



August 12, 2024 News & Views, Paris Olympics, Scholastic Exchange Tour

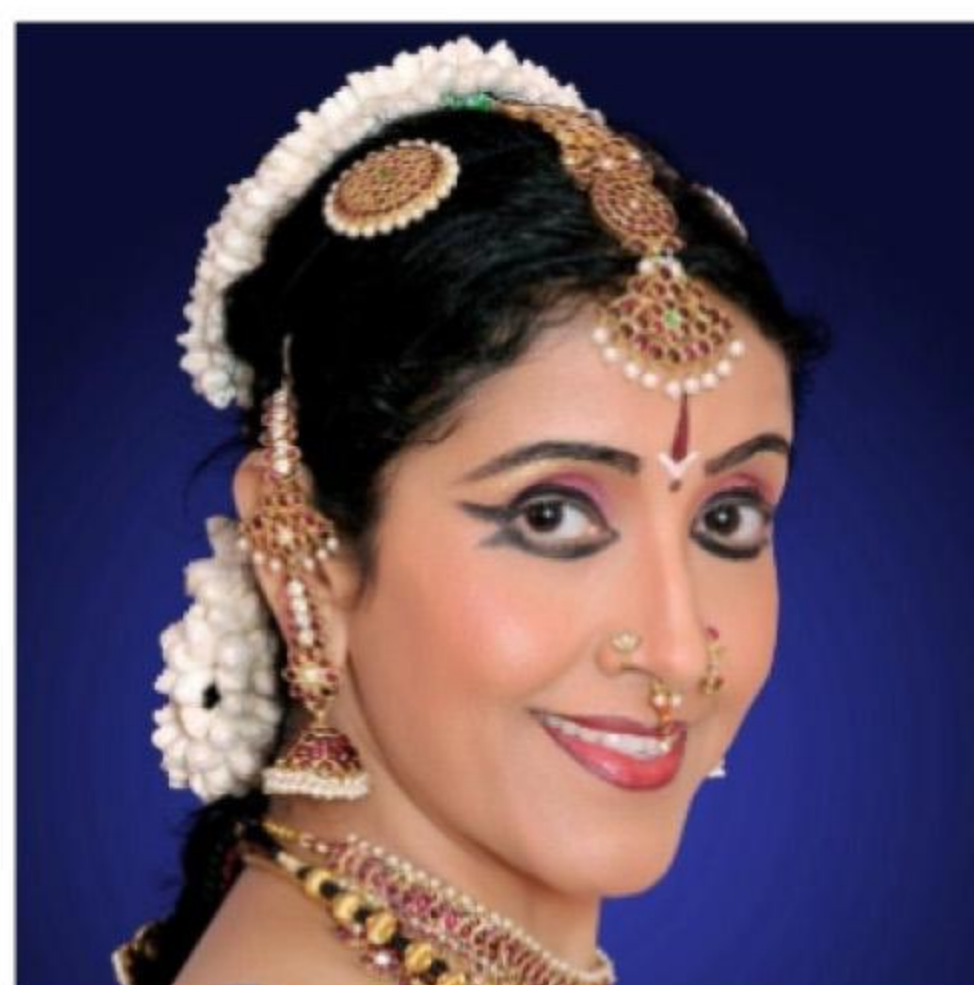
Bharatanatyam Virtuoso Bala Devi Chandrashekar Mesmerizes Audiences at India House



At the [Paris Olympics 2024](#), [India House](#) Bharatanatyam exponent and research scholar Bala Devi Chandrashekar carved a unique place for classical Indian dance by presenting a traditional Bharatanatyam performance at the landmark initiative of the Reliance Foundation, to a packed audience of distinguished guests, connoisseurs of art, and the global community. Her performance, a mesmerizing display of classical Indian dance, captivated the diverse audience, offering them a glimpse into the rich cultural heritage of India. As she moved gracefully to the rhythms of traditional music, the atmosphere was charged with the profound beauty and emotion of this ancient art form. She engulfed the stage with an astute presentation on Indian classical dance with specific reference to Bharatanatyam and allied subjects like temple sculptures- 108 karanas, music, literature and theatrics.

This celebration of Indian culture at India House was further enriched by the presence of volunteers from [Le Frehindi](#), a Paris-based organization dedicated to fostering [cultural exchange](#) between India and other European countries. Through their [exchange programs](#), [Le Frehindi](#) introduces French audiences to the intricacies of Indian dance forms like Bharatanatyam, helping to bridge cultural divides and create a deeper appreciation for the arts. The performance by Bala Devi Chandrashekar at [India House](#) was not just a showcase of talent but also a testament to the ongoing efforts of [Le Frehindi](#) to promote cultural understanding and exchange.

The Legacy of Bala Devi Chandrashekar: A Journey Through the Rich History of Bharatanatyam

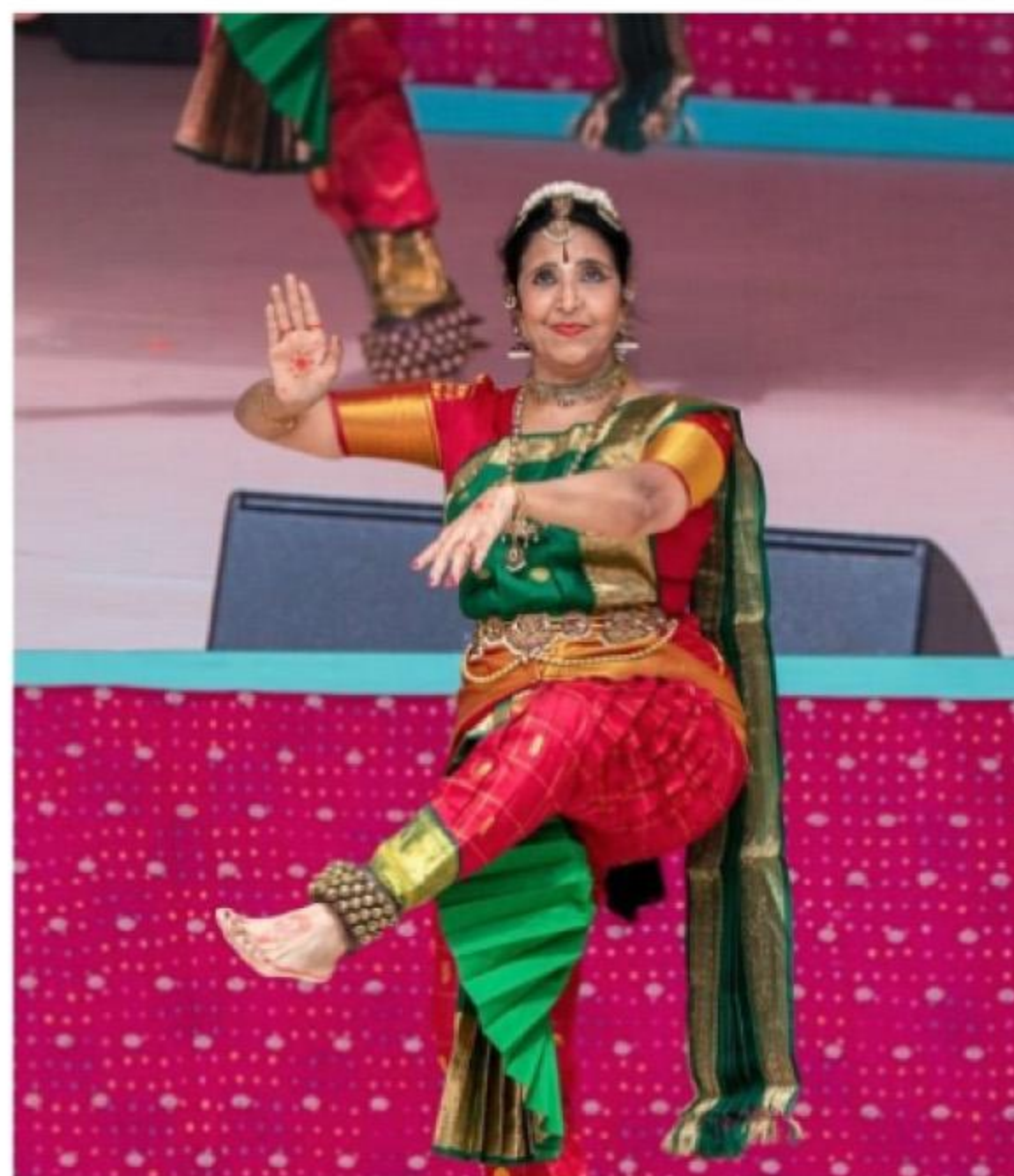


Kalaimamani Bala Devi Chandrashekar, hailing from a lineage of scholars and writers, is a highly acclaimed Bharatanatyam dancer and dedicated researcher. She is widely recognized for her distinctive scholarly approach, delving into ancient texts and conducting extensive research to craft captivating performances. Bala collaborates with esteemed scholars from diverse fields, extracting profound messages from scriptures that resonate with contemporary society. Her artistic pursuits have taken her to over 35 countries, where she has enthralled audiences with over 300 mesmerizing performances. She is a professor of practice in Asian performing arts. Her approach is interdisciplinary, involving lecturing and researching in performance studies, Theater and dance, art

history, religion, and philosophy. She is also the Artistic Director of SPNAPA Academy of Performing Arts, a premier Arts Academy based in Princeton, New Jersey. She has lectured and conducted workshops at IIT, Princeton University, Columbia, UPenn, Mount Holyoke, Vassar, Yeshiva, Rutgers, Rider, Drew, and across many corporate entities like Johnson and Johnson and the FBI etc.

She is the recipient of several awards, including Kalaimamani – Tamil Nadu Govt., Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam – "Bharata Nritya Seva Mani" "Natya Choodamani, Guru Debaprasad's "Nritya Ratna" award, Andhra Pradesh Govt," "Natya Kala Bharathi" – Thanjavur, "Vishwa Kalabharathi" - Kala Bharathi, Vizag, "Kala Rathna" – KalaPrakash, Varanasi, "Bharatha Kala Vani" – Dr. TN Ramachandran and Dr. Kodavayil Balasubramanian, "Thalaikkoli" – Rajasri Rajah S. Babaji Rajah Bhonsle Senior prince of Thanjavur palace, "Nritya Seva Mani" – Cleveland Aradhana, "Drishti Puraskar" – Drishti Arts Foundation, "Nritya Kala Ranjani" – Rasika Ranjani, Kumbakonam.

Heartwarming performance at India House



Bala Devi Chandrashekar concert platform presence was vivacious, with exuberant body movements. Adorned in a traditional costume of radiant colors and ankle bells, she captivated a diverse global audience with her rhythmic beat.

She opened her concert with the theme "MAA- the Eternal Truth," taking the audience on a journey celebrating the loving nature of Mother and Mother Earth.

Bala Devi's performance delved into the awe-inspiring power of the Maheswara Sutrani, the sacred sounds of the damaru that create, maintain, regulate, and ultimately dissolve the Universe. She portrayed the cosmic dance of Lord Shiva, invoking Mother Earth and reminding us of the cyclical nature of existence through time and space. The concept of Ardhanareeshvara symbolizing male and female principles, Sthiti and Gati – Stillness and Movement was received with great aplomb. The male half, Purusha, and the female half, Prakriti, were brought out through specific Karanas or temple sculptures. It conveyed the powerful concept of Shiva Shakti Swaroopa through Pathanjali's hymn, lending itself to prosperity- Mahalakshmi and fertility- Bhuma Devi; the dance unfolded with verses of sage Pathanjali, visualizing the magnificent sight of the cosmic dance.

Bala Devi Chandrashekar concluded her performance with a profound message of Vasudhaiva kutumbakam – one earth and one family – the interconnectedness of nature and human life, emphasizing that we are all integral parts of creation's grand design.

Collaborating with distinguished scholars, her performance embodied a profound narrative shaped by intensive research. It shed light on the beauty of the traditional art form of Bharatanatyam and brought historical significance and vital connection to our scriptures. Her performance captured the essence and relevance of the classical form of Bharatanatyam, Creating an engaging and unforgettable experience for the audience.

She also shared about her ten critically acclaimed productions, which are available digitally. Viewers can witness the captivating dance performance from the comfort of their homes, transcending geographical boundaries and introducing people worldwide to the beauty of her solo thematic productions, the temple's architectural marvel, and cultural significance. All ancient texts from our region have messages that are very relevant in today's world. "My mission is to take on topics and present them to diverse audiences worldwide," she added.

Bala Devi Chandrashekar's outstanding performance with thematic depth and artistic excellence was a testament to India's millennium-old cultural philosophy and drew huge appreciation from a diverse audience that packed the India house at the Paris Olympics 2024.

Le Frehindi's Commitment to Cultural Exchange and Classical Arts



At Le Frehindi, we believe in the power of cultural exchange to bridge global communities, fostering mutual understanding and respect. Bala Devi Chandrashekar's mesmerizing Bharatanatyam performance at the Paris 2024 Olympics perfectly embodies the spirit of our mission. Her dedication to preserving and promoting Indian classical arts resonates deeply with our own initiatives.

Through our cultural exchange programs, young students have the opportunity to immerse themselves in traditional art forms like Bharatanatyam, experiencing firsthand the richness of India's cultural heritage. One such memorable event was when the talented girls from SKV performed Bharatanatyam in Gwalior during a 10-day exchange program with French students. This initiative not only showcased the students' artistic talents but also served as a powerful tool for cross-cultural dialogue.

By supporting classical performances and encouraging young students to participate in cultural exchanges, Le Frehindi continues to nurture the next generation of global citizens who are proud of their heritage and eager to share it with the world. Bala Devi Chandrashekar's performance is a shining example of what can be achieved when traditional arts meet modern platforms, inspiring us to keep pushing the boundaries of cultural collaboration.

Le Frehindi: Bridging Cultures at India House, a Memorable Encounter with Bharatanatyam Virtuoso Bala Devi Chandrashekar



Le Frehindi plays a pivotal role in bridging cultures between India and other European countries, and their presence at [India House](#) during the [Paris Olympics 2024](#) was a shining example of their [mission](#). The organization, known for fostering [cultural exchanges](#), brought together young French volunteers who are passionate about exploring and sharing the diverse cultural heritage of India. The team was treated to a mesmerizing performance at India House by the legendary Bharatanatyam virtuoso, Bala Devi Chandrashekar, whose artistry offered a deep dive into the rich traditions of Indian classical dance.

After the performance, the team had the unique opportunity to meet Bala Devi Chandrashekar, an encounter that left a lasting impression. The interaction allowed them to gain deeper insights into the intricacies and history of Bharatanatyam, further enriching their understanding of Indian culture. This meeting was not just a chance to witness a world-class performance but also a meaningful exchange of ideas and experiences that aligned perfectly with [Le Frehindi's mission](#).

Through events like these, [Le Frehindi](#) continues to build cultural bridges, offering European audiences authentic experiences of India's artistic heritage and nurturing a deeper appreciation for the diverse cultures that connect the two nations.

[Le Frehindi's programs](#) build lasting connections between Indian and the world, celebrating diversity and enhancing mutual understanding.

For more details, kindly visit our website at www.lefrehindi.com.

You can also reach out to us directly through our [Contact Page](#) and our team will reach out to you.

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