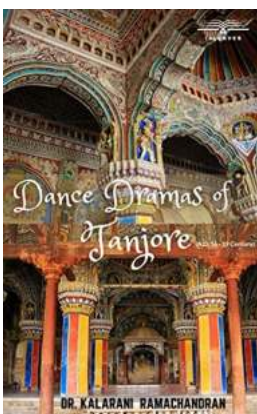


Dance Dramas of Tanjore 16-19 Century: A Spectacle of Culture and Art

Every region in India has its own rich cultural heritage, and Tanjore is no exception. Located in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, Tanjore is often considered the cultural capital of the region. One of the most fascinating aspects of Tanjore's cultural legacy is its unique dance dramas that flourished between the 16th and 19th centuries.

Known for their intricate hand gestures, facial expressions, and graceful movements, these dance dramas brought alive stories from ancient Indian mythology. They combined the art of dance, music, and storytelling to create a mesmerizing spectacle that captivated audiences of all ages. Today, they continue to be an integral part of Tanjore's cultural fabric and are celebrated during various festivals and cultural events.

The origins of dance dramas in Tanjore can be traced back to the reign of the Nayakas, who ruled the region during the 16th century. The Nayakas were great patrons of art and culture, and it was under their rule that dance dramas reached new heights of popularity and refinement. They sponsored the construction of magnificent temples and encouraged artists and artisans to showcase their skills.



Dance Dramas of Tanjore: A.D. 16 - 19 Century

by David Leavitt (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

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One of the most famous dance dramas of this period is the "Krishna Leela Tarangini," which translates to "The Waves of Krishna's Play." This dance drama tells the story of Lord Krishna's playful escapades, his divine love for Radha, and various episodes from his life. The dancers, dressed in colorful traditional attire, effortlessly portray the emotions and actions of the characters, enthraling the audience with their skillful performances.

Another popular dance drama is the "Rukmini Kalyanam," which depicts the divine marriage of Lord Krishna and Rukmini. This epic love story is brought to life through breathtaking dance sequences, soulful music, and elaborate costumes. The dancers meticulously portray the various characters, including Lord Krishna, Rukmini, and other gods and goddesses, showcasing the rich mythology and cultural heritage of Tanjore.

One cannot talk about Tanjore's dance dramas without mentioning the "Ramayana" and "Mahabharata." These two great epics of Indian mythology have been the inspiration behind countless performances and adaptations. The dance dramas based on these epics bring to life the heroic deeds of Lord Rama and the intense battles of the Pandavas and Kauravas. Each performance is a visual treat, with the dancers seamlessly transitioning between different characters and scenes.

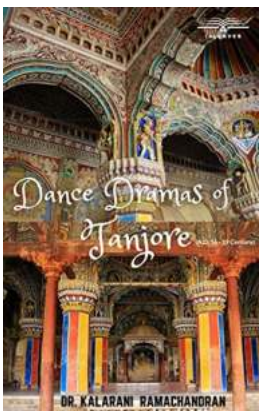
During the 17th and 18th centuries, the Maratha rulers of Tanjore further patronized and enriched the art of dance dramas. They introduced new themes and innovative techniques, making Tanjore a hub of cultural activity. One notable

contribution was the development of the "bhagavata mela," a unique musical tradition that accompanies the dance dramas. It combines classical music and dance, creating a harmonious blend that elevates the overall performance.

As the 19th century approached, the decline of the Marathas led to a shift in the cultural landscape of Tanjore. However, the legacy of dance dramas continued to thrive, thanks to the efforts of dedicated artists and scholars. Today, several dance schools in Tanjore and across Tamil Nadu teach the ancient art form to aspiring dancers, ensuring its preservation for future generations.

Attending a dance drama performance in Tanjore is akin to stepping back in time and experiencing the grandeur of ancient India. The costumes, makeup, and elaborate sets transport the audience to a different era, immersing them in the magic of the stories being told. It is an experience that cannot be replicated, and one that leaves a lasting impression.

In , the dance dramas of Tanjore from the 16th to 19th centuries are a testament to the rich cultural heritage of the region. They embody the artistic talent, creativity, and devotion of generations of performers and patrons. Preserving and promoting these dance dramas is essential in keeping alive the rich tapestry of Indian mythology and ensuring that future generations continue to appreciate and celebrate this remarkable art form.



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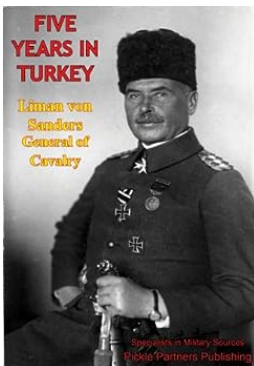
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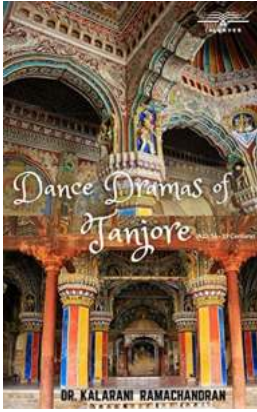


Dance and music are inevitable in the journey of a human life. Bharatha in his magnificent work Natyasastra reiterates this lofty thought. Dance is an art form that embodies prose, poetry, and drama. It is a visual treat that ensures happiness for both the dancer and the onlooker. Dance dramas, compared to individual recitals, have always been welcomed by the general audience. Artists, through the dance dramas were instrumental in taking to public the songs that were mythological, moral, just, valorous, and filled with sringara, the eternal love. Kings who ruled Tamil Nadu patronized art and artists. Special mention to the support offered by Tanjore kings that brought exemplary growth and changes in the field of fine arts. This book is an attempt to capture the growth of Dance Dramas between the 13th and 19th century A.D.



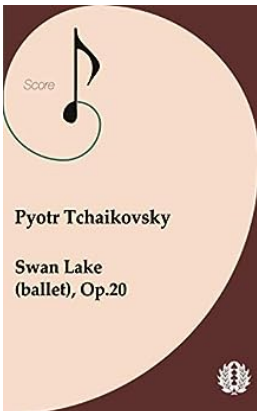
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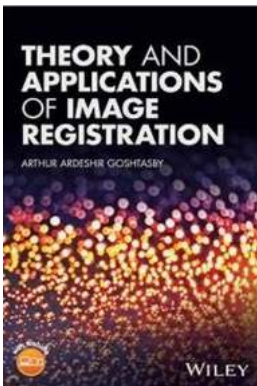
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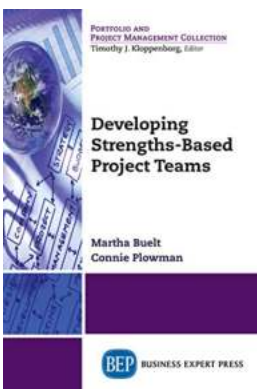
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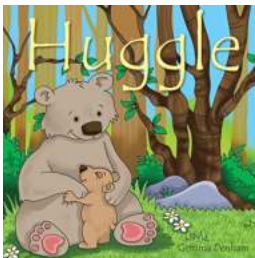
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