

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:



**MARCUS PERFORMING ARTS CENTER PRESENTS NRITYAGRAM RESIDENCY TO SHARE
THE ART OF CLASSICAL INDIAN DANCE**

Multi-day engagement with Nriyagram Dance Ensemble to take place April 24-28

MILWAUKEE (April 19, 2023) – [Marcus Performing Arts Center](#) (MPAC) is presenting a weeklong residency with [Nriyagram](#), a renowned Indian dance company who is dedicated to bringing Odissi – one of the oldest dance styles in the world – to audiences worldwide. Led by Artistic Director [Surupa Sen](#), their traditional practice is infused with a bright, contemporary spirit, which has captured the imagination of people around the globe.

The multi-day engagement focusing on the art of classical Indian dance will feature artists from Nriyagram leading community workshops, a lecture/demonstration, a student matinee performance for over 1,500 area youth, and a public performance with a post-show talkback.

One of the premier Indian dance ensembles performing today, the Nriyagram Dance Ensemble (pronounced NRI-thyuh-graam) has been teaching and performing for over 25 years. More than a dance company, Nriyagram was founded as a *Gurukula* (school) devoted to Indian dance. The all-female ensemble's daily life of intensive training and meditation brings to the stage compelling, captivating performances that are expressive and lyrical.

Nriyagram Residency schedule is as follows:

Monday, April 24

4:30-5:30pm – Odissi Intermediate Dance Class with youth dancers. Pre-registration required.

Participants will learn about the historical origin of Odissi and the language: body positions, basic movement technique, and the use of hand gestures and facial expressions for expressional dance.

Location: Baumgartner Center for Dance, 128 N. Jackson St., Milwaukee

Tuesday, April 25

9:30-10:30am – Lecture/Demonstration at Swanson Elementary.

The presentation will feature the history and evolution of Odissi and Kandyān dance as well as short dance sequences of both forms. The event will culminate in a Q&A session with the students.

Location: Swanson Elementary, 305 N. Calhoun Rd., Brookfield

4:30-5:30pm – Odissi Beginner Dance Class with youth dancers. Pre-registration required.

This introductory class is an opportunity to learn basic movement phrases and the body-training specific to Odissi, as evolved and practiced at Nrityagram.

Location: Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts, 3270 Mitchell Park Dr., Brookfield

Thursday, April 27

10:00-11:00am – Nrityagram Student Matinee Performance for over 1,500 Milwaukee area youth.

Geared for young audiences, company members illustrate the breathtaking beauty of both Odissi and Kandyān dance forms, demonstrating how each reflects the culture of their homeland and the differences that set each apart. Accompanied by Nrityagram's live music ensemble and a Kandyān drummer, this show includes audience participation and a Q&A session.

Location: Marcus Performing Arts Center, Uihlein Hall, 929 N. Water St., Milwaukee

Friday, April 28

7:30pm – Nrityagram Public Performance of “Āhuti” with Chitrasena Dance Company. A post-show Q&A with the artists will follow the performance.

Āhuti (2019)

{Sanskrit: Invoking | Pali: Offering}

On the heels of the tour revival of their international hit Saṃhāra, Surupa Sen collaborated with the Chitrasena Dance Company (pronounced Chithruh-say-naa) from Sri Lanka for a new work in which Nrityagram dancers are joined by male and female guest dancers from this Kandyān dance troupe.

Tickets available at www.MarcusCenter.org or by calling 414-273-7206.

Location: Marcus Performing Arts Center, Uihlein Hall, 929 N. Water St., Milwaukee

Tickets for the public performance of **Nrityagram** are on sale now and start at just \$29.50. To purchase tickets, visit www.MarcusCenter.org, call 414-273-7206, or visit the Marcus Center Box Office at 929 North Water Street, Downtown Milwaukee. Groups of 10 or more can secure their seats by calling 414-273-7207.

To register for participation in the dance workshops, contact John Hassig, MPAC Director of Programming & Education, at jhassig@marcuscenter.org.

Nrityagram is part of the 2022/23 MPAC Presents Dance Series. The 2022/23 MPAC Presents Series is supported by Bader Philanthropies, Inc., Saint Kate – The Arts Hotel, Fields Auto Group, the Herzfeld Foundation, The Ambassador Hotel, Sazama’s Fine Catering, and THINKLimo.

For more information about the show, visit www.nrityagram.org.

About Nrityagram

Regarded as one of the foremost dance companies of India, the Nrityagram Dance Ensemble is committed to carrying Indian dance into the twenty-first century. Led by Artistic Director Surupa Sen, the company is devoted to Odissi – one of the oldest dance styles in the world. Their traditional practice is infused with a bright, contemporary spirit, which has captured the imagination of people worldwide.

The rare opportunity to see them perform live is an exploration of culture, technique, storytelling, and devotion that is not to be missed.

Nrityagram (pronounced NRI-thyuh-graam), meaning “dance village,” is located outside Bangalore, India. More than a dance company, Nrityagram is home to a school inspired by the *Gurukula*, an ancient teaching paradigm, and the dance ensemble – a village of artists dedicated to the practice and nurture of a 2000-year-old art form.

Founded by Odissi dancer Protima Gauri, the all-female ensemble’s daily life of intensive training and meditation brings to the stage compelling, captivating performances that are expressive and lyrical. The ensemble not only explores creative expansions of tradition but are also able to commission fresh compositions from leading Indian classical musicians.

About Odissi

Odissi is one of the pre-eminent classical dance forms of India, originating in the Hindu temples of the state of Odisha in eastern India. Its theoretical base traces back to the *Natyashastra*, the ancient Sanskrit Hindu text on classical Indian performing arts. Fortifying this base is archeological evidence excavated from ancient sites which depict scenes of music and dance, the oldest of which are the Jain cave-temples of Udayagiri and Khandagiri, dating back to the second century BC.

Odissi is celebrated around the world for its lyricism, sensuality, and emphasis on *bhakti bhava* (attitude of devotion and surrender). Originally a sacred ritual dedicated to the gods, Odissi speaks of love and union, between human and divine, transporting viewers to enchanted worlds of magic and spirituality.

About Chitrasena Dance Company

With a vision to inspire and exhilarate through the traditional dances and drums of Sri Lanka, the Chitrasena Dance Company is at the forefront of transforming the Sri Lankan arts landscape.

Founded in 1943 by Guru Chitrasena along with his wife, Vajira, they worked tirelessly for decades to carefully distill ancient rhythmic rituals. By reviving and refining elements of traditional dances while experimenting with new forms, the Company is renowned for its authentic dance language with a fresh, new perspective.

For over seven decades the Chitrasena Dance Company has given life to compelling performances ranging from a rich repertoire of dance and drumming pieces, to acclaimed original ballets and productions inspired by ancient rituals and contemporary culture.

About Marcus Performing Arts Center

A mission-based non-profit organization located in downtown Milwaukee, the Marcus Performing Arts Center (MPAC) brings high-quality arts and cultural programming to Southeastern Wisconsin. MPAC strives to act as an energizing force that connects the community to the world through collaboration, innovation, social engagement, and the transformative power of the performing arts. Through multiple performance series, community events, and educational experiences, MPAC brings a diverse range of celebrated artists to the region. A fixture in Milwaukee for over 50 years, MPAC is proud to be part of the Milwaukee Theater District as well as a dedicated War Memorial facility. Learn more at www.marcuscenter.org.

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VISUAL / INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES:

One-on-one interviews with:

- Guest artists from Nrityagram Dance Ensemble
- Jared Duymovic, Vice President of Programming & Engagement, Marcus Performing Arts Center
- John Hassig, Director of Programming & Education, Marcus Performing Arts Center

Visuals of:

- Dance workshops with area youth and Nrityagram artists
- Student Matinee performance in Uihlein Hall with 1,500+ area students

To arrange interviews or RSVP for photo/video, contact Jennifer Han jhan@marcuscenter.org, 414-755-3969.
Press kit can be downloaded here: [MPAC Press Kits – Nrityagram](#)