MUSIC ENSEMBLE

Gajendran Ganesan
mridangam

Sai Sabapathy
vocal

Kadapa Raghavendran
flute

Radhakrishnan Selvaprasad
violin

Thanks to our generous donors!

ARIZONA COMMISSION ON THE ARTS

THANK YOU!

Guest Artists
C.S.M. Subramanyam
Mary Fitzgerald
Karion Houston
Jisun Myung

Dansense Team
Sai Pratyusha Gutti, Coley Curry, Naini Mandala, Niveditha Muthukrishnan

Hospitality & Support: Dansense Parents
PR/Liaising: Rajitha Bharatan
Lighting: Esteban Rosales
Videography: Dances with Tech

CBSL
Dramaturge: Karion Houston
Costume: Manasi Tripathy
Lighting Design: Aarohi Ghorpade

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dansense
NRTYABODHA

Annual Recital

featuring *Salangai* Recipients

September 16, 2023
ASU Kerr Cultural Center
5-7pm

PROGRAM

1 Opening Words
Music Ensemble & Students

2 Salangai Presentation
To: Jivantika, Tanvi, Vijeta

3 Purvaranga
Music composition: Dr. Padma Subramanyam
Choreography: Sai Pratyusha Gutti
Dancers: Jivantika, Yashvi

4 Jatiswaram
Hindolam, Adi
Choreography: N. Srikanth, Arrangement: Sumana
Dancers: Tanvi, Vijeta, Mira

5 Aadum Chidambaramo
Gopalakrishna Bharati, Behag, Adi
Choreography: N. Srikanth
Dancer: Jivantika

6 Maadu Meikum Kanne
Oothakadu Venkata Subbaiyer, Senchuruti, Tisra Adi
Choreography: Sumana
Dancers: Tanvi, Vijeta

7 Tillana
Poornima Rao w/Sumana, Natakurinji, Adi
Choreography: Sumana
Dancers: Yashvi, Jivantika, Mira, Tanvi, Vijeta

8 Certificate Presentation

9 Bhagavat Mela Theater presentation by CSM Subramanyam

10 Carnatic Music by Ensemble

11 *Changing Bodies, Shifting Landscapes* (CBSL)
A work-in-progress by Dansense Collective:
Rajitha Bharatan, Coley Curry, Mary Fitzgerald, Sai Pratyusha Gutti, Karion Houston, Sumana Sen Mandala, Niveditha Muthukrishnan, Jisun Myung, Mira Thompson, Manasi Tripathy, Yashvi Velidi

Jivantika,

whose persistence and intention helps to draw the world into focus...

Jivantika is growing into a dancer with a natural precision in technique and beauty in form that comes from the hard work of taking feedback from class and incorporating it into her practice and always ready for the next step.

May 2018

Tanvi,

whose energy and curiosity impact the spaces she enters...

Tanvi is finding the connections between her propensity to observe - question and her dance, infusing it with an impressionistic quality that keeps pushing the bounds of creativity.

Nov 2019

Vijeta,

whose patience and strength bring grounding to those around her...

Vijeta is a quiet listener to her environment whose discoveries manifest in her dance when she delivers rhythmic patterns with deceptive ease and communicates story with an inner smile.

Nov 2019

BHAGAVATA MELA DANCE DRAMA TRADITION

Bhagavata Mela is a tradition of dramatic performance that was brought from Andhra Pradesh to Tamil Nadu 400 years ago to be performed by members of bhagavathar families. It used to be performed in 5 villages, but is now practiced in only 3, of which Saliyamangalam has the oldest and longest continuous tradition, completing 378 years this year. Bhagavata Mela dramas are performed only by male dancers/artists, who also don the female roles. During the time of Narasimha Jayanti around May/June every year, these dancers dedicate themselves to the tradition outside of their professional lives. Bhagavata Mela is an unfathomable container for Carnatic music, dance, drama and Telegu literature traditions.

Today, we are fortunate to have Sri Subramanyam with us to share the tradition of which he has been a part for 55 years. He will perform excerpts from Prahlada Charitram, one of the main dramas in the Bhagavata Mela repertoire. The story goes:

Prahlada is the son of rakshasa (demon) king Hiranyakashipu and his queen Leelavathi. While still in the womb, Prahlada learnt all about the god Vishnu and became his ardent devotee. This was a problem because Vishnu had killed the king's brother and was his sworn enemy. And the king was looking for revenge. When Prahlada still insisted on praising Vishnu, his father became angry and tortured him, even trying to kill him. The queen and mother was stuck between the vengeful father and devoted son. She tried to reconcile both, but in vain. Then, father confronted son, saying, "I've conquered the universe, and no one dares to oppose me. Who will help you now?" Prahlada is sure that Vishnu will save him. When his father taunts him, "Where is your lord? Show me!" Prahlada replies "He is everywhere, within you, within me."

To see what happens next, come to the village of Saliyamangalam in Tamil Nadu during the Bhagavata Mela festival. All are welcome. Contact C.S.M. Subramanyam by email to learn more: sureshdance1@gmail.com

Changing Bodies, Shifting Lansdcapes is a collaborative work to reflect on changes in the female body that occur throughout life. This dance—part of a larger work in progress—specifically refers to the first menstrual period or menarche and is based in our own experiences and most recently a conversation in Dansense class about puberty. We shared our own stories of how we experience menstruation, some of the customs around it (including isolation and shame), the reasoning given us for them, and the inequities due to it. These are not unique to any one culture and need to be considered if our society is to be a safe and thriving environment for everyone. *Changing Bodies, Shifting Lansdcapes* is about speaking up, being inclusive of different menstruating bodies, and welcoming conversation with all genders.

The work has a specific form and process. The first section is set choreography guided by karana movements, which are part of the advanced course in Bharata-Nrityam at Dansense-Nrtyabodha. These movement choices came from stories of the shame and embarrassment of blood stains and the discomfort of puberty changes. The movements are also inspired by the confidence that comes from the kindness and understanding of friends and strangers, female and otherwise. The second section is real-time composition. In a sense, moving from the predetermined form of the first half to the open score of the second is representative of how we can expand our experiences and explore new ways of being/relating as women across generations, cultures, and genders.

Conversations through the Critical Response Process with future collaborators, including boys and men, have contributed to this iteration. Ganesan, Sai, Raghavendran, and Selvaprasad, the music ensemble from India, have played a vital role in this iteration, as well. They listened and thought with us to create a music score with extensive improvisations along with Jisun, their newest colleague on piano. The music not only reflects but enhances the movements and stories they contain. Dansense is blessed with this long-term association, which has yielded many musical splendors in its programming over the last decade.

This collision of creative energy among such a varied group of artists is the driving force of *Changing Bodies, Shifting Lansdcapes*.

THE COLLABORATORS

- Coley is a Filipinx dance artist, storyteller, facilitator and filmmaker. She has been a driving force for Dansense since 2019.
- Jisun started learning piano when she was 3 - her mom forced her to do that. Now she's very grateful because playing for dance is one of the most beautiful things that she experiences in life.
- Karion is a movement artist that blends together several dance genres in their freestyle movement. Movement is a way of life in which they hope to live and dance fully.
- Manasi was trained in Odissi dance under her neighbor and legendary Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra from childhood. She has more than 35 years of dance experience. Now dance is her identity.
- Mary is a contemporary modern dance artist who is insatiably curious about movement—in all its forms—and collaborative art making. She is a dance faculty member at Arizona State University.
- Mira is an experienced Bharatanatyam dancer and is currently in her first year of teaching English at IDW Middle School. She has a strong passion for the arts and is honored to be performing here today.
- Niveditha is a Bharatanatyam dancer and is also pursuing Bharathanrityam under the mentorship of Sumana Sen Mandala. Niveditha is a Health Scientist by profession.
- Rajitha is a Bharatanatyam dancer and a Physical Therapist. As artistic director of Omkara School of dance, she continues to actively learn, perform, teach, and collaborate with local artists.
- Sai Pratyusha is a Bharatanatyam dancer and is training in Bharatanrityam under Sumana Sen Mandala. Working with Sumana enabled her to widen her horizon by participating in community projects and go beyond the tradition. By profession, she is a Signal Processing Software Development Engineer at Cirrus Logic.
- Sumana is a Bharata-Nrityam artist. She is filled with gratitude to be surrounded by such generous artists-colleagues who are instrumental in realizing the Dansense-Nrtyabodha a Collective.
- Yashvi is 13 and has been learning dance for the last 7 years. She is an active participant in Dansense productions and finds ways to intertwine her many identities with her pursuit of dance.