

THE BAHRAINI WHO EMBRACED 'KATHAK'

Classical dancing is like being a mother: if you have never done it, you can't imagine how hard it is.' This quote by Harriet Cavalli, gives a fine perspective over the many layers of depth that this form of dancing provides.

"Classical dancing is not a dance form for me. It is a gateway to happiness and understanding the world from a finer perspective, that to achieve your dreams, one needs to work hard and not give up, irrespective of how difficult it may seem," says Khalil Alashar, who is the only Bahraini Kathak professional in the whole world, and is continuing his journey of entertaining people, and making them fall in love with dance. Having started learning at the age of 17, he has worked extremely hard in excelling every move and step of this form of art. "When I began learning, I had no idea that many start their formal training by the age of 2 or 3. Only, when I was told by my dance master, Prachi Dixit, I realized that the seed of inception in every form of art, started at an early age. When I got to know this, I worked extremely hard in mastering the moves of Kathak, and proving people, that there is no age bar for a person to learn what they desire of mastering," adds Alashar.

Taking a different road

Not everyone will welcome the idea of absorbing the art and culture of a country; you have no relation with, and have no knowledge about. The dance exponent says, "Being a graduate in Political Science from the US, and coming from an academically inclined family, where my siblings are in a good post, naturally it was expected that I too would follow the league, and take up a well-paid job. When I expressed my desire of becoming a Kathak dancer, my parents did not approve of it, as they were not aware

about India, and its culture. But, I worked really hard in proving them my talent, and convincing them, that there is no life for me without dance. It was difficult, but I am happy, that I am getting to do something that I love." Having travelled extensively to Ahmedabad, Orissa, Delhi, Kolkata and other states, for his training and performance, he is in awe with the culture and tradition of India, and feels proud to have mastered the form, whose seeds of germination are sown in India. He says, "I will say, Kathak came into my life, as I had no idea about other classical forms. There was a nice theatre in the US which advertised about Indian classical dance performance. I had heard about Bollywood dancing, but never about this form. When I attended, I was completely in awe of the moves and twists, and fell in love with the culture of India, and that is when the journey of Kathak started. I would say, I did not find Kathak, Kathak found me."

Khalil's first performance was at Bahrain Keraleeya Samajam in the year 2012, and the feeling of being recognized as the only individual representing 'his country', makes him feel proud and being on top of the world. Having been conferred the tag of only Bahraini Kathak exponent in the whole world, he is speechless with the recognition he has achieved. Not every one's dreams come true, but sticking to your guns, and having belief in your abilities, makes even impossible possible. "The ability to stand up and ask for what you want goes a long way in building your self-esteem, and knowing that your life is incomplete without your dreams. For me, Classical form of dancing will be a lifeline for the rest of my life, and making a career out of this is nothing but a blessing," signs off Alashar on a high note.

Khalil Alashar



Striding to fight the beast

October, dedicated to Breast Cancer Awareness, has been in full swing in raising awareness through every possible initiative, and has done exceedingly well, in making people more conscious about their health and their lifestyle. Bahrain Cancer Society, organized a walkathon at Bahrain Bay, which got tremendous support from the masses, and witnessed the crowd gather, and walk with zeal and enthusiasm, giving a strong message, that they have joined hands in evading this deadly disease, and feeling the pain of the patients, who are afflicted by this. "We have gathered over here to sweat out and feel the pain of what the patients go through while undergoing chemotherapy. Covering 4.5 km, gives us a feeling of pride, that we are able to support this cause, and taking care of our health by walking, makes us glow, that we are working hard to evade this issue," says Nujabah, student at Al Hijaz school.

"It has been five years, since I have been associated with the cancer society. I am

a cancer survivor, and it feels great to overcome this dark phase. I have become more conscious about my health, where I am eating healthy, and exercising, and I urge everyone out there, to stop being lazy, and be more attentive to their lifestyle, because when health is lost, everything is lost," Shama K. said to Weekender.



A first of its kind collaboration

An arts platform focused on recruiting talent from the MENA region, 55 Old St. announced their collaboration '55 Old St x Too Far Co. Art Collab' during the launch of their first project.

With its eclectic culinary experience, 55 Old St. joined forces with Too Far Co., a local arts platform and consultancy, to support emerging local talent through open and inclusive arts programmes, bringing new experiences to the heart of the art and food scene in Block 338. The unique collaboration kicked off its first cultural exhibition hosted at 55 Old St titled 'Poster Project', which celebrated the works of Bahraini artists Jenine Sharabi and Aysha Al Moayyed, both known for their craftsmanship and ingenuity, utilize modern and contemporary aesthetic in their artwork.

The Poster Project provides a young and fresh new opportunity to experience art and design, with the intention to initiate an open call for emerging and future creative talents in Bahrain and become a platform for them to showcase their

work in the Kingdom. Planting a piece of East London scene into the cultural heart of Bahrain, 55 Old St. is a café with an emphasis on being a social space. A high end casual/all day dining concept, 55 Old St. serves a full and seasonal menu with speciality in coffee, sandwiches and pastries. Delivering on its promise of being a social space, 55 Old St. has a dedicated area on its first floor designed with the intention of hosting cultural and social activities.

