

# American Natya Festival 2025



# AMERICAN RAGA BAND

Seema Kasthuri, Premik Russell Tubbs  
Todd Mosby, Prasanna Kasthuri

*Strauss*

STUDIO SERIES

AMERICAN  
RAGA  
BAND



June 27, 2025 / 7:30 PM

Kirkwood Performing Arts Center

210 East Monroe Avenue, Kirkwood, Missouri 63122

[www.metrotix.com](http://www.metrotix.com)

# Foreword

Dear Friends,

This year marks the sweet sixteenth celebration of the American Natya Festival—a milestone that resonates with the vibrance, grace, and hope of a young soul stepping into a bright future. Like a college-bound student preparing for their final ACT and SAT exams, we carry both the excitement of promise and the confidence of purpose.

For those who were there in 2008, when this journey began, the memories still feel as fresh and spirited as day one. Back then, our founding volunteers poured their hearts and strength into shaping a vision. Today, while time may have softened the hands that once labored tirelessly, their hearts remain ever-young—steadfast in their devotion, offering their time, energy, and resources to this noble endeavor. It is this spirit of selfless service that keeps the American Natya Festival moving forward, step by meaningful step.

We are deeply grateful to the St. Louis community for believing in us, supporting us, and walking with us on this path of cultural celebration.

At the heart of it all is our guiding light, Guruji Prasanna Kasthuri. His unwavering commitment to promoting traditional Indian performing arts in the Midwest stands without parallel. A towering figure among national leaders in the arts, Guruji has rightfully been honored with the prestigious *Karnataka Kalashri* and *Missouri Traditional Arts Fellowship* awards—true jewels in the crown of Soorya Performing Arts.

Under his visionary leadership—and with the dedication of an incredible team of board members, families, and dance Gurus from across 16 cities—we proudly completed the historic, nationwide dance competition: American Natya Idol. This is not merely a contest; it is a platform for nurturing the talent, discipline, and artistic spirit of tomorrow's cultural torchbearers. Since 2017, over 3,000 young dancers have found their stage through this initiative.

We are thrilled to welcome hundred of families and dance Gurus to this year's festival and Idol event. Your presence and enthusiasm inspire us. As a next step, we are planning a four-city tour—either this fall or early spring—for our winners, so they may share their artistry with wider audiences and proudly repre-

sent the rich cultural heritage of the Indian diaspora.

As with all great undertakings, we face our share of challenges—especially financial. We humbly request all those who cherish Indian dance and music to support us. Every dollar donated goes directly to sustaining this mission—funding performance opportunities for youth, supporting new productions, covering theater rentals, costumes, and essential organizational needs. You may contribute through our website: [www.natya.org](http://www.natya.org).

Your blessings are our greatest strength. Without the steadfast support of the Soorya family, our generous patrons, the Missouri Arts Council, and every single person who attends our events, this dream would not be possible. To each of you, we offer our heartfelt thanks.

Let the celebrations begin—immerse yourself in the joy, rhythm, and spirit of the 16th American Natya Festival!

Warm regards,

**Board of Directors**

*Soorya Performing Arts*

### **Soorya Performing Arts Board**

President: Nagendra Sanjeeva

Secretary: Dr. Sumithra Sankaranarayanan (Ph.D)

Treasure: Dr. Sriram Srinivasan (Ph.D)

Members: Srilakshmi Vishnubhotla, Sudhapriya Narasimhan,

Sujatha Mohan, Devika Nagaraj, Prabhakar Betnag

Artistic Directors - Prasanna Kasthuri and Seema Kasthuri



**Thanks to Missouri Arts Council for  
supporting this dance festival.**

## Lifetime Achievement Awardees

### Guru Vinitha Subramanian

Guru Smt. Vinitha Subramanian began her dancing career at the tender age of



four under the tutelage of Thirukoshtiyur Nagarathna Ammal. She then went on to be trained in the Thirukoshtiyur and Pandanainallur styles under Shri Radhakrishnan of Bangalore and Madurai S. Jayaraman, She also received a year of Kathakali training under Shri Manoharan,

She has given performances in diverse cities as Ahmedabad, Calcutta, Tirupati, and all over Tamilnadu. After moving to Texas, she founded Natyalaya School of Dance in 1982. Since then, she has taken scores of students through margam training, culminating in their arangetrams. Many of her students have gone on to make their own marks in the field of dance. She also has several dance dramas to her credit: "Agasthya," "Prahala Bhakthi Vijayam," "Nauka Charitram," "Two faces of Shiva," "Aaru Padai Veedu," "Raja Rajeshwari," "Ganga – A River's story," and "Navahavarna – Colors of Number Nine." She has also won several awards, most recently the 2019 Austin Tamil Sangam Kalai Magudam Award, the 2019 Sambhrama Puraskara Award and the 2019 Agni Foundation Distinguished Artist Hall of Fame honor. Under her direction Natyalaya has grown to over 150 students with branches in North Austin, Round Rock, Leander, and East Austin.

### Guru Sujatha Vinjamuri

Sujata Vinjamuri has brought to St.Louis the timeless art Kuchipudi in no small



or compromising manner. A dancer of depth and intellect, Sujata's unique artistry combines elements of aesthetics, devotion and mysticism. Since a tender age, Sujata has been studying the very different styles under the tutelage of many distinguished gurus. She

started Kuchipudi with Ms. Sumathi Kaushal, and later perfected her styles under the personal tutelage of Dr. Vempati Chinna Satyam. Sujata also studied Kathak and Bharatanatyam under the guidance of Guru Gopal Rao and Ms. Uma Rama Rao. She holds a Masters from Osmania University and is currently teaching the Indian dance to over 40 students in her well-established school Kuchipudi Art Academy of Dance St. Louis. Sujata has conceived and produced various themes like Bhagavad Gita, Om Shanti, and Kundalini. She has received high critical acclaim for her performance in her thought-provoking productions, both in USA and India. She has produced a documentary film “The temple and the Swan” a comparison of Kuchipudi and western Ballet dance, which was well received and appreciated by both the western and Indian audience.

## Friday Shows

### Kathak Performance by Maithili Patel



**Maithili Patel** is a Kathak artist and choreographer from New Jersey dedicated to telling stories that celebrate and challenge traditional narratives. Kathak, a storytelling art form, has enabled her to create meaningful experiences for diverse audiences. She continues to explore and expand her movement vocabulary to express contemporary themes, while always striving to honor her roots. Under the mentorship of Guru Dr. Pali Chandra, Maithili has been fortunate to share her work globally, performing at events such as The Dubai Kathak Festival, The London Parliament House of Lords, and The Modhera Dance Festival.

An avid storyteller, her piece *Draupadi*, choreographed by Dr. Chandra, received acclaim at the New York Kathak Festival 2019; her choreographic debut of *Dark Inside* in New York explored the intersection of internal experience and external reality in mental illness; while her dance film, *Rise*, addressing domestic abuse, resonated deeply at the Swiss International Kathak Festival 2020. Through her art, she remains committed to encouraging dialogue, cultural understanding, and unveiling the intricacies of the human experience.

### Aatman

This year marks the 10th anniversary of **Maithili's** solo debut, *Aatman*, first performed in Dubai. A journey that began as an exploration of her identity and

spirit through her connection to dance now returns, refined by a decade of life, experience, and growth.

Revisiting the original choreographies of Maithili's Guru and the concepts behind *Aatman* has allowed her to reflect on the evolution of her artistry and creative process. Her connection to the characters and their stories has deepened, shaped by the shifting lens of time and lived experience. As part of this reflection, **Maithili** will perform excerpts from Jayadeva's *Geeta Govind*—a piece that she first approached at 18 and now returns to at 28. The years in between have transformed her understanding of these verses, allowing her to embody their emotional and spiritual complexity in new ways. In this performance, **Maithili** will share excerpts from *Aatman*, re-embodied—an offering of movement and memory.

### **Bharathanatyam by Sumangala Varun**

Vidushi Sumangala has trained for several years in Carnatic music and Bharatanatyam. She had her initial training in Bharatanatyam at Kerala Kalalayam, Tripunithura, which was founded by the legendary dancer couple Kalamandalam Krishnan Nair and Kalamandalam Kalyanikutty Amma. Today she presents



**Mallari** - A mallari is a composition associated with the nadaswaram tradition. It is an introductory dance in Bharatanatyam to accompany the utsava murthys in processions. This mallari is in Gambheera naattai raga and chathurasra jathi eka talam. It concludes with a prayer to Lord Ganesha, the remover of obstacles. It is choreographed by Guru Smt. Sheela Chandrashekhar.

**Shabdam** - A shabdam is a nrithya composition with lyrics interspersed with jathis, composed by Thanjavur Arunachalam Pillai in praise of Lord Nataraja of Chidambaram. The nayika is lovelorn (virahotkhanditha) and is overcome with love for her Lord Nataraja. Set to ragamalika and misra chapu talam, this shabdam is choreographed by the late Guru B. Bhanumathi.

**Vachana** - Vachanas are brief lines of poetry composed by Shri Basaveshwara and other leaders of the Sharana movement in Karnataka, during the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Ably choreographed by Guru Smt. Sheela Chandrashekhar, this vachana expands on some popular stories including Ravana using a vein from his arm as a string for his veena, Brahma losing his fifth head for lying, and



the pure devotion of hunter Bedara Kannappa.

### **Mohiniyattam dance by Sreevidhya Vijayan**

Sreevidhya V is an accomplished dancer, educator, choreographer, and performer with a deep-rooted foundation in Bharatanatyam, which she began studying at the age of four. Her artistic journey expanded into advanced training in Mohiniyattam and Kuchipudi under the guidance of esteemed men-

tors.

Mohiniyattam is a classical dance form from Kerala, India, known for its graceful, flowing movements and expressive storytelling. The name combines "Mohini," referring to the enchantress avatar of the Hindu god Vishnu, and "attam," meaning dance, thus translating to "dance of the enchantress."

### **Chandanam**

Chandanam, a revived Mohiniyattam Desi choreography by Guru Nirmala Paniker, unfolds the legend of sandalwood's healing power. The dance begins with the Palazhimadhanam (churning of the milky ocean), where the poison Kalakoota emerges. As Shiva consumes it, the world trembles. The intensity of the burning poison and Kali's fierce manifestation as Parvathi fights to save

Shiva. The transformation occurs as she takes cooling sandalwood paste (Chandanam) from Vishnu's chest and anoints Shiva, restoring balance and harmony. This composition is in Saurashtra Ragam and Aiyadi Thalam.



### **Bharathanatyam by Sudha Raghuram**

Sudha Raghuram is the artistic director of Shivalaya School of Dance based in Montgomery. She is the board member of the Alabama Dance Council and has received several grants from the Alabama State Council on the Arts. In 2019, she received the Alabama Folk Herit-

age Award. She and her students participate in several multicultural events throughout the year. To Sudha, dance is a powerful way to enrich the experience, educate, engage the audience, and celebrate diversity.

Sudha's dance starts with Pushpanjali (offering of flowers) and continues with a Hindu devotional hymn in praise of Hanuman (Chalisa). It is an Avadhi language text written by Shri Thulasidas.

She concludes the dance with a Telugu song composed by Shri Annamacharya, Brahmamokate. The lines convey the truth that the universe is unified and there exists a supreme consciousness. It celebrates the unity of all existence.

### **Kuchipudi Dances by Kuchipudi Arts Academy**

Kuchipudi Arts Academy of Saint Louis is led by Guru Sujata Vinjamuri. Her students Dhanasri Kavuri, Keerthana Maddineni, Tejaswi Kavuri, Susnigdha Rayana, and Shivani Balaji will perform the following dances.

The Kuchipudi recital begins with Aananda Nartanam, a vibrant piece composed and choreographed by Uma Maheshwar Garu. Celebrating Lord Vinayaka, the remover of obstacles and symbol of wisdom.

The performance then transitions into Ramayana Shabdham, choreographed by the legendary Vempati Chinna Satyam Garu. This piece honors Lord Rama, depicting key moments from the epic Ramayana and showcasing his valor, compassion, and devotion to dharma. With dynamic storytelling and emotive expression, the dance brings to life Rama's noble virtues. Together, these pieces offer a rich journey through the divine energies of Vinayaka and the heroic ideals of Rama, reflecting the spiritual depth and elegance of Kuchipudi.

**Silks & Threads**

*Ready to wear Collection*

**We Sell:**

- Dresses
- Sarees with Stitched Blouses
- Lehngas
- Western Wear
- and much more...

**Phone**  
(314) 297-7954 - Bhavani  
(314) 764-8114 - Deepthi

**Location:**  
17113 centaur station drive  
Wildwood  
MO, 63040



## Sree Ayyappa Swami Charitham

### About the Choreographer

Guru Prasanna Kasthuri—reverently known as *Guruji*—is a distinguished choreographer, composer, educator, and performer of Indian classical arts. With a profound mastery of *Bharathanatyam* and *Kathak*, India's two foremost classical dance traditions, he has spent over four decades shaping the landscape of dance across India, Europe, and the United States.

As the founder of *Soorya Performing Arts* in St. Louis, Missouri, Guruji has been a tireless advocate for preserving and promoting Indian classical music, dance, and theater in the American Midwest. Under his visionary leadership, Soorya has staged over 50 acclaimed productions, including *Samarpan*, *Defeat of Death*, *Rainbow-2*, *Gokula Nirgamana*, *Anubhava Mantapa*, and more.

Among his many honors are the **Karnataka Kalashri Award** from the Karnataka Sangeetha Nritya Academy (2024), **Missouri Traditional Artist Fellowship** (2024), **Ravi Datar Award** (2020), and several honorary titles such as *Natya Shankara*, *Nritya Bharatha*, *Nritya Bhushana*, and *Kalayogi*.

### The Story of Ayyappa – The Divine Warrior of Dharma

This dance drama portrays the sacred legend of Lord Ayyappa, the revered deity of southern India, known for his divine origin and unwavering dedication to dharma (righteousness). Ayyappa—also called *Hariharaputra*—is born of a mystical union between Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu, who assumes his only female form, Mohini. This union signifies the synthesis of supreme cosmic energies.

## Synopsis of the Performance

The drama opens with a divine invocation to Lord Ganesha, remover of all obstacles. The story then unfolds with the rise of the demoness *Mahishi*, who seeks revenge for her brother Mahishasura's death, bringing turmoil to the world. Desperate, the celestial beings turn to Vishnu and Shiva for salvation. In a divine *tandava*, Shiva and Mohini bring forth a radiant child—destined to vanquish evil.

The infant is discovered by the King of Pandalam during a forest expedition and adopted with joy. Named *Manikanta*, he grows into a wise and valiant prince, outshining all, including the Queen's biological son born later. Consumed by envy and manipulation from her advisors, the Queen feigns illness and demands tiger's milk as her only cure—hoping to send Manikanta to his death.

Bravely accepting the task, Manikanta ventures into the forest. There, he confronts and defeats Mahishi in a powerful battle. As Mahishi is vanquished, she is transformed into a celestial maiden who seeks his hand in marriage. Manikanta declines, vowing to remain celibate until no devotees visit his shrine.

The Gods, moved by his valor, offer him blessings. He requests that they appear as tigers and accompany him back—fulfilling the Queen's demand for tiger's milk. Upon his return, the Queen is overwhelmed with guilt and seeks forgiveness. Manikanta, in his compassion, renounces the throne in favor of his brother and chooses a life of spiritual solitude in the forests of *Sabarimala*.

Along the way, he performs miracles—restoring the sight of his Guru's blind son—and ultimately attains divinity. His devotees revere him to this day, singing the sacred hymn "*Harivaranam*", which echoes through the hills of Sabarimala.

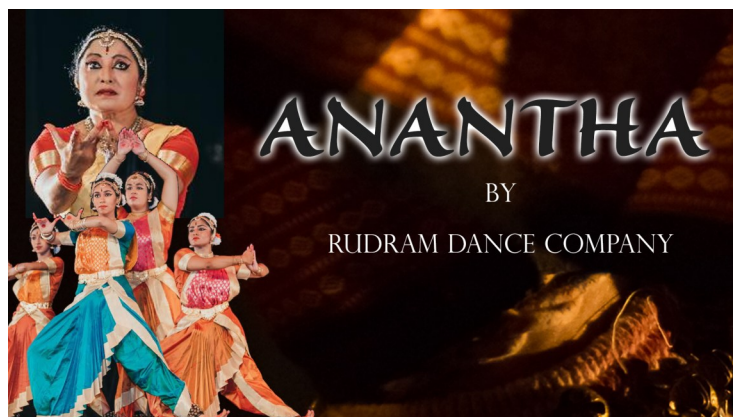
## Creative Credits

**Music** – Sri Tirumale Srinivasan

**Literature** – Vaasudevan

**Choreography** – Guruji Prasanna Kasthuri

**Dancers** – Samanvita Kasthuri, Aditi Sriram, Shreenidhi Senthilnathan, Kirthi Ramesh, Hritika Malugu, Harini Saravanan, Ishita Sanghavi, Akshaya K Boopathi, Deepashri Modekurty, Mridini Nandakumar, Sai-Saanvi Katarla, Diya Arun, Sona Prabhakaran, Sudha Venkatachalam, Sujatha Mohan, Mallika Kalahasti, Sucheta Rishikesh, Rashmi Wable, Lakshmi Bhargavi Koka, Pratibha Bharathi, Pratibha Vijjapu, Keemaya Iyer, Swara wable, Anika Curat, Nitara Sudheesh, Seema Kasthuri and Guru Prasanna Kasthuri



**Dance Drama - Ananta – Choreography Tara Priyadarshini Bikkasani**

Tara Priyadarshini Bikkasani is a professional Bharatanatyam dancer. She mastered her intricacies of Bharatanatyam under the tutelage of Nrithya Choodamani Smt. Krishnaveni Lakshnam of Kalakshetra, Prof. M. R. Krishnamurthy Smt. Uma Sundaram, and Smt. Uma Rao of Kalakshetra, Chennai, India. Tara also had the privilege of learning Abhinayam from Padma Shri. Dr. Nataraja Ramakrishna and Smt. Saride Manikyamma who is a legendary exponent of “Temple Dance form” from Hyderabad, India.

Tara has garnered the attention of media and connoisseurs of the arts by virtue of several hundreds of performances in India and abroad. The schedule she keeps is a testimony of her outstanding calibre and total commitment to her chosen field. Tara has choreographed Ramayana, Krishnam Vande Jagat Guru, Dhasavatharam, Draupadi, and recently Nrithya-Milana, an amalgamation of various Indian classical forms together. She has remarkable appearances at important national and international Dance Festivals.

“Ananta” is a dance performance of mythological stories retold through dance. Lord Krishna as a baby to Geethopadesam, will carry us through many Leelas of Krishna. The music was composed by Vidwan Sri. Kaniyal Hari Prasad (Kalakshetra ) and Vidwan Sri. Ravi Kulur.

Dancers: Revathi Vijay, Aditi Kanuganti, Nayana Jayakumar, Divya Vijeesh, Shreya Arackaparampil, Sharu Arackaparampil, Roshni Vummagoni and Anisha Aremanda.

## Rudrakshya Foundation



Rudrakshya Foundation founded in 2000 has grown from the seed passionately sown, nurtured, and tended to with great care by Guru Shree Bichitrananda Swain. Today, Rudrakshya has emerged as one of the leading dance institutions in a new generation of world-class organizations catering to international audiences while holding firm to the values and traditions established by the founding fathers of Odissi Dance. He is recipient of Padmashri Guru Gangadhar Pradhan Smruti Samman: 2017, Srinath Jagannath Samman 2019 (Rajasthan), Alvas Award (Mangalore) and many more. Established in 2000, Rudrakshya Foundation has been growing steadily. Its performances abroad and throughout India, as well as ongoing classes and private instruction, cater to the continuous flow of serious dance students coming from all over the world.

### Presentation

#### Mangalacharan - Ram Charit Manas

The "Keki Kantha Neelam" is a verse from the Ram Charit Manas written by the revered Saint Tulsidas. This verse beautifully describes Lord Rama's complexion, likening it to the deep blue of a peacock's throat or a sapphire (Neelam). It highlights his unparalleled skill in archery.

Raga – Megh & Kedar, Tala – Eka Tali  
Dance Choreography by Padma Bibhushan Guru Sri Kelu Charan Mohapatra; Music Composition by Pandit Raghunath Panigrahi ; Dance Directed by Guru Sri Bichitrananda Swain ; Dancers: Santosh Ram, Samir Kumar Panigrahi, Debashree Patnaik and Roji Swain



#### Pallavi – Hamsakalyani

The Pallavi in Raga Hamsakalyani is a vibrant and intricate composition of Odissi choreography, characterized by a diverse tempo and rhythm, harmoniously woven with a specific raga. The dance is marked by delicate footwork, elaborate movements, and an expressive melody.

Raga - Hamsakalyani, Taal - Matha; Dance Choreography Guru Sri Bichitrananda Swain; Music Composition by Guru Sri Ramahari Das; Rhythm Composition by Guru Sri Dhaneswar Swain; Dancers: Santosh Ram, Samir Kumar Panigrahi, Debashree Patnaik and Roji Swain

### **Bhavani Bhujangam Stotra**

A shloka in praise of the glorious beauty of Goddess Bhavani, written by saint & philosopher Adi Shankaracharya.

Raga : Gundakriya, Tala : Eka Taali and Jati ; Music Composition by Guru Sri Ramahari Das; Rhythm Composition by Guru Sri Dhaneswar Swain Dance Choreography by Guru Bichitranand Swain; Dancers: Santosh Ram and Samir Kumar Panigrahi

### **Mokshya**

Mokshya signifies salvation—the ultimate liberation from the cycle of human existence and the joyous union of the individual soul with the divine. In parallel to this profound concept, Mokshya, the concluding item of the Odissi repertoire, embodies the dancer's complete surrender to God. Dance Choreography by Padmabibhushan Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra; Music Composition by Pt. Bhubaneswar Mishra; Dancers: by Santosh Ram, Samir Kumar Panigrahi, Debashree Patnaik and Roji Swain

### **FUSED—a fusion of Indian and Western Dances by Samanvita Kasthuri**

Samanvita Kasthuri is an emerging fusion choreographer, trained in the styles of Bharatanatyam and Kathak under Guru Prasanna Kasthuri, and Carnatic mu-



sic under Guru Seema Kasthuri. She has received additional training from Guru Lalitha Srinivasan. She attained a dance minor at Saint Louis University. She continued her training in Contemporary as a Teaching and Company Artist for Pack Dance Company this past season, creating an extended version of her first professional, commissioned work, “Krtghna”, initially made in 2022 for the Saint Louis University Literary Arts Award Ceremony. Her work mixes Contemporary, Hip-Hop, Bharatanatyam,

and Kathak, focusing on storytelling, expressions, and connecting with your innermost feelings.

Samanvita has presented her work at many venues, such as the Battery Park Festival (New York) in 2022, Waxworks Showcase in (New York) in 2023, Space

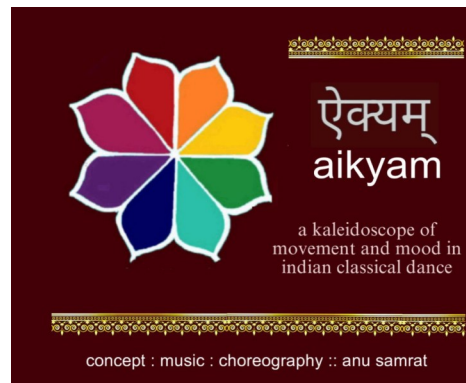
Station Dance Residency (St. Louis) in 2023, St. Louis Contemporary Dance Festival in 2023, Los Angeles Indian Dance Festival in 2024, Breaking Ground Festival (Tempe, AZ) in 2025, Disruption (St. Louis), and many more. Samanvita will pursue her career further at Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, NY, for a Master's in Fine Arts in Dance for the upcoming year.

Samanvita will present a variety of fusion performances at this year's Festival, including a solo inspired by "Dancing Circles" by Sampha; a collaborative piece with Kyla Kikkawa, a movement artist specializing in a street dance style called "Krump", which plays with Nattuvangam and explores the idea of being a fusion dancer; and a presentation of "Krtghna," performed with Kaylee Arnold, Izzy Perry, and Erin Berson.

"Krtghna" follows the story of Mother Earth, who wakes up in the universe, wonder-struck at the largeness of existence. She stumbles upon a child, who grows up to be Mankind. She gathers the five elements to help mankind breathe and flourish as part of the universe. However, Mankind selfishly exploits the five elements, deteriorating Mother Earth's natural resources. Heartbroken and angry, Mother Earth is left with no choice but to burn up the world. This piece explores the ungratefulness we have exhibited to the Earth, as well as the notion of motherhood and the sacrifices that can come with it.

#### **Anu Samrat - Aikyam**

Anu Samrat, founder of Alapadma Dance School in Seattle, presents "Aikyam", which means "merging".



"Aikyam" is a kaleidoscope of movement and mood, as portrayed in all eight styles of Indian classical dances: Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Kathakali, Kuchipudi, Manipuri, Mohiniyattam, Odissi, and Sattriya. The recital will highlight the two main aspects of Indian classical dance: Nritta (movement) and Abhinaya

(expression).

**Anubhava Dance Company – Explorations** - Joshua George & Shriya Srinivasan



Ever wonder how we, as humans, are designed to experience the world around us? Our senses trigger distinct pathways in our brains evoking a wide range of emotion-

al responses. Explorations dissects the neuroscience of human emotion. We dive deep into the psychology of laughter, fear, anxiety, uncertainty, and hope in a theatrical foray traversing the complexities of life's big decisions. Join the Anubhava Dance Company, as we explore the way our bodies and minds perceive and comprehend humanity.

**Concept and Choreography:** Joshua George & Shriya Srinivasan

**Dancers:** Shriya Srinivasan, Swathi Jaisankar, Sita Vakkalanka, Shriya Srinivas, Joshua George

**Dr. Sreedhara R. Akkihebbalu - Shataka Traya**

Dr. Sreedhara trained under illustrious Guru, - Sangeet Natak awardee Smt. Narmada and Padmabhushan Smt. Kalanidhi Narayanan. He started his dance



career in 1985 while he was resident in Family medicine. Dr. Sreedhara was the first male dancer from the state of Karnataka to have achieved the distinction of

Top-Grade Soloist for Television, by Prasar Bharati-Government of India

**Śhatakatraya**, a trilogy of Sanskrit poetry by King Bhartruhari. This collection explores love, ethics, and detachment through three sets of a hundred verses.

We begin with **Śṛṅgāraśataka**, which celebrates the beauty and complexity of love and romance. Bhartruhari uses rich metaphors to capture the enchantment and challenges of love.

Next, **Nītiśataka** offers guidance on living a virtuous life, emphasizing honesty and integrity. These verses encourage us to act with kindness and courage. Finally, **Vairāgyaśataka** focuses on spiritual liberation through detachment. Bhartruhari's later years were marked by a shift to renunciation, inspiring us to seek self-realization. His poetry invites us to pursue knowledge and the ultimate freedom of moksha. Enjoy the performance as we reflect on the timeless insights of Bhartruhari work.

#### **Medha Srigiri - *Pralayapa Payodhijale***



Medha Srigiri is a devoted Kuchipudi dancer with 17+ years of training and is currently pursuing a Master's in Kuchipudi, she is known for her nuanced abhinaya and dynamic stage presence. Medha

has performed across the U.S. and India, and her work reflects a deep commitment to preserving and sharing the richness of classical Indian storytelling through dance.

Medha Srigiri presents a powerful Kuchipudi interpretation of *Pralayapa Payodhijale*, the opening *ashtapadi* of the *Gita Govinda*, the 12th-century poetic masterpiece by Jayadeva. This invocatory verse glorifies Krishna's ten incarnations (*Dasavatara*), portraying Him as the supreme divine force who takes on different forms to restore cosmic balance. Through rhythmic footwork, expressive abhinaya, and lyrical storytelling, Medha brings to life the majesty and devotion embedded in each avatar. Rooted in bhakti and classical aesthetics, this piece offers spiritual depth and vibrant visual poetry.

### Kathak Vaibhavam – Soorya Kathak School



Guruji Prasanna Kasthuri's students – Riti Shahapeti, Vidhi Soneta, Divya Sinha, Anushka Rausaria, and Namita Rai will present two dances from Kathak repertoire. The dances include –

Aaj Shyam Murali Bajaayi – A memorable dance composition of Lucknow Gharana, presents the divine

scenario of Sri Krishna dancing on the banks of Yamuna River with Gopis. – Raag – Khamaj and Teen Taal

Taraana – a Creative work of Guruji Prasanna Kasthuri, presents pure movements through Tatkaras, Tukdas and Parans with a beautiful Tihai. This is in Raag: Tilang and Teen Taal. Co-written and composed by Vidwan Raghunandan Bhat.

### Andhra Natyam By Radhanika



Nisha Maguluru, has practiced Andhra Natyam since 1988, she began teaching in the U.S. in 2008 under the guidance of Dr. Ramakrishna and other gurus. She founded Radhanika to formalize Andhra Natyam training, with students earning certifications through Silicon Andhra

University (USA) and SPSR Telugu University (India), continuing the tradition and revival of this ancient art form.

Radhanika's team begins the performance with Kumbhaharathi ritual, performed in accordance with Agama nartanam followed by Andhra Natyam choreography 'Kannayya Janminche', celebrating Lord Krishna's birth. The next performance is choreographed for 'Raghuvamsa', a popular krithi and followed by 'Deva Deva' tarangam.

### **Kuchipudi Academy (Lalitha Samudrala)**

**Lalitha Samudrala**, founder of **Kuchipudi Academy** (est. 2015), is a trained classical dancer and vocalist. Starting Bharatanatyam at age 3 and Kuchipudi at 9, she studied under Guru Sujata Vinjamuri of Kuchipudi Arts Academy, later under Guru Ravishankar Vempati, son of the legendary Dr. Vempati Chinna Satyam. She has appeared on major platforms and holds records in the Guinness Book of World Records for large-scale dance events. Lalitha holds a Diploma in Carnatic Vocal and a Master's in Indian Classical Dance. Her Academy promotes Kuchipudi, Carnatic Vocal, and Bollywood dance and has performed widely across the USA.

### **Tillana**

Ragam: Hindolam Talam: Adi Choreography: Padmabhushan Dr. Vempati Chinna Satyam

Kuchipudi Academy presents a Tillana, a vibrant Nrutta (pure dance) piece known for its intricate footwork harmoniously balanced by the sculptural poses.. Structured in Pallavi, Anupallavi, and Charanam, this composition features lyrical praise of Siddhendra Yogi, the revered founder of Kuchipudi, in the Charanam. Typically performed as a finale, this Tillana is set to Hindolam ragam and Adi talam. Dancers: Sahana Santhanam, Kamyaa Anand, and Priyasha Munshi.

### **Aigiri Nandhini by the Soorya dance ensemble**

Passionate for dancing, this group of adults from Soorya Dance company present the popular Aigiri Nandini, a powerful dance of Goddess Durga based on the poem by Adi Shankara.



Performed by – Mallika Kalahasti, Shruthi Krishnareddy, Rashmi Wable, Sucheta Rishikesh, Sujatha Mohan, Lakshmi Bhargavi Koka, Sudha Venkatachalam, Pratibha Vijjapu, Sona Prabhakaran and Rashmi Boggarapu

## Natya Idol

**NATYA IDOL** is a platform to showcase the talents of young **Indian Classical dancers**. This is purely for **educational purposes** only. Our aim is to promote **healthy competition** among students, and inspire them to walk towards the **pursuit of perfection**. There are ups and downs, wins and losses, happiness and sad moments in this competition, just like life. But, it teaches what is needed to be successful in life. It teaches **patience, perseverance, humility**, and **dedication** as needed for the path of perfection.

We encourage every competitor to get into the process of practicing the **art of dancing** with dedication and humbleness. There is an unimaginable **happiness** in trying to be **perfect**. If one attains such **perfection**, they will bring **pure joy** to everyone who watches them. Attaining **perfection** in **Indian classical dance** is difficult, because it demands a **disciplined** way to **learn, live, and practice**. Those who have walked this road are highly **successful**. This competition will help you get there by giving one **performance opportunity** at a time.

We welcome everyone to take up the **challenge** to **perform** in the **Natya Idol competitions** and win **recognition** and **respect**. Everyone will be a winner here. Whether you get a prize or not, you will really be getting an opportunity to achieve perfection through your own preparations for the competition. This is also a great opportunity to get **valuable feedback** on your dancing skill from great minds of the dance field.

Natya Idol Schedule

<https://www.natya.org/competition-schedule/>



Natya Idol Schedule

## **Executive Committees**

### **Decoration committee**

Gowtami Sri, Hemanth kumar, Kalpana Katarla, Seema kasthuri, Sudha prasanna, Sujatha mohan, Sumithra Sankaran and Soorya Family

### **Transportation**

Sriram Srinivasan, Boomi Senthil Lakshmanan, Girish Dixit, Smitha Rausaria & Family, Amita Rai & Family, Raja Vardhan Sriram, Srinivas ghanta, Sudheer, Lakshmi Narasimhan, Krishna Reddy, Seema Kasthuri

### **Light & Sound**

Vinayaka Sharma, Sumati saravanan, Abhinav Kondapally, Amarnath Reddy, Nagendra Boggarapu, Aditi Sriram, Kirti Ramesh, Prasanna Narasimhan, Prasanna Kasthuri, Girish Dixit

### **Reception & Ticketing**

Nagendra Sanjeeva, Bhanu Bandarupalli, bhargavi priya, Aanya Kaushik, Girish Dixit, Minu Abraham, Priya Prasad, Shruti Krishnareddy, Sudhapriya Narasimhan, Priyanka, Sucheta Rishikesh, Sujatha Mohan, Sneha doss, Aparna Kaul, Sheetal Gattani

### **Food committee**

Swati Jetta, Suma Saravanan, Seema Kasthuri, Kalpana Katarla, Amit Bothra, Shruti Krishnareddy, Hemanth Kumar, Marina, Srividya Ramesh Natarajan, Rashmi Bogarapu, Girish Dixit, Lakshminarasimhan Santhanam, Priya prasad, Mukesh Malugu, Anupama Sriram, Srilu Vishnubhotla, Aditi Sriram, Sujatha Mohan, Vaishali Soneta

### **Video and Photo**

Manhar Bhakta, Deepashri Modekurty, Ishita Sanghavi, Tarun Modekurthy, Ramesh Natarajan, Sahasra Dandamudi

### **Stage management**

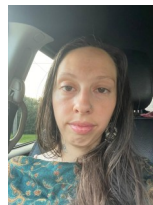
Hemanth Kumar Katarla, Boomi Senthil Lakshmanan, Sujatha Mohan, Swapnil Sanghavi, Vaishali Soneta, Vidhi Soneta

### **Master of Ceremony**

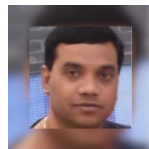
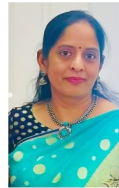
Sandhya Falgun Dave, Nisha Maguluru, Anu Sriram, Vijeyetha Dhanasekaran, Seema Kasthuri, Samanvita Kasthuri, Shreenidhi Senthil Nathan, Aditi Sriram, Diya Arun, Kirth Ramesh

**Fund Raising** - Sujatha Mohan, Devika Nagaraj, Prasanna Kasthuri

## Tickets and Reception Committee



## Lighting and Sound committee



## **Transportation Team**



**Our Volunteers are our family ....**

**A happy family ...**

**For the love of arts ...**



<b>Friday 13th June 2025</b>			
Introduction Dances		6:00 PM	Main Stage
Introduction Speech and Music		6:10 PM	Main Stage
Mythili Patel ( New York, NY)	Kathak Solo	6:25 PM	Main Stage
Sumangala V Varun (Austin, TX)	Bharathanatyam - solo	6:55 PM	Main Stage
Dinner break		7:25 PM	Commons
Sreevidhya Vijayan (Natya Idol Winner) (Chicago, IL)	Mohini Attam -Solo	7:55 PM	Main Stage
Sudha Raghuram (Birmingham, AL)	Bharathanatyam -Solo	8:25 PM	Main Stage
Students of Sujatha Vinjamuri (St. Louis, MO)	Group Kuchipudi	9:00 PM	Main Stage
<b>Saturday 14th June 2025</b>			
American Natya Idol - Advanced, Intermediate,	Senior Groups	8:00 AM - 3:30 PM	On Main-stage & Little Theater
Main Stager closes for Tech Rehearsal		3:30	
Audience entry		5:00 PM	Main Stage
Swamy Ayyappa by Soorya Dance Company (St. Louis, MO)	Dance Drama	5:30 PM	Main Stage
Anantha by Rudram Dance Company (Tampa, FL)	Dance Drama	7:00 PM	Main Stage
Dinner Break			Commons
Award Ceremony		8:15 PM	Main Stage
Rudrakshya (Bhubaneshwar, Odisha, India)	Odissi Dance Drama	8:30 PM	Main Stage
<b>Sunday 15th June 2025</b>			
American Natya Idol - Advanced, Intermediate, Senior Groups		8:00 AM - 1:00 PM	On Main-stage & Little Theater
Break (Tech Walk-throughs)		1:00 - 2:00	Main Stage
Fused - Dance Fusion Presentation by Samanvita (Natya Idol Winner) & Dancers (St. Louis, MO)	Dance Collaboration	2:00-PM	Main Stage
Award Ceremony - Natya Idol Finals		2:30 PM	Main Stage
Classical Dance Symphony - Anu Samrat & Dancers (Seattle, WA)	Dance collaboration	3:00 PM	Main Stage
Joshua George /Shriya Srinivasan (Boston, MA)	Dance collaboration	3:45 PM	Main Stage
Shataka Traya- By Kaveri Natya Yoga (Austin, TX)	Dance Drama	4:30 PM	Main Stage
Medha Srigiri - Student of Guru Sujatha Vinjamuri	Kuchipudi	5:15 PM	Main Stage
Kathak Vaibhavam - Soorya Dance School (St. Louis, MO)	Kathak Group Dances	5:45 PM	Main Stage
Lalitha Jilakara & Team (St. Louis, MO)	Kuchipudi	6:00 PM	Main Stage
Nisha Muguluru & Team (St. Louis, MO)	Andhra Natyam	6:15 PM	Main Stage
Aigiri Nandini (St. Louis, MO)	25 Bharathanatyam	6:30 PM	Main Stage



## ANU'S COLLECTION

618-570-6237

WE HAVE TRADITIONAL  
WEAR FOR MEN'S AND  
WOMEN'S ALSO SEMI SILK  
PURSES, CLUTCHES WHICH  
GIVE CAN ENHANCE YOUR  
FESTIVE ATTIER.



## ARCAY NATURALS

Inspired by the richness of Indian ingredients and rooted in nature, we're all about creating clean, effective products that work in harmony with your skin. Blending age-old wisdom with a modern approach, our formulas are crafted using responsibly sourced herbs, and oils.





# MURUGAN TEMPLE OF ST. LOUIS

Presents

## Katha-Nrityam - "Ramachandram Bhavayami"

**BY SHRI DUSHYANT SRIDHAR**

in English

A unique fusion of upanyasam (discourse) and dance on the theme - "I meditate on Sri Rama"

**26th July 2025, Saturday-6:30PM**

**YMCA, 16464 Burkhardt Pl, Chesterfield, MO 63017**



\*Murugan Temple of St. Louis\* proudly presents *Shri Dushyant Sridhar*, a great spiritual orator, harikatha exponent, author, director, and actor, accompanied by Smt Ramya Narayanan, an accomplished Bharatanatyam dancer.

They will be presenting a unique blend of discourse and dance - Katha Nrithyam on Sri Rama. Launched last year, this program has been staged in many cities in last few months to packed audience.

*The Hindu calls it a "A feminist retelling of the Ramayana".*

A well-researched program referencing both the Valmiki Ramayana and the Kamba Ramayanam. It presents new facets of the women from the Ramayana - Kaikeyi, Soorpanakha, Tara, and Mandodari. They all had one thing in common — adoration for Rama.

Dancing will be interspersed with mini-upanyasams, to connect all the dots, so you hear the entire Ramayana, with interesting details.



Smt Ramya Ramnarayan -  
Performer and choreographer

BOOK NOW >>

SCAN ME



### Sponsorship

(Table at the event, Stage and flyer recognition)

<b>Gold</b>	<b>\$100</b>
Box dinner included	
<b>Silver</b>	<b>\$50</b>
Box dinner included	
<b>Bronze</b>	<b>\$30</b>
Box dinner included	
<b>Bronze</b>	<b>\$20</b>

**\*REACH OUT FOR GROUP TICKETS AND GENERAL DONATION\* (636) 484-3586**



Manhar  
Bhakta

Call us for Video, Photography  
for your events - (314) 229-7979



FOOD BROUGHT YOU FROM MINERVA



## Weekend Lunch Buffet



**Saturday & Sunday**  
**12:00 PM - 3:30 PM**

**\$14.99\*** per person 12 Yrs & above  
**\$8.99\*** per person 5 - 12 Yrs



**ORDER NOW**

 14560, MANCHESTER ROAD, #9, BALLWIN, MO 63011

 +1 636-220-1101



Contact for  
Carnatic Music Classes

**Guru Seema  
Kasthuri**

314-359-9741

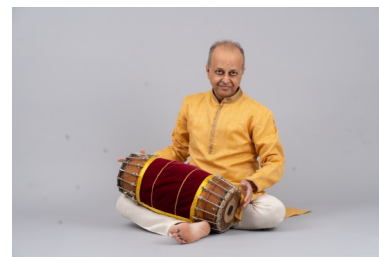
Contact for  
Bharathanatyam & Kathak Classes  
Guruji

**Prasanna Kasthuri**

314-397-5278



Contact for Mrudangam Lessons  
too !!!





# Kwality

Indian Eatery & Ice Cream

## LUNCH COMBOS

## SNACKS

## ICE CREAMS

## FALOODAS

## BIRYANIS & PULAVS

ORDER NOW



2550 State Hwy K, O'Fallon, MO-63368  
+1 (636) 294-0227 | [www.kwalitystl.com](http://www.kwalitystl.com)



The world becomes a  
better place with the

**3Es**



# DRYWALL DAMAGE?



**DRYWALL REPAIR**  
**844.NO.HOLES**

Fast Drywall Repair  
Seamless Texture Matching  
Dust-Free Process  
Up-Front Pricing  
Competitive Rates  
Background-Checked Technicians

**ANY SIZE HOLE - GET A FREE QUOTE!**



**(314) 720-3166**

**[www.HoleintheWall.com](http://www.HoleintheWall.com)**