

Arts in Motion

CULTURAL STARS TO LOOK FORWARD TO IN 2022



ACTIVIST RHYTHM Vrinda Chadha

Odissi dancer

WHY: Promoting dance education among the youth and using the classical arts to provide emotional literacy to children

SKILL SETS A
Visarad Degree in Odissi Dance and Hindustani classical vocals

THE MOST OVERRATED VIRTUE
Working hard. You need to work smart.

GREATEST FEAR
Having regrets

TO ALL YOUNG ARTISTS YOU SAY
Be consistent

A SKILL YOU'D LIKE TO LEARN TO
play the flute

"Vrinda's *nritta* is known for its rhythm and grace. Her movements are impeccably balanced," says Prahlad. Chadha holds a master's degree in Philosophy from Lady Shri Ram College for Women, Delhi University, and has received the prestigious National Scholarship for Odissi Dance from the Union Ministry of Culture. She has trained under Guru Ranjana Gauthar since she was six and is now a repertoire member and faculty at her eponymous academy. The Odissi exponent has strong social views—she is involved with The Teach for India fellowship by using dance to build emotional literacy in children. Through themed choreographies, she tackles vital contemporary issues. "My first performance spoke about female foeticide. The second was on mental health. The third, on which I will start working soon, will be on children's right to dream," says Chadha, who is all set for her upcoming dance performance as part of Colours of India this month in Mamallapuram, Tamil Nadu. Like other dancers of her tradition alone. She has choreographed a new song titled 'Bihag', the third single from Anillective's upcoming 2nd album *Home Coming*.

INCLUSIVE DIVA Gauri Diwakar

Kathak dancer

WHY: For personalising her message beyond the mythological context of traditional dance compositions

Gauri Diwakar is a modern dancer who uses Kathak's traditional context to explore contemporary nuances. For example, the lines in her production—'Hari Ho... Gai Meri'—are taken from Sayyad Mubarak Ali Bilgrami's verse, whose poems express his love for Krishna. It has more references to Krishna, like in the poetry of Maulana Hasrat Mohani, Malik Muhammad Jayasi and Mian Wahid Ali. The performance was staged at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Darbar Festival in London, Korzo Festival in the Hague and Milao Festival in Singapore. Dance dovens see Diwakar going places next year because of his habit of pushing the envelope. The training Diwakar received from her guru Aditi Mangaldas gave her the skill to go beyond Kathak's grammar to reach a space where the patterns of her movements are charged with an adventurous enquiry. "The honesty with which she taps into a story is admirable," says Prahlad. Diwakar has her hands (and feet) full putting together a dance workshop from January 4 to 8 with Kala Udayan, in association with Urban Services and Tala Steel CSR, in Jamshedpur. This will be followed by a live performance on the last day. Her upcoming dance production is based on the idea of 'touch'. "It encapsulates how facility became forbidden overnight with the onset of Covid," Diwakar says.



MOST PROUD OF
Bringing together young minds through the Facebook platform Azadi Mann Ke, to engage in meaningful conversations

FAMOUS MENTORS
Pt Birju Maharaj and his son Jalkishan Maharaj

CURRENT STATE OF MIND
I feel strong-headed. Also, at ease with myself.

MOST TREASURED POSSESSION
My ghungroos that I've had since childhood

THE GREATEST LOVE OF YOUR LIFE
Hindi *sahitya* or poetry

STEP BY STEP Parshwanath Upadhye

Bharatanatyam dancer

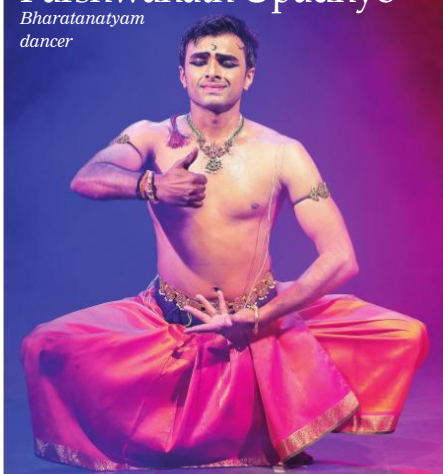
FIRST TEACHER
Mother who choreographed what she saw on TV

FIRST CAREER CHOICE
Civil Services

YOU'D LIKE TO BE REMEMBERED FOR
The man who loved what he did

YOU'D LOVE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT
All Devadasi dancers

ALTERNATE SKILL
A Black Belt in Karate



WHY: One of the most versatile male Bharatanatyam dancers in India

"2022 will be the Year of the Young. One such powerhouse of talent is Bharatanatyam dancer Parshwanath Upadhye. His movement speaks a vocabulary of purity and he has unfailingly stayed true to his craft, something that's fading from classical routines," says acclaimed Bharatanatyam dancer, choreographer and founder-director of the Delhi International Arts Festival Pratibha Prahlad. One look at his performance calendar for 2022 and the picture is clear. Mythology is the rich treasure trove for the Indian classical arts. Upadhye raised the curtains on 2022 with Abha on January 1 at the Soorya Festival in Thiruvananthapuram. The composition explores the Ramayana from Sita's perspective. Next up is the solo presentation 'Marga' on January 4, at Bharat Kalachar Chennai, where he presents traditional compositions of Bharatanatyam. A duet with Yakshagana on January 14 for the Evam Festival (digital) will follow. "The work takes the audience through the journey of Mammatha and Rati—the mind and the heart," shares Upadhye, who is also preparing for 'Partha' on January 23, at Ravindra Kalakshetra in Bengaluru. This one is about the last days of the mighty Arjuna, who analyses why he was denied heaven. On February 4, there is Sam Ved at the 32nd Durga Lal Festival in Mumbai where his solo presentation is called 'Suta', the birth of a father. It is an experimental work bringing the elements of Natya Padhati in Bharatanatyam using *tachika* (dialogues) and portrays the transformation of Himavan from protector of his kingdom to the father of the universal mother. Towards the end of the year, Upadhye hopes to tour the US and Europe with some of his new presentations.

SELF-HEALING TECHNIQUE
Writing to myself

HOW TO DEAL WITH A CRISIS
First panic, and then think objectively. Whatever happens, is for the best.

YOU GET IMPATIENT WHEN
Two colours don't match. I am a design student.

IT WOULD BE A DREAM TO PERFORM IN FRONT OF?
The Nataraja at the Chidambaram Temple, Tamil Nadu

DOLLING UP DANCE Divya Hoskere

Bharatanatyam dancer

WHY: For blending diametrically opposite art forms, Bharatanatyam and puppetry

"With this interdisciplinary approach, she's taking her art places. Her work as a lead puppeteer at Dhaatu Puppet Theatre has added to her love for history, research, and theatrics. She combines both to present a wholesome entertainment experience rooted in culture, being liberal in pushing the envelope," says Savitha Sastry, Bharatanatyam dancer and choreographer, about Hoskere, a disciple of Guru P Praveen Kumar, under whom she has been learning since age five. The inspiration for puppetry undoubtedly came from her mother Anupama Hoskere, who with her husband Vidya Shankar founded the unique puppetry NGO 'Dhaatu' in Bengaluru. Dhaatu is the yearly venue of the famous Navratri Mahotsava, the pageant of over 5,000 dolls which represent characters and scenes from Hindu mythology. Divya is currently preparing for the next unique highlight of her career—a first-of-its-kind Bharatanatyam-cum-traditional folk puppetry festival in September-October 2022. She will hold a new performance series referring to the many festivals of India beginning with Maha Shivratri on March 1. "It's based on the Pradosha Kala, a bimonthly occasion on the 13th day of every fortnight in the Hindu calendar. It's an auspicious time to worship Shiva, which is one and a half hours before and after the sunset," shares Hoskere.