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INTERNATIONAL

## FeuerFrau

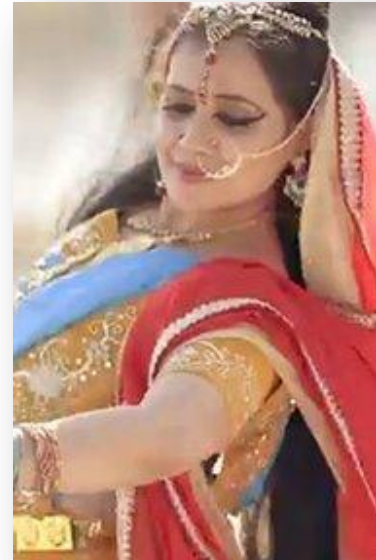
A TRADITIONAL INDIAN THEATRICAL DANCE

SNEHA BHARADWAJ

About her Music Video "**FEUERFRAU**"  
The Traditional Dance of "Bharata Natyam",  
Women Empowerment & Female Power (Shakti)

"Dance helps women identify their risks and evaluate their strengths"  
(Sneha Bharadwaj)

by Paiman Maria Davarifard



**G**raduated in "Bharata Natyam" from the college of fine arts in Bharathidasan University-India, the artist **Sneha Bharadwaj** is one of the young experts of this Indian classical dance in Germany. Starting at the age of 7 under the guidance of Guru **Sri H.K. Raj**, she learned Tanjore Style of Bharata Natyam for more than 7 years, later obtaining her training from Guru



Image: from the Music Video "FEUERFRAU" by SNEHA BHARADWAJ ©Sneha Bharadwaj 2014 is about female power and the art of indian classical dance. Dancers: Sneha Bharadwaj, Domenico Amendolara, Isaihas Pontai, Johannes Kabisch, Thorin Kuhn, Valerio Porleri, Fire: (Pyrostyx) Axel Berger , Video: Marc Oeder

**Smt. Narmada** and Guru **Pulikeshi Kasturi**. The education continued with studying Psychology, giving it up to fetch a degree in

Choreography where she was subjected to in-depth study of art, dance, Ornamentation of Indian Classical Music, Art History and Stage Craft at Bangalore University- Natya Institute of Kathak And Choreography by Guru **Dr. Maya Rao**. "**I had many opportunities to perform various challenging roles in various Indian Ballets and also presenting my choreography works on Historical, Mythological, Sanskrit and Contemporary Ballets**" says Sneha Bharadwaj, who had appeared once at stage together with the legendary **Padamashree-Award** winners **Dr. L. Sumbrahmaniam** (Indian Violinist, Composer & Music Conductor) and **Kavitha Krishnamurthy** (Classical Indian Singer). Skyping with her Gurus in Indian Bangalore, Guru **Sri Guru Murthy**, Guru **Sri Jyothi Lakshmi** and Guru **Pulikeshi Kasturi**, she is in permanent contact with the origins of her art. Sneha Bharadwaj has appeared at many Indian, German, US and International TV channels & media. She was invited to perform in Berlin by the former Indian ambassador to Germany and the current India's foreign secretary Mrs **Sujatha Singh**. Sneha is representing "Abhinaya Indische Tanz" in Munich since 2011, teaching and training children and adults. In this interview with imagofeminae, she is speaking about her music video **FeuerFrau**, Indian women, violence against women and her message as an artist to the society.

Image above : Sneha Bharadwaj. Indian Artist and professional classical dancer. © Sneha Bharadwaj 2014

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**imagofeminae: What is female power or Shakti?**

**Sneha Bharadwaj:** Shakti means “scared force or empowerment”. It is a personification of divine feminine creative power. A mighty feminine force which every women has to imbibe in her life to fight against the evil energy. Shakti can bail us out from illusion and conquer immortality or emerge victorious from its initiatory. If one immerses oneself in the world of dance I believe the art form can grant a level of freedom and autonomy.

Image : still from the music video "FeuerFrau" with contemporary male dancers from Europe ©Sneha Bharadwaj 2014

**imagofeminae: What is your music video "FeuerFrau" all about?**

**Sneha Bharadwaj:** "FeuerFrau" is an Indian theatrical & Dance Production as I dream to stage it sometime soon... this video is a teaser for my Production. *It is a story of power, revolt, courage, beauty and honour.* It is an amalgamation of two classical dance forms and the contemporary dance forms: Indian Classical, Bharata Natyam and Ballet. *Mahabharata* is a 5000 year old Sanskrit epic of India. FeuerFrau is the unique form of interpretation of the epic *Mahabharath* which emphasizes the importance of a women. It is a story told by a great women's perspective: **Draupadi**, a woman who is one of the Panch-Kanya (The Five



Franziska Angerer & Sneha Bharadwaj Berlin 2013  
Foto © Ruth Zuntz

Virgins) of the ancient Hindu epic. The Indian traditional ideals are communicated in Bharata Natyam, maintaining the purity of the classical form, and utilizing innovation within the classical context.



**imagofeminae: Is violence against women an issue for you as an artist?**

**Sneha Bharadwaj:** violence against women is indeed very disturbing as a woman, as an Indian citizen. As an artist, it hurts me to read about these gruesome incidences around the world. Hope there is soon an end to this Barbarism. My last project was called **Sammilana-Shakti**, presented by Ballerina **Franziska Angerer** and Myself. Through our dance we talked about *rape and violence against women*. We showed how a woman can tackle the situation. My

*main dream for women in India is that they imbibe Shakti (self-defense) in their lives & continue to fight against all odds & not to sit back.* Dance definitely brings self-confidence, power and positive relationships. When pure dance and divinity manifests within you, it transforms and transcends inside to an elevated experience. *Dance helps women identify their risks and evaluate their strengths.* Now with my new project **FeuerFrau** I continue to carry out the message "Shakti" in much higher scalus.

*FeuerFrau is unique form of interpretation of the epic Mahabharath which emphasizes the importance of a woman.*

**imagofeminae: What is the role of women in Bharata Natyam?**

**Sneha Bharadwaj:** women play a very important role in this art form. Bharata Natyam, one of the most important traditional Indian dances, was performed only by **Devadasis** or maids of God in temples untill the early 20th century. **Devadasis** were the traditional practitioners of this dance form and handed it over through the ages. Dancers like

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*Nagarathamma, Venkatalakshamma, Balasaraswati and Rukmini Devi Aundale* have played a vital role in revival of this dance. It has



Image: Franziska Angerer & Sneha Bharadwaj Performance in Berlin Indian Embassy 2013 Photo ©Mr. Arun Varghese



travelled a long way from temples to Royal Courts by praising the Kings to proscenium stage.

**imagofeminae: What is Neo-Bharata Natyam?**

**Sneha Bharadwaj:** Neo-Bharata Natyam and fusion dance segments are remarkable tribute to the past

with vision of the future, yet rooted still maintaining the purity of the classical context. The Indian traditional ideals are communicated in Bharatanatyam, maintaining the purity of the classical form, and utilizing innovation within the classical context.

Bharata Natyam, which originates from the state of Tamil Nadu in south India, is one of the most popular classical dance styles in India.

**imagofeminae: Who is the Composer of the music in "FeuerFrau"?**

**Sneha Bharadwaj:** the music for this production has been directed by one of the leading young musicians from India **Manjunath N.S.** who has a great power of bringing the both Indian and European classical musics together and make it sound as ONE.

**imagofeminae: What is the social aspect of your art?**

**Sneha Bharadwaj:** I simply aim to use dance and theater to reach various audiences about a multitude of social issues; from violence against women up to religious intolerance. Dance, as my artistic work, is



image: together with her husband **Sandeep Kashyap**. "He has been a great support to my art" says Sneha with a joyful voice! image: ©Sneha Bharadwaj 2014 Image L: still from the video FeuerFrau

a communicative phenomenon and it has the power to send and to receive messages through nonverbal movements. Dance is a unique social interaction that sends both intentional and unintentional messages. A choreographer has to be very careful



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while planning a dance sequence and make sure he or she gives the right message. Dance has the ability to reach people in a way that rhetoric alone often fails to do. Art can go through spaces where other things can't. It breaks through your prejudices and everything else which you have as your mask. In a world where attitudes are so difficult to change, we need a language that reaches through.

**imagofeminae: Thank you for this interview.**

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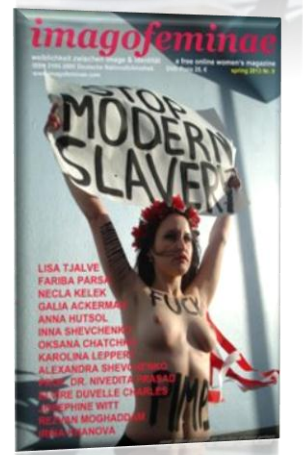
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by Paiman Maria Davarifard

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