



## Vid. Megha P Rao

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## Education

**Masters of Arts-** University of Bangalore, India.

**Post-Graduate Diploma** in Media Presentation – Loyola College, Chennai, India.

**Bachelors in Arts (Journalism)-** St Philomena's College, Mysore, India.

**Bharatanatyam Junior Exam** 1998 – Karnataka State Secondary Examination Board, India.

**Bharatanatyam Senior Exam** 2000 – Karnataka State Secondary Examination Board, India.

**Bharatanatyam Vidwat Exam** 1st Class 2003 – Karnataka State Secondary Examination Board, India.

**Rangapravesam/Arangetram** 2002 – A debut solo recital of 2-3 hours, which requires years of training, dedication and practice.

As an accomplished and dedicated artist of Bharatanatyam, a celebrated Indian classical dance form, Megha has over two decades of experience both as a performer and as a teacher. She is a Graded Doordarshan Artist and currently serving as the Board of Directors of Downtown Bentonville Inc. and is Selected for inclusion on the Arkansas Arts On Tour (AOT) and Arts In Education (AIE) Rosters. Over the past decade, Megha has captivated the hearts of audiences across the Central U.S at multiple venues.

She has extended her creative journey in choreography combining many Indian dance forms. Uniquely conceptualized and choreographed productions like NAVARASA MARGAM, THE EXILED KING, ARDHANAREE and BAALA-TALE OF KANHA, TULA-BALANCE OF LIFE. In recognition of her contribution to the performing arts in Northwest Arkansas, she was recently awarded a grant by Artists 360, a program of Mid-America Arts Alliance, to support her Dance production – 'Baala – tale of Kanha'

She has performed 1000+ dance performances across India and the US, some of them nationally significant events such as 21st TANA Conference - St Louis, NAVIKA- Cincinnati, OH. 12<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> American Natya Festival, St Louis. Sammilana 2023, Houston. Margazhi Nrityothsava 2023 in Chennai, India, NAVIKA – Austin, Tx.

As Artistic Director she currently runs the 'Dhirana Academy of Classical Dance' based in Bentonville Arkansas, training over a hundred students in the US every year in Bharatanatyam. Over the past five years, she has organized and produced 'Pradarshana' an annual Fall student showcase, to encourage young talents. She also works with school districts and other organizations to bring Bharatanatyam to the community. Her goal is to Bridge the gap between society and the classical art form by inspiring, educating and guiding budding talent.

She often collaborates with like-minded artists across different genres of music and performing arts, expanding the vocabulary while staying true to the art form. She has been appointed as an Ambassador of Good Will by Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson, representing the spirit of an Arkansas traveler. She has been approved as a subject of biographical record in the esteemed Marquis Who's Who in America.

## Awards

**Natya Rani Shantala Award** by kadamba Sainya Kannada Sanghatane.

**Award of Excellence in Entertainment for Stage Performances** 2015 – Tamil Community, Northwest Arkansas, USA

**Rajyothsava Prashasthi** awarded by Jilla Kannada Sahitya Parishat an organization promoting art and culture in Karnataka

**Aryabhata Award** 2006 by Aryabhata Cultural Organizations Bengaluru

**Karnataka State IMA Cultural Award** 2003 as part of 69th state medical conference.

**Ugadi Puraskar** 2004 by Chaitanya Balaga, Mandya which promotes social and cultural development in Mandya Karnataka India.

## Honors

Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson has authorized and commissioned Vidushi Megha Rao, an Arkansas traveler, to serve as an Ambassador of Good Will.

Karavali Samskruthika Sangha Mandya honored Ms Rao as part of Vasantotsav 2004

Shiv Sena Karnataka Mandya District honored Ms Rao with Puruskrita Pratibhe -2001

Sri Ranjini Kalavedhike Mandya – Ugadi Puraskar 2003

Chaitanya Balaga 2006

## Core Accomplishments

- Selected for inclusion on the Arkansas Arts On Tour (AOT) and Arts In Education (AIE) Rosters.
- Has been appointed as an Ambassador of Good Will by Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson, representing the spirit of an Arkansas traveler.
- Receptient of grant from Artists 360, a program of Mid-America Arts Alliance, with generous support from the Walton Family Foundation.
- Graded **Doordarshan Artist** – Doordarshan is an Indian national television channel.
- Has extended her creative journey in choreography combining many Indian dance forms. Uniquely conceptualized and choreographed productions like NAVARASA MARGAM, THE EXILED KING, ARDHANAREE, BAALA-TALE OF KANHA and TULA\_BALANCE OF LIFE.
- Collaborated with Trike Theatre and Ra-Ve Cultural Foundation to create an original adaptation of the well-known story, **The Jungle Book** mixed with theatrical storytelling and classical Indian dance.
- Established Dhirana Academy for Indian Classical Dance which trains 100+ students and creates opportunities for them to perform and also exposes them to various learning opportunities such as dance workshops, dance competitions, events. Also graduates senior disciples through Arangetram. Since 2017 Dhirana Academy organizes an annual event 'Pradashana' for young students to have the experience performing for a wider audience
- Since 1996 performed 1000+ dance performances across India and the US, some of them nationally significant events such as Nrityotsav-Mumbai, West Bengal Tourism Festival Calcutta, Pallavotsav Mysore, Navarasapur Utsav Bijapur, Hampi Utsav, India Fest – Little Rock, 21st TANA Conference -St Louis, American Natya Festival- St Louis, Sammilana2023 – Houston,Tx, NAVIKA- Austin Tx.
- She was an early achiever in the Bharatanatyam and won many national and state competitions conducted by government and private organizations. Considering her accomplishments in the field she has been regularly invited to perform by various organizations in India and USA.

## Artistic Exhibitions/Performance

- First Friday event at Downtown Bentonville Ar June 2024
- TuLA-Balance of Life @Thedan Performing Arts Center, Bentonville Ar 2024
- John Brown University– International Food Festival – Siloam Springs Nov 2023
- NAVIKA – Austin Tx – Nov 2023
- Bentonville Film Festival – The Momentary- June 2023

Prathiba Sanje 2005 – Akhila  
Karnataka Karavali Samskrithika  
Vokutta

Kannada Bharati-2006

Mandya zilla Brahmana Sabha 2002

Gurudev Academy of Fine Arts

## JUDGING

**SBAT Nrithyorvashi Award**, National  
Level Solo Bharathanatyam  
Competition 2023.

**Performing Arts Discovery (PAD)  
program 2022** - Served on the  
selection panel for the second round  
of the PAD program, a national level  
selection process for U.S.-based  
artists with a demonstrated readiness  
to tour internationally.

**Saptami Nationals/Global 2020 –**  
Bharatnatyam competitions  
conducted by Saptami Foundation,  
Dallas.

**Dhim TANA** - A National level dance  
and music competition conducted by  
Telugu Association of North America  
in St Louis in 2017

**National level bharatanatyam** Junior  
and Senior level bharatnatyam dance  
competitions conducted by GURUDEV  
ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS.

## Community Outreach

**'Megha Prerana'** – Lecture  
Demonstration & Workshop –  
January 2023

- Bentonville Together – Multicultural Festival – April 2023
- 14<sup>th</sup> American Natya Festival – St Louis, Mo - 2023
- Sammilana 2023 by Shivalli Kutumba in Houston Tx.
- Artist 360 Full Circle Showcase – Crystal Bridges Museum – April 2023
- Matumaini – Fayetteville Mar 2023
- Margazhi Nrityothsava 2023 – Andra Mahila Sabha, Chennai 2023
- Natyam by Ra-Ve Cultural Foundation @ KIFA Studio-Dec 2022
- Kannada Rajyotsava @ Thedan Great Hall - 2022
- Onam Celebration by NANMA @ BWHS PAC – 2022
- Botanical Garden at Ozarks - 2022
- LIVE in America at The Momentary – June 2022
- Baala-Tale of Kanha - @Walton Arts Center, Fayetteville – 2022
- Collision-When visions combine, The momentary, Bentonville-2021.
- 12th American Natya Festival, St. Louis-2021
- Art Party-CACHE, Rogers-2021
- ART Ventures, Fayetteville-2021(RVCF-One of the cohort members of ART Connect
- The Exiled King-Walton Arts Center, Fayetteville-2021
- In The Atrium-Walton Arts Center, Fayetteville-2021
- Value The World Series-Sapthami Foundation-2020
- Ardhanaree -A duet performance for RVCF 2020
- International Art & Culinary Week Downtown Bentonville Inc.2020
- Independence Day celebration by ICANWA 2020
- Botanical Garden at Ozarks 2020
- Friday Nights at the Lawn by Crystal Bridges Museum 2020
- Sankirtana 2020
- International Festival at Downtown Bentonville 2019
- NAVIKA 2019 at Cincinnati OH
- International Festival 2019 at Ozarks
- Springdale Cultural Festival by House of Songs-2019
- Charity and Fundraising event by AAPI – 2019
- SANKIRTANA HANWA USA 2019
- Walmart Asian Pacific Associate Resource Network – APAN Heritage Event 2019
- AAPI 2019
- Navarasa Margam 2018
- India Fest, Little Rock, Arkansas 2018
- Sankirtana HANWA, USA 2018
- University of Arkansas Diwali Celebrations 2017
- Sri Lanka Flood Relief Fund Raiser Event Bentonville Arkansas USA 2017
- Thaipooosa Festival HANWA USA 2017
- Multicultural Festival at Root Elementary School Fayetteville Arkansas USA 2017
- Ugadi Sambaralu NWA USA 2017

**House Concert**-Lecture  
Demonstration-May 2021

**Viriya Drop-in Classes**-RVCF-CACHE  
Project-2021

**Alarippu Workshop**-March 2021

**Expression In Dance Workshop**-RVCF-  
July 2020

**Master Class workshop** –  
Conservatory of Ballet, Bentonville,  
Arkansas.

**House Concert**-Lecture  
Demonstration-June 2023

Arkansas Arts Academy (AAA)  
**Summer Dance Intensive**-July 2022

Arkansas Arts Academy (AAA)  
**Summer Dance Intensive**-June 2021

- Independence Day Celebration Bentonville Arkansas USA 2017
- HANWA Music and Dance Festival-Sakala Kala Samarpana 2017
- Charity event by NWA AAPI (American Association of Physicians of Indian origin) Bentonville Ar 2017
- India Fest, Little Rock, USA 2017
- TANA Festival St Louis Missouri USA 2017
- DBI's First Friday International Festival Bentonville Arkansas USA 2017
- Fundraiser for Pediatric Cancer Treatment Bentonville Arkansas USA 2016
- India Fest Little Rock Arkansas USA 2016
- NWA Kannada Rajyotsava Celebrations 2016
- Sargam NWA USA 2016
- Diwali Celebrations by GIACA Rogers Arkansas USA 2016
- Northwest Arkansas International Festival hosted by NWACC USA 2015
- India Fest, Little Rock, USA 2015
- Pongal Celebration, NWA, USA 2015
- Language of Art Multilingual Open House, Crystal Bridges-Museum of American Art, NWA, USA 2015
- School Fundraiser, Fayetteville, USA 2015
- Pongal Celebration, NWA, USA. 2014
- Sargam, Northwest Arkansas, USA. 2014
- Pongal Celebration, Northwest Arkansas, USA. 2014
- Navratri celebration at Temple, Northwest Arkansas, USA.
- Sargam, Northwest Arkansas, USA. 2011,2012
- American Art, NWA, USA 2015
- School Fundraiser, Fayetteville, USA 2015
- Pongal Celebration, NWA, USA. 2014
- Sargam, Northwest Arkansas, USA. 2014
- Pongal Celebration, Northwest Arkansas, USA. 2014
- Navratri celebration at Temple, Northwest Arkansas, USA.
- Sargam, Northwest Arkansas, USA. 2011,2012
- Performance at Mantralaya on Vardanti and Pattabhisheka 2010
- Hampi Utsav – Group Performance with Vidya Venkatraman and 11 troupe at Hampi 2010
- West Bengal Tourism Festival- Kolkata 2010
- Dasara- Main Palace- with Dr Vasundhara Doreswamy in "Durga" 2010
- Navarapur Utsav – A National festival – Bijapur 2010
- Pallavothsava – Mysore 2010
- Indian Institution of World Culture- Bengaluru 2010
- ISKCON Temple- with Dr Vasundhara Doreswamy and troop 2010
- 2006: Performed at "Nalanda Nrityotsav"- A national level dance festival held at Mumbai.

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## Achievements

- 2020: Winner Of Momentary Virtual Tower Talent Show,NWA, USA.
  - 2005: First prize at 38th All India Competition in Music and Dance 2005 at Hyderabad
  - 2005: Second place in “Yuvaprathibe” – A state level Dance and Music competition
  - 2005: Second place in “Yuvajanotsava” – A zonal level Dance competition
  - 2005: Represented Mysore University at the south zone cultural competition [Bharatanatyam] “Yuva Kalanjali” at Bengaluru
  - 2004: Second Prize at 37th All India competition in Music and Dance at Hyderabad
  - 2004: Second Prize in Karnataka Govt. “Kishora Prathibe” – A state level Bharatanatyam competition
  - 2003: Gold Medal and Rolling Shield in Gopinath Das Nyasa Memorial state level Dance competition
  - 2003: First place in state level Dance competition held by Nritya Kala parishath in Mysore
  - 2003: Second place in district level Music and Dance competition held by Rotary in Mandya
  - 2003: Third place in district level Bharatanatyam competition held by Rotary in Mandya
  - 2002: Second place in Karnataka state “Yuvajanolsava”– Folk dance competition
  - 2001: First place in Karnataka Govt. zonal level “Kishora Prathibe” Bharatanatyam competition
  - 2001: Silver medal in Gopinath Das Nyasa Memorial state level Music and Dance competition
  - 2000: Gold medal in Gopinath Das Nyasa Memorial state level Music and Dance competition
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