



# Meet Megha Rao

February 23, 2024



We're excited to introduce you to the always interesting and insightful Megha Rao. We hope you'll enjoy our conversation with Megha below.

**Megha, thank you so much for taking the time to share your lessons learned with us and we're sure your wisdom will help many. So, one question that comes up often and that we're hoping you can shed some light on is keeping creativity alive over long stretches – how do**



creative inspiration, I indulge in observing other dancers' creative works, understanding their processes, struggles, and triumphs. Every person I interact with, including children, becomes a source of learning for me. Recognizing the importance of consistent skill development, I dedicate a few minutes each day to creating and developing concepts, steps, choreography, or ideas, ensuring that my creativity remains active and vibrant.

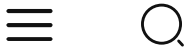
My creative process is a synthesis of life experiences, encompassing moments of pain, sorrow, joy, laughter, stories from my students and children, experiences of friends and family, and the beauty of nature. Viewing life as a divine creation serves as the inspiration for my creativity. Discipline is crucial in fostering creativity, with an emphasis on building positive qualities and addressing areas for improvement. It's an ongoing, never-ending process. When faced with creative blocks, I patiently wait, drawing on my wealth of experiences, exposure, and faith, knowing that the block is transient and will eventually pass.

Engaging with others who share similar interests or work in different fields is an integral part of my creative journey. Collaborating with diverse individuals brings in fresh perspectives and ideas. I actively participate in workshops, join creative communities, and benefit from the guidance of a supportive mentor. Embracing failure as an inherent part of the creative process is fundamental. I learn from mistakes, using them to fuel future creative endeavors.

Incorporating meditation into my routine aids in quieting my mind, reducing stress, and enhancing mental stamina and focus. This mental clarity creates a conducive environment for the emergence of creative thoughts. Ideas can manifest at any time, including during the night, prompting me to record them for future use. By embracing collaboration, continuous learning, disciplined practice, and resilience in the face of challenges, I am dedicated to maintaining a thriving and enduring creative spirit.

**Thanks for sharing that. So, before we get any further into our conversation, can you tell our readers a bit about yourself and what you're working on?**

I am an artist of Bharatanatyam, an esteemed Indian classical dance form, with nearly three decades of experience as a performer and a decade as an instructor. I have performed across the Central U.S., gracing prestigious venues such as Walton Arts Center, Fayetteville, America's Center, St. Louis, and Duke Energy Convention Center, Cincinnati. These platforms have served as a canvas for showcasing the exquisite beauty of Bharatanatyam, acting as a cultural bridge



extended my creative journey into choreography, where I conceive and orchestrate unique productions such as NAVARASA MARGAM, THE EXILED KING, ARDHANAREE, and BAALA-TALE OF KANHA. Recognized for my significant contributions to the performing arts in Northwest Arkansas, I received a grant from Artists 360, supporting my dance production – ‘Baala – tale of Kanha.’ I collaborated with Trike Theatre and Ra-Ve Cultural Foundation to create an original adaptation of The Jungle Book, blending theatrical storytelling with classical Indian dance.

As the founder of Dhirana Academy of Classical Dance, I am committed to training students and providing opportunities for them to perform, attend workshops, and partake in dance competitions. Since 2017, Dhirana Academy has organized an annual event, ‘Pradashana,’ offering young students the valuable experience of performing for a broader audience. Bharatanatyam, beyond its artistic expression, has proven instrumental in promoting mental health and well-being. The meditative and disciplined nature of this dance form consistently demonstrates positive effects on reducing stress, anxiety, and depression. Dedicated to extending these therapeutic benefits, I collaborate with organizations, schools, and community groups, offering workshops and master classes in dance, expressions, and emotions.

I collaborate with esteemed organizations in Northwest Arkansas, actively promoting diversity and fostering cross-cultural understanding. Recognized as a Graded Doordarshan Artist and possessing a Master’s Degree in Dance from Bangalore University, India, I currently serve as a Board of Directors member at Downtown Bentonville Inc. My achievements include various prestigious awards, such as the NatyaRani Shantala Award, Award of Excellence in Entertainment for Stage Performances, Rajyothsava Prashasthi, Aryabhata Award, and the Karnataka State IMA Cultural Award.

Currently immersed in the collaborative dance production “TuLA: The Balance of Life,” this grand partnership between Ra-Ve Cultural Foundation, Dhirana Academy of Classical Dance, and Ovation Plus (formerly Trike Theatre) blends modern and classical Indian music, dance, and costume into a theatrical experience. Symbolizing the interdependence and harmonious coexistence of male and female energies, the production celebrates balance, unity, and love through vibrant choreography and stunning visuals. This unique event provides opportunities for artists and students in Northwest Arkansas to showcase their talents on a diverse stage. “TuLA-Balance of Life” is set to premiere on March 16th at The Dan Auditorium from 4 pm to



The amalgamation of three essential qualities—adaptability and versatility, receptivity to criticism and resilience in the face of failure, and a commitment to continuous learning—actively contributes to both my personal and professional growth.

#### Adaptability and Versatility:

Possessing adaptability enables me to adjust and thrive in diverse situations, a crucial attribute in our dynamic and ever-changing environments. Being versatile empowers me to navigate challenges, respond effectively to unexpected circumstances, and embrace new perspectives. This quality fosters resilience, open-mindedness, and resourcefulness in the face of uncertainty. Proactively learning and acquiring new skills enhances my flexibility and effectiveness in various contexts, allowing me to approach problem-solving with a forward-thinking mindset. I firmly believe in letting go of the past, living in the present, and building a future proactively.

#### Receptivity to Criticism and Resilience in the Face of Failure:

An integral aspect of personal and professional development involves embracing criticism and viewing failures as opportunities for growth. My commitment to accepting feedback, regardless of its source, facilitates continuous learning and improvement. Resilience in the face of failure is a mindset that interprets setbacks as temporary obstacles rather than insurmountable barriers. This mindset enables me to bounce back, extract valuable lessons from experiences, and apply them to future endeavors. Ultimately, this contributes to long-term success and personal development.

#### Commitment to Continuous Learning:

In our rapidly evolving world, the pursuit of knowledge is pivotal for personal, professional, and spiritual growth. Personally, my commitment to learning new things, acquiring additional skills, and staying updated on industry trends ensures ongoing relevance and competitiveness. Continuous learning broadens my perspectives, enhances problem-solving abilities, and keeps me adaptable in an ever-changing landscape. Whether through formal education, self-directed learning, or seeking mentorship, my proactive approach to acquiring knowledge is a fundamental quality that propels ongoing development and success.

By embracing these qualities, I empower myself to navigate challenges, evolve with changing circumstances, and construct a solid foundation for sustained personal and professional



As a dancer, choreographer, and artistic director, I am always seeking collaborative opportunities with like-minded individuals who share a passion for creating, pushing artistic boundaries, and making a meaningful impact in the world of art. I am particularly interested in partnering with individuals who are open to learning something new, breaking traditional molds, and fostering cross-cultural connections.

In my view, art is a universal language that transcends cultural, genre, and geographic boundaries. To create powerful and resonant art, I believe in the importance of collaboration among diverse artists. Whether it's in the realm of Bharatanatyam or any other art form, the fusion of music, rhythm, lyrics, and various elements requires a collective effort.

I am interested in collaborating with individuals who are enthusiastic about cross-pollinating audiences and art forms. Breaking down barriers and collaborating across cultures, genres, and other dividing factors is essential for creating art that speaks to a diverse and inclusive audience. Regardless of cultural background or geographic location, the shared goal is to come together and contribute to the creation of something meaningful and impactful.

If you are someone who shares this vision, is passionate about the transformative power of art, and is willing to explore new possibilities, I would be thrilled to connect and collaborate with you. Together, we can create art that transcends boundaries and resonates with a broad and diverse audience.

Reach out to me via my website at [www.meghaprao.com](http://www.meghaprao.com) or through email at [megha.p.rao.nwa@gmail.com](mailto:megha.p.rao.nwa@gmail.com).

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**Youtube:** <https://www.youtube.com/@mskaks1>



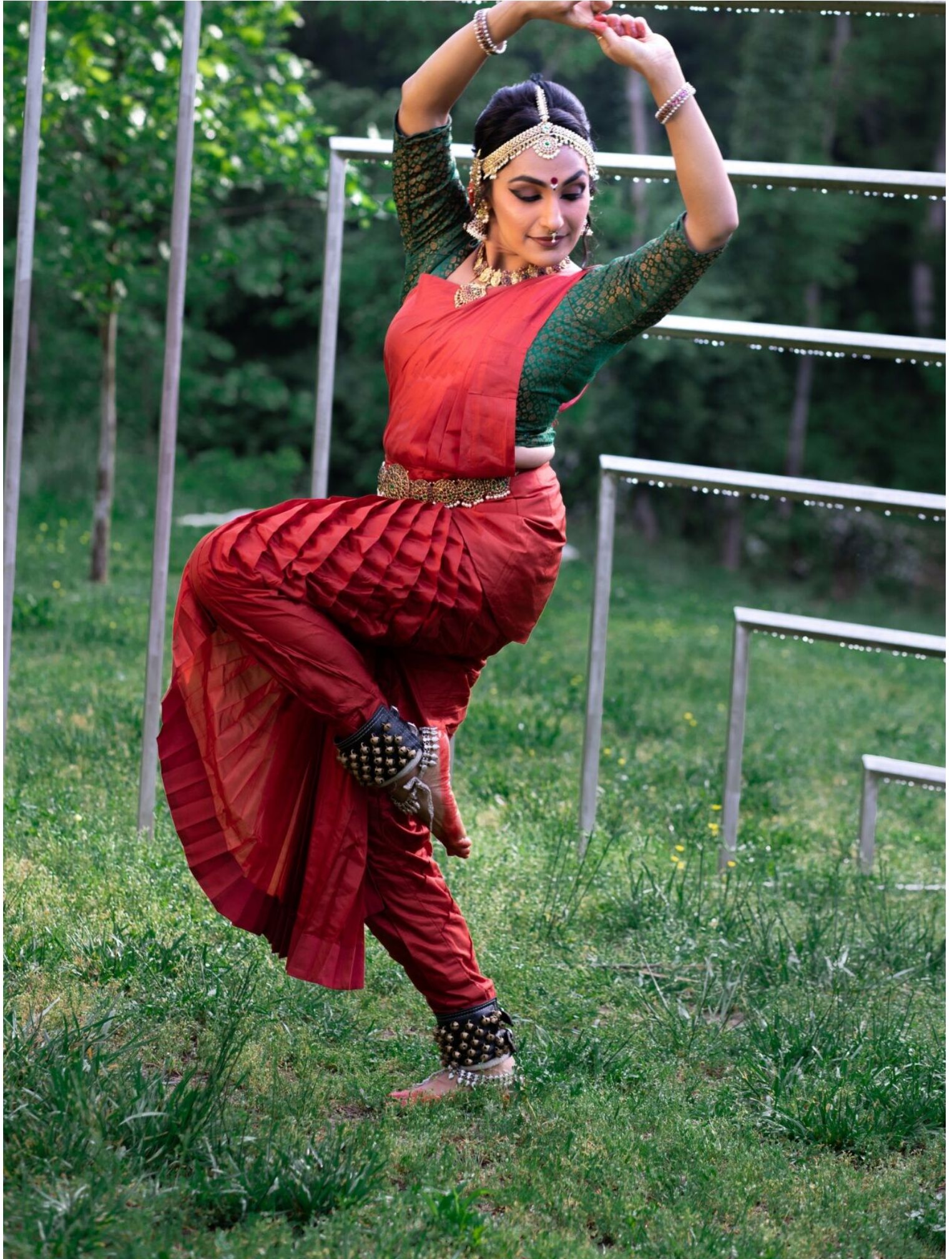
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