



Colourful lights and lanterns filled the trees and lined the pathways, and the entire place was a fairy-tale like spectacle, beautifully decorated and the technical aspects of the festival were, overall, very well executed too.

This year, the festival ran for five nights, from December 1st to 5th, and I attended the first three nights. All the dancing I witnessed was excellent, but I was particularly entranced on the second night, when I suddenly felt swept up in an Incredible!India moment.

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The Odissi dancers moved together in perfect rhythm on the stage, bathed in multicoloured lights and accompanied by live musicians and singers. The music stirred and soared and the dancers reverently, passionately poured their energy into their devotion. Behind them, the 12th century Konark Sun Temple was lit up against the night sky, and overhead colourful lanterns filled the trees encircling the outdoor auditorium. I reclined on a padded settee, like a maharani of old, and allowed the warm tropical night air, the Indian classical sights and sounds and the magnificence of the setting to completely envelope me. I was living the Incredible!India ad campaign, and even I could barely believe it.

With all my amazing Indian experiences over the past seven years – meditating at sunrise on the Ganga, seeing the morning sun glint off the Taj Mahal, sleeping on the sand dunes of Jaisalmer – seeing Meera Das and the Gunjan Dance Academy of Cuttack perform at the Konark Dance Festival still gave me an unexpected magic moment.

**This renowned dance festival honestly surpassed all my expectations.**