

# When Kathak becomes a dialogue with the divine

ANNA RAO GANGAVALLI

At Ethnic Hall, Shilparamam, Madhapur, a Kathak recital took an unconventional approach to the familiar idea of devotion. Aavahan: Some Dialogues with the Divine, presented by Aangan and Nadee School of Movement, explored prayer not as ritual or surrender, but as an intimate conversation between the seeker and the divine. The 40-minute solo production was performed by Niral Uprit, an Indore-based dancer who has trained in Kathak since the age of five and is a senior disciple of Guru Damayanti Miradwal. Uprit is also the founder of Technrityam, a digital riyaz companion for Indian classical arts, and works as a public speaker and writer while studying management science. The performance created an intimate setting for its central idea. A line of flowers bordered the dance space, while Uprit appeared in a flowing, silvery-white costume that complemented the movement. A telephone placed on a table became



**Niral Uprit's solo production Aavahan: Some Dialogues with the Divine brings classical Kathak into conversation with contemporary theatre, poetry and Advaita philosophy**

an unusual theatrical device through which the Gods were "summoned" one after another. A carved wooden screen provided transitions between sections. Ganesha, Shiva, Devi and Krishna were each approached through a distinct musical and

choreographic language. Rather than retelling their familiar stories, however, the production questioned how people inherit forms of devotion. The dancer-seeker encounters the silence or ambiguity that can follow conventional prayers and begins to question whether inherited ways of asking and accepting can remain meaningful.

The production therefore sought a more personal path to the divine. Traditional Kathak compositions and Sanskrit shlokas shared the stage with spoken word, English voiceover and original Hindi poetry. Ancient and contemporary elements were placed side by side, turning mythology into a

subject of enquiry rather than simply narration. The prerecorded music, composed by Savni Bhatt, combined singing, instrumental passages, recitation and voiceover. Tabla and pakhawaj formed the rhythmic foundation, while harmonium provided melodic support. The bansuri was particularly prominent in the Krishna section, adding a distinct melodic character to the movement.

Kathak's rhythmic vocabulary remained central to the production. Teental featured in the invocatory and celebratory sections, including Ganesha and Devi, as well as the final movement. The Shiva bandish used Roopak, whose uneven cycle brought urgency to the section. Ektaal appeared during faster passages, allowing Uprit's swift movements and chakkar to heighten the performance's intensity. Kavitts, parans and bandishes were woven into the choreography alongside Sanskrit verses from the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. These textual elements operated as another layer of meaning

beneath the dance, connecting the physical vocabulary of Kathak with the philosophical questions at the heart of the production. Uprit differentiated the four deities through rhythm, expression and movement. Her portrayal of Shiva, in particular, combined poetic composition with a striking interpretation of the Lord of Dance. The Krishna section drew on the interplay between flute, voice and choreography. Across the recital, clean footwork, controlled angika patterns and fleet chakkar demonstrated her command of the classical form. The performance gradually moved towards its central philosophical insight. As the dancer addresses the deities and finds that their answers repeatedly return the questions to her, the

search turns inward. The ultimate realisation echoes the Advaita understanding that what one seeks outside may ultimately be discovered within the self. Aavahan thus emerged as an exploration of seeking, questioning and self-discovery through Kathak. Its distinctive quality lay in bringing a traditional Indian classical form into dialogue with contemporary theatrical devices, original poetry, technology and philosophical enquiry. The programme was organised and introduced by Aditi Rao Ashtaputre, founder of Nadee School of Movement. The performance was received with appreciation, particularly for the way it retained the discipline of Kathak while creating space for a contemporary interpretation of devotion.



Niral Uprit

## Meenakshi Seshadri questions cinema's in-law stereotypes

Veteran actress Meenakshi Seshadri has reflected on the way the relationship between a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law has traditionally been portrayed in Indian cinema. She noted that the dynamic has often been presented in a negative light. Talking about the same, the 'Damini' actress recalled her 1990 film 'Ghar Ho To Aisa,' in which she played a daughter-in-law opposite veteran actress Bindu. She shared that her character stood up to her on-screen mother-in-law and taught her some hard lessons, with the film using comedy, melodrama and even karate sequences to highlight the conflict. Meenakshi Seshadri shared a video recreating the song 'January February' from her 1990 film Ghar Ho To Aisa. Dressed in a stylish co-ord outfit, the actress showcased her dance moves and expressive performance, giving a nostalgic glimpse of the popular track. The song was originally sung by Asha Bhosle and Mohammed Aziz, with music composed by Bappi Lahiri and lyrics penned by Majrooh Sultanpuri. For the caption, she wrote, "The relationship between a mother-in-law



and her daughter-in-law has often been portrayed with a negative flavor in Indian cinema. In my movie Ghar ho to aisa I pretend to be a daughter-in-law to the character played by famous actress Bindu. My character teaches some hard lessons to the mother-in-law, using exaggerated comedy, melodramatic components, and some keen karate moves!" "I personally wish that after marriage, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law develop a beautiful relationship, just

like a real-life mother and daughter." In Ghar Ho To Aisa, Meenakshi Seshadri played Seema Kumar, the strong-willed wife of Amar, portrayed by Anil Kapoor. Her character was portrayed as a fearless daughter-in-law who stood up to her cruel in-laws and challenged the domestic mistreatment she faced. Bindu portrayed the film's quintessential negative mother-in-law, a role that became one of her memorable characters. The film was later remade in Telugu as "Attintlo Adde Mogudu."

## Sonam Kapoor returns to spotlight after postpartum sabbatical

Actress and fashion icon Sonam Kapoor made a striking appearance at a luxury jewellery showcase in Mumbai. The actress was seen turning heads in an elegant black saree paired with statement jewellery. The actress, through her post on social media, stated that she is 'coming out of postpartum sabbatical' as she stepped out for the event. For the event, Sonam opted for a black saree featuring detailed metallic-gold along the border and 'pallu'. The saree also featured traditional embroidered motifs in shades of gold and brown. She paired it with a black blouse with gold-stripped detailing on the sleeves.

The actress accessorised the look with an elaborate diamond and gemstone-studded necklace, matching earrings and statement rings. For the hair, she chose to neatly pull it back into a sleek bun, with a dewy makeup look. Talking about Sonam, over the years, she has built a distinct style identity in the world of fashion.

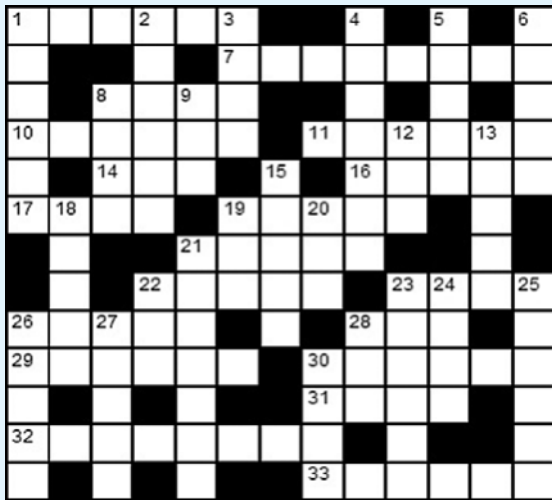
Her relationship with fashion has been closely intertwined with her sister Rhea Kapoor, who has frequently styled her for major public appearances. Rhea, for the uninitiated, is a film producer and fashion designer, stylist.

The sisters' creative partnership also extends to production. Rhea began her film-production career with Aisha in 2010, which starred Sonam alongside Abhay Deol. The sisters subsequently collaborated on films including Khoobsurat and Veere Di Wedding. Aisha, in particular, became an important part of Sonam's fashion and film journey. Released in 2010, the romantic comedy saw her play the title character, a young woman deeply interested in fashion and social life. The film also became closely associated with Sonam's evolving fashion image during her initial days in Bollywood.



On the acting front, Sonam began her career with Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Saawariya in 2007. She went on to feature in films including Delhi-6, I Hate Luv Storys, Aisha, Raanjhanaa, Bhaag Milkha Bhaag, Khoobsurat, Neerja, Prem Ratan Dhan Payo, Veere Di Wedding, Sanju, Ek Ladki Ko Dekha Toh Aisa Laga, The Zoya Factor and AK vs AK. Her performance in Neerja earned her a National Film Award. On the personal front, Sonam married businessman Anand Ahuja in May 2018. The couple welcomed their first son, Vayu, in August 2022. In March 2026, they welcomed their second son, Rudralokh.

### CROSSWORD



#### ACROSS

- Fingal's Cave island (6)
- Fine thread (8)
- Winglike (4)
- Became the responsibility of (4,2)
- Prized (6)
- A distress signal (3)
- Golf course (5)
- Put away (4)
- 2504 in Roman numerals (5)
- Cutter's edge, sword or knife (5)
- Venomous snake (5)
- Prison (4)
- South \_\_\_\_ : Seoul is its capital ? (5)
- 100% (3)
- Nothing (6)
- Varlets (6)
- "\_\_ \_ Wonderful Life" (3,1)
- Sweet, rich (8)
- Recoiling or drawing back (6)

#### DOWN

- Ridicules or derides (6)
- Companion (6)
- Hairstyle (4)
- Ms Portman of Hollywood (7)
- Started (5)
- Small projects or nails ? (5)
- Additionally (4)
- Auxiliary Territorial Serv. (3)
- Actress Tyler (3)
- Supplementing with difficulty (5)
- Online missive (5)
- Forbidden (5)
- Vidhan sabha member, in short (3)
- Commonly used pesticide (3)
- Upper caste Hindu (7)
- Beer barrel (3)
- Stylish (6)
- Thomas \_\_\_\_ Edison : the famous inventor ? (4)
- Relaxing (6)
- Sound a bell (5)
- Ballet follower (5)
- As industrious as an \_\_\_\_ ? (3)
- Join lips (4)



Solution to August 20

### SUDOKU



Solution to August 20



Solution to August 20