NRITYAGRAM DANCE ENSEMBLE

KHAṅKHAṆĀ: THE SOUND OF DANCING FEET

CHOREOGRAPHY & SOUND DESIGN Surupa Sen

MUSIC COMPOSITION
RĀSA RATI, ŚRIDEVI* AND *KHANDITĀ Pt. Raghunath Panigrahi
PRIYÉ CHĀRUSHEELÉ Pt. Bhubaneswar Mishra
NI SĀ DHĀ NI* AND *SMRITIRĀNGĀ Surupa Sen

RHYTHM COMPOSITION Guru Dhaneswar Swain, Surupa Sen, Rohan Dahale

DANCERS Surupa Sen, Pavithra Reddy, Anoushka Rahman, Namaha Mazoomdar, Daquil Miriyala

MUSICIANS
LEAD VOCALIST AND HARMONIUM Jatin Sahu
CHANTS AND MARDALA (PERCUSSION) Rohan Dahale
BAMBOO FLUTE Parshuram Das
VIOLIN Anup Kulthe
MANJIRA Surupa Sen

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR & LIGHTING DESIGNER Lynne Fernandez

Zellerbach Theatre

Friday, November 6 @ 7:30 PM
Saturday, November 7 @ 3 PM

There will be an intermission.

INSIGHTS Join us after Friday's performance for a conversation with the choreographer and artistic director, Surupa Sen, moderated by Pallabi Chakravorty.

Sruti
The India Music & Dance Society, Philadelphia
www.sruti.org

William Penn Foundation

This performance is part of the Arts of India Festival, which is co-presented with Sruti, The India Music & Dance Society, Philadelphia. Lead support for the Arts of India Festival is provided by the William Penn Foundation.

The 26/27 season dance series is co-sponsored by Arthur Kaplan, C'67 and Duane Perry alongside Lynn Jerath, W'95 and Kunal Jerath.

PROGRAM

Ni Sā Dhā Ni
DANCERS Anoushka Rahman, Daquil Miriyala, Pavithra Reddy, Namaha Mazoomdar

Rāsa Rati (Krishna's Rapturous Love Play)
DANCERS Pavithra Reddy, Anoushka Rahman, Namaha Mazoomdar, Daquil Miriyala

Śridevi (Invocation to the Mother Goddess)
DANCERS Pavithra Reddy, Anoushka Rahman, Daquil Miriyala, Namaha Mazoomdar

INTERMISSION

Priyé Chārusheelé (Divine Surrender)
DANCER Surupa Sen

Smritirāngā
DANCERS Pavithra Reddy, Anoushka Rahman, Daquil Miriyala, Namaha Mazoomdar, Surupa Sen

PROGRAM NOTES

Khaṅkhaṇā emerges as both invocation and memory.

Audiences are invited into a world where each step carries the imprint of time, earth and lineage.

Rooted in the fertile red soil of Nrityagram, *Khaṅkhaṇā* is shaped by a deep and abiding relationship to place. The land carries within it the quiet labor of practice, the pulse of tradition and the unfolding of a shared artistic life.

The evening brings together a constellation of works, both new and familiar, created by Surupa Sen. Drawn from different moments in the Ensemble's journey, these works reveal a movement language that is at once precise and expansive, distilling years of rigorous training into forms that honor tradition while remaining alive in the present.

Performed to an original live score, *Khaṅkhaṇā* unfolds as a dialogue between dancer and musician, body and breath, silence and sound. Here, rhythm becomes a living force, carrying memory forward and making space for what is yet to come.

What remains is an offering: a meditation on continuity, a celebration of shared presence and a quiet gesture of hope.

Ni Sā Dhā Ni
Ni Sā Dha Ni begins with a search—for a sound, a feeling, a melody that can open into movement. One note leads to another, each opening possibilities for what might follow, until sound and movement begin to find their own rhythm.

The music, composed by Surupa Sen, moves freely among notes, rhythms and melodic phrases, creating a soundscape that gradually discovers an identity of its own in dialogue with the vocabulary of Odissi.

The dance responds to this unfolding music. Motifs freeze and melt, pause and rise, each phrase emerging from the one before it. Movement and music continually listen to one another, shaping and reshaping what comes next.

Ni Sā Dha Ni is an exploration of this process of discovery—of finding a note, following it and allowing it to lead somewhere unexpected.

Rāsa Rati (Krishna's Rapturous Love Play)
A poem from the *Gita Govinda* is interpreted through facial expression (bhava) and gesture (mudra). Written in Sanskrit in the 12th century by the poet-saint Jayadeva, the *Gita Govinda* is a lyrical poem of love and longing, centered on the relationship between Radha and Krishna. Its poetry explores the yearning of the human soul for union with the divine.

In *Rāsa Rati*, Jayadeva evokes the rapture of Radha and Krishna's love through a series of sensuous images. Krishna, the triumphant Lord, delights in love play on the sandy banks of the Yamuna, while the forest becomes a world of beauty, anticipation and desire.

Anointing her body with shining deer musk,
he ornaments it with a multitude of stars,
making crescent moon patterns with his nails
to augment desire.

The ensemble enters this world collectively, giving form to the poem's shifting images and sensations. Through rhythm, gesture and sculptural movement, the dancers transform Jayadeva's poetry into a shared landscape of beauty, sensuality and longing.

Śridevi (Invocation to the Mother Goddess)
As we brave new journeys,
we ask the divine presence of the Mother Goddess
to light our path.

Oh Mother
Supreme power of the universe, grant us the vision
to behold you within.
From you comes all life
and into you we must all return.

At your feet
we offer our dance.

Priyé Chārusheelé (Divine Surrender)
A poem from the *Gita Govinda* is interpreted through facial expression (bhava) and gesture (mudra).

Krishna returns to Radha, repentant and longing for her forgiveness. He pleads with her to abandon her anger and receive him once again:

Your slightest word, like a moonbeam,
dispels the darkness of my heart.
You are my adornment, my breath,
the most precious gem in the ocean of life.

Smritirāngā
Dancing again in moments we want to live in

Memories are just songs
that like feelings,
have no definite path.

Coloured and hued
from moments they lived in
and the people they touched.

An abstract exploration of the Welsh word Hiraeth, which describes a profound longing for a home, a person, or a time that is forever lost. It is the strange presence of absence – a feeling in which pain and joy are held together, inseparable from one another.

Hiraeth is a link with the long-forgotten past, a language of the soul, a call from within. Half forgotten, fraction remembered. It is always there.

Hiraeth is the yearning of the soul to come home.

About Odissi
For centuries, the land of Odisha has held a deep relationship with dance. From prehistoric rock paintings at sites such as Yogimath and Gudahandi, where human figures are depicted dancing, to the sculpted dancers of Udayagiri and Khandagiri and the great temple monuments that followed, these images bear witness to a culture in which dance, music, myth and devotion have long been intertwined.

The form known today as Odissi was codified in the 1950s, drawing upon a rich and varied legacy of dance, sculpture, music, poetry and ritual. Its sinuous forms, lyrical movement, intricate rhythm and nuanced expression reflect the artistic traditions of Odisha while continuing to evolve in the present.

Odissi speaks of love and longing, of the eternal dialogue between the human and the divine. Through sculptural movement and emotional depth, it invites audiences into a world where movement, melody and verse converge. Its lyricism and sensuality emerge from the intertwined traditions that have shaped the cultural landscape of Odisha for centuries. In each performance, these traditions find renewed expression through the language of dance.

Nrityagram Dance Ensemble
Nrityagram, meaning "dance village," is India's renowned Gurukula for Odissi dance, where tradition, excellence and artistic inquiry come together within a living community devoted to dance. Founded by the visionary Protima Gauri, it stands as a cultural landmark rooted in India's artistic heritage while continually renewing itself in the present. At its heart is the gurukula way of life, where students and teachers live and learn together in an environment that nurtures discipline, creativity and reflection.

Over more than three decades, Nrityagram has evolved into a vibrant artistic ecosystem—home to its open school, the internationally acclaimed Dance Ensemble, and a range of initiatives that extend its work into wider communities. Emerging from this environment, the Nrityagram Dance Ensemble embodies a practice cultivated through years of shared learning and commitment. Under the artistic direction of Surupa Sen, the ensemble has earned critical acclaim, performing extensively across India and around the world – from Europe and the United States to the Middle East, Africa and Asia.

The ensemble performs works created by Surupa Sen, whose choreographic voice continues to expand the possibilities of Odissi. Sustained through rigorous training, collective practice and deep listening, the dancers embody a tradition that is at once rooted and evolving, carrying artistic memory forward through each performance.

Surupa Sen (Choreographer, Soloist, Composer)
Described by *The New York Times* as "among the world's greatest dancers," Surupa Sen is the Artistic Director, choreographer and principal soloist of Nrityagram. She trained in Odissi under Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra and Guru Protima Gauri, studied Abhinaya with Guru Kalanidhi Narayanan, and the Natyashastra under the supervision of Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam.

For more than two decades, Surupa has shaped a distinctive aesthetic for Nrityagram, rooted in tradition and driven by a spirit of innovation. Passionate about choreography and rhythm, she has created an acclaimed repertoire of works, including ten full-length ensemble productions for Nrityagram: *Śrī: In Search of the Goddess* (2001), *Ansh* (2005), *Sacred Space* (2005), *Pratimā: Reflection* (2008), *Śriyaḥ* (2010), *Saṃhāra* (2012), *Āhuti* (2019), *Āhuti Relived* (2022), *Khaṅkhaṇā: the sound of dancing feet* (2025) and *Māya-Leela* (2026); duet works including *Saṃyoga* (2012), *Songs of Love and Longing* (2013), and *Aṅgahāraḥ* (2025); solo works including *Yadunandana* (2017), *Vinati: Songs from the Gita Govinda* (2021), *Madhuragati* (2024) and *Chārulatā* (2025); virtual works including *Vinati*, a solo created for World Music Institute's *Dancing the Gods* Festival, and *Upadāna: An Offering* for the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, as well as numerous shorter choreographic works. Her artistry has earned her honors including the Raza Foundation Award (2006), Nritya Choodamani from Sri Krishna Gana Sabha, Chennai (2011) and India's highest honor for the performing arts, the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for Odissi dance (2018).

Pavithra Reddy (Dancer)
Reddy's association with Nrityagram began in 1990, when she joined its rural outreach program while living on a nearby farm. She went on to become the first student to graduate from the program, marking the beginning of a lifelong journey in Odissi. Trained under the guidance of Surupa Sen and enriched by collaborations with dancers and movement specialists from around the world, Reddy joined the Nrityagram Dance Ensemble in 1993. Since then, she has performed both as a soloist and with the ensemble on some of the most prestigious stages in India and internationally. Alongside her work as a full-time performer, Reddy plays a vital role as Director of Outreach Activities, teaching in Nrityagram's residential school and community programs, and helping dance reach and inspire new generations.

Anoushka Rahman (Dancer)
Rahman first encountered Nrityagram in 2018, when she came from Kolkata to attend a Summer Workshop. What began as a brief visit soon became her path, as she returned to pursue advanced training with Surupa Sen and Pavithra Reddy, having begun her Odissi training under Smt. Dona Ganguly. Recognized for her dedication with the V.K. Laroia Fellowship, she has performed with the ensemble across India, the U.S., Canada, Hong Kong and Sri Lanka, and made her solo debut in 2024. With a postgraduate degree in mathematics and a Sangeet Bhaskar in Odissi, Rahman now dances full-time with the ensemble, bringing together rigor, artistry and imagination.

Namaha Mazoomdar (Dancer)
Mazoomdar is a dancer, trainer, theatre director and storyteller whose artistic journey spans multiple disciplines. She began her Odissi training in Mumbai under Guru Daksha Mashruwala and has worked as a freelance dancer with companies in India and Singapore, performing across India, Singapore, Australia and Indonesia. A qualified actor with a diploma from the Intercultural Theatre Institute, Singapore, she began advanced training with Surupa Sen and Pavithra Reddy in 2022 and joined the Nrityagram Dance Ensemble in 2024.

Daquil Miriyala (Dancer)
Miriyala entered Nrityagram's world in 2010 through its Village Outreach Program. The following year, she became a residential student, balancing her academic studies with immersive dance training under Surupa Sen and Pavithra Reddy. In 2021, her journey came full circle as she joined the Nrityagram Dance Ensemble. Since then, she has performed across India, the U.S., Canada, Hong Kong and Sri Lanka, carrying the vision of Nrityagram from its classrooms to the global stage.

Jatin Sahu (Lead Vocalist, Harmonium)
Sahu learned Odissi singing under the tutelage of Guru Ramahari Das at the Music College, Odisha. He lives in Mumbai, has worked with Nrityagram since 2008, and is also a concert singer.

Rohan Dahale (Mardala – Percussion)
Dahale began his training with Guru Kelucharan Mahapatra and has continued to learn from Guru Banamali Maharana for the past 12 years. He lives in Mumbai and accompanies Odissi dancers from the region. He has performed with Nrityagram since 2015.

Parshuram Das (Bamboo Flute)
Das is a disciple of Pt. Mohini Mohan Pattnaik. He graduated from the Music College, Odisha and, in addition to working as a freelance music accompanist, teaches at Utkal University of Culture, Bhubaneswar. He has been with the Nrityagram Dance Ensemble since 2002.

Anup Kulthe (Violin)
Kulthe has a postgraduate degree in Hindustani violin and has been mentored by Shri Shirish Balkrishna Upadhyaya. He performs as a soloist, works as a freelance music accompanist and has been with the Nrityagram Dance Ensemble since 2024.

Lynne Fernandez (Lighting Designer, Technical Director)
Fernandez is one of India's pioneering professional lighting designers, with theatre work presented internationally from the Edinburgh Festival Fringe to London's West End and New York's Off-Broadway.

She joined Nrityagram in 1993 as production and technical consultant to the newly founded dance ensemble, later becoming its technical director and lighting designer. In 1997, she was appointed executive trustee of Nrityagram Village, School and Ensemble, a role she continues to hold.

Over the years, Fernandez has played a central role in the growth and evolution of Nrityagram, shaping its administration and infrastructure, guiding its projects and helping build the foundations for its international journey. She has overseen the ensemble's emergence on the world stage while developing initiatives that create opportunities for artists, artistic exchange, and wider engagement with dance.
For Fernandez, Nrityagram is a community she has helped nurture over decades–a place where dance, creativity and daily life come together, and where a shared commitment to the art continues to unfold.

26/27 SEASON

DANCE

Compagnie Hervé Koubi
NOV 20–21

A Very Sw!ng Out Holiday
DEC 11–12

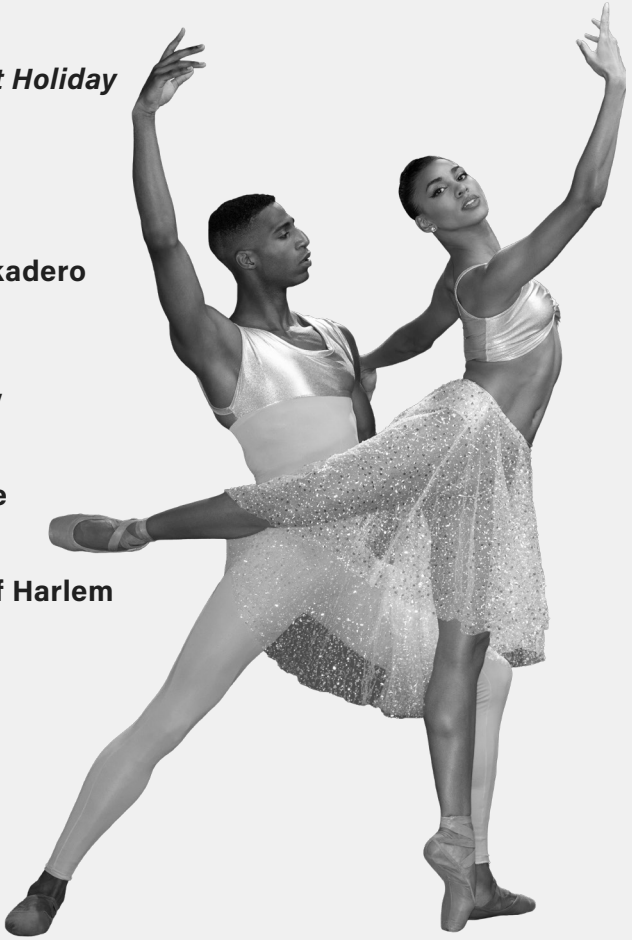
Black Grace
FEB 19–20

Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo
MAR 12–13

Gibney Company
APR 16–17

John Scott Dance
APR 30–MAY 1

Dance Theatre of Harlem
MAY 7–9



Dance Theatre of Harlem, Nir Arieli

ENJOY 3 SHOWS FOR AS LOW AS $86
PENNLIVE**ARTS.ORG** | 215.898.3900 |