



**KATHAKALI**  
**FORMATIVE COURSES LED BY MARIO BARZAGHI**  
*Pupil of M° Kalamandalam K. M. John*



*“...The nights of Kathakali let me have a glimpse on frontiers attainable by an actor: but it was dawn which revealed me the secret of these actors, at Kalamandalam di Cheruthuruthy, in Kerala. Here young adolescents, through an obstinate repetition of exercises, steps, songs, prayers, dancing of eyes, votive offerings, crystallized their ethos as artistic behaviour and ethic attitude.”*

Eugenio Barba

Kathakali literally means: “telling stories”. A Kathakali representation lasts the whole night starting at sunset and ending at first light. In India there are several forms of classic dance theatre such as

Kathakali which is however one of the most important and best known. In Western countries Kathakali has gained fame, appreciation and respect for the seriousness and accuracy of its training and has fascinated great masters of Western theatre such as Jerzy Grotowski, Eugenio Barba, Peter Brook, Ariane Mnouchkine. Kathakali is a great theatre machine: through study and practical exercises the actors-dancers have been training since their infancy to reach a perfect form. It's a global work, a union of theatre, music, dancing, singing, writing, make up, costume (to be seen as a moving scenography, too). To build a character the body is subdivided into bands or blocks: an upper and lower part which are, in turn, subdivided so as to underline micro details. As an example let's take the KALASHA of eyes: it is a rhythmic sequence where eyes dance so as to draw the greatest attention and lead spectators to an integral and harmonious vision.

### Practice in the workshop:

- 1- Learning of the 5 ways of greeting (*Namaskaram*: act of obeisance)
- 2- Learning of the basic steps
- 3- Meyurapadavugal (learning of the whole martial part)
- 4- Mudra (alphabet of hands: 24 positions)
- 5- Face and its basic expressions-Nava Rasa
- 6- Nokku: eyes (training the different way of looking)
- 7- Churippu: exercises to make independent the upper from the lower part of body
- 8- Kalasham (sequences of pure dance Tandava and Lasya, male and female)

**Link:** [An Athlete of Heart](#)

**Link:** [Parashurama](#)

**Info:** [info@tealbero.it](mailto:info@tealbero.it) 0039-3397104051