leela academy

NYC Kathak Summer Immersion Program

Rolling Applications Open Until May 19, 2023

A special opportunity to take a 3-week, in-person immersive in New York City with renowned kathak artist and sought- after teacher, Rachna Nivas, a founding artist of Leela Institute of Kathak.

Students will engage deeply with Leela's curriculum, grounded in teachings and philosophies of legendary master Pandit Chitresh Das, including rigorous training in kathak technique and movement, deep exploration and interplay with taal (complex rhythms and mathematics), study in abhinaya (art of mime and storytelling), and foundational lessons in North Indian classical music. Training on the dance floor will be complemented with education in Indian history and philosophy, special guest artist talks, and exclusive archival video viewing.

GUIDELINES

- Participants must submit a brief application.
- Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis, first-come, first-served through May 19, 2023.
- Accepted applicants will be notified as they come in. You must submit payment to secure your spot.
- Ages 16 and up.
- A dance and/or music background is preferred but not required.
- This will be an intensive experience and is designed for aspiring dancers, practitioners, and/or enthusiastic students of the Indian arts.
- Students who complete the program will have the opportunity to continue their training at an accelerated pace at Leela.

LOCATION

Wednesday, Aug 9th - Wednesday, Aug 30th (Mon-Fri) | 6pm-9pm
Ripley-Grier Studios, 520 8th Ave, Manhattan

TUITION

$865 + $20 theory booklet*

While we are not offering scholarships, students experiencing financial hardship may apply to do a work-study project. Please note that we do not allow work study projects to cover the entire cost of the tuition, but can potentially cover up to 70%, determined on a case by case basis.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q I am only able to do 2 of the weeks, not all three. Can I still do it?
A No, this program is designed to be for the full three weeks. The program builds on itself throughout the course and it is imperative that participants attend the full program.

Q I have had previous kathak training. Will this be too beginner for me?
A No not at all! Please indicate your prior training in your application when that question comes up. The program will be designed and taught based on the experience level of the participants and the wide ocean of knowledge that Indian classical dance has to offer - every student will be challenged to their individual capacities. Having said that, we do believe deeply at Leela Academy in the guru-shishya parampara. Philosophies and approaches differ a great deal between schools and we do not encourage students to go outside of their current training as it can be confusing and detrimental to your learning. If you are still studying with another teacher, please speak with them about your interest in this program.

Q I have other dance experience but have never studied kathak. Can I still apply?
A Absolutely! And we encourage it. Dance experience of any kind will be helpful. Having a music background can also be very helpful because of the nature of kathak dance being seamlessly intertwined with music and rhythm.

Q I do not have any dance experience at all. Can I still apply?
A Yes you can. If you are passionate about learning, have an open mind, and are willing to roll up your sleeves and work hard, sky's the limit.

Q What is the age range for this program?

A The minimum age is 16. While we do not have a maximum age limit, it should be noted that this is a very rigorous program! It is meant to push students beyond their comfort zone and boundaries - physically, emotionally, and spiritually. If you are looking to stand in the back and be unnoticed, this is not the program for you.

Q Is there a showing? When is it and can I invite my friends?

A There will be a showcase performance on the last day. You will have the opportunity to share your hard work with friends and family!

Q What is the dress code for classes?

A Students should wear a kurta (preferably cotton) to class with churidar or salwar. Hair should be tied back in a neat bun or a braid. Long braids should be pinned to kurtas to avoid injury during swift turns.

Q Can I video the classes?

A A critical skill for all kathak dancers is the ability to improvise. Improvising requires a highly aware and attuned mind, as well as the ability to grasp and retain material quickly. At Leela we aim to begin developing this skill early. Utilizing videos as an aid to learning interferes with the ability to train a sharp mind and memory. As a result, we do not allow students to video classes. We do however provide ample tools and materials to help students in their study and practice.

Q I cannot afford the program but I am very passionate about doing the program. Do you have any scholarship programs?

A We do not offer scholarships for this program but our fundamental principle is that money should not come in the way of anyone's strong desire to acquire knowledge of this incredible art. If you have a financial hardship to pay your tuition, we do offer a work-study program. Please indicate your interest in your application.

Q I do not live in New York City, but I would like to come and attend the program. Will I be able to continue my studies with your school once the program is over?

A Yes! We hope that you do! If you live in one of the four cities that we offer classes - New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, or Denver - then you will be able to attend classes in person building on what you learned in the immersion program. If you do not live in one of these locations, you will have the opportunity to take virtual classes with the aim that you try to attend offered intensives or retreats in-person as much as possible.

Additional questions? *Send an email to newyork@leela.dance*