

# 6th St. Louis Indian Dance Festival



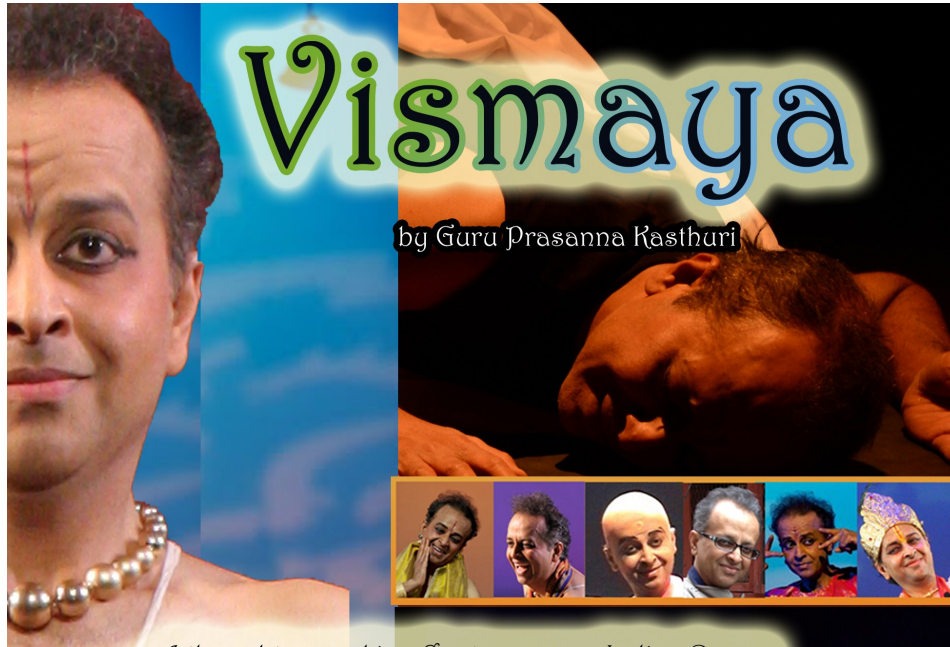
Presented by  
**Soorya**  
Performing Arts

April 11, 12, 13 - 2014  
Clayton High School Auditorium  
#1 Mark Twain Circle  
St. Louis, MO 63105



# Vismaya

by Guru Prasanna Kasthuri



A thought provoking Contemporary Indian Dance  
Theater production on human existence in Universe ....



Presented by Soorya Performing Arts  
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Many questions go unanswered in life...Because our senses and our intelligence , we  
question ...Many we don't ... either we do not know how to question or we know the  
question, we might not found an answer ... there is so much unknown, it is a

# VISMAYA

Life is full of surprises ...it is Vismaya ....be a part of dance based on beats of life

## Welcome Note

Dear Friends and Patrons,

Soorya Performing Arts completes 10 years of art service, this year. It was a great journey since 2003. Our journey experienced lots of challenges, some failures, but mostly successes. Since we worked with a noble intention, we never had to turn back and see. Our passion, dedication to create a good atmosphere of art and culture has been supported by patrons such as yourself and encouragements from businesses, and many other corners.

We feel we have gained your trust through hard work, selfless volunteering. We are able to do what we are doing because of you and the support we received from like minded entities — including public bodies such as Missouri Arts Council, Regional Arts Commission; as well as private corporations such as Enterprise Foundation, Bank of America, Monsanto; as well as many hundreds of donors.

But our main core of supporters still reside in our students and their parents—who lead in volunteering and help us bring these beautiful events to St. Louis Community. Hats off to these people, who work tirelessly. Because of these parents and many well wishers of Indian art, lots of others could sit and enjoy a beautiful show each night.

Now that a true artistic infrastructure is available for talented youth and experienced elite, we hope this beautiful city of St. Louis will make this as a tradition. We request to be part of this by giving back to the community through us either through volunteering, hosting, raising funds or promoting. If you are busy, you can always donate some funds, where it can be used for artistic services enabling a great platform for artistic venture and innovation.

With this message, we present—6th St. Louis Indian Dance Festival—showcasing the rich, colorful, traditional, classical dances from India symbolizing its civilization and culture, so it can build bridges of understanding and mutual appreciation between East and West.

We thank US Wide Financials, Missouri Arts Council, Regional Arts Commission, and lots of patrons who made this event rolling again for the 6th time.

Board of Directors.

Soorya Performing Arts

# 6th St. Louis Indian Dance Festival

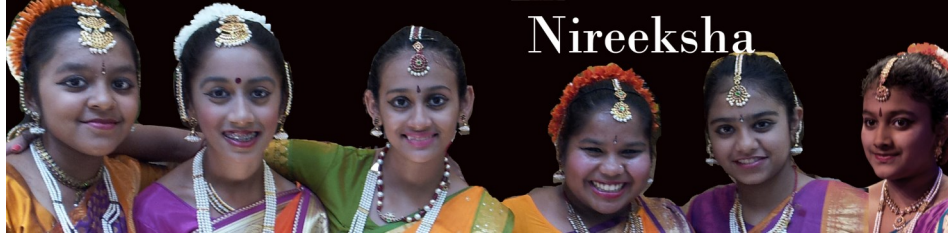
## Day 1

### Performance 1: AUSPICIOUS CHANTS

Ancestors divulged the secrets of nature through many imaginations and logical conclusions. Such conclusions set in Sanskrit verses invoke energy, faith and wisdom. Elderly, most respected Mrs. Subhadra Subbarao will inaugurate the show with auspicious chants on Ganapati and on mother Goddess Durga from Soundarya Lahari. She will be accompanied by – Shubha Subbarao, Hema Srikanta, Chaya Gopal, Jyoti Mysore, Suguna Satisha, Dr. Shobha and others

### Performance 2: NIREEKSHA (ANTICIPATION)

Nireeksha is a compilation of poems on anticipation. A lovelorn damsel lost in her dreams, anticipating the arrival of her beloved, a mother madly in love with her child, anticipating a colorful future for her daughter, a dancer anticipating an opposite move to rhythm. Lyrics are simple yet emotional and meaningful. This is a unique presentation of Kannada contemporary bhaavageethe (Light Music) and folk set to traditional and contemporary dancing styles. Music is set by Seema Kasthuri, and Pundit Vishwamohana Bhat and choreography is by Guru Prasanna.



Nrtyaarambha – An elegant start for the dance production provides an eloquent introduction of the Bharathanatyam through high caliber movement and enchanting rhythms. This will set the tone for the entire dance production. Courtesy: Madhurai R. Muralidharan

Yamuna – The poetess recollects the memories of her beloved and says ..

“On the banks of river Yamuna, in your comforting arms, I composed this beautiful poem with your bright eyes staring at me. This feeling is what keeps me alive each day. Do anything you feel like, but don’t ever pierce my feelings with your sharp nails.”



Chandirana BeLaka: A mother is looking at her beautiful child, enjoying her presence so much, she forgets herself. The child's mumbles are like a poem to the mother, her smile, a fairy tale. The mother considers herself a slave to her daughter, obeying her orders! The mother imagines her beautiful daughter blossoming into a beautiful flower, leaving home with Prince Charming. Mother is full of tears, however she is the most satisfied person to see her lovely daughter lead a good life. This is where her poem stops ....however, she is satisfied that it is truly complete!

Tillana/Tarana: An anticipation of rhythms from each other is a game for dancing feet. Two styles of dances – Bharathanatyam & Kathak will be presented in anticipation or Nireeksha for the moves and yield in an aesthetical presentation of dance skills

Performers: Samanvita Kasthuri, Shree Nivedita, Annapurna Pakrasi, Shree Govani, Priya Patel, Hamsika Sakshi, Sadhana Baktavachalam, Annika Renganathan, Esha Mahalingam, Mounica Gandhi, Rucha Kharod, Mrunal Desai & Seema Kasthuri

**Performance 3: Bharathanatyam by ANURADHA NAIMPALLY :**



Anuradha Naimpally, Bharath Natyam soloist, collaborator, and educator, has been dancing worldwide for over 35 years. Amongst her many honors, she is the only Indian dancer to win the prestigious Jacqueline LeMieux Prize from the Canada Council in 1989. In India, she was bestowed the title of "Sringara Mani" at the Kal-ke-Kalakar Festival in 1990. In Austin, TX she was named Best Dancer by the Austin Area Critics' Circle in 2001, and nominated numerous times, including 2011. Her production, Parampara, was awarded the coveted Best Dance Concert award and was named by the Austin Chronicle as one of the top five performances of 2011. In 2013, her mother-daughter performance was named Best Duet. Anuradha is funded by the City of Austin Cultural Contract Division and is a selected artist on the Texas Commission on the Arts Touring Roster and Mid-America Arts Alliance. Anuradha Naimpally presents traditional repertoire from the Tanjavur style of Bharata Natyam,

Alaripu Talam: Sankirna Jati Ekam (9 beat) - Set to a mathematically odd rhythm, this Alaripu brings out the beauty of the 9 beat cycle of sankirna jati. -- Composition and choreography: Acharya Parvati Kumar / Nattuvangam: Anuradha Naimpally / Vocals: Sudev Warriar

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Damaru Hara Kara Baje Ragam: Gunakali Talam: Mishra Chapu ( 7 beats) - Lord Shiva dances with the damaru, or rattle drum, as it emanates the primordial sound

of creation. He is adorned with serpents, smeared with ashes, and wears a garland of skulls; yet he is a sight to behold. He wields the great Pinaka bow and trident as he conquers all evils in the world.

Haririha Ragamalika Talam: Adi ; - The 12th century poet, Jayadeva, brings forward the divine and erotic together in his epic poem, Gita Govinda. Here, he describes the mischief of Krishna as he awakens love in the hearts of maidens, young and old. As they plot to smear red paste on Krishna, he ambushes them. In the end, all play the divine ras leela together as one.

Tillana Ragam: Hindolam Talam: Tishra Nadai Adi : Dance phrases are composed in five basic rhythmic patterns (3,4,5,7,9) as this joyful dance brings rhythm, grace, and footwork to an exciting finale. The compassion of Lord Rama is invoked to bless us all.

**Performance 4 : KUCHIPUDI BY DR. SARAWATHI RAJATHESH:(INDIA)**

Dr Saraswathi Rajathesh is a one of the few gurus among kuchipudi in Karnataka who acquired masters from legendary Siddendra Kalakshetram, Kuchipudi village under the legendary



gurus like vedantam ramu and vedantam Radhesyam. She is also trained in a special kuchipudi tradition "Simhanandini" sketching a lion with footwork on a canvas sheet under Guru smt.voleti Rangamani Hyderabad. She is further undergoing a Phd research through telugu university Hyderabad along with her multitasking dental profession and family. Bestowed with natural beauty, talent and grace, her attractive stage presence, creativity, dedication and command over the art has been greatly admired and appreciated from every corner. Founder director of Natyasaraswathi a non-profit

organization was established in 1997 contributing the field of art undertaking unique festivals and events like Kuchipudi Nrithyotsav and Nrithyabharathi with support from government bodies like ICCR, Kannada & culture, Andhra Pradesh cultural affairs, Bharatiya vidya Bhavan. She directed dance dramas like Geetha Govindam, Mohini bhasmasura, Shiva Ganga, Kaarunya Rama to list a few along with participation in national, international festivals and events.

**SIMHANANDINI NRITHYAM** :This dance is praising Mother Goddess Kathyayini. She is seated on a Lion and is prepared to end the tyranny of the demon Mahishasura and bless the whole world with good. She is decorated with crown, studded with beautiful gems and has the power of all stars and planets. Mother of universe with four arms, arrives with vigorous to destroy demon Mahishasura and bring peace to Universe. This dance has lot of rare ragas, talas, Karana's, charis, gatis and sthayi bhedas, which are the syllables of dance. At the end of the dance, dancer draws a picture of Lion on a colored canvas to a 128 beat of 1 Cycle of TALA or Period.



Remembering Gurus—1

## NARMADA

Guru Narmada has all her life contributed immensely to dance and students of dance with her generous giving and sharing of all her knowledge of dance.

Every successful artist in Bangalore would have learnt dance from Guru Narmada at some point or the other in their dancing career. A mother figure to all her students, they describe Guru Narmada as a great teacher and a good friend and guide. Caring, loving, sharing and giving are the qualities she possessed, making her close to each one's heart. She has trained some of the fine artists like Prasanna Kasthuri, Praveen Kumar, Dr. Shridhar, Dr. Savithri Ramaiah, Lakshmi Gopalswamy, Manju Bhargavi, Sathyanarayan Raju, Nirupama Rajendra, Malathi Iyengar, Praveen, Anuradha Vikranth.

Guru Narmada was awarded the Sangeet Natak Akademi award by the President of India for her contribution to the field of dance. She has been awarded the Shanthala Award by the Government of Karnataka. Completing 25 years of teaching, Guru Narmada was one of the most senior dance gurus of Bangalore, who had her initial training from the late V S Kaushik, and training in the Tanjore style of Bharatanatyam from Guru K P Kittappa Pillai of Thanjavur for 18 years.

She began her dance school Shakuntala Nruthyalaya (in memory of her mother) at Bangalore in 1978 where she has trained many students. She was by Karnataka Sang-eetha Nruthya Academy Award, the Shanthala Arts Academy Award, the Best Teacher award from the Music Academy, Chennai, Karnataka Rajyotsava Award and the Bestow Award from the Karnataka Cultural Association, California.

### **Pewrformance 5—In memory of my Guru Narmada by LAKSHMI SANJAY (Bharatanatyam)**

Lakshmi co-founded Abhinay Fine Arts, a non-profit organization in Seattle, OR. She started her initial training in Bharatanatyam under Gurus Prof. Usha Datar and Smt. Akhila Narayan. Later she underwent advance training under Guru. Narmada in the Pandanallur Style of Bharatanatyam. Her relationship with Guru Narmada was priceless and she had her dance debut (Arangetram) under her guidance. She will be dancing with her daughter in memory of her teacher.

शिशुर्वेत्ति पशुर्वेत्ति वेत्ति गानम रसम फणिः

*shishurveti pashurveti vetthi gaanam rasam phanihi*

Every living being enjoys music.

Either a small child or a cow or even a serpent will calm down by music.



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## 4th St. Louis Indian Music Festival

Sept 20, 21 - 2014, Ethical Society

Partial funding for this Festival is made possible  
by the Grants received from

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**Regional Arts Commission**

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**USWIDE Financials**



**Program 6— Kathak by Guru SHILA MEHTA (India) :** Shila Mehta is an established exponent of the Indian Classical art form- Kathak. She is a rare combination of an artist, performer, choreographer, educator, and composer, for which she has gained recognition from diverse groups including lay and expert audiences internationally. She is regularly commissioned for solo, small and large group productions, particularly due to her ability to transform traditional themes to make them accessible and relevant to modern audiences. She regularly **ours** and teaches at esteemed festivals and venues in India, North America, and Europe. She is the founder of the Nupur Zankar Academy of Performing Arts and Research Centre, Mumbai India, an organization that is enlisted with the Indian Council for Cultural Relations.

Shila Mehta presents 'Katha Se Kathak'. The first piece is an episode from Ram Chitra Manas, which is a poem composed by the legendary St Tulsidas, one of India's greatest poets. The second piece is taken from Geetanjali, again, poetry, notably that won a Noble Prize, written by Guru Rabindranath Tagore. The final piece is taken from the Bhagvad Geeta, which forms part of the Mahabharata. It is an important Hindu scripture for imparting knowledge of cultural teachings as applied to life. The performance introduces a unique element to Kathak by capitalizing on the use of narrative to add a new dimension to the art of communication through dance.

## Day 2

**Performance 7—Sacred Chants By students of Guru Seema Kasthuri :** Priya Kanna, Rahul, Samanvita, Divya Minnaganti and Nivedita Prabhu - Students of Guru Seema Kasthuri, present 9th century Sacred Chant – Mudakaratta Modakam

**Performance 8—Inaugural Dances by students of Guru Prasanna Kasthuri:**

Vandana Trayee: Bharatha Rathna Pundit Ravi Shankarji composed this beautiful, yet



simple music depicts the three most famous verses anyone in India acknowledges. The first prayer is Vakratunda – an obeisance to deity Ganesh, who is believed to be the





**Let our children live  
in a better world**

- Best wishes to  
Soorya Performing arts  
- from an art lover



**Let the art grow**

Best Wishes from  
**Ashok & Sandhya Yanamadala**



Best Wishes from  
**Bharadwaj Family**

- CM, Mythili, Maheetha & Meghana

destroyer of all evil, followed by Saraswati, a goddess of learning and a prayer on all the teachers. This is performed by all Soorya Dance Company students.

Tradition of Daasa Sahitya is very deep-rooted in Southern India. Dasa tradition teaches simple living and high thinking. Purandaradasa is the famous one in this great traditions. So, as Karigiri aacharya, whose composition - Bhooshitha Vanamala presented today, is in praise of deity Sri Krishna, also describes his divinity. Performed by: Niharika Sanjeeva, Samhita & Sanjana Prabhakar, Sanjana Anand, Amoolya Pandurangi, Ananya Sharma, Roshni Ramesh, Sansita Palakollu, Arna Gowda, Tanvi Dahuja,

**Performance 9—Siva Kuttumba- series of dances describing the family of the almighty Lord Siva : By Kaushi Subramanyam & Troupe , San Antonio, TX**

Kausi Subramaniam, director of dance at Kalalaya Indian Performing Arts, San Antonio, TX, trained under Guru Revathi Satyu of Dallas, TX and later under Guru Prasanna Kasthuri of Saint Louis, MO. She has over twenty years of teaching experience and her students excel in adjudicated events, auditions, and dance competitions. Kausi has served as the President of the San Antonio Dance Umbrella and has served as dance co-chair for Luminaria for four years. Kausi has recently been inducted to the San Antonio Women's Hall of Fame and was one of the San Antonio Business Journal's '40 Under 40



Rising Stars' in 2008. She played an instrumental role in pursuing and developing a Sister City in India and serves as President of Anuja SA, the organization that manages the Sister City Rela-

tionship between San Antonio and Chennai, India.

Anada Nartana Ganapatim- Ragam: Nattai, Talam: Adi- an happy dance describing piece on happily dancing Ganesha, the elder son of Lord Siva

Varnam- Nee Manamirangi Vandarulvai- Ragam: Lathangi, Talam: Adi- A varnam describing the various attributes of Lord Muruga, the younger son of Lord Siva.

Adhanareeswaram- Ragam: Kumudakriya, Talam: Rupakam- A dance in praise of Ardhanareeswaran, the fused form of Lord Siva and Goddess Parvathi.

Thillana- Ragam: Valachi, Talam: Adi- A fast paced rhythmic dance concluding with a stanza on Goddess Parvathi, the consort of Lord Siva.

*With Best Wishes*



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#### **Performance 10—JIVA – Synergy in Nature by Indique**

Established in June 2008, Indique Dance Company has set its course to achieve an artistic composite of what is Indian and what is unique. The dance troupe is an amalgamation of Indian Classical dancers who trained together for years and have now reunited to pursue a shared vision of new, exciting directions

in Indian classical dance. Indique Dance Company's passion for dance is its driver with variety and technique as the platform on which it runs. The group represents a synergy of years of experience in a variety of Eastern and Western classical dance forms.

JIVA: Indique Dance Company is now back with JIVA - Synergy in Nature. This show creatively unravels the mystery of the elements and demonstrates how they function in perfect synergy for the sustenance of life (JIVA). Various aspects of Nature are represented in spellbinding and dynamic ways. With a contemporary approach that combines classical dance, theater and yoga, Jeeva shows how we are both impacting and are impacted by Nature. Indique hopes to bring more awareness to the role we all play in preserving and nurturing Nature in a very unique way.

#### **Performance 11—Bahaar : Directed by Akhila Rao, Artistic Director, Kathak Rhythms**

Akhila Rao has been in the field of Kathak for over 30 years. She began her training in Kathak under the guidance of Guru Shri. Ganesh Hiralal. After performing her Rang Pravesh in 1978, she won the title of "Singar Mani" awarded by the prestigious Sur Singar Samsad at the Kal Ke Kalakaar Festival in 1981. She also received the "Menaka Trophy" for Kathak at the University of Bombay Youth Festival in 1981. She continued



her training in Kathak under the guidance of Guru Smt. Asha Joglekar and specialized in

teaching the finer aspects of the art form. Akhila has performed all over India at prestigious venues as well as in the US. She has been teaching Kathak to students of all ages in India and in the US to meet the certification standards of a recognized academy of Indian Classical Dance and Music. She serves as an examiner for Samved Conservatory

of Indian Classical Music and Dance, New Jersey, and is the Texas region co-ordinator for the institute. Mrs. Akhila Rao will present series of Kathak dances from her company – Kathak rhythms, which includes Nivedita Mukherjee, Devasri Warriar, Meerambika Kulkarni, Harshita Davuluri

Remembering Gurus –2

## Guru Vampati Chinna Sathyamgaaru

Vempati Chinna Satyam is a legendary dancer and guru of Kuchipudi dance form. This exquisite art form was popularized worldwide by him. He was born on 15th October, 1929, in a traditional family of dancers, at a small village of Kuchipudi in Andhra Pradesh. He started learning this dance form at the tender age of nine. Under the guidance



of three great Gurus, Vempati Chinna Satyam mastered in Kuchipudi. Initially he learnt from Sri Vedantam Lakshmi Narayana Sastry, then refined his art by learning the graceful movements from Sri Tadepally Perrayya Sastry and later was trained by his elder brother Sri Vempati Satyam in the beauty of expressions.

Vempati Chinna Satyam was a star shining brightly in the sky of international fame. He was conferred with many titles and awards such as "Sangeet Peeth of Bombay", "Asthana Natyacharya of Tirumala Tirupati Devas-

thanam", "T.T.K. Memorial Award" by Music Academy, "Natya Kalasaagara of Waltair", "Raja Lakshmi Award of Madras", "Kalaprapoorna" from Andhra University, "Natya Kala Bhushana of Guntur", "Bharatha Kalaprapoorna of Hyderabad", D. Litt. from Sri Venkateswara University, "Asthana Natyacharya of Pittsburg", and "National Award from Central Sangeet Naatak Akademi, New Delhi". He was awarded by many State Governments of India such as Kalidas Puraskar by the Government of Madhya Pradesh and Kalaimamani by the Government of Tamil Nadu. He was honored with a Doctorate degree by Andhra University. Guru Vempati has also received the highest India Civilian Award from Government of India "Padma Bhushan" for his contribution to Kuchipudi.

Vempati Chinna Satyam is famous not only in India but also abroad. In 1984, he was presented a Golden Key by the Mayor of Miami. 25th September, 1994, was announced as Vempati Chinna Satyam Day by the Mayor of Dayton, Ohio; 27th April, 1984 was declared as Classical Indian Kuchipudi Ballet Dance Drama day by the Mayor of Gahanna, Ohio; 3rd November 1994 as Kuchipudi Dance Drama Day by the Mayor of Atlanta and September 24, 1994 as Ramayanam Day by the Mayor of Memphis and he was also awarded a key of the city.



**Performance 12—Remembering Mastergaaru by Sujatha Vinjamuri** - Mrs. Sujata Vin-



jamuri, student of Guru Padmabhushan Dr. Vempatti Chinna Satyam established the Kuchipudi Dance Academy – St. Louis in St. Louis, Missouri in 1980 and the school received the non for profit status in 1990. Mrs. Sujata Vinjamuri is the founder and the artistic director who received her initial dance training in Bharat Natyam under renowned teacher, Mrs, Uma Ramarao and later received advanced training in Kuchipudi from world renowned exponent and Padmabhushan Guru Dr. Vempatti Chinna Satyam.

She was awarded the prestigious ‘Natya Visharada’ title by the Kuchipudi Art Academy. Sujata has also received ‘Turlapati Krishna Kumari’ award, Dr. Akineni Nageshwarao Gold Medal, ‘Nritya Mayuri’. from Shruti foundation, USA, and the titles of ‘Abhinaya Satyabhama’, ‘Natya Bhushan’ and ‘Natya Mayuri’.

Shivashtakam Dance presented by Kuchipudi Arts Academy of St. Louis – Shiva is the dancing deity, who is also the Lord of Universe. All devotees pray his wisdom and cherish his magnanimity. This is an original choreography of Vampati Chinna Sathyam.

**Performance 13— In memory of our Mastergaaru – presented by Senior most disciples of Shri Vempati Chinna Sathya through “Sri Krishna Parijatham”**

Dr. Kamala Reddy (Pittsburgh): One of the senior most students of Guru Vempati Chinna Satyam, Kamala has performed extensively in India, USA and other countries. She has performed for major organizations in India including the Music Academy and Krishna Gana Sabha, Chennai; ICCR and Sangeet Natak Academy, Delhi; Konark festival, Puri; Shanmukhananda Hall, Mumbai. She has played lead roles in many of Gurujis dance ballets and toured with him to the U.S.A in 1984, 1994 and 1998, the former U.S.S.R in 1987, the former Czechoslovakia and Hungary in 1989, the Netherlands in 1996 and France in 2001. Her roles as Rukmini in Rukmini Kalyanam, Parvathi in Hara Vilasam, the Fortune Teller and Parvathi in Srinivasa Kalyanam, and later as Padmavathi in Srinivasa Kalyanam to name a few, have won her accolades amongst critics and connoisseurs of dance. Kamala established the Kala Niketan Academy of Indian classical dance in Pittsburgh in 1991. Apart from being an accomplished dancer, Kamala is a practicing physician - an Endocrinologist. She is the medical director of one of Pittsburgh area affiliates of the Joslin Center for Diabetes.

Shobha Natarajan (Chicago): Acclaimed as an artist, whose dance performances are both beautiful and significant, Shoba Natarajan is one of the foremost exponents of two classical dance styles of India - Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi. Shoba has danced the lead role in several of Dr. Chinna Satyam's productions, and is best known for her

stirring portrayal of Srinivasa in 'Srinivasa Kalyanam.' Shoba has played an active and important role in popularizing Kuchipudi and Bharatanatyam around the world. In 1984, she became the first Kuchipudi dancer to tour the Soviet Union. She has also undertaken several dance tours of India, the United States, the former Soviet Union,



Europe, and Southeast Asia.

Sasikala Penumarthi(Atlanta): Popularly known as 'Padmavathi' in Srinivasa Kalyanam to the art lovers in the United States, Sasikala has found a unique place as a vigorous and vivacious exponent of Padma Bhushan Guru Vempati Chinna Satyam's style of Kuchipudi dance. Sasikala took an active role with Maastergaaru performing from 1993—1998 taking part in productions such as Sri Krishna Parijatham, Chandalika, Ksheera Sagara Madhanam, Hara Vilasam, Ramayanam, Ardha Nareeswara, Sakuntalam, and Srinivasa Kalyanam.

Sasikala is on the Georgia Arts Council State Roster and Young Audiences, Atlanta Roster. She works with Arts organizations associated with Georgia Council for the Arts to promote and propagate the Art of Kuchipudi Dance.

Revathi Komanduri (Atlanta): Revathi Komanduri is a senior disciple of Padma Bhushan Guru Dr. Vempati Chinna Satyam. She started learning Bharatnatyam at the age



of five. Mastergaru, as he is so lovingly known was everything that a child could look for in a perfect teacher, he was not just an ocean of knowledge and a strict disciplinarian, but was more of a very loving and caring parent in imparting this art to his students. That is why Kuchipudi stands so proudly on the face of the earth , flowing like the Ganga to so many different parts of the world, with no one to stop her. Revathi has had the fortune of performing in

many of her guru's productions, including, "Srinivasa Kalyanam", "Rukmini Kalyanam", "Ardhanaareswaram", "Gopika Krishna", "Sri Pada Paarijatham", and "Sri Krishna Paarijatham". She has also taken part in many tours of the Kuchipudi Art Academy, Chennai, traveling with the team to Germany in 1991, and USA in 1994 to name a few.

## Day 3

**Performance 14 : Sacred Chants by students of Seema Kasthuri** – Roshni Ramesh , Niharika Sanjeeva, Sapthaka Rajendra, Sanjana Prabhakar, Anushka Ramgounda, Ipsita Ravi, Hershitha Prabhu, Samhitha Prabhakar, Saanvi Ramgounda

**Performance 16 - Inaugural dances:** Saraswathi – A dance in praise of Goddess Saraswathi is presented by Mounica Gandhi, Esha Mahalingam, Sadhana Baktavachalam, Hansika Sakshi



Tarana – A beautiful Tarana elaborating the beautiful movements of Kathak dance is presented by Samanvita Kasthuri, Trisha Bhattacharya, Karishma Pradhan and Sara Parikh

**Performance 17— Pram Brahm Shivam by Aananda Dance Theater**

Aananda Dance Theater was founded by Guru Janaki Anandavalli Nair, a dedicated dance artist whose deep devotion to preserve the traditional and classical elements of Mohiniyattam and Kuchipudi pervades her artistic repertory. She gives exclusive training to her students, building a solid technical foundation, an impressive traditional repertoire, and an avenue to understand the scope of these art forms through innovative experimental pieces. Janaki Nair is a senior disciple of Guru Smt. V. Mydhili - Founder and Director of Midhilalaya Dance Academy in Trivandrum. Guru V. Mydhili is a graduate of the prestigious Kerala Kalamandalam and a disciple of Padmabhushan Dr. Vempati Chinna Sathyam.

The Aananda Dance troupe is led by the Guru, Janaki Nair herself and includes -

Neelima Bhavani Kartha, Elizabeth Nellamattathil, Anusha Karri , Swathi Karri , Leah Kunneth, Divya Pariti . Aananda Dance Theater offers "Parabrahmam Shivam - An Interpretation in Kuchipudi"

Shambhunatanam: Parabrahmam Shivam begins with Shambhunatanam - The item opens with Shiva Pratah Smarana Slokam, an early morning prayer to Lord Shiva written by Aadi Sankaracharya. He offers his prayers to Lord Shiva and describes the worldly existence as a disease and Lord Shiva as the medicine that cures it. The slokam



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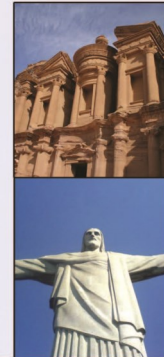
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is followed by Shambhunatanam - the Dance of Lord Shiva. This krithi is written by Saint Padanjali who is believed to be an incarnation of Aadi Shesha. The legend goes that Saint Padanjali was refused admission into the temple of Chidamabaram by Lord Shiva's trusted servant,

Nandi. Saint Padanjali was believed to have composed this beautiful krithi in a particular metre known as "Charana Sringa Rahitham" that does not use any extensions of the syllables. This is thought to be a rebuke to Nandi since "Charanam Sringa Rahitham" can be translated as "without feet or horns!" Lord Shiva was pleased at the extempore composition of Saint Padanjali and danced to this beautiful krithi in which the words are garlanded with amazing mastery over grammar and rhythm.

**Ardhanaareeswaram:** Ardhanaareeswaram is an ode to the concept of Shiva Shakthi - the perfect balance of the masculine and feminine energies of the Universe. Based on the verses from the Ardhanaareeswara Ashtakam of Aadi Shankaraacharya, the Purusha and Prakrithi aspects of this divine form are highlighted in this dance number - Beautiful hairdo on one half and matted locks on the other half, one half adorned by a garland of flowers while the other half is adorned by a garland of skulls so on and so forth. Lord Shiva is exalted as the Father of this Universe while Goddess Parvathi is praised as the Mother of the Universe.

**Shivasthuthi in Tharangam Format:** Aananda Dance Theater offers Tharangam as the grand finale of the presentation. Tharangam is the highlight in a Kuchipudi repertoire in which abhinaya and nritha sequences are interspersed and towards the end of the item, the dancers dance on the edges of brass plates symbolizing the spiritual elevation of pure bhakthi. Saint Narayana Theerthar's Shivasthuthi, Shiva Shiva Bhava Bhava Sharanam, has been choreographed by Guru Janaki as a Tharangam.

Lord Shiva is praised as Gangaadhara and the story of Gangaavatharanam or the Descent of River Ganges is depicted. King Bhageeratha, who wants Ganga to descend from the heaven to the earth knows that the force of the descent will be enough to cause catastrophe on the earth. He seeks Lord Shiva's help and Lord Shiva unties his matted locks and captures and secures Ganga within it. A tame stream is released from it which flows gently to the earth. Praising the Aanandanatanam of Lord Shiva, the dancers showcase footwork unique to Kuchipudi as well as the paadabhedaas in Natyasatra. This will be followed by the dancers executing complex rhythmic patterns on brass plates.





***Vivek Malik, Esq.***

At American Immigration Law Group, Vivek has successfully handled business, family, asylum, and removal defense matters in the field of U.S. immigration law. An expert in business immigration matters, he has counseled companies and individuals for non-immigrant and immigrant visas such as H-1B, H-2B, L-1A/B, O, P, EB-1, 2, 3, EB-5, NIWs.

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Parabrahmam Shivam concludes with another slokam by Adi Sankaracharya - the Kshama Slokam Karacharana Kritham, usually recited at the end of the day seeking forgiveness for all the mistakes committed by the body and mind, knowingly or unknowingly.

REMEMBERING GURUS—3

## Kalamandalam Krishnan Nair & Kalyani Kutti Amma

Kalamandalam Krishnan Nair (March 11, 1914 – August 15, 1990) was one of the most renowned Kathakali artists of any time, and arguably the greatest in the history of the



four-century-old classical dance-drama from Kerala in southern India.[citation needed] He had fleshy, flexible and clean-cut facial features that were powerful to launch any emotion with amazing power and ease, and was intelligent enough to acquire and exhibit varied styles of Kathakali that were in vogue across Kerala during his lifetime. A Padma Shri awardee, Krishnan Nair

was a genuine all-rounder who had the caliber to emote any role in Kathakali and, what's more, add his signature flair to it. Even so, he was most widely celebrated for his essaying of the virtuous and romantic pachcha (green-hued) roles like Nalan, Bhiman, Arjunan, Rukmangadan and Karnan.

A native of Cheruthazham in Kannur taluk of Kannur district in North Malabar, Kerala, he was initiated into Kathakali in his early teenages under the tutelage of Guru Chandu Panikker. By 19, he got noticed by Kerala Kalamandalam co-founder, poet Vallathol Narayana Menon, and inducted Krishnan Nair into his institute, then near Mulankunnathukavu, north of Thrissur in central Kerala. It was there that Krishnan Nair was trained under gurus of varied style—like Pattikkamthodi Ravunni Menon, Thakazhi Kunchu Kurup, Kavalappara Narayanan Nair and Mani Madhava Chakyar.

With his calibre to perform any challenging role and a flexible mindset that prompted him to occasionally do minor roles (with some new elements), Krishnan Nair was probably the pioneering Kathakali artiste who was a hardcore professional—in the sense that



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he was the arguably the first to dictate the rate for each of his performances. It was a watershed move in an art form that had huge feudal hangovers and its entailing element of servility that patrons expected from the artistes.

Krishnan Nair had a penchant for realistic portrayal of characters and situations that made him more popular in the Travancore belt of south Kerala. In fact, his outlandish style had made him a less acknowledged master in central and north Kerala—the very places that groomed his art in his early days.

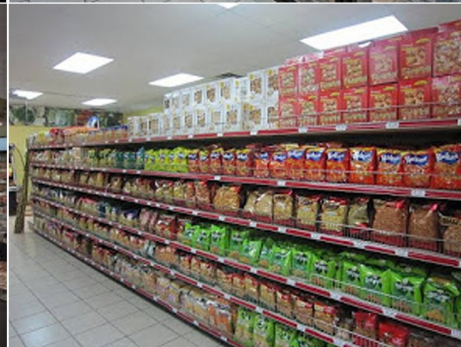
Krishnan Nair, towards the second half of his life, had made Tripunithura near Kochi his home. He had also served as the Kathakali Vesham faculty at the RLV College of Music and Fine Arts, Tripunithura. The late doyenne and the one who is considered the mother of Mohiniyattam, another Kerala classical dance form, Kalamandalam Kalyanikutty Amma was his wife. Their daughters, Sreedevi Rajan and Kala Vijayan, are experts in the field of Mohiniyattam and one of their sons, Kalasala Babu, is a well-known actor in the Malayalam drama and movie world. Krishnan Nair's granddaughter Smitha Rajan is a noted Mohiniyattam danseuse.[4]

Kalamandalam Kalyani Kutti Amma: Kalyanikutty Amma was born in 1915 in Tirunavaya in the Malappuram district of Kerala to orthodox parents Panangad Govinda Menon and Karingamana Sreedevi Amma. One of 6 children, she was a tomboy in her childhood and youth, took part in sports and even tried yoga and kalaripayattu. At the same time, she was keenly interested in literary pursuits, especially study of Sanskrit. As a young girl, she wrote poems and short stories in Malayalam under the name of Karingavanam Kalyanikutty. Since dance was not a favored artistic field, she did not even see any dance performance till she went to Kalamandalam. Kalyanikutty Amma received several titles and awards for her outstanding work in Mohiniattam. Among the prominent ones are the “Kavayithri” title given by Vallathol (1940), Sang-eet Natak Akademi fellowship (1974), Kerala Sangeet Natak Academy fellowship (1974), ‘Keerthi Shanku’ title given by Kerala Kalamandalam (1980), ‘Nrittapraveena’ title by Kerala Fine Arts Society (1984), Kerala Sahitya Academy award (1985).

The matter of revival and reform of an art form on the verge of extinction is not without controversies. Kalyanikutty Amma trained several students of Mohiniattam in the style she learnt from Krishna Panicker Asan. Her daughters Kala Vijayan and Sreedevi teach Mohiniattam and run their own institutions and many of her grandchildren have also taken to dance.

**Performance 18 : MohiniAttam by Smitha Rajan—** Smitha Rajan, a leading practitioner of Mohiniyattam and grand daughter of the revered and popular Kathakali legend Kalamandalam Krishnan Nair and the pioneer of Mohiniyattam, Kalamandalam Kalyanikutty Amma, also known as the "Mother of Mohiniyattam", along with her





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senior students presents major episodes from the Ramayana, through the grand Swati Tirunal composition "Bhavayami Raghuramam".

This kriti condenses the Ramayanam into six verses, highlighting incidents from the epic. This kriti is in Raga malika and is set to Roopaka taalam. Choreography is by Smitha Rajan. This piece will be followed by a Mangalam.

Performed by Smitha and her students:

Sneha Krishnapillai is a St. Louis resident, married with 2 children. She is an IT professional at AT&T. She has been learning and performing Mohiniyattam under the guidance of Smitha Rajan for 14 years. She has also learnt Odissi and Bharatanatyam and has an avid interest in all dance forms and takes great pleasure in teaching children and adults and participating in various cultural events.

Anu Samrat started learning Mohiniyattam from Smt. Smitha Rajan in 2001 and continues with advanced lessons from her guru. She was earlier a Bharatanatyam student and has also studied Carnatic music. She currently runs her dance school "Alapadma" in the greater Seattle area.

Smitha Vijayan started training in dance at the early age of 4 in the Bharatanatyam and later trained in Mohiniyattam and Bharatanatyam under the tutelage of Guru Kala Vijayan. For the past 3 years, Smitha continues to learn and perform Mohiniyattam under the training and guidance of Smt. Smitha Rajan. Smitha is now teaching Mohiniyattam in Seattle through the Mohini Dance School.

Lakshmi Kurup an accomplished performer and teacher, started learning dance from her parents at the young age of 4. A recipient of an Indian (Federal) Government scholarship for Mohiniyattam in 1985, Ms. Lakshmi Kurup currently teaches at the Noopura School of Indian Classical Dance in Queens (New York).

#### **Performance 19—SAAKSHI by Maitrii**

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# "Saakshi"

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**Radhika Acharya:** Radhika Acharya: An exponent of the graceful Thanjavur style of Bharatanatyam, Radhika initial training was under Guru M N Suvarna of the Arunodaya Kala Niketan, Mumbai. She continued training under Pt. V J Pillai (Thanjavur Nrithyashala, Mumbai) a principal disciple of the legendary Guru Acharya Parvathi Kumar, one of India's leading scholars, teachers and Gurus. In addition to extensive performances as a soloist in India and the US, Radhika Acharya also represented India as part of ASKARA, an Indian cultural organisation, in Folk dance festivals held in France, UK and the US. She started the Nupur Academy of Dance in Troy, MI, in 2003. She has boldly experimented with fusion styles in many original, creative full length productions and dance pieces to her credit. "Upaasana"(2003), "Paanchajanyam"(2005), "Amar Nrithya Katha"(2007), "Rudra"(2009)," PanchaBhootham"(2009) to name a few. Radhika Acharya is the creative Director of the Nupur Academy of Dance based in Troy, MI.

**Sandhya Sree Athmakuri:** Sandhya Sree Athmakuri, is an exponent of Bharata Natyam and Kuchipudi, having trained, in all authenticity, in India, under eminent Gurus of the Vazhuvoor Ramaiah Pillai lineage(Kum. Padma and 'Kalaimamani' Swamimalai Rajarathnam Pillai) and 'Padmabhushan' Dr. Vempati Chinna Satyam's Kuchipudi Art Academy (Smt. Bala and Guru Vempati himself). Sandhya has performed extensively not only in India but internationally as well –Festival of India in Germany, World Theater Opera Fest., in the Netherlands, the United States of America and Canada, with both her gurus, and adorned important parts in their dance productions. A 'Natya Visharada' & 'Singaramani' awardee, Smt. Sandhya Sree is the founder and director of "Natya Dharmi" foundation for performing arts at Rochester Hills, MI. Detailed profile (pdf).

**Manisha Dongre:** Manisha Dongre is a renowned Kathak dancer in Detroit area. She is trained under the guidance of Guru Manjiri Deo disciple of late Pt. Gopi Krishna & Smt Asha Joglekar. Manisha is blessed with the opportunity to be mentored by Kathak Maestros Pt. Birju Maharaj, Dr. Puru Dadheech and Kathak Queen Sitara Devi. Manisha has been practicing Kathak since the age of 12 and achieving milestones in her Kathak career by passing Nritya Visharad in 1989 & Nritya Alankar (Masters) in Kathak in 1994. Manisha has won prestigious awards at Swar Sadhana Samiti and the South Central Zone Cultural Center competitions in India. Manisha is the Founder & Director of Taal Academy in Detroit, Michigan.

**Asha Subramanian:** At the age of 10, Asha was initiated in Bharatanatyam, by Guru Thankamani Kutty of Kalamandalam, Calcutta. She had the privilege of being trained by eminent Gurus like Padmashri Guru Bharati Shivaji, Smt. Sreedevi Rajan and Kalamandalam Sumathy and was blessed to perform extensively in and around Kerala. Her theatrical skills led her to winning a few coveted roles in the Malayalam movies and TV where she proved her acting prowess. She also assists her mother Smt. Janaki Jayaram in training Carnatic music in metro Detroit.

Maitrii - Detroit presents "Saakshi" - Yamuna's tales of testimony

These are the stories of courage and persistence from the divine banks of river Yamuna. As she silently witnessed history pass by little did she realize that her pure waters were being colored drop by drop down the age with the serpentine venom with tears of guilt, with pangs of separation and with the tides of blood! Until, she lay barren, dry and completely parched. Saakshi connects river Yamuna with the stories of Krishna, Story of Taj Mahal, Lakshmi Bai – and the valorous queen of Jhansi.

**Performance 20—Raas Garbha by SLU (St. Louis University):** The Saint Louis University



ty Raas team was formed in 2007 by a group of ambitious students to preserve and promote Gujarati culture. Throughout the years, the commitment and dedication of the

team members has allowed SLU Raas to excel from a small unknown team, to a popular and well known team across the nation. SLU Raas has compiled a very successful track record in the past few years with numerous first places finishes, resulting in multiple invitations to the Best of the Best competition and the Raas All-Stars Championship--where the team took second place in 2010. Although we love having fun and thoroughly enjoy every aspect of the experience, we work extremely hard to create an energetic and exciting routine for our audiences around the country. We look forward to attending as many competitions as possible and meeting some amazing people from different teams throughout the country.

**Performance 21—Kolata from Karnataka:** Karnataka is southern state of India, where people speak Kannada. Kolata is danced with sticks across the state of Karnataka and it is one of the popular folk dance form, performed across many festivals and events. With simple yet delicate movement; Kolata takes people into a phase of athletics and provides fun and happiness. This is performed by Samanvita Kasthuri, Annika Renganathan, Shree Govani, Shree Nivedita, Annapurna Pakrasi, Rucha Kharod, Mrunal Desai, Sadhana Baktavachalam, and Esha Mahalingam.

**Performance 22—Garbha Raas by Neelima & friends:** Garba (ગરબા in Gujarati) is a form of dance that originated in the state of Gujarat in India. The name is derived from



the Sanskrit term Garbha ("womb") and Deep ("a small earthenware lamp"). Many traditional garbas are performed around a centrally lit lamp or a picture or statue of the Goddess Shakti. The circular and spiral figures of Garba have similarities to other spiritual dances, such as those of Sufi culture. Traditionally, it is performed during the nine-day Hindu festival Navarātrī Gujarātī નવરાત્રી Nava = 9, rātrī = nights). Performed by Kanal patel, Tejal patel, Komal desai, Nirali shah, Hema patel, Sheetal mehta, Ami Parikh, Ishita shanghvi, Vaishali Soneta, Neelima Bhavsar and Priti bhakta . Choreographed by: kanal, Nirali and Neelima. Today, this group will present 'garba' based on a beautiful song by shree zaverchand meghani- "man mor bani thanghat kare.....". The song has a small but interesting history attached with it- which would be narrated by its choreographers.

**Performance 23: BIHU Dances: by Seema & friends:** The Bihu dance (Assamese: বহু নৃত্য, Hindi: बिहू नृत्य) is a folk dance from the Indian state of Assam related to the festival of Bihu. Though the origins of the Bihu dance is unknown, the first official endorsement is cited to be when Ahom king Rudra Singha invited Bihu dancers to perform at the Ranghar fields sometime around 1694 on the occasion of Rongali Bihu. Presented JANAPADA group of St. Louis – performed by Seema, Sona, Jayashree, Kshipra, Kumuda, Anitha, Sheetal and others.

Bhangra by WASHU BHANGRA : Founded in 2006, WashU Bhangra formerly known as St. Lungitics has brought bhangra to the St. Louis Area and the Washington University



campus. Most of our performances were for Diwali until 2008 when we competed in our first ever national competition, Bhangra Bash, in Seattle, WA (This was our debut performance on Gabroo TV). Since then, the team has come a long way in terms of creativity, execution, and cleanliness.

Participants are Rithvik Prasannappa, Vivek Ashok, Reith Sarkar, Gayathri Srinivasan, Natasha Singh, Nityasri Sankar, Vikram Gurusamy, Saniya Suri and others.





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3. Arrange training and cross-artistic performances through residencies, workshops in schools and colleges in the city and rural areas
4. Arrange festivals, seminars, workshops and demonstrations for better enjoyment and appreciation of South Asian Performing Art forms
5. Create innovative dance, music and theater productions in co-operation with local, state and national companies
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