



THE NATIONAL TRUST – SRI LANKA LECTURE ON
THURSDAY 28TH NOVEMBER 2019

**“TRADITIONAL DANCE COSTUMES OF SRI LANKA
AND
THE ART OF SOMABANDHU VIDYAPATHY”**

By Kala Keerthi Ravibandu Vidyapathy

The 122nd Session of the Monthly Lecture Series of the National Trust - Sri Lanka will be held at the HNB Auditorium, 22nd Floor, HNB Towers, 479 T.B. Jayah Mawatha, Colombo 10 at 6.30p.m. on Thursday 28th November 2019.

As costume is an out-fit designed and fashioned for a specific and exclusive purpose that is performance. Performances of different types such as dance, opera, ballet, theatre and traditional ritual call for different styles of designs. In these different performances are found, various characters – kings, queens, peasants, beggars, men and women of different social status, for whom costumes are designed in traditional, modern, contemporary or avant-garde styles. There are also the characters from imaginary worlds such as gods, demons, demi-gods, animals and super human beings. However the main purpose of a costume is to create the outer appearance of a character. Traditional dance costumes make a special category because of their exotic, decorative and colorful designs that transform the performance, performer and the on-looker in to a world of fantasy and illusion.

By the middle of the 20th century, under the inspired stimulus of the Bengali renaissance and the impact made by the dance performances of Rabindranath Tagore and Udaya Shankar, the Sri Lanka dance arrives at a significant milestone; the emergence of the modern dance theatre of Sri Lanka.

The newly emerged dance forms of the 1940s created by pioneers like Chitrasena, Premakumara, Vasantha Kumara, Nimal Velgama and Shesha Palihakkara demanded a fresh form of décor art for the theatre.

Somabandhu Vidyapathy replenishes their void, by introducing a unique style and grammar of costumes, décor and make- up with a modernistic approach, yet keeping a traditional undertone. This talk will discuss the historic, visual and pragmatic aspects of the traditional costumes and the art of Somabandhu Vidyapathy.



Udakki and Pantheru

Kala Keerthi Ravibandu Vidyapathi, acclaimed Sri Lankan Drummer, Dancer and Choreographer was trained from his childhood in traditional Sri Lankan dance forms by the guru Chitrasena, he later travelled to India to the Kerala Kala Mandalam, where he received a rigorous formal training in the Kathakli dance form. Upon his return, he established his own dance school, The Ravibandu-Samanthi Narthayathanaya, with his wife Samanthi, also a dancer and dance teacher.

He developed the form of the Short Ballet, and has choreographed and danced in several critically acclaimed dance pieces which combine both the traditional and the contemporary – such as For The Young Killed in Wars and Judas. Ravibandu also created several full length ballets including Othello, Macbeth and Romeo & Juliet based on Shakespeare's plays. As a drummer, he has explored and experimented with the various aspects of drumming and drum composition widely, and has created new dimensions for traditional drums and drum rhythms. The Ravibandu Vidyapathi Drum Ensemble has toured across the world, appearing at festivals such as WOMAD, and performed at the Kennedy Centre in 2008. He has performed in prestigious theater around the world such as The Kennedy centre, the Saddlers' Dwells theater, Korea National theater, and Smithsonian Museum to great acclaim. Ravibandu himself has shared the stage with world-famous drummers such as Billy Cobham and Zakir Hussein. Today, the Ravibandu Vidyapathi Drum Ensemble is widely regarded as one of Sri Lanka's finest drum ensemble.

The National Trust – Sri Lanka conducts monthly lectures on the last Thursday of each month. The lectures are open to the members and the public at a nominal fee. The HNB Sustainability Foundation is the principal sponsor of the events of the National Trust – Sri Lanka.

Further information can be obtained from the Trust Office Tel 2682730 / 0778081214 at the Post Graduate Institute of Archaeology, 407 Baudhaloka Mawatha, Colombo 7. Members please bring your Membership Card and Invitation if available.