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## Synergy in Bharatanatyam and contemporary dance at Renjith & Vijna

October 25, 2016 · [Blog](#) · [Leave a comment](#)



"INFINITY, Taru, Renjith & Vijna. Photo: Sunny Jagesar.

Expectations are high among visitors: in 2015 were [Renjith & Vijna](#) one of the highlights of the festival, thanks to their perfect synchronous execution of Bharatanatyam. In 2016 they were invited again, this time to create their own modern dance piece led by artistic director Leo Spreksel in four weeks. This is the premiere on Friday 20 October.

### Margam

Sharon Wezer presents the classic section before the break. She explains that *Margam* means a program. The artist makes a conscious choice of its repertoire for a particular audience at a particular time in a particular place. Evening Renjith & Vijna chose three items: Pushpaanjali, Dashaavataara and Bhajan.

Pushpaanjali addressed to Ganesha, the god with the elephant head. He is often called within Hinduism at the start of a new journey or enterprise. Direct Renjith and Vijna impress with highly synchronous movements. This is something they, as appears in the discussion afterwards, a year ahead of schedule to achieve. In 2007, they met at a dance and in 2011 they married. Long as a year, without a mirror, worked to coordinate their movements and postures. As Renjith said, for *flavor* to get. In Pushpaanjali is it to see the result: in both slow and fast depiction fit combinations they form a unit. Finally Vijna late in beautiful poses see

Ja, hou mij  
op de hoogte!

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Odissi Dance  
Workshop -  
Embodying  
Sculptures Temple  
(Den Haag)

May 14 @ 10:00 - June  
4th @ 12:30

Classical Dance  
Workshop Sattriya  
(Leiden)

May 20 @ 14:00 - 16:00

Monsoon Night:  
India Yatra (The  
Hague)

May 27 @ 20:00 - 22:00

India Yatra  
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June 2 @ 20:00 - 22:00

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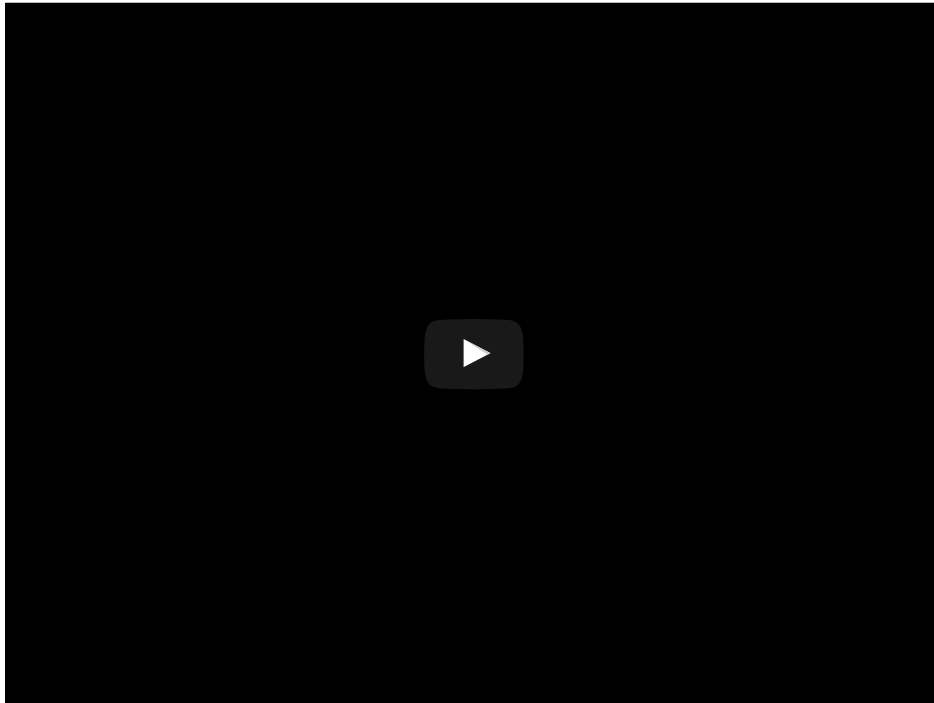
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different representations of Ganesh. This item ends with Ganesh, riding his mount mouse, vividly portrayed by Renjith. For Dashaavataara presents Vijna standing in a spotlight, the illustrated by Sharon Wezer ten avatars of Vishnu. Even from this visual explanation speaks her mastery of Bharatanatyam: I'm completely hypnotized. No nervous glances at the host (because it goes too fast or too slow) but a beautiful quiet padding, highly controlled. Interesting topic for a workshop?

This Dashaavataara was composed and choreographed by prof. CV Chandrasekhar, Renjith's *guru*, a *ashtapadi* (a 12th century poem by Sri Jayadeva about the love between Krishna and Radha). Sometimes Renjith & Vijna seem to interact together in a magical way, through meticulous movements, for example, at the churning of the ocean of milk. The portrayal of the dwarf Vamana, that King Bali with his ruse stripping properties. By clever use of position on the podium, and high and low positions, the portrayal of the story is very vivid. Vijna start with bravado as king Bali, just before Renjith on stage. Renjith makes small and gets his wish: three steps of the land of King Bali. Once king Bali agreed, Vamana begins to grow tremendously (now state Renjith before), so he steps back in two steps over heaven and the underworld. King Bali realizes that this is Vishnu, and Vamana offers his head to resign last. In Dashaavatara: perfectly synchronized, unity, transcendent. Renjith make huge jumps, it looks as if he lingers in the air.



The last item on the break Bhajan, in which the dancers portray the meeting of Radha and Krishna. Krishna appears, playing with a ball. Full of enthusiasm and confidence Renjith jumps across the stage. Until Radha appears: he wants to get to know her. He tucked his flute and peacock feather and speaks to her. Renjith plays the mischievous Krishna with infectious pleasure. Radha does have him: are not you the guy who stole butter? Dancing with all the girls? Radha Krishna finally wins his flute. Renjith & Vijna show an ultimate rendition of Kalakshetra Bharatanatyam: neat, with perfect body control, stamina and rich expression.

Taru

Natya Sudha 2016: a representation of a thriving Bharatanatyam dance Jolanda Boejharat, 25 years a key figure in Indian dance Netherlands





Taru. Photo: Sunny Jagesar.

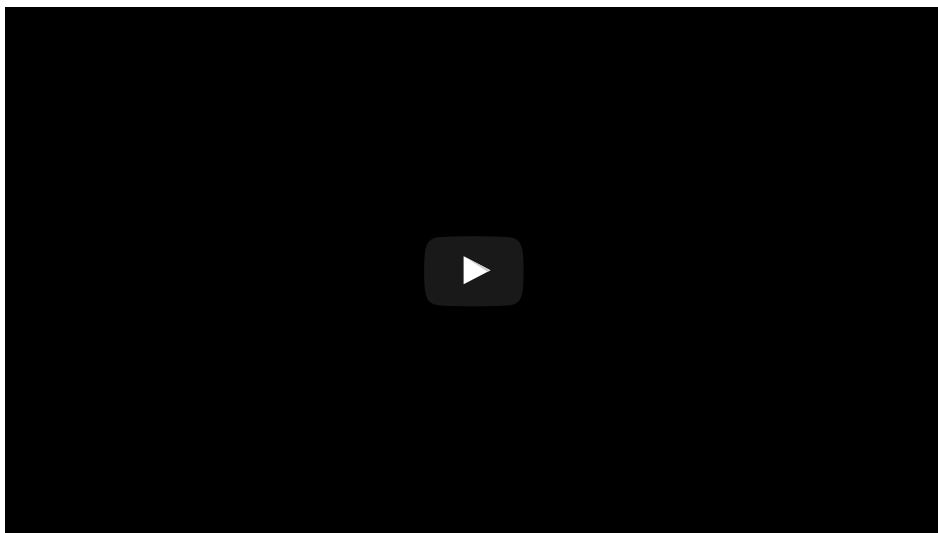
Taru (Sanskrit for tree) is "an ode to the challenging but wonderful life process of creation and growth", as can be read in the program. The piece starts with a dark male voice, which seems to speak Icelandic. In the discussion afterwards, the authors talk about the hope that the document would never be heard by an Icelandic speaking person - but of course ... there was an Icelander in the audience! Despite restricting the snippet, the text perfectly correct Taru. It is a poem about nature, creation, and a river of fire. In a dark theater runs Vijna, dark simple *salwaar* slowly across the stage. She shows running different emotions. Really beautiful it is when Renjith & Vijna form a slow unit and create repeating patterns: for example, when they put the head alternately on each shoulder. A "fluctuating spectacle" by the coming together of Shiva and Shakti. Perfect synergy. In Taru are also Bharatanatyam-like passages: synchronous, fast, energetic, high jumps. But the magical, transcendent atmosphere they can create in classical Bharatanatyam is palpable in Taru. Energy seems to be manipulated with 'new' *mudras* and movements. Thanks for their strength as Bharatanatyam dancers also the modern dance emerges. The show ends with Renjith, slowly walking away backwards when he cries, angry, frightened, laughing: *Navarasa* in modern dance.

Modern dance is less easy to interpret than Bharatanatyam. In Bharatanatyam often tells a story, modern dance challenges the viewer to feel yourself what it does to him. Renjith & Vijna tell the aftertalk their *gurus* ( *CV Chandrasekhar* and *The Dhananjayans* ) very open to other dance forms. Therefore, they gladly accepted the invitation of Korzo (sponsored by Jiří Kylián Foundation). It was the first modern dance in which they play a role in creating it. Sometimes she felt lost, Leo Spreksel helped them further. They dance just like modern and classical Bharatanatyam: the two dance styles where different ways of working and thinking are needed. In India, modern dance more and more accepted, there are already classical dancers in transition. They want to show Taru in India? Yes! The audience will have a critical look at, but they want to show you this.

strengthen all program components together. In classical Bharata Natyam they show their mastery, Taru is therefore more powerful, more worn. The aftertalk open and sparkling, there is plenty of laughter. I love this night very close to me. That has everything to do with the people who Renjith & Vijna radiate to be: warm, authentic, committed to their dance. Delicious!



"You never sit still!" Renjith, Vijna and Leo Spreksel in the discussion afterwards. Photo: Sunny Jagesar.



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**Marjol Rooze**

I learned Bharata Natyam between 2004 and 2012 Aartie Jagmohan (dance Madhoerie, Nijmegen). I have great memories of the shows with the troupe, including in India. In 2012 I started training religious studies (Radboud University Nijmegen), because I'm interested in the spiritual side of dance, even given the recent transformation of temple ritual to performing. In 2013 I have been in India dancers, teachers and public interviewed about their personal experiences with bharatanatyam. In 2015 I successfully completed this examination and training off. The end of 2015 I started [www.indiaseklassiekedans.nl](http://www.indiaseklassiekedans.nl).

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