

Rama Vaidyanathan - Dance Workshop Reviews

Bharatanatyam Dance Workshop (April 22, 2018)

A Review by La'Toya Latney

Bharatanatyam is more than an exceptionally beautiful art form, it is a staple for some of us. My name is La'Toya and as a child I watched my South Indian friends learn this lovely dance form and subsequently I learned about its culture. I was fortunate to find a guru that would train me as an adult. I have commuted from Philadelphia to NYC for 10 years and completed my arangetram in 2015. In this time, my guru has ensured that I was exposed to and given audience with the greatest exponents of the art. In this rare opportunity, I was able to finally meet and learn from Rama Vaidyanathan, one of the greats, at a location closer to home! She is an amazing inspiration and one that I have admired from afar for many years.



The workshop experience was fantastic and one of my favorites. As a non-native South Indian, it is extremely helpful and important for one to gain access to the language, the music and the meaning of an item, long before attempting to learn its choreography. Rama Akka sat us in a circle, much to my delight, and walked through each stanza, all of the meanings, and intricately described the emotion of the item. It best prepared me to grasp the choreography to follow. Before attending the workshop, I feared I would not retain the item or be able to keep up. Her teaching style erased this concern from the beginning. It was a bit scary to try to perform the entire item at the end, but I was extremely grateful for the second integrated approach taken to provide the dancers with tools for personal practice. We again sat down, after learning the item, counted out loud each jati in each sequence. This was phenomenal! In what would take someone like myself months to learn, I was able to digest the item in the timeframe of the workshop. As an artist, I have always been struck by her artistry. As a teacher, I was spellbound, grateful, and completely inspired by her nurturing and thorough teaching style. Thank you Sruti for hosting such an amazing guru and artist, we are truly grateful for the opportunity.

La'Toya is a Clinical Zoo and Exotic Animal Medicine veterinarian and Assistant Professor at the University of Pennsylvania Veterinary Teaching Hospital. Her South Indian group of friends and family have continued to foster my passion for bharatanatyam dance (Guru: Malini Srinivasan, disciple of Sir C V Chandrasekar)

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A Review by Shuchi Buch

It was a great opportunity for me to learn from Guru Rama Vaidyanathan at the Sruti Academy's workshop. The work shop was excellent! So many students could get a chance from Ramaakka. It was on such a place that east coast students can get the chance to learn. I came from Maryland. Within few hours i could learn the one full performance level Bhartanatyam item - Madhurashtakam.

Apart from these all, to learn from guru Akka Rama Vaidyanathan is a great opportunity for a dancer. Thanks to SRUTI for giving us an opportunity to learn and eagerly waiting for the next workshop.

Executive director of Taal Academy of Dance, Washington DC - Ms Shuchi Buch is Vishard in Indian classical Bharatnyam dance and has experience of more than two decades in teaching, choreographing and performing dance across India and in the United States.



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A Review by Arathi Narayan

Rama Vaidyanathan's dance workshop was wonderful and I was so glad to have had the opportunity to attend it. The workshop was well organized by Sruti and the cost was very reasonable.

It was a great experience to learn from Rama herself who is a dancer of high caliber. As dancers, we felt rejuvenated and challenged to take our dance to another level with Rama's beautiful choreography. She first talked about the composition and the way she choreographed the piece. I really liked how she had jathis interspersed with the ashtakam to keep the dance energetic. The Sanskrit shlokam by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was used very cleverly as the opening piece as well as like the arudhi. I also loved how Rama decided to end the piece by introducing elements of Krishna devotees dancing during Krishna Janmashtami in Vrindavan. I thoroughly enjoyed being in the same space as Rama and learning the beautifully choreographed Madhurashtakam.

Thank you to Sruti for bringing this dance workshop to the dancers in our area.

Arathi Narayan is an experienced Bharatanatyam dancer and teacher and runs the Natyaarathi School of Dance.