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LADIES PUNJABI FOLK DANCING ~ GIDDHA

Who performs Giddha?

Giddha is predominantly performed amongst females as a mark of a celebration such as a wedding. It is a traditional and local dance, exclusive to women, symbolising a festivity.

Men would not be involved in Giddha but instead would participate in a similar male version known as 'Malwai Giddha' which originated in the Malwa region in Punjab. This involves men performing Bhangra and the teasing of other people through folk poetry (Boliyan).



When words fail, music speaks!

When people think music, the first thing that comes to mind are instruments.

However, in Giddha, a joyous and excitable mood is primarily created through repetitive and extemporaneous clapping (tali). The sound of the synchronised clap sets the mood and creates a beat to which ladies can sing to.

Secondary to clapping, music instruments are used when Giddha is performed. The most popular instrument is a small drum (dholki) followed by tongs (chimta).



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How is Giddha Performed?

Giddha is a prevalent dance in Punjab, India and is considered to have derived from the ancient dance known as the ring dance. Similarly to the ring dance, women form a closed circle and take it in turns to come into the centre of the circle and perform to the 'Boli' (see 'Boliyan explained') being sung in complete harmony.

Women will dramatically play the roles of all people involved in the 'boli' for example they will tie a scarf (Chunni or Dupatta) around their head to impersonate a man or hunch their back to mimic an old lady. Whilst some women dance others will sing Boliyan, rhythmically clap and play instruments (see 'when words fail, music speaks') creating feelings of gaiety.



Boliyan Explained...

When Giddha is performed, women will sing couplets to express typical situations and their emotions. Boliyan are a type of folk poetry in which, classically, they amusingly sing about the relationships a woman has with her in-laws and or husband.

Occasionally 'Boliyan' have signature steps associated with them although majority of the steps are random and act out the story being told.

What Shall I Wear?

'What shall I wear?' is undoubtedly the most commonly used phrase by women. So what do women wear when participating in a Giddha performance?

Although it may seem peculiar to some, women performing Giddha tend to wear a colourful and vibrant dress, common to the Punjabi culture, consisting of three garments: a top (Kameez), pants (Salwaar) and a stole draped over their head and/or shoulders (Chunni or Dupatta). Occasionally, women will wear a skirt known as 'Lengha' or 'Ghagra' together with a 'Kameez'.

The costumes are decorated with striking jewellery such as earrings (Baliyan), head wear (Tikka and/or Saggi Phul), a necklace (Kentha) and bangles (Bangha). Simultaneously hair is plaited through with a 'Parandi' which not only acts as an accessory to extend, but also adorns the hair.



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