venues)

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- Khajuraho Festival, Konark Festival, NCPA Nakshatra Festival (Mumbai)
 - Music Academy and Krishna Gana Sabha festivals (Chennai)
 - Kathak Kendra festivals (Lucknow and New Delhi)
 - Karnataka Heritage festivals, Mukteshwar Festival, Dhauri Festival, Nishagandhi Festival, Brindavan Festival
 - Yajñseni Festival (Sangeet Natak Akademi & Central Sanskrit University)
 - Central Sanskrit University International Sanskrit Summit
 - Corporate and special presentations for organizations including Infosys Foundation, Bosch, TVS, Sony, NXP, GMR, and others

Other Initiatives

- *Class to Classics* — educational initiative presenting epics such as the Ramayana for school students
- Collaborations with the U.S. Consulate General, Chennai, and presentations for visiting international students and institutional groups
- Revival of Madanothsava, a traditional community festival celebrating the arrival of spring

Contact

Program Bookings & Press Enquiries

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Website

www.abhinava.dance

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Bengaluru, Karnataka, India

High-resolution photographs, performance videos, production notes, and additional materials are available on request or via the company website.

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