

By: Shaphali Jain

We first met with Adeta Gayah in October of 2006 when she was featured in the Achievers' Club column. At that time, she had just won an award from the Heritage India Foundation as the Most Gifted International Performer and was on her way to perform at the Royal Opera House in London in 2007. Since we featured Adeta in our publication, we have received numerous emails to do a follow up story on her. We touched base with her again - is she flying high or is she laying low - read on to find out just how levelheaded and humble she is, how driven and committed, and we are sure you will feel as proud of her as we did as we put this cover story together.

CM - Adeta - it's great to speak with you again. What have you been up to since we last spoke in October of 2006?

Adeta: Since October of 2006 my life has been one excitement after another. At the end of 2006, Heritage India Foundation offered me the opportunity to perform at a show at the Royal Opera House in London. I accepted the offer and flew to London on the 3rd of January 2007. I met my choreographers and my dance partner the second week I was there and began training immediately for my two dances (one solo dance and one partnered dance). I worked with 3 choreographers: Mira, for the solo and Vandana and Jyoti, for the partnered dance. Suresh was my partner.

CM: Was doing a partnered dance a new thing for you?

Adeta: Yes, absolutely! The biggest challenge with that dance was learning to trust, and become dependent on, my partner, especially with the flips, twists and lifts. I was literally putting my life in someone else's hands!

CM: We heard that you had an accident while practicing?

Adeta: Yes, unfortunately we had a bit of a mishap during one of our practices and two of the ribs on my right side became detached from the cartilage and I tore some muscle in the area. I was at the hospital for 2 days and was then in bed for 2 weeks. I slowly regained my strength and started to move slowly. I began physical therapy by mid to end February.

CM: You must have been under a lot of pressure to prepare for your performance?

Adeta: Well, yes, by the time I was cleared for dance again, I had less than one month until the show. I had to double up on practices to make sure I would be ready on time. All I can say is that I never grew tired of it.

CM: So, tell us about the actual performance and how it went - we hear that you got a standing ovation for your solo performance?

Adeta: I did! It was one of the most incredible nights of my life. I danced my heart out and received a standing ovation from the audience! The partnered dance was after the intermission - we hit every beat, lift and stunt - it felt amazing. John Travolta and his wife were in the audience and came back stage during the intermission to offer warm wishes and congratulations. That was a night I'll never forget. I felt like I could do anything!

CM: We also read about you meeting Aishwarya Rai/Bachchan - tell us about that.

Adeta: It was absolutely amazing. I attended the premiere of the movie *Provoked* and finally got to meet my idol, *Aishwarya Rai!* There are no words to describe the excitement,

and awe that I felt that night. She is more beautiful in person and has incredible presence. She is very sweet and does giggle a lot!

CM: You got the chance to work with HIF again, didn't you?

Adeta: Yes, when I came back to Orlando, HIF contacted me again and asked me if I wanted to try choreography. I had very little time to prepare and had only one week to teach a group that was purely classical and at least 2 - 6 years my senior! They were a great group to work with, all very supportive and talented. They jokingly called me "Chhoti Ma'am." After my evaluations by HIF, I was certified at a Mastery level for both Performance and Choreography. I am, to date, the youngest person to achieve an HIF Master of Performance and Choreography level certification.

CM: What are you pursuing right now?

Adeta: I am concentrating on my education for now. I am currently a senior at Rollins College and will be graduating in May with a degree in International Business and a minor in Communications. I will be graduating with high Honors and from the Honors Degree Program at my school. I will be starting Graduate School in the fall of this year. I am currently working on my Master's level thesis which will be published upon completion and sent to national and international conferences. I have worked very hard to achieve my successes in school and I am very proud that I decided to

complete my education.

CM: Would it be accurate to say that you now play the part of a role model for young girls in our community who aspire to be just like you?

Adeta: I have received wonderful support and kind words from people in my community. I think the greatest compliment is when young girls come up to me and say that I have become their role model and they want to be like me. It means the world to me when parents say that their children look up to me and admire me. If I can reach out to people or inspire them in some way, then I feel like I have served my purpose. There is no better feeling than that.

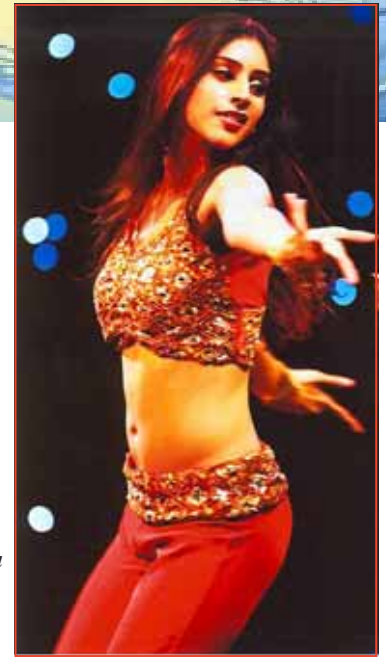
CM: Let's talk about your family a little.

Adeta: Well, my dad is my number one fan. No one enjoys my performances more than he does. My mom is my lifeline. I have been dancing for 17 years, yet she is still there at every performance making sure every safety pin or bobby pin is secure. My brother is my support. Even when I am

doubtful of things, he is there letting me know that if anyone can achieve it, I can. With this combination as my family, there is nowhere to go but up. I always want to make my parents proud. When I am performing, whether it is for a small crowd or a large packed auditorium, the thing that makes me happiest is looking out and seeing my parents smiling back at me from the audience. That's when I feel like they are proud of me.

CM: You had also talked about your dance teacher during our previous conversation. Would you say that her teachings have impacted your attempt at choreography?

Adeta: My dance teacher, Ms. Chandni, is the person who inspired me to believe in myself as a dancer. In my ten plus years of dancing with her, I have learned a lot about dance as well as about myself and life in general. I am very proud to say that I am still a student of hers and she continues to inspire me. Her creativity and ability to create unique and graceful movements is mind blowing. I consider her more than just my dance teacher, she is also a very dear friend.



CityMasala Rapid Fire

Favorite Book: The Kite Runner

Favorite Movie: Too many to count, but I'm particularly fond of the 2002 remake of *Devdas*.

Favorite Dancer(s): Aishwarya Bachchan and Madhuri Dixit.

Favorite Food(s): Hummus and cheese ... and chocolate and ice cream!

Dream Come True: To dance in a Bollywood film.

Most important people in my life: Mom, Dad, and my brother.

Excerpt from an interview with Aishwarya Rai/Bachchan in SawfNews on who she feels would be most likely to follow in her footsteps and portray her in a biography in which she refers to Adeta Gayah.

"I met a young girl in London earlier this year when I went to the premiere of *Provoked*. She was so beautiful yet unaware of the grace she possesses. She had a tall, thin frame and wide-eyed innocence that was filled with purity and tears. I thought I was looking at a reflection of my younger self. I was later told she was a dancer and had just done a show at the Royal Opera House. I was taken by her beauty and heart. I would want someone like her to portray me. Someone honest and beautiful but real."