

Kutiyattam Workshop

(03-12 July 2015, Irinjalakkuda, Kerala)

Information Sheet



INTRODUCTION

India has rich traditions of theatre and other performing arts. It is here where *Natyasastra*, one of the rare treatises on performance theory was born. Diverse forms and traditions of performance practices flourished across numerous languages and cultures of this land. Sanskrit theatre was significant one among them.

Kutiyattam, the tradition which is practiced in Kerala is the only one form that has survived as *Chakyars* and *Nambiars*; the hereditary practitioners preserved it with high degree of devotion. Believed to have a history of more than 2,000 years, *Kutiyattam* has a synthesis of Sanskrit classicism and local traditions. In its stylized and codified theatrical language, it focuses on the thoughts and inner feelings of the character. In 2001, it attained the status of 'intangible cultural heritage of humanity', proclaimed by UNESCO.

A *Kutiyattam* student would undergo years of rigorous training to transform into full-fledged performers having consummate control of breath and energy, subtle, precise and sharp facial expression to emote and thorough consciousness of his/her organic body. These skills make him/her capable to carry a situation or an episode to its minutest detail through which the he/she invokes *rasa* (sentiment); the fundamental objective of a *Kutiyattam* performance.

WORKSHOP ON KUTIYATTAM – OBJECTIVE

The present workshop on *Kutiyattam* is specifically devised to introduce the acting techniques and performance-making philosophy of this age old tradition to the contemporary theatre artistes, dancers and performing artistes from other disciplines. Theatreconnekt is organizing this program together with *Ammannur Chachu Chakyar Smarka Gurukulam*, one of the foremost schools of traditional practice of this form.



The workshop, placed in the traditional *Gurukulam* environment of ‘*Ammannur Kalari*’ is designed and formulated by Shri. G. Venu, who is an exponent of this form of theatre. He is also an accomplished pedagogue, scholar, trainer and also author of several books on *Kutiyattam* and other performance art forms of Kerala. Shri. Venu, *Kulapathi* of the *Gurukulam* will be the Director for the workshop, who will be assisted by the senior performers and faculties of the *Gurukulam*.

The workshop curriculum is designed to introduce the methodology, principles and systems of acting and theatre-making as practiced in *Kutiyattam*. For instance, the subtle and highly intricate use of eyes and its training, the language of hand gestures, control of breath, relation between voice and emotion, character analysis, invoking *rasa* (sentiment) and *bhava* (emotions), interpretation of text and character, the imagination of performer, concept and relativity between space and time etc will be explored in detail here.

Has emphasize on practical training supplemented with live performances by master performers in the evenings and lectures by eminent scholars from cross-disciplines, the program shall convert a participant familiar with the tradition and its fundamental approaches on performing of a play.

Taking place from 03 to 12 July 2015 at *Ammannur Gurukulam*, the workshop will be residential in nature. The participation is limited to 18 persons only. The participants will be short-listed from the applications received in prescribed form, which can be downloaded from the websites.

AMMANNUR GURUKULAM: A CRADLE FOR LEGENDS

Having history of several centuries, the Ammannur family made Irinjalakkuda their home in 1874, after migrating from their previous settlement in Palakkad district. The present Ammannur Kalari (school) was established in the year 1918 by the late Ammannur Chachu Chakyar, who was a great visionary, performer and exemplary trainer. It was under his tutelage, versatile performers like Painkulam Rama Chakyar, Parameswara Chakyar and Madhava Chakyar were trained. This legacy is still continued; Kuttan Chakyar, Usha Nangiar being outstanding examples of the contemporary generation of performers from this school.

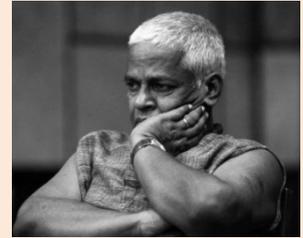
Artistes the *Gurukulam* are visiting faculties in several national and international institutions such as National School of Drama (New Delhi) and Inter-cultural Theatre Institute (ITI) Singapore and several others. To gather more information, visit <http://www.ammannurgurukulam.com/>

THEATRECONNEKT PERFORMING ARTS SOCIETY

Theatreconnekt is a group of people who believe in the power of art, to challenge many of society’s deepest assumptions. Among all art practices, theatre and performance art has proved to be a powerful medium of artistic expression capable to cut through complacency and apathy, inspire political actions, facilitate dialogues, empower individuals and communities, and stimulate social change through critical thinking and increased consciousness.

As the contemporary performance practices are undergoing multifaceted challenges, the role of intercultural and interdisciplinary collaborations are significant in cutting cross the existing boundaries of different artistic expressions in reinventing and formulating new languages. At Theatreconnekt, we intend to address this area by nurturing fresh and new aesthetic sensibilities, promoting innovative experiments and stimulating critical appreciation of theatre and performance-making art. For more information, visit <http://theatreconnekt.com/>





G. VENU: THE DIRECTOR

Gopal Venu is a performer, teacher and scholar of *Kutiyattam* and a senior disciple of Late Guru Ammannur Madhava Chakyar. He is also the founder of *Natanakairali* and the *Kulapathy* of Ammannur Chachu Chakyar Smaraka Gurukulam. Close associate of Late Madhava Chakyar since 1980s, Shri. Venu has played a vital role in stabilizing the Ammannur School and preserving its legacy sustainably.

A gifted trainer, Venu has designed and prepared training modules for performers from different disciplines such as contemporary theatre, dance and so on, which has been adapted by National School of Drama (Delhi) and Inter-cultural Theatre Institute (ITI, formerly TTRP) – Singapore, the institutions where he is also a visiting faculty and trainer for the last several years.

Shri. Venu has been selected for several honours and awards, which include Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award, Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi Award, Kerala Kalamandalam (Deemed University for Arts and Culture) Award, Painkulam Rama Chakyar Smaraka Puraskaram (2009) and the prestigious Nikkei Asia Prize for Culture (Japan), 2007. Some of Mr. Venu's honours and research fellowships include the Kerala Sahitya Academy award (1977), Homi Babha Fellowship (1985), Goethe Institute Scholarship (1989), and Senior Fellowship, Department of Culture, Government of India (1982).

He created adaptations of plays 'Abhijnana Sakuntalam', 'Vikramorvaseeyam' and Urubhangam for *Kutiyattam*. Venu authored 'Alphabet of Gestures in Kathakali' (1968), 'Puppetry and Lesser Known Dance Traditions of Kerala' (1990), 'Kathakalimudra Nighantu' (1994), 'The Language of Kathakali' (2000), 'Into the World of *Kutiyattam*' with the Late Ammanur Madhava Chakyar (2002) etc. To know more about him, visit <http://natanakairali.org/>

IRINJALAKKUDA: THE LAND OF CULTURAL LEGACY

The earliest historical reference to Irinjalakkuda is on *Koodalmanikyam* Temple. The earliest reference is found on a stone inscription attributed to the *Chera* dynasty dated 854 A.D. *Koodalmanikyam* temple of Lord Bharata, is one of the very few temples where *Kutiyattam* is still performed as an annual ritual. Irinjalakkuda possesses a rich heritage of performing arts including *Kutiyattam*, *Kathakali* and also literature. Unnayi Warriar, the author of popular *Kathakali* play 'Nalacharitham' hails from this city. The city houses one of the *Kathakali* institutions of Kerala.

The nearest railway station is Thrissur (21 km) and the airport is Kochi International Airport (40km)





KEY INFORMATION

Period of Workshop: 03 to 12 July 2015

Time of Classes: 7.00am to 5.30pm

Daily performances: 6.30 to 9.00pm from 03 to 09 July.

Guest Lectures: 5.30 to 6.30pm

Place of Workshop: Ammannur Chachu Chakyar Smaraka Gurukulam, Irinjalakkuda, Kerala, India.

Accommodation: Twin-sharing budget accommodation at Sangamam Guest House (Distance 400 Meters)

Food: Breakfast, lunch, tea, biscuits and dinner (Ordinary vegetarian Kerala food)

Participatory donation: Rs. 11,000.00 for Indian citizen and Rs. 15,000.00 for foreign nationals.

How to apply: Fill up the application form and email to theatreconnect@gmail.com on or before 08 June 2015.

Contact: +91 98471.88288 (Kesavan Nambudiri) & +91 94960.59166 (Sooraj Nambiar)

DATES TO REMEMBER

Last date for registration: **08 June 2015.**

Confirmation of registration: **10 June 2015.**

Remittance of first installment of fee: **12 June 2015.**

