

# meet the beat



## Soorya Performing Arts

(A not-for-profit organization devoted to Indian classical dance, music and theater)

Presents

### "MEET THE BEAT"

### a Kathak Show

By Kalayogi Guruji Prasanna Kasthuri

With Live Music

Vocal : Divya Khandekar  
Tabla : Naren Budhakar  
Harmonium : Vikas Falnikar

Imrat Guitar :  
Todd Mosby

Padanth : Samanvita  
& Seema Kasthuri



18th

November  
2023  
@6.30 pm

CHESTERFIELD FAMILY YMCA - COMMUNITY THEATRE  
16464 Burkhardt Place Chesterfield, MO 63017

Supported by



Tickets are available now at  
<https://www.sooryaperformingarts.org/>



## **Foreword**

Dear Patrons

We are delighted to present “Meet the beat” – Kathak show from Guruji Prasanna Kasthuri in live.

Kathak dance has been one of the main classical dance styles of Soorya Performing Arts. We are the first organization to give an exposure of this great classical dance form in Saint Louis. We are very proud of teaching this fine arts to hundreds of students in Missouri. We have presented many shows in the past, including great productions such as Rainbow-2 , which had great Kathak pieces. We presented Tap-Kathak collaboration with legendary tap dancer Robert Reed and took this unique productions to many Tap festivals.

We are the only organization to bring the greatest if great— Padmavibhushan—Pundit Birju Maharaj ji and Saswati Sen I with live music into Saint Louis city.

Today’s performance is a reunion of musicians and dancers. This is a presentation of traditional Kathak dance show with a pinch of modernity. It adds a new dimension with the inclusion of folk-based songs such as—Sojugada from Karnataka and also an inclusion of a Romantic piece from a Pakistani singer. It adds a new piece from ancient text of Upanishad. This only establishes a fact—as a dance form—Kathak is very flexible and all inclusive.

We want to take this opportunity to thank all the Soorya Family, who stood firmly with this festival. We thank - Missouri Arts Council for their continued support. We also thank regional arts commission for their renewed support.

Thank you to our volunteers who worked to make it happen.

Board of Directors  
Soorya Performing Arts



## **Soorya Performing Arts**

Soorya performing arts is a 501 (c) (3) organization registered in the state of Missouri. The dance and music wing under Soorya provides high-quality training and teaching of classical and folk performing art forms such as dance, music and theater from India.

Our vision

- Organize high-quality professional and amateur dance, music, folk, and drama performances from India.
- Arrange training and cross-artistic performances through residencies in schools and colleges in the city and rural areas.
- Arrange festivals, seminars, workshops, and demonstrations for better enjoyment and appreciation of South Asian Performing Art form
- Create innovative dance, music, and theater productions with local, state, and national companies.
- Award recognition to those served in performing arts.
- Establish dance competitions and provide rewards/recognition for excellence.
- Work with learning disabilities and mentally handicapped children and provide them with the enjoyment of dance and music.
- Establish student scholarships and internships to foster the learning of arts among the young generation

American Natya festival has been made possible by the grants received year after year from the Missouri Arts Council and Regional Arts Commission. We wholeheartedly thank all our donors.

### **Board**

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### **Artistic Directors**

Guru Prasanna Kasthuri  
Guru Seema Kasthuri

### **Contact**

info@sooryadance.com  
314-397- 5278  
314-359- 9741  
314- 629- 9754

[Www.sooryaperformingarts.org](http://www.sooryaperformingarts.org)



# Meet The Beat

Beats are universal. Kathak dance beats are based on the Hindustani music. They are in different patterns, counts and combinations. Dancers, musicians collaborate and float beats in the wave of cyclical music to come on the beat. Kathak has both pure movement – Nritta and expressional element – Abhinaya.

Guruji Prasanna Kasthuri will present both aspect in this beautiful showcase where Beat meets Nritta and Abhinaya. Most of the dances are his solo pieces. His three senior students – Aanya Kaushik, Vidhee Soneta and Divya Sinha accompany him in few pieces.

Guruji is accompanied on Padanth by his senior most disciple – Samanvita Kasthuri; and his wife – Guruji Seema Kasthuri. On Vocal is Dr. Divya Khandekar from Chicago; on Harmonium is veteran musician – Vikas Falnikar from Chicago. On Tabla by – Abhinav Sharma from Minnesota; and on Imrat Guitar – our own Todd Mosby ji.





With my Guru - **Dr. Maya Rao**

Dr. Maya Rao was a disciple of Shambhu Maharaj jii (Lucknow Stykle) and Sohan Lal ji (Jairpur Style)





With my Gurus—

Padmavibhushan Birju Maharj ji and  
Guruji Saswati Sen ji



Our Kathak Dance Class



## Guruji Prasanna Kasthuri



Prasanna Kasthuri is a dancer and choreographer from India - South Asia. Prasanna's parents Mr. Raghusutha & Mrs. Padmaje, were literary personalities who supported him in his artistic abilities.

Guruji learnt Kathak under the able guidance of Dr. Mayarao from Natya Institute of Kathak and Choreography from 1986 – 1993. He later continued with her while he visited back in India many occasions until demise.

Guruji also took lessons from legendary Pandit Birju Maharaj and his disciple Saswati Sen ji since 2002. He underwent special Kathak master program in 2016/17 in New Delhi with Saswati Sen ji and Birju Maharaj ji, under Regional Arts Commission assigned scholarship.

Guruji collaborated with Tap legendary Prof. Robert Reed to Tap-Kathak fusions in 2008. He was invited to perform in Tap Festivals in St. Louis and Oklahoma. Guruji holds a rank in the Vidwath exam conducted by the Karnataka government. He is the only dancer who has created "24-hour-marathon -Bharathanatyam-Dance" in India. Sixteen beautiful dance-drama productions and over more than two thousand performances shine high on his career. He traveled across Europe, the USA, and India. His presentations – "Rainbow-2" was based on English poetry for Indian classical dances, and "Ekalavya" – the sincere student – were performed in more than 40 cities.

Guruji lives in Saint Louis, USA, and volunteers as artistic director to Soorya Performing Arts, which presents the "American Natya Festival." His recent publication – "Natya Samhita -1", was very well received by many dance lovers and literary enthusiasts. In 2022 – Prasanna choreographed the World's premiere show of "SAMARPAN, which was viewed by more than 2000 people and presented in the USA and India. He curated the 14th American Natya Festival, attended by hundreds of people in April 2023.





**Dr. DIVYA KHANDEKAR -**  
Vocalist

Divya is a versatile vocalist trained in Hindustani classical and light music. Divya, originally from Mumbai, started her training in the Jaipur-Atrauli style of Hindustani classical music at the age of 6, under the tutelage of Mrs. Sarangee Ambekar and is currently learning light music from Mrs. Anuradha Marathe, a well-known name in the Marathi Film Industry. She is also receiving guidance from eminent Thumri singer Dhanashree Pandit-Rai. Divya has performed in several concerts of light-classical music in Chicago, LA, New Jersey, Detroit, Kansas City, Saint Louis, Mumbai, Pune, and Nashik. She was 2016 Indian Raga Senior fellow where she collaborated with other musicians to create high-quality music videos. Divya has excelled in several music competitions, including the BMM SaReGaMa, where she was a semifinalist in the year 2013.

**Guru Vikas Falnikar—**Harmonium



Vikas Falnikar is a well-known harmonium accompanist and singer of geet and ghazal from Chicago. He is a self-taught musician and comes from a musical family. He has performed with ghazal artists Rajkumar Rizvi, Penaaz Masani and Radhika Chopra and classical vocalists like Dr. Nagraj Havaldar, Dr. Ram Deshpande, Smt. Aarti Ankalikar Tikekar, Mahesh Kale among others. He has provided Lehra support to senior tabla artists like Pt. Shyam Kane, Pt. Anindo Chatterjee and Pt. Nayan Ghosh. In St. Louis Vikas ji has performed with Guru Prasanna Kasthuri, Guru Sandhya Pandurangi and others





## **Todd Mosby**—Imrath Guitar

An award-winning musician from Missouri with jazz, folk-rock and Indian raga influences, Todd Mosby is a musical storyteller and landscape artist. He uses the guitar to whisk listeners away to a borderless realm where jazz, North Indian, composition and folk-rock create transformative experiences. Mr. Todd has accompanied many Kathak shows of Guruji. He has learnt Hindustani music with Ustad Imrat Khan for 15 years.

## **Samanvita Kasthuri**—Padanth

Samanvita kasthuri hails from a family of literature, dance, music and yoga. She is a third-generation writer, second generation musician and dancer. Samanvita 's paternal grandparents (Mr. Raghusutha and Mrs. K R Padmaje) were Kannada literary figures. Samanvita



kasthuri began to learn Bharatanatyam, Kathak, and Carnatic music at the age of four. under the guidance of her father, guru Prasanna Kasthuri. She also began to learn carnatic music under her mother, guru Seema Kasthuri. Samanvita completed her Kathak (2015) and Bharatanatyam (2016) arangetrams in presence of Gurus such as Smitha Rajan, Sujatha Vinjamuri, Sushma Mohan and others. Samanvita was the first Indian to win prizes prestigious Fox Teen Talent Competition and performed in 2017 and 2019 in the Fabulous Fox Theater, in front of 3000 people. In 2019, She performed "Equal" – a contemporary dance production on Female Injustices, which was aired on PBS and at a pro-choice rally held in St. Louis after the sweeping bans on abortion.



## Seema Kasthuri—Padanth

Seema Kasthuri is a practitioner, performer and teacher of Carnatic classical



from St. Louis MO. Seema has performed in temples and organizations Kansas City, Columbia, Chicago, Los Angeles. She has performed for Sang-eetha in St. Louis and St. Louis Indian music festival. She was awarded the title of “AKKA Idol” at the American Kannada Koota conference in 2012. Seema’s versatility allows her to accompany her husband’s creative dance productions as a lead vocalist. She has also led her voice to many arangetrams in North America as a

lead singer

Seema has released several music albums in classical, devotional and contemporary genre and also has many music videos to her credit, on youtube. She has worked with Jazz, R&B style of music and her latest music album “Wind-Chyme” is a unique collection of fusion, classical and RAP experimentation. Seema has performed with the St. Louis based musician Todd Mosby as part of the World Fusion ensemble and collaborated with a rapper and musician based out of Columbia

## Abhinav Sharma – Tabla

Abhinava Sharma, a tabla player, started learning tabla from Mr. Roshan Bharti in 2003. He later continued under Ustad Ashok Kawa in Jaipur and later from Shri Sameer Suryavanshi in Pune. He lives in Minneapolis since 2014, and continued his learning under his mentor Dr. A



Pavan, and for the last 3 years I have been learning from the legend Pt Anindo Chatterjee. He has in multiple musical conferences in Pune, India. He has accompanied artists such as Pooja Goswami Pavan, Hidayat Khan, Kamal Sabri, Gauri Pathare, Sangeeta Katti, Katha Dance Theater - Rita Mustaphi, Nirmala Rajasekar, and, Steve Gorn to name a few.

Aanya Kaushik – Ms. Aanya Kaushik, a senior student of Guruji Prasanna Kasthuri ji learning from 2017. Aanya is a very dedicate dancer, who loves Kathak dance with Soorya Kathak school. She has performed many dance shows in Saint Louis and Columbia. She has performed in Parvati Kalyani. A motivated person, her other activities include Tennis and Violin. She also helps Guruji by assisting in his classes.

Divya Sinha – Ms. Divya Sinha is a bundle of joy enjoying the moves of Kathak. She climbed the ladder of levels pretty soon. Her control on rhythm is impeccable. She joined Soorya Kathak school in 2020. She attended summer Kathak workshops, which helped her to leap forward quickly in Kathak learning. She is a devoted student who believes in sincere practices. Other activities include – playing Piano, Guitar, and sings in Honor choir in School.

Vidhee Soneta - Ms. Vidhee Soneta, a senior student of Guruji Prasanna Kasthuri ji learning from 2016. Vidhee is a talented artist who has flair for both classical and folk moves from Gujarat. She is a volunteer in many places. She is a familiar face in St. Louis community activity. She acts in school dramas regularly. She has performed in Parvati Kalyani. A motivated person, her other activities include Tennis, Theater, Piano. She also helps Guruji by assisting in his classes.

### **Volunteers**

Ticketing – Sri Lakshmi Vishnubhotla, Jayashri Anand

Stage help – Adithi Sriram, Shreenidhi Senthilnathan, Hritika Malugu

Video Help – Sapthaka Upadhya

Announcements – Sona Mukesh

Professional Video – Manhar Bhakta

Thanks to YMCA Community Center staff for their invaluable support for this show. Thanks all those who helped. Directly and Indirectly.



## Repertoire

### Ganapathi Athrava Sheersha

Ganapathi Atharva Sheersha is a part of Atharva Veda. It is classified as an Upanishad and not as a chant; yet it is still considered universally as the greatest and most effective prayer addressed to Ganesha. -The first verse of the Upanishad proper asserts that Ganesha is the Supreme principle and all-pervading metaphysical absolute reality called Brahman. Ganesha is asserted by the text as identical to Om, the Brahman, the Atman or soul, and as the visible manifestation of the Vedic idea Tat tvam asi (you are that) found in the sixth chapter of the Chandogya Upanishad. Music is inspired by legendary singer – Pandit Jasraj Style. This song is set in Raag- Ahir Bhairav and rhythm set in – Teen Taal. Performed by Guruji.

### Nritta

This is a pure movement and rhythm interactive piece. The traditional percussion syllables of tabla and pakhavaj will be recited through structures such as “Tukda”, “Toda”, “Paran”, “Perumal”. A small expressive piece will be added with addition of “Kavitaa” – a rhythmical poem. This needs the dancer to recite alive on the stage all the “Bols” (Rhythmical phrases) before presenting them. Pace of this pieces begins slow, later it moves to intermediate speed and ends with a fast speed. This is set in Raag- Chandrakauns; and taal in – Teen taal. Performed by Guruji.

### Sojugada – an Ode to Lord Shiva

"Sojugada Suji Mallige" is a beautiful Kannada folk song. This is a composition on Lord Shiva who is worshipped by other names Mahadeva and in Kannada he is also worshipped as Maadeva. A village person expressing her love for Shiva in her own simple way. She says she has brought rare flowers such as - pointy jasmine, as a Gar-



land to decorate Maadeva's hair. She made fresh Ghee on a clean vessel, to light the lamps. She came to watch Maadeva in the divine process - called Parashe, with an offering of tasty Orange. She has only simpler things to offer, is proud to offer what she possesses with devotion. She firmly believes her beloved Lord Maadeva (Mahadeva or Shiva) will grace her home and heart. This is a simple Kathak dance highlighting the simplicity of a rural person. – Raag- Folk; Taal Roopak. Performed by Guruji.

### **Aaj Shyam Murali bajaayi**

Gokul, the birthplace of Krishna is beaming with excitement and happiness. Everyone is very excited and joyful to hear the enchanting music of Krishna's flute music. Krishna, who is the incarnation of MahaVishnu dances with alacrity and makes everyone happy in Brij. Everyone's heart is filled with happiness and joy. This is performed by Anya Kaushik and Vidhee Soneta. This is an original song from Pundit Birju Maharaj Tradition. This is in Raag – Khamach and set to Teen Taal.

### **Ab Ke Sawan Ghar Aaja**

Its monsoon, lots of rain. Heroine, is staying alone. She pleads her beloved to come home. She yearns for his return. This romantic separation song is the highlight of abhinaya by Guru Prasanna Kasthuri. This Thumri is in Raag – Tilak Kamod, and set in Taal – Punjabi Tappa

### **Taraana**

Taraana provides an overview of pure movement with multitude of musical pattern intertwined with rhythmical phrases. This Taraana is created by Guru ji Prasanna Kasthuri and his music Vocalist friend – Raghunandan Bhat from Bengaluru. This is in Raag - Tilang and it is set in Taal - Teen Taal



## Upcoming Shows and Performances

### India Engagements

**December—20th**—Samanvita performs in Iyengar's School of Arts,  
Bengaluru, India

**December –29th** Bharathanatyam in Nupura - Samanvita Kasthuri

**December 30th**— Banneru Ghatta School—Bharathanatyam —  
Samanvita Kasthuri

**December 30th**—EKALAVYA—Bhushan School of Dances—Mysore—  
Guruji Prasanna & Pulikeshi

**December 31st**—Seema Kasthuri presents **Bhava Sangama**—Ravindra  
Kalakshetra, Bengaluru

**Jan 4th, 2024**—Carnatic Classical Concert—Seema Kasthuri, in Chen-  
nai—at Periyavar Temple

**Jan 6th, 2024**—Rasika Ranjani Sabha, Chennai—Bharathanatyam Sa-  
manvita Kasthuri

**Jan 8th, 2024**—Kuvempu Literature Conference—Bengaluru— Presen-  
tation of **Beral ge koral** by Guruji Prasanna & Pulikeshi

### USA Engagements

**February 17th, 18th, 2024**

Soorya Annual Shows—Gandhi Center

**February 24th, 2024**

Soorya Annual Show—YMCA Theater

**March 31st, 2024**

Harmony in Music—at Grandel Theater

**April 26,27,28th, 2024**

15th American Natya Festival, Conference  
American Natya Idol Competitions—CHS Auditorium

(Dates are subjected to change due to political, weather situations)



# SOORYA PERFORMING ARTS



314-397-5278  
INFO@SOORYADANCE.COM