

# Ginette Dion-Ahmed

## Sattvika Danse Director



Ginette Dion-Ahmed is a professional Bharata Natyam dancer, teacher and choreographer. She began her training in 1990 with Mr. Jai Govinda of the Vancouver *Jai Govinda Dance Academy*. She then continued to train in the subtleties of this art with Mrs. Jayalakshmi Eshwar, an internationally renowned Bharata Natyam teacher and choreographer and director of the *Abhinayaa School of Dance* in New Delhi India. More recently, she also studied with Mrs. Smita Mahajan and M. Parimal Phadke in Pune, also in India. In recognition of her dedication to Bharata Natyam, the *Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute* awarded her a one-year scholarship in 2000 and a 4-month scholarship in 2003 to deepen her study of this art in

India. These many years of assiduous practice of Bharata Natyam were enriched by a BA in Modern Dance from the University of Quebec in Montreal in 2001 and a teacher's training in Iyengar yoga.

As is traditionally expected, Ginette presented her *Arrangetram*, a solo dance of a complete Bharata Natyam repertoire under the direction of Jai Govinda, in September 1996 and has since performed on several occasions in Canada and in India. She participated in the *Kala Nidhi International Dance Festival* in Toronto in August 1999 and in December 2001, was invited to dance at the Shilpgram Centre in Khajuraho, India. Ginette also gave two solo performances with live music at the Habitat Centre in New Delhi, one in December 2000 and another in September 2004.

Ginette Dion-Ahmed has been teaching Bharata Natyam since 1997 and has been invited on numerous occasions to give workshops in dance schools such as The Montreal Modern Dance workshops (*Les Ateliers de danse moderne de Montréal, LADMMI*), the Montreal Dance Conservatory (*Conservatoire de danse de Montréal*) and the Louise Lapierre Dance School (*l'École de danse Louise Lapierre*). She also taught a course in

the Dance department of the University of Quebec in Montréal (*Département de danse de l'Université du Québec à Montréal*) during the summer of 2007. At the same time, she teaches yoga at the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Montreal.

Ginette's extensive experience and personal vitality have led her to produce several Bharata Natyam shows including *Bhumi Pranam, a tribute to the earth*, in June 2008, *Krishna the flute player* in March 2008, *Ananda* in 2007, *Offering* in 2006, *Devi – the goddess* in 2005, *Pushpaputa – Offering* in 2005, *Rasa – emerging movements of classical Indian dance* between 2001 and 2004 and *Puja* in 2002. She created two Bharata Natyam choreographies accompanied by live musicians: first a solo, *Radha and Krishna*, presented in March 2008, as well as a piece for four dancers called *The Firebird, a Bharata Natyam Dance*, with an original musical composition by Antoine Ouellette presented at a show called *Bhumi Pranam, a tribute to the earth* in June 2008.

In order to deepen her art and experiment with new dance forms, Ginette Dion-Ahmed is now creating a personal gestural vocabulary having its source in Bharata Natyam. Utilizing the rhythms, emotions and sculptural poses of this traditional classical art, she has given new life to a personal and contemporary form of dance. From this inspiration, several choreographies were born, namely *For Once* in 2001 (*Pour une fois*), *Khajuraho*, (2001), *Goddess (Déesse)*, 2002), *Bodies in rhythm (Corps en cadence)*, 2002) and *Afloat (À flots)*, 2004). In order to continue exploring her artistic expression in Bharata Natyam and in contemporary dance, Ginette founded *SATTVIKA DANSE* in March 2005.



# At home in the world

A Canadian dancer teaches Bharatanatyam in Montreal,  
G George reports

**G**INETTE Dion-Ahmed, a Canadian Bharatanatyam dancer who performed at the Habitat Centre last week, is, as her name indicates, a veritable confluence of cultures - British, French, Hindu, Islamic - that would qualify her for world citizenship.

The pretty young dancer, who first studied Bharatanatyam with Guru Jai Govinda in Canada and graduated to solo recitals in India under the direction of Guru Jayalakshmi Eshwar, leading Bharatanatyam exponent, Kalakshetra alumni, founder-director of the Abhinayaa Bharatanatyam School and head of the Bharatanatyam department of the Triveni Kala Sangam, performed her arangetram in 1996. Ginette gave a solo performance in Delhi in 2000 and danced the following year in Khajuraho.

Ginette's dedication to Bharatanatyam was acknowledged by the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute in the form of a one-year scholarship in 2000 followed by a four-



Ginette Dion Ahmed

month internship in 2003. Ginette, who founded Danse Rasa in 2002 for the purpose of propagating Bharatanatyam in Canada, is at present teaching at the Centre de Yoga Iyengar de Montreal Canada.

Ginette's total involvement with Bharatanatyam was evident throughout the India Habitat Centre performance. She could not be faulted on dedication, technique or

**D**ance

on synchronisation with her accomplished accompanists, nattuvangam Jayalakshmi Eshwar, vocal S. Vasudevan, mridangam Jayabhaskar, violon Sri Durga Prasad, veena Shyamala Bhaskar. Where she was - marginally - found wanting was in that indescribable "fluid grace" which is an almost exclusive quality of South Asian women.

Beginning with Pushpanjali (Ragam

Nattai, Adi Talam, choreography by Jayalakshmi), a floral tribute to the gods, Ginette enacted the slokam "Ya Shoumba Nishoumba" in praise of the auspicious goddess, before moving on to a varnam; the Dance of Shiva, Ananda Natamidum Padam; Padam "netru varem" and a tillana. They were all choreographed by Jayalakshmi and with the exception of Padam "netru varem" in adi talam.

# All's well that ends well

Ginnette Dion Ahmed's performance got better and better,  
says **Ladha Guruden Singh**

**D**ANCERS usually accuse critics of not sitting till the end of the performance and writing on the basis all that they care to see or have patience to watch. However, sometimes critics should sit and sift through the entire performance. Chances of discovering a spark are higher then!

Ginnette Dion Ahmed's recital just proved that. Half-way through her Bharatanatyam dance recital, Ginnette went for a rather extended costume change and came back forcefully to perform "Ananda Natamidum Padam".

Her renewed vigour and sense of confidence as she covered the length and the breadth of the stage celebrating the cosmic energy of Shiva proved that she is an innate dancer who needs to control her hyper-energy and requires to be more comfortable with herself.

The Canadian dancer who is a visiting-student of Guru Jayalakshmi Eshwar has been training under her for over five years now. Ginnette's abhinaya has shown a marked improvement since one saw her the last time. For most foreigners, emoting on stage is

a tough mental game, more so because they have been brought up in an entirely different social environment.

Its not about leaving their identity and becoming Indian but about striking a balance between their socio-cultural environment and their absorption of Indian culture. Ginnette performed Netru Varen, a padam depicting the anxiety of the nayika as she is separated from her lover with gut involvement. Slokam "Ya Sha Shoumba Nishaouma" in Ragamalika which followed the pushpanjali was another highlight of the evening because of the maturity of Ginnette's abhinaya.

While the dancer seemed under stress while executing the teemanams of the Varnam addressed to goddess Maha devi, the orchestral support led by Guru Jayalakshmi Eshwar on nattuvangam proved to be a cushion for Ginnette. Bharatanatyam dancer S.Vasudevan who provided the vocal support was the delight of the evening. His voice has the depth and he is cautious of not flaunting his own talent. Shymala Bhaskar on Veena and Durga Prasad on Violin rendered a skillful support. In the sidelights, such was the melodious singing of S.Vasudevan that Dr. John R. Wood, the guest of honour and vice-President of the Shastri Indo-Canadian institute who co-sponsored Ginnette's recital along with the Habitat World, was caught stealing a short nap during the Varnam!

## MAISON DE LA CULTURE PLATEAU-MONT-ROYAL

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● 465, avenue du Mont-Royal Est ● tel. 872-2266 ● télécopieur 872-0532 ●

Le 26 février 2003

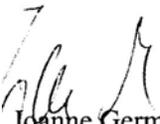
Ginette Dion  
Danse Rasa  
1060, rue Gilford #21  
Montréal, Québec  
H2J 1P6

Bonjour Ginette,

Je voulais simplement te remercier pour le spectacle *Rasa* que vous avez présenté le 6 décembre dernier à la maison de la culture Plateau Mont-Royal.

Les laissez-passer se sont envolés en quelques heures et le public nombreux qui assisté au spectacle lui a réservé un accueil des plus chaleureux. De plus, la représentation a attiré une clientèle variée, amateurs de danse ou de culture orientale, jeunes et moins jeunes confondus.

Je te souhaite beaucoup de succès dans tes projets futurs et te transmets mes salutations les meilleures,

  
Joanne Germain  
agente culturelle  
(514) 872-2267

Translation from French to English :

**MAISON DE LA CULTURE PLATEAU-MONT-ROYAL, 465 Mount Royal  
Avenue East tel: 872-2266 fax: 872 0532**

February 26 2003

Ginette Dion  
Danse Rasa  
1060 Gilford St. #21  
Montreal, Quebec  
H2J 1P6

Dear Ginette,

This is simply to thank you for the *Rasa* presentation that you gave last December 6 at the Maison de la culture Plateau-Mont-Royal.

The passes disappeared within a few hours and the audience who came to the presentation welcomed it warmly. Moreover, the show attracted a variety of clients including lovers of dance and oriental culture as well as people of all age groups.

I wish you a great deal of success in your future endeavors.

Sincerely,

Johanne Germain,  
Cultural agent  
(514) 872-2267



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June 26, 2002

Ms. Ginette Dion,  
21-1060 Gilford,  
Montreal, Quebec.  
H2J 1P6

Dear Ms. Dion,

It was a great pleasure to host your performance on June 22, 2002 at the Hindu Mandir, Dollard des Ormeaux, Que. We have been presenting Montreal-based and other local artistes in a special series of programs since the beginning of the year and your presentation of the Indian Classical Dance, Bharata Natyam, will be remembered as a highlight of our series for a long time to come.

The audience turn-out was very satisfactory and their reaction and feed-back was very impressive and encouraging. Many admired your Abhinaya which is so much a part of the dance and the choreography and the items you presented were greatly appreciated.

On behalf of the Bharatiya Sangeetha Sangham, an association which will soon be entering its 25<sup>th</sup> year of organizing Indian Classical Music & Dance in Montreal, I wish to congratulate you and sincerely thank you for having agreed to participate in our series and inspiring many young people in our community.

Yours very truly,

(VIJAY IYER, President BSS, Montreal)

# दैनिक भास्कर

भारत का सबसे तेज़ बढ़ता अखबार

भोपाल • सोमवार 31 दिसंबर, 2001

## कनाडा की नृत्यांगना के नृत्य ने दर्शकों का मनमोहा

■ निज संवाददाता

खजुराहो। कनाडा की नृत्यांगना जिनेथ डियो ने भरत नाट्यम शैली में शास्त्रीय नृत्य प्रस्तुत कर दर्शकों का मन मोह लिया। दक्षिण मध्य क्षेत्र सांस्कृतिक केंद्र नागपुर के खजुराहो स्थित शिल्पग्राम में ए भ्यूजिक इवनिंग समारोह में कई अन्य कलाकारों ने अपनी प्रतिभा दिखाई। समाराह के मुख्य अतिथि नगर पंचायत अध्यक्ष विक्रम सिंह उर्फ नातीराजा थे।

वर्ष 2001 अंतिम मास के अंतिम सप्ताह में जहां खजुराहो में रौनक देखने को मिल रही है वहीं होटलों में नए वर्ष की तैयारियां नए-नए तरीके से करने के प्रयास किए जा रहे हैं। इसी क्रम में सर्वप्रथम आइसेकट कंप्यूटर सेंटर के इस समारोह का मुख्य आकर्षण था कनाडा की भरत नाट्यम नृत्यांगना सुश्री 'जिनेथ डियो' का भरत नाट्यम। दर्शक

चकित थे कि एक विदेशी महिला ने भारत के दक्षिण प्रांत के शास्त्रीय नृत्य करने की कला को किस तरह वखूबी प्रस्तुत किया। सुश्री जिनेथ डियो ने अपनी प्रस्तुति शिव नृत्य, नेत्र वरन, तिल्लाना एवं मंगलम् से की। राग पथुवरली एवं ताल आदि में निबद्ध पदम नेत्रवरन में सुश्री जिनेथ डियो ने भरतनाट्यम शैली में अपने प्रियतम के विरह में अभिनय युक्त नृत्य प्रस्तुत करते हुए नृत्य शैली से चित्रण किया जिसमें वह अपनी सखी को अपनी विरह का वर्णन करते हुए कहती है कि हे सखी आखिर मेरे प्रियतम क्यों नहीं आए जबकि उन्होंने उससे आने का वायदा किया था। उनकी इस प्रस्तुति को दर्शकों ने खूब सराहा। इसके अलावा इस समारोह में राशिद खां जिन्हें इंडियन माइकल जैक्सन के नाम से लोग पुकारते हैं का पंजाबी एवं होरर डांस भी दर्शकों को पसंद आया।

Translation from Hindi to English  
By Usha Varma

Dainik Bhaskar Newspaper, December 31<sup>st</sup> 2001

### **Canadian dancer wins the hearts of her audience**

By a local correspondent

Khajuraho. A talented exponent of Bharata Natyam, Ginette Dion, a Canadian dancer won over the hearts of her audience. In the central Western province in the Nagpur region a musical evening was organized in the artists' village at Khajuraho where many artists displayed their talents. The chief guest on this occasion was the official from the city-council, Mr. Vikram Singh alias Nataraja.

At the end of December 2001, a lot of activity was going on in Khajuraho. Even the hotels were looking for new ways to usher in the New Year. The foremost attraction of the Iceskale Computer Centre was a presentation of Bharata Natyam by Canadian dancer Ginette Dion. The audience was totally enthralled at the mastery and execution of this Southern Indian classical form of dance by a foreign national. Ginette Dion presented the dance of Shiva, Padam Netru Varen, Tillana, and Mangalam.

Throughout the Bharata Natyam recital, Ms Dion made use of eye movements, facial expressions and body movements to depict the agony of separation from her beloved. She enacted the heart-wrenching question: "Alas! Why did he not come when he promised that he would?"