

Minnesota twin sisters will rock the stage with 2000-year-old classical dance



Eden Prairie, Minnesota Jul 26, 2022 ([IssueWire.com](http://www.IssueWire.com)) - Alisha and Isha Shah, twin sophomores at Eden Prairie High School, learned Bharatanatyam which is a 2000-plus-year-old art form originating in Tamilnadu, India. After 8 years of rigorous training and practice Alisha and Isha Shah, now 15 years old will finally step on the stage to rock their Bharatanatyam Arangetram. This is a debut performance where the mentor presents students for the first time through a public event.

They will perform on stage for up to three hours, with each dance ranging between 5 to 25 minutes and including multiple costume changes. This performance will be accompanied by live music, which includes a vocalist and traditional Indian instruments such as the violin, flute, and mridangam.

The rhythmic footsteps, facial expressions, and hand gestures of Bharatanatyam represent spiritual awakening and longing for enlightenment. This dance form encompasses hundreds of different steps and movements - some of them as slight and subtle as the shifting of the eyes.

The twin sisters began their Bharatanatyam journey at the tender age of 7 under the guidance of Smt. Padmaja Dharnipragada. Smt. Padmaja is a notable guru who owns Nrityalaya Dance Academy in the Twin Cities, and she has been teaching this art for the past 25 years.

"We were very interested in this art after we watched a live performance. When we told our parents we wanted to learn this 2000-year-old art, it took them by surprise but without hesitation, they signed us up. Our dad has always taught us that cultural preservation will give the next generation an understanding of how others view and build relationships", said Alisha and Isha.

The 8-year journey was not easy. "We sacrificed much of our prime childhood, vacations, parties and more for this day," said Alisha and Isha.

Divya Shah, an IT leader and mother of the twins, said, "We took Alisha and Isha for their weekly practice classes, waited for a couple of hours, and then took them to other activities such as soccer, piano, robotics, and flute. We always kept their schedule busy so that they could learn time management, and it also kept them away from social media and smartphones".

The energy-packed twins' musical interests go beyond dance as they've developed talents for multiple instruments, such as violin, piano, percussion, and flute. They played the piano at the MMTA state level for 9 years.

Alisha and Isha Shah will be performing the Bharatanatyam Arangetram at the end of July 2022.

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