

SAMHATI

Samhati is a unique Indian – Srilankan dance production Choreographed by Shamitha Hettige and Vithya Arasu

The lead performers of this production are:

Shamitha Hettige

Vithya Arasu

The supporting artists are students of Vithya Arasu:

Abhinaya Arasu

Samyukta Chillara

Josephine Ramya

Ines Shraddha

Olga

This production begins with a piece called “Mallari” which is a welcome song performed by students of Vithya Arasu.

This is followed by ‘Lasya’, an amalgamation of several different styles of Indian and Srilankan classical dance forms choreographed to the melodies tunes of Anousha Shankar

The central piece of the production is a duet titled “Anurakti” which narrates the stories of Shiva This dance piece is an Indo-Srilankan duet incorporating the dance styles of India, namely, Bharatanatyam, Odissi, Karanas, and Mayurbhanj Chhau, and the traditional dance styles of Srilanka, namely, Ves or Kandyan dance Pahatarata and Sabaragamua dance styles. Concept & choreography by Shamitha Hettige & Vithya Arasu Costume designed by Shamitha Hettige

Music composed and rendered by Ananthashree and Mithun madhusudhanan. Nuwan balasoorya on flute, rhythmic composition by Prasanna Rupathilaka. Ardhanareeshwara stuti in ragamalika.

Program Synopsis

Mallari

Mallari is the tune that is played in the temple during the procession of the deity around the temple . Dancers and musicians walk in front of the deity as they perform. The beauty of this rendition is now brought to the proscenium stage and is performed by many dancers in Bharatanatyam style. This choreography by Vithya Arasu is special as it's woven together by incorporating the Karanas of Natyasastra.

Mallari set in Gambeera Natai Ragam (melody) and Adi Talam (8 count rhythm)

This piece is performed by students of Vithya Arasu:

Abhinaya Arasu
Samyukta Chillara
Josephine Ramya
Ines Shraddha
Olga

Lasya

Dancer : Vithya Arasu

Music: Album " Traces of You" by Anoushka Shankar

Choreography by Vithya Arasu is a dedication to all her teachers with whom she learned different dance forms. The forms that she have included here are Karanas- Natyasastra which is the root of all dance forms, Bharatanatyam, Odissi, Mayurbhanj Chhau, Kandyan- a dance form of Srilanka and Vilasini Natyam.

Here are her gurus from different dance forms:

Karanas: Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam, Late. Smt. Uma Sriram &Dr. Gayatri Kannan

Bharatanatyam: BPK, Pondicherry & Nrithyodaya, Chennai

Odissi: Ms. Kanchana, Ms. Surpa Sen, Ms. Jahnabi Behera &Ms. Bijayini Sathpathy

Chhau: Mr. Rakesh Sai Babu

Kandyan : Mr. Shamitha Ruchiran Hettige

Vilasini Natvam : Ms. Purva Dhanashree

The music is from the very famous Album "Traces of You" by Anoushka Shankar and the track is Lava. What a wonderful work it is! It will make anybody move their limbs when they listen to it.

Anurakti Shiva tandava Stotram

The Shiva Tandava Stotra of Lord Ravana is interpreted as Parvathy singing for Shiva admiring his thick hair locks, the beautiful river Ganga that flows from above His head, and the majestic snake worn by Him.

She falls in love with him and addresses him as "Chandrasekhara". She bows down to Shiva who dances to the drum Bhol "Dagad Dagad ". She describes his third eye which is the burning fierce fire and how he burns Manmata with his anger.

Parvathy further admires him for creating marvelous paintings on her bosom with his love. Shiva is surrounded by bees as the sweet scent of Kadamba flowers from his body attracts them. He is the remover of all sins from our births, destructs Tripura, Yama, Manmata, Gajasura, and Andaka and is the destroyer of all evil spirits thus taking away all the negativity from us.

Lord Shiva has an equanimous vision towards different forms of the world, towards a snake and a garland, towards the most precious gem as well as a lump of dirt, and friends and enemies, towards a blade of grass or a lotus, towards common people or emperors. Om Sada Shivam Bhajamyaham !

This dance piece is an Indo-Srilankan duet incorporating the dance styles of India, namely, Bharatanatyam, Odissi, Karanas, and Mayurbhanj Chhau, and the traditional dance styles of Srilanka, namely, Ves or Kandyan dance Pahatarata and Sabaragamua dance styles. Concept & choreography by Shamitha Hettige & Vithya Arasu Costume designed by Shamitha Hettige

Ardhanarishwara as a concept has two fundamental entities: the Purusha and the Prakriti. Purusha and Prakriti must interact together and in harmony in order to create. As a result of the interaction between these two entities the material universe evolves in stages. This unison is represented by the androgynous imagery of shiva and shakti. This also may be symbolically seen in this piece as the quintessential balance between the masculine and the feminine energies within the beings and the universe.

The sloka composed by Sri Adi shankara describes the form as follows:

One half shines with golden yellow color like chAmpeya flower and other half shines in bright white of karpUra.

One side of the head is adorned with a beautiful braided decoration and other sports an unkempt jaTAmakuTam.

One half adorned with musk and kumkumam. The other half smeared with ashes from the funeral pyre.

The left foot is adorned with a beautiful golden nUpura that makes very pleasing sounds when they move. The lotus-like foot on the right side is adorned with a cobra as the anklet.

One half adorned with garlands made of mandAram and the other adorned with a garland made of skulls.

devi's eye is described as long, extending upto the ears like the long and beautiful nllotpalaa flower and shiva's eye is as radiant as a lotus flower.

She has even number of eyes and he has odd number of eyes.

The goddess dresses in royal and divine clothes and the god has directions alone as his clothes.

SHE dances in delight with captivating beauty at the face of creation which springs forth from them. His dance of destruction is in fury and the cosmos subsides back in them. SHE is the mother and He is the Father of this world.

To this figure of Ardhanreeswara I bow down to both Shivaa and shiva.

This has been rendered by Ananthashree and Mithun madhusudhanan. Nuwan balasoorya on flute, rythmic composition by Prasanna Rupathilaka. Ardhanareeshwara stuti in ragamalika.

About the Artists:

Josephine Ramya

Starting off as a student of Smt. Seethalakshmi Srinivasan (Bharatanatyam) from Madurai, Ramya has journeyed to being a multi-faceted personality. Apart from practicing and performing, she dons the curator/organizer/director hat in making learning programs available through Indira Performing Arts - like Marga Nrta Karanas course with Smt. Vithya Arasu - and curating events such as the Varnam Salon Deutschland (co-curator). Ramya's brain-child, Indira Performing Arts is a virtual platform that works to bring art for all and to promote art and artists in Europe. Committed to the cause, she is also serving as a board member of the Indian classical dance association, in Germany. (KITD e.V). A perennially curious student that Ramya is, she has recently completed her Master of Arts program in Bharatanatyam from Tamil University, Thanjavur.

Abinaya Arasu

As a senior student of Smt.Vithya Arasu, Abinaya's training is in Bharatanatyam, Natya Sastra and Odissi. She is a faculty member of Natya Kala Vidyalaya, additionally assisting Smt. Vithya Arasu in several well-received dance workshops across the Indian sub-continent. Touring in cities such as Coimbatore, Bangalore, Pune, Mumbai, Delhi and Hyderabad, Abinaya has notably also assisted in Vithya's lecture demonstration at the esteemed Sangeet Natak Academy, last year.

Olga

Olga is a Bharatanatyam dancer from Kyiv, Ukraine. Her journey began when she started studying Hindi and Indian Culture at university. This study piqued her interest in Indian classical dance. Olga began learning Bharatanatyam under the tutelage of Ganna Smirnova in Kyiv. And later on she received an ICCR scholarship to study Bharatanatyam under the guidance of Guru ji Jayalakshmi Eshwar in Delhi, India. She lived in India for over five years, which provided her with ample opportunities to immerse herself in the country's rich cultural heritage. Over the years, Olga has honed her skills in Bharatanatyam through attending workshops of esteemed mentors such as Rukmini Vijayakumar, Savitha Sastry and Madurai R Muralidharan, and dedicated personal practice. Currently, she is continuing her education in dance by learning Karanas from the renowned dance expert Vithya Arasu.

Shraddha Inés Fenili

Shraddha Inés Fenili, originally from Buenos Aires, Argentina, began learning Karanas from Vithya Arasu online at the end of 2020. She has primarily studied Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi via regular lessons from Argentine teachers and international workshops led by Indian teachers. During her secondary school years, she resided in a small village in Himachal Pradesh, India where she was exposed to Indian classical

dances. Her regular practice of Sahaja Yoga meditation has additionally enabled her to establish a profound connection to Indian classical arts. Thus began her journey in the Indian classical dances for more than ten years. She has performed at various events, including for the Indian Embassy in Argentina and cultural gatherings. Currently living in Vienna, Austria, she hopes to continue this journey.

Samyukta Chillara

Samyukta Chillara is a Bharatanatyam performer and teacher currently based in Spain. Trained by guru Dr. Ananda Shankar Jayant, she has performed across India as an ensemble artist. Alongside her biomedical research career, she teaches Bharatanatyam in an Indian dance school in Barcelona. Her institute 'Natyayukta kalasala' aims to promote Indian traditional arts in Spain and Europe.

Lead Dancers

Vithya Arasu

Vithya Arasu is a Bharathanatyam and an Odissi performer holding a Master's degree in Fine arts. She has received her formal training in Nritta Karanas under Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam, Guru Dr. Gayathri Kannan, and Guru. Uma Sriram. She received her initial training in Odissi from Guru Kanchana and Guru. Surupa Sen, Nrityagram and Guru. Biyayini Sathpathy in a workshop. She currently learns Chhau from Guru. Rakesh Sai Babu, Kandyan from Guru. Shamitha Hettige and Odissi under the guidance of Rukmani Dwivedi.

Vithya Arasu is trained by eminent gurus of each style and is known for her unique movement vocabulary and powerful explorations of identity and cultural expression through dance. Her work explores various themes and often incorporates different traditional art elements. Recently, she was awarded "Yuva Kala Bharathi" from Bharat Kalachar in Dec 2022.

Shamitha Hettige

SHAMITHA RUCHIRAN HETTIGE is an established Kandyan and contemporary dancer, performer & teacher. Shamitha began his dance training at the age of 9, under the legendary dancers Channa Wijewardana and Upuli Panibharatha. His trainings range from traditional Kandyan, modern dance and French ballet techniques.

Shamitha has been lauded for his flawless & geometrically fine jumps rooting from Kandyan

and other traditional dance forms of Srilanka. Ever since the age of 16, he has represented the country and Channa upuli dance troupe at more than 60 countries and prestigious venues.

SHAMITHA RUCHIRAN HETTIGE is also the founder of Playmore, Srilanka's and India's first trampoline based fitness studio. As a teacher he has been imparting dance knowledge to

hundreds of students on behalf of Channa-Upuli dance academy and on his own. He has an active set of students from around the globe learning Kandyan online. He is currently learning Srilankan traditional drums, Mayurbhanj Chhau, Kalaripayattu and exploring pedagogies of other traditional arts forms of South asia. He has recently performed for Trikaaya dance academy's online festival and Art of living's World forum for arts & culture.