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## **DANCE –A BRIDGING METAPHOR IN MOVEMENT**

# INTRODUCTION

All creation seeks to communicate . The written and the spoken word figuratively communicates through bridging metaphors, seeking to link the basic elements of our nature with the outside world. When a non-verbal attunement of feelings happen, communication transforms to a communion . Something flows through you which is of the beyond, urging you to empathize. An individual experience sheathed in the kinesthetics of diverse styles, truly has the body become a mediator and the dance becoming – ‘a bridging metaphor in movement ‘ .

## Dance a Bridging Metaphor in Movement

- Dance has always been a collective experience . The separation between dancers and audience only developed in later periods of time in most cultures of the world . The chasm widened to such an extent that finally we have that which was ritualistic and functional slowly transform to an aesthetic experience seeing to be shared.
- Dance and movement are ways in which we, as a human race, have been communicating through the times .
- Many of us use audible language to communicate, but whether we consciously realize this or not we also use movement to communicate.
- Many of those who are hearing or speech impaired depend on movement to express themselves through different forms of sign language and dance movement therapy is today a constantly evolving study .

# Dance as a Metaphor in Movement

Dance as a metaphor in movement thereby opens many possibilities :

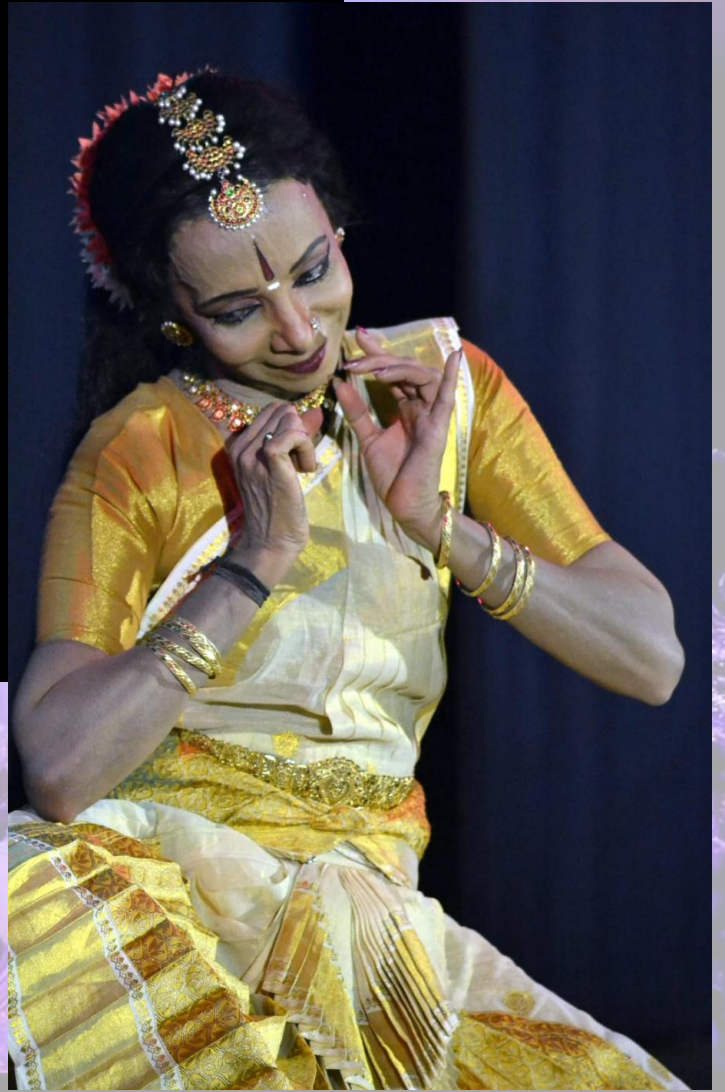
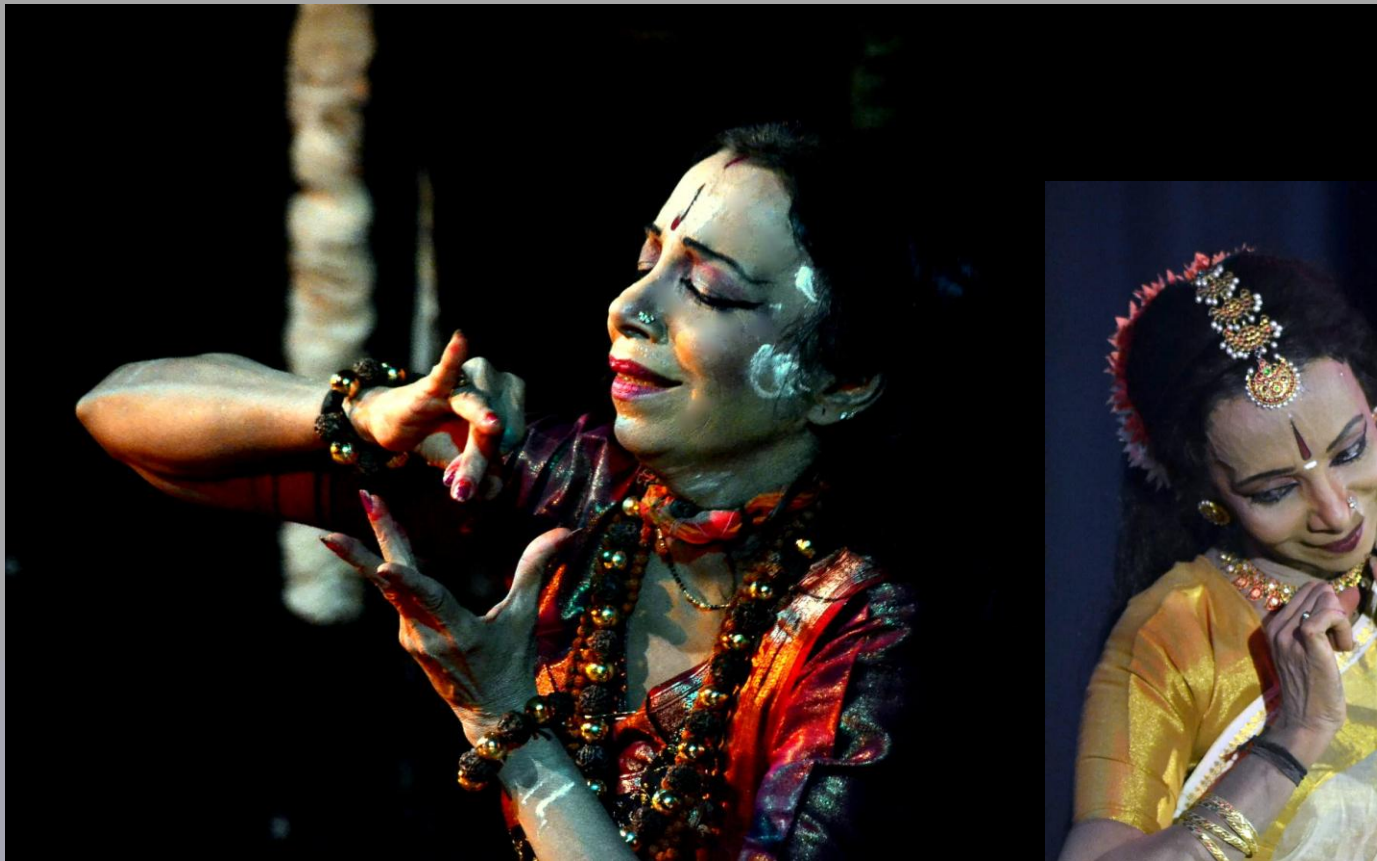
- a. It helps us to present one thing in the semblance of another and thereby allowing us to entertain new possibilities through symbolic representation as a dancer/ choreographer
- b. It helps to change the set perception of life through the new interpretation we give to our individual experience
- c. It serves as a bridge between the internal and external world, engendering an awakening through cathartic folds
- d. It creates a congenial cosmos vital for harmony in this universe .

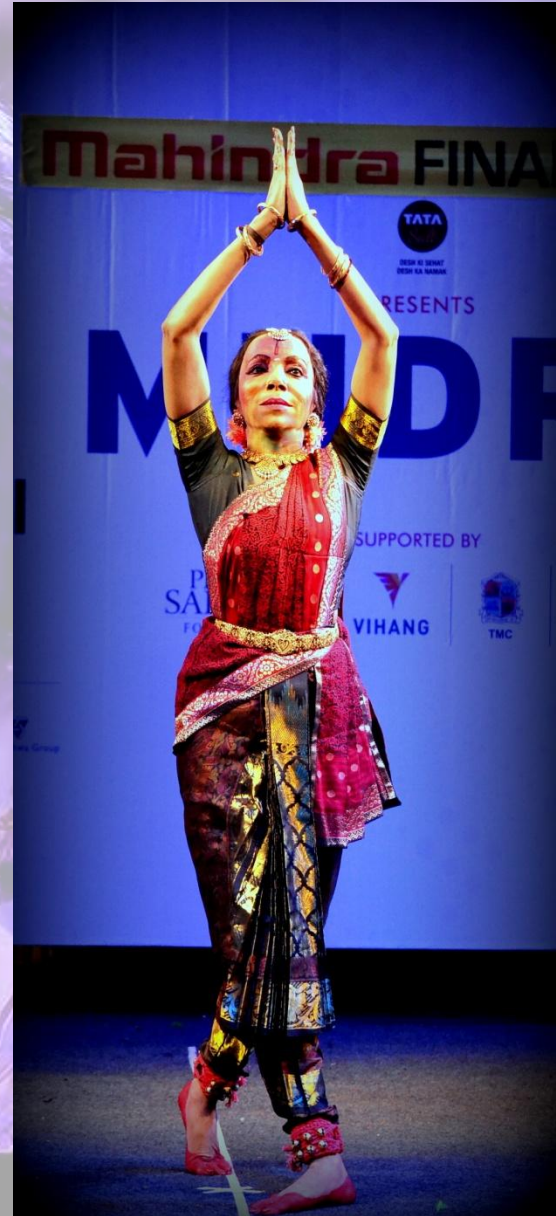
## A. Symbolic representation of the moving metaphor

- A symbol is a living picture. Whenever something inward happens, you seek to express it through outward symbols. Whenever you begin to feel something, the symbol comes in automatically, and the moment the symbol appears - the force is directed into that particular symbol.
- When the body is used figuratively, a metaphor comes into focus, bridging the living picture within to the outside world.

# A. Symbolic representation of the moving metaphor

- The dancer thereby needs an awareness of the potency of her technique .
- The grammar has to be comprehended in its totality to bring to life the metaphor –through the medium of the body
- Totality in temple art forms such as Bharata Natyam, implies not merely the control of the body through pure dance- *nritta* but the capacity to portray it, not only through the interpretative dance -*nrittya* but also through the dramatized aspect of the dance – *natya*.
- *And the four aspects of Abhinaya or the technique of representation of the dance*
- *Angika* ( representation through the body)
- *Vachika* ( representation through speech)
- *Aharya* ( representation through costumes)
- *Sattwika* (representation through acting and different states of the mind).







## B. Changing of perception through interpretation .

- Equipped with the awareness of technique through body control and dressing the technique with ornamentation bringing to life the lyrics , the dancer through mirroring of her emotions interprets the chosen theme .
- The external symbols used for interpretation varies from dance to dance but the highlighted emotions remain universal as ever.
- That which is vital is the externalization of an internal experience and connecting or holding the pulse of the audience.



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## B. Changing of Perception through interpretation

- Articulations of cosmic phenomena through verbal metaphors sheathed in lyrics /chords are recreated in physical time and space, through a system of correspondence where each sound, word or gesture, interpret the total design of the cosmos.
- The dancer through her individual experience uses universal emotions to draw attention to the theme through the syntax of her chosen style and highlight her view point to the audience .

## B.Changing of Perception through interpretation

- She gives a new insight to the experience , a new angle to the inherent drama of life unfolding all around
- The interpretative ability needs to grow with time to have the dance transform from Mime to a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings.
- **Irrespective of the styles all dance forms have a didactic potency that awakens us to the interpretative ability of the moving metaphor**

## C. Dance-The bridging metaphor between two worlds

- The core of a movement experience is 'to move' and 'be moved' ideally, both are present in the same instant. It is a moment of total awareness, the coming together of *what I am doing* and *what is happening to me*. The inner experience is constantly seeking to flow into spontaneously unfolding dimensions.
- Whether the images are God-like, human, animal, vegetable, or mineral or whether they come out of the movement experience from memories, dreams, and fantasies it appears as though the dancer is constantly seeking to embody them better aligning their very purpose to a larger unfolding dictum .

## C. Dance-The bridging metaphor between two worlds

- Some performers experience the unconscious predominantly through a stream of inner visual images and are able to communicate it better than others.
- Some may experience it primarily through the body . The journey from mere mime to a spontaneous overflow of visually etched feelings is a journey where finally the Artist is the style !
- kinesthetics of the moving metaphor can seek to 'move' only when the technique of the dance form flows without it being suffocatingly evident-the 'unfettered body in ecstatic trance'
- The more elevated the dancer is the more refined would be her performance and more skillfully can she use the dance as a bridging metaphor between two worlds

## C. Dance-The bridging metaphor between two worlds

- Painting is an art to 'look at' sculpture is an art you can 'walk around', architecture is an art you can 'walk through' !
- Architecture and dance share the same concern of describing shapes in space *but dance goes beyond the realms of physical control to self-control. It is music made visible.*
- Hence when a dancer extends her arm the line does not end with her fingers for they reach out towards infinity.
- The structural symbolism of the temples of south India and the symbolical representation of the dance repertoire go very close to each other.
- The circles, triangles, pentagons she creates in space, exist in a dimension far bigger than her physical body. ...yet the fourth dimension that the dance awakens us to urges the onlookers within a short duration of time to blissful folds urging a cosmos in a chaotic world

## D. A congenial cosmos vital for harmony

- Modern physics has shown that the rhythm of creation and destruction is not only manifest in the turn of the seasons and in the birth and death of all living creatures, but also the very essence of inorganic matter.
- For modern physicists, then, Shiva's dance is the dance of subatomic matter. Hundreds of years ago, Indian artist created visual images of dancing Shiva's in a beautiful series of bronzes.
- Today, physicists have used the most advanced technology to portray the pattern of the cosmic dance. Thus, the metaphor of the cosmic dance unifies ancient religious art and modern physics.



## D. A congenial cosmos vital for harmony



## D. A Congenial cosmos vital for harmony

- We are created in the image of the Divine and what we do with our bodies can be a sacred action resulting in direct communion with Spirit. Prayers are channels of communication and take many forms. Humans have long been fascinated by the struggle to balance the matter of manifest reality, with the energy of spirit and to find forms which celebrate the fruits of this union. Our moving bodies provide a structure whereby spiritual expression is shaped.
- The body is the sacred vessel through which we experience this power directly. Through channelizing the transcendent power and structuring our inspiration with the potency of our individual styles , interpreting it through a flowing creativity , we collaborate more deeply with that divinity within and its connection with the world outside .

This interactive transformation with positivity engenders a harmony transforming the moving metaphor called dance into a visual prayer.

- Be it as a solo /group , be it through the allegorical folds of the classical balet or temple art forms , be it western or Indian Dance has evolved and continues to evolve mirroring movements and moods of a changing canvas engendering – 'peace of mind all passions spent'

# Conclusion

- The most profound medium of expression is the gesture because it touches where words fail, because it touches the core of man's heart. Even speech is not as effective as the sound of ankle bells in a dancer because dance is a universal language touching the collective consciousness of man and caressing it with equanimity. In fact every relationship on earth should gather the bonding patterns of dance because the rules of pairing and partnering are as much relevant to life as they are to the Dance!

let me highlight it as a poem –



**“Hold not tightly  
but let us dance the pattern together  
intricate, swift and flowing  
If only to touch  
the beauty of every unfolding step  
that finds us in each other!  
no place here  
for the possessive clutch, the clinging arm, the heavy  
hand;  
only the barest touch in passing.”**

Now arm in arm, now face to face, now back to back  
one rhythm nourished by oneness  
and the joy of the living moment !  
Let life touch us lightly as we do each other!  
in tune with one rhythm  
and the music of the heart  
Poised on that one life-breath!  
Perhaps then we could **find each other –in each other**  
In that momentous pause between then and now  
gathering stillness through movement  
And  
movement through stillness  
Through that metaphor  
Awakening us all  
To “one world –one dance”



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