

Dancing her way to create environmental awareness

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Bharatanatyam artiste Bala Devi Chandrashekar.

CHENNAI: Bharatanatyam artiste Bala Devi Chandrashekar is set to present her latest production, MAA – The Eternal Truth, in Chennai, paying homage to Mother Nature and the nurturing essence of a mother.

She reflects on her unique approach to Bharatanatyam, saying, "I was the first dancer to read ancient scriptures and carve out relevant messages for the contemporary world."

Having performed globally, she shares her environmental concerns, "Everywhere I was, I witnessed the effect of changing weather patterns." Born and raised in a village in Kodavasal, she adds, "COVID triggered in my mind the fact that the old normal is never going to be normal again."

Her production, Maa, aims to raise awareness about Mother Nature's plight. She notes, "There are a lot of similarities between our mother and Mother Earth." Over the past 15 years, she has premiered all her productions in Chennai during the Margazhi season, appreciating the city's artistic community.

Acknowledging the city's significance for her, she states, "Undoubtedly, Chennai is the place to be for a professional Bharatanatyam dancer like me. It's quite challenging to showcase a creative production to the knowledgeable Chennai Margazhi audience. Thankfully, I've always gotten a great response from them. I'm excited about the pressure and can't wait to enjoy the applause afterwards."

The dancer mentions that the audience likes presentations that are around an hour long. They want topics that can show them something new or make them think. She adds, "My audience comes from various backgrounds, not just from the dance community. They enjoy my solo thematic operatic style of Bharatanatyam."