

Yakshagana



Yakshagana is a musical theatre popular in coastal Karnataka, India. Yakshagana literally means celestial music and is supposed to have developed during the Bhakti movement. This form of dance has drawn comparisons to the Western tradition of opera where the wear costumes and enacts different roles. It usually depicts a story from Indian epic poems and the Puranas. It consists of a narrator who narrates the story by singing. This dance drama is also performed throughout the night, usually after the winter crop has been reaped. They usually start at twilight with the playing of drums for an hour before the actors move to the stage.

Music

Yakshagana music is based on Carnatic Ragas and instruments used are *maddale* (looks like a mridanagam), harmonium and *chande* (loud drums).

Costumes

The costumes in this theatrical dance are rich in colour. However, they depend on the characters depicted in the play. The ornaments are made out of light wood, mirror work, coloured stones, etc. and they consist of a headgear, *kavacha* that decorates the chest, armllets, and belts made of light wood and gold foil. Detailed facial makeup is used to depict monsters. It may take 3-4hrs to complete the make up for certain characters.

Puppetry

Yakshagana is also performed in the form of poetry. There were more than 30 string puppet troupes in undivided South Karnataka district during 1910-1915. Puppets in Yakshagana style are 18 inches high with costumes and make-up similar to those worn by Yakhshagana characters.

Do It Yourself



Indian puppetry is famous for its unique way of story-telling. Create your own puppets and hold a puppet show in your school or neighbourhood inspired by the Yakshagana Style of Puppetry.

Colour the Yakshagana Mask shown in the picture.



What is common to our traditional folk theatre like yakshagana, jatra, ram lila etc?

Have you observed any of our traditional theatre ?How old were you then and can you describe the experience?
