

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Third International Dance Conference, Oct 1-2, 2011 by Samskriti
“INDIAN DANCE IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT”

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1: INDIA HOUSE HOUSTON

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM: Registration and Coffee in the Foyer

9:00 AM -1:00 PM: Conference Presentations – Indian Dance in a Global Context

- 9:00 AM: Welcome Address by Thara Narasimhan, President, Samskriti
- 9:05 AM: Lighting of the lamp by Chhaya Arora
- 9:10 AM: Introduction of Chief Guest by Rathna Kumar, Artistic Director of Samskriti
- 9:15 AM: Remarks by Chief Guest, Consul General Hon Sanjiv Arora
- 9:25 AM: Introduction of Anuradha Subramanian, Conference Convener
- 9:30 AM: Conference overview by the Convener, and introduction of Keynote Speaker
- 9:40 AM: Keynote address by *Padma Shri* Leela Samson
- 10:05 AM: Presentation by Anita Ratnam
- 10:30 AM: Presentation by Lata Pada
- 10:55 AM: Presentation by Uttara Asha Coorlawala
- 11:20 AM: Presentation by Daniel Phoenix Singh
- 12:15 PM: Presentation by Mythili Prakash
- 12:35 PM: Wrap-up by Rathna Kumar
- 12:45 PM: End of Oct 1 Morning Conference Presentations

12:45 PM - 2:00 PM: Lunch - India House

2:00 – 4:00 PM – Panel Discussion by Texas Teachers

“INDIAN DANCE IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT – The Texas Connection”

Participants from outside the Houston Area:

Bana Ramanath (San Antonio) & Akhila Rao (Dallas)

Participants from the Houston Area:

Anisha Rajesh, Darshi Ramachandra, Indrani Parthasarathy, Lavanya Rajagopalan, Padmini Chari, Shipra Mehrotra, Uma Nagarsheth,

8:00 PM: CULLEN PERFORMANCE HALL, WORTHAM CENTER

Houston Downtown Theater District

FEATURED DANCE PERFORMANCE OF *SPANDA* BY THE KALAKSHETRA REPERTORY COMPANY

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2: ANJALI CENTER, SUGAR LAND

8:30 – 9:00 AM: Registration and Coffee

9:00 AM to 12:00 PM: Workshop on “Creative Dance”, Facilitated by Dr. Anita Ratnam and Dr. Uttara Asha Coorlawala

12:00 – 1:00 PM: Lunch

1:00 PM: End of Conference

SPANDA

By

THE KALAKSHETRA REPERTORY COMPANY

Choreographed by Leela Samson

The Dancers

K.P. Rakesh

Girish Madhu

Viraja Arvind

K.R. Sreenath

V.K. Ramya

Sruthy Jayan

K.V. Arun

Christopher Gurusamy

Murugan Krishnan - Lighting engineer

The Kalakshetra Repertory Company has performed to wide acclaim around the world and continues to uphold the highest standards of performance. Each member of the Kalakshetra repertory company is an accomplished and creative solo performer, a result of the rigorous theoretical and practical arts training they receive at Kalakshetra. The artists present riveting programs of Indian classical dance and music. Their repertoire includes mythology based dance-dramas, classical and contemporary Bharatanatyam compositions, as well as programs of the varied folk dances of India.

Kalakshetra productions have come to be recognized worldwide for their impeccable technique and aesthetic. Senior dancers and musicians of the institute continued to add to the already vast repertoire. They have all completed their post graduate diplomas from Kalakshetra Foundation and are currently employed as artists in the Kalakshetra Repertory. All of them are artistes who have performed in prominent festivals in India & abroad.

Cullen Performance Hall, Wortham Center, Houston, Texas
8 PM – Saturday, October 1, 2011

About the Artists and the Conference Speakers



Leela Samson received the impulses for her growth as a dancer from Kalakshetra, the College of Fine Arts in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. She adheres to the mould of the Kalakshetra technique yet grew out of its binding, believing as she does that adherence to any school is a point of reference only. She is however deeply influenced by Rukmini Devi, the founder of that institute and its philosophy. Leela joined Kalakshetra in 1961. She left the institute in 1975 as one of its lead dancers. Rukmini Devi's passing away in February 1986, led to the creation of the Kalakshetra Foundation, on whose first board she served as a member for a three year term. As a dancer, her seemingly understated delineation conceals a powerful and inspired inner source, which gradually unfolds before the viewer. She is a virtuoso performer

and sensitive interpreter of the nuances of this form. She enjoys the reputation of being a dancer who has excellent form in nritta and who has sensitive abhinaya. Leela has traveled extensively and performed at leading festivals of dance. Two significant documentary films have been made on Leela Samson – 'Sanchari' by Arun Khopkar and 'The Flowering Tree' by Ein Lall. Leela is the recipient of the Sanskriti Award in 1982, the Padmashri Award in 1990, the Nritya Choodamani Award in 1997 and the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 2000. In March 2005, she was offered the opportunity to head her alma mater, a responsibility she accepted. She took over as Director of the Kalakshetra Foundation on 6th May 2005. In August 2010, she was appointed Chairman, Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi by the President of India. In April 2011, the Central Government appointed her as Chairperson of the Central Board of Film Certification.



Dr. Anita Ratnam is a well known icon in Indian performing arts. For over four decades she has shared her amazing dance and theatre skills in 25 countries around the world in over 1500 performances. A passionate modernist, Anita creates themes from her immediate environment and weaves the traditional alongside the modern with her eclectic view of life and art.

An award winning dancer, Anita specializes in themes that portray women from ancient myths as well as powerful women from her own life. Her grandmother, mother and daughter occupy a prominent place in her retelling of mythology from a contemporary viewpoint.

An MA in Theatre and Television, Anita has been a TV producer in New York City, a film actress, writer and an arts entrepreneur for the past twenty years.

Her many initiatives on stage and internet have impacted the culture industry in this country and created a template for many arts initiatives. Anita holds a PhD in Women's Studies and is currently engaged in a retelling of the ancient epic RAMAYANA from a feminist perspective.

About the Artists and the Conference Speakers



Uttara Asha Coorlawala, (Ph.D. New York University) has been teaching technique and theoretical dance courses at Long Island University's C.W. Post Campus, Barnard College (Columbia University) and at Princeton University, New Jersey. She served as editor and as member of the Editorial and Executive Boards for *Dance Research Journal*.

Born in Hyderabad and educated in India, Uttara studied Hatha Yoga with B.K.S. Iyengar, Siddha Yoga, Bharatanatyam (Kalakshetra style) and studies in Ancient Indian Culture at St. Xavier's Heras Indological Institute, all in Mumbai. She transferred to Smith College, Massachusetts, and then trained in Modern Dance in New York City at Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham studios. In India, she pioneered in what is now a growing trend towards intercultural innovation. Her own choreographic style brought her three disciplines - Modern Dance, Bharata Natyam and Yoga - to the dance stage. As a soloist, she danced throughout India, Europe, East Europe, Japan and the United States, and as a designated cultural representative of India and for the United States.

Coorlawala received the AHRB Dance Research Fellowship for South Asian Dance Research awarded by The Universities of Surrey, U.K. and the School of Oriental and Asian Studies, London; Graduate Research Award from CORD, an organization for dance research and scholarship, with membership worldwide; Kappa Delta Pi, the National Honor Society of Educators for excellence in research; the J.D. Rockefeller IIIrd Fund Fellowship; the Dadabhai Naoroji Lifetime Achievement Award, sponsored jointly by the British and Indian governments and the Homi Bhabha Fellowship in India.



Lata Pada is the Founder and Artistic Director of SAMPRADAYA Dance Creations, an award-winning professional dance company. Originally from India, Lata has made Canada her home. She has had an extensive career as a *Bharatanatyam* soloist. Lata has trained in *Bharatanatyam* under India's distinguished gurus - *Kalaimamani* K. Kalyanasundaram and *Padmabhushan* Kalanidhi Narayanan. Her extensive international dance career includes performances in India, Canada, USA, China, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Colombia, Mexico, Ireland, Austria and Cuba.

Lata holds a Masters in Dance from York University and is an Adjunct Professor in the Graduate Program of Dance at York University. Lata's writing on the transformational power of dance in her life has been featured in the 2011 research book - *Creative Arts in Interdisciplinary Practice - Inquiries for Hope and Change*, and in the 2011 Spring Edition of the *Canadian Theatre Review*.

Lata has received numerous awards and titles. In January 2011, Lata was conferred the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman by the President of India, the highest civilian honor for non-resident Indians. Lata is the first South Asian artist to receive the honor "Order of Canada". She is a founding member of the South Asian Advisory Committee at the Royal Ontario Museum. She currently serves on the Advisory Committees of York University's Faculty of Fine Arts, Centennial College and the Canada Dance Festival, as well as on the Advocacy Committee of the Canadian Dance Assembly.

About the Artists and the Conference Speakers



Daniel Phoenix Singh is the Artistic Director and President of Dakshina/Daniel Phoenix Singh Dance Company. Singh holds an MFA in Dance and a Graduate Certificate in Women's Studies from the University of Maryland. He also holds a Laban Movement Analyst Certificate from the Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies in New York City. He received a baccalaureate degree in Dance and Computer Science at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Singh trained in Bharata Natyam with Guru Meena Telikicherla of Nrityanjali, Maryland for several years.

His works have been the critic's pick in Washington City Paper and The Washington Post, and Voice of America profiled his dance company in the Fall of 2005. His piece, *Songs of My Life*, was a finalist in the Metro DC Dance Awards, and Singh was a finalist for the Mayor's Emerging Artist award in 2006 and 2007. In 2007, he was nominated for the Creative Communities Artist Fellowship in 2007. The company received the Founder's Award for Innovation in Dance in 2007 and the Emerging Group and Excellence in Costume Design in 2008 from the Metro DC Dance Awards.



Young, dynamic **Mythili Prakash** is making waves in the field of Bharata Natyam. Trained by her mother, Bharata Natyam exponent Viji Prakash, Mythili has also had the opportunity to study with several legendary Gurus, including Sri Mahalingam Pillai, Kalyanasundaram Pillai, C.V. Chandrasekhar and Bragha Bessell, and is currently under the tutelage of renowned dance exponent Malavika Sarukkai.

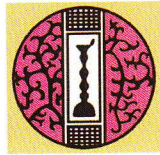
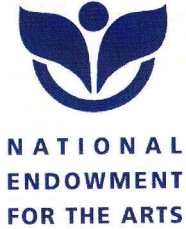
A regular performer in the Music and Dance Season of Chennai since 1990, Mythili has performed as a soloist for some of the most respected arts institutions in India. She has also toured extensively, performing her choreographic works at prestigious venues and Festivals in the United Kingdom, France, Singapore, Canada, and the United States.

Mythili's excellence has been acknowledged through the accolades received from the some of the premiere institutions of culture in India, such as "Nadanamaamani" (Karthik Fine Arts), "Yuva Kala Bharati" (Bharat Kalachar), "Sanskriti Nritya Puraskar" (Sanatan Sangeet Sanskriti), and MGR Best Dancer Award (The Madras Music Academy), to name a few. She is also a recipient of numerous coveted fellowships in the United States for her choreographic works, including the "Creation to Performance" grant from James Irvine Foundation and the "Investing in Artists" Grant from the Center for Cultural Innovation.

Born and raised in Los Angeles, Mythili holds a Bachelor's Degree in Mass Communications from University of California, Berkeley. She is also trained in Modern Dance, and is well versed in Carnatic Vocal music and Nattuvangam.

Acknowledgements

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