

## Program Notes: Dance Immersion

*An evening of Bharata Natyam & Kuchipudi dance performances by*

**Uma Kadekodi & Kasi Aysola**

*Opening Performance by Shakti Dancers*

**Presented by Shakti School of Bharata Natyam**

**Saturday October 8, 2022. 6pm**

James Armstrong Theatre. 3330 Civic Center Dr. Torrance, CA

### Message from the dancers

We would like to acknowledge how meaningful and special this performance is to us. To be able to present a Bharata Natyam & Kuchipudi for our dance community is surreal. Dance is such an important part of both our lives and it has been an exhilarating experience to plan and present Dance Immersion. We hope you enjoy it.

Our deepest gratitude to our Gurus Viji Prakash, Mythili Prakash, Nandita Behera, Vempati Ravi Shankar & Yamini Saripalli for all they have given us in dance and in life.

Thank you to the amazing Musical Team for their hard work and talent. We'd like to also thank the Shakti Family for all their help and support in putting this performance together.

Sincerely,

Uma Kadekodi & Kasi Aysola

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## Program

### **Pushpanjali followed by Ganesh Vandana**

Ganesh Vandana Composition: Mahesh Swamy

Choreography: Mythili Prakash

Dancers: Avanthi Dev, Eshani Prasad, Jessica Sitaramya, Latha Premkumar, Mallika Vairavan, Nandita Joshi, Raaga Mahesh, Ramya Premkumar, Shreya Kannan, Thasya Manikarnika Muddanna

### **Engum Chidambaram**

Musical Composition: Debur Srivathsa

Jathi Composition: V. Vedakrishnan

Choreography: Mythili Prakash

Ragam: Ragamalika. Talam: Adi

Dancer: Uma Kadekodi

Shiva dances within me, Shiva dances outside of me. The five elements of creation fueling life are manifestations of You. Oh Shiva, as you dance in Chidambaram, I experience your all encompassing calm, strength and power moving through my entire body. Everywhere I look, all I see is you.

### **Marakatha Manimaya Chela**

Musical Composition: Oothukadu Venkata Subbayar  
Dance Choreography: Vempati Chinna Satyam  
Ragam: Arabhi. Talam: Adi  
Dancer: Kasi Aysola

Beautifully written with alliteration and rhyme, this piece centers around devotion for Krishna who danced on the serpent Kaliya. He is the one wearing emerald studded robes. More beautiful than a thousand cupids himself, he evokes joy in the heart of all his seekers. He is the lover of Radha and engages in the play of Raas with the gopis. To the sound of “Taka dika tom” he dances with ankle bells and is worshiped by the four-faced creator Brahma. The dance ends with a rhythmic interplay, iconic to the Kuchipudi style, where the dancer demonstrates intricate patterns on the edge of a brass plate.

### **Ashtapadi - Dheera Sameere Yamuna Teere**

Musical Composition: Raghunath Panigrahi  
Lyrics: Jayadeva  
Choreography: Kasi Aysola, Uma Kadekodi & Mythili Prakash  
Ragam: Bhoop. Talam: Adi  
Dancers: Uma Kadekodi & Kasi Aysola

As the cool breeze blows gently, Krishna waits on the banks of the Yamuna river for the arrival of his beloved Radha, while her saki (friend) finds Radha in distress. The saki urges Radha, “Go quickly Radha and reunite with your beloved Krishna who has adorned himself as Manmadha (cupid). The One who has stolen your heart and left you lifeless. Calling your name with the intoxicating sound of His flute, Krishna eagerly awaits for you, mistaking even a rustle of a falling leaf as your arrival. Go Radha, without making a sound. Leave all your possessions, release your ego and go with only the desire of reuniting with your beloved Krishna.”

### **Manaha Mogara**

Music Composition: Sant Tukaram  
Choreography: Uma Kadekodi & Kasi Aysola  
Ragam: Bhagyashree  
Dancers: Uma Kadekodi & Kasi Aysola

In this bhajan, Santh Tukaram says, “ Just as we offer flowers and tulsi to the Supreme, I offer my mind and heart to the Lord, so that I do not come back to this cycle of birth and death again Take me beyond the realm of this human life and unite me with the Lord.”

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#### **Credits:**

Music Ensemble: Kiran Athreya, Shubha Chandramouli, Madhukar Chidambara, Krupaa Lakshmi, Ramya Kapadia, Karthick Narayanan, Mythili Prakash, Visalini Sundaram  
Shakti Publicity: Anu K Ganpati  
Lighting: Bri Patillo  
Technical Crew & Sound: Staff of James Armstrong Theater  
Videography: Serg of Perfect Video. Photography: Surendra Prakash  
Costumes: KR Dressers, Aharya Tailors  
Lobby: Sandhya Mahesh & Kanchana Dore  
South Bay Promise: Jocelyn Fermin  
Backstage & Foyer Assistance: Shakti Family



## Artist Bios:

### DANCERS:



**Uma Kadekodi** Bharata Natyam is one of Uma's greatest treasures as she feels a profound connection with the art. Uma began her journey in Bharata Natyam 31 years ago under Guru Viji Prakash and presented her arangatram in 1996. Since then she has performed extensively across the US and Canada with the Shakti School including tours such as Shyama and Bhagavad Gita. Uma has given several performances here in LA including Young Emerging Dancers and has done solo and group performances in India. Uma's love for dance continues to grow as she strives to delve deeper into dance and explore the world of choreography. Under the guidance of Viji and Mythili Prakash she created choreography for Shakti's Shyama in 2018 and assisted in choreography for Shakti's Meera production in 2019. Uma is married with two children, Shyam (9) and Suri (6), and works as a pediatric speech-language pathologist in Southern California. Uma's sacred connection with her Guru and the art keep her dancing as life continues into different chapters.



**Kasi Aysola** is a dance artist based in the United States. Kasi is a performer, choreographer and nattuvangam artist whose foundational training in Bharata Natyam was under celebrated Guru Viji Prakash and Mythili Prakash. He had the great fortune to train in Kuchipudi under late Guru Vempati Ravi Shankar and Yamini Saripalli. He co-founded Prakriti Dance, an innovative dance company, in 2014, with the intention to explore the human experience through the idiom of Indian performing traditions. While cultivating and collaborating with artists across America, the company has always focused on empowering artists. He serves as the Artistic Director of Prakriti Dance developing and touring original dance works.

Kasi's artistic excellence has received recognition and funding from organizations such as the National YoungArts Foundation, Alliance for California Traditional Arts, Arts & Humanities Council of Montgomery County, Maryland State Arts Council, Boston Live Arts & the National Academies Keck Futures Initiative. Kasi is pursuing Indian dance traditions with the intention to inspire new generations of artists to delve into the enriching world of Indian performing arts.



## MUSICIANS:



**Kiran Athreya** began his violin training at the age of 9 with Sri. Krishna Kutty and is currently a senior disciple of violin Maestro Sri Delhi P. Sunderrajan. He began learning vocal with his grandmother Smt. Vatsala Parthasarathy and continued with Smt. Padma Kutty before he began his violin training. He has accompanied many vocalists, given solo performances, and has played for numerous Arangetrams in the US and India. A recipient of the Alliance for California Traditional Arts (ACTA) scholarship in 2008, Kiran was recognized by 12th Council District City of Los Angeles 2016 for promoting South Indian Arts.



**Shubha Chandramouli** a highly sought-after mridangist in Southern California, is one of only a handful of female performing mridangam artists in the world and has been giving mridangam accompaniment to several renowned musicians and dancers across the globe. Having trained in Bharata Natyam herself as a member of the Arpana Dance Company as well as being an accomplished Carnatic vocalist, Shubha's unique accompanying style incorporates her Bharata Natyam and vocal training to deliver a scintillating musical experience. An MBA graduate from Boston University, Shubha currently resides in Los Angeles working in Strategic Planning & Finance.



**Krupaa Lakshmi** is an "A grade" Bharatanatyam artist who has been initiated into the art form by Shri. Suryanarayanamurthy and is currently under the tutelage of Smt. Shobanaa Bhalchandra for the past 22 years . She has performed in India and various other countries along with eminent Gurus like the Dhananjayans, The Narasimhacharis, Smt.Anita Ratnam, Smt. Anita Guha, Smt. Lakshmi Ramaswamy, Shri Madurai R Muralidharan, Shri Narendra Kumar, etc.

She has accompanied her guru and other eminent artists on nattuvangam in India, USA and few other countries and has also received various accolades in Chennai and across the globe.



**Ramya Kapadia** is a Carnatic vocalist, Bharatanatyam dancer. Ramya has written, choreographed and scored the music for dance-theater productions for dancers across the United States and abroad. She believes that art must tell stories that move audiences and uses her works to create awareness and fundraise for socially-involved organizations all over the U.S. She received the Emerging Artist and Artist Support Grants from the Durham and NC Arts Councils and a Choreography Fellowship from the NC Dance Alliance. She is a Teaching Artist with the Durham and United Arts Councils and Arts Access in North Carolina. Through these affiliations, she is pursuing research to integrate the principles of her art forms with the STEAM curriculum in schools. She holds Masters Degrees in Medical Physics and Neuroscience and runs the Natyarpana School of Dance & Music in Durham NC & Knoxville, TN.



**Karthick Narayanan** is a recognized mridangam artist from All India Radio, Chennai. He has been learning from Chrompet Sri. G. Suresh for the past 15 years and is currently under the guidance of Bangalore Shri. Arjun Kumar. Karthick has been performing consistently in all leading musical institutions all over the US and in India.



**Mythili Prakash** belongs to a new generation of classical Indian dancers. She is one of the most celebrated and respected young Bharata Natyam dancer/choreographers today. A second generation Indian and American artist, Mythili has positioned herself as a global and cosmopolitan artist through her unique experiences and collaborations. Her repertoire is an embodiment of narratives of the many worlds that shape her.

Raised in Los Angeles, she grew up in an environment filled with dance and music, under the watchful eye of her mother and teacher dance exponent Viji Prakash. Mythili began her performing career with her solo debut in India at the age of eight and has since performed extensively in prestigious venues and festivals throughout the world. She has studied with several legendary stalwarts from India, and is trained and mentored by India's iconic dancer/choreographer Malavika Sarukkai.

Mythili has toured her own solo productions in the United Kingdom, Scotland, France, and Singapore, the United States and Mexico. She was featured on NBC's Superstars of Dance as a Bharata Natyam soloist, introducing her art form to all over the world. Mythili also had the honor of working with Director Ang Lee in the award winning film Life of Pi and was cast as the wife of Pi. Nominated by celebrated dancer/choreographer Akram Khan as "choreographer of the future" for UK-based Dance

Umbrella's "Four by four commissions," Mythili premiered her solo work "HERE and NOW" at their 2019 Festival.

Mythili is recipient of numerous accolades from premiere institutions of Dance and Music in India. She is a recipient of the Creation to Performance Grant from the Irvine Dance Foundation and Artistic Innovation Grant from the Center for Cultural Innovation. In 2021 she received the National Dance Project Touring Grant from NEFA for She's Auspicious, which previewed in Hamburg at the "Reflektor Festival" curated by musician Anoushka Shankar.

She has been commissioned by Jacob's Pillow to create a piece on Identity for "American (a)- I am" the Pillow's 90th anniversary Festival in the summer of 2022. Mythili is a principal dancer in Akram Khan Company's currently touring production Outwitting the Devil.



**Visalini Sundaram** started her training in Carnatic music by her guru, Smt. Padma Kutty in 1996. She has had the privilege of studying music with Shri Palai Ramachandran, one of the prime disciples of Sangeetha Kalanidhi Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer as well as her late maternal grandfather, Shri Palakkad Seshamani Iyer, a student of G.N. Balasubramaniam.

Visalini is also trained in Bharatha Natyam and has been under the tutelage of her guru Ramya Harishankar since 1996. She currently performs solo and with the Irvine based

Arpana Dance Company and has performed in the US, India, and abroad. This year, Visalini has been awarded the Alliance for California Traditional Arts grant to further pursue her musical and dance abilities. She is also the Assistant Director of the Arpana School of Dance where she has been teaching for the past 6 years.

