

KALARIPPAYATTU originates from the southern Indian state of Kerala. Historical sources confirm the existence of kalaripayattu from at least the 12th Century AD. The name literally means a space/school (*kalari*) of exercises/fighting (*payattu*).

There are three styles of kalaripayattu commonly distinguished: the Northern (*vadakkan*), the Southern (*tekkan*) and the central one. In all of them practice includes: learning sequences of movements and locks overpowering an opponent, empty-hand fighting and training with wooden and metal weaponry (sticks, knives, swords, spears), as well as weight training, stretching and breathing exercises. The training is completed by a unique healing system closely related to ayurveda. It includes, among other things, massages that heal and make the body flexible, and teachings about *marmas* – vital points of the human body. Elements of kalaripayattu have been also used for centuries in Kerala in training of actors and dancers of such art forms as for example kathakali.

Regular practice of kalaripayattu enables one to achieve flexibility, agility and co-ordination of the body, to develop strength and stamina, concentration and sense of direction, and – most importantly – it makes people aware of their possibilities, allowing them to control their energy and shape their spiritual attitude.

BHARATANATYAM is a name of an Indian classical dancing style. It is known also as a temple dance because it originates from temples of South India, and till the 20th century, it was a part of temple religious ceremonies. A young girl designated to become a temple dancer was sent to a temple, and it was believed that she was marrying the god. She was becoming devadasi – a god's servant. Since then her presence during various rituals, temple ceremonies and prayers was supposed to protect from evil forces, guarantee fortune and god's protection. Devadasi dancers were also called nityasumangali – women with always good fortune.

Bharatanatyam considered a temple dance – despite the fact that it is not performed in temples any more – is connected with Hindu religion and mythology. When dancing, stories of gods, heroes and kings from the Indian mythology are told. This aspect of the narrative dance is called nritya. In order to present a meaning of a dance, a dancer uses codified hand gestures called hasta, and special face expressions to emphasise emotions of presented heroes. All this is accompanied by changing rhythm, which is followed by steps of a dancer. Abstractive aspect of the dance (despite the story told by gestures) is called nritya. It has dynamic and very precise way of expression – various movements, jumps, and turns are accompanied by forceful steps of feet against the floor. Stops and gestures which follow the dance, give it a changing speed and dynamic style.

Bharatanatyam is a dancing style of balanced proportions of beauty, charm and strength, dynamic movement and grace still-gestures, abstractive and narrative dance.

Sankar Lal Sivasankaran Nair comes from Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala, India). He has been studying the Southern style of kalaripayattu in Thiruvananthapuram since 1994 mainly with Tirupuram C. Madhavan (Anjaneya Kalari Sangham), Jayachandran Nair (Kerala School of Martial Arts), as well as Thankapan Assan and Ajith Kumar (Maruthi Marma Chikilsa Kalari Sangham and Ayurveda). He is qualified with an ayurvedic masseur's diploma. In the years 2005-2008, he worked with the Indian theatre group Milon Mela, co-leading numerous workshops and performing in festivals in India and Europe. Since 2008 he has lived in Wroclaw, Poland. He teaches the Southern style of kalaripayattu and gives ayurvedic massages. He is a co-founder of Studio Kalari.

Justyna Rodzińska-Nair comes from Wroclaw, Poland. She graduated from the Interfaculty Individual Studies in the Humanities at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow, Poland. In the years 2004–2005, she was involved in the activities of the Grotowski Centre as a participant of theatre workshops, volunteer and translator. Since 2006, she has been responsible for organising workshops and co-ordinating projects at the present Grotowski Institute. She has practised the Southern style of kalaripayattu since 2005. She has learned in Thiruvananthapuram under the direction of Jayachandran Nair (Kerala School of Martial Arts), as well as Thankapan Assan and Ajith Kumar (Maruthi Marma Chikilsa Kalari Sangham and Ayurveda). She co-leads trainings and workshops. She is a co-founder of Studio Kalari.

Agnieszka Kapelko graduated from the Culture Studies of Middle and Far East at the Jagiellonian University, Cracow, Poland. She started training in the bharatanatyam dance in 2004 in the city of Gokarna (Karnataka state, India) with Ms. Rajeshwari S. Hande. She studied also at the Sruthilaya Nattiya Vidhyalaya Shool in the state of Tamil Nadu. In 2009, she passed the governmental bharatanatyam dance exam organized by the Institute of Art Gandharva Mahavidyalay in Mumbai, India, and she obtained the 'Praveshika Purna' Certificate. She continues to improve her dancing skills during regular visits in India. She teaches bharatanatyam, performs and collaborates with the Natyalaya ensemble.



Phot. Silvia Bernardi (Performazioni, International Workshop Festival, Bologna), Ewa Grela