



Kuchipudi Rangapravesham by

ANUSHA CHALUVADI



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About Today's Presentation

Kuchipudi dance derives its name after its village of birth in Andhra Pradesh, India. Kuchipudi evolved from a drama tradition, and its solo repertoire features two strands of embodied history. *Daruvus*, excerpts from the dance-dramas historically presented by male dancers who played both male and female roles to enact stories, have entered the Kuchipudi solo repertoire as standalone pieces. Kuchipudi also shares repertoire with the hereditary women dancers of the region, as well as with Bharatanatyam's solo tradition – *jatiswarams*, *śabdams*, *varṇams*, *padams*, *jāvalīs*, *sankīrtanas*, and *tillānas* are performed in the distinctive *kuluku* of Kuchipudi, characterized by its scintillating rhythm, quicksilver movements, and eloquent sensitive expressions.

Rangapraveśam, which means “ascending the stage' in Sanskrit, is a full-length solo dance performance. It marks the transition of the artiste from a student to a blossoming dancer. Accompanied by a live orchestra, this performance demands that the dancer exhibit an understanding of the many aspects of Kuchipudi, from sensitive expressions to intricate rhythm, blending grace and vigor.

Today's rangapraveśam is a thematic presentation centered on *Hari Bhakti*, or devotion to Lord Vishnu. Today's program will highlight an array of works across the centuries that explore various facets of the Lord, as well as different forms of devotion toward Him. These works span both the *nāṭyamela* (dance-drama) and *naṭṭuvamela* (solo dance) traditions of Kuchipudi.

About Sri Sai Dance Academy

Sri Sai Dance Academy is an institution dedicated to learning, understanding and fostering interest in the classical art form of Kuchipudi. It was founded by Smt. J. Sarada, a patient and dedicated teacher with over two decades of teaching experience. Sarada focuses on developing technical perfection, theoretical understanding and, most importantly, passion for the art form.

The dynamic class environment allows for both individual attention and learning in groups. Additionally, the class's informal mentorship system encourages students to hone their own skills and learn from each other, as well as forge strong relationships. As a SAMPADA-affiliated institution, it prepares students to earn their certificates, diplomas, and other higher studies in Kuchipudi, as well as to develop their artistic presence. Several SSSA students have been recognized for completing their SAMPADA certificates with distinction.

Sarada's students have performed not only in the Richmond area, but also in India with Kuchipudi Kalakshetra's troupe. They have also toured across major cities in the United States as part of Sri Hari Rama Murthy's dance drama *Mohini Bhasmasura*. Two students have taught basics of Kuchipudi and choreographed theater courses at the College of William and Mary.

About Gurus

Smt. Sarada Jammi, founder of Sri Sai Dance Academy, began her Kuchipudi dance training at the Kuchipudi Art Academy, Chennai, under Padmabhushan Dr. Vempati Chinna Satyam. She has also trained at Kuchipudi Kalakshetra, Visakhapatnam. Sarada has performed widely in Singapore, India and the United States.

Sarada has taught in Richmond since 2002, formally founding Sri Sai Dance Academy in 2013. During the nineties, Sarada taught at the Nrithyalaya Aesthetics Society and worked for the Singaporean Ministry of Education, teaching at the Si Ling, North View, and Yishun primary schools.

Sarada is a prolific choreographer whose works are characterized by rhythmic interplay and evocative imagery. She uses the language of Kuchipudi to explore philosophical themes, as well as to introduce young dancers to stories from Hindu mythology.

As a founding member of ICAPS Richmond, she organizes intimate concerts to encourage young students of Indian classical arts and to invite experienced performers to share their art with the Richmond community. She also serves as the chairperson of Sri Sai Narayana Organization.

Smt. Ameya King is a Kuchipudi dancer, dance educator, writer, and podcaster based in Richmond, Va. She began learning Kuchipudi at the Kuchipudi Kalakshetra in 2000. Since then, she has been under the tutelage of her mother, Smt. J. Sarada, as well as Sri Hari Rama Murthy and Smt. N. N. V. Satyabhanu. Ameya earned her Masters in Kuchipudi Dance at the University of SiliconAndhra in 2020.

As a dance educator, Ameya uses a meticulous and analytical approach to hone the technical skills of dance students. Ameya brings together her love of dance, keen interest in research, and a touch of humor to delve into Indian classical dance forms as part of An Off the Beat Dance Podcast with Ameya and Kiran.

Ameya has been awarded the titles “Natya Pratibha” and “Natya Bharati” by Visakhapatnam Arts and Dance Association for her captivating performances. Ameya has also had her academic research on Kuchipudi at University of Silicon Andhra and Andhra University. She is a founding member of the Indian Classical Arts Performance Series at Sri Sai Narayana Organization and has also served on the Board of Directors for IDEA.

Dr. Yamini Saripalli (disciple of Padmabhushan Dr. Vempati Chinna Satyam and Kalaratna Dr. Vempati Ravi Shankar) also supported Anusha as a part of her rangapraivesam training.





Program

Prārdhana

A traditional prayer invoking Goddess Bālātripurasundari, the presiding deity of Kuchipudi village and seeking her blessings for a successful performance.

Gajavadanā Beḍuve

*Rāgam: Hamsadhwani | Tālam: Ādi | Composer: Saint Purandara Dasa
Choreographer: Padmabhushan Dr. Vempati Chinna Satyam*

The invocatory piece will be a Kannada composition in praise of Lord Ganesha by renowned 15th century Haridāsa philosopher Purandara Dasa.

Aṣṭapadi (Sancaradadhara)

*Rāgamālika | Tālam: Ādi
Composer: Sri Jayadeva
Choreographer: Padmabhushan
Dr. Vempati Chinna Satyam*

In the *Gīta Govinda*, 12th century poet Jayadeva wrote a collection of eight-verse poems personifying the bond between God and mankind as the love between Lord Krishna and Radha. In this particular *Aṣṭapadi*, Radha remembers the times she spent with Krishna and feels forgotten.

Tarangam

*Rāgamālika | Tālam: Ādi
Composer: Sri NaryanaTheerta, arrangement by Sri Vignesh
Nurani Subramanian | Choreographer: Smt. Sarada Jammi*

An excerpt from the first tarangam in 17th century composer Sri Narayana Theerta's *Śrī Kṛṣṇa Līla Tarangiṇi*, this piece praises Goddess Durga, who takes newborn Krishna's place in Devaki's arms after his birth.



Sri Siddhendra Yogi's Bhāmā Kalāpam

Kalāpams typically feature 2-3 characters and focus on the emotional journey of the main character. For today's main piece, daruvus of the legendary drama *Bhāmā Kalāpam* will be presented. Attributed to Sri Siddhendra Yogi himself, this seminal Kuchipudi *nāṭyam* was historically performed by Kuchipudi *Bhāgavatulu* over the course of 8 days. Today's protagonist is Lord Krishna's beautiful and haughty wife, Queen Satyabhama, who finds herself longing for the Lord's presence after she angers him. The other characters in *Bhāmā Kalāpam* are her confidante Madhavi and her beloved Sri Krishna.

Praveśa Daruvu

Rāgam: Bhairavi | Tālam: Miśracāpu

Choreography: Padmabhushan Dr. Vempati Chinna Satyam

Satyabhama proudly introduces herself before revealing her predicament.



Siggayenoyamma

Rāgam: Madhyamāvati | Tālam: Ādi

Traditional Choreography

Upon Madhavi asking her the name of her beloved, Satyabhama replies "I'm too shy to say his name – and have been that way since I was a child!"

Lekha

Rāgam: Ārabhi | Tālam: Ādi

Choreography: Padmabhushan Dr. Vempati Chinna Satyam

Unable to bear the pangs of separation, Satyabhama decides to write a letter to Sri Krishna. Upon finishing her letter, she considers the impending rainstorm in the north, the priests heading to a wedding, and other occurrences as auspicious omens.



Tyāgarāja Kṛti

Rāgam: Kedāragouḷa | Tālam: Rūpakam

Composer: Saint Tyagaraja

Choreographer: Kalaratna Sri Vempati Ravi Shankar

Saint Tyagaraja writes that even a thousand eyes would not be enough to perceive the beautiful of Lord Krishna and melodiously paints a picture of Gopikas mesmerized by him. Lyrics say “orakanulujudaga,” as in the Gopika is stealing glances at Krishna from off to the side.

Tillāna

Rāgam: Dwijāvanti | Tālam: Ādi

Composer: Sri Lalgudi Jayaraman

Choreographer: Smt. J. Sarada

This beautiful piece by 20th century Carnatic violinist Sri Lalgudi Jayaraman mellifluously invokes a young Krishna on the banks of the river Yamuna. The choreography reflects the grace and power of the mighty river through syncopated rhythms and sculpturesque movements that are at times languid and graceful, and at times rapid and thundering.

Mangalam

Rāgam: Surati | Tālam: Ādi

Composer: Sri Narayana Theertha

From Narayana Theertha's *Śrī Kṛṣṇa Lila Tarangiṇi*, when the Gopikas are wishing Krishna well as he sets off to Madhura.



About the Orchestra

Nattuvangam: Smt. Sarada Jammi and Smt. Ameya King

Vocal: Sri Vignesh Nurani Subramanian had his initial vocal training under the guidance of Smt. Geetha Venugopalan, Sri Meenakshi Sundaram and his school teachers Smt. Bhavani Ganesan and Smt. Seetha Kannan. Following this, he pursued his advanced training in Chennai from Sri V.Sundaresan, a disciple of Sangeetha Kalanidhi Sri D.K. Jayaraman.

Currently residing in Germantown, MD, Vignesh has performed in Chennai and has also performed at several places in and around NJ, MD and VA. Besides concerts, he has provided vocal support for his Guru Sri V.Sundaresan and has participated in several performances of Tyagaraja's Pancharatnas and Mudduswamy Dikshithar's Navaavarna and Navagraha Krithis, as well as provided vocal support for various dance institutions through the mid-Atlantic area.

Mridangam: Sri Vijay Ganesh, a seasoned mridangist, learnt this divine art from the age of 6. He had his tutelage under great and illustrious master, Vidwan Late Sri. Kumbakonam Rajappa Iyer. Vijay Ganesh has over the years established himself as a Mridangam player, performed extensively in music and dance festivals in India and USA and have played over 150 dance arangetrams. He has accompanied many eminent Carnatic musicians, vocalists and players of instruments. He has won several awards from Madras Music Academy, Sri Krishna Gana Sabha and other organization for his excellence in mridangam. He started a percussion school called KMR School of Mridangam in 2010, to promote classical music by inviting artists from India, helping them to get visa, sponsoring and organizing Carnatic concert tours across various cities in US and Canada.

Veena: Smt. Villianur G. Lalitha, veena artist, is an All India Radio artist from Pondicherry. She is the recipient of Veena Dhanammal Memorial Award given by Music Academy, Chennai. Most recently, she performed during the 2017 December Music Season at various sabhas and festivals in Chennai and Coimbatore. Smt. Lalitha has accompanied in Veena for vocalconcerts and dance arangetrams. She holds a Bachelors degree in Music from the University of Madras. She is teaching vocal and veena in person and through Skype. She has mentored participants from USA and Canada for the 2018 Cleveland Aradhana for Epic Choir, EppoVaruvaro, and Rakthi Raga Presentation programs.

Violin: Dr. Saritha Gomadam is a Carnatic violinist in Richmond, Virginia. She is training under the guidance of Smt. Rajarajeshwari Srinivasan, faculty of Vidhya Subramaniam Academy. She has played violin for several Bharatnatyam dance arangetrams in the Richmond area and Kuchipudi dance performances. She is also a Kuchipudi disciple of Smt. Sarada Jammi at Sri Sai Dance Academy. Dr. Gomadam is a practicing physician in Infectious Diseases and also serves as the Medical Director for Infectious Disease for the Richmond market, Bon Secours Mercy Health.

Flute: Sri Partha Aji is a much sought after flautist for South Indian dance performances. Under the tutelage of Guru Ranjani Ramakrishnan and Sri V.K. Raman, Partha has been expanding his musical repertoire for the past several years. As a flautist he has travelled across the United States and has performed in over 100 arangetrams. In addition to the flute Partha plays the mridangam, ghatam, khanjira and morsing. Having completed his senior exams as mridangist in Bengaluru under the tutelage of Sri SV Giridhar, he has performed in several concerts in India and US. Partha works as a Software Engineer and spends most of his spare time on the propagation of Indian music and looks for greater innovations in his art.



About Kum. Anusha Chaluvadi

Kum. Anusha Chaluvadi recently completed her senior year at J.R. Tucker High School as a student in the International Baccalaureate program. She has been learning Kuchipudi from Smt. J. Sarada for ten years. Throughout this time, Anusha received her Kuchipudi certificate with Distinction after completing four years of Kuchipudi practical and theoretical study and testing with Silicon Andhra's SAMPADA, which is affiliated with Potti Sreeramulu Telugu University.

Anusha has performed at the Siva-Vishnu Temple in Maryland and many cultural events throughout the Richmond area such as the Richmond Peace Festival, Generation Dream Festival, and Sangeeta NatyaMahotsavam. In October of 2019, Anusha presented a Kuchipudi solo performance as a part of the Indian Classical Arts Performance Series at the Richmond Sai Temple. Alongside her Kuchipudi journey, she has also learned Carnatic Music from Smt. Chitra Ravindran for nine years. Next year, Anusha will be studying Russian at the American University of Central Asia in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Credits

Brochure

Hari Venkatesan
Lasting Impressions

Videography & Live Streaming

Hari Venkatesan
Lasting Impressions

Photography

Stephen Salpukas

Makeup & Hair

Kasi Aysola

Costumes

Nagaiah Dance Tailors &
Renuka Tailors

