

Cosmic Dance & Exhibition

'Cosmic Dance of Siva!'

By Dr. Sharada Srinivasan

10 - 14 June, 2008 | Exhibition, Atrium, AFB

14 - Lecture cum Dance | 7 p.m | Auditorium, AFB



Chola bronzes from Tamil Nadu in southern India and the Nataraja images, of the Hindu God Siva as Lord of Dance represent one of the world's great statuary bronze traditions in an era preceding the Italian Renaissance. If Leonardo Da Vinci in the 16th century famously bridged the two worlds of art and science, then the makers of the 10th century Nataraja bronze achieved something no less visionary. Representing a tantalizing multi-dimensional synthesis of art, technology, dance and poetry, its enigmatic metaphors take on a new significance a millennium later in our scientific age.



These ideas are richly elucidated and in fact, dazzlingly mirrored in a photographic exhibition and lecture cum Bharata Natyam dance performance 'Cosmic Dance of Siva!' by Dr. Sharada Srinivasan.

Whereas the Nataraja is often philosophically described as the 'Cosmic Dance of Siva!', Dr. Sharada Srinivasan speculates whether aspects of its worship actually drew from cosmic observations such as of Orion (Ardra-darsanam) at the Chidambaram temple and the July 1054 supernova explosion. Her archaeometallurgical studies show how science may reveal aspects beyond the art historian's vision with the finding that the Nataraja was probably cast by the Pallava period (c 800). On the other hand, by exploring the introspective dance tradition, the casting rituals, the hymns of Tamil poets-saints and the inspiration of the widowed Chola patron, queen Sembiyan Mahadevi, she conveys aspects which are metaphorically "beyond vision"...

'...a fascinating theme which merges the world of art with its philosophical sensibilities with that of science and precision...'

Nino Ciccarone, Director, Alliance Française Bangalore



*Sharada's dance-lecture ...kept with the theme of Nataraja as a lyrical synthesis of art and science...'
-Jon Stock,
author of Cardamom Club*

*** The exhibition commemorates the late Jon Darius (9th May 1948-12th July 1993), Montreal-born astronomer-musicologist, Renaissance personality and historian of science in his 60th birth anniversary year.**

In this historic year of India's moon mission, Chandrayaan I, one may reflect that Chola bronzes celebrate Siva as the 'Lord Crowned with the Moon'... Dr. Sharada Srinivasan takes one through a stirring visual and intellectual odyssey, weaving in the ideas of global artists, scientists and thinkers including famed French sculptor Auguste Rodin, Ananda Coomaraswamy, Carl Sagan, Carl Jung, Nietzsche, T.S. Eliot, Arthur Clarke, Jon Darius, Fritjof Capra, Nirupama Raghavan, Jean Letschert, Roger Malina, V. S. Ramachandran, Kalpana Chawla and others...Zooming from past to present, the event also showcases experiments by Arthur Woods, Kitsou Dubois and others of artworks, dancers and cosmonauts: of 'cosmic dance' in zero-gravity or actually out in space!!

* Photos in the exhibition include some by Dr. Sharada Srinivasan, and other contributors as indicated including well known photographer Benoy Behl, and photographs of Dr. Sharada Srinivasan also taken around the Parthenon in Athens, Greece during the World Dance Congress

* Cover photo of Nataraja, 11th century, Kankoduvanithavam, Government Museum Chennai by Benoy Behl.



Sthapati or icon maker from Swamimalai, Tamil Nadu finishing an image made by the lost wax process

Photo credit: Dr. Sharada Srinivasan