



Ileana Citaristi



ILEANA CITARISTI • Italian by birth, has been living in Orissa, India, since 1979 • Learnt Chhau (Mayurbhanj) under the guidance of Guru Shri Hari Nayak & Odissi from Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra (Padma Vibhushan) • Has many years of experience in traditional as well as experimental theatre in Europe • Founded Art Vision (1995) to teach Odissi & Chhau to visiting students. Organises annual Festival of Films on performing & visual arts and the Kalinga Festival – Festival of Martial Dances & does innovative choreography in Mayurbhanji Chhau like the one on the Greek myth 'Echo & Narcissus' • Ph. D on 'Psychoanalysis and eastern mythology' • Authored a book on Kelucharan Mohapatra's life titled 'The Making of a Guru' (2001) • Received Padma Shri (2006), 'Leonide Massine for the art of dance' in Italy (1992), 'National Award for best choreography' for dance direction in Bengali film 'Yugant' directed by Aparna Sen

MAYURBHANJ CHHAU • Chhau dance is an Indian tribal martial dance which is popular in Seraikella (Bihar), Purulia (West Bengal) & Mayurbhanj (Orissa). Based on the place of origin and development, the dance is called Seraikella Chhau, Mayurbhanj Chhau or Purulia Chhau • It is also called paika nrutya. The word paika is derived from the Sanskrit word Padatika meaning the infantry - hence the name of the dance is paika (battle) nrutya (dance). The primary aim of this dance was the development of physical excitement & courage in the dancing warriors • Maharaja Shriram Chandra Bhanjdeo & Pratap Chandra Bhanjdeo, one of the builders of modern Orissa composed the famous War-Dance • Instruments accompanying chhau performances are Mohuri (a unique wind instrument), Chad-Chadi, Dhol, Dhumsa. Chhau comprises six Chalis or Topka (basic steps) and 36 uflis (jumping locomotions) which are drawn from rural house hold activities, the behaviour of animals & birds & actions of war. The Mayurbhanj repertoire treasures the highest number of dance items at 200. The solo pieces are Dandi, Mahadev, Sabar Toka, Nataraj and Jambab, etc. The famous group presentations are Kirat Arjun, Mayasabari, Tamudia Krishna, Matrpuja, Kelakeluni, Dhajatal, Bainshi Chori, Kailash Leela etc. • The presiding deity of Mayurbhanj Chhau is Lord Bhairab