



KATHAKALI AND THE WORLD EPICS

THE ILIAD

The Wrath of Achilles



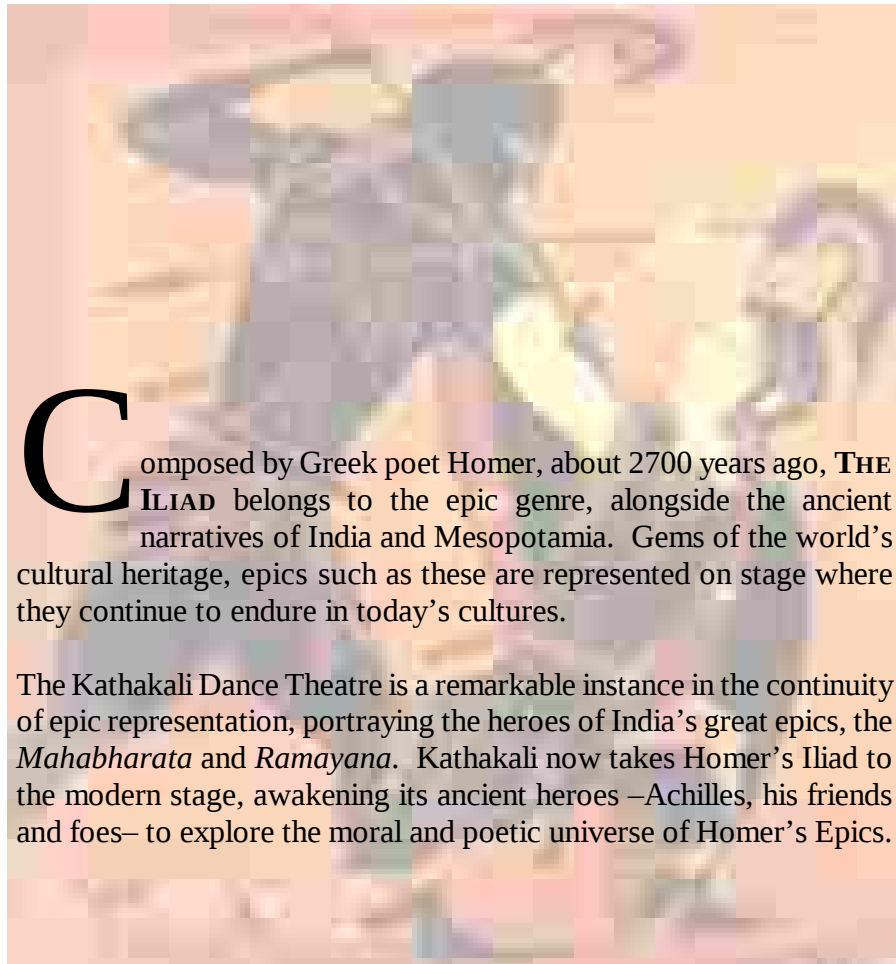
A cross-cultural Trojan Horse... THE ILIAD is certainly a visual spectacle that awes and captivates. (The Flying Inkpot, Singapore)

The presentation of The Iliad (in Bombay) meant a welcome widening of the Kathakali repertoire. (Sruti Magazine, Madras)

The six selected episodes have been choreographed to permit maximum dramatic interaction and a denser use of hand gestures as well as maximum opportunities for dance and movement. (The Straits Times, Singapour)

Directed by choreographer Richard Tremblay, The Iliad was rendered to perfection by noted professionals. (The Times of India)

While remaining faithful to Kathakali convention, the artists have submitted a version of Homer's Iliad. This show attracted great interest from the audience and was the cause of an animated discussion among the Kathakali initiates. The importance of this innovation looms large by the fact that it was introduced by an outsider, the Canadian director and choreographer Richard Tremblay whose innovation made of the "Iliad-Kathakali" show a great intercultural experience. (Dialog, Warsaw)



Composed by Greek poet Homer, about 2700 years ago, **THE ILIAD** belongs to the epic genre, alongside the ancient narratives of India and Mesopotamia. Gems of the world's cultural heritage, epics such as these are represented on stage where they continue to endure in today's cultures.

The Kathakali Dance Theatre is a remarkable instance in the continuity of epic representation, portraying the heroes of India's great epics, the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*. Kathakali now takes Homer's Iliad to the modern stage, awakening its ancient heroes –Achilles, his friends and foes– to explore the moral and poetic universe of Homer's Epics.



Kalamandalam Gopi

Kathakali Dance

A world of dreams...

*That is the only place where we might
conceivably meet anything similar. (C. G. Jung)*

Kathakali is a classical dance which originated in South India. Its movement technique blends harmoniously acting, music, make-up and costumes to depict the epic narratives. The characters are grouped under certain clearly defined types –they are not only individuals but also symbolic personalities. The striking make-up and costumes are designed to transform the dancers both mentally and physically into the characters they portray. It takes five to six hours for a Kathakali dancer to complete the make-up and costume, which heighten the personality and extend the movement of each character.

To narrate a story or portray a character, coded facial expressions, called *Nawa Rasas*, along with hand gestures create a kind of sophisticated sign language comprising a large variety of meaningful units called *Mudras*. All of these elements combine with abstract movement and personal interpretation to recreate, with the accompaniment of the mighty sounds of gongs, cymbals and drums, the myths and legends of the past and present.

The Iliad

The wrath of Achilles

KATHAKALI DANCE THEATRE

Narrative and Choreography by **Richard Tremblay**
Lighting, and Space Arrangement: **Jean-Guy Lecat**
Associate to the music and sound: **Bruno Paquet**

Performed by dancers from India's renown Kathakali institutions.

Soloists: **Sadanam Krishnankutty,**
Kalamandalam P.V. Vijayan,



and **Margi Vijayan.**

Main Musicians: **K. Balachandran,**
and **K. Unnikrishnan**

6 dancers, 3 percussionists, and 2 vocalists.
Personnel: 6 members

The Iliad is enacted through singing, dance, theatre, and music. With its powerful theatre conventions, and through the beautiful and subtle body language of the East, Kathakali goes deep into the essence of Homer's epics, giving the myths and legends of the Western narratives a dimension so far unknown.

Like opera, Kathakali lends itself to the representation of various themes, contributing its dramatic forms, make-up and costumes to the uniqueness of this production

Presented with sub-titles.

URL: www.silentculture.org/creation/english.asp

The main figures behind

The Iliad

Richard Tremblay - Canadian Contemporary Dance choreographer who trained extensively in the Kathakali Dance Theatre in India. He has staged numerous contemporary dance productions in addition to his Kathakali works. (www.silentculture.org/creation/english.asp?page=rt.asp)

Jean-Guy Lecat - French stage-designer who has collaborated with director Peter Brook for the last twenty years, notably in the creation of the Mahabharata.

Sadanam Krishnankutty - Outstanding Kathakali dancer from India, who participated in major Kathakali works in India, elsewhere in Asia, and in Europe.

Bruno Paquet - Canadian percussionist and composer who studied the Kathakali percussion instruments in India, and who plays the instruments in both classical or contemporary works. (www.silentculture.org/creation/english.asp?page=bp.asp)