

# Sangeet Natak Akademi

National Academy of Music, Dance and Drama, New Delhi

an Autonomous Body under the Ministry of  
Culture, Government of India

*In Collaboration with*

Sanskritik Gosthi Kallol and Rangalaya, Nagaon



## CHHAU PARVA

Festival of Chhau Dances

26 – 28 March 2017

Khagen Mahanta Auditorium

Jail Road, Near DC Residence, Nagaon, Assam



## The Chhau Dances- An Overview

The Chhau region is a tribal tract of eastern India and had as its original inhabitants, indigenous tribes like the *Santhal, Munda, Ho, Oraon, Gond, Bhuiyan, Bhumij and Kol* to name a few. Over a sustained period of time, spanning many centuries people from other parts of the country settled here. This led to an intermingling of the local tribal culture with that of the migratory population.

Chhau dance is a tradition from eastern India that enacts episodes from epics including the Mahabharata and Ramayana, local folklore and abstract themes. Its three distinct styles hail from the regions of Seraikella, Purulia and Mayurbhanj, the first two using masks. Chhau dance is intimately connected to regional festivals, notably the spring festival Chaitra Parva. Its origin is traceable to indigenous forms of dance and martial practices. Its vocabulary of movement includes mock combat techniques, stylized gaits of birds and animals and movements modelled on the chores of village housewives. Chhau is taught to male dancers from families of traditional artists or from local communities. The communities that now constitute a large part of the present day population are mostly of this mixed descent and are associated with Chhau as Gurus/ Ustads or teachers, performers, musicians, instrument makers, mask-makers and costume/ ornament makers. The dance aspect is mainly practised by the communities known as *Munda, Mahato, Kalindi, Pattnaik, Samal, Daroga, Mohanty, Acharya, Bhol, Kar, Dubey, and Sahoo*. The musical accompaniment is provided to Chhau Dance by people of communities known as Mukhi, Kalindi, Ghadhei, and Dhada. They are also involved in the making of the instruments. As masks form an integral part of Chhau Dance in Purulia and Seraikella the craft of mask making involves communities of traditional painters known as *Maharana, Mohapatra and Sutradhar*.

The dance is usually performed at night in an open space to traditional and folk melodies, played on the reed pipes, mohuri and shehnai. The reverberating drumbeats of a variety of drums, Dhol, Nagada and Charchari, dominate the accompanying music ensemble. Chhau is an integral part of the culture of these communities. It binds together people from different social strata and ethnic background with diverse social practices, beliefs, professions and languages.

## Sangeet Natak Akademi's Project of Support to Chhau Dances

Under its existing scheme of Establishment of National Centres for Specialised training in Dance and Music, Sangeet Natak Akademi mooted project of support to Chhau Dances in 1991 and after detailed survey the project was launched in 1994. Under the project training, production and performance support has been provided to large number of artists and students of Mayurbhanj Chhau at Baripada and Rairangpur in Odisha, and Seraikella Chhau in Seraikella in Jharkhand and in New Delhi. Training in Chhau dances, music, masks making etc. have been going on at different centres and regular performances of Chhau groups have been sponsored in various cities of the country. The traditional annual festival of Chaitra Parva associated with the art has also been funded. The Chhau Project has resulted in consolidating the art and technique of this tradition and formation of well trained repertoires of dancers and musicians, thus, leading to its reinvigoration.

### PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

#### Sunday 26 March 2017, 6 PM

##### **Jatraghat / Ratri/ Nabik /Radha Krishna- Seraikella Chhau**

Guru Shashadhar Acharya & artists, Sangeet Natak Akademi's Seraikella Chhau Project, Delhi

##### **Nagarjuna/Ranga Panda- Mayurbhanj Chhau**

Guru Sadashiv Pradhan & artists, Angika, Bhubaneswar, Odisha

##### **Jatraghat / Har Parvati/Mahishasura Mardini- Seraikella Chhau**

Guru Tapan Kumar Pattanayak & artists, Government Chhau Dance Centre, Seraikella, Jharkhand

##### **Judan/Gosingha Vadh- Purulia Chhau**

Senabana Bir Netaji Chhou Nritya Samiti, Purulia, West Bengal

## Monday, 27 March 2017, 6 PM

### **Rang Baja/Nataraja/Raj Bahadur- Mayurbhanj Chhau**

Artists of Sangeet Natak Akademi's Mayurbhanj Chhau Project, Baripada, Odisha

### **Jatraghat / Ratri/ Duryodhana Urubhanga- Seraikella Chhau**

Guru Gopal Prasad Dubey & artists, Trinetra Chhau Dance Centre, Seraikella, Jharkhand

### **Dandi/Yoddha-Mayurbhanj Chhau**

Guru Janmejy Sai Babu & artists, Sangeet Natak Akademi's Mayurbhanj Chhau Project, Delhi

### **Judan/Sita Swayamvara- Purulia Chhau**

Guru Jagru Mahato & artists, Binapani Rupchand Chhou Dance Group, Purulia, West Bengal

### **Chakra Vyuh- Mayurbhanj Chhau**

Guru Achintya Kumar Behera & artists, Mayur art centre, Bhubaneswar, Odisha

## Tuesday, 28 March 2017, 6 PM

### **Jatraghat / Hansa/ Chandrabhaga /Bhoopati Monoranjana- Seraikella Chhau**

Artists of Sangeet Natak Akademi's Chhau Project, Seraikella, Jharkhand

### **Radha Krishna/Meghdoot-Seraikella Chhau**

Shri Malay Kumar Sahu & artists, Kedar art centre, Seraikella, Jharkhand

### **Dandi/Garud Vahana/Kshatriya Bandhu - Mayurbhanj Chhau**

Artists of Sangeet Natak Akademi's Mayurbhanj Chhau Project, Rairangpur, Odisha

### **Sabar/Durga- Seraikella Chhau**

Srikalapith, Seraikella, Jharkhand

### **Kirata-Arjuna Prasanga-Purulia Chhau**

Guru Gombhir Chandra Mahato & artists, Jamdehi, Manbhum, West Bengal



# SANGEET NATAK AKADEMI

National Academy of Music, Dance and Drama, New Delhi

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Sangeet Natak Akademi, India's national academy for music, dance and drama, is the first national academy of the arts set up in 1952 by the Republic of India. The first President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, inaugurated it on 28 January 1953 in a special function held in the Parliament House of India. In that ceremony, India's first Education Minister of the State, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad propitiated the role and responsibility of the Akademi:

*"India's precious heritage of music, drama and dance is one which we must cherish and develop. We must do so not only for our own sake but also as our contribution to the cultural heritage of mankind. Nowhere is it truer than in the field of art that to sustain means to create. Traditions cannot be preserved but can only be created afresh. It will be the aim of this Akademi to preserve our traditions by offering them an institutional form..."*

Since its inception the Akademi has been functioning as the apex body for the performing arts in the country, preserving and promoting the vast intangible heritage of India's diverse culture expressed in the many forms of music, dance and drama. In furtherance of its objectives and zeal to serve the vast allied arts traditions of India covering performing

forms replete with literary texts, visual arts and tangible components, the Akademi collaborates with the governments and art academies of different States and Territories of the Union of India, as also with major cultural institutions in the country. The Akademi also establishes and looks after institutions and projects of national importance in the field of performing arts. Besides organizing performances of music, dance and theatre and giving awards in recognition of individual artistic or scholarly achievement, Akademi subsidizes the work of institutions engaged in teaching, performing or promoting the diverse performing arts of India; gives grant-in-aid for research, documentation and publishing in the performing arts; organizes and subsidizes seminars and conferences of subject specialists; documents and records the performing arts for its audio-visual archives; maintains a reference library and a gallery of musical instruments; and publishes literature on relevant subjects on a small scale. The Akademi also renders advice and assistance to the Government of India in the task of formulating and implementing policies and programmes in the field. Additionally, the Akademi carries a part of responsibilities of the state for fostering cultural contacts between various regions in India and between India and the World.

Please bring this card with you.

Invitees should take their seats 15 minutes before the commencement of the programme.

For security reasons, tape recorder, camera or any other objectionable articles will not be allowed in the auditorium. Mobile phones must be switched off.

Children below seven years of age are not permitted.

Audio/video recording is prohibited.

Programme subject to change.



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