

Bharatanatyam Recital by Tanu Sreedharan and Vibhaa Sivaraman

Jheem Jheem

Ragam: Arabhi, Talam: Adi, Choreography: K.P.Yesodha

A fast-paced introductory dance comprising mostly movement with verses praising Lord Ganesha, the all-knowing Lord who rides a mouse and possesses an elephantine countenance with a curved trunk and big ears.

Dasavatharam Keerthanam:

Ragamalika, Talam: Adi, Choreography: Rukmini Devi Arundale

Centerpiece of today's recital that is dedicated to the ten avatars (forms) that Lord Vishnu takes in order to protect the universe. This piece is structured in the form of ten sets of verses, each depicting the storyline of one of the forms, interspersed with swarams or musical notes that are marked by rhythmic movements.

The ten avatars (forms) described are:

- **matsya:** fish-form in order to save the Vedas from the horse-like demon Hayagriva. Lord Vishnu appears as a tiny fish to the sage Satyavrata, grows to a huge size, and saves the entire kingdom from a flood after which he slays the demon Hayagriva.
- **kUrma:** tortoise-form to support the sinking Mandara mountain. As the Asuras and Devas churn the ocean for divine milk, Vishnu supports the mountain and takes the form of Mohini to surreptitiously distribute the divine nectar to only the Gods and not the demons.
- **varAha:** boar-form to rescue Mother earth from the demon Hiranyaksha who stole her and hid her deep in the ocean.
- **Narasimha:** half-lion half-human form to kill the demon Hiranyakashipu and bless his son, Prahlada who was ever devoted to Lord Vishnu.
- **vAmana:** dwarf-form to curb the pride of King Mahabali. In this form, Lord Vishnu asks King Mahabali, who believes he has all the wealth in the world, to offer three steps of land to him. When the king agrees, Lord Vishnu transforms into a giant forcing the king to give his own head for the third step, teaching him to be more humble in the process.
- **paraSurAma:** sage-form to curb the power of ruthless and cruel kings. Lord Vishnu is portrayed as a sage with long limbs who carries an axe and is well-versed in the Vedas.
- **rAma:** human form where Lord Vishnu is born as the heir of the Surya (sun) race to destroy the ten-faced demon Ravana. The story depicts the capture of Goddess Sita, Rama's wife when in exile in the forests by Lord Ravana, and her subsequent rescue by Lord Rama.
- **balarAma:** human form with a plough to defeat the demon Ghatotgacha. In this form, Lord Vishnu pretends to be a child that Ghatotgacha carries only to realize that Balarama is way too heavy for him, and gets crushed by his weight.
- **kRsNA:** human form that is cherished by all residents of Vrindavan, particularly the Gopis (young women). This jovial description depicts how Krishna plays with the Gopis, sometimes stealing their clothes, sometimes stealing butter but always stealing their hearts.
- **kalki:** human form riding a horse that is meant to end the darkest periods of existence and usher in a new era of righteousness. This form is believed to have not yet taken place.

Mayil Vaahana:

Ragam: Mohanam, Talam: Adi, Choreography: K.P. Yesodha

A kriti dedicated to the six-faced Lord Muruga, the son of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvathi who travels on a peacock, and is married to Valli.

mayil vAhanA vaLLi manamOhanA

(Addressing that) Muruga, who rides on a peacock and is loved by Valli

sharavaNabhava varamaruLvAi vA mA

(You) the six-faced Lord Muruga, please bless us with luck and prosperity.

The dancers will depict the birth story of Lord Muruga when Lord Shiva's six sparks were cooled by the rivers to produce six faces that were coalesced into one body by Goddess Parvathi. They also describe the story of Valli's pursuit by Muruga wherein he takes the form of an old man seeking shelter, and proceeds to ask Valli for her hand in marriage.

kayilAyam mudal malaigaLilellAm kaLiththu

(Addressing Muruga as) the one whose presence radiates in the Kailasha mountains

viLaiyADum panniru kaiyA murugaiyA

who also plays with his twelve hands

This stanza briefly depicts the story of Lord Muruga being presented with his spear and its powers by his parents, Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvathi. He uses the spear to kill numerous demons.

pUrNa candiran pOlum arumukhA

The six-faced God who is as bright as the shining moon

bhuvanam engum nirai mAyavan marugA

The one who rules the entire world, and is the nephew of Lord Vishnu

AraNapporuLE aDimai enai ALa vA vA vA rAmdAsan paNi guha

The poet Ramadasa praises that Lord Muruga who even taught his own father the meaning of "Om"

Padam: Panimati Mukhi Bale –

Ragam: Ahiri, Talam: Mishra Chapu, Choreography: K.P. Yesodha

A padam (lyrical composition) depicting a saddened heroine at the separation from her beloved

panimati mukhi bAlE padmanAbhan innennil

Oh beautiful moon-faced friend, (hear) what Lord Padmanabha is doing today

kanivillAykayAl kAman pArameyyunnU

Absent of any compassion, Kama (God of Love) is taunting me with his arrows

manasi dussaham ayyO madana gadanam

As I suffer from Kama's torture

endu madirAkshi jnyAn ceyyAvU

Oh my beautiful friend, (tell me) what I should do now?

lOka vAsikaLkellAm lObhanIyanAmindu

All the people on this world are enjoying the brightness of the moon

shOkam enikku mAtram sumukhi tarunnadendu

Oh friend, why am I alone beset with sorrow?

EkAndattilennODu sAkam seyda leelagaL

Back then, Padmanabha and I spent so much time together enjoying ourselves

Akave mama kAntan Ashu bata maRannO

Yet, how has my beloved suddenly forgotten everything to do with me

The penultimate line is depicted in much more detail to show the heroine setting her house up in anticipation of her beloved Krishna's arrival. When he does arrive in all grandiose clothing, he is elated to see her setup and embraces her in happiness. She however, goes onto question how he has forgotten all of these good times they enjoyed together.

Javali (Era Rara):

Ragam: Kamas, Talam: Adi, Choreography: Rukmini Devi Arundale

ErA rArA ceyidEdA I marubAriki tALaga lErA

(To Lord Vishnu) Please come, take my hand; I can no longer sustain these annoyances of Cupid

mAra janaka sukumAra sundara

Oh beautiful one, you are the father of Cupid and the one who was brought up with such joy

valaci ninnu pilacina nannu sallApinci mariyu nullAsincevu

When I call out to you so lovingly, you truly rejoice in conversation with me

sarasuDani cAla kOrinArA birAna nannu kaugalincavErA vaddiki

I am enamored by you and your pure soul. Please come soon and embrace me.

Javalis are typically fast-paced, light-hearted and frivolous in their depictions of the nayika (heroine) and her interactions with her beloved (Lord Vishnu here). It typically portrays the Shringara rasa (emotion of love) from the perspective of a heroine confident in her relationship with the Lord. In this piece, the nayika calls out subtly to her Lord to come embrace her, and exaggerates the pain caused by the separation from him in an effort to come to her sooner.

Thillana:

Ragam: Behag, Talam: Khanda Eka, Choreography: Dhananjayans

A fast-paced concluding piece with predominantly movement honoring Lord Vishnu, the resident of the holy temple in Guruvayur and the patron of all Indian art forms.

Bharatanatyam is a classical Indian dance form that originated in South India. It is believed to have its theoretical foundations in the ancient Sanskrit text, Natya Shastra, and its first existence dates as far back as the second century. The dance form is noted for its fixed upper torso, bent legs, spectacular footwork and a sophisticated vocabulary of sign language based on gestures of hands, eyes and face muscles. The dancer herself is believed to be similar to a bride and therefore, dressed accordingly. Despite being an ancient dance form, Bharatanatyam weaves in itself all the modernity even today. It encapsulates centuries of tradition; simultaneously it is evolving with imaginative innovations. The **Kalakshetra** style of Bharatanatyam is a particular style codified by Rukmini Devi Arundale, the founder of the Kalakshetra foundation. Founded in 1936, Kalakshetra continues to be home to a number of full-time pursuers of dance from a variety of backgrounds and nationalities.

Vibhaalakshmi Sivaraman recently finished her PhD in Computer Science and currently works in the technology space. Vibhaa has been learning Bharatanatyam under the Kalakshetra style for the last two decades from her Guru (teacher) K.P.Yesodha. She performed her Arangetram (first solo professional performance) in May 2011. Since then, she has given numerous performances both as a solo artiste and as part of Kalanjali's group recitals.

Tanu Sreedharan is a dancer and dedicated public health professional. She began her tutelage under gurus K.P. Kunhiraman and Katherine Kunhiraman and continued her study of Bharatanatyam under guru K.P. Yesodha. Tanu has been dancing for over 25 years and performed her Arangetram in June 2011. She has danced in many productions with Kalanjali Dances of India, Nava Dance Theatre, and as a freelance dancer for other artists. She loves collaborating with other artists in bringing ideas to life on stage.

K.P.Yesodha comes from a long line of performing artists from her grandfather, the legendary Ambu Pannikar to her uncle, K.P.Kunhiraman, a lead male dancer at Kalakshetra for over thirty years. She studied dance and related subjects at Kalakshetra Institute of Art in Chennai. She later trained under the Dhananjayans at Bharata Kalanjali. Her uncle Kunhiraman and her aunt Katherine founded Kalanjali in California in 1975 and Yesodha directs Kalanjali's Chennai branch where numerous students pursue dance.

Today's orchestra:

Nattuvangam: K.P. Yesodha

Vocal: Vijesh Parappurath

Mridangam: K.P. Ramesh Babu

Violin: Vishwesh Swaminadhan

Flute: Akhil Anilkumar

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ODC is on the ancestral lands of the Ramaytush People in Yelamu. We pay respects to elders past and present, who are still here and part of our community. We recognize that regenerative land management is not new, but is a continuation of practices from Native cultures and from our own ancestors. It is our responsibility to steward the land with care, as our elders did before us. ODC is donating \$.50 for each in-person ticket (seat) sold to all performances in the Theater. ODC will donate these funds to the Association of Ramaytush Ohlone land tax fund.

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