

Remembering The Legendary Kathak Maestro

Birju Maharaj is a leading exponent and torch-bearer of Kathak dance form. He is the only son and disciple of Shri Achhan Maharaj and a familiar face of Indian Kathak dance all over the world. He has performed in several countries. He is a wonderful singer with a strong grip over, Thumri, Dadra, Bhajan and Ghazals. He gave his first performance at the age of seven. Pandit Birju Maharaj is not only a Kathak dancer but also a sensitive poet and captivating orator.

His constant attempt to take Kathak to a whole new level fructified when he managed to make people take note of this dance form, not only in India but in the western countries as well. Introduced to Kathak at a very young age, Birju went on to master the nuances of arguably one of the most difficult classical dances of India. Known for his facial expressions and nimble feet movements, Pandit Birju Maharaj is considered as the epitome of Kathak by many.

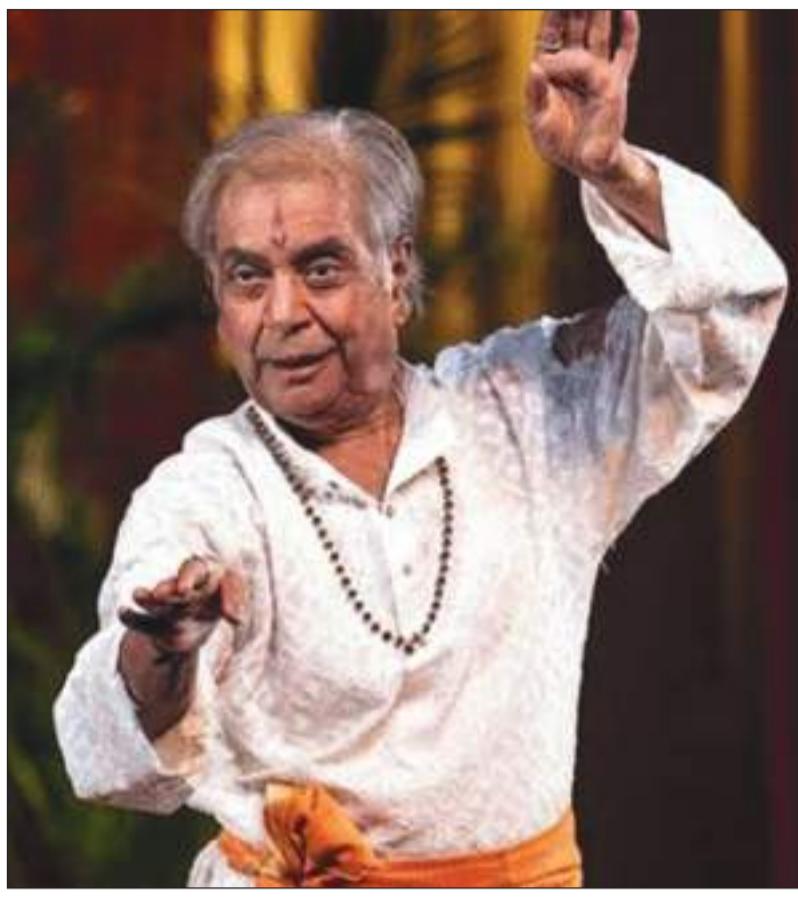
Birju Maharaj started his career as a teacher when he was just 13 years old. After a successful stint at Sangeet Bharati, where he began his career, he went on to teach at the famous Bharatiya Kala Kendra. Soon, he was presented with the opportunity to head a team of teachers at the Kathak Kendra, a unit of Sangeet Natak Akademi. After serving as the Head of Faculty at the Kathak Kendra for many years, he retired in 1998 at the age of 60.

Living his Dream

Starting his own dance school was always a dream and ambition of Birju Maharaj. This was realized soon after his retirement, when he started Kalashram. In Kalashram, the students are trained in the field of Kathak, and other associated disciplines like vocal and instrumental music, yoga, painting, Sanskrit, dramas, stagecraft etc. Pandit Birju Maharaj is a firm believer that a dancer must have adequate knowledge of music. Also, since it is important for a Kathak dancer to have control over his breath, he or she will benefit immensely from practicing Yoga.

The classrooms, practice halls and amphitheatre of Kalashram reflect a shade of rural set-up amidst the busy and fast-moving urban lifestyle. The natural atmosphere, with numerous trees and ponds are extremely inspiring and brings everyone within the institute closer to the simple, unassuming yet rich heritage of the country.

The objective of the institute is to produce highly talented students who would not



only prove worthy of the training they receive, but would also lead a modest, humble and disciplined lifestyle.

Pandit Birju Maharaj is also a noted film personality. In the movie 'Shatranj Ke Khilari', directed by the famous Satyajit Ray, Birju Maharaj had composed two dance sequences for which he had lent his voice as well. In the 2002 film 'Devdas', Birju had choreographed the song 'Kaahe Chhed Mohe.' He has also worked as a choreographer in well-known movies like 'Dedh Ishqya', 'Umrao Jaan', and 'Bajirao Mastani.' In 2013, he went on to make his South Indian movie debut when he choreographed the song 'Unnai Kaanatha Naan' for the Kamal Haasan starrer 'Vishwaroopam.'

Birju Maharaj is a leading exponent and torch-bearer of the Kalka-Bindadin Gharana. Apart from his obvious contributions (which are immense), his effort to make Kathak a well-known dance form all over the world is exceptional. He has performed in various countries making people all over the world take a note of this magnificent dance form. Thanks to his dance school 'Kalashram', his contribution towards Kathak will resonate throughout the globe for decades to come.

Awards

Pandit Birju Maharaj has won several honors and awards including the coveted Padma Vibhushan (1986). He has been awarded with the Kalidas Samman by the Government of Madhya Pradesh. He has also been honored with Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, Soviet Land Nehru Award and Sangam Kala Award among other awards. In 2002, he was honored with the Lata Mangeshkar Puraskar. Pandit Birju Maharaj has also been conferred with honorary Doctorate degrees from Khairagarh University and Banaras Hindu University.

In 2012, he bagged the National Film Award for Best Choreography for the movie 'Vishwaroopam.' He also went on to win Tamil Nadu State Film Award for Best Choreographer for the same movie. In 2016, he bagged the Filmfare Award for Best Choreography for the film 'Bajirao Mastani'.

Birju Maharaj the Mystic

Being an ardent devotee of Lord Krishna, mysticism comes naturally to Pandit Birju Maharaj. His interest in all things spiritual and the way he observes the dance of nature (whistling of wind, rumbling of clouds, swaying of trees among other things) makes him a natural mystic.

THE FACT CORNER



When a male penguin falls in love with a female penguin, he searches the entire beach to find the perfect Pebble to present to her



A giraffe's heart weighs about 25 pounds



Planarian worms are immortal & when cut in half, they will grow a new head or tail



Catfish have over 27,000 taste buds. Humans have around 7,000

BRAIN TEASERS

1 Q. Replace the ? by the correct Mathematics symbol to make the expression true
 $18 ? 12 ? 4 ? 5 = 59$

2 Q. Solve this logic number sequence puzzle by the correct digit
 $8080 = 6$
 $1357 = 0$
 $2022 = 1$
 $1999 = 3$
 $6666 = ?$

3 Q. I know a three positive numbers that will results the same when multiplied together or added together.

4 Q. By using numbers 7,3,7,3 and with any maths signs can you make number as 24

5 Q. If $1 + 9 + 11 = 1$, Then what is the value of $12 + 11 + 9 = ?$

6 Q. Let us say that a table tennis tournament was going on with knock out terms which means the one who loses the match is out of the tournament. 100 players took part in that tournament.
How many matches were played?

7 Q. If $77x = 189x = 345x$.
What is the value of x?

5. 10
6. 99 matches.
7. 0(zero) off course.

SOLUTION:
1. $18 \times 12 \div 4 + 5 = 59$.
2. $4 \times 2 \times 3 = 6$.
3. three positive numbers
 $1 + 2 + 3 = 6$.
 $4. 7 * ((3 / 7) + 3) = 24$.
5. $12 \& 3$

English Proverbs and Meanings

* Better be the head of a dog than the tail of a lion.

It's better to be the leader of a small group than a subordinate in a bigger one.

* Better flatter a fool than fight him.

It's better to avoid disputes with stupid people.

* Better lose the saddle than the horse.

It's better to stop and accept a small loss, rather than continue and risk losing everything.

* Better untaught than ill-taught.

It's better not to be taught at all than to be taught badly.

* Blood will out.

A person's background or education will eventually show.

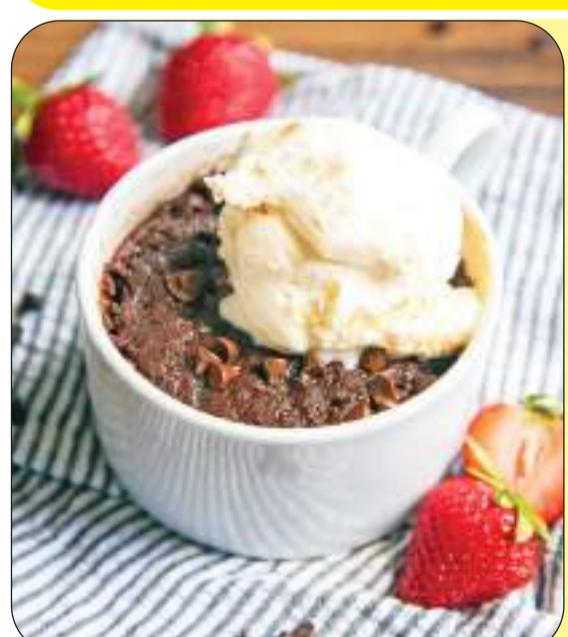
* He who plays with fire gets burnt.

If you behave in a risky way, you are likely to have problems.

* One today is worth two tomorrow.

What you have today is better than what is promised for.

5-Minute Mug Brownie



Ingredients:

3 tablespoon all purpose flour
2 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa powder
2 tablespoon vegetable oil
1 dash baking powder
3 tablespoon powdered sugar
3 tablespoon milk
4 pieces dark chocolate

Method:

Take a large microwavable mug. Through a sieve, sift the dry ingredients like all-purpose flour, powdered sugar, cocoa powder and baking powder.

Now add milk and vegetable oil to the cup. Use a fork or a spoon to give a good mix. Now dunk the chocolate pieces into the mug and cover them using the batter.

Now microwave the mug for about 3 minutes. Check by inserting a toothpick. If it comes out clean, your brownie is done. If not, then microwave for 1-2 minute more, as per the need.

Garnish with chocolate sauce (optional) and serve.

Tips

Replace all-purpose flour with wheat flour to make the brownies healthier.

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Badam Cashew Cake



Ingredients:

15 almonds
150 gm sugar
2 teaspoon ghee
100 gm dark chocolate
20 cashews
1/2 teaspoon powdered green cardamom
1 handful grated coconut

How to Proceed:

To prepare this delicious cake, soak the almonds and cashews in water until they become tender. Peel the almonds skin and keep them aside. Using the double boiler method, melt the chocolate. Grind the almonds and cashews in a mixer. In a pan, dissolve some sugar in water by boiling them together. Once the sugar has dissolved, add the cashew-badam paste, melted chocolate, cardamom, and ghee in the same pan. Mix well until you get a thick consistency. Transfer to a greased plate and allow it to cool in the refrigerator. Once chilled, garnish it with grated coconut. Cut into slices and serve!

Tips

You can also prepare this cake without the chocolate if you want to skip it.