

MAMATA  
NIYOGI-NAKRA

1937 - 2024  
PATNA - MONTRÉAL

LE BAL

Cette nuit dans mon sommeil  
Je t'ai enlevée de ta tour  
J'avais dérobé l'soleil  
Pour que jamais n'vienne le jour  
Nous courions dans les prairies  
Tes rubans volaient au vent  
Nous avons bu dans nos mains  
À la source du matin

À la porte d'un château  
Nous sommes entrés sans frapper  
Des lutins tambours au dos  
Nous attendaient pour danser  
Sous une lune d'opale  
Nous avons ouvert le bal  
Moi qui ai jamais su danser  
J'ai dansé à perdre pied

Puis rendus à l'horizon  
De beaux anges à cheveux longs  
Ont avancé un nuage  
Et nous ont poussé au large  
On voyait d'en haut la terre  
Toute noire, pleine de misère  
Toi tu as dit: « C'est nos frères  
Redonnons-leur la lumière ! »

Donc nous sommes redescendus  
Puisque le soleil je l'avais  
À la foule je t'ai rendue  
Et le matin s'est refait  
J'ai la promesse des anges  
Qu'après le jug'ment dernier  
On r'prendra ce bal étrange  
Et pour toute l'éternité

Félix Leclerc - 1953

Dearest Mamiji

I am shattered and still not believe that I would not be hearing you anymore. We shared a beautiful bond in all these years specially after Mamaji with your visit to India and staying with us. Our long talks at odd India timings and your beautiful emails will be cherished and remembered lifetime. You are now with Mamaji, and he would be so happy to see you in the Almighty's feet. You were and are my second mom which no one in the family can take this place. You have stayed faithful to your commitments and is admirable by all and had a vision which was far ahead that one can imagine. Time can never blur the memories I have of you. You have touched and impacted our lives from multiple perspectives, and it's difficult not to remember that you are no longer with us. I still affectionately admire your positive way of dealing with life. May you find happiness in the hereafter and keep blessing us.

Love, Respects and as you always said Love and light.

Monty (Vishal Pasricha)

Dear Kalabharati folks,

I just received your email with news that Mamata had died. Thank you for the notification. But it is dated July 7, and this is several days later. Why? I've seen nothing in the newspapers.

I am greatly saddened and upset by her loss. Was it anticipated? We had just been in contact in May.

My daughter, Maya, and I will grieve the loss of Mamata who we knew privately as a deeply caring and generous friend. Professionally I knew her as part of the dynamic duo whose dedication to their community, culture and, most particularly, to the art of dance both theatrical and educational, was a leading light in Montreal and abroad.

Mamata was an ambassador of Canadian cross-culture. She introduced thousands of Montrealers to bharatanatyam, trained Canadian dancers who performed her unique, hybrid choreographies dependent on Canadian as well as ancient Indian values, and then took them to India to be lauded for her vision and accomplishments.

Her child, Kalabharati, would grow, always challenging new realms: Mamata, its co-founder and spokesperson, with her staunch and equally committed co-founder, Bans, at her side. Until he wasn't. And that was very,very hard. But she persisted.

Mamata was a beacon of determination and creativity. I will miss her fire, her insatiable curiosity, her strong will, our long conversations. In her steely and yet velvety way, Mamata changed everyone she met. In view of her contributions to society, I hope her death will be acknowledged in the Montreal media.

May she rest in the peace she deserves for a job well done.

Linde Howe-Beck

### A tribute to Mamata didi

To think that Smt. Mamata Niyogi Nakra is no more is to remember that all things in this universe, no matter how splendid or valuable, must come to an end; that all beings visit the earth for a limited timespan. But while we mourn her passing, we can also see that the real value of a life well lived extends beyond the mortal, its real gifts are imperishable.

Her unbounded affection for her large family of friends and relatives and students; the childlike enthusiasm with which she embraced the big and small beauties of life; the reverence with which she remembered her roots; contrasting with the endless creativity that kept her charged and looking forward to the future even till her last day; all these qualities were undergirded by her unwavering faith in the art of Bharatanatyam and in the teachings of her gurus.

I believe it is the fragrance of these qualities that will remain in the universe, a gift from a divine soul that completed its current sojourn in our complex world, a world she cared deeply about. Whether as an academic, an artist or a common citizen, she ceaselessly connected with her environment, her love of community never allowing her to stay shut off in an ivory tower. I had met her formally over the years on her occasional visits to India. Even before that, I remember seeing, as a young dancer, a brochure of Kala Bharati and feeling that the thoughts she conveyed through her words and dance images were after my own heart.

But it was only when I started frequenting Atlanta in the US and then visited her in Montreal that we got to know each other and discovered so many shared ideas. In her endearing way she insisted I call her 'Didi' from then on, and not Mamata ji, as I had always addressed her as a senior artist.

We had long conversations in person and on the phone. And though our backgrounds were quite different, as were, I dare say, our teaching methodologies and approach to many topics, we found ourselves in an agreeable and inspiring bonhomie. Politics, the state of the arts, the Indian diaspora in North America; practising the Indian arts, more specifically Bharatanatyam, in the West; considering the history of Indian classical dance that was largely distorted over the 20th century;

the role of dance in children's education — these were only some of the topics we ran through. She listened with interest to my views and asked about my theatre and dance projects, and she shared tales of her remarkable family elders who had contributed to education and culture in newly independent India. Being my senior by some two decades, and heads and shoulders above me academically, she nevertheless gave me more respect than I could have expected and included me unreservedly into her beloved Kaybee parivar.

I shall always be grateful that I got the opportunity to meet this unique artist and human being. I can only guess that we might have had more in-depth practical collaborations if fate had allowed. By the time I was able to interact regularly with her, when we could have planned something more concrete, age was beginning to slow her down a bit. Her feisty, always young personality, though, ensured that age had a tough fight on its hands.

The adjective 'passionate' paled before Mamata di. She could be impetuous to a scary degree, yet loving and gracious too. Proud of her many accomplishments, yet eternally grateful for the favours the universe bestowed on her. Forgetful of some instances while others remained engraved in her memory. She was contradictory and warm and human, basking unabashedly in all the nava rasas. The circumstances of her passing, quickly and without suffering, preserving the dignity and decorum that meant a lot to her, assure me that, true to the metaphors of Indian art, the many rasas of her life subsided calmly, in the end, into shanta.

Dance in eternal bliss, Mamata di.  
Thank you for coming among us.

With love and reverence,  
Anjana Rajan  
Sahibabad, Uttar Pradesh, India  
16 July 2024

DIDI, YOU HAVE LEFT US FOR YOUR HEAVENLY ABODE,  
BUT YOU WILL ALWAYS REMAIN IN OUR HEARTS.

My Friends and Well-wishers,

With a deep sense of shock and bereavement I inform you that my respected Didi, MAMATA NIYOGI NAKRA, has passed away peacefully on 6 July 2024 at her residence in Montreal, Canada. Fortunately, with God's blessings, I happen to be right now in Montreal with my elder son, Prasenjit and family, and so we could have her 'antim darshan' and could perform her last rites. The 'anteshtikriya' was done on 9 July and the 'Shraddha' and 'Shraddhanjali' ceremonies will be held on 16 July. I will conduct the divine service. Born to a devoted Brahmo couple, the late Jyotish Chandra Niyogi and the late Shobhona Niyogi, in the house of Aghore Kamini Devi, the mother of Dr B.C. Roy, at Patna, she faced struggle and hardship as ours was an ordinary middle class family. But she proved her academic brilliance right from her school days. In her school final, I.A., and B.A. (English Hons.) exams, she passed with very high marks, standing first in Hons. from Patna College.

In her M.A. exam. in English at the PG Dept. of English, Patna University, in 1959, she stood first in the First Class, a rare achievement in those days. The period from 1958 to 1961 was a golden one in the P.U. history, as it witnessed the advent of some exceptionally outstanding postgraduate achievers in various subjects, who later left their mark in national and international arena. For example, to name a few --- Surendra Gopal and Ram Lakhan Shukla in History, Yashwant Sinha, Ramaswamy Mani and Kulbhusan Rai in Pol. Sc., Mukul Banerjee and Abhimanyu Singh in Economics, and Minakshi Banerjee in English. I state with all humility and restraint that Didi also found her place in that galaxy of talents. In her college days she excelled in dance and debates, and won many awards, and was a leading member of PU teams at the Delhi annual youth festival several years. She served as Lecturer at Magadh Mahila College, P.U., and as Asstt. Prof at I.I.T., Delhi, before shifting to Montreal, Canada, where she obtained her Ph.D. at the University de Montreal.

Upbringing in a Brahmo family inculcated in her a liberal, progressive and rationalist attitude. She often fought for right causes. In her marriage also she proved it.

She was a Bengali Brahmo, but my Jamaibabu, Harbans Nakra, belonged to a Punjabi Hindu family. There was some unwillingness on our side, as it was a bit unconventional, if not unusual. But Didi viewed that if love is genuine, it can transcend all barriers of caste, community, race and language. He was a product of I.I.T. Kharagpur and obtained his Ph.D. at McGill Univ., Montreal. And they made a good couple, and enjoyed a marital life spanning 53 years till his demise in 2017. She regularly participated in group songs and hymns during the Maghotsava and Bhadrotsava at Rammohun Roy Seminary, so long as she was at Patna. Even after her marriage she and Jamaibabu regularly performed upasanas at their Montreal house. Two masterpieces from the Brahmasangeet they liked very much, 'Amar sakal tumi, sakal tumi, sakalito tumi' (Hey Parameshwar, you are my everything, and I can't do anything without you) and 'Ami akriti adham boleyoto more kam kore kichu daoni' (Hey God, you are so kind, as you have given me so much even knowing that I am unworthy and unholy.).

She learnt Bharat Natyam dance style from Patna's famous school of dancing, the Arts and Artists, under Guru Bala Krishnan, and later advanced training from Guru US Krishna Rao, a well-established Guru in Bangalore and set up a Bharat Natyam dance centre, named Kala Bharati in Montreal, which trained many young men and women in that dance form. She received the Award of Honour from the Govt of Quebec for her contribution to the Canadian society in the realm of art and culture. As the Artistic Director of La Troupe Kala Bharati she created numerous innovative group choreographies in Bharata Natya, including Seasonscape, Kriya Marga, Dasavatar, Arjuna, Aalapana and others. She was invited by Doordarshan to present her choreographies on Indian national TV, as part of the 50th anniversary celebrations of the Indian Independence.

At this moment of pain and predicament, I seek solace from our ancient wisdom embodied in the sacred texts. MRITYOUR MA AMRITAGAMAYA, (Upanishad) meaning Hey the Almighty, lead us from death to eternity ; NA JAYATE MRIYATE WA KADACHINNAYA, ---- AJO NITYA, NITYA SASWATOYAN NA HANNYATE HA (Gita) meaning the soul is immortal; it is not born nor dies, it is ancient, constant, eternal and old; it is indestructible though it resides in a destructible body.

Sri Sumanta Niyogi



She is now with Bans Uncle...May she rest in peace...May she continue her talks about comparing notes on Bharata Natya and Ballet with Vincent. May she watch over all of us who have imbibed the dance arts in our day to day lives. May we hold her memories close to our hearts and cherish our fondest memories of her. May her voice resonate in our ears as she talks to us endlessly providing her eternal guidance. May she choreograph dance to her writings of Haikus in the spirit world. She truly lived a remarkable life.

I am so blessed to have her as my Guru. I was so blessed my father crossed paths with Bans Uncle and Mamata Aunty during his early days at Expo 67. He saw I loved to dance with Priya, but wanted me to learn properly following a Parampara, so he reached out to Aunty. I heard their conversation from another phone and was immediately struck by her voice.

Over the years my dance journey with Aunty grew deeper and we bonded as Guru-Shishya. Her institution Kala Bharati was instrumental in my growth as a student, and as a teacher. I was one of the many fortunate dancers to have completed my training and offered my Ranga Pravesh under her tutelage.

She was tireless when pursuing the arts and promoting it here in Montreal and all over the world through her choreographies, writings, lectures-dems, and workshops. Her infectious passion brought many dancers, dance enthusiasts, musicians, artists together.

We have had fantastic moments together and some tough ones too. I succumbed to an injury and have been going through my own struggles. There is nothing more I want to do than dance and truth is she guided me to reach bliss when I danced. For that I am forever grateful to her.

My humblest Pranaam, Mamata Aunty.  
Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

Renu Chitra



Hier, nous avons vécu le rite de la crémation du Au Revoir à ma chère professeure de danse, Guru Mamata Niyogi-Nakra. Beaucoup d'émotions et de tristesse, mais aussi des connexions de partage et de remémorations du Beau qu'est la vie. C'est une immense perte pour moi, ainsi que pour la communauté artistique. Depuis plus de 38 ans, elle a été une figure essentielle dans ma vie, elle a été une mentor inégalée et une source d'inspiration constante.

Mamata aunty n'était pas seulement une professeure et une chorégraphe exceptionnelle, mais également une éducatrice dévouée, partageant sa passion pour la danse avec une générosité d'esprit sans pareille, mais aussi une attraction pour les papillons tout comme moi. Elle m'a transmis bien plus que des techniques de danse; elle m'a inculqué des valeurs de discipline, de persévérance et d'amour pour l'art, valeurs qui me suivent dans tous les autres aspects de la vie.

Ses enseignements ont façonné non seulement ma carrière, mais également ma vie personnelle. À travers ses leçons, j'ai appris la force de la résilience, l'importance du travail bien fait, l'excellence d'aimer ce que nous faisons et la beauté de l'expression artistique dans notre quotidien. Son héritage continuera de vivre à travers tous ceux qu'elle a touchés et inspirés.

Je suis éternellement reconnaissante pour tout ce qu'elle m'a apporté. Elle restera à jamais dans mon cœur, et je continuerai à honorer sa mémoire à travers ma vie et mes actions.

Repose en paix, chère Guru.  
Votre lumière et votre influence perdureront toujours.

Bhava Thamo

My first encounter with Dr Mamata Niyogi-Nakra goes back to September 1982. As a young theatre student at UQAM, Larry Tremblay invited me to volunteer at the first Indian dance symposium organised by Kala Bharati in collaboration with the dance and theatre departments. It brought together students, teachers and dancers. It was a unique opportunity for me to stay in touch with the Indian dance that I had studied in 1980 and 1981 in Kerala. I met Mamata Di and Bans Uncle, as well as the US gurus Krishna Rao and UK Chandrabhaga Devi, and a number of Indian dancers living in Canada and the United States, who came together under the theme of 'Tradition and Experimentation'. This meeting played a decisive role in my life.

Before participating regularly in the activities of Kala Bharati, I had met the Nakra on several occasions during important events in my life as an artist, such as the presentation of my master's thesis in 1991, the visit of my Kathakali guru K. Gopalakrishna in 2002, and that of my Mexican colleague Eugenia Cano-Puga in 2004. From 2008 onwards, I began to take part in Kala Bharati's activities on a regular basis, which enabled me to stay in touch with Indian dance, deepen my knowledge and meet a number of Indian dance artists and scholars, as well as members of her family. Inspired by Mamata's vision and her way of thinking about dance differently, I took part in the organisation of Journées de la Culture, conferences, the centenary of Guru US Krishna Rao, Montreal's 375th anniversary celebrations, workshops for young people at Petits bonheurs, the preparation of the Udbodhana podcast and the revitalisation of Natyaangan during the pandemic, and finally the unveiling of Pranaam at the daCi 2022 conference.

In 2019, on a trip to Delhi and Kolkata, I helped Mamata Di prepare the tribute to Bans Uncle and met his family. Since Bans Uncle's departure, I have been assisting Mamata with various administrative tasks for Kala Bharati, which allows me to put my skills at the service of the organisation and add to them.

If India has helped me to become who I am today, over the years Mamata di has enabled me to stay in touch with the culture that has taught me so much. This constant contact with Indian dance has led me to question what it has given me as an artist. Mamata di encouraged me to undertake a doctorate in performing and screen arts at Université Laval. As I write the final pages of my thesis, 'Le rêve d'Urmila - projet de recherche création autour de l'hybridation culturelle à partir du kathakali et du Natyasastra' under the direction of Liviu Dospinescu, I can't stop thinking about her, and I will be eternally grateful to her.

I would also like to thank her for her presence in my life. Her dedication to dance, her pedagogy, her unifying spirit, her creativity, her humour and her lively spirit are all sources of inspiration that are always with me. Over the years, Kala Bharati has allowed me to meet a unique and diverse family united under the motto :

« Par la danse, rapprochement et ouverture ».

I will miss you tremendously.  
Sylvi Belleau



It was a phone call I made while I was away from Montreal that I had my first contact with Dr Mamata Niyogi Nakra. I explained my intention to find an Indian classical dance teacher. She offered to meet me at the IKSCON temple. What a unique way to initiate a meeting for a dance project. I was disappointed that she no longer teaches in person, and a meeting in a temple seemed quite intriguing.

During the 15 years we knew each other, she did everything she could to find me a teacher. She made sure that I got all the essence and meaning of dancing to such a beautiful art.

Although I was mature then, I have grown up more mature with a more insightful understanding of life through dance. Through her, I learnt that dance is not just about moving a body, working for a Ranga Pravesh or performing on stage. It is also to awaken the inner being to the true value of existence on this earth, to express the divine wisdom and to love the Supreme Light, Gurus, elders and everyone around us, from a small child to an old grandparent.

Mamaji taught me to appreciate the nature that surrounds us, from the soil under our bodies to the surrounding breeze we breathe, the green leaves we see when I was driving her around.

All the little conversations we had in all the places we visited, or even while appreciating a simple cup of tea on the dining table. She was always generous, giving me whatever she could. It seemed so little at the time, but now that it comes back to me, I realise how much knowledge she managed to store in me.

She was always considerate, even when she was tired of my shortcomings.

She used to show me how incompetent and unfocused I am, which is true, but her last words to me were: « I admire your perseverance and diligence. You have what a lot of people lack. I am proud of you ».

Finally, asking me to meet in a temple was a test for me to see how I would feel, she knew very well that my background might hinder my relationship with a classical Hindu art form and she addressed this from the start. She was very good at reading people's minds. She had an extraordinarily avant-garde vision of meaningful art and her intellect was far beyond the grasp of others.

I will miss her very much, but the light she has left me will always illuminate my life.

Rest in peace, Mamaji

Yasmine Alshaibi







### *Beat of Dance*

Poem written by Vidya Ray-Chaudhuri  
July 10th, 2024 for Mamata Aunty's cremation

You were sweat as the beat  
As you danced in rhythm  
Moving your body  
In an algorithm  
You knew what to do  
You stamped your feet  
On the beat

Later in life as you danced  
You realized to enhance  
Your love of butterflies  
You became wise and  
Started to teach dance

This led you to reach  
Higher goals in life  
This made such an impact  
On the dance community  
With celerity you had the  
Ability to become a Guru

Then eventually you had to pass  
Sadly we all will miss you  
But you will always be in our hearts  
As you made an impact on the art of dance.

Vidya Ray-Chaudhuri

Hearty condolences to the dear and near of Smt. Mamata Niyogi. This sad news of Mamatajee's passing away reached us this morning and I feel really sad. She is a pioneer and wonder woman who strived very hard to popularise and establish Bharatanaatyam and Bhaarateeya Samskriti in CANada and helped visiting artists with no pride and prejudice. We remember her immense help in organising our programs and interactions with her students from the time we started traveling to Canada & USA in the year 1976/77 onwards. Both the Niyogis were a source of inspiration to immigrant performers and visiting and resident talents.

WE pray her soul rest in peace.

The Dhananjayans (Shanta & Dhananjayan )



MAY ALMIGHTY GOD KEEP HER SOUL IN PEACE MY HEARTFELT CONDOLENCE ON SAD DEMISE OF DIDI SUCH A WONDER INDIAN ICON WHO ALONG WITH HER HUSBAND CREATED A COMMENDABLE SPACE FOR INDIAN ART, DANCE & CULTURE ON ALIEN SOIL.

Manu Kumar

Dear friends and family of Mamata aunty and Harbans uncle,

Our deepest condolences we share.

She is in our prayers as she makes her way to the lotus feet of the gods. She will be missed and her legacy forever treasured in our lives. Our family would love to contribute to honouring her when the time comes. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us to help organize.

Ohm shanti, Ohm Shanti, Ohm Shanti

Lavanya Narasiah, Aditya Verma and Family



Ce matin, en lisant ces lignes si tristes, nous avons perdu une personne exceptionnelle. Mes condoléances à toute sa communauté. Je me réconforte en sachant qu'aujourd'hui elle a retrouvé son cher Bans.

Chère Mamata, may you rest in peace.

Marie Brodeur

A remarkable chapter has come to end. Our sincerest homage to this caring and loving person. A life worth celebrating...

Om Shanti,  
Raghu & Hita  
TK Raghunathan



My heartfelt condolences!! Words cannot soothe any of the pain that you and family members and students would be suffering .  
I have very fond memories of our visits and stay with Mamta ji and you.  
May her soul rest in peace

Hema Rajagopalan  
Artistic Director  
Natya Dance Theatre



Deeply grieved by the passing away of Mamata Aunty. Her contribution to Bharatanatyam in North America is unmatched and this is a huge loss for the whole dance community . I will always remember the wonderful times I spent with her and Bans Uncle in Montreal.

Rama Vaidyanathan

Dear Friend,

Thanks for your message. I am deeply saddened and rather shocked to hear about dear Mamataji's passing away. I thought all is well with her when we talked sometime ago. She has been a great artist and tried her very best to put Bharatanatyam in a special place in the Cultural map of Quebec. Her tireless efforts have secured a very special place for her in the Cultural history of Quebec. I offer my deepest condolences and prayers for her soul to rest in peace. Om Shanti.

Priyamvada Shankar



Dear Friend,

Its really feel sad to Hear that Mamata Di is not there anymore,  
I have worked with Her for many years in Montreal specially the Haiku Poetry, Shishu Sadhana, and many more.  
Will Always miss Her Creative Genius, Choreography, sence of Music n Rhythm for Her compositions.

May Her Soul Rest in Peace,  
Om Shanti Shanti Shanti.

Santanu Chakraborty  
Brother of Mamata Di,  
And Bharatanatyam Dancer, New Delhi

We share the heartfelt grief and loss at the departure of her soul, with the family and Kala Bharati Community.

She is in peace,

Rashter & Mercedes



Very sorry to hear the sad news.  
May her soul rest in peace.

Mythrai



Mamta was a symbol of everlasting love For Harvard  
She was a great Teacher of Arts  
Now she is with Harbans and with God  
Harbans and I were hood friends at IIT Kharagpur  
God bless both  
Regards  
Om Shanti

Puran Dang  
Lexington/Boson

Sending my deepest condolences to aunty's near and dear ones and to the Kala Bharathi family.

May her soul rest in peace

Sumathi Halan



I am sad to hear that  
I began my Bharat Natyam training with Mamata

My sympathies.

Roger Sinha



Dear Kala Bharati's members,  
I have no words to express my condolences  
to all of the members.  
May her soul Rest in eternal Peace.  
Om Shanti Om Shanti Om Shanti.

Indranil Mallick

I am so very VERY sorry to hear of the passing of Guru Mamata. It is with the fondest of memories that I think back on the wonderful opportunity she provided when she accepted me as one of her summer workshop students many years ago. I learned so much during that brief immersion into the world of Bharata Natyam, not the least of which was that Mamata was a genuine visionary with a passion for growing the awareness and understanding of East Indian culture, classical music, and dance here in Canada.

With the greatest of respect in recognition of the passing of a gifted teacher, an accomplished artist, and a fine human,

Joan Miles



Dear Renu chitra,

I am deeply shocked and aggrieved  
at Mamata's passing away.  
Let her soul rest in peace.

Utpal K Banerjee

My deep condolences to the family. I shall, forever remember dear Mamata di, for her timeless contribution in her field and also her support to musicians and to those culturally inclined, like myself (North Indian classical vocalist).

She and Bans da had always been kind to make their home, mine, while I traveled for concerts in Montreal.

May her soul Rest In Peace and  
may the legacy she left,  
continue.

Om Shanti.

Esha Bandyopadhyay



Dear family and friends of Mamataji,

My sincere and deep condolences. I am sad to hear this news. Mamatji and I spent some time together, and I really enjoyed her company and appreciated her kindness and care. Also, her contribution to the world of dance is immense.

May Krishna bless her soul and protect her.

Sincerely,

Bader Soma

I acknowledge receipt of the sad news of Mamatadi's passing with a feeling of great loss. I convey my deepest condolences. May her soul rest in eternal peace.

Mamatadi was an exceptional human being. Her tireless contributions to the Art of Dance, Education and to society at large throughout the past decades have left an indelible legacy. She touched so many lives with her incomparable generosity and brilliance. We all are indebted and richer for it. She will be greatly missed.

Om Shanti Om Shanti Om Shanti

Respectfully,  
Reeta Majumdar



We are very sorry to hear about the death of Dr. Mamata Niyogi Nakra, Founder/ President of the Kala Bharati Foundation. She made a significant impact on the Indian community in Quebec, Canada, and abroad through her contributions in the field of Indian classical dance and the arts.

We pray for her soul to be in peace.  
And our prayers for her loved ones.

Om Shanti Shanti Om.

CFQOI team  
( Cercle des Femmes Du Québec d'Origine Indienne)

Oh, extremely sorry to know that. Kindly convey my deepest condolences to the family. May her soul rest in eternal peace.

Om Shanti

Manjari Sinha



I read this saddening. Information with a heavy heart. I put forth my heartfelt condolences to the kith and kin of the departed soul. May she rest in eternal peace. It is with fondness do I remember Mamata Di and Bans Da - as I would address them. They were an erudite couple very much immersed in the pursuit of knowledge art and culture. I had had a very rich and exalted association with both of them. I shall miss both of them dearly.

Rajarshi Bagchi



Its a huge loss for us  
ohm shanti

Best Regards

Rajesh Chenthy

I am so sorry and am extremely sad to hear about the passing away of Mamata ji. She was so full of life and always kept in touch with us all. Being an excellent dancer she spread the love of her dance style in alien soil. It is because of her efforts that our dance became so popular in Montreal, Canada and all the other places that she was in contact with.

Her memory will always be with us and inspire us. May Kala Bharati continue to do the wonderful work that Mamata ji started.

My condolences to the family and all her near and dear ones. May she live on through her disciples.

My sincerest prayers for the peace and happiness of her soul in its onward journey.

With sincerest regards,

Amita Dutt.

## FACEBOOK TESTIMONIES





Bon voyage Mamata !

Après 43 ans de collaboration à la Fondation Kala Bharati de Montréal, vous prenez enfin un repos bien mérité.

Michel Laverdière

Une grande dame qui a largement contribué à faire découvrir aux québécois la culture indienne sous ses formes les plus raffinées, bien que sa contribution à la danse classique soit la plus reconnue. Véritable ambassadrice du dialogue interculturel, elle n'a cessé de promouvoir le dépassement créatif chez tous ceux et celles qu'elle croisait. Elle a maintenant rejoint son époux Harbans, laissant derrière elle un héritage inestimable.

Jean Rivest

(Via Michel Laverdière Facebook)



Une grande dame qui a largement contribué à faire découvrir aux québécois la culture indienne sous ses formes les plus raffinées, bien que sa contribution à la danse classique soit la plus reconnue. Véritable ambassadrice du dialogue interculturel, elle n'a cessé de promouvoir le dépassement créatif chez tous ceux et celles qu'elle croisait. Elle a maintenant rejoint son époux Harbans, laissant derrière elle un héritage inestimable.

Saraswati Ruel

(Via Michel Laverdière Facebook)



Plus qu'une connaissance, une alliée, une amie. Culture, cuisine, spiritualité, musique et danse. Je me rends compte que j'ai beaucoup de souvenirs liés à sa personne et ceux et celles qui l'entouraient. Ce fut un honneur de la connaître.

Normand Vanasse

(Via Michel Laverdière Facebook)





Que je suis profondément triste d'apprendre cette nouvelle. J'aimais tant cette dame. Je l'admirais et bénéficiais d'une si belle complicité et confiance avec elle. Une affection aussi.

Grâce à Michel Laverdière j'ai travaillé comme arrangeur à un projet de CD Seasonscape, pièce indienne que Mamata a chorégraphié.

Et Mamata a été une dame si encourageante à mon endroit, une lumière dans ma vie.

Elle fut si rassembleuse, si généreuse de ses multiples talents de leader interculturel.

J'aurais tant aimé la revoir cet été.

Nous avons planifié un échange.

Bref je suis pris par surprise par le cours de la Vie.

Je pleure très fort son départ.

Frédéric Brunel  
(Via Michel Laverdière Facebook)

L'Institut Universitaire de Montréal où je chante régulièrement a engagé sa troupe à quelques reprises .

Je faisais partie des organisateurs.

Une femme extraordinaire qui a formé des danseurs offrant de merveilleux spectacles dans la pure tradition de l'Inde du sud

Claire Garand  
(Via Michel Laverdière Facebook)



Triste départ

Marie Brodeur  
(Via Michel Laverdière Facebook)



Une grande dame remarquable et très admirée, elle manquera beaucoup. Vincent et Brydon lui étaient très proches.

Veronique Landory  
(Via Michel Laverdière Facebook)



Dr. Mamata Niyogi-Nakra (1937-2024)

Kabir Cultural Centre humbly joins in homage with thousands of Canadian and international admirers of Dr. Mamata Niyogi-Nakra, a pioneer for establishing and sustaining Bharata Natya in Canada.



Le centre culturel Kabir se joint respectueusement aux milliers d'admirateurs canadiens et internationaux de Dr Mamata Niyogi-Nakra, une des pionnières de Établissements et le soutien du Bharata Natya au Canada.

Toutes mes sympathies !  
Son impact dans le milieu culturel s'est fait sentir et se fera sentir encore longtemps!  
Repose en paix chère Mamata!

Ginette Dubé  
(Via Kabir Center Facebook)



An inspiring and passionate teacher - humble pranams to her spirit.  
Condolences to her family, friends, colleagues and students. We remember her with respect and gratitude.

Manohar Performing Arts  
(Via Kabir Center Facebook)



My pronams to her departed soul. Many memories from day 1 of my Canada/Montreal visit.  
May her soul rest in eternal peace.  
Om Shanti Om Shanti Om Shanti

Indranil Mallick  
(Via Kabir Center Facebook)

She had so much impact in the arts world in Montreal & beyond & always attended the Bengali community events with pride. May her soul rest in peace. Om Shanti shanti shanti.

Chaddy Jhuma  
(Via Kabir Center Facebook)



Will always remember the course i took with Guru Mamata a humble yet strong woman. Blessings for a cherished life

Maya Canta  
(Via Kabir Center Facebook)



Truly sorry to know of this.  
Her pioneering spirit is much to be thankful for.

Ganga Dakshinamurti  
(Via Kabir Center Facebook)



She was my first Bharata Natyam teacher.  
A sad loss.

Roger Sinha  
(Via Kabir Center Facebook)



C'est avec une immense tristesse que nous avons appris le décès de Guru, Dr. Mamata Niyogi-Nakra, le 6 juillet dernier. Grande amie de la bibliothèque et de notre cher Vincent Warren, elle a transmis pendant des décennies sa passion de la danse indienne à plusieurs générations de jeunes montréalais et a fondé la troupe Kala Bharati. Nos plus sincères condoléances à tous ses proches, famille, amis.

Bibliothèque de la danse Vincent-Warren  
11 juillet 2024



Triste! Merci beaucoup Mamata.

Al Laurent  
( From Bibliothèque de la danse Facebook page)



ISKCON Montreal: Centre Hare Krishna.

Mamata Niyogi Nakra nous a quitté ce week-end. Elle a adopté le Québec à bras ouverts, elle en fait son foyer. Elle a accueilli des danseurs de partout au monde pour les amener un peu plus haut un peu plus loin. Elle m'a fait découvrir son pays d'origine, l'Inde, en m'introduisant auprès de personnalités diverses de la danse, du monde politique, du milieu communautaire et du monde des artistes en arts visuels. Lors de notre passage à New Delhi, je lui ai remis la médaille de l'Assemblée nationale en reconnaissance de son implication dans le monde de la danse au Québec.

Mamata voulait faire connaître les bienfaits de la danse notamment pour les enfants et leur développement. Elle croyait profondément que l'art de la danse apportait un meilleur équilibre aux enfants.

Une de ses grandes joies fut la lettre signée par René Lévesque, Premier ministre du Québec reconnaissant sa contribution. Pour elle, ce geste d'un Premier ministre pour une femme immigrante était le plus beau cadeau que l'on pouvait lui faire.

Elle laisse une communauté, qui je l'espère, réalisera sa volonté de créer une fondation pour établir un pont entre sa terre natale et sa terre d'adoption et favoriser les échanges en matière culturelle. Les premiers grains ont été semés que ses voeux se réalisent. Au revoir grande dame.

Carole Poirier

Mme Poirier, Nos respects et condoléances à tous les membres de la famille, amis, collègues et étudiants de Mamata Niyogi Nakra. Ses contributions culturelles à la danse classique indienne sont particulièrement révolutionnaires en matière de sensibilisation et de rapprochement de nombreuses communautés.

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

ISKCON Montreal: Centre Hare Krishna  
(From Carole Poirier's Facebook)



Comme tu l'as bien décrite ! Cette grande dame fait partie de ces grands personnages qui nous aident à grandir et donnent espoir à une société parfois en dérive. Merci de nous avoir fait part de son oeuvre artistique, sociale et humaine.

Daniele Masse  
(From Carole Poirier's Facebook)

Mes sincères condoléances! Triste nouvelle, je garde de très bons souvenirs de Dre Mamata cette grande dame.

Lyne Leboeuf  
(From Carole Poirier's Facebook)



Un modèle pour notre Québec  
Toutes mes pensées !

Patrick Ney  
(From Carole Poirier's Facebook)



Sincères condoléances. Merci de me l'avoir fait découvrir alors que je ne la connaissais pas. Chaque mot décrit si bien une grande dame et transmet une partie de son héritage. Condoléances à toute la communauté qui l'apprécie et bénéficie de son impact.

Angèle Bouffard  
(From Carole Poirier's Facebook)

I pay my tribute to Dr. Mamata Niyogi Nakra who left for her heavenly abode to be united to her life long companion Harbans Nakra on 6th July.

With heavy heart I deeply mourn her demise for many reasons...

I met her first time in 2004 in INTERFACE where she was a speaker and then she became my sister in 2005 when I lost my own sister! I went and stayed with her in Le Niketan which touched so many lives!

It was in 2006 I started by dance Academy to teach children after being coaxed by her and she gave me the logo of BUTTERFLY as dance for her 'Is not just Transformation but Metamorphosis' a journey to be a butterfly from a caterpillar! Her work of SHISHU SADHONA being another strong inspiration which made me wait for her to be in Kolkata to inaugurate my Academy in February 2006. She held me in all my bad times!!!

It was only during pandemic in 2020, I discovered that she got married in same year and month like my mother in June, 1964, which made me feel like her son instantly. It was 6th June and I also remember that she read out the letters written to her by Bans da, anecdotes of their inter caste marriage way back in 60s which was quite unthinkable!!!!

I still remember the night of the Amphan storm where in utmost darkness and torrential rains when I thought the world is coming to an end.. we conversed throughout without any pause or disruption!!! Isn't that a cosmic connection? Lastly we did PRONAM for DaCi conference in 2022 and was waiting to meet her...

I never knew she will leave without bidding me final goodbye and I will never be able to touch her mortal feet.

Last year in Guru Purnima, I organised a small ritual at her Madurdaho home in Kolkata paying tribute to all including her Gurus and of course Bans da. I never thought I would not see her this year! She will be remembered by all as the staunch Guru of Pandanalur style of Bharata Natya and at same time who experimented with it like creating SEASONScape and performing for CPC ( National Doordarshan of India) which came as a pleasant surprise for many critics and dance practitioners during that decade. I feel her legacy will remain and Kalabharati will continue in different ways to sustain her work and vision to move forward!

I pray for her departed soul on behalf  
of all members of Sapphire Creations Dance Company .  
Atma Shanti  
Sudarshan Chakravorty

## ATMA SHANTI

Guru DR. MAMATA NIYOGI-NAKRA passed away on July 6, 2024. She was the disciple of Gurus U.S. Krishna Rao and U.K. Chandrabhaga Devi and performed extensively in India, U.K. and Europe, but an accident in 1969, soon after her arrival in Canada, left her with a permanent injury, which abruptly cut her off from performing. She founded Kala Bharati in Montreal, Quebec in 1981 and was one of the pioneers who taught Bharatanatyam in alien soil. Mamata created a new repertoire of classical items designed for children and choreographed a series of vignettes in Bharatanatyam style to capture Haiku moments. In Montreal, she presented her work regularly with La Troupe Kala Bharati, independently and in collaboration with various other organizations.

She was co-author with Vincent Warren "Crafting Dance: Two Voices" (in preparation) and published many articles on Indian classical dance. She created Shishu Sadhana, a child friendly Bharatanatyam repertoire, book with a DVD (2005). In recognition of her contribution to Indian classical dance and Bharatanatyam, Mamata Niyogi-Nakra has been mentioned under the section Guru Parampara in the book Bharatanatyam, published by Marg Publications, Bombay (1997).

To all those that crossed her path, she enriched their lives by infusing her love for dance, as a Guru, a teacher, a speaker, and a mentor. Her passion for dance, contribution at a scholarly level, and unceasing endeavors in the field of dance has left an indelible mark on many individuals and on the dance community.

NARTHAKI.com

Really sorry to hear this. She was a senior student of my teachers Prof & Smt U. S Krishna Rao and I used to meet her often at their place.

I remember her as a very graceful & soft spoken lady who was one of the pioneers to promote classical dance in Canada.

May she attain Sadgati

Prathibha Prahlad  
(Via Nartaki Facebook)



Soo many unsung «she»eros the wider international diaspora will never know more of...

Hiten Mistry  
(Via Nartaki Facebook)



I had the privilege of meeting and briefly working with Mam-taji from 1984 to about 1993.

What an individual and guru. Shanti

Parul Shah  
(Via Nartaki Facebook)



Very sad. She had hosted me in 1985.

Vepathangudi Ramachandrarao Devika  
(Via Nartaki Facebook)



আর একজন মাতৃসমা শুরু চলে গেলেন। একটি যুগের অবসান হলো। আমার সৃজনশীল জগৎ এ যে মানুষগুলোর প্রভাব রয়েছে, তাঁদের মধ্যে ডঃ মমতা নিয়োগী নাকরা অন্যতম। ২০২০ এর পর আর দেখা হলো না। গত মাসেই উনি ফোন করেছিলেন, ধরতে পারিনি, পরে আমি যোগাযোগ করার চেষ্টায় আর পেলাম না ওনাকে, এটা খুব কুড়ে কুড়ে খাচ্ছে। কখনো ওনাকে নিয়ে লিখবো, ওনার কাজ নিয়ে একটা বই করবো। সততার সাথে নিষ্ঠার সাথে দিদি যেভাবে কাজ করে গেলেন শিখিয়ে গেলেন তা আজীবন সাথে থাকবে। দিদি আপনি অনন্যা, আপনার সাথে নানান বিরোধিতা আর একান্ত ঘনিষ্ঠতায় আমার শিল্প মন তৈরি হয়েছে। আপনার থেকে যা শিখেছি ভোলার নয়। ছোটদের নিয়ে বেশ কিছু কাজ করবো আমরা, এমনটা কতবার আলোচনা করেছি, সেই কাজ করবো এইবার। ভালোবাসা। শঙ্কা। 🌹🌹🌹

Biswajit Das avec Piyal Bhattacharya et 2 autres personnes



Fondly remembering times we spent together with Didi and Bans  
Da... discuss, argue, create...

Dheeman Bhattacharyya  
(Via Bhiswajit Das Facebook)



Ma chère amie est décédée en paix cette semaine et nous  
avons célébré sa vie. Mamata Niyogi-Nakra était une grande  
dame !

Un amateur de danse et de communauté  
sur une terre extraterrestre.

Kyra Lober



My first bharata natyam guru Mrs. Mamata Niyogi Nakra passed away peacefully in her Montreal home on Friday. I was the first student to graduate/ Ranga Parvesh from her dance school, Kala Bharati, in 1983. We travelled together to India a few times, including my first full bharata natyam performance with a live orchestra at the FICCI auditorium in Delhi, following my first Canadian dance tour in 1986 with guru Govindarajan and orchestra. Here on the picture in Chidambaram in 1985.

May her soul Rest In Peace.  
Pranams.

Benoit Villeneuve (Jai Govinda)



..with Mrs Mamata Nakra and legendary  
Shri Lalgudi Jayaraman in Chennai. 1986



So sorry to read this! Some of us attended a number of her summer workshop sessions; I remember a kind, open-minded teacher with a vast store of knowledge and creativity. She will be missed. Condolences to all who knew her.

Manohar Performing Arts  
(Via Benoit Villeneuve Facebook)





Its with very heavy heart we share the news of the passing away of the Montreal legendary dancer  
«Dr. Mamata Niyogi-Nakra» akka.

She has touched many lives through her art including mine by gracing her presence and supporting my dance journey in many occasions of Montreal Natyanjali festival. As art aspirants and seekers the path she has paved will be a inspirational journey for us to continue in the divine path !!

Deepa Nallappan  
Teesri Duniya Theatre  
Montreal Natyanjali  
Param des arts - Montreal, Quebec

May she rest in peace. She was a trailblazer, making Canada aware of Indian classical dances.

Rahul Varma  
(Via Deepa Nallappan Facebook)



Mamata di was deeply committed and dedicated to Bharatanatyam, dance and art.

Janaki Srinivasan  
(Via Deepa Nallappan Facebook)



Mamata Tante était mon premier gourou de l'enfance à l'adolescence. Elle a inculqué un amour profond de la tradition et de la culture à travers la danse. Bien que notre relation ait été complexe et que les années nous ont vus nous éloigner les uns des autres, je serai toujours reconnaissante pour ces enseignements fondamentaux qui m'ont inculqué une grande appréciation pour les arts classiques. Je vois tellement d'entre nous, élèves originaux de Kala Bharati, maintiennent l'art dans notre vie et c'est parce qu'elle a été une première étape formative dans le monde de la danse.

Om shanti shanti shanti  
Om gouru ji.

Jasmine Sharma  
(Via Deepa Nallappan Facebook)



With a heavy heart , another one of my teachers / Guru/ director,  
Dr.Smt.Mamata Niyogi Nakra peacefully left us.  
She was a disciple of Late Sri U S Krishna Rao and Smt UK Chandrabhaga Devi of Bangalore and Sri Guru Balakrishna of Kolkata.  
She was a visionary and was very impressive in her presentations of Bharatanatyam with her school La Fondation Kalabharati, adding to the Indian dance diaspora for over 4 decades in Montreal .

She will be missed by all her family , students, colleagues, and art lovers worldwide. I was fortunate to be the last one to speak to her, she was so proud of my work and was sharing her love , so fondly that she passed happily.

It's such a blessing  
May Sriman Narayana embrace her and give her Mukthi  
Adiyen

Seshakamal Iyengar

She was a visionary and helped ignite in me, a great love and dedication to the divine art of Bharatanatyam. May her soul rest in peace Om Shantih

Deepa Nair  
(Via Seshakamal Facebook)



Oh Krishna! May Radha Manohara bless her on her journey. She was an exacting guru and indeed a visionary. I will remember how she would ensure that all the items she taught me were focussed on Krishna. Her steadfast dedication to sharing Bharatanatyam with the world was unparalleled. Jay Sriman Narayan. Hare Krishna

Manu Dasa Lawrence  
(Via Seshakamal Facebook)



So sorry to hear this. She was a very dedicated to Art of Bharatanatyam always smiling and was very down to earth and humble person. My prayers for her Sadgati and may her Soul rest in Peace.

Jeeja Moro Srikant  
(Via Seshakamal Facebook)

I am very saddened to hear Mamata's demise. I have known her ever since we arrived in Canada in 1976. Yes, she was a visionary and her dedication to Bharatha Natyam was unparalleled. Kala Bharathi was synonymous with Mamata & Bans. She will be very much missed. Rest in Peace Mamata.

Om Shanthi!  
Sorry for your loss Seshakamal.

Radha Sankaran  
(Via Seshakamal Facebook)



Oh dear! Mamata Nakra ji was such an exceptional person, thinker, orator and patron of art. We remember spending wonderful times with her and her husband. Truly sad to know this news. Prayers for her peaceful journey forward.

Nirupama Rajendra  
(Via Seshakamal Facebook)



What a visionary she was May Her soul rest in peace

Sudha Raghuraman  
(Via Seshakamal Facebook)

Deeply saddened by Mamata ji's passing.  
A Canadian dance luminary!

Lata Pada  
(Via Seshakamal Facebook)



Our deepest sympathy to the whole School of Dance Academy we are very sorry about this departure of our dear Aunty so humble dance teacher. May her soul rest in peace.

We all will miss you love.

Minta Virahsammy  
(Via Seshakamal Facebook)



Very sad news, earlier time we had much contact.  
OM Shanti

Dasappa Keshava  
(Via Seshakamal Facebook)



MORE TESTIMONIES TO COME...



D'AUTRES TÉMOIGNAGES À VENIR...