

# Study Guide for Teachers

## AATMA Performing Arts *Colors of India*

presented by  
Young Audiences New Jersey & Eastern PA  
(866) 500-9265  
[www.yanjep.org](http://www.yanjep.org)



### ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Born in Hindu temples more than 2,000 years ago, Indian dance is in equal measure movement, mime, and music. Join four dancers on an epic journey charting the exciting evolution of Indian dance. This dynamic performance focuses on the explosive rhythms found in Indian classical and folk dance, which eventually gave rise to the globally recognized Bollywood dance and music of today. Students will see the transition that Indian dance has made from the colorful villages of India to the vibrant streets of modern Mumbai.

### LEARNING GOALS

Students will

- Be exposed to a classical music and dance form that is over 5,000 years old.
- Be able to follow dance even if they do not understand the language.
- Be introduced to the history and art of a different culture.
- Learn new rhythms and participate through clapping.
- See and experience the evolution of Indian dance from temple and folk dances to the more modern form of dance known as Bollywood.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

India is one of the oldest civilizations in the world, with a kaleidoscopic variety of rich cultural heritage. It has achieved phenomenal socio-economic progress during the last 60 years of its independence. India has become self-sufficient in agricultural production and is now the tenth largest industrialized country in the world. With one foot steeped in rich traditions and the other fervently striding into the entrepreneurial e-age, India embraces its diversity with unmatched serenity. Spread in an area of 3.28 million square kilometers, India is comprised of 28 states, such as Punjab, Maharashtra, Haryana, and Goa, and seven union territories.

In India, dance has been used both as a vehicle of worship and as an expression of profound emotions. The origins of Indian dance are shrouded in the mist of antiquity. A bronze figurine of a dancing girl discovered in the 4,000-year-old ruin of Mohenjo-Daro is the world's earliest evidence of dance.

The Indian dance structure is the oldest and the most comprehensive system in the world. It is a traditional art, an oral tradition which has been passed from generation to generation. Born in the Hindu temples, it is devotional in spirit, yet possesses a highly stylized and sophisticated technique.

## **BEFORE THE PROGRAM**

1. Look at a map of India and note where it is in relation to the United States.
2. Have students read stories from India. *Chandamama* magazine ([www.chandamama.in](http://www.chandamama.in)) is an excellent source for these tales.
3. Get the music teacher involved! Have students learn about traditional Indian musical instruments and listen to carnatic music.

## **AFTER THE PROGRAM**

1. Have students select dances from the performance that they enjoyed and discuss them. Did the dances leave them with something to think about?
2. Have students discuss how Indian dance is different from what they know. What is similar?
3. Get the visual arts teacher involved. Have students create their own visual images from the dances.

## **VOCABULARY WORDS**

**Bharathanatyam:** A major genre of Indian classical dance that originated in Tamil Nadu. Sometimes referred to as Bharathanatiyam or Sadir.

**Bollywood:** A synthesis of formal and folk Indian traditional music and dance traditions, in fusion with Middle Eastern techniques and Western dance forms, including hip hop.

**Carnatic Music:** A system of music commonly associated with southern India.

**Mumbai:** the capital city of the Indian state of Maharashtra. It is the most populous city in India with an estimated city population of 18.4 million.

## **RESOURCES**

[www.musicindiaonline.com](http://www.musicindiaonline.com): A comprehensive source for information on Indian music.

[www.culturalindia.net/indian-dance/classical](http://www.culturalindia.net/indian-dance/classical): Information and examples of many Indian classical dances.

[www.rhythm-india.com/bollywood-dance.html](http://www.rhythm-india.com/bollywood-dance.html): A short history of Bollywood movies.

[www.aatmaperformingarts.com](http://www.aatmaperformingarts.com): Official AATMA Performing Arts website.

## **ARTIST INFORMATION**

AATMA PERFORMING ARTS is an award-winning dance company that stands at the unique intersection of traditional Indian performance and modern movement. Founded by Amit Shah, the organization is an outgrowth of the experiences of Indian-Americans who have found a delicate balance in fusing Indian classical and folk dance with Western disciplines. As a pioneer in this field, AATMA has received international acclaim and media attention in North America, Europe, Africa, and Asia, and is the first U.S.-based Indian dance company to do so on such a large scale.

Epitomized in praise from Bollywood icon Farah Khan—"Their choreography is even better than the film"—AATMA blends the colorful experiences of the Indian diaspora to create products coined as "visually grand and dynamic" and "a kaleidoscope of colour and beauty" by *The New York Times*, *The Star Ledger*, and various global publications.

AATMA Performing Arts prides itself on its unique position to preserve Indian culture, fostering its expression in the context of American communities. As a dance troupe and school, it remains dedicated to this mission, creating a brilliant fusion of the Eastern and Western worlds while influencing others around the world to do the same.