

# About the Program

## Ashtapadi

Raaga: *Ragamalika*

Tala: *Adi Tala*

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 ashtapadi, "Sanchara Dadhara", Radha remembers the times she spent with Krishna and feels jealous that he is spending time with other gopikas. The item was choreographed by Padmabhushan Dr. Vempati Chinna Satyam.

## Murugan kriti

Raaga: *Rasikapriya*

Tala: *Adi Tala*

The great Tamil composer Sri Koteeswara Iyer composed 72 melakarta kritis in praise of Lord Murugan, This particular kriti, "Arul Seiyya Vendum Ayya" in the last melakarta raga, pleads Lord Murugan to mercifully free the artist from disillusioning worldly attachments. This item was choreographed by Smt. J. Sarada.

## Thillana

Raaga: *Hindolam*

Tala: *Adi Tala*

A thillana is a nritya item, which uses abstract combinations of hand gestures and footwork that show mastery of rhythmic complexity. This particular thillana ends by seeking the blessings of Sri Siddhendra Yogi, the founder of Kuchipudi. The item was choreographed by Padmabhushan Dr. Vempati Chinna Satyam.

## Mangalam



Presents  
the Rangapravesam of

**LIKHITHA UMAKANTH**

Henrico Theatre ~ November 20th, 2011



*Nathagnyanam nathacchilpan*

*Nasa vidya nasa kala*

*Nasa yoga nasetth karma*

*Natyasminenna drisyathe*

There is no intelligence

or sculpture,

No knowledge or art,

No meditation or ritual

In this world left untold

in the Natya Sastra

— Sage Bharata Muni's

*Natyashastra*

## About Kuchipudi

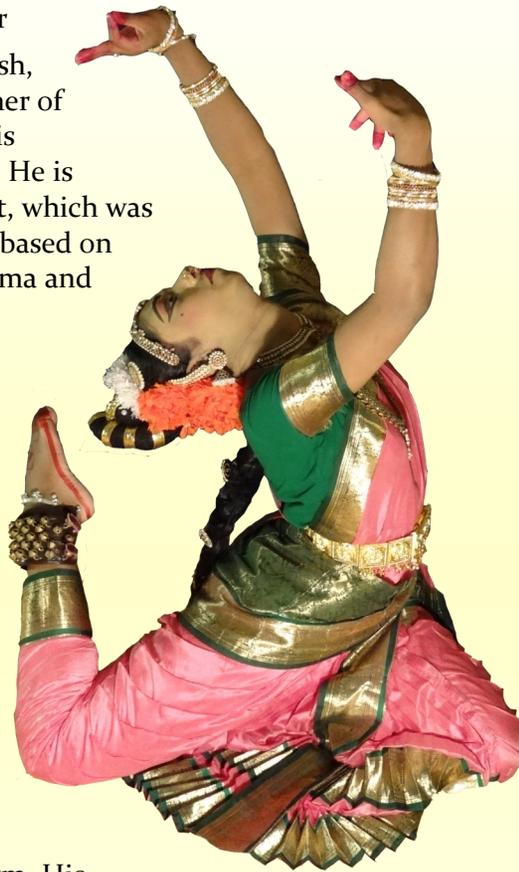
*Kuchipudi* derives its name after its village of birth in Andhra Pradesh, India. Sri Siddhendra Yogi, the father of this dance form, first developed this particular style in the 14th century. He is known for *Bhamakalapam*, a ballet, which was performed over nine days and was based on the mythological story of Satyabhama and Lord Krishna.

Kuchipudi evolved from yakshagana, a drama tradition practiced by male dancers who played both male and female roles to enact stories. As the patronage changed through each generation, this art form grew and went through a lot of changes.

In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Sri Vendantam Lakshmi Narayana Sastry revolutionized Kuchipudi by introducing solos to the drama tradition. He also encouraged women into the art form. His disciple, Padmabhushan Dr. Vempati Chinna Satyam continued his work and brought world-wide recognition to this art form.

The foundations of Kuchipudi are based on the *Natya Shastra*, a treatise on dance, music, and drama. This art form is characterized by its scintillating rhythm, quicksilver movements, geometric precision, eloquent and sensitive expressions, and beauty in its technique of presentation.

More than that, Kuchipudi is a lifestyle to live, a discipline to follow that makes one a better person.



## About the Gurus



*Smt. J. Sarada* was introduced to dance by Smt. Shantha Balagopalan in Dhanbad, India. In 1985, she began learning Kuchipudi under Padmabhushan Dr. Vempati Chinna Satyam at the Kuchipudi Art Academy in the true *gurukulam* style, living in his home. In 1987, she moved to Kuchipudi Kalakshetra, Visakhapatnam, a branch of the Academy. In 2000, she spent a whole year honing proficiency in expressions, choreography, and theory at Kuchipudi Kalakshetra. Sarada has

performed and given lecture demonstrations in the United States, Singapore and India.

A prolific choreographer, Sarada has choreographed Kuchipudi dance items that feature complex rhythms and nuanced expressions and explore philosophical themes in Hinduism.

Sarada is the founder and director of Sri Sai Dance Academy. She began teaching in Richmond in 2002. During the nineties, Sarada taught Kuchipudi at the Nrithyalaya Aesthetics Society and taught dance under the Singapore Ministry of Education. From 2000 to 2001, she taught Kuchipudi in Visakhapatnam as part of Kuchipudi Kalakshetra's outreach.



*Kum. Ameya Jammie*, also taught Likhitha in her preparation for her rangapravesam. Ameya began learning Kuchipudi at the Kuchipudi Kalakshetra in 2000. Since then, Ameya has been under the tutelage of her mother, J. Sarada. She has also underwent training under Sri Hari Rama Murthy and Smt. N. N. V. Satyabhanu.

*Sri Hari Rama Murthy*, principal of Kuchipudi Kalakshetra, and *Smt. N. N. V. Satyabhanu*, director of Sri Siddhendra Yogi Kala Nilayam conducted workshops that Likhitha attended. She also trained under them as a cast member of *Mohini Bhasmasura* during the summer of 2011.

## About the School

*Sri Sai Dance Academy* was established by Smt. J. Sarada. Based in Henrico, Va., it is an institution dedicated to learning, understanding, and fostering interest in the classical art form of Kuchipudi that was born out of Sarada's love for teaching. 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 allows students to hone their own skills and learn from each other, as well as forge strong relationships.

*Rangapravesam*, which means "ascending the stage" in Sanskrit, is a full-length solo dance performance. It marks the transition of the artist 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, marrying grace and vigor.

## About the Artiste

*Kum. Likhitha Umakanth* is a freshman at J. R. Tucker High School in the International Baccalaureate program. She began learning Kuchipudi under Smt. J. Sarada when she was 8. In addition to her training at Sri Sai Dance Academy, she has also trained in workshops conducted by Sri Hari Rama Murthy and Smt. N. N. V. Satyabhanu in Richmond, Va.

Likhitha has performed in Henrico County Public School events as well as at the Sai Temple in Richmond and various Indian cultural programs in the Richmond area. She also performed in Sri Hari Rama Murthy's 2011 US tour presenting the dance drama *Mohini Bhasmasura*.



## About the Orchestra

*Smt. J. Sarada* is conducting nattuvangam, leading the orchestra.



*Smt. Chitra Ravindran*, vocalist, learned music under Brinda Thyagarajan, the daughter of renowned Sangeetha Kalanidhi Maharajapuram Santhanam. She is currently mentored by her husband Ravi Ravindran in the advanced techniques of Carnatic music. In addition to teaching classical Carnatic music, she also works as a teacher at a local private elementary school.



*Smt. Meenakshi Sankaran*, vocalist, hails from the family of the legendary Sangeetha Kalanidhi T. L. Venkatarama Iyer, a veteran Carnatic music exponent and Justice of the Supreme Court of India. She received her foundation in music from Smt. Shanti Sriram and Smt. Raji Gopalakrishnan and is currently under the tutelage of Sri Ravi Ravindran. She teaches Carnatic music and the divine "Thirupugazh" to many in the Richmond community.



*Kum. Maya Ravindran*, violinist, is a sophomore at Douglas Freeman High School for leadership, government, and global economics. She has been learning Carnatic violin from Nagai Sriram for the past two years. Maya is also an accomplished Carnatic vocalist, and has won recognition at the Cleveland Aradhana competitions. Apart from her Indian classical credentials, Maya is also very engaged and talented in the western classical piano and violin.

## About the Orchestra

*Smt. Lalitha Balasubramaniam*, veena player, is an All India Radio artist in Veena. Lalitha has been performing veena and vocal since the age of twelve. Lalitha has won several awards including Veena Dhanammal Memorial Award given by the Music Academy. Lalitha is also a recipient of a cultural talent scholarship given by the government of India. Lalitha is the disciple of Karukurichi Narayana Iyer in Veena, Srirangam R. Ranganathan in Vocal, and Kumbakonam P.Gowrisankar in Bharathnayam. She holds a Bachelors degree in Carnatic Music from University of Madras besides her M.S. in Physics and Computer Science.



*Sri Vijay Ganesh*, mridangist, learned this divine art from the age of six. He had his tutelage under great and illustrious master Late Sri. Kumbakonam Rajappa Iyer. He has accompanied many dancers and performed in many arangetrams and rangapravesams in USA, Canada, and India. He has won several awards including the Best Mridangist award from the Music Academy in 1999, the Best Mridangist award in Gokulashtami from Sri Krishna Gana Sabha in 1998, the Government of India Cultural Scholarship for Mridangam from 1995 to 1999, and first prizes in competitions from various sabhas in Chennai, India. He is an All India Radio graded artist.



## About the Program

*Prayer*

*Gajavadana*

Raaga: *Hamsadhvani*

Tala: *Adi Tala*

This invocatory item is a kriti by Saint Purandara Dasa about Lord Ganesha, the remover of obstacles. It describes and salutes the elephant-headed god as the son of Gowri, who is praised and loved by all in the three worlds. This item was choreographed by Padmabhushan Dr. Vempati Chinna Satyam.

*Kalika Stuthi*

Raaga: *Kanakangi*

Tala: *Rupaka Tala*

In this beautiful piece on Goddess Kali, the dancer seeks her blessings and asks her to come immediately to help her cross this worldly ocean. This item was composed by Sri Tumuluri Satyagopal, and choreographed by Smt. J. Sarada.

*Tharangam*

Raaga: *Ragamalika*

Tala: *Adi Tala*

Tharangam means waves. Bala Gopala Tharangam is a piece from Narayana Tirtha's well known "Krishna Leela Tharangini." It is a typical Kuchipudi item where the dancer describes the childhood pranks of Sri Krishna. This item is the climax of the recital and ends with the dancer dancing on the rim of a brass plate. The item was choreographed by Padmabhushan Dr. Vempati Chinna Satyam.

*Ananda Thandavam*

Raaga: *Ragamalika*

Tala: *Adi Tala*

This exhilarating item describes Lord Siva performing a dance of bliss as his consort Parvati smiles and the river Ganga bounds from his locks and the universe watches, mesmerized. This item was choreographed by Padmabhushan Dr. Vempati Chinna Satyam.