

**We dared to break free to enter the world of abstraction to be indulged in a fantasy.....**

### **We concocted Kolpokotha....An eternal invitation to Dream**

Beyond the daily chores and the professional occupancies, beyond the skills that help us make money to support living; we wanted to explore our own self to tease out our subdued longing and hidden talents, as they say. And as goes the old gitty, "birds of feather flock together", so we did, from nooks and corners of Kolkata, to transform a vision, to materialize "Kolpokotha", a cultural amalgamation. People, otherwise busy in analyzing experimental datasheets took time out to scribble scripts; corporate house busybodies let their adam's apple emanate tunes; ever so engaged academicians nurtured their brain cells to conceive how and when the spotlight is to follow the heroine in the dance-drama!

Having started our journey about a year and half Kolpokotha now has four productions in bag. We experimented with our moves, our plans, our songs and even our scheduled dates with one thing in mind.....improvement! We amateurs wanted to come up with something professional, something that could be cherished forever by the performers as well as the beholders!

Through our presentation Nohi Samanyo Nari- a dance recital, Kolpokotha attempts to unveil *Abhigyan Shakuntalam* by the great litterateur Kalidasa with a new vision. Shakuntala, as most of the female heroines in Indian mythology invariably, is marked by her feminine allure and beauty, her romance with King Dushyanta from Hastinapore followed by the saga of estrangement and betrayal that elicits in the readers a sense of sympathy and kindness towards the character. Her selfless act of letting her son Bharat, whom she had reared till day, to leave her for the greater cause that is the throne of Hastinapore has been shown as an epitomisation of sacrifice, a character laden for Indian fairer sex. This secondary significance of women as mothers and consorts is part of an unquestioned patriarchal dynamic in which India flourished. In any case, Shakuntala is hardly known for her role as a strong mother figure or as a strong figure at all. If she is an icon of something, it is that of coy femininity, a sign that *readers* and writers reserve for most female protagonists, even as their more empowering characteristics are mediated through verbal signs of intelligence, smartness and character. We try to envision Shakuntala in terms of establishing a corpus of strong, independent Hindu womanhood, offering all kinds of powerful suggestions for a foundational myth of Hindu India.