

Nrityagram Dance Ensemble



Samhāra
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.

Key Biographies



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), Samhāra (2012) and Śriyah (2016); and two full-length duet shows Samyoga (2012) and Songs of Love and Longing (2013). Surupa is Artistic Director and choreographer at Nrityagram.

Bijayini Satpathy made Nrityagram her home in 1993 and is a founding member of The Nrityagram Dance Ensemble. Her initial Odissi training was in Odisha from the age of seven, until she moved to Nrityagram. Bijayini, in partnership with Surupa Sen has created an aesthetic style of Odissi dance that is the hallmark of Nrityagram. Her research on the moving body in all its possibilities has resulted in a scientific body training programme sourced from Yoga, Natyashastra, Kalaripayattu, Western fitness methods and Odissi body-conditioning exercises. This makes practice of dance injury-proof and increases the performance life-span of a dancer.

She has also developed an expanded, systematic and accessible training programme for Odissi dancers, which is equally valuable for beginners, advanced learners, performers and Teachers. As Director Dance Education, Bijayini works on extending the vocabulary of the traditional Odissi form and formulating Nrityagram's dance pedagogy. She is also responsible for all outreach activities.



Samhāra

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

DATES AVAILABLE FOR TOURING

Fall 2018

TOURING PERSONNEL

Dancers/Performers: 7 dancers, 5 musicians

Production/Technical: 2

RESIDENCY & OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Master Classes & Workshops: Odissi Dance and Kandyan Dance

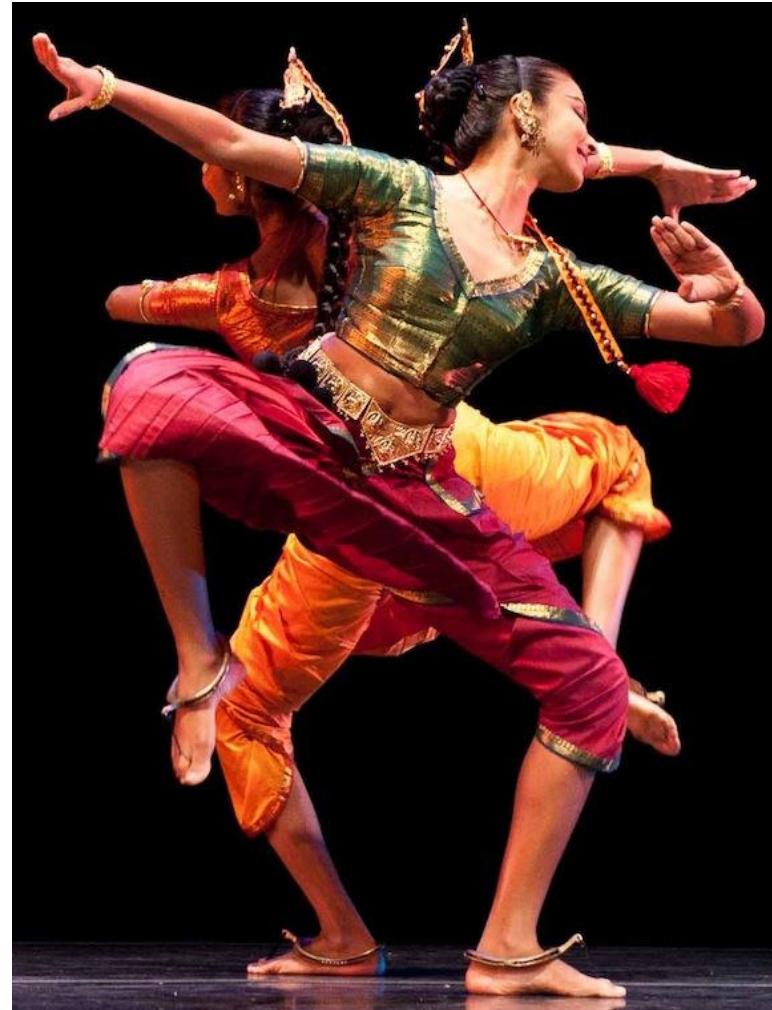
Schooltide Performances

Lecture Demonstration

Pre and Post Performance Discussions

VIDEO

Excerpts: <https://vimeo.com/212977266>



Performed with live music. Featuring special guest artists from Chitrasena Dance Company. India's most celebrated Odissi dance troupe returns to the US with *Samhāra*, a work that has not been seen in the US since its premiere in 2012. Accompanied by the beguiling dancers of Sri Lanka's Chitrasena Dance Company, the collaborative performance features an impressive ensemble of 12 international dancers and musicians. A rare opportunity to experience the timeless brilliance of two ancient dance forms, from the sensuous grace of Odissi to the ethereal dynamism of Kandyan dance.

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*

Contact

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