

# Saju Ahmed

*A leading exponent of "Kathak" dance in Bangladesh, a dance director and a successful teacher; Saju Ahmed is someone who is yet to be replicated. He started his journey with the stage drama 'Montur Pathshala' at the age of seven. He got his first dance lesson in Kuchipuri form from Derik Monro of Rabindra Baharati University. He is a direct student of the great Pandit Birju Maharaj. He also took his lessons from Bulbul Academy of Fine Arts (BAFA) and Bangladesh Shilpakola Academy. In 2002, he became the General Secretary of Bangladesh Nritya Shilpi Sangstha and contributed with glory for seven years. In 2003, he started and directed the Nritya Utsav "Milechi Milone Chonde Anonde" organized by Bangladesh Nritya Shilpi Sangsta. Moreover, he organized this yearly project for four times. Saju Ahmed raised his voice to include dance in educational institutions and his plea was heard by the University of Dhaka. He will be admired forever for his remarkable contributions in the cultural arena of Bangladesh.*

## INSPIRATION

Since childhood, I was very agile but I used to read a lot of books. I learnt it from my beloved mother and brother. My brother was a freedom fighter and that time, he was in 10<sup>th</sup> grade only. My mother once gave me a book named *Mother* by Maxim Gorky which left a deep impression on me. Therefore, my family is my inspiration. I greatly admire the philosophy of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Additionally, our honorable Wahidul Haque and my Guruji Pandit Birju Maharaj are my inspirations. Moreover, all the great leaders who dedicated their lives for establishing a peaceful world are my inspirations.

## PHILOSOPHY

I believe in Marxism. I want a society where everyone should be equal and there won't be any discrimination among the people. I think, only in case of art, a society with no discrimination can be created. I would like to request the parents to motivate their children to involve themselves in any form of art because it keeps them away from drug addiction or crime. My wish to my creator gives me inner peace. Our great Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) always cared about others before eating his meal and this philosophy inspires me a lot to care about others.

## VIEWS ON HIS PROFESSION

Since childhood, I dreamt of being a teacher of Bengali literature. But after being an adult, I kept getting into music. Dance is a form of education. It has its own way of expressing the thoughts of others. Moreover, it has rules in geometry, emotion, colors and images as well. The love for art should be transmitted through the lessons from honorable instructors. I appreciate the initiative of arranging Bengal

Classical Festival. Such events can have positive effects on the minds of the audience. I would like to request the organizers to take further initiatives to motivate artistes from all corners of our country and I am very hopeful of this country's future generation. Many of today's artistes are doing exceptionally well and my request to them is to focus more on classical music. The government is taking initiatives to uplift the taste of our future generation, which is really appreciable.

## BOOKS

I have read a lot of books, and I have to pinpoint *Bishad Shindhu* as one of my favorites. Additionally, I am also a fan of books on Mahatma Gandhi.

## FILMS

I love to watch movies with philosophical messages. *Kony* by Soumitra Chatterjee is my favorite. *Mrs. Sujuka* by Shabana Azmi is also one of my most favorite movies.

## MUSIC

I love classical music. It has a heart-to-heart communication and gives me celestial peace. Rabindra Sangeet and Lalon Geeti are my favorites.

## FUTURE PLANS

It is one of my agendas to continue dance till my last breath. Also, I have a plan to continue Kathak Nritya Utsav and expand it. I would love to involve more people in this project so that the dancers of all corners of our country get the motivation from it. I always introduce myself as a promoter of classical dance.

## IDOL

In case of dance and arts, Guruji Pandit Birju Maharaj is my idol. Additionally, I greatly admire the philosophies of Karl Marx.

By Shawreen Rahman

