



Nrityagram Dance Ensemble

Electronic Press Kit

About the Company



"I dream of building a community of dancers in a forsaken place amidst nature. A place where nothing exists, except dance. A place where you breathe, eat, sleep, dream, talk, imagine - dance. A place where all the five senses can be refined to perfection. A place where dancers drop negative qualities such as jealousy, small-mindedness, greed and malice to embrace their colleagues as sisters and support each other in their journey towards becoming dancers of merit."

"A place called Nrityagram."

– Protima Gauri (October 12,1948 - August 18, 1998)

One of the premier Indian Classical dance ensembles performing today, Nrityagram Dance Ensemble has the unprecedented distinction of making The New York Times' "Best Dance of the Year" list two consecutive years in a row (2015, 2016). More than a dance company, Nrityagram was founded as a village devoted to dance. The all-female ensemble's daily life of intensive training and meditation brings to the stage compelling captivating performances that are at once sensual and lyrical.

The Nrityagram dance village is located outside Bangalore, India. It was founded in 1990 by Odissi dancer Protima Gauri, who converted ten acres of farmland into a setting for the study, practice and teaching of dance. At Nrityagram, dance is a way of life. Reminiscent of ancient ashrams where gurus imparted not only technique but also a philosophy of being, this is a creative space where dancers, musicians and choreographers live together, sharing their skills and developing their art. To enrich their practice, dancers are also taught yoga and martial arts along with Sanskrit and classical literature. As knowledge passes from guru to disciple, the continuity of the classical arts is ensured.

Surupa Sen, Artistic Director



Surupa Sen was the first student to graduate from the Nrityagram Gurukula (School) and is a founding member of The Nrityagram Dance Ensemble. She began her Odissi training with the architect of Odissi, Guru Kelucharan Mahapatra and also studied Odissi with Guru Protima Gauri, and Abhinaya (expressional dance) with Guru Kalanidhi Narayanan. Surupa shares an artistic partnership with Bijayini Satpathy for over two decades and together they have researched and developed the vocabulary of Odissi dance and have created a style that distinguishes the dancers of the Nrityagram Gurukula (School). Attracted to choreography from her first exposure to western makers of dance, she has worked with dancers and choreographers from across the world. She has a keen talent for music and rhythm composition and has worked closely with composer Pt. Raghunath Panigrahi. Surupa has choreographed six full-length ensemble shows for Nrityagram, which are Śrī: In Search of the Goddess (2000), Ansh (2004), Sacred Space (2006), Pratimā: Reflection (2008), Saṃhāra (2012) and Śriyah (2016); and two full-length duet shows Saṃyoga (2012) and Songs of Love and Longing (2013). Surupa is Artistic Director and choreographer at Nrityagram.

In 2019, Surupa was awarded The Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, the highest award for the Performing Arts in India.

Touring Program



“exciting and illuminating”
- *The New York Times*

Āhuti (2019)

Running Time: 95 minutes (with a 20 minute Intermission)

Featuring Nrityagram & Chitrasena dancers

Performed with live music

On the heels of their recent tour revival of the international hit *Samhara*, Surupa Sen will collaborate with Chitrasena Dance Company from Sri Lanka for a new work. The company will be joined by male and female guest dancers from this Kandyan dance troupe along with members from Nrityagram’s Odissi dance ensemble.

TOURING PERSONNEL

Dancers/Performers: 9 dancers, 4 musicians

Production/Technical: 1

DATES AVAILABLE FOR TOURING

Fall 2019

Summer 2021 + Spring 2022

Nrityagram Press Quotes



“The Best Dance of 2015” “The Best Dance of 2016”
- *The New York Times*

“So beguiling, you resist blinking in case you miss a moment!”
- *The Herald*

“These are among the world’s greatest dancers.”
- *The New York Times*

“One of the most extraordinary dance events of the year... The only proper response to dancers this amazing is worship.”
- *The New York Times*

“The women of the Nrityagram Dance Ensemble are rock stars in the dance world! At Tuesday’s opening night, Mikhail Baryshnikov and Isaac Mizrahi were in the audience, and choreographer Mark Morris was on his feet at the curtain, shouting bravos!”
- *The New York Post*

Residency Activities



Introduction to Odissi Dance Class

This introductory class is an opportunity to learn the basic abstract movement phrases and body-training techniques specific to Odissi, as evolved and practiced at Nrityagram.

Kandyan Dance Class

This class will give participants the opportunity to learn about Kandyan, an indigenous traditional dance form from Sri Lanka.

Schooltime Matinee: Dance Village Odyssey

This one-of-a-kind cultural exchange transports students on a journey through time and space to Eastern India, the birthplace of Odissi (one of the world's oldest classical dance forms) and to the island of Sri Lanka, home to Kandyan dance (an ancient folk dance ritual). Geared for young audiences, company members illustrate the breathtaking beauty of both dance forms, demonstrating how each reflects the culture of their homeland and thus the differences that set each apart. Accompanied with live music, this engaging show includes audience participation and introduces students to the language of Odissi and Kandyan dance – from body positions and movement vocabulary to nuances such as walks, spins and jumps. Study Guide Available.

Lecture Demonstration

Based on Odissi Dance from India and Kandyan Dance from Sri Lanka, The Lecture-Demonstration is an Introduction to Odissi Dance as evolved and practiced at Nrityagram & Kandyan Dance as developed and practiced by the Chitrasena Dance School.

Panel Discussions, Artist Talks and **Post-show** discussions are also available.

Contact

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