



Bharatanatyam Arangetrām

Aditi Sriram

Disciple of Kalayogi Guru Prasanna Kasthuri

August 10 2024

@ Ladue High School Auditorium
St. Louis MO



Guruji Prasanna Kasthuri



Guruji 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. He practices Bharathanatyam, Kathak, Carnatic music and Mrudangam. Guruji Prasanna holds a rank in Vidwath exam (1985) and was the best state dancer (1986) conducted by Karnataka government. He is the only dancer who has created "24-hour-marathon-Bharathanatyam-Dance" in India. Sixteen beautiful dance-drama productions and 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 was collaborated with Grammy awardee Pandit Vishwa Mohan Bhat. Guruji Prasanna choreographed and presented Jnapeeth awardee poet Kuvempu's "Ekalavya", which was toured in more than 40 cities in USA and India. He lives in Saint Louis, USA, and volunteers as artistic director to non-profit organization - Soorya Performing Arts, which presented "American Natya Festival" since 2008. 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" - a courageous showcase of Indian's freedom struggle against colonialism. This was viewed by 2000 people and presented in the USA and India. He has been curating the American Natya Festivals in Saint Louis, MO USA. He was invited by St. Louis Symphony to present Kathak dance in May 2023. His recent production - "Swamy Ayyappa Charitham" was very well received by hundreds of patrons in June 2023. His presentation of "Defeat of Death" based on Sri Aurobindo's Savithri won laurels and accolades in 15th American Natya Festival. Prasanna Kasthuri has been awarded many titles. In 2015 he received "Kalayogi" award from Artists and Writers Guild of India in Bengaluru. In 2024, he received prestigious "Living Traditional Sustainer Fellow- 2024" award from Missouri Folk Arts, in 2023 - "Sambharama Puraskara" in India. Guruji has dedicated his life for Indian classical music and dance in USA and in India. His "American Natya Idol" reached 6 USA cities in spring 2024, hundreds of students took part in this educational competitions.

Guruji is blessed with a family of artists. His brother Pulikeshi Kasturi is a well-known Nattuvanar, his sister Sushma Mohan is an accomplished dance Guru in Atlanta. Guruji's wife Seema Kasthuri is a beautiful singer and daughter Samanvita Kasthuri is a wonderful contemporary-Bharathanatyam dancer.

More details are on his website - Visit www.prasannakasthuri.com



Aditi Sriram



Aditi Sriram, an incoming sophomore at Marquette High School, is a dynamic individual with a deep passion for both the performing arts and academic excellence. From a young age, Aditi discovered her love for dance, beginning with ballet training at the age of 3 at St. Peters Dance Academy.

At the age of five, she started her Bharatanatyam journey under the guidance of Guru Prasana Kasthuri and that became a central part of her artistic journey. Staring at an early age, laid the foundation for her disciplined approach to dance and performance. Aditi, known for her grace and expressive storytelling abilities, has performed in several notable Bharatanatyam productions, including "Ashtalakshmi", "Samarpan", "Dasavatharam", "Swami Ayyappa Charithram" and Aurobindo's "Savithri", each showcasing her dedication to preserving and interpreting cultural narratives through dance. She has performed in 14th and 15th American Natya Festival, Navaratri Festival in St. Louis Hindu Temple, Shivaratri Festival in Missouri Ganesha Temple.

Aditi's is a member of the X Bots robotics team, where she has competed in both the FIRST Lego League (FLL) and FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC). Her contributions to the team were instrumental in their success, culminating in third place overall win in the Franklin division at the 2024 World Championship in Houston. At Marquette High School, Aditi actively participates in extracurricular activities. She is an enthusiastic member of HOSA (Health Occupations Students of America) and contributes her time and skills to the Red Cross, reflecting her dedication to education and community service.

Outside of her academic and extracurricular pursuits, Aditi enjoys reading, painting, and spending quality time with her friends and family. As she continues her educational journey, Aditi is passionate about dance and looks forward to further exploring her interests and contributing to the community.



Aarambhanartana



Aarambhanartana is an invocation dance consisting of 5 parts:

Pushpanjali – an offering of flowers to God of dance, Nataraja, followed by paying respect to teachers, co-artists and audience.

Ekadantam – a Ganeshashloka performed to seek success of the event. The elephant headed Ganesha is described as the lord of success, who removes all obstructions, who is beautiful eyed, big bodied, and adorned with golden attire.

Sabha Vandana – This is a Shloka (Sanskrit verse) from Abhinaya Darpana – which describes the audience as a beautiful divine tree, whose branches are 4 Vedas (Hindu holy scriptures), its flowers areshastras (sciences), where honeybees (Scholars) enjoy the nectar (knowledge).

Sharade Karunanidhe – Sharade is the goddess of knowledge. She holds a book in one hand, meditation beads in other one, with two more hands playing Veena, the musical instrument. The dancer will pray and seek Sharade or Saraswathi's blessings to be more erudite and care for the Universe.

Alaripu is an opening dance number, which portrays pure dance movements from Bharatanatyam. This dance has beautiful moves, important positions such as movements of full standing, sitting and half-sitting positions with varying rhythms.

Pushpanjali – Raga: Amruta Varshini, Taala: Adi (8 beat cycle), Composer: Guru Prasanna Kasthuri

Ganesha Shloka – Raga: Bhouli – from Ganesh Ashtakam

Sabha Vandana – Raga: Begade
Composer: Nadikeshwara (4th Century AE)

Sharade Karunanidhe : Raga: Amir Kalyani,
Taala: Mishra Chapu, Composer: Chandrashekar Bharati

Alaripu – Taala : Khanda Chapu (5 beat Cycle)
Composer: Guru Lalitha Srinivasan



Jatiswaram



In Nritya (pure movement), dancer establishes her expertise of movements with respect to different melodic combinations called Swarams for a specific Raga. They establish the combinations of calculations with moves gracefully. She also performs pure rhythm structures called Jatis. This Jatiswaram is structured on a Raaga – Kokila and set in Aadi Taalam (multiple so 8 beat cycle) by Guru Prasanna Kasthuri.

Varnam



The most colorful piece in Bharatanatyam repertoire is Varnam. It has the force of extraordinary rhythm structures called – Trikala Jatis – where the dancers present movements in three speeds. Also, the dancer presents more combinations of Nritya (pure movement) through Jatis and swara patterns. This Varnam weaves through the life story of Krishna, who is the 8th incarnation of Lord Vishnu, who is considered the God of protection in Hindu beliefs. The dancer portrays his noble character of kindness and courage, which helps the subjects of Gokula and Mathura. The dancer narrates Krishna's birth, where Vasudeva escapes from prison to save his son by walking in a heavy thunderstorm but sheltered by a huge serpent called Adi Sesha as he crosses the flooded Yamuna River. The dancer also narrates the story of Pootana's destruction by baby Krishna and preaching of Bhagavad Geetha in Mahabharata War to Arjuna. The song is set in Raaga: Reeti Gowla and Taala: Aadi; composed by Bengaluru Tirumale Srinivasan (Chaami) based on Krishna Ashtottaram.



Devi Neeye Thunai



This is a beautiful Kriti, which depicts the beauty of Goddess Parvati. The poet says – O Goddess with beautiful eyes like a fish, who lives in southern Madurai, you are my only companion in this journey of life. You are the most beautiful woman in the entire universe! You are the one that has ensnared the heart of that Lord of the Lords, Sri Sundareswaran. Oh Devi, as the fruit of mighty penance performed by Pandya King, Malayadhvajan, you became the daughter of the King. Oh, lady with the speech of parrots to whom Lakshmi and Sarasvati bow down. You are the one who nourished the three forms of Tamizh that are sweet like nectar.

This song is in Ragam: Keeravani; Talam: Adi; Composed by Papanasam Sivan



Bho Shambho



A powerful song on God of destruction – MahaDeva or Shiva. Although, he is known to end the cycle of life, he is known to have protected the universe plenty of times from extinction. Poet says – O Shiva, you held fierce Ganga in your hair when she dropped from heavens to earth. You merciful, please help us cross this ocean of misery. You are the ultimate Godhead (Parabrahma), who is beyond everything. You are undefinable, infinite, full of joy and eternal. You dance to vigorous beats of drums while clad by Sky, showing the true form with spotless truth. You are worshipped by sage Mathanga. Let your eternal dance bless the universe.

This is in Raaga: Revati; Taalam – Aadi; composed by Dayananda Saraswathi.

Krishna Neze Begane Baaro



A well-known devaranama (songs on Deity Vishnu) from South India is on miracles of Lord Krishna. Mother Yashoda calls him affectionately and requests him to show his face. She wishes to put fragrance of Sandal paste, give him a new flute and dresses him with the best Banaras Pitambaram costumes. She decks his feet with ankle bell, shoulder with bapuri jewels, she requests the “blue-bodies Krishna” to dance and come towards her. Poet Vyasa Teertha says – mother was amazed to see the entire universe in his mouth, when she tried to check his mouth for eating soil.

This is in Raga: Yaman Kalyani; Taalam – Mishra Chapu (7 beats);
written by Vyasa Teertha

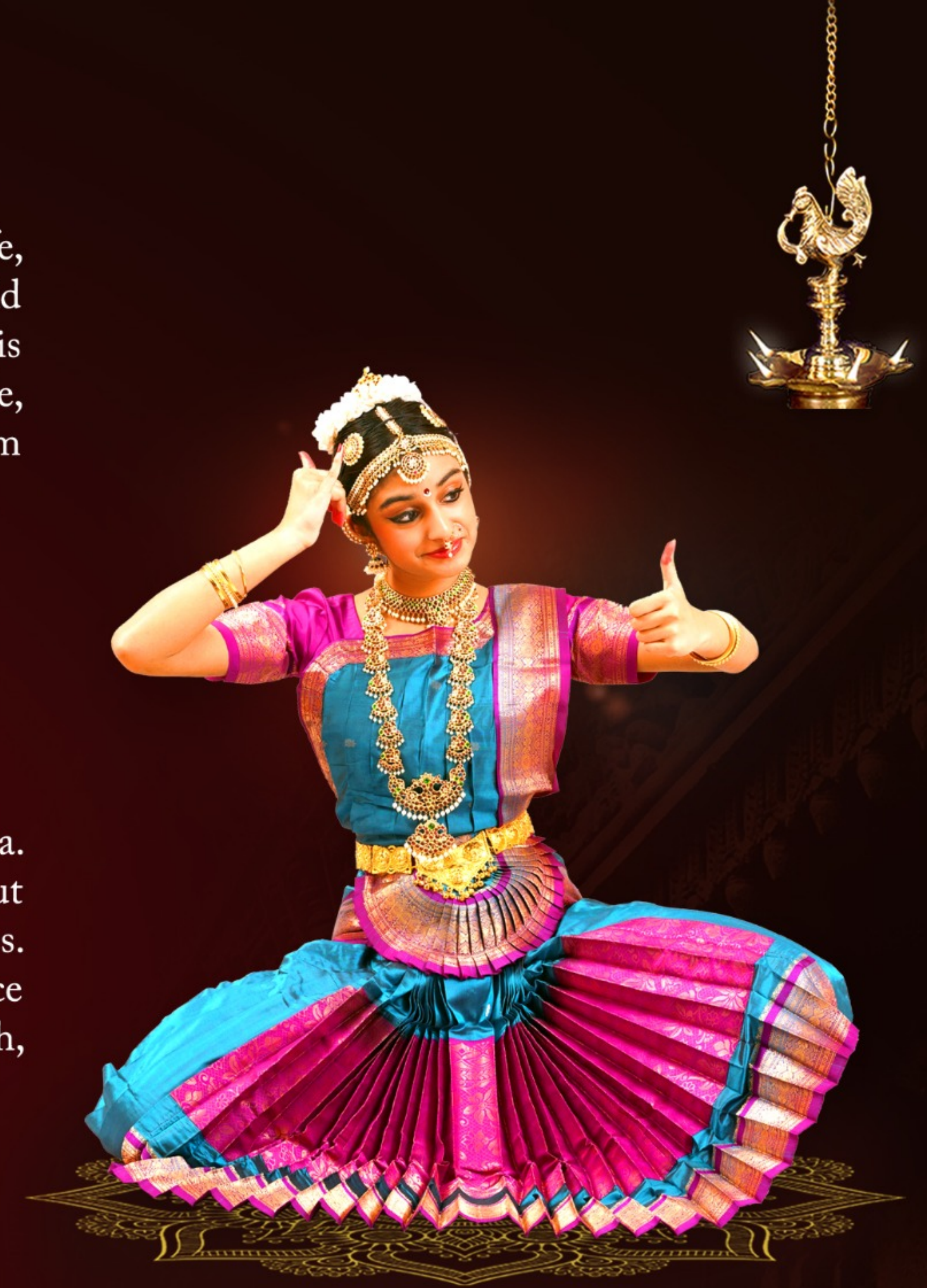


Tillana



Bharathanatyam Arangetram's last piece is always a Tillana, a reflection of pure movement with sculptural poses and varying foot works called Gettu. This Tillana is specially composed by Guru Pulikeshi Kasturi, put to music and choreographed by Guru Prasanna Kasthuri. There is a short lyric appreciating deity Rama, which includes the lyric which blends in the names of Sriram Family, which is dedicated to community work.

Raaga: Vakulabharana; Tala: Chaturashra Matya Taala
Tala Composition : Guru Pulikeshi Kasturi
Raga and Lyrics : Guru Prasanna Kasthuri





Special Dance

Vaaranam Ayiram (I saw in my dream!) - Andal

A beautiful verse from 9th century poetess Andal, describes her imagination of marrying the lord Narayana, the protector of the universe. VaarnamAayiram is a set of 10 Paasurams from Nacchiyaar Thirumozhi, sung by Andal, an incarnation of Bhoomadevi (Mother Earth). Born as Kodhai, Andal was the only female Azhwar among the 12 Azhwars of Sri Vaishnavam Philosophy.

Andal, was the daughter of Periazhwar who was of Veyar clan and who hailed from the beautiful place known as Srivilliputhur. In "VaaranamAayiram", Andal tells her friends about her dream in which she sees Sriman Narayana marrying her as per Vaidik tradition. In this dance, the dancer will portray the various events that happen during a marriage- from the arrival of the groom, through the holding hands and taking 7-circles around holy fire and dreams of marrying him, on an auspicious muhurtam through to ammimidhithal. Traditional belief is that when this ritual is performed, the newly wedded couple's lives will forever remain sweet. The steps and sequences involved in the Vedic marriage of today are very similar to the marriage ceremony that Andal describes in VaaranamAyiram. This beautiful dance piece is a fitting finale of an Arangetram.

Mangalam

This calls for an auspicious ending to the event, where it calls for a peace for entire universe.

Artists

Nattuvangam
Guru Prasanna Kasthuri

Vocal
Guru Seema Kasthuri

Mridhangist
Arjun Ramachandran

Veena
Nithya Sayeeganesh

Flutist
C.V. Sudhakar

Violin
Balaji Sivasubramanian



*Thank you for your presence,
encouragement and blessings...*