

Dancer, Choreographer & Guru

Rani Khanam is one of the most sensitive and astute interpreters of Lucknow Gharana of Kathak today and she has been performing professionally for the past thirty years. She brings to her dance a rare sense of devotion and dedication, which leaves the audience with a sense of spiritual fulfillment.

Her style reflects deep comprehension of the dance tradition which has set new dimensions and source of inspirations to younger generation. While deeply rooted in tradition she has evolved her own individual style in Kathak. She achieved her rigorous training by renowned doyens of Kathak Ustd Fattan Khan, Smt. Reba Vidyarthi and Pt. Birju Maharaj, Rani Khanam graduated with top honours from Kathak Kendra, New Delhi.

Inspired by her intimate knowledge of Islamic and Sufi texts, she has a deep vision to perform on unique repertoire of Sufiana poetry (Qalam) & Islamic verses, which has received rich reviews. Liberating experience for the 30years that she has been dancing, and at this juncture, Rani Khanam is share with the world, some of what she has learned, gained and evolved, especially with the new generation of serious students of Kathak.

As a choreographer, Rani Khanam has won accolades from everyone right from the common man to the dignitaries. Her Choreography have received applaud and encouragement from the dignitaries Including the **President, Vice President, Prime Minister, Chief Ministers of Delhi & Arunachal Pradesh, Governor of Bengal & Arunachal Pradesh** etc. As a choreographer, she experimented with a wide variety of themes: traditional, contemporary as well as issued based dance productions. She has choreographed over 200 items. The Indian and international art critics consider her an excellent and creative dancer. She is an empanelled artist in “**Outstanding Category**” of the Indian Council for Culture Relations (ICCR) and “**Top Graded**” artiste at the Delhi Doordarshan.

AWARDS

Rani Khanam has been honored for her courageous and pioneering work by such awards as:

- 1) **Women Achievement Award** 2022 by Gandhi Smriti & Darshan Samiti, Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India.
- 2) **National Integration Award** 2017.
- 3) **Loreal Femina Women Award**, 2014 for creative work on the rights of the women & Disabled.
- 4) **5th National Women Excellence Award**, 2012 for the work on critical issues of equality & social justice for women and with the person with disabilities.
- 5) "**World Dance and Islam**" 2006 -Asian Cultural Council Fellowship, New York.
- 6) **Senior Fellowship award** from the Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India.
- 7) "**Outstanding Kathak dancer**" 1991-The India Foundation's award.

And many more for her outstanding Innovative work in Kathak dance and for creating bridges in between missing links in performing arts with social issues

Performance In Abroad:

For the past near about three decades, Rani Khanam has performed regularly at reputed international and national dance festivals. She performed one of her greatest work performances in the presence of **the Majesties the King and the Queen of Malaysia & Prime Minister of Malaysia** at Kuala Lumpur. Another was **Salaam - International festival of Islamic Arts in London** with legends of Sufi musicians, singers & dancers around the world.

For the past more than two decades, Rani Khanam and her group has performed regularly at reputed international and national dance festivals. She performed one of her greatest work in the presence of the Majesties **the King and the Queen** and Prime Minister of **Malaysia** at **Kuala Lumpur**.

Her dance tours to abroad has covered major festivals like-‘Namaste France’-**France, Spain, UK**, Asia Traditional song & dance Festival-**South Korea**, Salaam-International festival of Islamic Arts in **London**, Tropical dance festival in **The Netherlands**, ‘Sound of spell’ at Royal festival hall, **London**, Erasing Borders in **New York**, Forde International Festival in **Sweden-Norway**, ‘India Week’ at Tlemcen **Algeria**-the Islamic cultural capital of the world for the year 2012 and many solos and group performances in **England, Canada, Australia, Malaysia, Japan, Singapore, Qatar, Doha, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Muscat, Abu Dhabi, Dubai & Sri Lanka** and the ‘Festival of India’ in **USSR, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan**.

International Collaborative Performances with Legends:

Rani Khanam has internationally collaborated with living legends of Sufi Musicians, Singers & Dancers from many corners of the Islamic world.

1	Egypt	Sheikh Yaseen el Tuhamy, Sufi Munshid, Assouit
2	Turkey	Latif Bolat, Sufi instrumentalist & Composer
3	Yemen	Fanun al Yemen Ensemble
4	Iraq	Angam al-Rafidain traditional Maqam, Baghdad
5	Kenya	Zein Abdin, Taarab music
6	Morocco	Aissawa Sufi Brotherhood of Said Guissi
7	Indonesia	Rafly & Kande from Aceh & Ubiet
8	China	Dolan Muqam Uyghur Ensemble
9	Bosnia	Sultan Mehmet Fatih Ensemble from Sarajevo

Research Work:

She has involved herself in research work on the subject of:

1. ‘Re-uniting Katha -Vachak’ & ‘Bhav- Batana’ in Kathak Lucknow style
2. ‘World dance and Islam’ ACC- Asian Cultural council’
3. ‘Contribution of Persian Culture to Kathak dance’

People have applauded her for bringing depth, passion and spontaneity into her work.

Community Based Choreographic & Creative Works:

Rani Khanam firmly believes that dance should be linked with social issues and she has used her artistic calibre to create awareness through her choreography which articulates her convictions that dance can be vehicle to build social bridges.

1. Work with Person with Disabilities:

Through creative training and choreography, Rani Khanam has credited with many path-breaking works in performing arts and she **generates unique employment avenues for person with disabilities & women** in the field of art & culture. Rani Khanam works with differently abled artists, who perform on Wheelchairs. The unique performances performed by young artists with disabilities, are sensitizing, empowering and motivating to the mass and inspire the audience.

2. Dance Work on the Rights of the Women:

Rani Khanam is known for using classical Kathak to amplify and addressing critical issues of equality & social justice for Indian Muslim women and women in general. Her critically acclaimed dance

production “Black and White” brings activism and the art together which seeks to raise awareness about the rights of Indian Muslim women for that she has won renewed praise.

3. Creative work on Social Issues:

Also her international (UK) production ‘SHIVER’s choreography has thrown the spotlight on the issues of social stigma, HIV / AIDS and volatile stories of South Asian women.

As a Guru & Founder of AAMAD Dance Centre (1996)

As in her career spanning near about three decades, connoisseurs have seen her dance productions which have made its impact all over the world. In 1996, Rani Khanam founded **AAMAD Dance Centre**, an NGO, recognised by the Dept. of Culture, Govt. of India and worked in cooperation with Kathak Kendra (National institute of Kathak dance), New Delhi as its accredited centre (East). AAMAD is empanelled with Indian Council for Cultural Relations & Ministry of Culture. www.aamad.org

A respected Guru, she has cultivated and groomed some of the finest Kathak dancers in India & abroad. A cultural visionary, beside an outstanding exponent of Kathak, her contribution to the field of art is profound and countable in traditional classical dance history.

Hosts Reputed Festival & Seminar

A cultural visionary, Rani Khanam has conceptualized ‘Parampara Pravah’ a research oriented dance festival aimed at reviving the fading aspects & aesthetics of Kathak for future generation and the ‘Pratibha Utsav’ a Festival providing a platform to the young, unknown but talented future torch-bearers of the pure Kathak tradition.

Lecture Demonstrations / Workshops

Rani Khanam has promoted Indian classical dance amongst the youth through the performances, lecture demonstrations & workshops throughout India in many educational institutions, collages & schools under the auspices of Spic Macay, I.C.C.R., New York performing art library & Indian Ruler Cultural Centre.

Dance in Education

Rani Khanam is in the planning group of DEAA, The department of education in Arts & Aesthetics - NCERT who created the “Teacher’s Handbook in dance for upper primary stage” of school education for teachers & next generations.

Press & Critic’s Reviews

- Rani Khanam's Ghungroos tell the story of strength, one woman's fight to follow her heart and pursue a dream, against many odds. Her dance is devotion, her art a voice for many who don't have one. Kathak is not just a passion, but a prayer, a freedom to see herself and many" **Indian Express**
- Related to transcendence, it involves an extraordinary modesty and objectivity, I felt this most acutely during the Kathak dancer Rani Khanam’s solo “Nritta and Abhinaya”.
The New York Times, by Alastair Macaulay
- Internationally renowned dancer and choreographer Rani Khanam’s “Sound of Spell” is enchanting Kathak dance, which brings forth the rich diverse contribution to Islamic culture.
Southbank, London UK

Rani Khanam
Kathak Dancer, Choreographer & Guru

- Her rhythmic virtuosity coaxed shrieks of Surprise and spontaneous applause from the audience.
De Morgen, Belgium, Netherlands
- “Khanam gets the opportunity to demonstrate the full range of skills.” **Metro, London**
- Rani Khanam has surmounted formidable social obstacle to become one of the leading Kathak dancers of the country.
The Week, India
- The most natural Kathak Dancer...The Brilliant display of abhinaya performed by Rani Khanam, her is a dance whose creative imagination has depth and poetic sensibility."
The Hindu, India
- It could not have been easy throwing aside the Vail for a pair of Ghungroos. But then it never is easy having a series of firsts against your name. It was perhaps Kathak dancer Rani Khanam’s faith and her dedication to her dance that helped her scale heights.
Mail Today, India
- Rani Khanam, the only Indian Muslim classical dancer of note, takes the daring step of dancing to Islamic Verses.
Indian Express
- Amir Khusro's Persian love poetry, Rani Khanam's interpretation had that delicate touch and a creative imagination, which is her hallmark.
The Hindu
- Rani Khanam choreography was a sensitive interface between art and activism. **The Hindu**
- “Rani Khanam is a name to reckon with in the world of Kathak. Her own choreography of Sufi saint poets has won her international reputation and unqualified success for expanding the boundaries of Kathak repertoire. Equally at ease with Braj literature as with Islamic literature, she is a link between religions that aim at oneness.
Sunil Kothari, 2019, Narthaki
- “Far away from the exhibitionistic Kathak one is generally treated to, Rani Khanam’s Kathak with the Lucknow ‘andaz’ revels in underplayed artistry.
Leela Venkatraman, 2019
- “In Search: the Journey of Ruhaniyat, was an extraordinary thematic Kathak presentation around the Sufi thought of passionate love with the divine. It was imaginatively conceived and sensitively performed with intense involvement by Rani Khanam.
Manjari Sinha, 2018
- “Rani Khanam’s ‘In search- a journey of Ruhaniyat’ presentation was a sort of voyage into the Sufi stratosphere where the emotion of love traverses from earthly to ethereal plane, shaking off its temporal shackles. But then, this transition doesn’t just happen like that; it is a journey of the soul (rooh) which is very rooted in the body, subject to only sublime emotion of love whose manifestation is as much mundane as spiritual.
Ranee Kumar, 2018