

Katha Dance Theatre

FY25 Annual Report



Overview / Mission

Katha Dance Theatre creates, performs and educates through the art forms of dance, music, poetry and storytelling. Rooted in Kathak, the classical dance style of North India, KDT is dedicated to making dance accessible, inclusive and relevant. It enhances the local community by bridging diverse cultures and audiences to contribute to life's infinite artistic expressions.

Using a mixture of performances, touring, education, and outreach initiatives, KDT works to integrate the North Indian Kathak tradition into American culture. KDT's company not only debuts new dance works each year, but also tours worldwide to increase the form's accessibility. Rita Mustaphi founded KDT in 1987 with the goal of making the ancient Kathak dance tradition relevant and accessible across lines of generation, culture, and community--work that continues close to four decades later.

In addition to providing world-class educational programming, KDT cultivates cross-cultural creative partnerships with diverse artists to create a genre-defying repertory that conveys universal themes, embodying the connective power of dance.

By providing hybrid options for every class, KDT has continued its important work of preserving and building upon the Kathak tradition as it trains new generations of dance artists nationwide. Read on for a look back at our work during FY 2025.



Performances



KDT performers in *Panchatantra* (top) and *Nature's Revenge* (bottom). Photos by Bill Cameron and Anjana Nair.

This fiscal year, KDT premiered a brand-new work that exemplified its mission to pass down the Kathak tradition to future generations of artists and incorporate diverse influences and voices as open and accessible to all. *Panchatantra - The Dancing Tales of Wisdom* was KDT's largest-scale production in its history, with 42 intergenerational dancers comprised of its Company, apprentices, and students, even some as young as eight years old. Along with a cross-cultural composing team, costumes and animal masks imported from India and original artwork by a Minnesota-based artist, *Panchatantra* distilled Artistic Director Rita Mustaphi's pioneering vision of Kathak dance. Between its paid performances and a free school matinee, it was also seen by 1,095 people!

In the Spring of 2025, KDT toured its expanded version of *Prakritir Pratisodh - Nature's Revenge!* to Appleton, WI, where it was received with audience acclaim. 700 people came to see the show, which uses Kathak dance to emphasize the importance of maintaining a relationship of mutual respect with the earth. The show would later premiere at the O'Shaughnessy at St. Kate's in the Fall of 2025.

Audience Reactions to *Panchatantra* and *Nature's Revenge*:

"Everything was fabulous"

"There was a smile on my face throughout the entire performance! I am fond of that style of dance, the sets and costuming were magnificent, the dancers beautifully trained and the music a sheer delight. The joy of it all lasted days."

"Loved everything about it; all the dancers were awesome and performed brilliantly."

"[My favorite part was] the gentleness of it all."

"I enjoyed all of it. I missed live musicians, but I understand that was tough for such a complex program. Loved the paintings."

"The audience response was a testimony to your effort to make art relevant to all."

"It is always a rejuvenating experience watching your work that so deftly employs classical Kathak to effectively address contemporary issues that we face."

"Thanks for sharing your craft with us"

School



KDT students perform in *Sadhana*, the end-of-the-year school showcase.

KDT continues to offer hybrid learning options for every class at its school, with accessibility remaining to be at the forefront of its mission. Students learned from KDT from North Dakota, Washington, DC, Massachusetts, New York, Wisconsin and throughout the greater Twin Cities. Over 100 students were enrolled this school year, largely consistent with last fiscal year's enrollment level.

Apart from a Fall-Spring semester system, KDT also offered a Summer class session that allowed students to learn an entire dance that can be performed at Diwali festivals and other community events. One survey respondent said this about the session: "The class progressed at a good pace, covered a lot of things (footwork, mudras, spins, expression) and the meaning and history behind different aspects of the dance was explained well. It was a nice group and Shilpi is a great teacher."

Tour & Outreach



KDT performers onstage in "Prakritir Pratisodh - Nature's Revenge" at the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center in Appleton, WI

This fiscal year, KDT continued its mission to make Kathak accessible to diverse audiences. Apart from its performance in Appleton, WI, KDT also toured to Eau Claire and engaged the Lakeville community with opportunities to learn Kathak from KDT instructor Shilpi Chatterjee via its Community Education program. The number of classes offered expanded as demand grew, and the number of students ended up being approx. 30. KDT also participated in a collaborative performance with Flying Foot Forum and Zorongo Flamenco Dance Theatre entitled *Time Piece*, which was seen by over 700 people at the Park Square Theatre in May of 2025.

These programs, which included a mixture of performances, outreach (including a performance at Shakopee High School seen by 200 people) and workshops, perfectly encapsulated our overarching mission to make Kathak dance inclusive and accessible to all. Our touring and outreach programs were seen by over 1,600 people in Minnesota and Wisconsin, some of which were at no cost to audiences.

Finances

KDT Financial Sep 1, 2024-Aug 31, 2025	
INCOME	
Support	
Individual Donation	14,169
Grant-Foundation	79,500
Grant Corporation	26,375
Grant-Gov	185,158
Total Support	305,203
REVENUE	
Dance School Fee	82,697
Outreach	34,735
Admission	7,088
Interest	12,316
Total Revenue	136,836
TOTAL INCOME	442,039
EXPENSES	
Administration	76,657
Artist Fee	87,661
Audio, Photo & Video	12,611
Costume	16,240
Fees	2,443
Food & Entertainment	2,423
Independent Contractor	25,460
Information Technology	6,367
Insurance	271
Lighting Tech	5,221
Maintenance	5,105
Payroll Tax & Unemployment Insurance	15,777
Planning, Accounting	7,500
Prof Dev	300
Publicity & Marketing	13,639
Refund	855
Space	67,309
Sound Tech	2,873
Supply	9,239
Travel	2,994
Utility	1,951
TOTAL EXPENSES	362,896
In-Ex	79,143
Prepared by Kalyan Mustaphi, Exe Director	
Katha Dance Theatre; 090525	

As the above graphic shows, KDT ended the 2025 Fiscal Year (Sept. 1 2024 - Aug. 31, 2025) in the green. This was in keeping with our financial history of responsible asset management and budgeting practices. Our finances are handled by Executive Director Kalyan Mustaphi, who capably manages day-to-day KDT operations to ensure the organization's longterm well-being.

KDT's finances are also reviewed in detail at bi-monthly board meetings, where development and financial best practices are discussed. Further, we've taken steps to streamline financial management by working with a consultant to transition all of our bookkeeping to Quickbooks. Other measures taken to ensure KDT's financial success include having our General Manager (Nina Hagen) help with grant writing, reporting and fundraising work as needed.

Our board of directors also grew to 8 diverse members this fiscal year.

2025 Ernie Award



Rita Mustaphi being presented with the 2025 Ernie Award in Chicago. Photo courtesy of Dance/USA

KDT Founder and Artistic Director Rita Mustaphi was named the 2025 winner of Dance/USA's prestigious Ernie Award.

As they put it, "The 'Ernie' Award is given to an individual working 'behind the scenes' within the infrastructure of the national dance community, who has demonstrated extraordinary leadership, outstanding value in the ecosystem, and whose achievements have influenced and significantly advanced the work of artists and supported their creativity."

Rita joined a small group of winners for the organization's 2025 awards, which "have been given to extraordinary leaders in the dance ecosystem, both artists and administrators, over the past thirty years." The award was formally presented at Dance/USA's national conference on June 17 in Chicago.

In his introductory speech, Kalyan Mustaphi said in part: "[Rita] loves to teach children with care, love, compassion and gives them courage. With her trained, strong and dedicated company and apprentice dancers, she [...] invites their input in her choreography. [KDT] is her harmonious dance family. She collaborates with dancers & musicians of various ethnicities and art forms [...]. She strongly believes that tradition and innovation are compatible partners. I am so proud of her success. She has accomplished things unheard of and has served as a powerful female leader and mentor to hundreds of people around the world."



To learn more about our programs,
visit <https://www.kathadance.org>



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