

LEELA VENKATARAMAN

INDIAN
CLASSICAL
DANCE



The Renaissance and Beyond



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INDIAN CLASSICAL DANCE

by Leela Venkataraman

Indian Classical Dance: The Renaissance and Beyond traces the journey of the evolution of Indian classical dance since the years of Independence. Covering the eight classical dance forms of India—Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Kuchipudi, Kathakali, Manipuri, Mohiniattam, Odissi and Sattriya—Leela Venkataraman seamlessly weaves together a historical perspective with the contemporary scenario. Stripped of their association with the temple and the court, classical dance traditions in India went through a period of unprecedented change in the period marking the last few years of British rule and thereafter. From becoming part of the nationalist struggle when India was trying to rediscover its lost identity, to sharing the international stage today with dance forms from all over the world, the last sixty-six years have seen many changes in perspective and presentation of Indian Classical Dance – some intentional, others involuntary. While looking at these years closely and their impact on dance forms, one realises that this is a phase in an ongoing process, with each new generations of dancers and musicians adding to an already rich tapestry of tradition. The book is beautifully illustrated, and multi-faceted, dealing with various aspects of dance, including sponsorship and patronage, the teacher/disciple relationship and the contemporary classical dialectic. Unique in its vast range of covering all the classical forms, Indian Classical Dance is a must read for dancers and dance historians, students and teachers of dance and those interested in this fascinating field of Indian culture.

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Leela Venkataraman's career as a writer on Dance began in 1980 as dance critic for The National Herald and later the Patriot. Associated with the daily The Hindu for over thirty years, her Friday Review column has earned her a wide reputation for her incisive commentary on the dance scene. Widely travelled, she has been a regular participant in dance seminars in India and abroad. A prolific writer and regular contributor to dance journals like Nartanam and Sruti, she is the author of books Tradition in Transition, Step by Step Bharatanatyam, A Dancing Phenomenon—Birju Maharaj, and a book commissioned by the Children's Book Trust on Indian Classical Dances. Her work and contribution have earned her the prestigious Sangeet Natak Akademi Award.

