

SOHINI RAY

Founder/Artistic Director, Manipuri Dance Visions – Institute of Manipuri Dance
4344 Hayman Avenue, La Canada Flintridge, CA 91011

Phone: (818)7902897

Website: www.manipuridancevisions.com

E-mail: sohindiray7@gmail.com.

PROFESSIONAL DANCE AND RELATED ARTS TRAINING

Dance Form: Classical Manipuri Dance from North-east India

Guru: Guru Bipin Singh.

Admitted into Manipuri Nartanalaya, 1974.

Guru Varan with Guru Bipin Singh, 1977 and remained his disciple till his death in 2000.

Trained in pung (Manipuri drums) since 1977

Trained in Thang-Ta (Manipuri martial art) from Guru Sinam Devabrata from July 1997 to June 1998.

Trained in Indian (Hindustani) Classical Vocal from Guru Smt. Lakshmi Shankar from June 2002 till present.

PERFORMANCE EXPERIENCE

Founder/Artistic Director, Manipuri Dance Visions Ensemble, Premiere dance company of Manipuri dance in North America. 2005 - present

Individual performer of Manipuri dance and experimental modern dance/performance art based in Los Angeles, U.S.A. 1993- present

Solo performing artiste, Doordarshan (Indian National Television), Calcutta, since September 1990 – present.

Member of the Jhaveri sisters performing troupe, 1979- present

Member of the performing troupe of Manipuri Nartanalaya, since 1975

Select Performances

[I have taken part in numerous performances since childhood, the following are a list of some important ones in my career]

World Premiere, “Banshigi Khonjel” by Manipuri Dance Visions ensemble and Manipuri Dance Visions Youth ensemble, Pumpkin Festival, Kinspace Museum, Pasadena, October 2011.

Invited Solo performance, Krishna Festival, Thunder Bay, Canada, July 2011.

Invited Solo performance, Traditions Engaged Festival, Yerba Buena Centre for performing Arts, San Francisco, October 2010.

Invited Solo performance, world premiere of “Ima” (director and performer) Nachle India Festival, Irvine-Barclay Theatre, Irvine, May 2010.

Invited Solo performance, Omaha Nrityotsav, Dance Festival organized by Hindu Temple, Omaha, Nebraska, March 2010.

“Generations”, Inaugural function of new Dance studio in La Canada Flintridge, California, January 2010.
 “Gita-govinda and other classical dances”, toured UK, Germany and Poland, June-July 2009
 “Utsav” in Beauty by Cambridge University Contemporary Dance workshop, January 2009.
 “Gitagovinda” in “Adorations” as a part of World Festival of Sacred Music, Fountain Theatre, Hollywood, September 2008.
 “Krishnagi Wari” (director and performer) Invited Concert, Heritage Empowered Artists Legacy, Barnsdall Gallery theatre, Los Angeles, May 2008.
 Invited Performance, Wichita Asian Association, Wichita, Kansas, April 2008.
 Guest Artist, “Archana”, Friends of India Association, Thousand Oaks Civic Arts Plaza, Thousand Oaks, California, April 2008.
 Invited performance, ‘Bhaktirasgi Mangal Khonjel: Sounds and lights of Devotion’, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, April 2008.
 Invited performance, Pasadena Dance Festival, Pasadena Civic Auditorium, February 2008.
 Invited Performance, India Festival, Indian Association of Phoenix, Arizona, November 2007.
 Invited artiste, Jhaveri sisters performing troupe, US national tour, September 2007.
 “Harao-kummei: celebrations of joy in Manipuri dance”, Invited concert of Manipuri Dance Visions Ensemble in Fountain theatre, Hollywood, October 2007.
 “Angika: creation and re-creation in movements”, collaborative production with Srishti Dances of India, Pittsburg, toured U.S. nationally, September-October 2007.
 “Krishnabhakti”, lead role of Krishna by Rasika, Portland, Oregon, toured Northeast U.S., April 2006.
 Inaugural concert, Manipuri Dance Visions, Fountain Theater, Los Angeles, September 2005.
 “Pattano Pradesh”, Menaka Thakkar Dance Company, Toronto, Canada, toured nationally, April – May 2004.
 Kalanidhi Dance Festival, Kalananidhi Foundation for the Arts, Harborfront Theater, Toronto, Canada, March 2004.
 Choreographer’s series, Cast Theater, Hollywood, April 2002.
 “Nagasaki Rain”, Co-directed by Cliff Faulkner and Deidre Sklar, Department of Theater, University of California, Irvine March 2002.
 Title sequence of ‘Sahara TV’, Indian Television (In collaboration with Novocom Corporation, Hollywood, U.S.A.), aired nationally in India, October 2000.
 San Diego Ethnic Dance Festival, 1999, San Diego State Park, San Diego, September 1999.
 Classical Manipuri Solo Dance Festival, 1998, Invited solo performance, Manipur State Kala Academy, Imphal, Manipur, India, November 1998.
 Dance Kaliedoscope 1996, Inaugural night, Luckman Fine Arts Complex, California State University, Los Angeles, July 1996.
 Los Angeles Women's Theater Festival, Invited Solo Performance, Los Angeles contemporary exhibition, Hollywood, March 1996.
 "Mathis der Maler" an experimental multimedia opera directed by Peter Sellars, film sequence, premiered in Royal Opera House, London in November, 1995.
 South West Regional American College Dance Festival, University of New Mexico, March 1994.
 Inauguration Ceremony, South-Asia Fest 1992, New York University, Nov. 1992.

Doordarshan Kendra, Calcutta , May 1992; telecast of a solo performance.
 Birth Anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore, Rabindra Sadan, Calcutta, May 1992; lead role of Krishna in the dance drama "Bhanushingher Padavali".
 Award presentation ceremony of "Kalidas Samman" awarded to Guru Bipin Singh, Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal, February 1990.
 Swami Haridas Sammelan, Sur Shringar Samsad, Bombay, May 1989; invited solo performance.
 Ganga Utsav, Benaras, March 1989; performed with Manipuri Nartanalaya performing troupe.
 Kal-ke-Kalakar Sangeet Sammelan (Young Artistes conference), Sur Shringar Samsad, Bombay, December 1988; solo performance.
 Diamond Jubilee Celebrations of the Institution of Chemists, IICB Auditorium, Calcutta, March 1988 ; invited solo performance.
 Birla Academy of Arts and Culture, Calcutta, August 1986; solo performance produced by Manipuri Nartanalaya.
 Children's day celebrations at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi, November 1980; performed with Jhaveri Sisters troupe.
 Academy of Fine Arts, Calcutta, January 1978; pioneering solo recital of "Mridang Vadan" - a Manipuri percussion along with solo and group dances.
 Academy of Fine Arts, Calcutta, January 1975; lead role of child "Krishna" in the dance drama "Gostha leela"

PRESS REVIEWS

Excerpts of reviews from Los Angeles Times, Pittsburg Post Gazette, Wichita Eagle, The Statesman, Hindustan Times, Anandabazar Patrika will be provided upon request.

PROFESSIONAL DANCE AWARDS/GRANTS/DANCE-RELATED AWARDS

Nominee, “Lestor Horton Award” in World Dance Category, Dance Resource Centre of Los Angeles. March 2011.
 Nominee, Margaret Mead Award, Society for Applied Anthropology, American Anthropological Association, October 2011.
 Winner, J. B. Donne prize in anthropology of art, Royal anthropological Institute, UK (First dance–researcher in the world ever to win this prize), May 2011.
 Artist Resource Completion Grant, Durfee Foundation, June 2009.
 Winner, “Lestor Horton Award” in “World Dance” category, Dance Resource Centre of Los Angeles, March 2009.
 Traditional Arts Development Grant from Alliance for California’s Traditional Arts, January 2009.
 Selected as “Critic’s pick” – LA Weekly, September 2008.
 Nominee, “Lestor Horton Award”, Dance Resource Centre of Los Angeles, March 2008.
 “Elaine Weissman Los Angeles Treasures Award”, California Traditional Music Society and Department of Cultural Affairs, City of Los Angeles, October 2007.
 “Nartan Acharya”, Manipuri Nartanalaya, January 1999.
 "Nartan Visharad", Manipuri Nartanalaya, August 1992.

"Shringar Mani" award in the Kal-ke-Kalakar Sangeet Sammelan, Sur Shringar Samsad, Bombay, December 1988.

First Prize in Manipuri Dance in "Sangeetotsav", Music Festival of the West Bengal State Music Academy, 1987.

National Cultural Talent Scholarship, Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India, 1982-86

DANCE TEACHING/RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Lecturer, Department of Theatre and Dance, University of California, Santa Barbara, course titles "History of South Asian theatre and performance" and "Globalization and Performing Arts: Asia"

Conducted workshops on Manipuri dance for Universities/leges, Dance Studios/Theater companies in USA, Canada, UK, Germany, Poland. Since 1992 – present.

Founding Teacher, Manipuri Dance Visions – Institute of Manipuri Dance since 2005.

Faculty Fellow, "Gesture as Inscription" Research Residency Program, University of California Humanities Research Institute, Irvine, Fall 2002.

Teaching Assistant/Associate, Dept of World Arts and Cultures, School of the Arts, UCLA. Winter 1996 (WAC 190A, Teaching Assistant) and Spring 1996, (WAC 190B, Teaching Associate).

Research Assistant for Prof. Colin Quigley, Dept. of World Arts and Cultures, July 1995.

Teaching Assistant, Dept. of Dance/World Arts and Cultures, School of the Arts, University of California at Los Angeles, Fall 1994 and Winter 1995. (Independently taught a class on Manipuri Dance).

Assistant Editor, UCLA Journal of Dance Ethnology, 1995-1996

Part-time Faculty, Program in Dance and Dance Education, School of Education, New York University, Spring 1993. (Course title "Dance performance" course included techniques and theory of Manipuri dance)

Teaching Assistant to Guru Bipin Singh in conducting workshops in West Bengal State Music Academy, Govt. of West Bengal, June 1992.

Part-time Instructor, Manipuri Nartanalaya, Calcutta (Premier institution of Manipuri Dance in India), Oct. 1988 - July 1992

Part-time Research Assistant of Guru Bipin Singh since 1983 Participated in various projects including the compilation of Vaishnava Sangeet Shastra (a series of edited volumes bringing together ancient scriptures on Indian musicology) and Misconceptions in Manipuri Dance (a comprehensive volume of the history of classical Manipuri Dance)

CHOREOGRAPHIC/DIRECTIONAL EXPERIENCE

Directed and performed, "Bansigi khonjel" by Manipuri Dance Visions Youth Ensemble and Manipuri Dance Visions Ensemble, Pasadena, October 2011.

Directed and performed, "Ima", a multimedia solo dance production, Irvine, May 2010.

Collaborating choreographer, "Tillana" in the lead role of Krishna Omaha Nrityotsav, Omaha, Nebraska. March 2010.

Filmed, directed and produced 'Sounds and Lights of Devotion', the film adaptation of past multi-media production "Bhaktirasgi mangal-khonjel," January 2010.

Directed “Generations: An offering in Dance” inaugurating new studio in La Canada Flintridge, January 2010.

Directed multimedia version of ‘Gita-Govinda’ toured, UK, Germany and Poland, June-July 2009.

Invited Choreographer for “Beauty” by Cambridge University Contemporary Dance Workshop, January 2009.

Directed “Gita-govinda” as a part of “Adorations”, in World Festival of Sacred Music, September 2008.

Directed “Krishnagi wari: Stories of Krishna in Manipuri Dance,” May 2008.

Directed and Performed “Bhaktirasgi Mangal Khonjel: lights and sounds of devotion in Manipuri dance” multi-media productions in Manipuri Dance, April 2008.

Directed and performed Harao-Kummei : Joyful Celebrations in Manipuri Dance, October 2007

Pioneer in Reviving, training and directing the original repertoire of Guru Bipin Singh’s gharana of Classical Manipuri Dance in North America in own company Manipuri Dance Visions Ensemble since 2005.

Choreographed the Manipuri Dance section of “Angika : Creation and Re-creation in movements” Collaborative work with Srishti Dances of India, Pittsburg showcasing Odissi and Manipuri dances Touring US nationally Fall 2007.

Choreographed Manipuri dance section of “Krishnabhakti” ballet. Rasika, Portland, Oregon, April 2006.

Assisted Darshana Jhaveri in choreographing the Manipuri sections of ‘Pattano Pradesh’, Menaka Thakkar Dance Company. Toronto, Canada, April-May 2004.

‘Self’, Collaborative work with Korean choreographer Sen-he-Ha, Spring 1994.

‘Secrets of the Heart’, based on a story by Kahlil Gibran. New York University, 1993.

ADMINISTRATIVE/ORGANIZATIONAL/REVIEWER EXPERIENCE

Adjudicator, Indian Dance Competition, Neema Saree Palace, Irvine, 2010.

Reviewer, Cultural Grants program, Los Angeles City Cultural Affairs Department, December 2009.

Secretary/Board member, Dance Resource Center of Los Angeles, September 2006-August 2008, September 2009 – present.

Member of Organizing committee, Dance –Ethnology Forum, Graduate Dance –Ethnology Students Association. October 1993-June 1995.

Invited member, Student committee for the arts, UCLA Center for Performing Arts, October 1994-June 1996.

Founding Member, “Choreomuse”, School of Education, New York University 1992-1993.

ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS

Manuscripts Collected

I am a custodian of authorized photocopies hand-written Meitei manuscripts outside India. I also have several published manuscripts in my collection.

Videorecordings

I have recorded several ceremonies and festivals in Manipur, India from April 1994 to January 1999 that include Rasleela, Natpala, Lai-haraoba, Thang-Ta performances. I have a total of 77 hours of footage approximately, and will provide details if necessary.

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy, Anthropology

University of California at Los Angeles (September 2000)

Specialization: Linguistic/Socio-Cultural Anthropology [Examination areas: South Asian history (emphasizing Subaltern studies), Language ideology, Anthropology of the body]

Dissertation title: The sacred alphabet and the divine body: the case of Meitei mayek in North-eastern India

Committee chair: Prof. Paul V. Kroskrity

Master of Arts, Dance

University of California, Los Angeles (June 1995)

Specialization: Dance Ethnology

Thesis title: Meitei Revivalism and Manipuri Dance

Committee chair: Prof. Colin Quigley

Master of Arts, Liberal Studies

New York University 1992-93 (transferred to UCLA).

Master of Science, Anthropology

University College of Science, University of Calcutta (August 1992)

Specialization: Social Anthropology

Dissertation title: Society and Dance: An Anthropological Overview of the Meiteis of Manipur.

Advisor: Prof. Prabodh Kumar Bhowmick

Bachelor of Science

Bangabasi College, University of Calcutta (June 1988)

Honors: Anthropology

Other subjects: Botany, Zoology, English.

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Read, write and speak: Bengali, English, Hindi, Meitei

Read and write: Sanskrit and the archaic Manipuri script.