

Lincoln Center's

# white light festival

October 16–November 16, 2016

*Wednesday, November 2, 2016 at 7:30 pm*

*Friday, November 4, 2016 at 7:30 pm*

*Post-performance artist discussion, moderated by Lakshmi Vishwanathan, on  
Wednesday, November 2 in the Anya and Andrew Shiva Gallery*

## *Sounds of India*

Curated by Mark Morris

## Nrityagram Dance Ensemble

*Surupa Sen, Choreographer and Artistic Director*

**Nrityagram Music Ensemble**

*Jateen Sahu, Lead Vocals and Harmonium*

*Rohan Dahale, Chant and Mardala (Percussion)*

*Sanjib Kunda, Violin*

*Manu Raj, Bamboo Flute*

*Lynne Fernandez, Lighting Designer, Technical Director, and  
Executive Producer*

*Dancers: Surupa Sen, Bijayini Satpathy, Pavithra Reddy,  
Akshiti Roychowdhury, Prithvi Nayak, Urmila Mallick*

*This performance is approximately one hour and 35 minutes long, including  
intermission.*

*Please join the artists for a White Light Lounge immediately following the performance.*

*(Program continued)*

---

The White Light Festival presentation of *Sounds of India* is supported by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

**These performances are made possible in part by the Josie Robertson Fund for Lincoln Center.**

Gerald W. Lynch Theater at John Jay College

*Please make certain all your electronic devices  
are switched off.*

MetLife is the National Sponsor of Lincoln Center.

Artist Catering provided by Zabar's and Zabars.com

American Airlines is the Official Airline of Lincoln Center

Nespresso is the Official Coffee of Lincoln Center

NewYork-Presbyterian is the Official Hospital of Lincoln Center

## UPCOMING WHITE LIGHT FESTIVAL EVENTS:

### **A Little Night Music**

*Thursday, November 3 at 10:00 pm in the Stanley H. Kaplan Penthouse*

#### **Nrityagram Music Ensemble**

**Jateen Sahu**, lead vocals and harmonium

**Rohan Dahale**, chant and mardala (percussion)

**Sanjib Kunda**, violin

**Manu Raj**, bamboo flute

### **A Little Night Music**

*Friday, November 4 at 10:00 pm in the Stanley H. Kaplan Penthouse*

#### **MMDG Music Ensemble**

LOU HARRISON: *Suite for Cello and Piano*

NICO MUHLY: *Drones & Viola*

MESSIAEN: Selected Preludes for piano

ESA-PEKKA SALONEN: *Homunculus*

### **Sounds of India**

*Sunday, November 6 at 5:00 pm in the Gerald W. Lynch Theater*

**T.M. Krishna**, vocals

**Akkarai S. Subhalakshmi**, violin

**Rajna Swaminathan**, mridangam

**N. Guruprasad**, ghatam

**Vikram Raghavan**, tambura

**Madhav Iyengar**, tambura

*Thursday–Saturday, November 10–12 at 8:00 pm at Baryshnikov Arts Center, Jerome Robbins Theater*

**(T)here to (T)here** (World premiere)

#### **Liz Gerring Dance Company**

**Liz Gerring**, choreographer

In collaboration with **Kay Rosen**

*Dancers:* Brandon Collwes, Joseph Giordano,

Pierre Guilbault, Julia Jurgilewicz, Claire Westby

*Post-performance discussion with Liz Gerring on November 11*

*Co-presented with Baryshnikov Arts Center*

For tickets, call (212) 721-6500 or visit [WhiteLightFestival.org](http://WhiteLightFestival.org). Call the Lincoln Center Info Request Line at (212) 875-5766 to learn about program cancellations or to request a White Light Festival brochure.

**Visit [WhiteLightFestival.org](http://WhiteLightFestival.org) for full festival listings.**

Join the conversation: #LCWhiteLight

---

*We would like to remind you that the sound of coughing and rustling paper might distract the performers and your fellow audience members.*

*In consideration of the performing artists and members of the audience, those who must leave before the end of the performance are asked to do so between pieces. The taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment are not allowed in the building.*

## **Sankirtanam** (a prayer)

*Dancers:* Bijayini Satpathy, Pavithra Reddy, Akshiti Roychowdhury,  
Prithvi Nayak, Urmila Mallick

\*

## **Panchtaal Pallavi**

*This dance explores the various dimensions of Odissi's abstract vocabulary, set to different rhythmic cycles. It begins with slow, sensuous movements and builds up gradually to a climax of intricate patterns.*

Original Choreography by Guru Kelucharan Mahapatra  
Restaged by Surupa Sen

*Dancers:* Bijayini Satpathy, Pavithra Reddy, Akshiti Roychowdhury,  
Prithvi Nayak, Urmila Mallick

\*

## **Lalita Lavanga** (World premiere)

*A poem from the Gita Govinda is interpreted through facial expressions (bhava) and gestures (mudra). Written in the 12th century, the Gita Govinda is an epic ballad about the immortal love of Radha and Krishna, reflecting the Vaishnava belief that all humankind is feminine energy (Radha) constantly seeking union with the one male godhead (Krishna)*

*Dancers:* Surupa Sen, Bijayini Satpathy

## *Intermission*

## **Aali** (North American premiere)

*Set to a poem by Meera (Mirabai), a 16th-century mystic poet and aristocrat from Rajasthan who wrote and sang songs of ecstasy and longing, all dedicated to Krishna*

*Dancer:* Surupa Sen

\*

## **Sridevi**

*A dance in praise of the Mother Goddess*

*Dancers:* Bijayini Satpathy, Pavithra Reddy, Akshiti Roychowdhury,  
Prithvi Nayak, Urmila Mallick

# Note on the Program

By Marina Harss

"We spend a lot of our time telling stories about gods and goddesses," Surupa Sen told Mark Morris during a recent public conversation hosted by the organization Words on Dance. Sen is the artistic director of the Nrityagram Dance Ensemble, which specializes in the Indian classical dance form Odissi. From the age of 20, she has been based at the Nrityagram dance village near Bangalore, first as a student, and then as a teacher (or guru) and choreographer. This is where she spends her days dreaming up new and ever-more subtle ways to portray these stories.

The fundamentals of Odissi, like those of all classical Indian dance, are traceable to the Bronze Age, when the first Vedas, or Hindu scriptures, were composed. One of these, the *Natyasastra*, is a treatise on the performing arts. From this Veda sprung a huge variety of dance and theatrical forms, of which Odissi is just one. Conceived as an expression of religious devotion, Odissi was performed by women in the temples of the eastern state of Odisha, where its poses are preserved in carvings on the temple walls. These voluptuous sandstone maidens form sinuous S-shapes with their bodies, smiling with their eyes, holding their hands in symbolic gestures, or *mudras*.

Though it has moved from the temple to the stage, Odissi has retained this spiritual dimension, expressed both in the stories depicted and in the dancers' attitude toward the performance itself. As Sen explained to Morris last March: "You prepare the body, and then you sublimate it." Far from the noise of urban life, the dancers of Nrityagram study and practice eight hours a day. They also cook and take their meals together. This extreme, even monastic devotion to their craft helps to explain the refinement and detail of the

ensemble's dancing, and the aesthetic harmony one sees onstage. As Sen recently told me: "We are involved in a constant inquiry of what motivates movement—what are the patterns that evolve both on the outside and the inside of our being as we peel the layers from the gross to the subtle?"

This pursuit of purity of expression is particularly visible in the dancing of Sen and Bijayini Satpathy, who have lived and worked together at Nrityagram for over two decades. Through a kind of sublimation of the ego, they have achieved an uncanny ability to transform themselves into what appear to be two halves of the same being. It is an extraordinary illusion, a living embodiment of the relationship between Krishna and Radha—the eternal lovers of the epic poem *Gita Govinda*—whose oneness represents the totality of the universe.

Concretely, the language of Odissi is characterized by a mix of stylized mime (*abhinaya*), expressive movement (*nritya*), and pure dance (*nritta*). Each element is equally important, and so closely connected to the music and sung text that it is difficult to separate one from the other. The music—for voice, *mardala* drum, bamboo flute, and violin—is built upon sophisticated rhythmic and melodic systems that take years to master. As Morris, curator of *Sounds of India*, whose interest in Indian music and dance dates back three decades, has said, "the rhythms suggest an order that's more profound and more ordered than anything I could have imagined, a kind of Elysium."

The rhythms are expressed through drumming, the patter of the dancers' feet, and the recitation of syllables, similar to scatting in jazz. Meanwhile, the dancer's upper body "sings" the melody. The head, eyes, and fingers complete the movement, which is rounded, sinuous, and fluid. There are no sharp angles in Odissi, one of the

things that renders it so pleasingly sensual. That sensuality is part of the point—just as Radha and Krishna long for each other, the dancers' desire for transcendence has an erotic dimension. Body, mind, soul, and pulse—all are at play.

This evening's program comprises five dances. Only one, *Panchtaal Pallavi*, consists of "pure" dance, without story: The audience hears the drum and recited syllables, or *bols*, then sees the response of the dancers' feet. This particular *pallavi* was originally choreographed by Sen's teacher, Guru Kelucharan Mahapatra; she has reset it for the full ensemble. Two prayer dances, one addressed to Krishna (*Sankirtanam*) and the other to the Mother Goddess (*Sridevi*), frame the program. The high point is a pair of dances based on love poems. *Lalita Lavanga*, a duet for Sen and Satpathy, is inspired by a love ballad from the *Gita Govinda* that describes Radha's longing for Krishna. (It overflows with sensual images: flowers swarmed by honeybees, saffron trees heavy with golden pis-

tils.) *Aali*, a solo for Sen, is based on an ode by the 16th-century mystic poet Meera (also known as Mirabai). In it, Sen appears as a supplicant, helpless as a "fish without water," sick with longing for her blue-skinned lover.

Sen is not only a great performer, but an innovator. With her dances for the Nrityagram Dance Ensemble, she is pushing an ancient art toward ever-greater complexity and richness of expression, without betraying its basic nature. At its heart, Odissi is about telling stories with the body. "When you see a great Indian dancer who suddenly has Krishna's revelation," Morris once told me, "you feel it yourself." For that moment, at least, eternity is within our grasp.

*Marina Harss is a freelance culture writer based in New York.*

—Copyright ©2016 by Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc.

## Aali

By Meera (Mirabai)

His glance is the loving dagger that sears my heart.

Helpless, without caution

I enter the fire like a firefly,

gaze longingly at the moon like a chakora bird,

yearn for my Lord like a fish without water.

Like Radha, I am crazed for the love of her Krishna.

There is none for me

more beautiful than He.

My delightful Lord of the forest,

my blue-bodied Shyam.

Meera beseeches you,

let me be yours.

# Meet the Artists

## Nrityagram Dance Ensemble

Nrityagram, which means dance village, is located outside Bangalore, India. It was founded in 1990 by Odissi dancer Protima Gauri, who converted ten acres of farmland into a setting for the study, practice, and teaching of dance.

At Nrityagram, dance is a way of life. Reminiscent of ancient ashrams where gurus imparted not only technique but also a philosophy of being, this is a creative space where dancers, musicians, and choreographers live together, sharing their skills and developing their art. To enrich their practice, dancers are also taught yoga and martial arts along with Sanskrit and classical literature. As knowledge passes from guru to disciple, the continuity of the classical arts is ensured.

For almost two decades, Surupa Sen and Bijayini Satpathy have researched and expanded the dance vocabulary of Odissi dance and have developed a style that distinguishes the dancers of the Nrityagram School. A unique blend of traditional knowledge with contemporary understanding and application makes Nrityagram the only institution of its kind in the world. Choreographers, movement specialists, sculptors, painters, writers, musicians, and theater practitioners from all over the world frequently visit the village to perform and conduct workshops and seminars in their areas of practice.

The Dance Ensemble, Nrityagram's repertory company, is regarded as one of the foremost dance companies of India, performing all over the world, including an annual tour to the U.S. Although steeped in and dedicated to ancient practice, the ensemble is also committed to carrying Indian dance into the 21st century. Enabled by grants from the National Dance Project

of the New England Foundation for the Arts, and more recently from New York's Joyce Theater, Nrityagram's dancers not only explore creative expansions of tradition but are also able to commission fresh compositions from musicians.



**Surupa Sen**

Surupa Sen is the artistic director and choreographer of Nrityagram. She was the first student to graduate from Nrityagram, and began her Odissi training with the late body-language expert and architect of Odissi, Guru Kelucharan Mahapatra. She also studied Odissi with Protima Gauri, and Abhinaya (expressional dance) with Guru Kalanidhi Narayanan.

As a child, Ms. Sen studied Bharatanatyam, to which she attributes her focus on form and line. Attracted to choreography from her first exposure to Western makers of dance, she has worked with dancers and choreographers from across the world.

Ms. Sen has choreographed five full-length ensemble shows for Nrityagram, which are *Śrī: In Search of the Goddess* (2000), *Ansh* (2004), *Sacred Space* (2006), *Pratimā: Reflection* (2008), and *Samhāra* (2012). She has also created two full-length duet shows, *Samyoga* (2012) and *Songs of Love and Longing* (2013).



**Bijayini Satpathy**

Bijayini Satpathy made Nrityagram her home in 1993. Her initial Odissi training

was in Odisha from the age of seven, until she moved to Nrityagram. She has worked with Surupa Sen ever since.

Ms. Satpathy's research on the moving body in all its possibilities has resulted in a scientific body training program for Nrityagram, sourced from yoga, Natyashastra, Kalaripayattu, Western fitness methods, and Odissi body-conditioning exercises. This makes the practice of dance less injury-prone and increases the performance life-span of a dancer. Ms. Satpathy has also developed an expanded training program for Odissi dancers, which is equally valuable for beginners, advanced learners, performers, and teachers. As director of dance education at Nrityagram, she works on extending the vocabulary of the traditional Odissi form and formulating Nrityagram's dance pedagogy. She is also responsible for all outreach activities.

### **Pavithra Reddy**

Pavithra Reddy was the first student to graduate from Nrityagram's rural outreach program. She came to Nrityagram in 1990 from a nearby village and was selected to receive special training. She learned Odissi dance under the tutelage of Surupa Sen and Bijayini Satpathy and has worked with dancers and movement specialists from around the globe. Ms. Reddy joined Nrityagram in 1993 and has performed as a soloist and with the ensemble at some of the most prestigious venues across India and the world. In addition to being a full-time performer, Ms. Reddy also teaches dance at Nrityagram.

### **Akshiti Roychowdhury**

Akshiti Roychowdhury began training with Nrityagram in 2011. A recipient of a special five-year scholarship, Ms. Roychowdhury has trained under the direct mentorship of Surupa Sen and Bijayini Satpathy. In addition to training, she is an assistant teacher in the outreach program for children. She is working towards her solo debut and also

performs with Nrityagram Too, the junior dance ensemble.

### **Prithvi Nayak**

Prithvi Nayak started her Odissi training with Surupa Sen's classes in Bangalore in 2012 and was soon accepted to train more intensively at Nrityagram. In 2014 she joined Nrityagram Too, the junior dance ensemble, and now apprentices as a performer while she continues her undergraduate studies.

### **Urmila Mallick**

Urmila Mallick was eight when she watched a Nrityagram performance and knew she wanted to be a dancer. She started training at Nrityagram when she was 13, while she was a student. After finishing high school she took a gap year to live at the dance village, where she continues to train under the tutelage of Surupa Sen and Bijayini Satpathy. She received the Cornelia and Michael Bessie Foundation Scholarship to support her training at Nrityagram. She is working towards her solo debut and performs with Nrityagram Too, the junior dance ensemble.

### **Jateen Sahu**

Jateen Sahu (lead vocals, harmonium) learned Odissi singing under the tutelage of Ramahari Das in Odisha. He lives in Mumbai and has worked with Nrityagram since 2008. He is also a concert singer.

### **Rohan Dahale**

Rohan Dahale (chant, mardala) began his training with Kelucharan Mohapatra and has continued to learn from Banamali Maharana for the past 12 years. He lives in Mumbai and accompanies Odissi dancers from the region. At present, he is the percussionist at Nrityagram and travels with the ensemble.

### **Sanjib Kunda**

Sanjib Kunda (violin) started working with Nrityagram in 2006 after studying

Hindustani violin in Odisha. In addition to performing with Nrityagram, he accompanies dancers in Odisha.

## Manu Raj

Manu Raj (bamboo flute) began his musical training as a vocalist when he was 11. At 14, he found his calling and began to learn the bamboo flute. He moved to Mumbai in 2009 and has been under the tutelage of the renowned maestro Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia. He accompanies his guru in concert, performs as a soloist and as part of several bands, and also accompanies dance.

## Lynne Fernandez

Lynne Fernandez (lighting designer, technical director, executive producer) has worked as an actress and lighting designer with many notable directors, including Barry John, Joy Michael, Ranjit Kapoor, and Lillete Dubey, and was one of the first professional lighting designers in India. Her theater work has been presented at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, in the West End, and Off-Broadway.

Ms. Fernandez came to Nrityagram in 1993 as a consultant for staging of shows and technical direction of the newly founded ensemble. She stayed on as technical director, and in 1997 was appointed executive director of the Nrityagram Village, School and Ensemble. In this role she is responsible for administration, fund-raising, and project development. Her recent projects include Kula, a culture collective where arts practitioners can live and create new work, and a performing arts center comprising a theater, exhibition space, and rehearsal studios.

## Lakshmi Vishwanathan

Lakshmi Vishwanathan is a leading exponent of Bharatanatyam, the classical dance of South India. A dancer for five decades, she did intensive training in Bharatanatyam under Guru Kanjivaram Ellappa, and has performed at respected institutions such

as the Indian Fine Arts Society and the Sri Parthasarathy Swami Sabha. Ms. Vishwanathan has also researched and directed several dance-theater productions. As a writer and scholar, she has delved deep into not only ancient Indian dance texts and theories, but has also studied the history of dance and its sociological importance in changing societies. She is the author of four highly acclaimed books.

Ms. Vishwanathan graduated from Queen Mary's College, Madras University, with a degree in English literature, and danced at the 1964 New York World's Fair. She has choreographed several original works that were performed in India and abroad, including *Nandanar Charitram*; *Krishna Darshanam*; *Banyan Tree-Vata Vriksha*; and *Chatur Anga*, which was broadcast internationally to celebrate 50 years of Indian independence. She has performed and given master classes at Brandeis University, Wesleyan University, Jacob's Pillow, and Mark Morris Dance Center, among others. In 1987 Ms. Vishwanathan directed and produced *Poetry of Dance*, a documentary about Bharayanatyam that explores the historical and mystical background of this ancient art form.

## Gerald W. Lynch Theater at John Jay College

John Jay College of Criminal Justice of the City University of New York, an international leader in educating for justice, offers a rich liberal arts and professional studies curriculum to upwards of 15,000 undergraduate and graduate students from more than 135 nations. In teaching, scholarship and research, the college approaches justice as an applied art and science in service to society and as an ongoing conversation about fundamental human desires for fairness, equality, and the rule of law.

Since opening its doors in 1988, the Gerald W. Lynch Theater has been an invaluable cultural resource for John Jay College and

the larger New York City community. The theater is dedicated to the creation and presentation of performing arts programming of all disciplines with a special focus on how the artistic imagination can shed light on the many perceptions of justice in our society. The theater is also a member of CUNY Stages, a consortium of 16 performing arts centers located on CUNY campuses across New York City.

The Gerald W. Lynch Theater has hosted events in the Lincoln Center Festival since its first season in 1996, as well as performances by the Lincoln Center's Great Performers series, New York City Opera, Gotham Chamber Opera, Metropolitan Opera Guild, and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater/Ailey II. The theater has also been the site of many television and film specials including A&E's *Live by Request*, Comedy Central's *Premium Blend* and *Robert Klein in Concert*, and VH1's *Soundtrack Live*.

### **White Light Festival**

*I could compare my music to white light, which contains all colors. Only a prism can divide the colors and make them appear; this prism could be the spirit of the listener.*  
—Arvo Pärt. Now in its seventh year, the White Light Festival is Lincoln Center's annual exploration of music and art's power

to reveal the many dimensions of our interior lives. International in scope, the multidisciplinary festival offers a broad spectrum of the world's leading instrumentalists, vocalists, ensembles, choreographers, dance companies, and directors complemented by conversations with artists and scholars and post-performance White Light Lounges.

### **Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc.**

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts (LCPA) serves three primary roles: presenter of artistic programming, national leader in arts and education and community relations, and manager of the Lincoln Center campus. A presenter of more than 3,000 free and ticketed events, performances, tours, and educational activities annually, LCPA offers 15 programs, series, and festivals including American Songbook, Great Performers, Lincoln Center Festival, Lincoln Center Out of Doors, Midsummer Night Swing, the Mostly Mozart Festival, and the White Light Festival, as well as the Emmy Award-winning *Live From Lincoln Center*, which airs nationally on PBS. As manager of the Lincoln Center campus, LCPA provides support and services for the Lincoln Center complex and the 11 resident organizations. In addition, LCPA led a \$1.2 billion campus renovation, completed in October 2012.

## **Lincoln Center Programming Department**

Jane Moss, *Ehrenkranz Artistic Director*  
Hanako Yamaguchi, *Director, Music Programming*  
Jon Nakagawa, *Director, Contemporary Programming*  
Jill Sternheimer, *Director, Public Programming*  
Lisa Takemoto, *Production Manager*  
Charles Cermele, *Producer, Contemporary Programming*  
Mauricio Lomelin, *Producer, Contemporary Programming*  
Andrew C. Elsesser, *Associate Director, Programming*  
Regina Grande Rivera, *Associate Producer*  
Nana Asase, *Assistant to the Artistic Director*  
Luna Shyr, *Senior Editor*  
Olivia Fortunato, *House Seat Coordinator*  
Gabe Mizrachi, *Program Content Coordinator*

## **For the White Light Festival**

Neil Creedon, *Production Manager*  
Scott Stauffer, *Sound Designer*  
Nick Kolin, *Lighting Designer*  
Janet Rucker, *Company Manager*

## **John Jay College Administration**

Jeremy Travis, *President*  
Steven Titan, *Vice President, Office of Finance and Administration*  
Jeffrey Brown, *Executive Director, Gerald W. Lynch Theater*  
Joshua Redfearn, *Technical Supervisor*  
Ian Del Duca, *Assistant Technical Supervisor*  
Martin Perrin, *Stage Crew Chief*  
Rubina Shafi, *Audience Services Manager*  
Stuart Burgess, *House Electrician*  
William Grady, *House Audio Engineer*  
Alyshia Burke, *Custodian*