

Mute is beautiful. Mute is sublime. Mute is powerful. When expressed through the silent rendition of Mime, mute becomes a silent dedication of ceaseless artistic emotions depicted through the smile, glance and endless assortment of corporeal loops and curls. The world of mime is smeared with expressive silence that simply but firmly gets the point across. Here silence is the means and message is the sacred offering to the audience. It may be described as the dramatic portrayal of an action, character or of an emotion without using words, but only by using gestures, expressions, and body movements. To make it simple, it can be explained as a speechless short play. Mime legend Tony Montanaro refers to Mime as "Physical Eloquence". In other words it is the art of expressing feelings by using the body as an instrument, but without the involvement of the voice. The body too has a language that converses without using the spoken word and that creates 'Mime'.

The word 'mime' has its ancestry in the Greek word 'mimos', meaning 'imitator'. Having its roots in ancient Greece and Rome, this mute art has been the forte of the French who preserved and propagated it across the globe. In today's time, Mime as an art form has strong grip in France. It is the French who have nourished and popularized the art across the globe. The French have extraordinary expertise over this art. Mime has various shades and facets today beyond theatre and shows. It remains an inspiration to create cartoon characters, puppet shows on television and contemporary dance moves. The history of mime continues to evolve through our times as it forays into the bright future ahead.

In our times, today Mime art has embroidered its presence in India with some fine artistes in the domain, striving hard to popularize this silent art with a thousand shades of hue, depicted in the silent spray of monochromatic colours .

### **Growth and development of Mime in Telangana**

Telangana has an affluent gathering of talented mime artistes and teachers. Their contribution to the field of Mime in Telangana is immense and indispensable.

Irshad Panjatan is undeniably a milestone in the history of Indian Mime, making Telangana globally proud. Hyderabad cradled Irshad Panjatan on 7th September 1931, a world class artist was born .He further grew to become the epitome of Indian Mime and an artist of international acclaim. Presently settled in Berlin Germany, Panjatan fondly remembers his childhood and youth spent in the city of Hyderabad before life changed forever – Irshad Panjatan and Mime became synonyms. The artiste lives the art and the art glorifies the artiste. The veteran, Panjatan qualified to be an aviation engineer; his inclination for arts took him to the world of theater and celluloid screens. Theatre accidentally made him perform ‘Pantomime’ and in return Irshad Panjatan introduced ‘Mime’ to the Indian art and theatre trail in 1962, thus making him the Godfather of Mime in India. Irshad was self trained. He disclosed in an interview that his theatre act would begin with Shiva shlokas that would give him a lot of energy. He further talks about learning his art and says, “Like Ekalavya who made Drona his guru without being his formal disciple. I bought a statue of Lord Shiva and made him my master”.

Devdas Kanakale was a famous mime performer and teacher who taught mime at the Madras Film Institute. He was a mime teacher to cine stars like Rajendra Prasad, Chiranjeevi, Rajnikanth and many more South Indian cine stars.

Polapragada Janardhan Rao got attracted towards mime after watching the French Mime Milan Sladick. He was so inspired seeing the French performer that he started learning the art by himself without any professional guidance. He was able to fine tune his mime art by seeing and silent films and performances of Charlie Chaplin. Soon he was able to stage mime shows that became popular. With his performance he was able to motivate K.Kaladhar and P.Nagabhushanam.

K.Kaladhar, after being influenced by Polapragada Janardhan Rao, joined to get trained in mime under him. He migrated from drama to mime and devotedly cultivated the art of mime as a hobby. With dedicated efforts he won many accolades. His achievements include Limca Book of World Record for his 24 hour non-stop mime performance in 1993. In 2003 he won the Limca Book of World Record for performing 240 Mime Illusions in one Hour. Narendra Katkar learnt the art of mime in Germany and became a famed performer and teacher in the state. Shekhar

Babu another famous name in Mime developed the mime syllabus for the Under-graduate and Postgraduate being taught in the state of Telangana.

Guru Arusam Madhusudan the ace Indian mime artist with exceptional flight in his movements and extraordinary lucidity in gestures is a treasure trove, reigning the current mime scenario of Telangana. He has been performing mime for past 20 years. Arusam Madhusudan initially trained under Late Guru Sri P. Nagabhushanam in Warangal. He studied Master of Performing Arts (M.P.A) at the Sarojini Naidu School of Performing Arts, Central University, Hyderabad. He then had the opportunity to receive advanced mime training from Padma Shri , Guru Shri Niranjan Goswami. Arusam Madhusudan's international training, by the famous American mime legend Tony Montanaro. He also underwent rigorous training of the 'Body and Movement' in Japan under the supervision of famous Butoh dancer and renowned Body & Movement trainer, Min Tanaka. Arusam Madhusudan has also undertaken training in traditional 'Kalaripattu' fight sequences from Sudhakaran Gurukulam, Kerala, as well as Martial Art Tai-Chi from Master Ravi Varma. Arusam Madhusudan's devotion and loyalty to the art of mime has made him an institution in the art and also an outstanding teacher. Arusam Madhusudan is the recipient of the Nandi Award in 2003 and Ustad Bismilla Khan Sangeet Natak Academy Award in 2007. He creatively uses mime in social cause to benefit the deaf and dumb, blind and street children. He runs the Indian Mime Academy with the aim of saving the dying art, reviving it and spreading the aroma of mime across Telangana and India.

### **Recent trends of Mime in Telangana**

Telangana, the youngest state of India has patronized Mime and has given it a horizon to raise and mature as an individual art form. The Department of Language & Culture (DLC), Government of Telangana, since its creation in 2014 has been the foremost source in driving the development Mime in the state. The Government's efforts for popularizing Mime as an art form in Telangana has now given the state perhaps the largest number of mimes trained under several Mime projects run by the Government.

Mamidi Harikrishna, Director Department of Language & Culture (DLC), Government of Telangana says, "There is an unseen spiritual connect that takes mime to the masses". He further

explains mime is an art form in which one does not have to spend much on costumes, accessories or on stage management and that makes it an affordable as well as acceptable by all sections of the society. Mamidi Harikrishna's idea is to use mime art for social, mental and physical advantage, besides the amusement aspect the art carries. He has also been vigilant about preserving and promoting this exclusive art form that was struggling for recognition and existence at one point of time. Due to his interest and initiatives much has been done in the last five years to popularize this art.

Under the guidance of Telangana's globally applauded mime artiste and pedagogue- Arusam Madhusudan, several mime projects focusing on the overall benefit of students and artistes have been conducted through the state Government's initiatives. Much has been done in the last five years to popularize this art. Mime Guru, Arusam Madhusudan firmly says "My goal is to make Telangana the mime hub of India."

#### *International Mime Festival - "Mim' Art -2019"*

Telangana played host to the first ever International Mime festival "Mim' Art -2019" on 29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> of August 2019 at Rabindra Bharati , Hyderabad. Organized by the combined effort of the Indian Mime Academy along with Alliance France Hyderabad and wholeheartedly supported by the Department of Language and Culture, Government of Telangana the three day festival showcased some of the finest mimes of our times. Disciple of the legendary mime Marcel Marceau, the ace Italian- French Mime artist Elena Serra was the star attraction of this festival. Legendary Indian Mime Guru Padma Shri Niranjan Goswami was amongst the luminaries present. The key face representing Telangana state for the festival was the very talented and internationally acclaimed Guru Shri Arusam Madhusudan. Mime artistes from nine Indian states showcased their Mime caliber in this festival. An English coffee table book on Mime titled "Mimescape of Telangana A Montage on Mime" researched and written by Shalini Mahapatra , jointly published by the Indian Mime Academy and Department of Culture and Language Government of Telangana ,was released on the occasion . The objective of the festival was to promote Telangana's Mime activities and artistes at an international platform and to fine-tune budding artistes.

#### *The Art of Mime for Personality Development-2018*

The Telangana Government's foresight in using Mime for personality development and motivation of school students was achieved through workshops conducted in 2018. Telangan State Model School students of class X and XII were trained in mime. Guru Arusam Madhusudan was successful in developing self confidence and mental clarity amongst the rural students of Telangana's Government schools. Guru Madhusudan shared his experience on these workshops and said "Initially the students were shy, some were arrogant but slowly they could feel the change mime did to them. They opened up their emotional self. Some students cried, the quieter ones laughed and talked. The change was evident". These workshops helped the students in the development of soft skills, emotional intelligence and in the evaluation of their own strengths and limitations. They were encouraged to do team work, show empathy and also build a positive outlook towards their upcoming life. Srinivas.M a class X student from a Government school in Karimnagar says "I am now a fan of Mime. I love the art and the changes it has brought in me". Fifty thousand students have been trained in the art of Mime in these school workshops.

#### *National Mime workshop for the Deaf and Dumb-2018*

As part of Project Uthhaanam, the Telangana Government conducted a National Mime workshop for the Deaf and Dumb at Hyderabad. Forty Five deaf and dumb students from across India enrolled into this exclusive training class. The students' trained under the guidance of Mime Guru Arusam Madhusudan. These hearing impaired students later performed at the national level mime competition, New Delhi on World Disability Day-2018 and won the first spot for their rendition.

#### *Indian Classical and Mime fusion- "Triveni Sangamam" 2018*

The Telangana Government has also persuaded experiments by allowing Indian Classical and Mime fusions. An extraordinary convergence of Indian classical dance forms and Mime was beautifully choreographed by weaving Oddisi and Mohiniattam together with Mime in "Triveni Sangamam 2018", thus unifying the diverse, rich and ancient culture of India flowing together with the western art form of Mime. Odissi Guru Mira Das, Mohiniattam Guru Gopika Verma and Mime Guru Arusam Madhusudan were able to establish the harmony of creativity and art on a single platform effortlessly. The entire thought behind the *Triveni Sangamam* was to establish

the harmony of creativity and art on one platform. The Indian classical dance forms –Odissi and Mohiniattam effortlessly flowed along with European Mime to accomplish creative salvation at *Triveni Sangamam*.

### *Project Uthhaanam-2017*

The Department of Language & Culture (DLC), Government of Telangana initiated its mime endeavor with Project Uthhaanam (*The Rising*) in 2017. Designed for pupils of eighteen years and above, the 12 day full time workshop initially commenced in 10 districts of Telangana. This mime project intended to coach interested learners from the field of drama, theater, television and films in the art of mime and make them capable of stage performances in mime art. Going further all the 33 districts of Telangana will benefit from this novel mime project. Since the inception of these workshops, more than a hundred artists have been trained under the guidance of the very talented Arusam Madhusudan, who is also the brain behind the innovative Uthhaanam mime project. This was his dedicated initiative towards the goal of making Telangana India's Mime hub.

Supriya Aysola, a participant in the Uthhaanam project revealed her feelings and said “My personal observation has been that, after taking part in the Uthhaanam mime workshop, my relationship with my body has changed dramatically. I can feel the bones, the muscles, the blood circulation and the nerve's energy in my body that I was never aware of. This sort of knowledge and wisdom helps in acquiring more insights and in creating intuition about any given situation in life.”

### **The Way Ahead**

Telangana is perhaps the only state that is supporting the silent art with paramount gusto. After using Mime in education of school children and gathering a heartening response, the Government looks forward to more such student benefitting workshops. Mime has well contributed in the confidence building and outflow of creativity amidst deaf and dumb children. The outstanding results stand testimony that the art has the ability to help the specially-able community. The revival and reinstatement of Mime is underway, paving a bright future for the Mime art in the state.

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