

# MOSS ARTS CENTER



Saturday, November 12, 2022, 7:30 PM

## *Āhuti*

Nrityagram Dance Ensemble  
in collaboration with Chitrasena Dance Company

Moss Arts Center  
Street and Davis Performance Hall  
Anne and Ellen Fife Theatre



# SEASON

*at a glance*—2022-2023

Thurs., Nov. 17, 7:30 PM

**Soweto Gospel Choir**

*Hope: It's Been a Long  
Time Coming*

Sat., Dec. 3, 4 PM

**Roanoke Symphony Orchestra**

*Holiday Pops Spectacular*

Thurs., Jan. 19, 7:30 PM

**Concerto Budapest Symphony  
Orchestra**

András Keller, chief conductor  
Zoltan Fejérvári, piano

Tues., Jan. 24, 7:30 PM

*An Evening with  
Kevin Young*

Fri., Jan. 27, 7:30 PM

**Machine de Cirque**  
*La Galerie*

Sat., Feb. 11, 7:30 PM

**PUBLIQuartet**

Tues., Feb. 14, 7:30 PM

*Broadway in Blacksburg*  
**Hairspray**

Fri., Feb. 17, 7:30 PM

Sat., Feb. 18, 2 and 7:30 PM

**Akutagarwa**

Co-created by Koryū Nishikawa V  
and Tom Lee

Tues., Feb. 28-Wed., March 1, 7:30 PM

**Alvin Ailey American Dance  
Theater**

Thurs., March 16, 7:30 PM

*An Evening with  
Việt Thanh Nguyen*

Fri., March 24, 7:30 PM

**Book of Mountains and Seas**

Composer and librettist:

Huang Ruo

Director and production design:

Basil Twist

Sun., April 23, 4 PM

**Opera Roanoke and  
Blacksburg Master Chorale**

Benjamin Britten's  
*War Requiem*

Sat., April 29, 7:30 PM

**Cécile McLorin Salvant**

Tickets are available now at the box office and online. See the complete schedule of performances, exhibitions, and engagement activities at [artscenter.vt.edu](https://artscenter.vt.edu).

# *Āhuti*

## Nrityagram Dance Ensemble in collaboration with Chitrasena Dance Company

**Artistic Director, Choreographer, and Sound Designer**  
Surupa Sen

**Music Composer**  
Pandit Raghunath Panigrahi

**Rhythm Composers**  
Dhaneswar Swain (India)  
Presanna Singakkara (Sri Lanka)  
Surupa Sen

**Dancers (Nrityagram)**  
Pavithra Reddy  
Abhinaya Rohan  
Anoushka Rahman  
Rohini Banerjee  
Daquil Miriyala

**Dancers (Chitrasena)**  
Thaji Dias  
Amandi Gomez  
Kushan Dharmarathna  
Geeth Premachandra

**Musicians (India)**  
Jateen Sahu, *lead vocal and harmonium*  
Rohan Dahale, *chants and mardala*  
(*percussion*)  
Parshuram Das, *bamboo flute*  
Siba Nayak, *violin*

**Musician (Sri Lanka)**  
Koshan Mapatuna, *Kandyan drum*

**Assistant Choreographer**  
Heshma Wignaraja (Chitrasena)

**Master Tailor**  
Ghulam Rasool

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

**Nrityagram–The Dance Village**  
[nrityagram.org](http://nrityagram.org) | [lynne@nrityagram.org](mailto:lynne@nrityagram.org)

**Exclusive U.S. Tour Representation**  
Pentacle  
Sandy Garcia  
[sandyg@pentacle.org](mailto:sandyg@pentacle.org) | [pentacle.org](http://pentacle.org)

The performance runs for 100 minutes, including one 20-minute intermission.



This engagement of *Āhuti* is made possible through the ArtsCONNECT program of Mid Atlantic Arts with support from the National Endowment for the Arts.

# Program Notes

## **Āhuti**

{Sanskrit: Invoking | Pali: Offering}

### **SANKIRTANAM** (a prayer)

Wandering minstrels sing and dance in praise of Lord Krishna...

The lotus-eyed lord  
with the flute in his hands  
and a peacock feather in his hair.  
The eternal lover,  
the yogi,  
the last refuge.  
Protector of the universe,  
he is the purest of all beings.  
The only truth.

**Dancers:** Abhinaya Rohan, Anoushka Rahman, Rohini Banerjee, Pavithra Reddy, and Daquil Miriyala

### **POORNĀRATĪ**

In most South Asian traditions, the arts serve as a medium to attain the highest state of being. Temple rituals integrate dance as an essential medium of worship to invoke and propitiate the powers that govern the natural order of the universe.

*Poornāratī*, which means "complete offering," seeks to invoke the principles of the Universe, both male and female, that we may dance in their Presence.

**Odissi Dancers:** Pavithra Reddy, Abhinaya Rohan, Anoushka Rahman, and Rohini Banerjee

**Kandyan Dancers:** Thaji Dias, Amandi Gomez, Kushan Dharmarathna, and Geeth Premachandra

## INTERMISSION

## INVOKING SHIVA

Attributed to Ravana, Sri Lanka's great warrior king, who was a devotee of Shiva, the God of dance and destruction.

Shiva!  
From the forest  
of your matted locks  
descends  
the celestial river Ganga.

A mighty serpent  
garlands you lovingly,  
the glittering gem  
in his magical hood  
radiates brilliance,  
that anoints the faces  
of the four-directions  
with a delicate hue.

Adorned  
only by the sky,  
a new-born moon jewels your locks  
and your forehead smoulders  
with the fire of your third eye.

Your ceaseless drum song  
pervades the universe,  
as you dance  
your fearsome Tandava.

Perfect consort to Himalaya's  
daughter,  
you are the ever-compassionate  
destroyer of evil.

Opening your third eye  
you burnt to ashes  
the God of Love  
The five-arrowed Kamadeva,  
disrupter of your meditation.

You are the Universe.  
Invincible.  
Infinite.  
Eternal.

On you  
I meditate.

Dance  
on the funeral pyres  
in my heart  
and release me  
from this universe.

**Dancers:** Thaji Dias and Pavithra Reddy

## ĀLĀP

The Kandyen and Odissi dance traditions meet in space, to challenge, combine, and embrace each other through musical conversation and rhythmic dialogue.

**Dancers:** Pavithra Reddy, Rohini Banerjee, Thaji Dias, Amandi Gomez, Anoushka Rahman, Abhinaya Rohan, Daquil Miriyala, Kushan Dharmarathna, and Geeth Premachandra

# About the Dance Forms

## KANDYAN DANCE

Kandyan dance comes from Kandy, an area in the central hills region in Sri Lanka. According to legend, the origins of the dance lie in an exorcism ritual known as the Kohomba Kankariya, which was performed by shamans from India who came to the island on the request of a king suffering from a mysterious illness. After the performance of the ritual, the illness vanished and the local people adopted the dance.

Originally performed by dancers who were identified as a separate caste and aligned to the Temple of the Tooth, the dance declined when support from the Kandyan kings ended in the colonial period.

Kandyan dance was adapted for the stage in the 1940s by Guru Chitrasena. His wife and dance partner, Vajira, was the first professional female Kandyan dancer, and together they established Kandyan dance as a performance art. Their popularity helped to reduce the caste barriers surrounding the dance and made it accessible to an urban, contemporary audience.

## ODISSI DANCE

For centuries, a temple has looked out at a turbulent sea, its walls dancing a prayer to the rising sun. Magnificent ruins like these in Odisha in Eastern India confirm that Odissi was performed as far back as 200 BCE. Originally a sacred ritual dedicated to the gods, Odissi is one of the oldest dance traditions in the world. Its sinuous forms, languorous limbs, and rapt expressions frozen in stone tell of a past rich in dance, music, myth, and legend.

Odissi speaks of love and union between human and divine, transporting viewers to enchanted worlds of magic and spirituality. Its sensuousness and lyricism reflect both the motifs of Odisha temple sculpture as well as the poetry from the deep wellsprings of Oriya music.

# About the Companies

## THE CHITRASENA DANCE COMPANY

Founded by Guru Chitrasena with a vision to inspire and exhilarate through the traditional dances and drums of Sri Lanka, the Chitrasena Dance Company has always been at the forefront of transforming the traditional arts landscape of the island. Chitrasena is recognized for rescuing the traditional dances that were confined to village settings and presenting it to audiences in Sri Lanka and across the world. The company was founded in 1943, initially nurtured under the creative genius Chitrasena, and later together with his wife, Vajira. They worked tirelessly for decades to carefully distill ancient rhythmic rituals—by reviving and refining elements while staying firmly rooted in the old—and developed an authentic dance language.

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. *Karadiya* (1961), *Nala Damayanthi* (1963), *Nrithanjali* (1965), *Kinkini Kolama* (1978), *Shiva Ranga* (1984), *Chandalika* (1996), and *Bera-Handa* (2001) are some of the most-renowned productions. More recently, the Chitrasena Dance Company has brought to the stage *The Art of Chitrasena* (2006), *Kumbi Kathawa* (2007), *Dancing for the Gods* (2010), *Devanjali* (2015), and *Guru Gedara Festival* (2018). The creative partnership and the first collaborative production, based on an invitation extended to the Chitrasena Dance Company by Nrityagram, led to the much-acclaimed production *Samhara* (2012).

The Chitrasena Dance Company celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> year in 2018, and the third generation is led by Heshma Wignaraja, artistic director and eldest granddaughter of Chitrasena and Vajira, who continues to take forward the legacy of her grandparents. Experimenting without compromise and using traditional dance language and form to push boundaries, the new work offers a fresh perspective while upholding Guru Chitrasena's philosophy that "the new is but an extension of the old."

## NRITYAGRAM

Nrityagram (which means dance village) is located outside Bangalore, India. It was founded in 1990 by Odissi dancer Protima Gauri, who converted 10 acres of farmland into a setting for the study, practice, and teaching of dance.

Nrityagram is dedicated to creating excellence in Odissi through the traditional method of learning, the Guru-Shishya Parampara, a unique and

# About the Companies, continued

sacred relationship between mentor and disciple, referred to as mentorship in modern times.

The dance pedagogy is inspired by the Gurukula, an ancient Indian residential teaching paradigm where students and teachers live together in an integrated environment of practice, theory, and discipline. Learning is a way of life, and students have a rare opportunity to imbibe the spirit of the Guru by living with them and observing them at work.

Conceived this way for almost 30 years, Nrityagram imparts not only technique in dance but nurtures a philosophy of being that embraces holistic practice, mindful living, and the pursuit of excellence. The daily schedule includes a unique, scientific body conditioning and training program that is sourced from yoga, Natyashastra, Kalaripayattu, Western fitness methods, and Odissi body-conditioning exercises. This training method is designed to increase the performance lifespan of a dancer and is sought after by accomplished dance and movement professionals from different disciplines.

With a student strength of over 200, Nrityagram provides an environment that fosters the artistic, intellectual, and personal growth of its dancers and prepares them for successful and productive lives as artists and citizens, as well as to become leaders in their professions.

The aim is to prepare dancers for careers that combine performance with teaching, community outreach, and leadership. To enrich their practice, dancers are taught yoga, meditation, and martial arts, along with Sanskrit and ancient dance scriptures. Choreographers, musicians, writers, and theatre practitioners from all over the world visit to perform and conduct workshops and seminars in their area of practice.

This unique blend of traditional knowledge with contemporary understanding and application makes Nrityagram the only institution of its kind in the world and strengthens its position as a groundbreaking institution.

The Nrityagram Dance Ensemble is regarded as one of the foremost dance companies of India. Led by Artistic Director Surupa Sen, the company has achieved worldwide critical acclaim, performing across the globe, including an annual tour to the United States.

The company is devoted to bringing Odissi—one of the oldest dance traditions in the world—to audiences worldwide. Performed as far back as 200 B.C. as a sacred ritual dedicated to the gods, Odissi speaks of love and union between human and divine, transporting viewers to enchanting



worlds of magic and spirituality. Its lush lyricism reflects both the motifs of Odisha temple sculpture as well as the poetry from the deep wellsprings of Oriya music.

Although steeped in and dedicated to ancient practice, the ensemble is also committed to carrying Indian dance into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Enabled by grants from International Arts Funding organizations, Nrityagram's dancers not only explore creative expansions of tradition, but are also able to commission fresh compositions from leading Indian classical musicians.

Nrityagram has presented seven full-length ensemble shows *Śrī: In Search of the Goddess* (2001), *Ansh* (2005), *Sacred Space* (2005), *Pratimā: Reflection* (2008), *Śriyaḥ* (2010), *Samhāra* (2012), and *Āhuti* (2019); two full-length duet shows, *Samyoga* (2012) and *Songs of Love and Longing* (2013); and two solo shows, *Yadunandana* (2017) and *Vinati: Songs from the Gita Govinda* (2021). All works were choreographed by Sen.

This is the first performance by Nrityagram Dance Ensemble and Chitrasena Dance Company at the Moss Arts Center.

# Biographies

**SURUPA SEN**, *artistic director and choreographer*

Surupa Sen was the first student to graduate from Nrityagram. Sen began her Odissi training with the architect of Odissi, Guru Kelucharan Mahapatra. She also studied Odissi with Guru Protima Gauri and Abhinaya (expressional dance) with Guru Kalanidhi Narayanan. For over two decades, Sen has researched and expanded the dance vocabulary of Odissi and developed an aesthetic style that distinguishes the dancers from the Nrityagram Gurukula (School). Attracted to choreography from childhood, Sen has focused on making new dances using an expanded Odissi language rooted in traditional Odissi and the Natyashastra. She has a keen interest in music and rhythm composition and has worked closely with Pt. Raghunath Panigrahi since 1999.

Sen has choreographed seven full-length ensemble shows for Nrityagram, which are *Śrī: In Search of the Goddess* (2000), *Ansh* (2004), *Sacred Space* (2006), *Pratimā: Reflection* (2008), *Śrīyaḥ* (2010), *Samhāra* (2012), and *Āhuti* (2019); two full-length duet shows, *Samyoga* (2012) and *Songs of Love and Longing* (2013); and two full-length solo shows, *Yadunandana* (2017) and *Vinati: Songs from the Gita Govinda* (2021). She has also created two virtual shows, *Vinati*, a solo for World Music Institute's Dancing the Gods Festival, and *Upadāna: An Offering* for the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival.

Sen received the Raza Foundation Award in 2006; the Yagnaraman Award from Sri Krishna Gana Sabha, Chennai in 2008; the prestigious Nritya Choodamani from Sri Krishna Gana Sabha, Chennai in 2011; and the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award 2018—the highest honour for the Performing Arts in India.

**PAVITHRA REDDY**, *Odissi dancer*

Pavithra Reddy belongs to a neighboring farm and started her Odissi training in Nrityagram's rural outreach program in 1990. Reddy was the first student to graduate from Nrityagram's rural outreach program. She learned Odissi under the tutelage of Surupa Sen and has worked with dancers and movement specialists from across the globe. She joined the Nrityagram Dance Ensemble 1993 and has performed both solo and with the ensemble at some of the most prestigious venues across India and the world. In addition to being a full-time performer, Reddy is also one of the primary teachers at Nrityagram.

**ABHINAYA ROHAN, Odissi dancer**

Abhinaya Rohan initially trained in Bharatnatyam before enrolling at Nrityagram to learn Odissi. Rohan has been part of the Day Scholar program and has studied under the tutelage of Surupa Sen. Rohan has performed with the ensemble since 2018.

**ANOUSHKA RAHMAN, Odissi dancer**

Anoushka Rahman initially learned Odissi in Kolkata, where she also completed a post graduate degree in Odissi Dance. Rahman joined Nrityagram 2018 and has studied under the tutelage of Surupa Sen. This is Rahman's first international tour with Nrityagram.

**ROHINI BANERJEE, Odissi dancer**

Rohini Banerjee is a senior disciple of Guru Sharmila Biswas, who trained her from the age of 12. Banerjee has toured extensively in India and abroad as a part of her guru's company and recently started her journey as a soloist. She was selected to be part of Nrityagram's *Āhuti* in 2021. This is Banerjee's first tour with Nrityagram.

**DAQUIL MIRIYALA, Odissi dancer**

Daquil Miriyala joined Nrityagram's village outreach program in 2010 and became a residential student in 2011, where she trained in dance while continuing her academic studies. Miriyala has learned Odissi under the tutelage of Gurus Surupa Sen and Pavithra Reddy. In 2021 she was selected to be a part of the Nrityagram Dance Ensemble and included in *Āhuti*. This is Miriyala's first tour with Nrityagram.

**THAJI DIAS, Kandyen dancer**

Thaji Dias is the principal dancer of the Chitrasena Dance Company and youngest granddaughter of Sri Lanka's eminent dance duo, Chitrasena and Vajira. At age seven Dias started learning Kandyen dance from her aunt, Guru Upeka Chitrasena, and began touring with the dance company at age 12, when she received the opportunity to perform along with Upeka Chitrasena at the prestigious Theatre Du Soleil, Paris, as a guest of Ariane Mnouchkine. Since then, she has performed with the Chitrasena Dance Company in Sri Lanka, India, the far east, United States, Europe, and Australia. Dias also teaches at the Chitrasena Kalayathanaya (School).

# Biographies, continued

## **KUSHAN DHARMARATHNA**, *Kandyan dancer*

Kushan Dharmarathna joined the Chitrasena Kalayathanaya in 2000 as a scholar in Guru Vajira's Preserve the Dance program. Dharmarathna has been a part of the Chitrasena Dance Company since 2002 and has performed in most of the company's productions locally and internationally. Dharmarathna holds a bachelor of fine arts from the University of Visual and Performing Arts, Sri Lanka, and is currently working on a master's degree in performing arts at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka.

## **GEETH PREMACHANDRA**, *Kandyan dancer*

Geeth Premachandra joined the Chitrasena Dance Company in 2000 and has been with the company ever since, performing extensively in productions both locally and internationally. Premachandra has a bachelor of arts degree from the University of Kelaniya and a master's degree in performing arts from the University of Visual and Performing Arts in Sri Lanka. He also completed diplomas in education as well as education management at the National Institute of Management, which enabled him to pursue his passion of teaching dance as a lecturer. This is Premachandra's first tour with Nrityagram.

## **AMANDI GOMEZ**, *Kandyan dancer*

Amandi Gomez has learned Kandyan dancing at the Chitrasena Kalayathanaya since she was seven years old and has performed in numerous productions of the Chitrasena Dance Company since 2013, including a lead character in the acclaimed children's ballet *Kumbi Kathawa* in 2015. Gomez holds a bachelor of law degree from the University of London. This is Gomez's first tour with Nrityagram.

## **JATEEN SAHU**, *lead vocal and harmonium*

Jateen Sahu learned Odissi singing under the tutelage of Guru Ramahari Das at the Music College, Odisha. Sahu lives in Mumbai and has worked with Nrityagram since 2008. Sahu is also a concert singer.

## **ROHAN DAHALE**, *mardala-percussion*

Rohan Dahale began his training with Guru Kelucharan Mahapatra and has continued to learn from Guru Banamali Maharana for the past 12 years. Dahale lives in Mumbai and accompanies Odissi dancers from the region.

At present, Dahale is percussionist at the dance village and travels and performs with the ensemble.

**PARSHURAM DAS,** *bamboo flute*

Parshuram Das is a disciple of Pt. Mohini Mohan Pattnaik. Das graduated from the Music College, Odisha, and in addition to freelancing as a music accompanist, he teaches at Utkal University of Culture, Bhubaneswar. Das has been with the Nrityagram Dance Ensemble since 2002.

**SIBA NAYAK,** *violin*

Siba Nayak has a postgraduate degree in Hindustani Violin from the Utkal University of Culture, Bhubaneswar. Nayak freelances as a music accompanist and has worked with the Nrityagram Dance Ensemble since 2018.

**KOSHAN MAPATUNA,** *Kandyan drum*

Koshan Mapatuna has been a part of the Chitrasena Dance Company since 2019. Mapatuna has performed with his drumming guru, Prasanna Rupatillaka, as a member of the Prasanna Ru Dancing Academy since 2014. He has a bachelor's degree in performing arts from the University of Visual and Performing Arts, Sri Lanka, and is currently a guest lecturer at the same university in the percussion and music department. This is Mapatuna's first tour with Nrityagram.

**HESHMA WIGNARAJA,** *assistant choreographer*

Heshma Wignaraja has a degree in dramatic arts in dance from UC Berkeley. The eldest granddaughter of Chitrasena and Vajira, Wignaraja returned to Sri Lanka after her graduation to work in the school and company established by her illustrious grandparents. She learned Kandyan Dance from the age of six and performed and toured with the Chitrasena Dance Company from the time she was 14 years old, but her real interest is in choreography. Wignaraja has choreographed seven shows for the Chitrasena Dance Company: *Barefeet in Motion* (2003), *Art of Chitrasena* (2006), *Guru Pooja* (2008), *Dancing for the Gods* (2010), *Ridmaranga: Vajira in Perspective* (2013), *Devanjali: Ritual\_Rites\_Reflection* (2014), and *Parampara: From Generation to Generation* (2017), a dance video installation. She has also worked as assistant choreographer with Surupa Sen on the Kandyan dance sections of *Samhāra* (2012) and *Āhuti* (2019). Wignaraja is artistic director of the Chitrasena Dance Company.

# Biographies, continued

**LYNNE FERNANDEZ**, *lighting designer, technical director, and executive producer*

Lynne Fernandez has worked as an actress and light 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. Fernandez's theatre work has been presented at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, in the West End, and off-Broadway. She came to Nrityagram in 1993 as production and technical consultant to the newly founded ensemble. She stayed on as technical director and in 1997 was appointed executive director of the Nrityagram village, school, and ensemble. As executive director, she is responsible for administration, fundraising, and project development. Her recent projects include Kula, a residence where arts practitioners can live and create new work, and a performing arts center comprising a theatre, an exhibition space, and rehearsal studios. Fernandez has also overseen the emergence of the ensemble in the international arena.

## Tell Us What You Think!

We'd love your feedback on this performance. If you complete the short survey, you can enter for a chance to win two tickets to Concerto Budapest Symphony Orchestra on Thursday, January 19, 2023.



[bit.ly/nrityagram-feedback](https://bit.ly/nrityagram-feedback)

# Engagement Events

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2022**

## **VIRTUAL VILLAGE TOUR WITH NRITYAGRAM DANCE ENSEMBLE**

This online event offered attendees the opportunities to explore the lush, 10-acre grounds of the Nrityagram Dance Village and speak live with Chitrasena Dance Company's Heshma Wignaraja, artistic director, and Thaji Dias, principal dancer.

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8-THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2022**

## **VIRGINIA TECH CLASS VISITS**

Chitrasena Dance Company and Nrityagram Dance Ensemble offered demonstrations and classes in Odissi and Kandyen for students in dance, costume design, and women's and gender studies.

## **SOCIAL WITH SRI LANKAN STUDENT ASSOCIATION**

Chitrasena Dance Company visited with Sri Lankan students and guests at this informal gathering.

## **KANDYAN DANCE CLASS AT SPRINGHOUSE DAY SCHOOL**

A Floyd County High School welcomed Chitrasena Dance Company to their school for a private workshop in Kandyen dance.

## **KANDYAN DANCE CLASS**

In conjunction with International Education Week, Chitrasena Dance Company led an open, introductory workshop in Kandyen dance.

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2022**

## **SCHOOL-DAY PERFORMANCE: A MEETING OF TWO CULTURES**

Public, private, and homeschool students from Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Floyd, and surrounding areas enjoyed this free performance by Chitrasena Dance Company and Nrityagram Dance Ensemble.

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2022**

## **POST-PERFORMANCE Q&A**

Join the performers for an open conversation moderated by Margaret Lawrence, Moss Arts Center director of programming.

*Special thanks to Asian Cultural Engagement Center, Creativity + Innovation District Living-Learning Community, Mozaiko, Sri Lankan Student Association, Kevin Ayoub, Julia Basso, Doug Bowman, Kayley Carter, Nina Ha, Scotty Hardwig, Iuliia Hoban, Tyler M. Holland, Leah Ican, Teshani Lihiniya Kumarage, Nicole Muller, Todd Ogle, Carolyn Reilly, Rachel Rugh, Tanner Upthegrove, Bonnie Zare, Marcus Haynie, Dance.Tech Performing Arts Studio, and Paige Godwin*

# Go Deeper

In an interview with *Groundviews*, Surupa Sen, artistic director of Nrityagram, reflected on the earliest stages of her ensemble's collaboration with Chitrasena: "there was a definite [...] connection where we could collaborate on the basis of something that binds us together historically, but at the same time has so much in contrast." What similarities and differences do you observe in the Odissi and Kandyan dance styles? Why do you think the ensembles are averse to characterizing their work together as a "fusion of dance forms?"

## Did You Know?

The Moss Arts Center has received the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold certification. LEED certified buildings save money, improve efficiency, lower carbon emissions, and create healthier places for people. They are a critical part of addressing climate change, enhancing resilience, and supporting more equitable communities.

## In the Galleries

### Fall Exhibitions

Through Saturday, December 17

#### **Craig Drennen: *First Acts, Scene 2***

##### **Ruth C. Horton Gallery**

Atlanta-based artist Craig Drennen is best known for his ongoing *Timon of Athens* series—inspired by the Shakespeare play of the same name—for which he has produced paintings, drawings, prints, videos, performances, and sculptures.

#### **Steve Locke: *the daily practice of painting***

##### **Miles C. Horton Jr. Gallery and Sherwood Payne Quillen '71 Reception Gallery**

Throughout his artistic career, Steve Locke's work has questioned how we ascribe meaning to portraiture.



# K-12 Programs at the Moss



Experiences with the arts cultivate the next generation of creative thinkers, engage learners of diverse backgrounds, and foster community dialogue. The Moss Arts Center has been dedicated to providing K-12 students in the region with free, high-quality, and exciting arts programming since opening our doors in 2013. Through school-day matinee programs, gallery tours, in-school performances, and workshops with artists, we are passionate about serving our youngest community members and schools. Learn more at [bit.ly/moss-k12](https://bit.ly/moss-k12).

# Land Acknowledgement and Labor Recognition

Virginia Tech acknowledges that we live and work on the Tutelo/Monacan People's homeland and we recognize their continued relationships with their lands and waterways. We further acknowledge that legislation and practices like the Morrill Act (1862) enabled the commonwealth of Virginia to finance and found Virginia Tech through the forced removal of Native Nations from their lands, both locally and in western territories.

We understand that honoring Native Peoples without explicit material commitments falls short of our institutional responsibilities. Through sustained, transparent, and meaningful engagement with the Tutelo/Monacan Peoples and other Native Nations, we commit to changing the trajectory of Virginia Tech's history by increasing Indigenous student, staff, and faculty recruitment and retention, diversifying course offerings, and meeting the growing needs of all Virginia tribes and supporting their sovereignty.

We must also recognize that enslaved Black people generated revenue and resources used to establish Virginia Tech and were prohibited from attending until 1953. Through InclusiveVT, the institutional and individual commitment to *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve) in the spirit of community, diversity, and excellence, we commit to advancing a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive community.

## Health and Wellness

The Moss Arts Center adheres to the guidelines of the Virginia Department of Health and Virginia Tech in its operations, including protocols for distancing, face coverings, and cleaning and sanitation. Our status may change according to changes in university operating procedures. Find the most up to date information at [artscenter.vt.edu/visit](https://artscenter.vt.edu/visit).

We ask patrons to do their part in keeping our community healthy. If you feel unwell, please stay home.

# Moss Arts Center Staff

## Office of the Associate Provost for the Arts

Ruth Waalkes, associate provost for the arts  
and executive director, Moss Arts Center

Devair Jeffries-Lee, program director,  
Arts@VirginiaTech

David Ehrlich, outreach fellow for the fine arts  
Molly Parker, executive assistant

## Development

Bernadette Bascom, assistant director of  
leadership gifts

## Exhibitions

Brian Holcombe, curator

Laura Higgins, exhibitions program manager

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Toni Cartee, business manager

Lori Compton, housekeeper

Austin Elliot, building manager

Jonathan Howell, housekeeper

Matt Hudson, IT specialist

Jamie McReynolds, fiscal, HR,  
and grants technician

Herman Noble, building operations manager

Shirley Rose, housekeeper

Luke Taylor, housekeeper

## Marketing and Communication

Katie Gehrt, director of marketing and  
communication

Reneé Alarid, associate director of creative  
services

Susan Bland, associate director of  
communication

Jonathan Boulter, associate director of  
patron services

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Robert Gainer, audio supervisor and  
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Laine Goerner, production and rentals manager

Joe Ingram, senior technician,  
stage and rigging

CJ Jessie, senior technician, lighting

Jackson Stitzer, senior technician, audio/video

## Programming

Margaret Lawrence, director of programming

Shara Appanaitis, engagement manager

Jon Catherwood-Ginn, associate director  
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Sarah M. Johnson, program manager

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We have long held the belief that science, technology, and the arts strengthen our community, however, we feel that it is the arts alone which heal and calm. We are most honored to have been able to lend our support to the Moss Center from the very beginning. We are grateful for the gifts it bestows to all of us in return.

— Bill and Pat Carstensen

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Be an advocate for the arts and help advance initiatives that stretch well beyond the stage.

For a limited time only, your \$2,500 gift gives shows your support for the arts and gives you the opportunity to name a seat — for yourself or your business, or as a gift to honor friends and family, celebrate a graduate, or memorialize loved ones. A plaque installed on your named seat will be engraved with an inscription of your choice.

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Thursday, November 17, 2022, 7:30 PM


## **Soweto Gospel Choir**

*Hope: It's Been a Long Time Coming*

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- Oscar Wilde

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# UP 86

## Guest Curator Series

A trio of spring performances curated by North Carolina artist Shirlette Ammons, who is serving as the Moss Arts Center's first independent guest performing arts curator. Ammons brings a new perspective to the center's lineup, creating a focus on Black Southern artists who effortlessly cross genres and revitalize time-honored music traditions.

\$15 general admission  
\$10 students with ID and youth 18 and under



Thursday, March 30-Friday, March 31, 8 PM

### **Rissi Palmer**

A country singer and songwriter from Raleigh, North Carolina, Rissi Palmer's gift lies in reaching across musical boundaries. While Palmer made her mark in country music, she is equally at home in R&B, bringing the entire spectrum of popular music to bear on music she calls "Southern soul."



Friday, April 7, 8 PM

### **Shirlette Ammons**

Shirlette Ammons is a Durham, North Carolina-based poet, musician, emcee, and film creative whose highly collaborative work defies genre. Ammons' upcoming recording, *Spectacles*, interrogates her own relationships to gender, Blackness, and Southernness.



Friday, April 14, 8 PM

### **Sonny Miles**

Sonny Miles is a singer and multi-instrumentalist from Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Citing gospel, funk, and neo-soul as his biggest influences, he fuses catchy, relatable lyrics with soulful compositions. Miles has amassed over 500,000 streams on Spotify alone.



# YMCA AT VIRGINIA TECH

## Developing Young Leaders

YMCA at Virginia Tech Leaders Club

### What:

A program encouraging lifelong volunteer work, personal growth, enhancing leadership skills, and forming positive relationships. Work with Virginia Tech student volunteers to strengthen the pillars of academics, positive relationships, life skills, and positive self identity. Learn the YMCA core values of Respect, Honesty, Responsibility, and Caring.

### Who:

Student Leaders aged 11-18  
College Mentors 18+

### Where:

Event Room  
1000 North Main Street  
Blacksburg,

### When:

Each Tuesday, 7-8pm  
Beginning Oct. 11

[www.vtymca.org](http://www.vtymca.org)



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### Questions:

Contact Mary & Emily at  
[yleadersclub@vtymca.org](mailto:yleadersclub@vtymca.org)  
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## The Open University

Did You Know



Stuart's 1st challenge was helping further adult education. In what was then called the Free University (later the Open University), classes provided a forum for discussion and life long learning.

In 1970 Emily Stuart became the Y's new director and gradually reinvented the YMCA at Virginia Tech.



The Open University program enrolled over 4000 students in 350 classes per year. Class subjects range widely, covering many subjects such as cooking, personal finance management, perennial gardening, and how to create a web page.



[www.vtymca.org](http://www.vtymca.org)