

29/8/2025

Dear Admissions Committee,

It is my pleasure to write this letter of recommendation in support of Araadhya Jain's application to your undergraduate program. A high school senior of Charterhouse, Araadhya has taken great strides during her training in kathak under my guidance; it is in light of our close association that I believe myself to be deeply familiar with her strengths – being hardworking, goal-oriented, and honing her artistic spirit that shines through her kathak performances. When I think of Araadhya, I think of a student who is focussed and does not shy away from challenging herself, which are qualities that are useful (and important) outside of kathak too, and therefore, I would like to affirm that Araadhya is absolutely deserving to join your university.

Araadhya has been undertaking formal training in kathak since 2014, and possesses a remarkable repertoire of skills – she is emotive with her dance performances, and expressive with her body language. This is a direct result of her intensive preparation; she has, for instance, completed the Praveshika Pratham (April 2023) and Praveshika Poorna (April 2024) examinations with the Akhil Bharitiya Gandharva Mahavidyalaya Mandal in Mumbai. While I was proud to learn that she secured First Place in the latter examination, I also saw her coming into her own as a kathak dancer: she devoted herself to training (while balancing her academics and extracurricular activities), added her own personal touch to a classical danceform, and was always eager to achieve excellence.

Araadhya is a student who values learning through both experience and theory, performance and practice. For example, she has spent as much time practicing her 'tatkal' (footwork) as she has in learning about the theory of Kathak 'mudras' (hand gestures) and the history behind this art as a whole (learning about successful kathak composers being a part of this), which she drew from during the written and theory sections of her examinations. It is clear to me that she is able to weave meaning into her movements because of how deeply she is acquainted with the dance's cultural background, technicalities, and her own capability to be agile and graceful on stage.

Araadhya has danced through over a decade of her life with Kathak, and this sense of fluidity and intention has also been reflected in her training with me. When Araadhya shared that she has previously performed at the Sapa Kathak Show and another smaller show, she spoke of kathak with deep admiration; for her, it is a way to connect with her body and her culture, as well as channel her creativity – her ability to focus on small details, like the flick of wrist or subtle shifts in eye movement, is something I have commended, for she embodies this dedication across all aspects of her kathak practice.

It has been a joy to mentor Araadhya and to witness her growth over the years. Despite having spent some time training independently during the pandemic, Araadhya has maintained her level of expertise throughout, and ensured that kathak is an integral part of her life – because she finds joy, community, and strength in this artform. I am confident that she will continue to

display the same commitment to her academic and co-curricular responsibilities at your university, inspiring many others to put their best foot forward just like she has. I wish her the very best for all her future endeavors, and am happy to provide any further information if needed.

Regards,
Nikita Banawalikar
Kathak Exponent
Founder, Kala Vatikaa Foundation