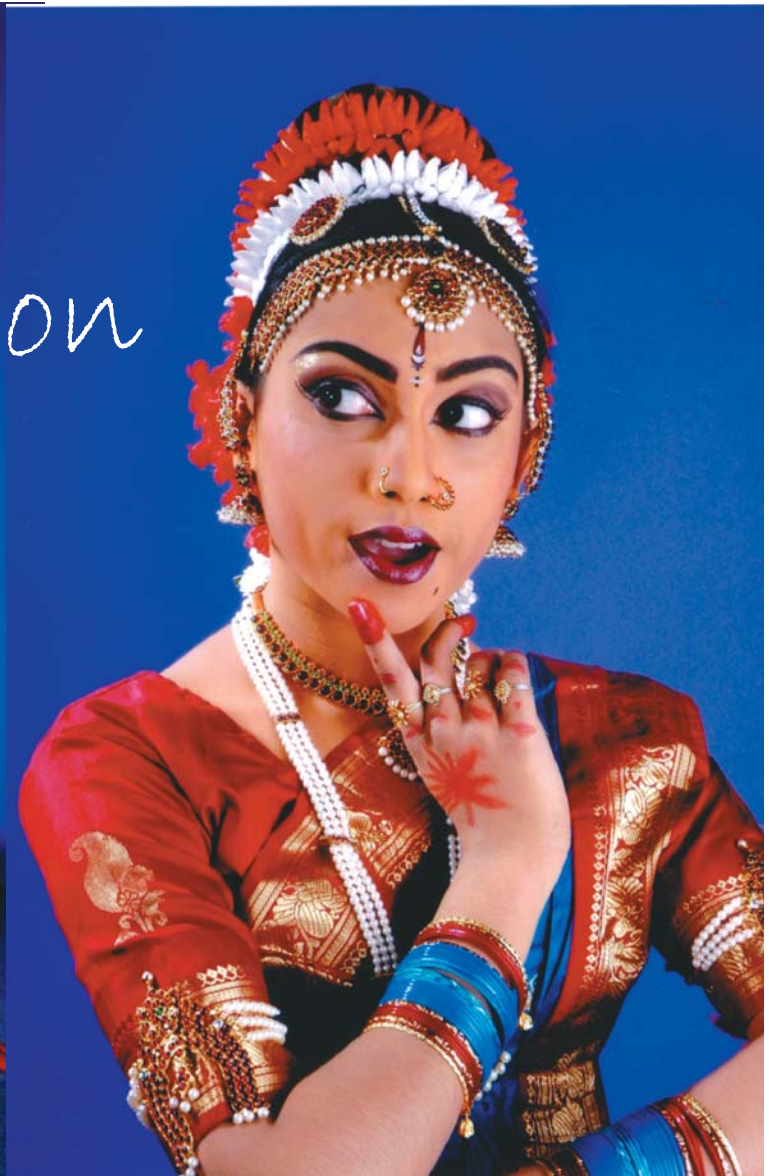


Picture of Perfection



Nikita's exquisite Arangetram Ceremony

Nikita Kanji is just 15, but her beautiful Indian Classical dances held the audience spellbound at her Arangetram (Graduation) Ceremony in Auckland – the most important event in the life of a dancer. It was a very special evening for her proud family the many friends from Franklin, Auckland and India. Nikita, eldest daughter of Kishor and Manaxi Kanji of Pukekohe, switched from Jazz Ballet to the ancient art of Indian Classical when she was six years old. Even when taking a break from dance, she has always been dedicated and maintained her practise. Nikita has many interests and is busy at school with speech and drama, the Duke of Edinburgh programme, playing hockey and learning the oboe. With her graduation in the discipline of Indian Classical Dancing, Nikita is now qualified to go on to teach the skills of the ancient art.

“The dances are mainly from South India and their purpose is to tell stories about the Indian gods, while some are about the footwork and actions. There are two styles of dance – Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi, with five costume changes in 12 dances,” she explains. Nikita practised intensely for six months for her graduation ceremony, working with her teacher Guru Archana Kunicha Koorthy to perfect the dances. One special Arangetram dance, Varnam, is 20 minutes long and as with all Indian Classical dances, every

Kishor,
Nikita and
Manaxi Kanji



movement, every posture, every expression has to be exact. Taharangam for Lord Krishna is a skilful dance symbolising balance, where Nikita dances with a pot on her head and a plate between her feet – a definite crowd pleaser and an exhibition of the discipline

required for Indian Classical Dance. As the big evening came closer, Nikita rehearsed twice a day with the musicians to ensure every dance was the picture of perfection.