



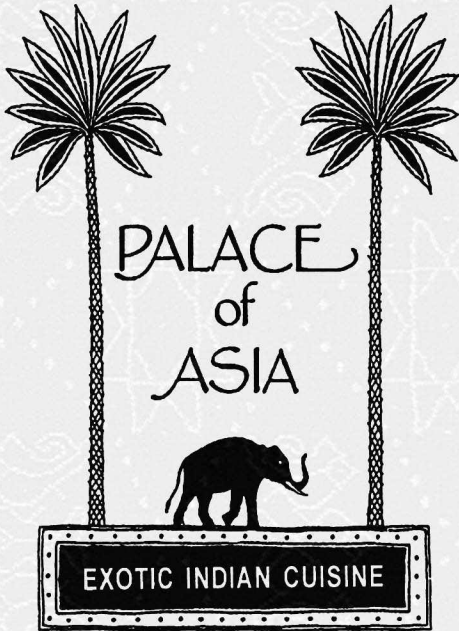
SRUTI - The India Music and Dance Society
in collaboration with
Montgomery County Community College



The Nrityagram Dance Ensemble

March 27 2010

Montgomery County Community College Science Theater



**285 Commerce Dr
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PA 19034**

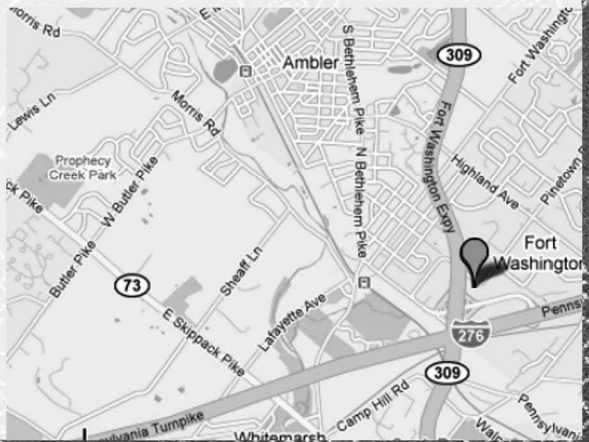
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SRUTI- The India Music and Dance Society in collaboration with Montgomery County Community College is pleased to present the acclaimed Nrityagram Dance Ensemble in the Greater Philadelphia region after a gap of 7 years. The ensemble has performed to critical acclaim in New York and Washington D.C. in past years. This evening's performance is the only one in the North East for this season.

Odissi traces its origins back to antiquity like other forms of Indian classical dance. Odissi may well claim to be the earliest classical Indian dance style on the basis of archaeological evidence, the foremost being the *Rani Gumpha* caves dating back to the second century B.C.E. The *Natya Sastra* speaks of the existence of the *Odhra-Magadhi* dance style which has been identified as the precursor of present day Odissi. Subsequent to a dark period in the beginning of the 20th century during which the ancient dance forms of India went into near extinction, the revival and the popularizing of the practice of Odissi generated great interest in the 1950's. There were a number of illustrious names associated with the renaissance- Guru Deba Prasad Das, Guru Mayadhar Raut, Guru Pankaj Charan Das, Guru Kelu Charan Mahapatra to name a few.

All classical Indian dance forms include both a pure rhythmic component (*nritta*) and a narrative component (*abhinaya*). The repertoire includes a number of compositions wherein the dancer uses a palette of facial expression, hand gestures, body movements and the dance technique to interpret the rich mythology, literary and poetic works. The Odissi repertoire continues to evolve and has been enriched by compositions in both the *nritta* and the *abhinaya* segments.

SRUTI- The India Music and Dance Society is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization based in the Philadelphia area and founded in 1986. Sruti's principal mission is to promote and present Indian classical music and dance. In addition Sruti also seeks to educate the Philadelphia community at large about Indian arts. Sruti is a volunteer-run organization. Its leadership comprises of an elected Board of Directors and several committees. Sruti publishes an annual magazine *Sruti Ranjani* and a periodical, *Sruti Notes*.

During the past twenty three years, SRUTI has grown from presenting three to four concerts a year to presenting eight to ten concerts a year. All this has been made possible with recognition and funding from many granting agencies and corporations in addition to a loyal and appreciative audience. SRUTI has received generous grants from private foundations and public organizations including the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, the Philadelphia Foundation, Dance Advance and Philadelphia Music Project (funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts), the Stockton-Rush Bartol Foundation, Sam Fels Foundation and the Philadelphia Inquirer and Daily News.

The Science Center Theater has been made available by Montgomery County Community College. The office of Cultural Affairs has worked closely with the production manager of Nrityagram Dance Ensemble to orchestrate the level of sound and lighting required for the presentation.

ODISSI

The temple looks out at a turbulent sea. For centuries, its walls have danced a prayer to the rising sun. In magnificent ruins like these, there is evidence that the ancient dance form known as Odissi was performed in Orissa as far back as the 2nd century BC - a sacred ritual dedicated to the gods. This makes it one of the oldest dance traditions in the world. Sinuous forms, languorous limbs and rapt expressions frozen in stone tell tales of a past filled with dance, music, myth and legend.

Odissi is characterized by sensuousness and lyricism. With movements that reflect the motifs of Orissa temple sculpture, it captures drum rhythms, melodies, as well as the poetic meaning of songs taken from the vast canon of Oriya music. It speaks of love and union, between human and divine, transporting viewers to enchanted worlds.

NRITYAGRAM

At Nrityagram dance village, dance is a way of life. The founder, Protima Gauri - an exquisite Odissi dancer herself - converted ten acres of farmland into an ideal setting for the study, practice and teaching of classical dance. Reminiscent of ancient ashrams where gurus imparted not only technique but also a philosophy of being, it is a creative space where dancers, musicians and choreographers live together, sharing their skills and developing their art. The dancers study yoga, meditation, martial arts as well as Sanskrit, mythology and literature. As knowledge passes from guru to disciple, the continuity of the classical arts is ensured.

The outside world, too, is an integral part of Nrityagram. Choreographers, movement specialists, sculptors, painters, writers, musicians and theatre people from all over the world, frequently visit the village to perform and give workshops and seminars on their art. Nrityagram's proudest achievement is its annual spring festival, *Vasantahabba*, an all night performance of music and dance, the roster of which includes some of the greatest names in India, attended by over forty thousand enthusiastic spectators streaming in from surrounding villages - and beyond.

The Nrityagram Dance Ensemble is regarded as one of the foremost dance companies of India. Since 1996, the year of their life-changing New York debut, they have toured the US annually. They have performed at sold-out shows from New York to Hawaii and Bozeman, MT to Key West, FL.

In '03 and '04, their soloists were invited to perform at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival (at Dance Base - National Center for Dance). In addition, the Ensemble has performed in Denmark, Holland, Portugal, the Middle-east, Singapore, Japan, etc.

Although steeped in and dedicated to ancient practice, Nrityagram dancers are also involved in carrying Indian dance into the twenty-first century. Thanks to grants from the National Dance Project of the New England Foundation for the Arts and most recently, the Joyce Theater, they not only develop new work, which explores creative ways to expand on tradition, but also are able to commission music from leading composers of Indian classical music, like Pandit Raghunath Panigrahi of Orissa, and the brothers Ganesh Kumaresh from south India.

Their first full-length production, *Sri - In Search of the Goddess*, premiered in New Delhi in 2001 and in the US in 2002. It was made possible by the Doris Duke Fund for Dance of the National Dance Project. *Sri - In Search of the Goddess* toured the United States extensively in 2002 – 2003 to great critical acclaim.

The next production, *Ansh*, which premiered in Denver in 2005, consisted of a re-conception of a typical Odissi recital, which normally progresses from *mangalacharan* (an invocation), through *pallavi* (pure dance) and traditional *abhinaya* (narrative dance), to *moksh* ('dance of liberation'). Included in the US Tour 2005 was a week long run at the Joyce Theater, New York.

Sacred Space, which was made possible by the Doris Duke Fund for Dance of the National Dance Project, premiered in Chennai in December 2005. *Sacred Space* was awarded the best production of the season by the prestigious Music Academy, Chennai and toured the United States for six months in 2006, including stops at Spoleto festival, Jacobs Pillow Dance Festival, etc.

The newest production, *Pratima: Reflection* has been commissioned by the Joyce Theater's Stephen and Cathy Weinroth Fund for New Work. The world premiere of *Pratima: Reflection* was in February 2008 at the Joyce Theater, New York. *Vibhakti* from *Pratima: Reflection*, was listed in "The 10 best dance performances of 2008" by Joan Acocella, The New Yorker (12/9/2008)

CREDITS

The Nrityagram Dance Ensemble

Manasi Tripathy
Rasmi Raj
Pavithra Reddy
Bijayini Satpathy
Surupa Sen

Music Composer

Pandit Raghunath Panigrahi
Assisted by Srinibas Satpathy

Rhythm Composer

Dhaneswar Swain
Surupa Sen

Costumes

Ghulam Rasool Tailor

Lighting Director

Lynne Fernandez

Artistic Director/Choreographer

Surupa Sen

Executive Director

Lynne Fernandez

US Representative

Pentacle / DanceWorks Inc.
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Nrityagram – The Dance Village

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Sruti gratefully acknowledges the support rendered by Helen Haynes, Brent Woods and their team at Montgomery County Community College through the planning and execution stages of this presentation.

Thanks are due to Sophie Myrtil-McCourty, David Claps and the team at Pentacle for the professional interaction during the contract process and for working out of the logistics.

PROGRAM NOTES- PRATIMA: REFLECTION

PRAARAMBHA (hymn of creation)

At first, there was but *ONE*.

That *ONE* thing, breathless, breathed by its own nature,
beyond that, there was nothingness.

From within the depths of darkness engulfing darkness,
emerged the first seed of desire to become.

It grew out of its own warmth and transversely spread its cosmic rays.

The great sages saw this in their mind's eye.

Who knew the way? Who then declared from whence it came?

(Even the Gods came after.)

The *ONE*, from whom creation unfolded
knows

or perhaps, knows not.

(Translation of *Naasadiya Sukta*; Rig - Veda X. 129)

Dancers: *Manasi Tripathy, Pavithra Reddy, Rasmi Raj, Bijayini Satpathy, Surupa Sen*

CHHAYA (image)

A submission to the inherently lyrical form of Odissi, this dance explores the various
dimensions of its abstract vocabulary.

Images

of the dance and the dancer.

Never separate, one enhancing the other.

The reflections unite, multiply, gently embellish themselves.

And grow languidly in the sensuous realms of Odissi.

Dancers: *Bijayini Satpathy, Surupa Sen, Manasi Tripathy, Rasmi Raj, Pavithra Reddy.*

MUGDHA (lost in love)

An excerpt from '*Sacred Space*'

A poem from the *Geet Govind* is interpreted through facial expressions (*bhava*) and
gestures (*mudra*). Written in Sanskrit in the twelfth century by the saint poet Jayadeva,
the *Geet Govind* is a romantic ballad about the immortal love of Radha and Krishna. It is
a song of love and longing that reflects the Vaishnava belief, that all of humankind is a
feminine energy (Radha) constantly seeking union with the one male godhead (Krishna).
Annoyed with Krishna, who flirts with other women, Radha is in a state of jealousy and
yearning.

The *Sakhi* (friend) brings a message to Radha, that Krishna awaits her. She says:

In the dark of the night

on the banks of the Yamuna river...

adorned with wildflowers and jewels,

Krishna waits.

His flute calls out your name,

as he wanders through the forest caressing the breeze

for your touch.

He prepares a bed of love.

and his eyes search anxiously

at every stir of a leaf.

Do not linger any further, oh sensuous-hipped one
cast away the traitorous bells from your ankles
and drape yourself with the night.
Hasten to your beloved,
he awaits you.

Dancers: Pavithra Reddy, Manasi Tripathy, Rasmi Raj

INTERMISSION

VIBHAKTA (the division) **

In the union and the separation of the male and female principle lies the secret of all creation. It is believed that creation begins when, with the power of yoga, the ONE splits into two and becomes Ardhanareshwara (half-man half-woman). In this form both halves live in perfect symphony - at once distinct and separate as well as harmonious and blended. Each acknowledges and celebrates the existence of the other.

"Her body is the colour of a *champa* blossom,
his is like camphor;
her body is sprinkled with musk-vermillion powder,
his is smeared with the ash of funeral-pyres;
she is adorned with anklets and bracelets of gold,
he wears a multitude of glistening snakes;
she wears a garland of *mandaar* flowers,
he wears a garland of skulls;
she is draped in silks,
he is clad by the sky;
her hair is dark like the monsoon clouds,
his matted locks flash with lightening.
Her dance creates the universe.
His *Tandava* dissolves everything.
I bow to the mother of the universe.
I bow to the father of the universe.
Om namah Shivaa.
Om namah Shivah."

(*Ardhanareshwara Stotra* attributed to Shri Adi Shankara)

Ardhanareshwara Stotra is a hymn sung by a devotee. We interpret it as a poem, where *Shivah*, the male principle, sings his adoration to his beloved other half. And *Shivaa*, the female aspect, describes the glory of her magnificent counterpart.

It becomes at once, a love song and a celebration of the 'duality' of the human spirit.

Dancers: Surupa Sen, Bijayini Satpathy

** Listed in "The 10 best dance performances of 2008" - Joan Acocella, The New Yorker (12/9/2008)

AARATI (offering of light)

A salutation to the presiding deities of Odissi dance - the goddess Vimala and Lord Jagannath.

"From you comes all life; and into you we must all return".

Dancers: Bijayini Satpathy, Pavithra Reddy, Rasmi Raj, Manasi Tripathy

Artist Biography

SURUPA SEN (Artistic Director, choreographer, soloist)

was the first student at Nrityagram, where she began her Odissi training with the late body language genius and architect of Odissi, Guru Kelucharan Mahapatra. She also studied with Protima Gauri, founder of Nrityagram, and *Abhinaya* with Smt. Kalanidhi Narayanan.

As a child she studied Bharatanatyam, to which she attributes her pre-occupation with form and line. Attracted to choreography from her first exposure to western makers of dance, she participated in the International Choreographer's Residency at the American Dance Festival in 2000, thanks to a grant from the Asian Cultural Council.

Surupa has performed in solo recital and ensemble all over India, North America, Europe, the Middle East and the Far-East.

Her first evening length work *Sri: In Search of the Goddess* (2000), consisted of both a non-traditional suite (*Night, Fire, & Dialogue with Death*) & a re-working of traditional dance (*Srimati, Srimayi, & Sri Devi*).

Her next production *Ansh* (2004) was a re-working of a typical Odissi recital, which toured extensively including a run at the Joyce Theater, New York in 2005.

Sacred Space (2006), a show based on Temple Architecture and its relationship to dance, used an expanded traditional Odissi vocabulary. For *Sacred Space*, Surupa received the award for best choreography from the Music Academy, Chennai.

Pratima: Reflection is an evening-length work that explores the relationship between the dancer and her dance as she seeks to find an image of herself through the essential truths – of Creation, Contemplation, Separation and the Duality of the human spirit.

She received the Raza Foundation Award for Excellence in Dance in 2007. And the Yagnaraman Award for Excellence in Dance, from Sri Krishna Gana Sabha, Chennai in 2008.

Surupa is Artistic Director and choreographer at Nrityagram.



BIJAYINI SATPATHY (Director of Odissi gurukul, soloist)

joined the Orissa Dance Academy in Bhubaneswar at the age of 7, where she trained for 13 years under the tutelage of Guru Kanduri Charan Behera, Guru Pagal Swain, Bichitrananda Swain & Aruna Mohanty.

An insatiable thirst for knowledge led her to Nrityagram in 1993 where she flourished under the guidance of Protima Gauri, and through her collaboration with Surupa Sen.



At Nrityagram she gained from the intense concentration on dance that it promotes, as well as from interaction with other practitioners of performing arts, to which she attributes her own artistic growth.

Bijayini has performed alone, and with the ensemble, all over the world and has received national and international recognition including the 2003 *Mahari Award* given to the best Odissi dancer of the year and the *Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar 2007* given by the Sangeet Natak Akademi to the best in performing arts in India.

As Director of the Odissi Gurukul, Bijayini works on creating new techniques for Odissi dance training, and extending the vocabulary of the traditional form.

PAVITHRA REDDY (dancer) came as part of the outreach programme in 1990, from a village near Nrityagram. She has learned Odissi under the tutelage of Surupa Sen and Bijayini Satpathy and been a part of the ensemble since 1993. She had her solo debut in 2003 & now teaches dance in our village and city outreach programme.

RASMI RAJ (dancer) studied at Orissa Dance Academy in Bhubaneswar for 5 years before she came to Nrityagram for advanced training. Here, she has learned with Surupa Sen and Bijayini Satpathy. Rasmi has been with Nrityagram for six years and is the youngest dancer in the ensemble.

MANASI TRIPATHY (dancer) is from Srujan dance academy in Bhubaneswar, where she trained for 11 years before coming to Nrityagram. Now she trains under Surupa Sen and Bijayini Satpathy. She is the newest dancer in the ensemble.

LYNNE FERNANDEZ (lighting director, Executive Director Nrityagram) has been with Nrityagram since 1993. Among the first practicing light professionals in India, she has worked as actress and light designer with leading directors like Barry John, Joy Michael, Ranjit Kapoor, and Lillete Dubey. Her work in theatre has also been featured internationally – at the Edinburgh Fringe festival, the Westend (London) and off-Broadway, New York.

Of her work with the ensemble, Surupa Sen says “she understands dance intuitively and is able to create the visual space that enhances our work. Her contribution is the luminosity, the look that has become characteristic of the ensemble”.

As Executive Director of Nrityagram, Lynne is responsible for administration, fund raising, project development, amongst other things. Her recent projects include building a dance facility with a studio, auditorium, exhibition space and physiotherapy unit. She has also overseen the emergence of the ensemble onto the international arena.



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Spring 2010 Concert Series.....

Saturday March 27, 2010
Odissi Style Indian Classical Dance:
The Nrityagram Dance Ensemble

Saturday April 17, 2010
South Indian Classical Vocal Concert: P. Unnikrishnan

Saturday May 15, 2010
Special D.K. Pattamal Memorial Concert
South Indian Classical Vocal Concert: Vijay Siva

Saturday June 5, 2010
South Indian Classical Instrumental Concert- Veena :
Nirmala Rajasekar

www.sruti.org for details

Fall 2010 Concert Series.....

Saturday September 18, 2010
South Indian Classical Instrumental Concert- Violin Duo:
L. Subramaniam & Ambi Subramaniam

Saturday October 9, 2010
Bharatanatyam Style Indian Classical Dance:
Shijith Nambiar & Parvati Menon

Saturday October 23, 2010
North Indian Classical Vocal Concert:
Veena Sahasrabudhe

Saturday November 13, 2010
South Indian Classical Vocal Concert: Malladi Brothers

Saturday December 11, 2010
Composer's Day & General Body Meeting