

RANGOLI DANCE FESTIVAL 2005: 20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

Indian Dance Ensemble Rejoices at Madrid Theatre June 25 & 26

LOS ANGELES - Commemorating two decades of enduring music, dance, theater, and visual arts, **Rangoli Foundation for Art & Culture** presents **Malathi Iyengar & Rangoli Dance Company** in a program of new and traditional choreographic works. ***Rangoli Dance Festival 2005: 20th Anniversary Celebrations*** takes place at the **Madrid Theatre** on **Saturday, June 25 at 6:00 pm** and **Sunday, June 26 at 4:00 pm**.

Also on the program at the Madrid, paying tribute to Rangoli's artistic longevity and accomplishments, are guest artists from India **Ranjith Babu, Neewin Hershah** and **K. Murali Mohan**; Los Angeles-based **Viver Brasil Dance Company**; and guests of honor including dance critic, award-winning author and acting chair of UCLA's Department of World Arts and Cultures **David Gere** (Saturday); and patrons of the arts **Ashok** and **Kay Talwar** (Sunday).

"In preparation for this momentous celebration, I have engaged in a retrospective journey that has been, at times, overwhelming," says Rangoli founding artistic director and choreographer **Malathi Iyengar**, who was recently selected as a Master Teacher in the South Indian Bharatanatyam dance tradition by the Alliance for California Traditional Artists. "The youthful energy of the company's dancers and the intensity of rehearsals is a constant reminder to me of the value of making art, the community it creates, and the ideas it provokes."

On the 20th anniversary program are two new works choreographed by Iyengar and a classical piece handed down over generations:

A **Los Angeles premiere**, ***Punyakoti*** is a dance narrative based on an ancient folk tale from Karnataka, India. With original music by **Rajkumar Bharathi**, this simple and moving story of a pious cow whose honesty leads to her salvation was choreographed by Iyengar with families and children in mind.

The **world premiere** of ***Jagadanandakaraka*** is choreographed by Malathi Iyengar to the composition by Saint Thyagaraja (1767-1847 A.D). Considered a gem in the south Indian classical music tradition, ***Jagadanandakaraka*** describes Lord Rama's (hero of the epic *Ramayana*) numerous attributes. The vocals, in Sanskrit, are performed live by **R. Veeraraghavan**, who is accompanied by **G. Gurumurthy** (percussion), **A. P. Sarvotham** (flute), **Sankar Subrahmaniam** (violin) and **Raja Sivamani** (Veena).

Handed down through the generations, ***Ragamalika Varnam*** is an extensive composition featuring devotion and love interspersed with abstract dances in praise of Lord Brihadeeshwara of Tanjore. It retains the original musical format composed by the Tanjore Quartet and passed down over the years to Malathi Iyengar's guru Narmada. The Varnam got its appeal from strict adherence to the classicism and originality. Malathi continues the tradition by teaching and passing it on to her senior disciples.

Rangoli continues a long-standing practice of sharing other traditions and cultures with its audiences, welcoming the multiple award-winning **Viver Brasil Dance Company** as a special guest. Under the guidance of artistic directors **Luiz Badaró** and **Linda Yudin**, Viver Brasil creates riveting and passionate Brazilian dance to explore ancient and contemporary art forms and the spiritual strength of Brazilian culture.

'Rangoli' is the traditional art of decorating courtyards and walls of Indian houses with colorful designs. Iyengar, who has created floor designs for museums and institutions in both India and the U.S., named the company after the art form which, in India, is a symbol of beauty, hope, and tradition. Malathi Iyengar and the Rangoli Dance Company have performed extensively in India, the United States, and Canada. The Rangoli Foundation for Art & Culture, a nonprofit organization, was established in 1985 and is the recipient of multiple awards and grants from city, state and national agencies.

Malathi Iyengar, originally from Bangalore, India, is a Los Angeles-based choreographer, dancer and visual artist recognized as a visionary willing to take artistic challenges. She studied the vintage Pandanallur/Tanjore style of Bharata Natyam (classical dance of south India) from renowned Guru Narmada of Bangalore. Her creations range from traditional works to collaborations with artists of diverse cultures. Iyengar's prestigious distinctions and awards include a Durfee Foundation Award; Brody Fellowship for Performing Arts; Alma Hawkins Award for Excellence in Choreography; John Lennon Performing Arts Award; Glorja Kaufman Award; and J. Watumull Award. In 2004, Malathi and her daughter, dancer and costume designer Lakshmi Iyengar, were selected as one of 14 Master Teacher and Apprentice pairs in the South Indian Bharatanatyam dance tradition by the Alliance for California Traditional Artists (ACTA), a program jointly funded by the National Endowment for the Arts and The James Irvine Foundation. Malathi's extensive choreography credits include *Planting A Sequoia* (2004); *Sacred Geometry* (2002); *Enduring Traditions* (2002); *Love Lyrics* (2001); *Ankle Bells & Painted Faces* (2001); *Inter-Active Visual Poetry* (2000); *Ramayana* (2000); *Gati-Pragati* (1999); *Dancing Divinities* (1999); *Margam* (1998); *Soorya Kanti* (1997); *Aananda Narthana* (1997); *Mustard Seeds* (1996); *In the Beginning*, featuring *Narasimha* and *Creation Myth* (1995); *Traditions & Innovations*, featuring *Partha Sarathi* and *Anubhava* (1994); *Skanda* (1993); and *Sri Raghavendra* (1992). Malathi's has also choreographed traditional dances for Aman International Music & Dance Company and for the play *A Midsummer Night's Dream* directed by Michael Michetti.

Indian composer Rajkumar Bharathi stands today as one of the most popular artists of his generation. A native of Chennai, he has a great following in Karnataka. Rajkumar is known for his strong singing style or "sahithya bhava" (singing with clarity and feeling). He has composed film scores and devotional music, and has performed throughout India, the U.S., Europe and the Far East. He has collaborated with Malathi Iyengar since 1992.

Rangoli Festival 2005: 20th Anniversary Celebrations takes place on **Saturday, June 25** at **6:00 pm** and **Sunday, June 26** at **4:00 pm**. Tickets are **\$15.00** with advance purchase and for students and seniors, and **20.00** for at the door. **The Madrid Theatre** is located at **21622 Sherman Way** in Canoga Park. For information and tickets, the public should call the Madrid Theatre Box Office at **(818) 347-9938** or go to **www.madridtheatre.org**.

MORE—MORE—MORE

THE FACTS

WHAT: Malathi Iyengar & Rangoli Dance Company presents **Rangoli Festival 2005: 20th Anniversary Celebrations:**

- **Punyakoti** - the **Los Angeles premiere** of a dance-theater work for families and children inspired by the folk tale of *Govina Haadu* about *Punyakoti*, a pious and truthful cow.

- **Jagadanandakaraka** - the **world premiere** of a composition in Sanskrit by Saint Thyagaraja (1767-1847 A.D), considered a gem in the south Indian classical music tradition, that describes Lord Rama's (hero of the epic *Ramayana*) numerous attributes.

- **Ragamalika Varnam** - an extensive composition featuring devotion and love interspersed with abstract dances in praise of Lord Brihadeeshwara of Tanjore. It retains the original musical format composed by the Tanjore Quartet and handed down through generations to Malathi Iyengar's guru Narmada. The Varnam got its appeal from strict adherence to the classicism and originality. Malathi continues the tradition by teaching and passing it on to her senior disciples.

- **Special Guest Artists** - Multiple award-winning **Viver Brasil Dance Company**, under the guidance of artistic directors **Luiz Badaró** and **Linda Yudin**, creates riveting and passionate Brazilian dance to explore ancient and contemporary art forms and the spiritual strength of Brazilian culture.

WHO: Choreography by **Malathi Iyengar**

Original Music composed by **Rajkumar Bharathi**

Musicians: S. R. Veeraraghavan (vocals), **G. Gurusurthy** (percussion)

A. P. Sarvotham (flute), **Sankar Subrahmanyam** (violin),
and **Raja Sivamani** (Veena)

Rangoli Dancers: Shivani Aysola, Shayan Chalan, Lakshmi Iyengar, Malathi Iyengar, Hema Iyer, Sheel Jagani, Mary Khetani, Aarti Rao, and Shaheen Sheik

Dancers from India: Ranjith Babu, Neewin Hershall and K. Murali Mohan

Special Guests: Viver Brasil Dance Company,
artistic directors **Linda Yudin** and **Luiz Badaro**

WHEN: Saturday, June 25 at 6:00 pm

Sunday, June 26 at 4:00 pm

WHERE: Madrid Theatre

21622 Sherman Way
Canoga Park, CA 91303

HOW: (818) 347-9938 or www.madridtheatre.org

PRICES: Advance Purchase, Seniors, and Students: \$15.00

General Admission at Door: \$20.00

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