Chapter V

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Chapter V

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AND AJANTA

Introduction

India has cultural tradition as old as civilization. Performing arts is one of the famous modes used to express ideas, pass messages. Performing art is an art which can live only when it is performed. The performer performs it in front of spectacles which provide different experience of feeling of some kind of union with the performer. The tradition of performing arts in India goes back to the Vedic times, to the dramatic spectacles wherein priests assumed the roles of gods and sages in order to recreate on the earth the event of cosmic creation. In India performing arts are closely related with religion. Indian mythology along with enduring cultural patterns observed in India helped to sustain the tradition of performing arts. Uninterrupted tradition spanning several centuries gave strength to performing arts in India.

Performing arts are an integral part of the process of living, deriving validity from interaction and communication which alone can lead to the renewal and reinterpretation of any tradition.

The performing Arts- watching them, listening them, sharing them, mentally participating in them, sharing in tension the excitement created consciously, being activated by them provides a kind of experience which is different from emotions recollected in tranquillity.

India, the land rich in culture and heritage is known for the ages for its performing arts- whether it may be dance, music, and theatre or modern art form that is cinema. Indians are transcending barriers of culture and development. Ancient humans were probably mimicking the movements of the birds and animals in an attempt to acquire or depict the unconscious grace and freedom of form and motion and so emerged the dance and music.
Types of Performing Art

Performing arts is classified under three different categories, Dance, Music and theatre. All these have rich tradition and origin takes us to the Indian mythology and proved by many examples. One of the famous examples is figure of dancing girl found in Indus valley civilization. Paintings representing various postures of dance in caves of Ajanta or mudras of various Gods and Goddess are shown in sculptures of Ellora.

Music and dance forms important aspects of culture. India is proud of having one of the richest and oldest cultures in the world. Music both vocal and instrumental provides a profound appeal to the mind. Thus the sonorous rhythm that is produced while enchanting the Vedic mantras or litanies has a telling impact on human sensibility. Similarly martial music arouses feeling of heroism among the soldiers. Again various dance forms delineated in the sculptures at Ellora suggest the existence of intrinsic relationship between dance and music.\(^4\)

The dances were born, brought up & flourished in temples. Indian classical dance is basically devotional in spirit and character. The dancer controls over the movements, emotions and abstract ideas. Almost all the dances are the living stories and contain the complete saga of human experience. The dancer uses various postures and poses, motions and movements of body, gestures, sometimes spoken words, costumes and facial expression to convey the experience and the stories on which the dance is based.

Ritualistic and magical in intent these trance-dances represented a remarkable and harmonious fusion of music, dance, and drama.\(^5\)

Dance as a performing art

The tradition of performing arts in India has its roots in the Vedas in which rituals manifested itself through music and dance. Dance is one of the earliest fine art evolved by mankind and considered as a part of the religion because first dance performed is believed to be the cosmic dance of Shiva at creation of the universe.
The belief is that dancing came into being at the beginning of the entire thing. Indian mind having traversed all regions of knowledge surrender to the bliss of Dance of Shiva, who plays, longs and creates. Blinded by the beauty, he rushes, frolics, dances and whirls, Lord Shiva is Nataraja, Lord of Dances, the cosmos is his theatre- he himself is actor and audience.

The figure of Nataraja is adorned as the prime source of Indian dance. The dance is par excellence a visual art. This has been aptly stated in the words of Chawla Romila as,"The enigmatic swirling of the feet, the gracefully gyrating bodies and the rhythm of the soulful music, transports one to the beautiful realm of relaxing solitude. Indian dance forms are infact beautiful expression of the moods, celebrations and gaiety of the people. Shah Priyabala defines dance as “the rhythmic physical movement prompted by feelings and emotions”. Dance remains a wonderful medium for the expression of the joys of the people and the accompaniment to many of their activities which they experience in their real life situation.

Origin of Dance-

The origin of dance is associated with Shiva, the God of Vedic period. Dance as an art came into existence with the growth of human society and civilization. The first most important text on dramaturgy, Natyashtra by Bharatmuni, explains that in ancient time written text was monopoly of educated few, then Gods appealed to Lord Brahma, the creator of the universe and urged him to promulgate a fifth Veda, and it will be in the form of audiovisual art that would be accessible to all irrespective of formal education and to all the caste. Thus fifth Veda was introduced by drawing the content and teaching from the four Vedas and presented perfectly of all five arts including music, painting and dance.

Indian art and religion, philosophy and mythology are intermingled and cannot be separated. Indian dance and music tied inextricably/closely to the ceremonies such as wedding, birth, coronation and religious processions.
Dance is an instinctive art. Dance is obviously an outward mode of deep inner feeling.\textsuperscript{10} Dancing is an art. It is associated with human life closely related to culture and civilization of a country and its people.\textsuperscript{11}

Thus it is observed that in the sculptures of Ellora and painting of Ajanta caves reflects dance as the earliest example of fine art evolved by mankind. It occupied very important place since primitive period till today’s highly civilized era. Every movement in Indian dance is enormously important because it is meaningful. Indian dance is a high spiritual experience, a medium of worship, an experience of upliftment of the soul. In dance every step was carefully worked out and every extensible precisely designed, for every gesture and eye expressions along with the make up.

According to Indian mythology, overlord of Gods, Indra was also the divine patron of the arts. In his royal court there were celestial singers (Gandharvas), musicians (Kinnaras) and dancing Nymphs (Apsaras) to entertain the Gods.

The great Indian epic also shows the references of dance and music. In Ramayana many passages refers to music and dance.\textsuperscript{e.g.} The King Dasharatha invited the entire community of dancing girls to attain the royal horse sacrifice, the Ashwamedh Yagna. In Mahabharata Pandava were sent for exile of 12 years, during this for some years, Arjun disguised himself as a dancing master and taught the art of dancing to the Princess Uttara and other women in the court of King Virata.

Later the references of performing art came in Kalidasa’s play, Kalidasa a great personality related to Sanskrit poetry and drama in India. He was from the great emperor Chandra Gupta II of Ujjain reign, reveals the high status of various arts in his plays. He described a contest between two rival dance masters of the royal court as the theme of court scene in his drama, Malavikagnimitra.
A magnificent symbol of this synthesis is the south Indian image of Shiva Natraja, Lord of cosmic dance. The cult of Shiva gave a new creative impulse to the art of temple architecture, sculpture and the dance.

Thus Indian art have sacred origin and the inner experience especially in dance and music. Indian dance is characterised by demonstration of deep philosophical and religious mood of Indian people.

**Types of Dance**

Indian dancing falls under two principle types—Laysa and Tandava, feminine and masculine. This division is made according to the moods particular to the dances. Of the different types of dances performed in India, Kathak dance of North India, Manipur of North East, Bharatnatyam of Southwest belongs to Laysa type where as the Tandav mood is reflected in Kathakali of Kerala.

It would be really difficult to understand the cannons of painting without acquaintance with those of dancing. In Vishnudharmottaram the anatomy of human form in its motionless position are given. It is only in dancing that this form may be found in rhythmic movements with all the artistic possibilities. Similarly the cannons of image making or sculpture are closely related to the cannons of dancing.

Dancing (Nrutya) in general was connected with acting (Natya). They are aspects of same art, abhinaya, which is the portrayal of human emotions. The drama employed mainly words and gestures and dance uses mainly music and gestures.

The poses and gestures are classified in detail even carefully as the Bharata’s Natyashastra , which mentions thirteen poses of head, thirty six of eyes, nine of neck, thirty seven of the hand, thirty six of the body. Later texts classify many more poses and gestures, every one which depicts a specific emotions or object with so many possible combinations. The dancer can tell a whole story, easily comprehensible to the observer who knows the convention.
The most striking feature of the Indian dance is undoubtedly the hand-gesture (mudra). By beautiful and complicated code the hand alone is capable of portraying not only a wide range of emotions but of gods, animals, men, natural scenery, and actions and so on. Some hundred mudras were classified in later textbooks and they are used not only in the dance, but as we have seen in religious worships and iconography.

Indian dancing is not merely a thing of legs and arms but of whole body. Every movement of the little finger or eyebrow is significant and must be fully controlled. There are the essential features in a dance. It is a pleasure derived both by dancer and spectator due to a definite combination of such graceful movements and the vivid representation of the emotions in other people watching the dance, due to such carefully trained movements.  

**Music as performing Art**

Indian music has one of the longest and most distinguished histories of any tradition in the world. The history of origin of music takes us as it is intimately involved with the Hindu religion, its origin centres round the chanting of the Rigveda and Samaveda, the oldest liturgy in the world. The theoretical knowledge of music is still preserved in manuscripts and it has been handed down from generation to generations. But our knowledge regarding musical instrument is enhanced when we refer it in the plastic representations found in painting, sculptures etc.

Music is one of the oldest and finest human expressions. Like dance it shows the entire element to express the emotions, anger, love etc. Music is common phenomenon of all nations and a part of the life of human being.

**Origin of Music**

As music was of divine origin it was considered the priority of Brahma only to know music. In the ancient literature music is given a lot of importance. It was considered to be of divine origin and was called the fifth Veda. The
origin traces back to Indian mythology, according to a Hindu legend, music is a divine gift to man. Saraswati, consort of Brahma is the goddess of music and all fine arts. She holds a Vina (Seven stringed instruments) in one hand and plays it with another. It was said that Narada the sage and spiritual son of Bramha, the creator was the first musician. Even as Shiva was the first dancer, Vishnu the originator of song. Music is a source of joy, grief, prayer or praise in which the ganas are taking rasa. The Gandharvas are entertaining the Gods. The ganas are also a source of joy and laughter. Ancient books also refer to the mythological tradition of music. Music is the gateway to heaven. The importance of music in human life is very emphatically stated by Pushpendra Kumar as, ‘the man who properly attends the performance of music (gandharva) and drama will attain the happy and meritorious path in the company of Brahmanic sages.’ It is mentioned in the Hindu mythology that the various aspects of life and learning are associated with different Sages that is why the mythologists might have ascribed the origin of three fold art of music to certain Gods, Goddess or superhuman being to their own belief.

The Vedas are set to a distinctive melody that has been passed down through the centuries in an unbroken oral tradition. The ancient references are found by Panin in 500 B.C. It was the first reference to music. The great Hindu epic Mahabharata mentions seven sabres, the Jataka stories of Buddhism mentions great sounds. The Vaishnva and Shiva Bhakti saints spread love of music through devotional hymns. Music thus can be said to have developed as a sequel to worship. Temples have always been the biggest centres and shrines of music and dance. If music accompanies dance, both of them strive to depict certain ideas, meaning and gestures employed in dance helps to narrate a particular emotion. Music provides the life to the dance. Music is both master and partner of the dance.

Thus we can say that Indian music occupies the various stages of Indian social life and culture
Theatre as a performing art

Theatre is the branch of the performing arts concerned with acting out stories in front of an audience using combinations of speech, gesture, music, dance, sound and spectacle. In addition to the standard narrative dialogue style, theatre takes such forms as classical dance, opera and mime.

Natya and Abhinaya is more or less the same thing which is generally performed in the theatre.

The co-relation between drama and dance is rightly pointed out by Dr. Tagore. He states, “Our very word for drama or play ‘Nataka’ or ‘Abhinaya’ shows that dance was its essential feature”.  

This is also explained by Shah Priyabala as, “Dancing and Drama in India are inseparable”. The gesture code called Abhinaya is a medium of expression to take towards to present a theme to the audience. The Abhinaya consist of four limbs, the first is Angika abhinaya to the gestures, movements and poses of the different parts of the body. The second is the Vachika Abhinaya or the uttered word, speech or song. The third is Aharya Abhinaya or the external aids such as costume and make-up, the forth Sattvika Abhinaya or the physical or outward manifestations of the psychic state of mind.

Abhinaya possesses a medium of expression as eloquent as the spoken word. When analysed they seem to spring from four sources like Mudra, mimetic or imitative gestures, gestures in everyday use and gestures deliberately invented. This symbolic vehicle enables the dancer to interpret and suggest anything from the least significant of created things to the supreme the creator of them all.

In abhinaya this articulate medium, combined with sattvika abhinaya helps reveal the inner condition of the mind is an indispensable for the manifestation of the basic mood, the abiding background of the given theme.
Thus the expression of the mood which is technically referred to as Bhava or the main motif evokes Rasa, sentiment or flavour that leads to complete aesthetic experience.

According to Natya Shastra, Indian historic art – which means drama and dance, has three main and distinct aspects- nrita, nritya and natya.

Nrita means abstract dance. In this there is movements, steps, rhythm, pattern, but there is nothing communicate beyond artistry.

Nritya recognizes theme, story, and narrative. It is essentially expressional dance and is concerned with conveying the meaning of an idea or a subject. It achieves this through feeling expressed facially, through the use of hands and other elements of body language known to Indian dance.

Natya is far more comprehensive and all embracing. It includes nrita and nritya, and has, in addition the element of drama, that is injected through speech and song.

Therefore it can be stated that features of drama are very effectively presented through dance and music.

**Reflection of performing arts in the Sculptures of Ellora.**

The performing arts constitute dance, music and drama. The famous cave temple Ellora, a world heritage site; highest achievement of cave architecture in the world has plenty of sculptures. These sculptures are of different religion; Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism. In all we are able to see various icons reflecting various aspects of life. These sculptures portray the social life through various ways.

In this connection Asok Bhattacharyya expresses the importance and scope of Ellora sculpture as “on experience the might of Indian sculpture it is indeed essential to witness Ellora”. The Ellora caves are not only remarkable for possessing some grand representation of the noblest Brahmanical stories in the great epics but also for adducing artistic innovation involving formal as well as emotive aspect of sculpting. On stylistic examination of the reliefs, we find events of dramatic importance. Some of the compositions show figures in tension, while others in rest.
The liveliness of the sculpture is reflected through the perfection in carving and their facial expression. This is supported by Parimoo Ratan, Kannal Depak, Pannikar Shivaji as, “If the carved images in the lankeshwara or the Deshavatara cave were to come alive and perform their respective deeds, the ardent rasika would be dazed to find that each event, each myth, each narration and each sculpture is dance.  

The majestic grace of Durga- Mahisasuramardini, or the grandeur of Nataraja attended upon and viewed by galaxy of beings or the combat between Narasimha- Hiranyakashyapu or the silence and deep slumber of Sheshsayi Vishnu were to come alive and be enacted as abhinaya or drama, the present position in which the sculptures are resting today appear to be frozen at significant climatic split-second moments during the action of enactment.

This is also true in case of Brahmanical caves of Ellora that the sculptures carved are having one or another hidden posture of dance in them.

A dancer’s interest in the entire gamut of Indian sculptures has remained focused on discovering, observing and analysing the dance postural value which is intrinsic to the structures of these sculptures.

After foregoing of the above concepts relating to performing art, dance, music and theatre the sculptures in Ellora caves were examined and accordingly some of the important sculptures are discussed below.

Panel 2.2.1 Ravana shaking Kailasa -- A kind of dynamo of magic and Spiritual energy.

This panel is on the left-side of sanctum sanctorum. It is beneath the rangamahal This is shown in Panel No.5.2.1 on page I inserted

This panel reminds us one of the famous events of Ramayana incident of ‘Ravana’s shaking of the mount Kailasa’. It is also called as ‘Ravananugriha –Murti of Shiva’. It is carved at various places in many caves as it was one of the important themes. This is most expressive panel is in Kailasa cave 16. It depicts exerting terrific force in Ravana’s
efforts to lift it up. The mountain quakes, Parvati due to the shock clutch
her husband’s arm, and cries out “some one is moving the mountain we
shall be overthrown. Her maid is flying in alarm, but Siva only raising one
foot presses down Kailasa upon Ravana’s head and holds him fast.

There is intense dramatic force and imagination in this great sculpture.
The whole execution shows extraordinary command of plastic technique,
not only in the grouping and composition of line but in the powerful and
subtle treatment of varies gradation of relief. The sculpture has
concentrated masses of deep shadow and strong broken light upon the
crouching struggling figure of Ravana which throws into high relief all the
horror of his dominical power. On the mountain top, Shiva sits enthroned,
the serenity of his paradise-hardly disturbed by Parvati’s sudden
movement and the alarm of her landmaid –is finely suggested in quitic
alteration and gradation of relief, softened by a veil of half shade which
falls over them from above. 26

Rowland Benjamin describes this panel as, ‘His outstretched foot, barely
touching the ground imprisons the demon giant in the bowels of the
mountain.

In the darkness of the background, into which rushed the terrified figure of
a maidservant is shown. Depth and darkness are parcelled out according
to the demands of the psychological suggestiveness with which the artist
invests each single figure. Space and light and shade have been
employed to heighten the emotional effect. 27

In the scene as Coomaraswamy says, “quivering of the mountains has
been felt, and Parvati turns to Siva and grasps his hand in fear, while her
maid takes to flight, but the great God is unmoved, and holds all fast by
pressing down his foot. The lower half of the composition exhibits Ravana
exerting all force of his twenty arms against the sides of his subterranean
prison” and recognises in the panel a powerful visual realisation of
geotectonic conception. 28

This panel is a synthesis of the formal values with psychological elements.
It is doubtlessly the most significant achievement of the carver.
The well-known authorities have praised this panel as one of the most remarkable panel for showing values. In the panel, ‘Shiva supports Parvati one of his hands is in Vismaya mudra expressing surprise’ there are male and female attendants. The dominant feelings, moods and actions are very expressive in the famous panels of Ravana shaking Kailasa. The latent strength of Ravana with ten heads and twenty hands shown in visual forms and the application of his titanic strength to bring a seismic vibration in the Kailasa, the agitated and panic stricken Parvati clings to lord Siva and His serene and unmoved disposition and His final act of pressing down his toe are chief features highlighted in this composition. Not even of the sentiments shown, the sculptors present so many characters of diverse movements in an integrated totality. To effect such a dynamic action on the live rock, he appears to have shifted emphasis from mass to void and volume to linearity. In this panel the forms are visualised in terms of depth instead of surface which is the known approach of the classical sculptor. Hence as says Saraswati, “the action is set in a deep box like hallow from the darkness of which the figure seem to emerge according to the depth of relief which again is graded into a number of planes by receding cuts. Such graduation are determined by the requirements of psychological differentiation, each mood and each sentiment being described in its appropriate setting according to varying degree of intensity”.

Thus it is observed in above panel almost all aspects of rasa are highlighted through the characters of the panel. Parvati is frightened, seen through her body language, she is holding Shiva. Shiva is surprised as his right hand is indicating the aspect. The maidservants are running in fear. The musician entertaining lord too are running with their musical instruments either in hand or on the head. Shiva’s face shows Shant bhava or is calm and full of spirituality. Doorkeeper like Shiva is unmoved from the incidence they are not moved from their seat as they know the power of their lord. The figure of Ravana shows the great force he is
applying which is seen through bulging eyes and the muscles. The entire panel narrates a great story through the medium of stone. It shows the life and movement of typical Hindu art. It is full of vigour. The Hindu loved to depict life as it was lived and liked to portray it as such. Every figure fits perfectly in the whole scheme and every figure has its distinct individuality. It is the finest expression of performing arts which can not be visualised in any manner anywhere.

Panel – 5.2.2 Vishnu in the form of Narsimha -- A Katihasta pose and Chapatdana mudra

Another important panel in the cave 15, Das Avatara cave is the Narsimhamurti of Vishnu. This panel is somewhat different than commonly shown Narsimhavatar where in Hirayankaspu is always shown on the lap of Narsiha. This is Vishnu’s appearance on earth as man lion.

Vishnu in the form of Nrisihma holds in one hand a Parasu and a conch. One hand is kathiasta pose, the other in chapatdana mudra. With other three hands he is holding Hiranyakashyapu. The legs of Hiranya and Nrisimha are interlocked.

This is seen in the panel 5.2.2 on page I inserted.

Mr. E. B. Havells remarks on this sculpture, ‘The sculpture has chosen the moment when the terrific apparition of the man lion rushes forth to seize Hiranya, when taken unawares and with the mocking taunt still on his lips, makes a desperate effort to defend himself.’ Any artist will appreciate the technical strength and imaginative powers with subjects are treated in these sculptures. It would however be impossible to give an adequate impression of great sculptured monument of India within the compass of single volume, even if sufficient material were available. In the words of Gopinath Rao, “the master touch of the works of the artists is seen in the way in which the interlocking of the legs of Nrisimha with that of Hiranyakashyapu is carried out.”
Thus the above panel depicts expressions of Narsimha are full of fury. The furious expression is shown by facial expression. To kill a demon requires strength which is shown through eight hands. The action of holding Hiranya as he is running away with fear is very aptly depicted. Hiranyakashyapu is sculptured as if turning away with fear as Narsimha takes hold of his shoulder and locks him with own legs. This is the finest example of the imagination of the artists and the ability to convey the message in right way. The posture of Narsimha is in tribhnaga pose which is an indication of heroic mood.

**Panel 5.2.3 Mahishsurmardini -- Heroic and furious sentiments**

This panel is in cave no.17 on the right wall of left verandah.(Panel No. 5.2.3)

This panel represent the postural representation in Goddesses in the form of warrior. This posture is used in aiming and releasing weapon. This posture indicates a heroic or furious sentiment.

In this panel Goddesses Durga is killing demon Mahisasura. The figure standing in this posture indicates heroic or furious mood by position of legs and hands. She is in combat with a demon. One leg of Durga is planted firmly on the ground, while the other is heavily pressed against Mahisa’s back. The agitated torso in this panel of combat suggests action and movement. Gandharvas are seen on her right side above. They are carrying a garland to welcome the Goddess.

In the language of dance this posture is called as ‘alidha posture’. All the alidha- standing postural representation of warriors, are interrelated by common heroic sentiments.

This panel suggests that the Goddess is ready to fulfil the divine deed. It is the victory of good over evil elements in the society, the spiritual truth in Indian philosophy. This representation has taken an individual turn, which could be best explained in terms of iconographical variants of a posture, which reflects the freedom of the imagination and artistic choice. One can
also infer the dynamic state of the postural and gestural iconography. The tribhanga pose is an indication of heroic nature itself in which Goddess is standing. The body stature, the facial expressions are too conveying that this panel is the demonstration of performing art form-theatre.

**Panel 5.2.4 Kalyansundaramurti-- Parvati as a loving and blushing bride**

There are many panels depicting marriage of Shiva and Parvati in Hindu caves. The present panel is in the southern gallery of cave 16, Kailasa. The details of this panel 5.2.4 are shown as below page II inserted

In this panel Shiva and Parvati are shown standing. They both look graceful, their faces being lit up with intense love. The figure of Parvati is noteworthy. The curves of her body are extremely graceful. Her slightly inclined standing posture makes a beautiful posture of bride. Gupte R.S. describes this bride as, 'she looks extremely coy and can be seen blushing.' 35 Parvati's slightly bend face lends great charm to her person. Her appearance is extremely natural, as sculpture depicts her marriage with Shiva. Parvati is carved as a bride and she looks like a bride in all aspects.

In this wonderful panel the artists has, with perfect ease, carved out of mere stone a loving and blushing bride.

This panel expresses the feelings of bride the sculptor has shown her legs with left thumb over right thumb. Even she also forgot to wear one anklet in hurry.

In general in Indian marriage the bride’s hand is given in bridegroom’s hand, here it is opposite Shiva’s hand is seen in Parvati’s hand. This indicates same feeling which Shiva is experiencing. All these show the mixed feelings of a bride.

One of the reasons behind her blushing is Shiva’s one hand is on her shoulder and another is in her hand. Shiva and Parvati are shown with many ornaments.
As in Indian marriage the priest's role is important. Here too the priest is seen. Ganas, Brahma are also present to witness the marriage ceremony. Parvati is seen as a typical young bride, shy and nervous. The emotion of love is free flowing in this panel. The marriage scene depicts the mixed emotions which are generally experienced by Indian brides and bridegrooms. The pose of Parvati is abhanga, one of the pose of dance, Gauri (Parvati), is the best example of this pose.

Thus this panel demonstrates the ideals of performing arts.

Panel 5.2.5  Gajasura-vadha Murti --- Shiva as Bhairva

This panel is below the nandimandapa of cave No.16 on the western wall. This panel is related to Shiva. Shiva the God of destruction here shown to kill a demon. (see insert P. III)

Shiva takes a violent form to get rid of the world of Evil, which is symbolised by Gajasura. He burnt the demon by exposing him to the heat of sun and to protect himself he used the skin of elephant like an umbrella. The skill of sculptors is seen in the delineating the figure of Bhairva. Shiva is God of Destruction as well as of Creation. Shiva is engaged in task of destroying the demon; he is shown caressing his consort Parvati with one hand. The artists have shown Shiva is with flaming eyes and in state of frenzied excitement with saptamatrikas at his feet. 36 Sapta matrika and Bhringi are also seen here.

It is observed in the above panel that Shiva performing the task with a sense of perfect philosophic detachment.In the violent form Shiva is shown with ten hands. The numerous hands of Shiva are the indication of strength. Shiva is in tribhanga pose. The hand position, number of hands, the tribhanga pose and flaming eyes are the indications of heroic nature of Shiva. This panel helps us to observe that the stones too convey sentiments as an example of performing art.
Panel 5.2.6  Shiva as Mahayogi

The panel is on the eastern wall below nandimandapa. It is a panel shows calm and serene aspects of Shiva. This is exactly opposite of Shiva, as Bhairva in placement and in sentiments or moods.

This panel shows Shiva is in deep meditation. It is an example of samabhanga pose. On two sides of Shiva musicians are shown playing musical instruments. They are trying to disturb Shiva. Shiva is untouched with all this. On the both side of Shiva are sadhus trying to meditate. The sound of music makes it impossible for them to concentrate on anything.

It is observed that Shiva is seated on lotus in padmasana. He wears a very decorative crown and having eight hands. Astadikpalas are seen above Shiva with their vahanas.

The Shiva is in calmer and reposeful mood. He is in sativika mudra. The face of Shiva and posture is the finest example of performing art, drama.

Panel 5.2.7  Nataraja Shiva - Dancing Shiva as manifesting the primal cosmic forces of creation and destruction

We find many sculptures of Nataraja Shiva carved in many hindu caves like cave no. 14, 15, 16 and 21. Shiva as Nataraja is regarded as the lord of dance.

These themes are seen in Panel. No. 5.2.7.1, 5.2.7.2, 5.2.7.3.and 5.2.7.4 Image of Natraja shows the full range of body, hand and foot positions practically all poses exhibited by sculptures of other dancing figures are found in the iconography of Nataraja. 37

Dancing Shiva is manifesting the primal cosmic forces of creation and destruction found everywhere and within us. The dance can be represented through the sound Aum. Dancing Shiva holds a drum symbolizing creation through sound. On the other hand, Nataraja also holds fire, symbolizing destruction.
Shiva dominates all dancing divinities. His dance is known as tandava. It is believed that it is through Shiva’s tandava that the art of dance descended to the earth.

Shiva and Krishna are the two divinities who find pride of place in the scheme of Indian dance. They also find extensive representation in traditional Indian painting and sculpture. In Hindu mythology, the birth of the dance is, as indicated earlier, neatly bound up with the eternally pulsating rhythm of the heavens. It is the gods, goddesses and untold number of other character in this mythology, who continue to be remembered in the dance that men and women on earth exulted in as entertainment, and carried to the height of glorious performing art.

The tandava dance represents the creation, maintenance, and destruction of the universe.

Shiva's dance is Tandava, energetic and virile. The dance represents the God's five activities, Pnachkripya Viz.1. The creation and evolution (Shrishti) 2. Maintenance and preservation (Sthithi) 3. Destruction and involution (Samhara) drawing again into his ownself. 4. Embodiment of soul (Triobhava), 5. Their release from the cycle (Anugraha). These separately considered are the activities of the deities, Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Maheshwar, Sadashiva. The palaka hand which depicts the pose of Abhaya Mudra is for boon, peace, contentment and maintenance. The cosmic process of creation and destruction, manifestation and non-manifestation, the world evolution and change are fundamental concepts of Hindu theology and Shiva's dance is the depiction of the same.

The position of his legs and mudras depicted by his hands clearly indicate that the artist was versed in art of dancing. The foot of the right leg touches the knee of left leg. The dance pose is portrayed very well by the sculptors by giving movement. The panel has grace and majesty. Astadikpalas on their respective vehicles are carved above on both sides of Shiva. Close by are seen three figures of musicians. They are playing
mridanga, flute and cymbals respectively. Parvati is gracefully reclined against a pillar. Her legs are crossed a posture which lends exquisite charm to her whole figure. The curves of the body of Shiva have been artistically carved. (Panel 5.2.7.4)

The musical instruments used in this panel are the instruments commonly found in the performance of classical dance of India-Bharatnatyam.

This is another dance form of Shiva. The Natraja is in the katisama Karana. It is a position in which one hand rests on the thigh while the other near the navel. The feet position is noteworthy as they are most primary and essential to any dance movement. Here the toes alone touch the ground, while the rest of the foot is lifted above the ground. Shiva is shown in tribhanga pose. He has eight hands. One of his hands is in gajahasta pose; the others are holding fire, parashu and the damaru. The legs are in position of dance. Musicians are playing by his side. They are playing flute, cymbals and mridunga. Beautiful flying gandharvas are seen above the Shiva.

In upper part of panel Astadikpalas are seen with their respective vahana. They are shown engrossed in performance. Parvati is shown with little Skanda. Shiva’s ornaments in this panel are noteworthy. Even Nandi, Bhringi and ganas take their share in entertainment.

It is found that various poses of Nataraja, down the ages, the theme of dancing divinities has inspired countless artists to sculpt, carve and paint images.

The favourite subject is, understandably, Nataraja. While his most familiar representation is in his Ananda Tandava attitude, there are hundreds of other ways in which he is projected as Supreme Dancer. Images shown here are with two to eight arms, the hands often holding implements or weapons, in order to highlight his multiple roles, qualities and attributes.

The atmosphere perceived through this depiction is calm and serene. The posture of Shiva reflects his total immersion in his own dance.
Many positions of dance in the form of Nataraja are found in the Hindu caves of Ellora. The Nataraja Murti of Shiva (discussed as per Panel No. 5.2.7.1, 5.2.7.2, 5.2.7.3, and 5.2.7.4 above) communicates vigour, peace, contentment, and mainaintance which are the aspects of life through abhinaya. Thus Shiva is dancing is the origin of all performing arts.

Dance of Shiva is the finest expression of performing art which cannot be visualised in any manner anywhere. It gives us the deeper sense of philosophical views of Lord Shiva.

**Panel 5.2.8 Depiction of Music in Ellora caves**

Music is considered as divine origin. Music is a source of expression of joy, grief, prayer or preys. According to mythological tradition music is gateway to heavens. Like dance it shows the entire element to express the emotions, anger and love. Saraswati, consort of Brahma is Goddess of music and all fine arts. She holds Vina in one hand and plays with other. Such glimpses of music are seen in Buddhist, Hindu and Jain caves. Few selected panels highlight importance of music and musical instruments are discussed below.

**Music Gallery in cave.10**

This panel is found Cave 10, Vishwakarma Cave at Ellora.(Panel. 4.2.8.1)

Below the beautiful Chaitya window is door and two windows. The door leads to a gallery. The gallery is famous for the depiction of performing art i.e. dance and music and thus it is called as music gallery. On the parapet wall of the gallery are numerous panels, all beautifully carved. There are number of extremely beautiful dancing figures. There too we can find gandharvas playing music with musical instruments.

It is possible that from this Music Gallery, background music was provided to the bhikkus chanting mantras below. It may also have been used for seating important visitor. 41
On the front panel of this cave there is a sculpture of a dancer in the centre surrounded by the musician. She is performing a difficult step which is found in the classical Indian dance named Bharatnatyam. This and other dancing figures shows that the dancing and music was used to convey the messages and they themselves are the manifestation that these performing art was prominent in ancient India and practised widely so the sculptors too after observations used in carving.

The panels selected above are the example of use of dance and music in ancient time. In Buddhism these performing arts were widely observed and practised. They act as a source of reflection is seen in the famous Viswakarma cave of Ellora. The dancer is in a dancing posture and position of hands shows the movement.

The next panel is on the Chaitya window where in we can find the dwarfs playing musical instruments like Mridinga, Cymbals. As per panel 5.2.8.2, it not only reflects importance of music in sculpture but also it shows the position of music in the Buddhist society. This is the only one panel highlighting performing art, dance and music.

This panel gives us an idea of variety of musical instruments used. All these instruments are commonly used with the performance of Bharatnatyam.

**Shiva and Parvati**

This panel 5.2.8.3 is found in cave 21 on the northern wall .This panel reflects the importance of performing art-music. Shiva and Parvati are shown seating in this panel. Parvati is relaxing and inclined on Shiva. One hand of Shiva is resting on the Parvati’s waist. The hairstyle of Parvati is noteworthy.

Below this panel there are seven small figures of musicians. They are playing Sarangi, cymbals, flute, mridanga etc.
The performing art is jain cave is demonstrated in cave no. 33. The example of performing art in Jain cave is shown in the panel 5.2.8.4 presented below.

**Performing art in Jain cave**

In the panel 5.2.8.4, it is observed that the performing arts are also seen in the Jain caves. They are in the form of episodes about Mahavira, Parshvanath and Gomateshwar. The panel narrates the stories. Their expression to communicate the messages to the viewers is in the form dance and music which are depicted in this cave. In cave 33 one of the panels (panel 5.2.8.4) depicts a flying figure holding Vina is shown prominently. The figure is carved in such a way that flying position through movement of legs is shown clearly. The gesture shows same complete devotion.

Thus love, anger, fear, joy, terror, ecstasy, and various other emotions find lucid expressions in the sculptures of Ellora. Each and every sculpture speaks to the viewer.

All the sculptures listed above are full of life; their postures and gesture highlight the expression and convey the meaning. The sculptures in Ellora are an encyclopaedia of performing Arts.

Through a beautiful and complete language of movement, dance provides the most concrete manifestation of the inner state and vision we have spoken of. Indian dance, like Indian poetry, music and sculpture, seeks to communicate universal, impersonal emotions and through the very medium of the human form, it transcends the physical plane, in its technique, it employs the technique of all Indian arts. the music which seems accompany the dance is actually the life-breath of its structure and indeed, dance interprets in movement what music interprets in sound, the posture and the stances it attains are poses which the Indian sculptures models, all these the dancers imbues with a living spirit of movement in a composition of forms which is both the sensuous and spiritual.\(^{42}\)
The cultural refinement of the times is fully expressed through music, dance, painting and arts and other pastimes. It is in this context that the study of musical instrument represented in the sculptures forms an important aspect of cultural dynamics of the Ellora caves.

Thus the reflection of performing art is aptly summarised by the well known authorities Parimoo Ratan and others in following words, “Inferentially, the postural and gestural values of Ellora sculptures are at par with dance, in which each image has been very thoughtfully placed and positioned. 43

As in case of dance poses found at Ellora, Vatasyan Kapila remarked, “All dance poses whether of Buddhist, Hindu and Jain are classified and analysed in terms of the Samabhanga,, abhanga and tribhanga and within the tradition no movement would be possible without falling into one of these three categories. 44

Samabhanga, abhanga and tribhanga are the poses in which sculpture are found. These are the finest example of sculpture art which depicts both intrinsic and externsic features and even in minute aspects of human body while performing these postures.

The visit to Ellora cave is nothing but experiencing dramas full of dance and music played for the audience.

**Reflection of Performing Arts in Ajanta caves**

Ajanta the very name creates an everlasting sensation in the minds of artists, performers, poets, architects, art lovers, critics, students of socio-religious development, costume designers, craftsmen and so on. Ajanta is the manifestation of Indian art in its true sense. One is struck standing in front of these rocks cut architectural marvels, lavishly carved and painted, with elegance in its purity of form and line. The over decoration is never to be felt in the art of Ajanta, a balance of simplicity and love for details is experienced throughout the entire phase of artistic activity.
The study of nonverbal behaviour is tied to performance in drama and dance. Since Indian studies describe and emphasise a unity of purpose between poetry and drama, indeed, between all arts, the physical manifestation of nonverbal behaviour as representations of underlying psychological needs and states is integrated in every art. In poetry through appropriate description and metaphor, in sculpture through direct, indirect and oblique representation of nonverbal acts, and in dance combining both poetry and sculpture, adding to the combination the dimension of movement and symbol. The artist whether author, painter, playwright, musician or actor, communicates through words, sounds, music, line, colour, surface, tone, space, gesture and movement. What renders a gesture more effective is a mode and manner designed to please, and gratify the senses, sensibilities and minds of those being communicated with. In addition what is being communicated must be meaningful and significant. The perception of the gestural object must move beyond the merely sensual and penetrate deeper to the level of intrinsic perception.

The features of the dance poses are applicable to Ajanta art too. The poses of the character painted and carved are categorized in poses of samabhanga, abhanga, tribhanga and atibhanga. These aspects are analysed while discussing various panels which are selected for the study.

Panel 5.3.1 Boddhisattva Padmapani- The most praised painting in the world

In cave 1 to the left of the entrance to the antechamber of the main shrine is a painting of the Bodhisattva Padmapani, the bearer of the Lotus. These are the pre-stage of Buddha. He is also considered as the attendants of Buddha. It is one of the best panels painted in Ajanta. It is one of the most praised paintings in the world.

Around the Bodhisattva are painted playful monkeys and a joyous musician. Amid all this activity, the Bodhisattva responds to a deep harmony. There is a great sense of sublime peace that pervades this figure, which is one of the greatest masterpieces of Indian art.
The painting of Bodhisattva Padmapani is described very artistically by Bejamin Rowland in the following words:

Here is ‘an art that reveals life… as an intricate ritual fitted to the consummation of every perfect experience. In a marvellous reconciliation of beauty physical and spiritual, the Great Bodhisattva is realized as the very embodiment of the compassion and tenderness that his mission of allaying the miseries of the world implies. The eyes half closed in reverie, the physically unreal proportions of the face suggest a beauty beyond reality; this is a liveliness so refined away from transitory human appearance that it becomes a symbol of celestial beauty and purity. The head, almost like a heavy flower on the strong stalk of the neck, bends slightly forward; an Olympian majesty sits on the tensile arc of the brows. The face is veiled in a lyric, pensive abstraction that almost reminds one of the half-sensual, half spiritual ghostliness that animates the faces of Michelangelo’s demi-gods. The proper expression of the qualities of a Bodhisattva is the result of the artist’s knowledge and possession of the entire body of the painter’s tradition – proportion, drawing and technique – together with an understanding of the drama of pose and gesture which, as in the dance, conveys the essential nature of the deity. The figure gives an impression of being arrested in a moment between tranquillity and movement. This suggestion of the potentiality of movement at though the figure were about to ‘come to life’ is, of course, the express result of the wonderfully rhythmic disposing of pose and gesture.  

In the words of Yazdani, “The pose with a swing at waist line, although somewhat conventional is yet quite pleasing producing a lively idea of movement in the figure, the pose is seen to have been adapted from the dancing attitude”.  

In the opinion of Mujumdar R.C, “The great Bodhisattva Padamapani Avalokitesvara in panel No. 5.3.1, shows the highest attainment in the way of figure painting. We may recognize it as the very acme of Asiatic pictorial art”. 

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Mr. E. B. Havell points out that, “The lovely head of Bodhisattva, a good impression of the broad plastic treatment of the later Ajanta paintings. The brush lines here visible are not foundation of the painting, but the finishing touches which give emphasis and reality to the surface modelling”. 48 Mr. N. Jayapalan comments that, “Bodhisattva Padmapani looks down at the erring world with great compassion”. 49 Mr. Ghosh A highlights, “The figure of Bodhisattva are represented by qualities of calm and intense self – concentration. 50 Another important observation is given by Mr. Mulk Raj Anand, “A sentimental bent head stance is substituted for awareness. 51 A perfect experience in marvellous reconciliation of beauty physical and spiritual.

It is observed that the figure of Bodhisattva is the wonder in Indian art. Each and every body part of Bodhisattva are the master pieces in Indian art.

The figure is having the qualities of youth, birth in royal family, noble character and religious temperament. The body of Bodhisattva Padmapani has painted highlighting the strong masculine limbs, a broad chest, round arms and well set neck which a youth possesses. The noble character is shown by the facial features are most elegant, high intellectual forehead, large meditative eyes, a quiline nose and firm lips. The choice of ornament adds the noble characteristics. The raised eyebrows and high light on the nose and the chin give an air of spirituality to the countenance.

The eyebrow is especially noteworthy as it is continuous and drawn in one stroke. The eyes which are half open and closed show the meditative character and spirituality.

The pose is tribhanga pose which is commonly seen in performing arts, dance.

All these qualities make it a unique piece of art like world famous painting of Monalisa.
Panel 5.3.2  Dark Princess – The consort of Bodhisattva

It is a painting found in cave 1. It is to the left of Bodhisattva Padmapani. She is the consort of Buddhisattva. Panel 5.3.2, the main features of panel, Dark Princess can be considered as under.

Dark Princess is painted almost lifesize by itself a tour de force. The artist has painted her as symbol for love as contrast to the pearl grey complexion of Bodhisattva. The limbs treatment shows much feminine charm. The serenity is shown on her face. She is with scanty clothing, which comprises only a bodice of fine gauze and a short skirt of striped silk. Her expression exhibits restraints and modesty combined with an air of meditativeness. It is seen through special delineation of the eyes.

The artist has attempted to indicate the grace of a matron instead of that of a young damsels, her pose being slightly turned from the Bodhisattva, to whom the public gaze naturally will be directed, is very characteristics of Indian women when appearing in public with their husband or relatives. Mr. Yazdani G. describes this painting in a very beautiful manner as, “The budding beauty of girl, with rather a melancholy bent head, is being contemplated by a monk, as a temptation he must resist. The painter, therefore, infuses into her lovely, lush, purple-brown contours, all the ripeness of bursting fruit, with which a certain despondency in the full lower lip, as though her beauty is the harbinger of doom. The dreamy eyes seem to be manipulated like cliche. The beautiful curve her body forms as she bends forward a little to look into the mirror, very well delineated. The highlight shown on her chin, lower lip and nose have made this painting exquisite. The Princess is scantily dressed as compared to the all distinguished ladies of Ajanta. The dressing shows the grace of her form.

From the point of view of performing arts we can say that the figure of dark princess is in tribhanga pose. This pose is generally used by the dancer as a standing pose. Her royalty is shown through the ornaments she is wearing. Her lips, the hand position, half closed eyes, eyebrows show lady with royal characteristics.
Panel 5.3.3 Dancing Girl – A scene from Mahajanaka Jataka

This is a scene from Mahajanaka Jataka in cave 1. It is on the left, just above the cell door. The young king Mahajanaka has decided to renounce the world. To persuade to give up his idea his mother invited the dancer and the musicians. This shows the royal scene where king Mahajanaka is sitting majestically while princes is looking at him in love filled eyes as he is renouncing the world as depicted in Panel 5.3.3.

The scene portrays dance. The principal dancer is beautifully attired. She is wearing a long jacket with full sleeves. A cloth like dupatta hangs down from the shoulders covering the part of her body. She is wearing a long skirt. The ornaments of the dancer have also been painted with care. The hairstyle also exhibits much imagination and intermingling of the flowers with the plaits is most pleasing. She is shown deeply engrossed in her performance. Her hands have been thrown in graceful curves and her legs have been parted in action. The pose of the dancer is typical; one with Indian steps of to-day could say that very little change has taken place in this art since the fresco was painted, almost 1500 years ago.

In the words of Ratan Parimoo, Deepak Kannal, “This is a circular composition where the dancer is the centre of attraction. The artist in order to bring fluidity in the painting instead of stretching a rigid pose has captured the glimpses of an intermediary movement. The left hand is turned is alapallava while the right hand is internal across moving in the process of crossing back to its former side. The right leg is samapada left foot is indicating a movement appropriate angular bending of the head, waist and knee gives a total balance to the pose. The headgear, curving of the hands head, waist and knee bending indicate a circular movement which can be associated with the present day Odissi form of dance. The full sleeved stitched dress as upper garment is very attractive. The combination of light and dark shades brings a rare grace and charm to the form of the dance. This attire has been adopted as traditional dress of Kathak school of dance.

At the right hand of the chief dancer there are ladies. The orchestra comprises five artists. Two of them are playing flute, one a pair of drum another mridang and one cymbal.
This panel is remarkable tribute to skill of Ajanta artists as it portrays the charms of the dancers through various forms. All part of the dance scene is meant to stop King Mahajanka from renouncing the world.

The dancer is tribhanga pose. Her one hand is in a gajahasta mudra of Nataraja Shiva. This mudra is found in the main Indian classical dance, Bharatnatyam. The movement of the body is shown through the legs, slight bend in the head, the slightly flying plaits, the dress is also seems like moving with her. Her facial expressions also indicate that she is fond of dancing. The waist of the dancer is perfectly thin.

**Panel 5.3.4 Dying Princess – A figure of Pathos and sentiments**

The Dying Princess is from conversion of Nanda panel, Cave 16. It is on the wall of left corridor. It is shown in the Panel 5.3.4

One of the great paintings of Ajanta is one in which we see Nanda’s wife struck by grief because her husband has left her and gone away. This painting is called "The Dying Princess".

This painting has received unstinted praise from Griffiths, Bugess and Furgusson.” For the pathos and the sentiment and unmistakable way of telling its story this picture, I consider, cannot be surpassed in the history of art. The Florentine could have put better drawing and Venetian better colour, but neither could have thrown greater expression on it.\(^{56}\) The princess has fainted at the sight of the crown held by servant before her. The servant’s twisted eyebrow and eyes filled with tear shows that he is greatly perturbed. Expression of pathos is clearly shown. There are maid servants also. One is holding a rectangular fan with long handle.

The princess is seated on a couch, leaning against a pillow. She is supported behind by a maid servant. The maid’s fingers are delicately drawn. In the parting of hair a ‘bindi’ can be seen. She is looking at the princess. The princess has her head down with grief. She is not able to the bear the sight of the crown. Her lifeless legs and face shows that she almost unconscious. Another maid attendant is seated by her side. Her
hand is on her breast because she is struck by the condition of her mistress. With the other she is feeling the pulse of the princess. The painting of dying princess is the masterpiece of Ajanta art. By tilting the head slightly and suggesting the limpness of the figure, through the falling left hand, the painter has evoked the fundamental stance of near death. The solitude of three maids, one supporting the women from behind with left outstretched, the other watching anxiously to read the face of the patient, the third bent forward with face distraught, crystallise the intense moment. The supporting cast of the two male attendants rushing in from outside and the anxious females on the balcony next door indicates the tension in the atmosphere. The peacock fight and the bend leaves on banana tree in soft green shade are suggestive of sadness. The picture of wife is dying of the shock of ‘going away’ of her husband, with an emotion, which seems like a substle portrayal of a faint, or of slow passing away of all hope, or of the fading into reality. All the figure drawn is full of ethos and sadness, the leaning body of the princess, the lifeless hands, closed eyes, bended head, the body language of the maid servant are the indication of sadness. The gesture of the maid servants also reflects sadness and tension. Emotion and pathos are expressed here by the controlled turn and poise of the body and the eloquent gestures of the hands.

Thus this painting is considered as the master piece of work of performing Arts and which serves as a piece of model for performing arts, drama.

**Panel 5.3.5 Indra flying down to taste Vishvantra**

This is scene is painted on the left wall of the varanda to the right of the fourth cell-door of cave 17 and thus is shown in Panel 5.3.5.

The painting is of Indra who is flying down to taste the King Vishvantra, the king was famous for his liberality. Later Indra took form of brahmin to taste Vishvantara he demanded the surrender of his wife. King agreed it and Indra gave back him his kingdom and children.
The most remarkable part is an Indra with its fleet flying down amid clouds. These are apsara, royal dancers. The figure of Indra is in motion. It is one of the dance pose. To welcome the God musician are playing music. One female musician playing flute has very attractive posture. The painting reveals that she is totally engrossed in her act and looking to the God. She is facing the Indra and her back is visible. The curve of the back tells us the appropriate structure of the musician.

As they float away from the earth into the empyrean, they stimulate physical desire and conduce to a certain grace in the ascent from the illusory life towards the beyond. Apsaras with dreamy eyes, intricate coiffeur and shaking jewellery, are the kind of spirits who hover over the world.

Indra, a Hindu divinity, is depicted flying together with celestial nymphs holding musical instruments. Indra is wearing a royal crown, pearl necklaces and in his girdles a sword and a dagger. The speed of his flight is suggested by the backward movement of pearl necklaces, bended legs, and rope of jewels sweeping backward over their breasts.

The individual features, the eyes and nose and mouth show the royal origin. The elegance in these flying figures is an illustrative piece of Indian dance, a form of performing arts. Presence of music in playing music is the reflection of high taste and love for music is of greatest social significance.

Panel 5.3.6 Mother and Child – A pious event of Buddha’s life after Enlightenment

This painting is on the back wall of the ante chamber, to the left of the shrine door of the cave 17. The representation of one of the memorable events of Buddha's life after enlightenment and which ranks among the best of the paintings at Ajanta. The painting is about, Buddha receives alms from his wife and son. It is his first encounter with his family after renunciation and enlightenment. This is shown in the panel.
The Buddha is shown before his wife Yashodhara and son Rahul. He is made very large to depict his spiritual achievement.

It is further observed in this panel that Yasodhara, wearing on this day of gladness the jewellery she has discarded for seven long desolate years, stands at her door, gazing up in adoration at the apparition in front of her and holding out caressingly the precious gift she offers to the Divine beggar, her darling child. The Buddha, graciously bending his head, accepts Rahula as his disciple.  

In the words of well known author E. B. Havell, “The artist has indeed been wonderfully inspired, in the grand spacing out of the whole design, in his conception of the Divine Form, majestic in its simple and austere lines, and in the tenderness and pathos he has given to the figures of mother and child, drawn in rhythmic brush-lines with exquisite delicacy and charm’. The above point is also supported by Mujumbar R.C, ‘The ‘Mother and Child’ group in cave 17 is undoubtedly a very attractive specimen of Ajanta art. There is a holy feeling in this painting which is stated by Mr.Ghosh A in the following words, “His peerless wisdom and compassion are indicated by his superhuman stature and spiritual expression. The crown held over his hallowed head by heavenly cherubs further enhances this effect. Buddha’s sovereignty over the earth and heaven is shown by Vidhyadhari holding an umbrella, and halo around the head.

Thus the symbolic representation is widely used in this painting, as Buddha looks majestic in his long robe. The figure is shown in larger size shows the spiritual greatness as compared with ordinary beings for instance the representation of Yashodhara and Rahula. They look very small by comparison.

The face of Buddha is calm and serene. Yashodhara has been shown with all charm of natural beauty. The features of the face are obliterated but the eyes are clear and in meditative gaze suggest absorption of mind in the spirituality. The head of Buddha is significantly inclined towards Yashodhara, showing compassion and love.
This is the master piece indicative of expression of love and compassion expressed among mother and child and father Buddha depicting excellence in Performing Arts.

**Panel 5.3.7 Flying Apsara – A poetic view of reality**

The painting of flying Apsara is in cave 17 which is shown in the panel 5.3.7. The flying figure is almost part of cloud grouped in this panel.

While describing the panel it is very aptly narrated by Mr. Mulk Raj Anand, “The poetic view of reality, with the consecutive movement of dance, and the living music of the sphere, is shown in the Flying Apsaras”.

It is further observed in the above painting that the rich ornamentation which was the characteristic of the period. She is beautifully portrayed in her turban decked with pearls and flowers. The backward movement of the necklace suggests the flight of the *apsara* in movement.

The painting of flying Apsara is one of the beautiful paintings. The motion is shown as she drifts through the air. She is carrying cymbals with her. Her ornaments are very beautiful and admired by the women. The necklace made of diamonds, sapphires and pearls with heavy pendants swaying with Apsara’s movement. A matching string of jewel is found in her hair.

The pendulum movement of all the dangling ropes of precious stones to the right is echoed in the direction of all these ornaments subtly indicates the Apsara’s flight towards the left of the composition.

Performing Arts takes into consideration the motion which should be categorically reflected. This is found in the above painting which is a matter of great appreciation.

**Panel 5.3.8 Black Princess – An art of graceful delineation**

This panel is painted on the upper part of the pilaster which connects the right and front corridors of cave 17. This panel is also called as; A Toilet Scene'. The details of the panel (are described as follows
In this panel black princess is shown in the toilet. There are two maids to help her. A female dwarf is also shown. All of them are having different hairstyles and beautiful jewellery. The Black princess is shown holding a mirror by one hand and applying cosmetics by other hand. The beautiful curve her body forms as she bends forward a little to look into the mirror, very well delineated. The princess is wearing three necklaces of pearls, which looks very real.

It is observed that the superb execution of the body is shown through suppleness of her body, delicacy and firmness of her limbs and the graceful contours of her form.

Panel 5.3.9 Temptation of Mara – A view of graceful dance of Mara kanyas

The panel is in Cave 26, on the left wall. In this panel one of the famous stories related to Buddha’s life is depicted.

Buddha was meditating for enlightenment, to disturb the process Mara’s daughters are seen performing dance.

Buddha is in bhumisparsha mudra and seating under bodhi tree. Mara’s daughters are dancing in front of Buddha. All of them are youthful and pretty. They are expressing their body charms which are seen through their dressing. All the girls are with beautiful hairstyles. Music is also played. Dejected Mara is also shown. The central dancing girl is noteworthy for her posture and gesture. She is shown in tribhanga pose which is found Indian classical dance. Her crossed legs are posture of dancer. Her facial expression shows that she is totally engrossed in her attempt to disturb Buddha. The jewellery which Mara’s daughters are wearing are also beautiful. In this connection Mr. Ratan Parimoo and Mr. Deepak Kannal rightly stated, “Mara thought of spreading a golden snare and commended his youthful daughter Rati (lust) and Trisna (Thirst) Arati (delight) to tempt Buddha with their bewitching charm. Their coquettish gestures, attractive dance and melodious music all failed to tempt Gautama and swerve him from the path of enlightenment.”
Buddha’s determination is aptly described by Mr. N. Jayapalan, “Master sits in meditation unaffected by temptation of lascivious woman and threats of demons etc.”

This panel is a drama played for the viewers in which on upper part Mara’s army has shown attacking. The elephant and warriors with weapons are seen clearly. The central part is main portion of the panel is reserved for Buddha. Meditating Buddha calling earth to witness his enlightenment is in samabahngā pose. Beautiful dancers are along with the musician are the part of lower panel. Different rasas like furious, sringara and shanta are seen in an army, dancers and Buddha respectively.

This panel gives an elaborate view of various postures, figures, ornaments, costumes and hairstyles in an effective way. These are necessary ingredients for the best results of performing arts –theatre.

**Panel 4.3.10 Mahaparinirvana of Buddha –A perfection-A stage of eternal bliss**

This panel is in cave 26, on the left wall. The panel narrates a story of Mahaparinirvana of Buddha It is the largest relief found in Ajanta caves.

Buddha is shown in laying position on his right side. His head is shown on cushion. A number of mourners are seen seated near his cot. All of them are in grief. Above the figure of Buddha Gods and Goddesses can be seen. Towards the legs of Buddha one of the followers is shown sitting in grief.

Gupte R.S explains rightly about it,’ Buddha’s face shows that calmness and serenity which can come only when a person has reached that stage of eternal bliss where there is no pain and no sorrow and from where there is no return to this world of unhappiness.” The artists of Ajanta have succeeded in capturing this mood and in this they are true to the great art traditions of the period. The ability of catching moods of their subject makes the sculptors and painters of Ajanta so great and it was the time when they reached perfection in figure drawing and figure sculpture.
Mahaparinirvana of Buddha very impressively presents the facial expression of Buddha showing calmness and serenity. This is a feature of a person who has reached to the stage of eternal bliss. The mourners sitting below are with different poses and each of them indicate the grief. Above Buddha are Gods and Goddesses who are welcoming him. They are with garlands and some of them are playing music. This panel is a best example of depictions of moods and perfection in figure drawing and figure sculpture. This colossus surrounded by mourners has a profound effect on the visitors to the cave.

Panel 5.3.11 Depiction of Music in Ajanta caves

Music a part of performing arts also has presence in the art of Ajanta. There are many evidences of musical instruments carved or painted on the walls, pillars or on the ceiling. Music as played on almost all occasions in the ancient times is portrayed in Ajanta. Following are the panels selected to give heritage of music as a form of performing arts.

Kinnar with musical Instrument.

This panel is the part of Bodhisattva Padmapani panel which is shown separately in this as Panel No. 5.3.11.1 to highlight the importance of music as performing arts. Kinnar is above Bodhisattva, on the right side. He is shown above the couple and money amidst the trees.

In this panel Kinnaras, heavenly musician with human busts and bird’s legs and claws. Surma is very prominent in the corner of their eyes. One of them is playing harp, the form of which can be considered useful for learning music.

The above panel can be further described in following words;

Kinnara is in short figure and pot belled which is general feature of Yaksha, the God of wealth. This celestial feature is mythological as it is having human body and bird’s legs and claws. He is wearing crown, earrings and necklace of beads which shows his royal background. To
show the motion of flying in air, he has given the form of bird and the pose too indicates the movement. His eyes are prominent. Kajal is seen in his eyes. He is carrying harp like instrument as he is playing it for his master, Padmapani.

This depicts that the people were enjoying music as an art in their social life which the painter observed and experienced.

**Kinnaras with musical instruments carved on pillars**

The music is played with different instruments. These instruments are also found in today's life. Presences of such instruments are also there in sculpture in Ajanta caves. These of royal musician Kinnars form the front pillars of cave 1 (Panel- 5.3.11.2)

It is found that the kinnaras are playing music with different musical instruments like Vina, Flute and cymbals. This gives us idea of the importance of music in the society. The sculptors used to observe it and this is reflected in the carving.

The performing art culture of India is a fusion of the arts. An aesthetic sensibility is shared between music, dance, drama and literature. Indian dance, music, literature, painting and architecture have all been intimately connected with Indian religion and philosophy.

The Ajanta paintings in particular are a superb example of the portrayal of the gestures in art. Ajanta ranks among the greatest pictorial monuments in the world. “the ease and animation”, writes Laurene Binyon, “of the figure painting, the tender humanity, the frequent grace of grouping, the insight and power with which animals birds drawn have the height claim on art.”

As defined in Natyashattra, every attitude, gesture and facial expression conceals a precise meaning, intended to arouse in the initiated spectator (rasika) a specific emotion or sentiment. The actor or a dancer variously portrays surprise, modesty, fright, resignation, expectation or anger. In a
gesture, scowl or the dart of the glance, the rasika immediately recognises the rasa evoked and thus understands the dominant character of the scene being played out before him. Since common theories formed the foundation of all Indian aesthetics, the Ajanta painters were thoroughly versed in the conventional plastic vocabulary exposed in the shastra. Thus the painter by his art, as an actor by his performance, must arouse a psychic state of Rasa in the spectator that is immediately perceptible and identifiable. Such an analogy demonstrates the profound, formal affinities between the religious arts of Ajanta and the arts of theatre and dance.

Besides the Buddha in his various avatars and common, royal and celestial beings, the artists use a profusion of yakshas (demons), kinnars (half human-half birds), apsaras (heavenly dancers), gandharvas (divine musicians) and creatures from the animal world to add colour and variety in their friezes. Every character is integrated into a grand scheme, each having its own character and each telling its own story.

The unique character of Indian culture is the religious connotation, and tolerance. Being a land of many religions, all religions live together hand in hand. The reflection of religious harmony is seen through various aspects like painting, music, dance etc. This is why Indian arts have earned fame all over the world. The Indian performing artists are greeted by large audience in India and in western countries.

In country like India with its long and unbroken tradition, Music and dance are much related to Indian ethos. The dance forms of India have also been greatly influenced by religion and culture. Together with music it forms an integral part of aesthetic perfection for the worship of the Almighty Lord.
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Chapter VI
ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AND TOURISM POLICY

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