

Sikh Bharatnatyam Dancer passes away

Renowned exponent Jatinderpal Singh Bansal bids adieu

Rajee Narayan

Jatinder has the distinction of being the first ever Sikh Bharatanatyam dancer in India, who has made it to the Limca Book of World Records. And he has indeed made it to our hearts and will stay there forever.

46 year old Jatinder, residing in Nerul, Mumbai, was head of the Dance and Music department of Delhi Public School in Nerul, teaching Bharatanatyam and Indian folk dances. At the age of 26, he gave up a cushy job with Pidilite, to pursue his passion for Bharatanatyam and Indian folk dances.

A student Guru Rajee since 1990, he learnt from her not only Bharatanatyam but also Nattuvangam and Natya Sastra. He assisted her in teaching the students of Nritya Geethanjali and was ever so popular with the students, whom he encouraged with gentle coaxing and kind words of encouragement.

Jatinder had participated in all the dance dramas and group programmes of Nritya Geethanjali and given several solo stage performances in Bharatanatyam. He performed for the NCPA, National Centre for the Performing Arts in 1996, the 6th Bharatam Dance Festival in Chennai, the Ramakrishna Mission in Mumbai and other Sabhas. In June 2008, he was in London, where he performed at the Nehru Centre, for the second time. A devoted Sikh, he made a novel presentation of Shabad, the devotional Punjabi bhajan on stage, keeping its religious sanctity intact. He has given about 250 performances all over India and also in London and California.

Jatinder was a graded artiste with Mumbai Doordarshan. He won the men's freestyle solo dance competition on the popular TV programme, Boogie Woogie, on Sony channel. He has been featured in more than a hundred episodes of Aao Seekhen, a children's programme on Doordarshan, demonstrating the use of waste material in handicrafts and fabric painting.

He was skilled in teaching the visually, hearing and orally impaired, mentally challenged, spastics, as well as paraplegic children, not only dance, but also handicrafts and fabric painting, as a means towards gainful

self-employment. He used Bharatanatyam as a Dance Therapy, for mentally challenged children.

Jatinder was a natural artist - very good at making interesting things, especially for children. He had held exhibitions of his work and conducted workshops and demonstrations, held inter-school competitions in fabric painting and handicrafts, in various cities all over India.

The Rotary Club of Bombay Midcity conferred the Vocational Excellence Award - 2004, on Jatinder, for his excellent contribution to the field of Indian Dance. His most notable achievement is the Best Dancer Award he received at the 6th Bharatam Festival in 1999, at Thyaga Brahma Gana Sabha, Chennai. His most memorable moment, he would always say, was when he performed at Vani Mahal, Chennai, in 1995.

Jatinder's swan song was at Jodhpur, where he had gone for a dance programme, presenting ten students from Delhi Public School, on Saturday, 19th July. Following his students' performance, he presented a solo item. Later backstage, he suffered acute pain, followed by a massive heart attack that he did not survive.

Jatinder has passed away, doing what he loved to do the most... and leaving a terrible void in our midst.

Veteran dance teacher Guru Smt. Rajee Narayan was the teacher of Jatinder Pal Singh Bansal. She has been honoured with the prestigious Maharashtra Rajya Sanskritik Puraskar (known as the lifetime achievement award), for her contribution towards the enrichment and propagation of Bharatanatyam for over five decades. She is the daughter of S. Narayana Iyer, who was a great vedic and yogic scholar writer and poet. Her mother, Gangammal, was recognised as the only family lady who knew the maximum number of Tyagaraja kritis, padams and javalis, and was Rajee's first guru for Carnatic music.



Raza Murad to play Sabat Soorat Sikh



Veteran actor Raza Murad to play Sabat Soorat Sikh in a teleserial Kirpan, whose shooting started in Amritsar last week. Raja Murad has played many a brilliant character role and would be a Gianiji in the serial being produced by Sony Entertainment channel. "This is for the first time in 37 years of my stint in this industry that I got a role of Sikh and feel lucky and happy" said the actor during the course of the first shooting at Darbar Sahib, Amritsar.

Third Annual SikhNet Youth Online Film Fest a big hit

In its third year, the film festival has inspired scores of film submissions from around the world. In the tradition of "Britain's Got Talent" and "American Idol", this year audience members will be able to vote for their favorites in real-time, right as the films are being shown." said Gurmustuk

Singh, webmaster of Sikhnet. This year's theme "My Sikhi" has inspired young Sikh filmmakers from Bombay to Brighton to respond with creativity, honesty, insight, and their own personal experience of the Sikh lifestyle to produce highly original and surprisingly professional short films. The films are available for viewing online at www.sikhnet.com.

