

# rangoli foundation for art culture

For Immediate Release

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Rangoli Foundation  
Presents

## **Abhinaya**

- **the craft of expressing and conveying in words, art, music, and movement by the esteemed Bharatanatyam dancer from Chennai, India**

## **Bragha Bessell**

**Saturday, October 7, 2006. 7:00 P.M.**  
**Barnsdall Gallery Theatre**  
**4800 Hollywood Blvd, Hollywood, Ca 90027**

‘Abhinaya’, a solo dance performance by the renowned artist Bragha Bessell takes place on Saturday, October 7, 2006 at 7:00 P.M. at the Barnsdall Gallery Theatre in Hollywood, California.

Bragha Bessell, invited by Rangoli Foundation is a Bharatanatyam exponent and a master artist in residence from August – October 2006. During this period Bragha teaches Rangoli Dance Company members and dancers from southern California’s leading institutions, vintage dances that primarily focus on the emotive aspect, mime, narrative, and the art of story telling through facial expressions and hand gestures. The performance will primarily showcase Bragha Bessell and senior dancers who have studied under her guidance during the residency. The event includes an interactive question and answer session with the featured artists and the audience. Lighting design is by Eileen Cooley and set design is by Suresh Iyengar.

**Bragha Bessell**, a consummate artist is a prime disciple of Adyar K. Lakshman and Kalanidhi Narayan. She studied Bharatanatyam initially from Mangudi Durai Raja Iyer and Kunchitapadam Pillai. Bragha, a quintessential dancer and a multiple award winning artist is renowned for her Abhinaya (art of expression). She has often played the lead roles in her teachers' dance productions and also teaches at her guru's institute. With many awards to her credit, she has given numerous performances and participated in festivals all over India, the United States, Canada, and Europe. She has made TV appearances in Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Japan, and on Asia Net. She has conducted Abhinaya workshops and lecture demonstrations extensively and has been invited by the prestigious institution Kalakshetra, (Chennai India) to give master classes. Bragha, having toured United States twice with her gurus, is currently sponsored by Rangoli Foundation based in Los Angeles to offer master classes for Rangoli Dance Company.

For more information on Bragha Bessell, visit [www.kutcheribuzz.com/ebrochures/bragha/](http://www.kutcheribuzz.com/ebrochures/bragha/)

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### **Rangoli Foundation**

Rangoli Foundation for Art & Culture, a non profit organization was established in 1985 by artistic director, Malathi Iyengar to realize a creative vision of presenting visual and performing arts of India. Rangoli Foundation has presented a wide variety of dance performances, festivals, music concerts, guest artists, visual arts exhibits, residencies, master classes and staged several productions ever since its inception. The foundation frequently brings renowned tradition bearers, dancers and musicians from India to the United States to work with company artists. In August 2004, Rangoli Foundation published 'Dance & Devotion' the first book written by Malathi Iyengar. In 2005 Rangoli Foundation presented 20th anniversary celebrations by featuring new and traditional works.

### **Bharatanatyam (excerpts from 'Dance & Devotion' written by Malathi Iyengar)**

Bharatanatyam, classical dance of India is considered to be one of the most profound world art forms today. The key features of the dance form are: '*nritta*', or pure dance technique with no interpretive meaning, which is characterized by a classic geometry of line and movement; '*abhinaya*', or expressional dance, in which the dancer, through stylized gestures, body movement, and facial expressions, conveys emotions, revealing in the process the most nuances, & '*natya*' (element of drama and story telling). Since Bharatanatyam is an extremely precise dance style, the Bharatanatyam dancer follows a very stylized linear sequence. The term Bharatanatyam also refers to 'Bhava' (expression), 'Raga' (melody), & 'Tala' (rhythm).

'Abhinaya', the art of expression is a very important feature in Bharatanatyam. Knowledge of music, stories, visual arts, culture, and language help the dancer to perform with total involvement and expression. The dancer, internalizing the music, uses several hand gestures called as 'Hastha Mudras', facial expressions, and body language to communicate the ideas, images, and the essence of stories. 'Abhinaya' includes Angika (body movements), 'Aharya' (costumes and adornment), 'Vachika' (spoken word), and 'Sattvika' (expressing feelings from within). There are several approaches and views when it comes to teaching and performing 'Abhinaya' oriented dances.

The study and practice of 'Nava Rasa' ('Nava' means nine and 'Rasa' means sentiments) is an important aspect of learning Abhinaya' in Bharatanatyam. According to Indian aesthetics, 'Rasa' is the taste or the flavour of an art, object or work. The 'Nava Rasas' are universally felt and experienced by everyone alike. 'Rasa' has no exact meaning; it can be described, however, as an aesthetic experience felt by the spectator, which results from the artist's soulful performance filled with 'Bhava'. 'Bhava' is the emotional feeling or (an) expression felt and expressed by the performer. It is an existing condition of the artist. According to Natyashastra, there are eight 'Rasas'. The text 'Abhinaya Darpana' by Nandikeshwara includes peace ('Shantham') as the ninth 'Rasa'. The 'Nava Rasas' are: Love ('Sringaram'), Courage ('Veeram'), Pathos ('Karunyam'), Wonder ('Adhbhutam'), Mirth ('Hasyam'), Fear ('Bhayam'), Disgust ('Bheebhatsam'), Anger ('Roudram'), and Peace ('Shantham').

The dancer's repertoire usually consists of invocatory dances, hymns, pure dances, and expressional dances including Alarippu, Pushpanjali, Kautuvam, Jatiswaram, Shabdham, Kritis, Bhajans, Varnams, Padams, Javalis, Devarnamas, Thillanas, and Mangalam.

**'Abhinaya' takes place on Saturday, October 7th at 7:00 pm.**

**Tickets are \$15 & \$18 and can be bought directly from [www.bgttickets.com](http://www.bgttickets.com) / 323 644 7272. The Barnsdall Gallery Theatre is located at 4800 Hollywood Blvd in Hollywood.**

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**For concert information, call 818 788 6860 or write to [msiyengar@yahoo.com](mailto:msiyengar@yahoo.com)**

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## The Facts

**What:**

Rangoli Foundation presents 'Abhinaya', the craft of expressing and conveying in words, art, music, and movement by the celebrated Bharatanatyam exponent Bragha Bessell from Chennai, India

**Who:**

Bragha Bessell (Chennai, India)  
Malathi Iyengar & Rangoli Dance Company (Los Angeles, USA)

**When:**

Saturday, October 7, 2006. 7:00 P.M.

**Where:**

Barnsdall Gallery Theatre  
4800 Hollywood Blvd, Hollywood, Ca 90027

**Admission:**

General Admission: \$15 & \$18

**How:**

[www.bgttickets.com](http://www.bgttickets.com) / Theatre: 323 644 6272

**Concert Information:**

818 788 6860 / [msiyengar@yahoo.com](mailto:msiyengar@yahoo.com)

**Parking:**

Free parking on site

**Website:**

[www.rangoli.org](http://www.rangoli.org)

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