**Volume 3│Dance**

When she made her first move, she created an art form. Dance first came out of the temples of *devadasis* and evolved into a form combining literature, music and theatre.

But was it easy for this initially unsophisticated art form to be accommodated in the social milieu of the day?

How did Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Kuchipudi and Manipuri become an acceptable form of artistic expression?

This book is the story of evolution of the dance forms in India. From its traditional custodians to its latest globalised avatar, the volume choreographs the journey of *abhinaya* and brings to life for the readers, one of our most cherished performing arts—dance.

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**Pathfinders**

* The pioneer of modern dance in India, dancer and choreographer **Uday Shankar** had an exciting international career and was best known for his adaptation of Western theatrical techniques to Indian classical, folk and tribal dance. He was able to win acceptance for his distinctive style and popularise Indian dance in Europe and the United States in the 1920s and 1930s.
* The credit for providing an institutional framework for the restoration of the ancient classical dance Bharatanatyam must go to **Rukmini Devi Arundale**, an enlightened upper-class Theosophist from Chennai. She is considered one of the most significant renaissance figures whose quest for an indigenous tradition in the arts led to an unprecedented revival of interest in Bharatanatyam.
* To the iconoclastic dancer and choreographer **Chandralekha** goes the credit of infusing a shock of modernity into the world of classical Indian dance, thereby fashioning a distinct space for a contemporary dance idiom. Trained in classical Bharatanatyam and a student of the famous teacher Ellappa Pillai, she had begun to tire of her success as a classical dancer and had begun to make some attempts at choreography as early as 1961 with *Devadasi* and later with *Navagraha* in 1972. Unhappy with what she perceived as the restricting structure of the form, she turned her back on classical Bharatanatyam.
* Unequivocally rated as the *numero uno* among Kathakali actors today, **V.M. Govindan Nair**, popularly known as Kalamandalam Gopi, is best known for his performances as the hero who displays *satvik* (divine) qualities which are distinguished by *pacha* (green) make-up. He was groomed by the late Kalamandalam Padmanabhan Nair and Ramankutty Nair through the Kerala Kalamandalam under the erstwhile guru–shishya parampbara; on completing his training Gopi served on the faculty of his alma mater until his retirement from the post of principal. Today he is regarded as the apostle of the Kalamandalam style, which evolved from the great Pattikkamthodi and Kalluvazhi traditions of late 19th and early 20th centuries.
* An iconic dancer and leading exponent of Odissi, **Sonal Mansingh** is an original. Strong-willed from the start, she left her comfortable and privileged home in Bombay as a teenager to learn Bharatanatyam from gurus U.S. Krishna Rao and Chandrabhaga in Bangalore. Following her debut performance in 1961, she was already known as a rising young Bharatanatyam dancer, when fascinated by Odissi, she began to train with Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra in 1965. The sensuous dance, which could be both aesthetic and erotic, was a perfect match for her deeply and unselfconsciously personal sense of spirituality, which did not discard the corporeal but celebrated it as an integral part of the life force which makes all creation possible.
* **Astad Deboo**, a pioneer of Modern Dance, is a performing artiste, conceptualiser, planner and coordinator, who has forged this new dance idiom as a viable movement in free India.