

presents

The Festival of Classical Dances of India

Performers

Kasi Aysola
Uma Kadekodi
Bhavya Kumaran
Asha Mehta
Colin Mascarenhas
Lia Nandi
Preetha Narayanan
Harini Nilakantan
Shiralee Patel
Sigma Satabdhi Pradhan
Kavisha Prajapati
Neeti Sabharwal
Kirti Sheth
Misha Talapatra
Mahitha Unnikrishnan
Sreevidhya Vijayan
Varsha Vijayan

Five different styles
featured!

Bharatanatyam
Odissi
Kathak
Kuchipudi
Mohiniyattam

November 19, 2023
2 PM - 7 PM CST

Reva and David Logan
Center for the Arts
915 E 60th St, Chicago,
IL 60637

FREE EVENT!

Please reserve your
tickets online at

www.kalapriya.org

Food will be available



The dance styles highlighted in our show are Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, Mohiniyattam, Odissi, and Kathak.

The performers (in show order):

KUCHIPUDI AND BHARATANATYAM

Uma Kadekodi and Kasi Asyola

“Our Story”

We are first generation American born youth whose parents migrated from India with the dream of creating opportunities for themselves and their future families. As they navigated their new life in America, preserving their culture became a priority. To ensure this rich cultural heritage could be shared and passed on, they sought to have their children learn and flourish in Indian dance and music.

Like a whole generation of Indian Americans, we spent our childhoods immersed in dance classes, learning the stories, languages, music, poetry, and exploring the rich tapestries of Indian artistic traditions.

Now, reflecting on the decades of deep practice and growing from a relationship with Indian art forms, we put forth the following question:

Whose culture is it?

Our parents' desire to pass *their* heritage has become *ours*. As we grew up trying to negotiate a dual cultural identity and “fit ourselves in,” our artistic practices became an integral part of an identity that was uniquely ours. The

Gods, Goddesses, myth, stories and morals were part of a world that now is integral to our lives and our artistry. This rich cultural foundation we received moves forward with us today changing and evolving through our dance finding purpose and connection.

And yet when we approach our dance today in a different climate and time, our dance is often only viewed as a “cultural experience”.

For us, there is no division between the art created before us or by us. Rather it is a continuous river that keeps incorporating fresh waters. There is no part of the art that belongs to our parents' generation vs. art that belongs to us. The worlds are seamless, timeless, and meaningful which traverse cultural boundaries.

It is our belief that a presentation that is meant to speak to present times and to the “American experience” can be as filled with Shiva, Devi, the love of Radha and Krishna, and the intricate melodies and rhythms of Bharatanatyam and Kuchupudi.

Through this presentation, we invite you to experience the art that has given us foundation, conviction, and identity: as Indians, as Americans, as artists, and as people.

The Festival of Classical Dances of India

NOVEMBER 19, 2023

Introduction

Kalpriya Chicago proudly presents The Festival of Classical Dances of India on November 19, 2023, at the Reva and David Logan Center, Chicago. This five hour extravaganza is a celebration of the Indian subcontinent's traditional classical dance forms, of which there are eight major styles (according to the Sangeet Natak Academy) – Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, Manipuri, Odissi, Kathak, Kathakali, Mohiniyattam, and Sattriya.



MOHINIYATTAM AND KUCHIPUDI

Sreevidhya and Varsha Vijayan

KUCHIPUDI

“Nirupama Sundara” is a popular Kuchipudi dance composition by the renowned composer Oothukadu Venkata Subbaiyer. Kuchipudi is a classical Indian dance form that originated in the village of Kuchipudi in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. The composition “Nirupama Sundara” is often chosen for its lyrical beauty and emotional depth.

The central theme of “Nirupama Sundara Kara” is the divine and enchanting persona of Lord Krishna during his childhood, highlighting his divine grace, charm, and the love and devotion of his devotees. Kuchipudi dancers perform this tharangam with expressive movements, intricate footwork, and storytelling gestures to bring these episodes from Krishna’s life to life on stage.

MOHINIYATTAM

“Kurathy”

Kurathy means a woman belonging to a hill tribe. This composition tells us the story of Ayyappa. In the beginning, the danseuse enters as Kurathy and introduces herself as “Mayam Kurathy”, which means she is the ‘Maya’ of Lord Vishnu who has disguised as Kurathy. Aspects of a Kurathy’s nomadic lifestyle are enacted through dance – such as their expertise in palm reading. She also says that she is the daughter of mountains and can even climb Mount Kailasa.

Then the Kurathy danseuse begins to tell the story of Ayyappa. She says she has taken the form of Mohini, the enchantress avatar of Mahavishnu.

The beautiful Mohini comes to attract Siva by playing a ball, Siva who was with Sivaparvathy is fascinated by the enchantress and goes to her, leaving Parvathy alone. A male child Ayappa is born out of the union of Mohini and Lord Shiva. Then, the Ayyappa devotee’s pilgrimage to Sabarimala is elaborated. Finally, kurathy bids farewell to everyone and departs.

KATHAK

Dilshad Khan Academy

Ustad Dilshad Khan is a globally renowned exponent of kathak, with a specialization in the patiala gharana. He has been teaching dance in Chicago and Indiana since 1990. Today’s selection of performances include taranas and thumris, both quintessential compositions in kathak.



Mohiniyattam is performed by Sreevidhya Vijayan

disciple of Ms. Sandra Pisharody -Senior disciple of Mohiniyattam Exponent Guru Nirmala Paniker

Kuchipudi is performed by Varsha Vijayan

**Ragam: Ragamalika
Thalam: Thalamalika**





1. Tarana

Tarana is a composition in Hindustani classical music, characterized by specific phonetic syllables, or bol, and set to a mid to fast tempo, or laya. Poet Amir Khusro is credited with the invention of the tarana, which typically consists of a repetitive base melody complemented by a second, contrasting melody. This tarana is performed by Shiralee Patel, choreographed by Ustad Dilshad Khan, and composed by Bageshree Vaze, in teentaal. Shiralee has been studying kathak for several years, and is also a bharatanatyam dancer. She is a company dancer with Ameya Performing Arts.

2. Ja Tose Nahin

Thumri is a composition that is typically romantic and devotional in nature, characterized by melody, expression, and storytelling. This thumri is performed by Asha Mehta, choreographed by Ustad Dilshad Khan, and composed by Salil Chowdhury, in raag hamsadhvani. Asha has been studying kathak for several years, and has also trained in bharatanatyam.

3. Malkauns Tarana

Malkauns is a raag in Hindustani classical music. The equivalent raag in Carnatic music is called Hindolam. This tarana is performed by Lia Nandi and Mahitha Unnikrishnan, and choreographed by Ustad Dilshad Khan, in raag malkauns. Lia Nandi has been studying kathak since she was 5 years old and has truly grown up with Guruji. Mahitha has been studying kathak for several years, and also trains in bharatanatyam.

4. Mohe Panghat Pe

In the 1960 movie Mughal-e-Azam, the song Mohe Panghat Pe almost didn't make it into the film. Famed director Vijay Bhatt, though not the director of the film, recommended it be excluded since it depicted the Mughal emperor celebrating Janmashtami, which he felt was illogical. Composer Naushad felt otherwise, and the rest is history! Mohe Panghat Pe describes Krishna's flirtatious antics. The heroine explains, Krishna teased me at the river bank and left. He twisted my wrists, he broke my water pot, he drenched my sari. Ultimately though, he stole my heart. Mohe Panghat Pe is performed by Kirti Sheth, choreographed by Ustad Dilshad Khan, and composed by Naushad. Kirti has been studying kathak for several years, and has partnered with Guruji to offer weekly kathak classes on Devon Ave at her restaurant, Arya Bhavan.

5. Thumri

Shiralee Patel is performing a thumri choreographed and composed by Ustad Dilshad Khan, and recited by his nephew, Adil. The music has been recorded by talented musicians in Pakistan, organized by Guruji himself. It showcases a number of different taal, especially 14 matra (jhoomra), as well as a taalmala (9 matra through 16 matra). Those of you in the audience who can count along, will notice a number of transitions in the beat cycles!

6. Kahe Chhed

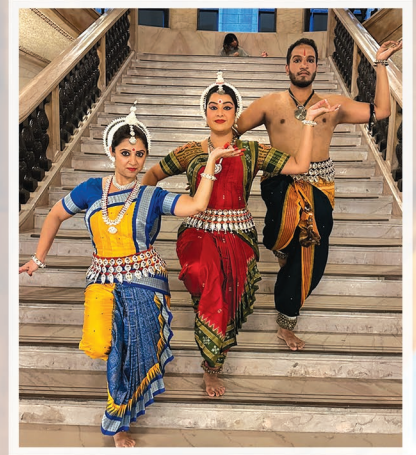
Lia Nandi is performing a thumri choreographed by Ustad Dilshad Khan, composed by Pt. Birju Maharaj. This is a classic song from Sanjay Leela Bhansali's 2002 movie, *Devdas*.

ODISSI

Aikyam Odissi Dance Collective Chicago

Aikyam Odissi Dance Collective Chicago is a space for Odissi and Indian classical dance artists to unite, collaborate, and create.

1. First an excerpt of *Batu Nritya* – a pure dance offering in honor of Lord Batuka Bhairava, one of the 64 aspects of Lord Shiva. This dance item is redolent with sculptural poses describing such actions as the playing of the drum, veena, flute and cymbals. Intricate rhythmic patterns are also worked out elaborately in different passages of a continuing refrain, and no song or recitation is allowed in the accompaniment.
2. Second, *Billahari Pallavi* – a rhythmic pure dance that implies elaboration; an exposition not only of the dance but also of the music that accompanies it. The graceful and lyrical movement of the dancer's form is supported by intricate rhythm patterns of exceptional beauty. Like the blossoming of a flower, the Pallavi gradually unfolds the particular Raga upon which it is based: thus a beautiful tapestry of rhythm, music and movement is created.
3. Lastly, *Mokshya* – meaning salvation, the ultimate release from the human life experience and the blissful integration of the human soul with Godhood. Paralleling this concept, Mokshya, the final item of the Odissi repertoire, signifies the total surrender of the dancer to God. A pure dance sequence in fast tempo is performed to an accompaniment of a recitation of rhythmic syllables which are played out on the mardala (the main percussion instrument in Odissi). Then follows an invocation to the Goddess Shakti, praying for the universal well-being of mankind and a harmonious co-existence.



Vocals: Nitin Shankar,
Shankar Mahadevan,
Shirish, Shridhar, and
Taufiq Qureshi.

Dance Composition:
Sigma Satabdhi and
Harini Nilakantan

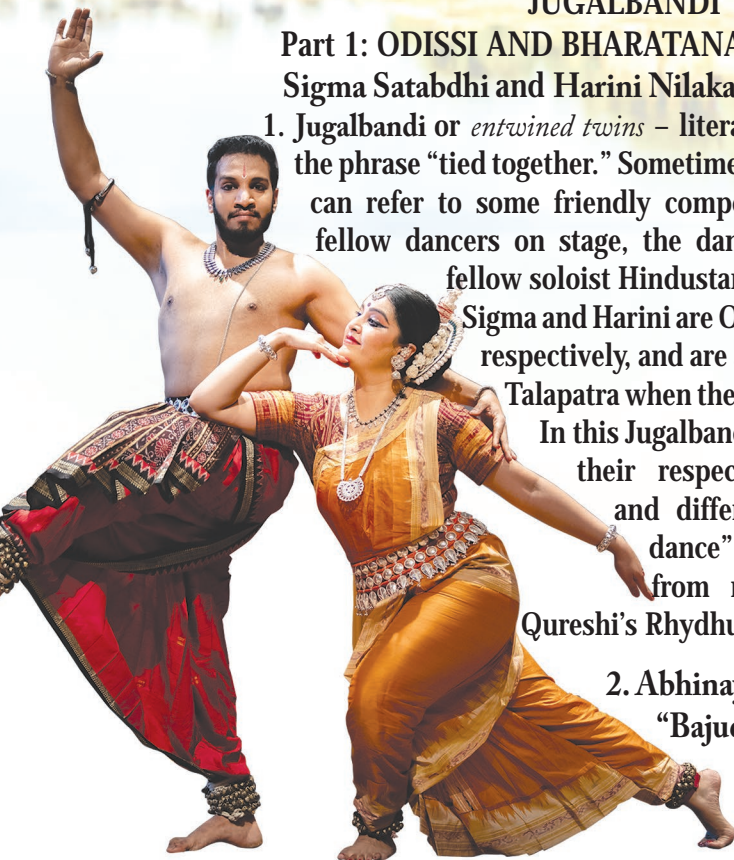
JUGALBANDI

Part 1: ODISSI AND BHARATANATYAM Sigma Satabdhi and Harini Nilakantan

1. Jugalbandi or *entwined twins* – literally translates to the phrase “tied together.” Sometimes a “jugalbandi” can refer to some friendly competition between fellow dancers on stage, the dancer and the percussionist, or fellow soloist Hindustani or Carnatic musicians! Sigma and Harini are Odissi and Bharatanatyam dancers respectively, and are also teammates along with Misha Talapatra when they perform as Movement Of Desis. In this Jugalbandi, Sigma and Harini will explore their respective dance forms' similarities and differences through nritta or “pure dance” set to “The Other Rhythm” from renowned percussionist Taufiq Qureshi's Rhythun – An Odyssey of Rhythm.

2. Abhinaya | Sigma Satabdhi
“Bajuchi Sahi Bajare” is an Oriya

Core members Colin Mascarenhas, Neeti Sabharwal and Misha Talapatra will be presenting three pieces from the Odissi repertoire.



Raagam:
Poorvi Kalyani,

Taalam:
Rupakam

Composer:
Shri Nilakanta Sivan

Dance Composition:
Acharya Choodamani
Guru Shri.
Adyar K. Lakshman

abhinaya, a form of traditional Indian dance drama, that tells the story of the eternal and scandalous love affair between Radha and Krishna. In this performance, Radha's friend/Sakhi warns her about the rumors spreading throughout the town of Braja regarding her passionate relationship with Krishna.

The Sakhi describes how Radha's love for Krishna has become the talk of the town. Radha is depicted as being deeply in love with Krishna, to the point where she eagerly waits for his presence, oblivious to the criticisms and judgment of others. The two lovers share intense and passionate glances that are noticed by everyone, and even Radha's rival, Chandrabali, claims that Krishna utters Radha's name while in her arms.

The dance choreography for "Bajuchi Sahi Bajare" was created by the late Padmashri Guru Gangadhar Pradhan and Guru Aruna Mohanty, and the music was composed by Bijay Kumar Jena. This performance captures the essence of Radha and Krishna's love story and the intrigue and scandal that it generates in the town of Braja.

3. Kirtanam | Ananda Natamaduvur Thillai; Harini Nilakantan

A kirtanam is a composition extolling the virtues of an individual, God's or Historical characters. The joyful and happy dance of Lord Siva at Thillai (Chidambaram) is described in this beautiful kirtanam where the poet appeals to the Lord of Dance to relieve everyone of their difficulties and anxieties.

Those who surrender at His feet will not have the fear of death. The lines further move on to describe the uniqueness of the form of the Lord of Dance - Nataraja. The different aspects of the Body of the Lord each signify an important mythical event, and these aspects are depicted elaborately by the dancer through movement.

– ACT VI –

MITRA: A CELEBRATION OF FRIENDSHIP

Hold a true friend with both your hands.

– Nigerian proverb

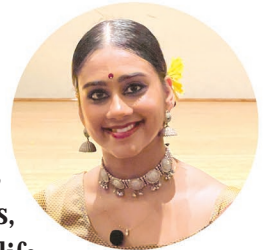
Shared laughter, comforting touch, strengthening grip, shoulder to cry on... friendship is the language of the heart, a communion of souls. It is the foundation of all relationships, sustaining every human being through the smiles and tears of life.

Produced and presented by the Kalapriya Center for the Performing Arts, Chicago, MITRA, A CELEBRATION OF FRIENDSHIP, showcases the many facets of the theme from carefree childhood to the care-laden years.

Kalapriya brings together artists from Chicago and India to create this multi-genre production blending theater, dance, music and poetry.

Directed by Gowri Ramnarayan, the show will feature Kavisha Prajapathi and Bhavya Kumaran, of the Nrithya Sangeeth Academy in Naperville.

Mitra is a Sanskrit word which means "friend." It is a combination of the root words, *mi*, which means "destruction," and *tra*, meaning "protective force." The term is best explained as a friend who protects you from harm, guides you through the right path and brings you happiness.





SCENE 1

“SOUTH AND NORTH...”

Chinese, Du Fu (712-770)

Translated by Vikram Seth

South and north of my house lies springtime
water,
And only flocks of gulls come every day.
The flower path is unswept.
No guests.
The gate is open...
You are the first to come this way
The market is far:
My food is nothing special.
The wine, because we are poor, is an old brew –
But if you wish
I'll call my ancient neighbor across the fence
To drink it with us two.

SCENE 2

MOREY AANGAN MEIN

Hindi, Mirabai, (1516-1521)

Come! Play the flute in my courtyard
I will give you toys, play games with you
If only you play the flute in my courtyard
Dance! Dance for me, my sweetheart!
I will sing sweet songs for you
O Lord of Mira! O mountain bearer*!
I lose myself as I surrender to you

*Mountain bearer: he who sheltered people and
livestock under a mountain during a cyclone

SCENE 3

MARAVEN, MARAVEN

Tamil, Kalki Krishnamurthy, (1899-1954)

O blue peacock! Will the king* who swore on his
spear that he would never forget me, forget me
after all? Will he know how my heart aches for
him? How my life diminishes without him?

O you stupid bird! Here I am, waiting for my
beloved to come, and what do you do but
sashay like the swan! Bearing the Lord on your
back as his mount*, have you become so lost
in arrogance as to lose your way?

O my precious bird! With a heart full of
vengeance and malice, perhaps you have fallen
asleep on the way! Wont you have a little pity
for the woman who is spellbound by the Lord
himself?

*King: Murugan, also known as Velan, the God
with the invincible spear

*Mount: Murugan rides and soars on the peacock

SCENE 4 PARIPAHI

Malayalam, Vayaskara Aryan Narayanan Mooss
(1890-1959)

Please protect me, O Lord, the consort of
goddess Lakshmi
Listening to the words of my five husbands,
you got yourself ready to leave at once and
parley with those evil men, the Kauravas.
I am overwhelmed by grief. What I have to say
comes straight from my inmost heart.
Please pity me and listen to me with
compassion.
O Hrishikesha*, Lord of the World, you remove
every kind of distress! Listen to me!
Those cruel men without the least trace of pity
dragged me by the hair into the open court.
O Keshava* of the beautiful locks! Before you
go, take a look at my long tresses hanging
unbound still.

*Hrisheekesha, *Keshava:
Names of the god Krishna

SCENE 5

MOLLIKA BONEY

Bengali, Rabindranath Tagore, (1861- 1941)

When the jasmine wood in my heart
bore its first buds
I strung the blooms and offered them to you
At that time, O my friend!
Young dawn twinkled with dew drops
And my jasmine garland shone ruby red

O my friend! Even today, at this very moment
The music in the jasmine wood has not ended
Will you not come?

O jasmine wood! Your flowers have started
wilting now!
As if they may scatter at any moment!
O my friend! Speak out what is left in your heart!

SCENE 6

BAARE PANDURANGA

Marathi, Tukaram, (1608- 1650)

O Panduranga*! When will you come to meet me
I am desolate without you
I cannot see anyone but you as my friend
I want to grab your feet (then you can't run
away)
I want to offer myself to you
When will you meet me bearer of the discus*?
Says Tuka, please fulfill my wish
O Narayana*! Come running to me!

*Panduranga: the deity (Krishna) in the temple
in Pandharpur town

*Discus: the weapon of the god Krishna

*Narayana: Krishna is the avatar of the god
Vishnu or Narayana

SCENE 7

A STYLE OF LOVING

English, Vikram Seth (1952-)

Light now restricts itself
To the top half of trees;
The angled sun
Slants honey-coloured rays
That lessen to the ground
As we bike through
The corridor of Palm Drive.
We two
Have reached a safety the years
Can claim to have created:
Unconsummated, therefore
Unjaded, unsated.
Picnic, movie, ice-cream;
Talk; to clear my head
Hot buttered rum - coffee for you;
And so not to bed.

And so, we have set the question
Aside, gently.
Were we to become lovers
Where would our best friends be?
You do not wish, nor I
To risk again
This savoured light for noon's
High joy or pain.

SCENE 8

ON FRIENDSHIP

Arabic & English, Kahlil Gibran
(1883-1931)

Your friend is your needs answered.
For you come to him with your
hunger, and you seek him for peace.

And when he is silent your heart
ceases not to listen to his heart
For without words, in friendship,
all thoughts, all desires,
all expectations are fulfilled.

And let there be no purpose in friendship
save the deepening of the spirit.
And let your best be for your friend.

If he must know the ebb of your tide,
let him know its flood also.
For what is your friend that you should
seek him with hours to kill?

Seek him always with hours to live.
For it is his to fill your need
but not your emptiness.
And in the sweetness of
friendship

let there be laughter and
sharing of pleasures.
For in the dew of little things
the heart finds its morning
and is refreshed.





The Kalapriya Foundation, Center for Indian Performing Arts, is an integrated Indian performing arts organization located in Chicago. It is networked to contemporary Indian performing arts and artists in Chicago, USA, India, and around the world, providing a more holistic understanding of South Asian culture to its audiences.

Founded to serve the Indian diaspora in 1994, Kalapriya became a 501(c)3 foundation in 2000. Kalapriya has kept pace with the changing demographics of the city, always staying focused on the needs of its most underserved citizens.

The mission of the Kalapriya Foundation today is to serve all Chicagoans. Rooted in the Indian performing arts, Kalapriya builds bridges between the performing arts and our contemporary lives. It offers classes in classical dance and music, summer camps, after school programs and community events at its facility in the South Loop. Kalapriya also offers unique programs at Chicago’s public and private schools and stage performances at public and private venues in Chicago.

Kalapriya’s artistic vision is to produce and present works to address current issues on the global challenges of migration, intolerance, violence, hate crimes, gender discrimination and climate change.

Kalapriya’s programs are predicated on creating community bonds and cross-cultural understanding. Connecting all Chicagoans, not just those of South Asian descent, to diversity in arts and culture is an important goal for Kalapriya. Kalapriya’s performing arts programs brings to life the diversity and cohesion between cultural communities highlighting their shared values, and common humanity. We all work for a just and compassionate Chicago.

Thank you to our Sponsors and Partners



Kalapriya Center for Indian Performing Arts
2101 S. Wabash Avenue, Suite 1 | Chicago, Illinois 60616
www.kalapriya.org