



IndianRaga Certification

Bharatanatyam Curriculum

A

IndianRaga Certification

The new gold standard in
Bharatanatyam Dance

IndianRaga's new certification program is the first ever structured, coherent, fair assessment mechanism to certify performers of Indian Classical Bharatanatyam Dance at various levels of training and performance.

A. Parameters for assessment

Balance and Grace, Expression and Emoting, Posture, Rhythm, and Technique (Ex. Araithandi, position of hands and feet)

B. Panel of assessors

Holistic assessment of each candidate by a panel of accomplished dance teachers

C. Standardized Testing

Online video-based mechanism eliminates bias and delivers an unparalleled test-taking experience.



What?

Syllabus will test concepts of Bharatanatyam and ability to perform

How?

Levels 1 through 7 to evaluate progress at various levels of training and performance

Advantages of getting certified

1. Recognition of dancing skills
2. Qualitative assessment of level of accomplishment
3. Encouragement of commitment towards dancing
4. Presentation of credentials for arts or academic profile

B



D



C

Understanding the different levels.

Through a carefully constructed path of progression, the dancer grows through focus and perfection on technique, adding layers of emotion, complexity and nuance from the Beginner to Advanced level

A. Level 1 to 3 (Beginner)

- Initial levels of training
- Understanding of basic terminology
- Ability to perform basic Adavus in various speeds
- Recite basic Mudras
- Acquire additional skills with Bhajans, slokams and expressions

C. Level 6 to 7 (Advanced)

- Advanced level compositions with complexity of technique and emotion
- Professional dancing ability
- Studio recordings

B. Level 4 to 5 (Intermediate)

- Acquire additional skills with Alarippu, Jathiswarams, Varnams and Thillanas
- Exposure to live performances

Syllabus: Level 1 (Beginner1)

Topics	Recommended Learning
Namaskaram	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proper way to do the Namaskaram (Namaskar) and the meaning behind that
Warm-Up Exercises (Beginner Level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Any exercises taught by your instructor to stretch and condition the body before all practice sessions and performance
Basic Terminology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Namaskar</i>- A Bharatnatyam dancer starts and ends every session of dancing with Namaskar (obedience). Dancer seeks blessings and permission from Mother Earth to stomp on her during the dance. The dancer pays respect to God (Nataraja), Teacher (Guru), and Audience.• <i>Angashuddham</i> - Refers to purity, clarity, and neatness of adavus and stance.• <i>Attami</i> - Refers to the neck movements.• <i>Samam (Samapadam)</i> - Feet together and standing straight.• <i>Araimandi (Ardhamandala)</i> - Is a basic posture of the body in Bharatnatyam in which the body should be straight, legs bent at the knee, and toes facing sideways.• <i>Muzhumandi (Mandala)</i> - The torso should be straight while sitting down on the toes of the two feet.• <i>Sollukattu</i> - Rhythmic syllables• <i>Nrittaastas</i> - Hand movements executed along with adavus solely for aesthetic beauty of embellishment are called nritta-astas.

Basic Adavus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Tatta Adavu – Thaiya – Tai</i> - striking the floor with sole of the feet ○ <i>Natta Adavu – Taiyum Tattat Taiyum Tam</i> - stretching the leg and striking with heels ○ <i>Pakkaadavu (Visharu Adavu) – Ta Tai Tai Ta</i> - importance to Swasthika position ○ <i>Kudditu Mettu (Tai Hath Tai Hi)</i> - jumping on toes and striking the ground with the heels while retaining the toes-contact with the ground ○ <i>Sarikal (Sarukkal) Adavu (Tai Ya Tai Yi)</i>
Basic Mudras	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>One of the most striking features of Indian Classical Dance is the use of hand gestures. Speaking in dance via gestures, rather than orally, in order to visually convey outer events or things, as well as inner feelings, two classifications of specific traditional 'MUDRA' (hand/finger gesture) are used in Indian Classical Dance.</i> • <i>Asamyuktha Hasta Sloka (Single hand gestures):</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pathaakas, Tripathaako, Ardhapathaakah, Karthareemukhah, Mayooraakhyo, Ardhachandrascha, Araalah, Shukathundakah, Mushtishcha, Sikharaakhyascha, Kapiththah, Katakaamukhah, Soochee, Chandrakalaa, Padmakosha, Sarpashirasthathaa, Mrgashirsha, Simhamukhah, Kangulascha, Alapadmakaha, Chathuro, Bhramarashchaiva, Hamsaasyo, Hamsapakshakaha, Sandamsho, Mukulaschaiva, Thamrachooda, Thrishoolakaha ○ <i>Samyuktha Hasta Sloka (Double hand gestures):</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anjalishcha, Kapothashcha, Karkatah, Svasthikasthathaa, Dolahasthah, Pushpaputaha, Uthsangah, Shivalingakaha, Katakaavardhanashchaiva, Karthareesvasthikasthathaa, Shakatam, Shanka, Chakrecha, Samputah, Paasha, Keelakau (Keelako), Mathsyah, Koormo, Varaahashcha, Garudo, Naagabandhakaha, Khatvaa, Berundakaakeshcha, Avahithasthathatheivacha

Syllabus: Level 2 (Beginner2)

Topics	Recommended Learning
Any short dance piece (around 3 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Any slokas, Bajans, instrumental piece or any other appropriate music for classical dance can be used giving importance to adavus and mudras learned so far
Nadai	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The basic Bharatanatyam walk which involves lifting the feet while slightly lowering the body. The feet are then placed down heel first and the body is raised back up.
Intermediate Adavus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Tat Tai Tam</i> (Sutral Adavu) - combination of Tattu, Nattu, Swasthika and Paichaal (jump).<ul style="list-style-type: none">§ Dhit taiyuam Tat Taa Tai§ Karthari Adavu§ Kathi Adavu<i>Kuthu Adavu</i> (Ettu adavu) – Tat Tai Ta Ha – striking the toes of both feet simultaneously, with a slight jump

Head Movements (This may be taught with a sloka or other ways deemed appropriate by the instructor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Samam</i> - keeping the head motionless and the eyes in a fixed gaze ○ <i>Udvāhitam</i> - head tilted up ○ <i>Adhomukham</i> - downcast or bowing down in greeting ○ <i>Ālolitam</i> - moving the head in a circular motion ○ <i>Dhutam</i> - moving the head from side to side ○ <i>Kampitam</i> - moving the head up and down ○ <i>Parāvrttam</i> - turning the head away in malice ○ <i>Utkṣiptam</i> - turning the head to one side and raise it up ○ <i>Parivāhitam</i> - swaying the head from side to side in a wave-like motion
Eye Movements (This may be taught with a sloka or other ways deemed appropriate by the instructor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Samam</i> - eyes are motionless and straight or even ○ <i>Ālokitam</i> - circular movement of eyes ○ <i>Sāci</i> - looking askance ○ <i>Prālokitam</i> - glancing towards both the sides with wide eyes ○ <i>Nimīlitam</i> - half-closed eyes ○ <i>Ullokitam</i> - eyes raised in upward glance ○ <i>Anuvrttam</i> - speedily moving the eyes up and down ○ <i>Avalokitam</i> - eyes downcast
Neck Movements (This may be taught with a sloka or other ways deemed appropriate by the instructor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Sundarī</i> - neck movement horizontally on both sides ○ <i>Tiraścīnā</i> - an upward and downward movement of the neck on both sides, suggesting the gliding of the snake ○ <i>Parivartitā</i> - movement from right to left ○ <i>Prakampita</i> - moving the neck forward and backward

Syllabus: Level 3 (Beginner3)

Topics	Recommended Learning
Any short dance piece (around 3 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any slokas, Bajans, instrumental piece or any other appropriate music for classical dance can be used giving importance to adavus and mudras learned in Level 2
Advanced Adavus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Tai Tai tat Ta</i> - combination of Tattu, Nattu, and resting on toes <i>Sarukkal Adavu</i> - sliding <i>Mandi Adavu</i> - done in Muzhumandi position; Tham Ti tham kitathaka Tai Ta Tai <i>Makuta Adavu</i> (theermana adavu) - usually as an end for the sequence; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Tadhing Gina Thome with Ta Hatha Jhaum Tari Ta § Kitta Takka Dhari Kirtta Thome <i>Thatti Mettu</i> - strike the ground, raise the heel, and re-strike, resting the toes on the ground; <i>Trishram</i> (Tha Ki Tta), <i>Chatushram</i> (Tha Ka Dhi mi), <i>Khandam</i>, (ThaKa Tha kit a), <i>Mishram</i> (3+4 or 4+3), <i>Sankeernam</i> (4+5 or 5+4) <i>Tadh Dhit Ta</i> - single unit step; generally used as a connecting unit
Advanced warm- up techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surya Namaskar or other comparable warm-up routines
Review the Entire Adavus with special focus on 3rd speed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All basic, intermediate, and advanced adavus reviewed earlier in third speed
Alarippu	<p>A Bharatanatyam recital usually begins with Alarippu, a short invocatory piece in which the dancer pays obeisance to the guru, the Gods, and the spectators. Alarippu literally means "flowering". The movements indicate the gradual blooming or opening out of the dancer's body (like a flower) in readiness for the following dances. On a practical level, this is similar to a warm-up exercise for the dancer, and for the audience an opportunity to appraise her technical skill and finesse. The act is entirely based on rhythm and is focused on relaxing the body of the dancer, thereby relaxing her mind and symbolizes her awakening.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">

Syllabus: Level 4 (Intermediate1)

Topics	Recommended Learning
Jatiswaram	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jatiswaram depicts pure dance (nritya) in which the performer weaves several patterns on a basic musical composition. It is distinguished from other musical compositions by having no words of poetry (geet) in it. Because of this characteristic it does not express any bhava (emotion). The beauty of Jatiswaram is the presentation of control over rhythm (thalam) through tempo (laya), by the movements of major limbs of the body (ang-sanchalan) and feet (pada-sanchalan)
Expressions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This includes an understanding and the BASIC ability to do the <i>Navarasas</i>. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Sringaram</i> – Love, Delight <i>Hasyam</i> – Laughter <i>Karuna</i> – Compassion <i>Raudram</i> – Fury <i>Viram</i> – Bravery/Courage <i>Bhayanakam</i> – Fear <i>Bibhatsam</i> – Revulsion/ Disgust <i>Adbhutam</i> – Awe, Wonder <i>Shantam</i> – Serene
Sabdam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Sabdam the dancer performs to a devotional song (bhakti geet) and introduces abhinaya. The end sequence of this short number consists of pure dance (nritya). Sabdam has been rightly described as a "piece of abhinaya with a fringe of pure dance running all around it and between it." It is a delightful item of expressional dance (abhinaya) to the accompaniment of a song in praise of the glory of god (or a royal patron).

Syllabus: Level 5 (Intermediate2)

Adavu Perfection	<p><i>Practice with diligence, 1st through 4th speed; make sure that there is proper angashudam in adavu practice</i></p> <p><i>(proper araimandi with the pelvis pushed in, stretching from the groin and not the knees, straight arms and raised elbows, and loud, clear foot work)</i></p> <p><i>Dancer must work to develop core strength and tone. Adavus at this level should not be executed robotically, but with more depth and emotion.</i></p> <p><i>Adavus can also be put together in more complicated sequences.</i></p>
Perfection of Abhinaya or Bhavam	<p><i>The Navarasa depict the simplest of the emotions; at this level the dancer must learn nuances in showing emotion. With each of the Navarasa's, practice performing a gradient of at least three levels. For example, with Roudram, start with showing irritation, then intensify the emotion to anger, then intensify more to show rage. Perfect these nuances for every emotion.</i></p>
Pushpanjali	<p><i>Pushpanjali is an introductory piece typically performed to offer flowers to Lord Ganesha and seek the blessings of Lord Nataraja, the Guru, the orchestra, and the audience. It is primarily nritha-based, with small portions of simple abhinaya in which the dancer can exercise more nuanced emotion with the depiction of small stories.</i></p>
Thillana	<p><i>Thillana is the culminating item in a bharathanatyam margam that is full of vibrant nritha patterns and complicated footwork. It also contains a small charanam, which can have a theme of devotion to a certain deity, or simply be a small message from the composer.</i></p>

Syllabus: Level 6 (Advanced1)

Continuing Adavu Practice	<i>Adavus must continue to be practiced well, with improving araimandi posture, natyarambam, and other crucial stances more every time.</i>
Advancing Abhinaya	<p><i>The Nayika Bedha is a complex set of emotions represented by a nayika's (heroine's) relationship to a nayaka (hero). At the core, these particular emotions are an allegory to human relations with each other and the Divine in a multitude of concepts. The Bedhas are:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vassikasajita – one who awaits her Nayaka's arrival 2. Virahotkanthita: One who is disappointed because her nayaka has not come 3. Swadinapatika: One who feels lucky to have a nayaka 4. Vipralabdha: One who has been deceived by her nayaka 5. Kandita: One who is angry with her nayaka for having gone to the other woman. There are 3 kinds of <i>kanditanayika</i>: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Dhirai: One who coolly punishes her nayaka b. Atidhirai: One who cries and pleads with her nayaka c. Dhiradhirai: One who fights with her nayaka 6. Kalahantarita: One who repents for having fought with her nayaka. 7. Prositapatika: One who is feeling lonely because her nayaka has gone out 8. Abhisarika: One who stealthily goes out to meet her nayaka
Padam	<i>Padam is an intricate abhinaya piece that involves a slow and patient depth and understanding of emotion. It is often constructed on the theme of sringara, or love, usually between a Nayika and a Nayaka.</i>
Shiva Thandavams	<i>Shiva Thandavam is the cosmic dance performed by Lord Nataraja, in one of two states of emotion, either Anandam or Rudram. It is a strong nritha piece that involves abhinaya to truly bring out the essence of Lord Nataraja's dance.</i>

Syllabus: Level 7 (Advanced2)

Continued Adavu Perfection	<i>1st through 4th speed</i>
Continued Perfection of Abhinaya	<i>Perfect the nuances for every emotion.</i>
The Varnam	<i>The Pada Varnam is the most traditional varnam format used the bharathanatyam, as it is comprised of a pallavi, anupallavi, a charanam, and multiple sahityams that correspond to intricate swaram patterns following the charanam in the second half of the piece. The varnam is the center piece of the margam, and is therefore the longest and most challenging piece to execute. Equal parts nritha (in both jathis and swarams) and abhinaya (slow-paced in the first half, fast-paced in the second half), it is the true test of a dancer.</i>