



Tribune photo: Parvesh Chauhan

# Choreographers never had it so good

**SANJAY AUSTA**

Dancing is no more the pastime of the young and the idle. Thanks to the media explosion, especially in the entertainment sector, dance has become an art form that has spawned a myriad of career options from dance instructors to choreographers.

Choreography is an artistic career where the choreographer not only matches the music to the steps and movements of the dancers but also supervises the stage paraphernalia, including stage lighting and costume of the dancers. Experience of dance is a must for a career in choreography. Therefore, one must either have some experience as a dancer or as a dance instructor.

Classical dance has its fixed rules and the choreographer has to be an exponent of the particular dance form. He or she can learn classical dance from one of the many cultural centres in the country or in any of the universities that offer a course in it. However, it is the contemporary dance form, that is the hot favourite of the young hopefuls. From salsa, to jazz, to hip-hop to classical ballet to ballroom dance, a variety of forms and styles are the

flavour of the season. The young want to be well-versed with at least one of the new dance styles and cashing in on this demand, dance academies are sprouting all over cities.

Shamak Davar Dance Academy and Dream Worx (run by Ashley Lobo) are just two examples of private academies run by celebrated dancers. They all began their dance academies tentatively a few years ago with only a handful of students, but today some of them have a full-time administrative staff to manage their several dance institutes and students.

"Most of the people come to learn dance as a hobby. They just want to be comfortable dancing", says Shaira, a choreographer with the Dance Worx, the dance institute started by Ashley Lobo. Lobo began his dance company in 1998 with the curriculum consisting of styles such as jazz, classical ballet, contemporary dance and ballroom. Shaira, who began dancing as a hobby, soon thought of making it a career. Today, besides taking dance classes, she is involved in choreographing dance musicals, dance theatre and group shows. According to her, apart from having a sense of

dance rhythm and style, one must have a good ear for music to become a good choreographer.

One must also have a lot of patience and verbal skills to communicate the ideas to dancers. The demand for choreographers is on the rise, with stage shows forming an integral part of any function or event, be it marriage or a corporate launch party. "Corporate events like auto-expo are never complete without a dance performance. Companies now organise a lot of events and a dance item has become integral to them. So, they are forever on the lookout for good choreographers", says Shaira.

With proliferation of music videos, choreographers are in demand as never before. Then there are dance musicals and dance theatre where a choreographer can find employment. And if a choreographer has a lot of talent he or she can even be picked up by producers of Hindi films, which are replete with dance items. Choreographers work on a freelance basis and are hired and paid on the basis of their reputation, skill and experience.

Since dance is a short-lived profession, choreography is often the natural progression in the career of a dancer.