

MYTHILI PRAKASH

She's Auspicious

DANCE/CHOREOGRAPHY Mythili Prakash

VOCALS/VEENA Ananya Ashok

VOCALS Susha Rangarajan

PERCUSSION Aswini Srinivasan

DANCE ENSEMBLE Jahnavi Kalyan, Nikita Rao, Jessica Sitaramya, Malini Taneja

RECORDED CONTRIBUTORS

VOCALS Sushma Soma

VOCALS/PERCUSSION Aditya Prakash

MRIDANGAM Sumesh Narayanan

LIGHTING Venkatesh Krishnan

PRODUCTION MANAGER Matt Sanford

REHEARSAL DIRECTOR Kaavya Matatova

SOUND DESIGN Aditya Prakash, Mythili Prakash, Sushma Soma

SOUND ENGINEER Julian Lê

MUSIC PRODUCTION Aditya Prakash

LIGHTING DESIGN Aideen Malone, Jennifer Cashman

SET DESIGN Mythili Prakash, Kaavya Matatova, Zak Macro

TECHNICAL MANAGERS Lars Davidson, Zak Macro

PROJECT MANAGER Jahnavi Kalyan

AGENT Cathy Pruzan

MENTOR Akram Khan

Harold Prince Theatre

Friday, October 4 @ 8 PM

Saturday, October 5 @ 2 PM

Sunday, October 6 @ 2 PM

There will be no intermission.

INSIGHTS

Stay after the Oct 4 performance for a chat with Mythili Prakash and Pallabi Chakravorty, Stephen Lang Professor of Performing Arts at Swarthmore College.



The presentation of Mythili Prakash was made possible by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Foundation and the Mellon Foundation.

PROGRAM NOTES

A full-length dance and music work featuring an all-female cast, *She's Auspicious* blurs the lines between Goddess and Woman to explore the intricate interplay between the worship of Goddesses and treatment of women in society. The Goddess/Woman paradox allows the unraveling of socio-cultural myths, stories and values that are beautiful and personal, but simultaneously deeply rooted in systemic power structures.

"As the dancer, I inhabit the character of the Goddess Devi, who is created by male Gods, generated with their energy and weapons, and programmed to kill an army of demons. In doing this, I seek to embody and linger in psychological states that challenge the ideals of "restraint" that characterize femininity in both classical dance and in society; this mythical narrative becomes a mirror to our present day reality, connected to questions of power and agency, reflecting my own lived and observed experiences as a woman."

- Mythili Prakash

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Mythili Prakash (Dance/Choreography)

Prakash's innovative vision as a choreographer, combined with her powerful conviction as a performer, distinguishes her as one of the most respected young Bharatanatyam artists today. Her work is unique – while rooted in the intricate and nuanced language of Bharatanatyam, it confronts the socio-political global world we live in today. Prakash is incisive in her approach, questioning cultural and social norms, while pushing the boundaries of her practice of the art form, particularly around femininity and aesthetics. Her creative introspections acknowledge and draw fodder from her experiences as a mother and a first-generation child of immigrants, as well as the complexity of her identity as a dancer of caste-privilege in India, while simultaneously a female artist of color in the U.S.

Prakash has toured her own solo productions throughout the United States, Mexico, Canada, United Kingdom, Europe, India and Singapore, performing at venues such as Sadler's Wells (London), Music Academy (India), Jacob's Pillow (U.S.) and Esplanade Theatres (Singapore). She was featured on NBC's *Superstars of Dance* as a Bharatanatyam soloist, introducing her art form to the world. Prakash also had the honor of working with director Ang Lee in the award-winning film *Life of Pi* and was cast as the wife of the titular character.

In 2019, Prakash was nominated by celebrated dancer/choreographer Akram Khan as Choreographer of the Future for UK-based Dance Umbrella's Four by Four Commissions, premiering her solo work *HERE and NOW* at the festival that year. Prakash is a recipient of the Creation to Performance grant from the Irvine Dance Foundation and Artistic Innovation grant from the Center for Cultural Innovation. She has received numerous accolades from premiere institutions of dance and music in India as well.

In 2021, Prakash received the National Dance Project touring grant from NEFA for *She's Auspicious*, which premiered in Hamburg at the Reflektor Festival, curated by musician Anoushka Shankar. The next year, she subsequently created a trilogy of pieces, beginning with *AR | DHA*, a commission for the 90th anniversary festival of Jacob's Pillow. The trilogy concluded with *ONE | ALL* for the Festival in Motion, a first of its kind, site-specific dance festival surrounding the World Cup in Qatar. Prakash was also a principal dancer in Akram Khan Company's *Outwitting the Devil*, which toured worldwide from 2019 to 2022.

Prakash is currently touring her latest production, *She's Auspicious*, across the U.S., Asia and the UK, garnering great acclaim from critics and audiences alike for its artistic merit and thought-provoking narrative.

Ananya Ashok (Vocals/Veena)

Ashok is a Carnatic vocalist and disciple of Sangeeta Kalanidhi, Sri Madurai TN Seshagopalan. She received her initial and formative training from the esteemed violinist, Smt. Anuradha Sridhar. She is also a vainika and disciple of Sri Srikanth Chary. Ashok resides in the Bay Area. When she isn't performing, she enjoys teaching the classical arts to students of all ages.

Susha Rangarajan (Vocals)

Rangarajan is an award-winning musician and visual artist. She was introduced to music at the age of five and trained with some of the most renowned South Indian classical gurus and musicians. She has performed widely at both Indian and international festivals and has released several Carnatic and world music albums. In 2012, she earned her master's in jazz performance from the University of Toronto. She is deeply passionate about cross-disciplinary, collaborative work, particularly in the fields of performance, film and visual media. She explores various ways to integrate her musical career with her interests in visual design and communication. Rangarajan works as a music composer and has scored music for feature films, dance performances, advertisements and short films.

Aswini Srinivasan (Percussion)

Srinivasan started playing Mridangam at the age of six. She started her training in Mridangam from the legend Padmashri Dr. T.K. Murthy. Her talent has been recognized by Shri Ramjhi, founder of Issai Mazhalai. Srinivasan has performed more than 1,800 concerts all over India and abroad. She has also played in many percussion ensemble concerts along with her Guru Shri. T.K. Murthy and other eminent personalities. She has accompanied many well-known musicians and has collaborated with many dancers. She is the youngest professional female Mridangist in India. She has received many prestigious awards and accolades and won many prizes. Apart from playing Mridangam, she also plays Cajon, Rhythm Pad, Kanjira, Dholak/Dholki, etc. and performs all genres of music. She was a part of Ethno Sweden, where young musicians from over 19 countries came together and performed a concert in the famous Bingsjöståmman Music Festival in Sweden in 2022. Srinivasan has performed all over India and overseas, including concerts in Malaysia, Colombo, France, Sweden and Singapore.

Jahnvi Kalyan (Dancer)

A proud SoCal native, Kalyan has studied Bharatanatyam for the past 15 years under Viji Prakash and Mythili Prakash in Los Angeles. She has performed with the Shakti Dance Company across the United States, India and Singapore at renowned venues such as the Ford Amphitheater and Esplanade Theatres by the Bay, and is also a recipient of the National YoungArts Award. Kalyan now resides in Washington, D.C., where she works as a program analyst for SRI portfolios. Passionate about artistic work rooted in social justice, Kalyan is proud to be part of the *She's Auspicious* team as both an ensemble dancer and project manager, and continues to support innovative projects via her newly launched arts consultancy startup, Kaleidoscope.

Nikita Rao (Dancer)

Rao began learning Bharatanatyam at the age of eight under the tutelage of Smt. Viji Prakash. She completed her arangetram in 2011 and has since performed with the Shakti Dance Company in many productions, including *Ramayana*, *Krishnam Vande Jagat Gurum* and *Mara*. Rao has trained under Mythili Prakash for over a decade, and in 2018, she trained under Smt. Bragha Bessell and Smt. Malavika Sarukkai in Chennai. Rao now resides in Los Angeles with her partner and dog.

Jessica Sitaramya (Dancer)

Sitaramya is a native of Los Angeles and has been studying Bharatanatyam since the age of five. She is a disciple of Viji Prakash and Mythili Prakash. Sitaramya has had the privilege of performing in various productions and has toured throughout the U.S. and India. During her time in college, she was captain of the dance troupe, UT Nritya Sangam. She is also training in Carnatic music under Vani Ramamurthi. Sitaramya received a BS in public health from the University of Texas at Austin and is currently working to expand value-based care into the nephrology space.

Malini Taneja (Dancer)

Taneja has been a student of Bharatanatyam for 21 years, under the guidance of her mentors, Viji Prakash and Mythili Prakash, and has performed in several of their productions. She is also a Rajasthani folk dancer and singer of Kirtan music, and has performed, taught workshops and shared her passion for dance and spirituality in yoga spaces and music festivals around the world. Taneja enjoys curating meaningful experiences for people. She has organized a children's summer camp program for the past 12 years and brings groups yearly to India for pilgrimages and artist excursions. Taneja currently lives in upstate New York, where she co-created a retreat center known as Serve Love Ashram, for spiritual education and devotional arts.

Venkatesh Krishnan (Lighting)

With over three decades of experience, Krishnan is the most sought-after light and sound technician in Chennai, India. With an eye for detail and an in-depth knowledge of classical Indian music and dance, Krishnan has traveled far and wide with stalwarts to the United States, Canada, UK, France, Germany, Netherlands, China, Japan, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Mauritius and Australia. He has worked on prestigious stages across the globe, including The Kennedy Center, U.S. and the Esplanade, Singapore. Krishnan's technical wizardry coupled with aesthetics takes any production to its zenith.

Matt Sanford (Production Manager)

Sanford has worked professionally in production for dance, theatre, film and gallery for twenty years. He has provided technical direction, production and stage management, scenic and lighting design for companies such as Alonzo King Lines Ballet, Aspen Santa Fe Ballet, New Mexico School for the Arts, New Mexico Actors Lab, Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian, Vladem Contemporary and the Museum of International Folk Art. In addition to a successful career in production, Sanford is also an accomplished actor, director, playwright and photographer. He is based out of Santa Fe, NM.

Kaavya Matatova (Rehearsal Director)

Matatova is a board-certified general surgeon, chief medical officer and now, project producer. She was the Vice Chief of Surgery at HonorHealth Deer Valley in Phoenix, AZ where she currently resides. Matatova stepped away from operating in 2021 and was appointed as the Chief Medical Officer of Southwest Breast and Aesthetics, a highly specialized plastic and reconstructive surgery practice whose expertise is helping women obtain breast reconstruction. When Matatova attended a private performance of *She's Auspicious*, she was so taken by it that she restructured her work schedule to be able to work on this team. Her connection to Mythili, and this artform, dates back 33 years, when she first began dancing at the Shakti School of Bharata Natyam.

Julian Lê (Sound Engineer)

Julian-Quán Việt Lê is a Vietnamese/Chinese producer, composer and audio engineer. His main hobby is learning about all sounds and their amazing ability to tell stories, evoke feelings/emotions and connect people. He also loves to swim, cook and befriend giant sea creatures such as turtles, manta rays and whale sharks. Instagram: Lejkeys

ZAKIR HUSSAIN & RAHUL SHARMA

NOV 3

"A fearsome technician but also a whimsical inventor," (*The New York Times*) tabla superstar Zakir Hussain is joined by renowned santoor player Rahul Sharma for a masterful blend of classical ragas and energetic rhythms.



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