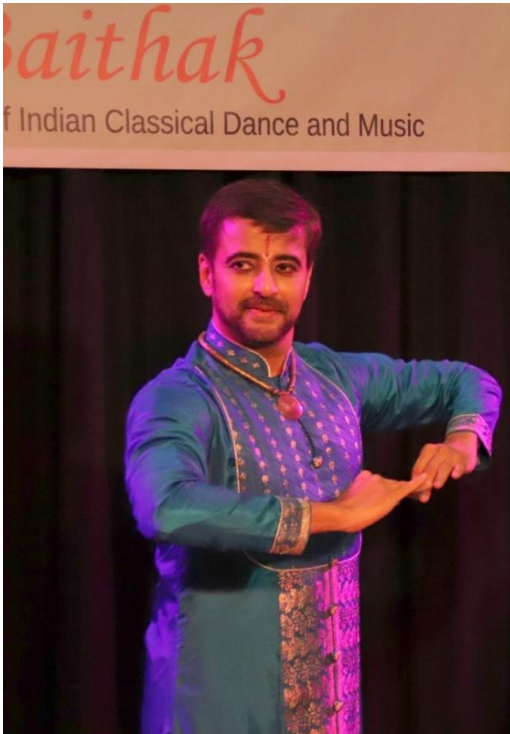


## Dr Piyush Raj



Dr Piyush Raj – an educator having an academic approach, an entrepreneur and a performer, is a Doctorate in Pharmacy and a MBA in marketing and was in the medical industry for 20 yrs followed by a stint of 10 yrs of career in Interior and Furniture Design. However, he gave up all this and has now dedicated his time completely to Performing Arts and Dance and has been instrumental in establishing a creative space for all performing arts- **the Natanam Studio for Performing Arts** which is affiliated to Gandharva Mahavidyala.

### Training in Dance-

A Nritya Visharad in Kathak under **Dr Shveni Pandya**, (*disciple of Pandit Lacchu Maharaj*), Piyush further honed his art for over 18 years in the Guru Shishya Parampara from his **Guru Late Shri Bireshwar Gautam**, (*disciple of Guru Bandana Sen, Padmashri Pt. Gopi Krishna and Padmashri Damayanti Joshi*) a renowned Kathak dancer and accomplished Thumri singer. His dance derives its flavor

from his tutelage- highlighting the nuances of Kathak by emphasizing the “Thehraav” while simultaneously developing the Bhava and Abhinaya aspect of Katha vaachan and poetry in dance.

He is now pursuing his M.A in Kathak under the able guidance of Kathak Scholar and **Guru Dr Puru Dadheech**.

### Few Accomplishments listed :

- Have graduated as Nritya Visharad in Kathak from the Akhil Bharatiya Gandharva Mahavidyalaya, Miraj.
- He has also attended various Kathak workshops conducted by **Pt. Birju Maharaj** and also by **Guru Pratap Pawar**. Having an in-depth knowledge of Indian Folk Dances, he has performed and assisted in choreography of many ballets based on Kathak and Folk dances.
- Have performed at many prestigious dance festivals with his Guru –Festivals like Kala Ghoda Festival and the Ellora Festival by MTDC, Purush Festival-Bombay, Nehru Centre Festival of Dance, Spirit of Unity Concerts for International Integration- Chennai, in the ‘Vasantosav’ of Kalashram, organised by **Pt. Birju Maharaj** in Delhi and many others.
- Have acted in the theatrical dance production- “**Shyam Sakhi**”, directed by **Late Shri Chetan Datar** and conceptualized by **Guru Rajashree Shirke** and **Shri Vaibhav Arekar** staged in Prithvi Theatre, Mumbai.
- Founder Secretary and a trustee of his own charitable institute called as KATHAK DARPAN CULTURAL CENTRE, conducting Kathak classes for students besides conducting various other activities related to Classical Performing Arts.

- Have organized festivals like PURUSH- All male Dancer's Festival, SWARANJALI – a festival of Music and Dance, PHAGUN- a festival of Dance and Music on Holi, SHAAGIRD- a Dance festival featuring young disciples of renowned Gurus.
- Have assisted in choreography many Dance Ballets and is creatively involved in evolving a new project to convey the finer nuances of Kathak: Ballets which were conceptualized and choreographed by his Guru Shri Bireshwar Gautam were-
  - RAAG MILAN– A synthesis between Rabindra Sangeet and pure classical music, set against the back-drop of Kathak.
  - KATHAK AUR THUMRI KE RANG – Brings out and elaborates the similarities between Thumri and Kathak.
  - SHAKTI- Salutations to the supreme power- Shiv and Durga and Kali.
  - SURAABHINAYA – A dance-drama which brings out the tension and conflict in the mother-son relationship between Karna and Kunti.
- A key member in the SANSKRITA FOUNDATION, a charitable institute founded by Guru Shubhada Varadkar, promoting Odissi Classical dance art form and other performing arts and working towards a noble cause of collecting funds for poor cancer patients.
- Was the General Secretary and key member of Dancer's guild- NARTAK MILAN, headed by Late Guru Krishnan Kutty and Late Guru Damayanti Joshi. Also organized events and competitions in Indian Classical Music and Dance for various schools and colleges of Mumbai to help to popularize classical art forms amongst the youth.
- Was also the General Secretary of Nrityanjali- An institute of Dance, Music and Personality Development, Mumbai. Intensive training and performances in Indian Folk Dances and dance ballets.
- Written a thesis on Personality Development through Performing Arts- which was presented at the end of the Special Personality Development course developed by me with able guidance from Shri Tushar Guha.

#### Present activities :

- He is the Trustee of the charitable Trust **KATHAK DARPAN CULTURAL CENTRE** established by his Late Guru Shri Bireshwar Gautam and the Founder Director of **NATANAM STUDIO FOR PERFORMING ARTS** in Mumbai which is affiliated to the Gandharva Mahavidyala. The Studio promotes and propagates Indian Classical Dance and Music by training many promising students in Kathak, Odissi, Bharatnatyam, Mohinattam, Manipuri and Hindustani Vocals.
- He is an accredited Kathak teacher by the Akhil Bharatiya Gandharva MahaVidyalaya and is teaching Kathak to students at the **Natanam Studio for Performing Arts** (affiliated to Gandharva Mahavidyalaya) and continuing the dance style of his Guru Shri Bireshwar Gautam.