

# Karima Essa — Bollywood Dancer

KNOW

## About the Artist



At the age of four, Karima Essa began imitating famous stars in Bollywood films and went on to perform in dance competitions and community events and festivals at the age of 10. During the last 18 years, Bollywood has developed into a lifelong passion while performing, choreographing and teaching this cultural dance form to others across the Lower Mainland. In 2014, her love for Bollywood took her to the streets in Mumbai, India, as a two-time finalist on the reality TV show Bollywood Star on Omni TV. Karima loves teaching children Bollywood dance because she loves watching them embrace different personas through dance and storytelling.

Karima's vision is to allow children to experience the pure magic and joy of dance and storytelling through the fun expressions and movement of Bollywood dance. Children are inspiring to her because they are uninhibited and dance from the heart - and this is at the heart of every Bollywood Star!

## About the Performance

Karima's show *Bollywood Star* will showcase Bollywood dance as a fun cultural art form told through the lens of her personal journey. The show opens with a Bollywood dance to intrigue students. She introduces how Bollywood influenced her childhood and explains the origins through demonstrating early traditional dance forms that have shaped Bollywood dance culture today. Her show is very interactive and involves students in learning traditional dance moves. Hindi, the language of Bollywood Cinema, is introduced through teaching students simple words in the chorus of a popular Bollywood song. The show parallels the elements of Bollywood cinema through storytelling, drama, dance and music.

- Duration: 60 minutes or single day or multi-day workshops with the entire school K-7 or 8-12
- What to expect during the performance: upbeat music with high energy movement, followed by an easy to follow workshop with simple steps that come together to create choreography.
- What is expected of the audience during the performance: participation, interaction, ability to follow and listen.
- Technical requirements: PA with AV cord for playback on laptop and two wireless microphones and stands, stage that is swept because she often dances in bare feet
- Links to artist website: [www.karimaessa.com](http://www.karimaessa.com) and [www.pebblestarartists.com/karima-essa](http://www.pebblestarartists.com/karima-essa)

## About the Art Form

Bollywood is the nickname given to the popular Indian cinema based in Mumbai (previously Bombay). The term 'Bollywood' didn't exist until the late 1970s, when the industry was referred to as Hindi cinema. Bollywood cinema usually narrates the story of love and emotion and is heavily influenced by the ancient Indian epics of the [Mahabharata](#) and [Ramayana](#), ancient [Sanskrit drama](#), the traditional folk [theatre of India](#), [Parsi theatre](#) and [Hollywood](#) musicals from the 1920s to 1950s. Bollywood dance is an integral part of Bollywood cinema and is a combination of multiple dance forms that originated in all parts of India including [Bharatnatyam](#), [Kathak](#), Garba, Bhangra, Rasra and other classical Indian dance forms.

The main elements of Bollywood dance include:

- hand movements which act as a form of sign language to help to tell a story or demonstrate themes such as weather, animals or places. These hand gestures are often referred to as "hastas" and "mudras."
- neck and head movements
- facial expressions. Classical Indian dance incorporates two basic elements - abhinaya (expression) and nritya (pure dance).
- foot movements
- costumes including bells, headpieces, jewellery

Main message for students: Bollywood is a cultural dance form influenced by both Eastern and Western theatre and dance styles and makes lots of references to Hollywood pop culture. It is a fun and engaging way to gain self-confidence and explore self-expression while also learning about other cultures. Anyone can do it!

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**Links:** [Bollywood \(source: Wikipedia\)](#)  
[Bollywood dance explained](#) (source: BBC News Magazine, July 10, 2012 by Lucy Townsend)

#### **Links to Curriculum**

- Learning about other cultures through dance and music helps us develop a better awareness and understanding of our community and allows us to build healthy relationships with people from different ethnic backgrounds
- Dance helps boost one's self-esteem and is a healthy form of exercise
- Creative expression is a means to explore and share one's identity. Dance and music are important for learning self-expression and building self-confidence in students.

#### **Pre-Performance Discussion Questions**

Does anyone know where Bollywood films and dance comes from? What language is spoken in these films? What's the purpose of dancing during a song?  
Can you describe a time when you had to perform on stage. How did it make you feel? Have you ever been nervous being in front of large crowds and if so, how did you deal with that situation?

#### **Post-Performance Activities**

Two or three activities for students after watching the performance that have relations to the art form:

- Pick your favourite song and think about the story the lyrics are telling. Make up your own dance moves and actions related to the story in the song. Perform it in front of your family or friends.
- Watch a Bollywood dance on YouTube and try to copy a simple dance sequence. Even if you don't understand the language, how is the story delivered through the movements?

#### **Post-Performance Discussion Questions**

- How did the movements and sounds in the Bollywood song and dances tell a story?
- What are the main elements of Bollywood dancing that help tell the story of the song?



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Learn more about this artist online at [artstarts.com/aotd](http://artstarts.com/aotd)