

Love What You Love Podcast

Episode 17: Classical Indian Dance with Ajeetha Gnanasambandan

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Hey, I'm Julie Rose. Welcome to *Love What You Love*. I'm an author, creator, and enthusiast, and I've always been fascinated by the things that people are super into, because they're always a unique expression of curiosity, and joy, and wonder. So every week I'll introduce you to another fascinating human who's into really interesting stuff.

Welcome back! Or, Welcome! A little bit of housekeeping up front. Episode transcripts, which are created by the fabulous Emily White, are now available for everyone on the *Love What You Love* website. They're all PDFs, and the files for all 16 episodes so far are linked there. If you ever have issues with downloading the transcripts, or if you have questions, or if you just want to say hi, you can email me at LoveWhatYouLovePod@gmail.com. With that business out of the way, let's get on with the show.

Ajeetha Gnanasambandan is an accomplished performer who is absolutely passionate about classical Indian dance, particularly Bharathanatyam, the oldest classical dance tradition in India, which dates to about the 2nd century CE. It was outlawed by the British in 1910, but the Indian independence movement in the early 20th century led to a renaissance of the dance form as a way to recover culture and to celebrate history.

Ajeetha and I chat about \$20,000 dance graduations, empathy and performance, dance as devotion, and so much more. So find out why Ajeetha loves classical Indian dance, and why you might learn to love it too.

Julie: Hello, Ajeetha. Thank you so much for joining me today.

Ajeetha: Thank you, Julie. I'm so excited. I don't know whether I will do justice to this, but I'll try my very best.

Julie: Oh, I know you will. We have known each other for a number of years now. I can't believe how much time has gone by. One of the things I really know about you is, any time there's something going on at work that involves getting people together, you love to perform, and you love to dance. I want to understand more about that. Where did that come from? What kind of dance styles do you perform? What is that impulse? Why do you love to perform and to dance?

Ajeetha: I feel that's the human form which can express love to the fullest, or joy to the fullest. The whole body, your eyes, your hands, the whole body is expressing joy. I really, really feel it when I dance. When did I start learning dance? I think when I was like six years old. I'm not very sure. Much younger than that, I feel. But it was such a coincidence that my neighbor, she was joining a dance class, and she came to my mom and said, "I'm joining this dance class. Do you want to send your daughters to dance?"

At the time, I was there in the room and both my sisters were not there, so my mother was like, "Do you want to dance?" And I'm like, "Yeah, I don't mind." So I just tagged along with this girl and went to this dance class. I still remember as though it was yesterday, a very simple house, like a street house, and they were teaching this traditional Indian dance called Bharathanatyam. It very popular in the state I come from, Tamil Nadu.

In India there are different states, and there about six states whose dance form is very popular. Tamil Nadu's popular dance form is called Bharathanatyam, so that's when I got introduced to dance. I didn't realize that it was something that would be part of my life throughout my life, even now. I know it will continue forever with me as long as my physical self will allow. I just enjoy to the core when I listen to music that has the dance beat, and I start dancing.

It started there, and as my dad was moving to other homes, it so happened there would be a dance school nearby, which is not very common. But it so happened there would be a dance school and the same dance form also that I continued learning for a long time.

Julie: So when you were going to these dance schools, were there, like, dance recitals? What were your opportunities to perform when you were young?

Ajeetha: This dance form takes a while for you to learn and then perform, so for quite some time you don't get to perform because they have a syllabus, and here, especially in the US, it takes ten years for kids to learn this dance form and then perform. But in India, because we used to go quite often... Here they only go once a week to dance school. That's how it is in most of the dance schools here. Whereas in India we used to go twice a week, and it made a huge difference.

But still, to get to that perfection and to get that expression... Some of the songs are based off of emotions that you have to emote, right? And for that you need to get to that age where you can show those emotions easily. And the steps are so heavy. There is a syllabus that you will go through, about 14 sets of steps, and each set by itself would have, like, on average five to eight different steps. So it takes a while for your body to get that dance form in the perfect position that you've got to do; the position of your legs and your hands, the firmness that the body needs.

Not everyone would like this dance form because of how tedious and painful the legs can get. It's not something that is very much welcomed by everyone because it's traditional dance form. It's not like Bollywood where it's, like, a jolly dance and people enjoy it, right? This dance form is more for God. Most of the songs are about God, and each of the gods, and what each of the gods represents, is what most of the dance songs are on. So, it's not very popular for the general public, but there are traditional people who not only cherish it but they feel it's a divine form. They feel so serene when they come and sit there and watch it, with so much honor and respect that they watch a dance form as though a god or goddess has come to dance for them.

Julie: Now, do you feel serene when you're dancing, or do you feel, kind of, that range of emotions that you were talking about before? Where do you go in your head, or in your spirit when you're dancing?

Ajeetha: When I do the dance I totally become that person. So, if I represent, say, the goddess Durga, or... there are so many different gods, and obviously the lyrics would also have a meaning, so I become that person. Otherwise I would not be able to do justice to the dance. And I was lucky to be taught by the National Dancer of India. She was National Dancer for quite some time. When she taught me, she was very young, and she did not know that she would become a national dancer. So, I was so very lucky because there were a bunch of kids, we were dancing, and she was taught by the guru who was, like, a founder of the dance school. Occasionally he used to visit, and one particular day he

was there, and she walked in and she said, "I would like to teach dance for these kids because I moved here and I just want a group of kids that I can teach."

I was so lucky that my then-dance teacher, he just picked me and said, "Okay, you can take her." Six of us. So, six of us go to her and I started enjoying the dance, like, a million times more because of the way she taught, the passion she had, and the perfection she wanted us to get. I'm so lucky to have gotten her. I could see that I loved this dance form. I would wait to go to dance class, whereas other kids would go, "Oh, I have to go to dance class because my mom wants me to."

When I was in ninth grade or so, when I became a little bigger, my mom didn't want me to dance. She felt like... We're a more conservative family so she felt like, "Oh on stage you're going to dance in front of all these guys..." And I used to fight that I wanted to continue dance.

Julie: And how old is this dance form?

Ajeetha: People say it's, like, thousands of years. We really don't know. But how it started was devadasis, they're called. The entertainment in those days... Let's assume a thousand years, right? The entertainment they had was in the temple, the community would meet, and in those days they used to have stories about God. There are two great epics in India, which are *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa*. There would be stories about that, and *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* have short stories within them also. So the entertainment was people would come and sit down, and there would be this well-educated priest or scholar who would come and sit down, and he would tell those stories. Then the music would have accompanied, I guess, and then this dance form where most of the dances would be on those stories.

So, the devadasis were a group of women, in each of these temples they would go and dance. If you see some of the... We call it the mudras, where there's some sort of a posture or pose that you show, and most of the postures or poses would be similar to the sculptures that you see in the temple. The sculptures would be sculptures of God in the temple. If you've seen any of the Indian temples here, it'll be a huge temple with a lot of carvings in the temple, right?

Each of our gods would have an animal that represents them, and they would use that animal like a pet for them, and they would go around in that animal form. There's one god, Murugan, and he used to travel sitting on a peacock. Durga, she represent killing evil, so she would be on a lion. Then they would have weapons, and most of the gods' stories would be about how they kill evil men or women. Something evil that's happening, they are born in a human form and they would kill that evil being.

So, most of the stories would be like that, so the postures that we did would be with that kind of a weapon that we'll show, or the animal that we'll show, and base it on that animal. In the devadasis, that was their life. They would go perform, and the kings, queens, the lords, whoever, would gift them with something. That's how this dance form evolved. And now it is very, very popular in Tamil Nadu and in all of India too, because this is one of the oldest dance forms in India and they want to maintain its richness. Also because it is associated with the Hindu gods and the parents would want the kids to learn this.

Apart from the dance, and you imbibe something, and you represent a god, and you dance, you can bring a lot of good messages to people. You tell the stories of Hinduism. It's all about good over evil. I feel like it has a message too that you away

with. It's not just for entertainment. And of course it's such a physically... It keeps you really fit, not only physically but mentally too. I don't know whether you've seen certain dances of this. There are heavy steps and very fast beats, and you have to keep up with that from your head to your toe. Your hands, your eyes, expressions, neck movement. I feel it's such a wonderful exercise for your brain too because it has to keep itself coordinated with the music.

Julie: And you must be, like, very serene once you're done, because that must be quite a physical, mental, emotional workout.

Ajeetha: It's beautiful. Once you go on stage, and the music starts, and you're performing, I feel like I'm a different person, because I'm not anymore Ajeetha there. I am a goddess, meaning any movement of my body is totally like a goddess. And yes, of course, after the dance you literally feel like you are a god, and after you complete it you'll become Ajeetha again, you know? You really would feel that way if you're really cherishing and performing to its truest form. That's how you would feel. And of course, after you complete doing it, especially if it's a heavy piece, a step-oriented dance item, then you really feel like, "Thank God I got it down."

Julie: A couple of questions. When did you come to the US, and when you did, did you continue to dance when you got here?

Ajeetha: See, my mom didn't want me to continue dance, so unfortunately I had to quit. The way this dance form goes is that once you complete learning it... before you complete, you kind of get a graduation on it. They make you dance small, small items here and there, and then the teacher would say, "Okay, you have now come to a level where you can do your debut dance," like a solo dance. That is very, very grand. It's like a graduation that you've learned this dance form, you've completed it. So it's like... I won't call it an exam, but it's more so of showing the world that you have got it and you're doing a solo performance.

So, it is very expensive also sometimes, because you have to find an auditorium, you have to pay for the musicians because of the live music, and then your costumes... It can be very expensive. Some of the dance teachers, they charge a lot too. So I didn't get to that level.

Before that they have something called salangai pooja. Salangai means anklet, and you do a pooja to it, because you have a huge anklet around your ankle which creates that sound, which aligns with the music as well. I did a salangai pooja, which is exactly the same items that you would have done arangetram, which is the solo debut performance that you do in front of the whole audience. Here, you just call a few people like your family members and your dance students, of course. It's more so maybe like 75 people, that's it. So I just did that, and after that my mom didn't allow me to perform or anything so I had to quit dance.

Then in college, because it was a women's college... The first year of college they made us perform something as juniors, and then they recognized me, that I could dance, and then I got a lot of opportunities to dance. And my mom said, "Okay, because it's a women's college, that's fine." I was a dance president for three years. I used to win in all the competitions.

When I came to the US, then I got married... After coming out of college, I really didn't have any opportunity. I got married, then my daughter was born, I'd just come to US... Oh yeah, I got an opportunity to dance on Singapore television.

Julie: What?? Really?!

Ajeetha: I don't know how this connection happened. Someone asked me, "Do you want to dance?" And I'm like, "Yeah, I can." I think my neighbor or someone... So, for one of the Indian festivals I went to the television studio and I danced. Then I came to the US, by then my daughter was ready to start learning dance, so I went there and used to sit with the teacher and help her teach the rest of the kids. I did that for, like, 10 years. And whenever she had a production I would perform with her, a little bit here and there. Not much because I started to have some knee problems. This dance form, if you don't do it properly, or if you leave a gap and by then you've put on a lot of weight... which I did. After my daughter was born I was pretty heavy, and I think that would have impacted my knees, I guess.

Then I started my own dance school. I'd lost some weight, I had a lot of time, my daughter was almost going to college, so I had so much time on hand, so I started my own dance school. I had, like, 20 kids. They learned, like, until high school level of dance from me. But since I discontinued my dance long ago, when they came to a level where I could not support that, I gave them to another dance teacher. And actually the dance teacher was very happy because all the... You know, getting the actual form and the steps, that takes a lot of time. Once they get all those things, then the rest of the items can be taught

Julie: Being in the Bay Area, was there more of a chance to find students for this particular form of dance?

Ajeetha: You would not believe... Indians are all over the US, I think. And especially where it's IT-prone cities, you see a lot of Indians, right? So, even here, so many people have asked me, "Why don't you start a dance class?" Very high demand. It has its perfection that I'm not up to yet because I quit that dance form for a long time. Now, if you see some of the teachers, just amazing; the choreography, and the creations are so beautiful that I feel like I would not do justice with this dance form. So I would say, "No, why don't you go to this teacher..." But the teachers cannot take more students, especially in the Bay Area. I have my full-time job too, and weekends I do not want to teach for money. It's more so the passion that I have.

I would make sure that the perfection is there for the kids. The kids start at the age of five-and-a-half or six because the parents are like, "Oh, I don't want to lose out on this." When the kids come around that age, it won't be fun for the kids if I just say, "Come on, sit." And it's not a very easy dance posture that you maintain. The kids want to enjoy it, right? So I make it, like, a one-and-a-half to two hours class, and I'll play with them, sing with them, and make it more of a fun experience for them and teach them.

I taught for six or seven years, and I had a real good time with my kids. I love kids, so I really cherished those moments. Sometimes I would think, "Maybe I should start one and have a deal with the senior teachers saying that I would teach to this level and then you can take the kids."

Julie: I'm curious too about the dance styles. You mentioned some of the teachers do choreography, so it's kind of like you learn this syllabus, and then different teachers or choreographers can interpret it in new ways. Is that right?

Ajeetha: Yes. It's such a wonder that we have, like, two hands and two legs but the variations that it can do is just mind blowing, really. Some of the choreography, it's like, "Wow!" It's so beautiful. Of course, it's along with the music. The music is also evolving as we speak. Even now, they are about God, and the inner life of God, and whatever, but I think there are certain other songs that they're trying where they want to make it more contemporary to the stories which are happening now, real life, what's happening, and relate to it, and compose some lyrics out of it.

So, I think the lyrics, the music, dance, the makeup, everything is evolving. For this particular dance there is a particular costume that you wear, and the jewelry that you wear, and it's because you are representing a goddess in most of the songs. The Indian Hindu goddesses, they wear a lot of jewelry, and the richness of God shows up in that abundance, so that has evolved as well.

Now there is a fusion dance where you have... Bharathanatyam is a traditional dance, and there's a fusion with Bollywood, with Western music, creativity can go to different heights that you would not even imagine. It has evolved a lot.

Julie: I know when I've seen you perform it seems like it was Bollywood dance.

Ajeetha: Yes.

Julie: So is that really more of what you do now for fun?

Ajeetha: Yes, because Bharathanatyam, I'm still working on my knees. I'm trying to get my hamstrings and calf muscles strengthened so that it's not so much on my knees. But I do have a goal. I want to get back to my traditional Indian dance to do a heavy piece called thillana, which has a lot of steps in it. Very intricate, very... too much on the knees it would be, but I'm hoping I'll get there one day. But in the meantime, yes, Bollywood is also a very, very jolly music dance. Anyone would cherish it; anyone would enjoy that music.

I'm not very good at choreographing Bollywood, rather the traditional dance to some extent I could choreograph because I've been drenched in it from a young age. But Bollywood, if you take one dance-speed Bollywood song just released, say, today, within a matter of a week there will be hundreds of choreographies on YouTube. So, I would copy from them and just perform.

Julie: So, I'm really interested to know, when you're doing your traditional dance versus your Bollywood dance, how are you feeling different? What's going on inside of you during those two dances?

Ajeetha: A true dancer would become what they are in the dance, right? When it's a traditional dance there's so much respect to the art form, and it's very auspicious when you do that traditional dance form and you get into that space. I think its music... because I'm so very familiar with the temples, I've been to the temple, and when you get into a temple you get into a different frequency within you, right? Something serene happens in you. Even when I go to a church I feel that way. Similarly, when you do a traditional form, it's totally... you get into that mode. I think it's also the posture and the positioning of the steps you do that gets you into that space easily as well.

Whereas Bollywood is more so... some of the dances are extremely opposite, where this girl is like, "I'm so pretty. See, I am..." and you're trying to attract someone, you know, "I'm going shopping, why don't you come along with me?" and things like that. So, that's a jolly kind of dance, and it's for a lighter crowd for entertainment and fun. Whereas in the traditional dance, it's not fun as such, but it gives a different ambience to the people who are watching that.

Julie: You mentioned your daughter performed. Does she still perform or did she, kind of, move on to other things?

Ajeetha: Well, she got a chance to do the solo performance. So, she got trained for almost seven to eight years here, and then she was lucky because her dance teacher in the Bay Area was going to India, and she said... By then, Sindhu was ready for her arangetram. And arangetram is a big deal when you get into this dance form. That's how you feel complete and that you've achieved something. So, she asked her whether Sindhu would like to do it, and I could not afford to have an arangetram here in the Bay Area because it's very expensive; auditorium, and coordinating, and all that.

So, I was almost... Sindhu, my daughter, also felt like it's not worth it. "It's okay Ma, I learned the dance form and I can use it for any performances." But then since her teacher said, "You can go to India," that was even better and ideal for us because all our relatives are there. So, she got to do a very authentic dance there. We invited the then-National Dancer of India, who was not the same person who taught me. She had come as the chief guest for her performance.

Julie: Wow!

Ajeetha: Yeah, Sindhu was very lucky. And Sindhu did a fantastic job too, because her teacher was also a perfectionist, so she taught her really well. Now she's very busy with work, but she and I, we are thinking of just coming up with a YouTube performance sometime soon.

Julie: Yes, do that! Do that! That would be amazing. Does this traditional dance form... it sounds like... Does it turn you into a perfectionist, or do you have to already be a perfectionist to get into it?

Ajeetha: I feel that dance is something that can... I would not say it's as much as singing, where singing you need to have the voice, right? You can try to practice a lot and try getting some movements, but for some people it comes so easily. For me, I would say I got it very easily. I think it was inborn in me, I would say. Like the expressions... Expressions is another major thing.

In this traditional dance form, there are three facets. The first one would be the steps that you do, because the beat... every time you hit your feet, there are different variations, combinations, and they need to align with the music. And the music can be very fast, and you have to align with that. There are different sets of steps that you can do, that is one facet.

The second one is mudra. The first one is called jaati, where there's a lot of steps, and then the mudras are the postures that you show with your hands, and your legs, and the whole body to represent any god or goddess. And the third one is your expression. It's so heavy on expressions because most of the time the audience gets attracted to the face. You watch the expression of the person, and the rest of the things are

complimentary; your hands and legs are complimentary. All put together, you feel like, "Okay, it's a good dance."

So when you see a solo performance... If it's a group of people it's more of a synchronization, like, are they synced together for your eyes to see. But when you see a solo performance it's more so the expression. So we give a lot of importance to showing emotions, expressions, and that is something which has to come naturally. I feel you need to have a lot of empathy within you to become a traditional Bharathanatyam dancer. That's when you can emote those feelings. You cannot try to 'act' emotional. You have to feel the emotion. It will show that you're acting, and you lose it there. Your audience is like, "Oh, she's acting." You know?

Julie: Faking it.

Ajeetha: Yeah. And the beauty of the song... everything loses its authenticity right there.

Julie: So has there been anything in this journey that has been surprising to you? Either about the dance itself, or maybe things you've learned about yourself, has anything been surprising for you?

Ajeetha: I wouldn't say surprising. What I feel is... This dance form is so beautiful. At the same time, when they do, like, a solo performance and it will be for one-and-a-half hours that you perform.

Julie: Oh my god!

Ajeetha: Yeah, and it'll be like... You do seven items. You do four items, one after the other, and then there is a break, and then you do the other three items. The fourth item that you do would be for half an hour, and the half-hour dance would be so... You should have gained the stamina to dance it, because it does have expressions like you're telling a story, narrating something, where it's not too much on your bodies. But there are jaatis, heavy steps, that you're doing in between that can tire you out.

How can we make it... Because it's always a repetition of the same stories, like *Ramayana* and *Mahābhārata*, so people in the audience will already know the story that you're going to express in that song, so I think it would be nice to... And as I said, there are variations, they are evolving, they are coming up with other things, but how can we make it more attractive for the general public? And we may have to give in here and there, especially because it has its own strict rules as to, "This is how you've got to do this."

That's why this fusion is coming in place right now. That's something which I think... areas that the teachers who put a lot of time and effort, and the lyricists and the musicians can think about, as to how they can give a different variation, huge variation that could attract the general public too.

The general public... Don't get me wrong, because they would get attracted for sure because the costume is so rich, and you're performing. And why all these parents want their girls to learn is because there is beauty in it. But to watch for one-and-a-half hours, rather come up with some story which has some message to convey, at the same time some entertainment, and a totally different story that keeps the audience engaged.

Julie: So if someone listening to this podcast... Two things. One, if they want to learn more about it or attend a performance, where would they go? And two, if they wanted to learn it themselves, where would they go?

Ajeetha: Obviously, learning by themselves, YouTube has the complete... the steps I was talking about, which takes two years to learn all the steps. There are 14 sets of steps, and each set by itself would have variation of an average of five to seven steps in it, I would say. So to learn that, although you can memorize in your head, but for your body to get it, it would take time. So, there are YouTube links. When I was teaching my kids I used to look at YouTube for the different steps. So that's one.

YouTube has tons, and tons, and tons of Bharathanatyam videos. Different beautiful ones. Once you sit in it, especially a person like me who has a passion for dance, you can go for hours watching the dance. To go in person and learn would be the best, I would say, because it's not just the discipline that you need, it's also the joy that you get by going in person and learning with a teacher as well as other students.

There are a lot of dance schools in the Bay Area. You can just enter Bharathanatyam classes, google it, there will be so many classes that come up. Pretty popular teachers there in the Bay Area, it's very difficult to get into a class. There's waiting lists. But I'm sure there's a lot of small schools trying to get recognition, and now I think they've come to a point where all the kids who have learned, they are starting dance schools too.

Julie: So would you say... If I wanted to go see one of these performances in person, outside of the context of you giving your final performance as a graduation, like, are there festivals? Are there places where people can go just to see this dance in person?

Ajeetha: Definitely. The best place to go and get to understand what I'm talking about, because I said, like, it takes ten years, and it's a strenuous workout, and practice, and commitment, and conviction to get to that space, right? It will be wonderful for people who are interested to go to any of the arangetrams, the solo performance, the first time the student does. It's free, and it's done so very beautifully and it's so amazing. When you sit in that auditorium, you never know that you are in some place other than India. Because it's done with such authenticity, realistic... The decorations that they do, and the way they welcome, and you're sitting there, and the music is so soothing to your ears. And the girls perform amazingly perfect.

So, if you go to an Indian store there would be the Indian magazines that are free, and in these they advertise the arangetrams that are performed by the students from different dance schools. It is free, and nowadays they make it, like, a huge, grand festival where they also provide food for free. You would not believe... They spend around \$25,000 for this performance. I'm not bluffing.

Julie: Oh my!

Ajeetha: In the break, they would have snack, and after the performance they have dinner for everyone. And there would be around 400-500 people who would come because all the... You know, the dance teachers, they have like 100 students. Each teacher has 100 students, and 100 students bringing their family, and then your own relatives coming over. So you can go for such performances, as well as these dance schools have productions of their own, annual productions, and they are also amazing because it's more so like the whole dance... Not all the students but the senior students would perform. It would be like a dance drama, very well done, by some of the dance schools. So, that would also definitely be advertised in the magazines. And it's ticketed.

Julie: I'm real curious... It seems obvious, but performing and being involved in these dances when you come here to the US, that is a direct connection back to India, back to traditions. Is dance, like, a big part of the culture of Indian Americans?

Ajeetha: It depends. I think people, especially coming from India, some parents feel, "We should not lose our culture, our tradition," and so they bring the kids to dance, but then there are people who think, "We have moved here so let's be a Roman in Rome," and they put kids in ballet, or Western music. I don't know how it's going to evolve, because I do see... When the first generation comes from India, they miss India so much that they want the kids to learn, and they get the fear of, "Will my kid become more Westernized? Let her go learn all these things." Especially with these dance forms, they're more towards inculcating the religion also in them. So, first generation moving from India, they do that, but then as the kids grow here, and the second and third generation, how it's going to evolve, I'm not sure.

Julie: What do you personally get out of performing? And what questions does it answer for you?

Ajeetha: The joy that you get... I don't know whether... I cherish music. The only way I can show joy, enjoying this life, the ultimate way of enjoying life, is by dancing. That's how I do it. Each person is different. Sometimes someone can just be silent and just be in bliss, right? You can be that way too, but the way dance allows you to express joy, there's nothing like it. And to be frank, I don't know whether the audience who watches my dance, if they enjoy it or not. They seem to enjoy it because they come and tell me, "You did a good job..." I don't know whether they enjoy it as much as I do when I dance. It's beautiful. When the music is there, and you're just in your high spirits, dancing, it's something that I feel like everyone should experience.

Julie: It's transcendent for you.

Ajeetha: Yes, yes.

Julie: That's beautiful. Thank you so much for taking time to chat with me, and telling me all about this, and educating me about this. This has been... You're just a joy anyway.

Ajeetha: Thank you, Julie. I'm not sure how many people are going to listen to it and what they're going to get out of it, but if there's some curiosity in them, I would definitely suggest they watch certain videos. I'll send you some videos of this dance form, because if they are not exposed to a dance form like this, Bharathanatyam, it's something good for them to get exposed to, to know that there is a dance form like this. It's beautiful.

She's right. It is so, so beautiful. Links to videos of Bharathanatyam performances, including Ajeetha with her daughter Sindhu, are included in the show notes. And I have to tell you, when Ajeetha sent these link to me, it sent me down a glorious two-day Bharathanatyam YouTube rabbit hole, and I am *not* mad about it. It was so great.

Just a reminder that you can find the podcast on Instagram [@LoveWhatYouLovePod](#), and on Twitter, [@WhatYouLovePod](#), and the website is LoveWhatYouLovePod.com. If you'd like to support the podcast, leaving a rating or review on [Apple Podcasts](#) - even if that's not where you listen - is a great way to do that.

As always, Zeke Rodrigues Thomas at Mindjam Media provided amazing editing assistance. You can find Zeke at MindjamMedia.com.

So as always, be good to yourselves, be good to each other, and love the hell out of whatever it is that you love. Thanks for listening. Let's hang out again soon.

Links:

Find Ajeetha on [Facebook](#)

[Ajeetha and her daughter Sindhu performing during Bharat Tamil Sangam](#) (classical)

[Ajeetha performing a Diwali God and Goddess dance](#) (classical)

["Barso Re" performed by Ajeetha](#) (Bollywood)

["Bhupalam Thillana" performed by Sridevi Nrithyalaya](#) (classical)

[Fusion dance performed by Iswarya & Shruthi](#)

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LWYL Music: [Inspiring Hope by Pink-Sounds](#)

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