

**For Immediate Release**

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Contact: Malathi Iyengar 818 788 6860

msiyengar@yahoo.com

**Rangoli Foundation presents**

**A double bill featuring 'Kodhai's Dream', a thematic Bharatanatyam performance by Rangoli Dance Company and 'Kala Yatra', Dances of India by the Nadam Dance Company from India.**

The two-part presentation takes place on Saturday, July 8, 2006 at 7 pm at the Barnsdall Gallery Theatre in Hollywood. **Kodhai's Dream** features excerpts from the sacred texts Thiruppavai and Nachiar Thirumozhi, where Kodhai's pure love for Krishna is depicted. Kodhai's Dream is choreographed by Malathi Iyengar and performed by Rangoli Dance Company with music composed by Rajkumar Bharathi (India). **Kala Yatra** features Dances of India by Nadam Dance Company from Bangalore, India. Lighting Design is by the multiple award-winning artist, Eileen Cooley and set design is by Suresh Iyengar.

**Rangoli Dance Company**

The Rangoli Dance Company is dedicated to preserving the southern India classical dance form of Bharatanatyam while using it as a foundation for new expressions and presentation techniques. Rangoli's vibrant classical work and pioneering inter-cultural collaborations are performed to diverse audiences emphasizing versatility, depth, and the modern vitality of Bharatanatyam. Rangoli Dance Company is a highly recognized group of talented artists formed by Malathi Iyengar in 1992. Recently company senior dancers Lakshmi Iyengar, Hema Iyer, Mary Khetani, and Shaheen Sheik were nominated for a Lester Horton Dance Award for outstanding achievement in performance. Consisting of high caliber core and guest artists, the company has given invigorating performances throughout the United States, Canada, and India. Furthermore, the company maintains its extensive commitment towards education and outreach programs, which have promoted a richer understanding of classical dance and the heritage of India.

**Malathi Iyengar**

Malathi Iyengar, originally from Bangalore, India, is a Los Angeles based choreographer, dancer, writer, and visual artist. She holds a Master of Fine Arts degree in Choreography and Performance from the University of California, Los Angeles. Malathi has studied the vintage 'Pandanallur' / 'Tanjore' style of 'Bharatanatyam' from Guru Narmada of Bangalore, who is a disciple of the late legendary Kittappa Pillai, descendant of the Tanjore Quartet. She studied choreography and improvisation under the mentorship of Marion Scott. Malathi's many awards and distinctions include: Master Artist of Bharatanatyam dance (Alliance for California Traditional Artists), Brody Fellowship for Performing Arts, Alma Hawkins Award for Excellence in Choreography, and National Endowment of the Arts for Creation & Presentation. She is the author of 'Dance & Devotion' published by Rangoli Foundation.

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## **Rangoli Foundation presents –**

Malathi's critically acclaimed choreographic works include: 'Enduring Traditions' (2005), 'Punyakoti' (2004), 'Tulasi' (2004), 'Sacred Geometry' (2002), 'Love Lyrics' (2001), 'Ramayana' (2000), & Mustard Seeds (1996). Drawing from her extensive experience as an artist, Malathi regularly teaches classical Indian dance (Bharatanatyam), production and presentation seminars, and Intercultural dance-theater. Malathi is the artistic director for the non-profit organization, Rangoli Foundation for Art & Culture, founded in 1985. Malathi Iyengar and Rangoli Dance Company have performed extensively in United States, Canada, & India.

**Murali Mohan Kalvakalva**, a talented Kathak dancer, is a disciple of the celebrated dance masters, Dharamshi Shah and Kumudini Lakhia. Murali has performed, choreographed and taught Kathak and folk dances of India extensively throughout India, Europe, Canada, and the U.S. His vibrant performances and authentic choreographic works have won awards and accolades in many competitions and festivals. Murali, a sponsored artist of Rangoli Foundation since 1999, has taught the rich folk traditions to several dance companies in United States.

Murali Mohan Kalvakalva and Nandini Mehta, artistic directors of Nadam Dance Academy, Bangalore, India are currently touring United States along with their company members as sponsored artists of Aarathi School of Indian Dances, Phoenix, Arizona.

**'Kodhai's Dream' and 'Kala Yatra' take place on Saturday, July 8 at 7:00 pm.**  
**Tickets are \$15 per person and can be bought directly through [www.bgttickets.com](http://www.bgttickets.com).**  
**The Barnsdall Gallery theatre is located at 4800 Hollywood Blvd in Hollywood.**  
**Call (323) 644-6272 or go to [www.bgttickets.com](http://www.bgttickets.com).**  
**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 Kodhai's Dream**, a thematic Bharatanatyam performance by **Rangoli Dance Company** featuring the sacred sayings of the saint poet Andal, also known as Kodhai (8<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. Tamilnadu, India) and **Kala Yatra**, classical and folk dances performed by **Nadam Dance Company (India)**.

## Who:

### **Rangoli Dance Company**

Choreography – Malathi Iyengar

Poetry - Andal's Thiruppavai and Nachiar Thirumozhi

Music Composition – Rajkumar Bharathi

Lighting Design – Eileen Cooley

Set Design – Suresh Iyengar

**Nadam Dance Company** (touring company from India)

Artistic Directors: Murali Mohan Kalvakalva & Nandini Mehta (Bangalore, India)

## When:

**Saturday, July 8, 2006. 7:00 P.M.**

## Where:

Barnsdall Gallery Theatre

4800 Hollywood Blvd, Hollywood, Ca 90027

## Admission:

General Admission: \$15

## 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)

## Who is Kodhai

Notes by Malathi Iyengar

Kodhai, also known as Andal, is an extraordinary personality and one of the most beloved poet saints of southern India. Kodhai is revered as the benevolent mother earth, descending to this earth as the goddess Lakshmi. Kodhai, one of the twelve Alvars (worshippers of Lord Vishnu) is the only woman in the exalted group who lived in the eighth century.

Kodhai was discovered under a Tulasi plant by a devout priest, Perialwar, who raised her as his own daughter. As a child Kodhai grew up in holy surroundings, worshipping the deity Krishna, listening to Vedas, epics, and sacred hymns. She developed an intense love for Krishna. Kodhai used to adorn herself in flower garlands made for Lord Krishna and then offering them to the Lord, which enraged her father. She was reassured by the Lord Himself, in her dream, that He relished only the garlands worn by Kodhai. With a firm belief that Krishna was her husband, she refused to marry anyone else. The distressed father in his dream was directed by Lord Vishnu to take Kodhai to Ranganatha temple in Srirangam and marry her to the Lord. Under his command, Perialwar took Kodhai to the temple in the bridal costume in a palanquin. On reaching the City and the temple, Kodhai moved swiftly towards the Lord in the Sanctorum. The Lord extended his arms to receive and embrace His long-expected bride. She was said to have merged with the deity in front of an assembly.

The life of Kodhai is remarkable in its romantic simplicity. The transformation of a young girl, devotee, making flower garlands intended for the deity into a sacred symbol worshipped in the sanctum sanctorum of Vishnu temple is a wonder beyond comprehension.

### **Kodhai wrote two major works in which her love and longing for her Lord are passionately expressed:**

1. **Thiruppavai** a poem of thirty verses in which Kodhai imagines herself to be a cowherd girl during the incarnation of Lord Krishna. She yearns to serve Him and achieve happiness not just in this birth, but for all eternity, and describes the religious vow (*pavai*) that she and her fellow cowgirls will take for this purpose. During the penance she sends the cloud as a messenger to Krishna, makes an appeal to the cuckoo and the parrot to bring Him to her.

2. **Nachiar Thirumozhi**, literally meaning sacred sayings of the goddess, contains 143 hymns. The poetry gives us a real and soul-stirring picture of Kodhai in various moods of love-joy and sorrow, hope and disappointment.

In the 6<sup>th</sup> segment 'The Auspicious Dream', Kodhai imagined herself to be His bride and through her poetry created imagery that is of high devotional and artistic merit. In this dream, she passes through the various rituals in a South Indian style marriage: the engagement, reception, the bridal costume, tying of the sacred thread, the exchange of garland, going round the fire holding the hand of the groom, taking the sacred seven steps, the touching of the stone-slab by the bride's foot, the offering of puffed rice in the ceremonial fire with her hands placed right on the groom's hands and the final procession of the happy married couple on a caparisoned elephant to the tune of music and drum.

As her soul pines for union with the beloved Krishna, she becomes human and accessible and anyone is able to identify with her. Her exquisite poetry speaks of love for God, separation from God, and single-minded devotion to God.

- During the month of Margazi (December-January), discourses on Tiruppavai and Nachiar Thirumozhi take place all over India.
- Iyengar community girls in southern India following Vaishnavite culture are often seen dressed as Kodhai during weddings.

Alvars - worshippers of Lord Vishnu who are completely immersed in their devotion to HIM

Andal – the one who rules the world

Kodhai – another name for Andal, a beautiful girl, flower garland, creeper

Krishna - 8<sup>th</sup> incarnation of Lord Vishnu

Lakshmi – Hindu goddess of health, wealth, and prosperity

Nachiar Thirumozhi – Sacred Sayings of the Goddess Andal (Kodhai)

Perialwar – father of Kodhai

Ranganatha - Lord Vishnu

Srirangam – temple in south India

Thiruppavai – The Maiden's Vow - sacred text written by Andal

Tulasi – also known as Holy Basil, is a sacred plant of India.

Vaishnavite – followers of Vishnu

## **Reference & Resource**

Kalyani Krishnamachari  
Dr V. Satagopan

The Hindu Marriage Ceremony - Jnana Prabodhini, Pune, India  
Nachiar Thirumozhi by P. Sundaram  
The Sacred Book of Four Thousand by Srirama Bharathi

[www.ramanuja.org](http://www.ramanuja.org)  
[www.srivaishnavam.org](http://www.srivaishnavam.org)