

ARTIST STATEMENT

My drive as an Indian-American Bharatanatyam dancer is to make south Indian classical dance accessible by breaking it out of the holds of traditional repertoire and staging. Since 1990, I have been performing around the country and internationally to diverse audiences of all ages and ethnicities. As a Fulbright Scholar in Dance in 2006-07, I studied the extent of diversity in Bharatanatyam's corpus through a pan-Indian survey of over 200 dancers. As a professional dancer and choreographer, I use insights gained from my research to fuel new choreography. Performance, research, and teaching are interconnected in my work, and my attention cycles between them often. At present, I am pushing the boundaries of the customary Bharatanatyam repertoire into improvisation of abstract dance. I concurrently work as a biostatistician at the Massachusetts General Hospital, where I refine clinical research methods in a variety of applications.

EDUCATION

2006-07	<i>Mridangam</i> drum / <i>Hatha</i> yoga (intensive study in India)	M. Vasudev Rao / Krishnamacharya Yoga Mandiram
1999-01	Sc.M. in Biostatistics / Minor in Epidemiology	Harvard School of Public Health
1995-99	B.A. in Mathematics (Cum Laude) / Minor in Spanish	Duke University
1982-93	Arangetram ('Ascent to stage') in Bharatanatyam dance	Ragamala Music & Dance Theater
1982-99	Western classical music theory / Piano / Voice	Duke University / MN Music Teachers Association
1988-89	<i>Carnatic</i> (south Indian) vocal music	Malathi Rao

MAJOR PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS

1996-11	Freelance Performing Artist (Various in MA, NC, MN, IL, MD, WI)
2002-09	Bharatanatyam Instructor / Lecturer (Boston, MA)
2006-07	Researcher, U.S. Fulbright Grant in Dance (INDIA)
1990-95	Company Dancer (Lead/Soloist), Ragamala Music and Dance Theater (Minneapolis, MN)

PRESENTATIONS / LECTURES *(selected)*

2012	Guest Artist, Lesley Ellis school (Arlington, MA)
2011	Choreographer/Performer, American Academy in Rome (Rome, ITALY)
2009	World Dance Instructor, Fitcorp Gym (Cambridge, MA) Guest Artist, Devanritya Dance Ensemble (Hudson, WI)
2008	Presenter, Hollins University , Congress on Research in Dance Conference (Roanoke, VA)
2007	Scholar, Fulbright Conference (Maharashtra, INDIA)
2006	Guest Lecturer, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute , Arts Week (Boston, MA)
2004	Guest Lecturer, Peabody-Essex Museum (Salem, MA)
2003-05	Dance Faculty, Brookline Community Center for the Arts (Brookline, MA)
2003	World Dance Instructor, Healthworks Fitness Center (Cambridge, MA)
2002	Choreographic Consultant, Boston Network of South Asian Professionals (Boston, MA) World Dance Instructor, Collage Dance Ensemble's Orient Dance Camp (Plymouth, MA)
1999	Guest Lecturer, Duke University (Durham, NC)

GRANTS / HONORS *(selected)*

2009	Guest Artist	Devanritya Dance Ensemble
2006	Fulbright Scholar in Dance	U.S. Fulbright Grant to India
2003	Residency in Bharatanatyam (<i>14 selected across N. America</i>)	Kala Bharati / Canadian Heritage Department
2001	Environmental Statistics Scholar	NIEHS / Pfizer
1999	Baxter Foundation Scholarship	Baxter Healthcare Corporation
1995	MN All-State Choir, Singer	Minnesota Music Educators Association
1994	MN State Honors Concert (<i>Senior Level A</i>), Pianist	Minnesota Music Teachers Association

SOLO PERFORMANCES / LECTURE DEMONSTRATIONS *(selected)*

- 2012 **Lesley Ellis School** (Arlington, MA)
- 2011 **National Museum for Women in the Arts** International Perspectives in PLAY (Washington, DC)
American Academy in Rome Annual Concert for Trustees' Week (Rome, ITALY)
- 2009 **Devanriya Dance Ensemble** (Guest Artist) Decoding the Modern Practice of Bharatanatyam (Hudson, WI)
- 2008 **Hollins University** (Presenter) Congress on Research in Dance 41'st Annual Conference (Roanoke, VA)
- 2007 **Folk moot U.S.A.** (Western NC)
Fulbright Conference (Maharashtra, INDIA)
- 2006 **Dana-Farber Cancer Institute** Arts Week (Boston, MA)
Stonehill College Asian-American festival (Easton, MA)
M.I.T. Lebanese Red Cross fundraiser (Cambridge, MA)
- 2005 **Rivers School** Diversity in motion (Weston, MA)
Club Passim Arabesque Mondays (Cambridge, MA)
- 2004 **Emerson College** Cultural and diversity week (Boston, MA)
Brookline Community Center for the Arts Summer gala faculty performance / Serpentine night (Brookline, MA)
Fleet Bank Asian heritage night (Boston, MA)
Peabody-Essex Museum (Salem, MA)
Beaver Country Day School (Chestnut Hill, MA)
- 2003 **M.I.T.** Raaga-Taala fundraiser for Association for India's Development (Cambridge, MA)
Cambridge Center for Adult Education (Cambridge, MA)
Pravda (Boston, MA)
New England Kannada Koota Ganesh Chaturthi celebration (Andover, MA)
Brookline Community Center for the Arts Winter Solstice concert series (Brookline, MA)
- 2002 **Himalayan Institute Hospital Trust (HIHT)** International conference on science and meditation (Uttaranchal, INDIA)
Collage Dance Ensemble Orient Dance Camp (Plymouth, MA)
North American Sankethi Association Annual convention (New Windsor, MD)
- 2001 **Harvard School of Public Health** International night (Boston, MA)
- 1999 **Duke University** Senior piano recital (Durham, NC)
- 1996 **Duke University** Diwali: Festival of lights (Durham, NC)
- 1995 **The Himalayan Institute 20th Annual Congress** Techniques and practices for self transformation (Chicago, IL)
University of MN State honors piano concert (Minneapolis, MN)
- 1994 **Asian-American renaissance at Penumbra Theater** Cabaret (St. Paul, MN)
MN State Fair (Minneapolis, MN)
- 1993 **MN Indo community center** Minneapolis Indo summer fest (Minneapolis, MN)
Hindu Society of MN Diwali festival (Minneapolis, MN)

COMPANY PERFORMANCES *(selected)*

- 2004 **Sanchali** (Artistic Director) *Bharatanatyam: A Step Apart* (Cambridge, MA)
- 2003 **Navarasa Dance Theater** (Soloist) *When Earth Sings: Plantation talas* (Boston, MA)
- 2000-02 **The Longwood Players** (Featured Dancer/Singer) *Pippin / Singing in the Rain / West-side Story (Francesca)* (Boston, MA)
- 1999 **Duke University Chorale** (Soloist) *International tour* (ITALY)
- 1996-97 **Payal Dance Academy** (Soloist) *Jai Shiva Shankar* (Raleigh, NC)
Duke University Chorale (Soloist) *International tour* (CHINA)
- 1992-95 **Ragamala Music and Dance Theater** (Soloist) *Canticle of Mary / Dawn / 5others* (Minneapolis, MN)
- 1990 **Nritya Jyoti Dance Inc.** (Lead Dancer) *Valli Kalyanam* (Minneapolis, MN)

PUBLICATIONS *(selected)*

Keshaviah, Aparna. *Is Conservatism De-Conserving Bharatanatyam?* AttenDance magazine. 2009-2010.

Keshaviah, Aparna. *Decoding the Modern Practice of Bharatanatyam*. Proceedings of the 41st Annual Congress on Research in Dance. 2008.

Keshaviah, Aparna. *The Reviewer's Bias*. Narthaki.com. August 2009.

Keshaviah, Aparna. *'This' or 'That': The Unbearable Burden of Binaries*. PULSE Dance magazine. Spring 2007.

Keshaviah, Aparna. *Choreographing Traditions in Chicago*. PULSE Dance magazine. Winter 2006.

Over 20 publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals, including the New England Journal of Medicine

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chitra Sundaram (Interview), So, how many bharatanatyam-s are out there?! PULSE Dance, Autumn 2007.

Matthew Trumbull (Interview), Demystifying the confusing history of Bharata Natyam, INDIA New England, September 16-30, 2006.

Gita Balakrishnan (Review), "A Step Apart" artists add twists to Bharata Natyam, INDIA New England, June 15, 2004.

Nirmala Garimella (Review), A Step Apart Is A Step Forward, Lokvani.com, June 13, 2004.

Alizah (Review), Sanchali presents "Bharatanatyam: A Step Apart," Middle-Eastern Dance in New England, Nov/Dec 2004.

Poornima Apte (Review), Community arts center says Bollywood offering among its most profitable INDIA New England, October 1, 2004.

Theodore Bale (Listing), Corbett set to share the stage, Boston Herald, June 8, 2004.

Morgana (Review), Out of Bollywood: Modern Indian Dance, with Aparna Keshaviah, Middle-Eastern Dance in New England, Jan/Feb 2004.

Larry Osgood (Photo exhibition), Citizens Bank, Fall 2003.

INW (Article), Raaga and Taala: An Indian classical dance and music showcase, India Newsweek, July 21, 2003.

Mike Steele (Review), Ragamala's 'Canticle' is a sumptuous blending, StarTribune, March 18, 1995.

ORIGINAL WORKS *(selected)*

2011

Kinetic Play *(with composer Dr. Paul Rudy)*

Kinetic Play combines a morphing acoustic sonic environment with a South Indian Classical Dance structure to formulate a new hybrid. Neither classically structured nor amorphous, it emerges from a basal communication between dancer and musician, both composing as they perform. Premiered at the American Academy in Rome, and restaged at the National Museum of Women in the Arts.

2006

Mahishasura Mardini *(Demon-slaying goddess)*

Invoking the fierce goddess Kali, pounding rhythms of war infiltrate this dance, propelled by the pulses of a traditional chant (sloka). Created for the Lebanese Red Cross fundraiser in Boston; re-staged at Folkmoot U.S.A. for dancers from 8 international folk dance troupes.

2005

Matrabandh *(Union of elements)*

This piece deconstructs Bharatanatyam into its core components of footwork, gesture, and expression, and then reunites them. Bare, powerful stamping is contrasted with fluid hand gestures. When the two unite, they become punctuated by sharp isolations of the neck, eyes, and shoulders. Matrabandh allows beginners to feel the language of Bharatanatyam even while learning the alphabetic steps.

2003

Contemporary Indian Dance Medley

This medley interweaves Bollywood-style dance, Gujarata & Punjabi folk forms, and other world forms (American hip-hop, salsa) to ultimately create a high-energy contemporary Indian dance. First taught at the Brookline Community Center for the Arts, the piece was expanded into a World Dance class due to its immense popularity and taught in dance schools and fitness centers across the U.S. Set to a custom mix of Bollywood film, techno-bhangra, and garba music.