

MADHAVI MUDGAL & DANCERS present :

ANANYA (#2)

The Unparalleled



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ANANYA (#2)

The Unparalleled

**Created on November 3rd 2009 at New Delhi, India.
1h15 approximately**

Concept, Choreography and Costumes:

MADHAVI MUDGAL

Music composition:

MADHUP MUDGAL

Dancers :

**Madhavi Mudgal
Arushi Mudgal**

**And 7 dancers of academy
Gandharva Mahavidyalaya
in New Delhi**

Musicians :

**5 musicians of academy
Gandharva Mahavidyalaya
in New Delhi**

**(voice, tampura, flute, sitar,
pakhavaj)**

Lights :

Gautam Bhattacharya

Madhavi has choreographed this show for a large number of dancers, as she does in its presentations unanimously acclaimed in India. While Indian dance has long been presented in the West in the form of solos or duets (for obvious economic reasons), traditional festivals in India welcome compositions much more impressive, as bas reliefs of the temples, still visible today, reflect the origin.

Madhavi masterfully choreographed an ensemble that brings together nine dancers from the prestigious academy in New Delhi where she is the guru. She and her niece and principal disciple Arushi, are part of the cast.

Live music composed by his own brother, Madhup Mudgal, celebrity in

the world of Indian classical music, is played by five musicians with traditional instruments.

The flamboyant costumes, the extreme sophistication of the choreography and the sheer number of dancers on stage together join to create a unique and memorable show.

The scenes of ANANYA

The ancient Indian texts establish the two components of dance. One focuses on abstract movements as sophisticated models, unique language of syllables, which the feet of dancers reflect the rhythmic vocabulary. The other component is a stylized narrative and poetic text, using codified facial expressions and hand gestures.

Ranga Stuti

A meditative invocation of Space with the stage as its representation and source of artistic creativity. With verses from a 12th century compendium on the grammar of Indian dance, the Abhinaya Darpana, the dancers ask for blessings.

Vasant

An expressional piece describing the advent of spring: "The trees are laden with flowers – the ponds are abloom with the lotus – the breeze is heavily scented – the nights are as delightful as the day. O beloved! All beauty is augmented at this time of the year. Young maidens, with love-lorn hearts pierced by the cries of the koels and the humming bees, wander aimlessly. Spring, as Cupid incarnate, arrives in all his resplendence, conquering the hearts of all."

Kumarasambhavam

The dramatic interpretation of a mythical tale, from the great Sanskrit poet Kalidas' Kumarasambhavam, which describes the coming together of the cosmic couple, Shiva and Parvati. Oppressed by the demon Taraka, the Gods realise that Kartikeya, born of Shiva and Parvati, could be their only saviour. Kamadeva, the god of love, is commissioned to bestir Shiva out of his deep meditation, but fails and is burned to ashes by Shiva's third eye.

Our story opens when Parvati, having witnessed Kamadeva's destruction, realises that beauty alone cannot win over Shiva. Discarding the comforts

and luxuries of her palace, she proceeds to the forest adorning herself with bark to practise the severest of austerities. In summer, surrounded by fire, she withstands the blazing sun with unblinking gaze; during stormy nights she chooses the hard rock of the mountain as her bed, with the thunder and lightning as her only companions. In winter she stands in the cold waters of a lotus pond, alone surviving the onslaught of the falling snow. The delicate Parvati's penance far surpasses the rigours of those with hardened bodies.

Overwhelmed by her devotion, Shiva playfully decides to engage with her. Disguised as an ascetic, and feigning ignorance, he inquires from her the reason for such harsh penance. "Why have you cast aside your ornaments, do you seek a bridegroom? For a jewel like you grooms will come unbidden." "If you really seek a husband, then I am willing to share with you half of my wealth acquired through penance, but only if you reveal the name of the one you seek."

Parvati coyly indicates, through her friend, that she seeks Shiva. Horrified, the ascetic describes the repulsive appearance of Shiva and belittles him: "Your feet which are accustomed to tread on flowers will have to step on the grounds of the dead. I know well the one that you pursue, and I cannot commend your choice. Can you withstand the touch of one who has hissing serpents coiled around his arm? How incongruous, that you, who should be riding the grandest of elephants, will be seated on the old bull that carries Shiva! Even the most decorous will be unable to control their mirth at such a sight!"

An outraged Parvati retorts, "You obviously do not know the real Shiva, the Lord of the three worlds. Though horrific in form, he is still felicitous..." Unable to bear it anymore, she bids the ascetic to depart, only to find revealed in him, her heart's desire, Shiva. Dumbstruck, her senses reel, and she becomes like the flowing river obstructed by an immovable mountain : neither able to halt nor move away.

Moksha

The show ends with a short piece as an epilogue. According to the Vedic thought, the ultimate aim of human endeavour is to merge with the absolute. Towards this end, disciplining the body and the mind, the dancer seeks stillness through movement.

MADHAVI MUDGAL



Madhavi MUDGAL epitomizes the elegance and sophistication that are the result of blending modern sensibilities with the ancient ethos of eastern India to create the highly lyrical dance art of Odissi. Born into a family deeply involved in propagating the classical arts, Madhavi was immersed in music and dance from a very young age. With every opportunity to learn the arts, Madhavi trained in Bharata Natyam and Kathak under great gurus and performed these dance styles to acclaim. Later she turned to Odissi which she adopted as her preferred medium. Her introduction to Odissi took place under Guru Hare Krishna Bahera who trained her in the fundamentals. Later she came under the

tutelage of the renowned Guru Kelucharan Mahapatra.

Madhavi's command over the nritta or purely ornamental aspect of Odissi is striking. Her delicate postures and strong rhythmic footwork combine in an appealing flow of sculpturesque movements. Her subtle abhinaya (the expressional aspect of dance), musical knowledge and aesthetic sense add to the highly distinctive character of her recitals.

Through teaching, performing and conducting workshops, Madhavi has been actively involved in propagating the art of Odissi in New Delhi and other parts of India as well as the world. She has trained a number of accomplished students who are performers in their own right. In nineteen eighty five she organized a seminar and festival, Angahaar, a first of its kind event in New Delhi when gurus, scholars and dancers met to revisit the origins of Odissi and think about the future trends of the dance form. She also directed and produced a short audio-visual documentary that was screened at the festival.

Madhavi's father, the late Professor Vinay Chandra Maudgalya was the founder of the famous Gandharva Mahavidyalaya, New Delhi's first and most highly reputed institution for the teaching of Hindustani music and classical dance. Madhavi has been teaching Odissi at this institute for many years.

She has received repeated acclaim in the major cities and dance festivals that have featured her throughout the world: like the Edinburgh International Festival, U.K.; Festival of India in USA; the Cervantino Festival, Mexico;

Vienna Dance Festival, Austria; Festival of Indian Dance, South Africa; Festival of Indian Culture, Sao Paulo, Brazil; Days of Indian Culture, Hungary; Festival of Indian Arts, London; the Avignon Festival, France; Pina Bausch's Festival, Wuppertal and Berlin Festspiele, Germany; and festivals in Italy, Spain, Laos, Vietnam, Malaysia, Japan and the Indian subcontinent. She has been associated with the making of several films and audio-visuals on Odissi as well as with the organisation of some of the most widely appreciated specialised dance festivals in India.

Numerous awards and honours have come her way for her contribution to the art, including the Sanskriti Award, 1984, President of India's award of Padma Shri, 1990, the Orissa State Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, 1996, Grande Medaille de la Ville by the city of Paris, 1997, the Central Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, 2000, and the Delhi State Parishad Samman, 2002. Sri Krishna Gana Sabha (Chennai) conferred the title Nritya Choodamani on Madhavi MUDGAL on December 9, 2004.

ODISSI STYLE

By MADHAVI MUDGAL and ARUSHI MUDGAL

The style of Odissi comes from the state of Orissa, a province of northern India, located south of Calcutta. In the tradition of the great classic styles is an ancient art and refined, a tribute to the deity, equal in Bharatanatyam (South India) by seniority and perfection.

There are traces of this style from the 2nd century BC that show wealth and sophistication of this writing already well defined.

The Mahar (or sacred dancers) danced in the temple in honor of the god and his chariot in front of large religious processions. Doomed to celibacy, they led an austere life, devoted entirely to the worship of the deity. They were forbidden to speak to any man, even to watch, especially when dancing. From the 11th century, "Ashtapatis, poems composing the Gita Govinda, the famous work of Jayadeva, was known throughout Orissa and Anandabhima Deva king ordered them to do part of the ritual dance. This beautiful poem recounts the loves of Krishna and his beloved Radha, symbol of the quest of the human soul seeking God. The movement spread across Orissa, and to make known this devotion to the greatest number, we danced the Maharis outside temples in places not dedicated for all to see dances praising the god beloved. This change in the traditional business of Maharis marked the beginning of the degradation of their institution. The Mughal rulers had Maharis dancing in their palaces for their entertainment. Their reputation suffered as they were now regarded as tainted and unworthy of the respect shown to them since forever. Unfairly treated as prostitutes, and to replace them somehow, Prataparudra Deva King ordered that their art was taught to young boys dressed as women (gotipuas) who were not likely to arouse impure desires among the spectators. These young boys were dancing until the age of 18, then their appearance becoming too masculine. Later, Maharis received permission to marry, priests thereby preserving their reputation for purity and morality. They continued to dance after their marriage and their children in turn became musicians or dancers.

This teaching has been faithfully handed down to us by the famous masters like Guru Pankaj Charan Das and Kelucharan Mohapatra, Guru Madhavi MUDGAL to whom we owe the revival and recognition of this ancient art.

Only recently professional dancers interpret the Odissi in theater.



PRESS

The heavenly body of a spellbinding India

As a fabulous, meditative, narrative, rhythmic trilogy, "Ananya" is a mesmerizing show, where an elsewhere appears on stage, another breath is given to the present time, where extreme stylized bodies, deified to be exact, incarnate eternal.

Iconic leader of Indian dance, Madhavi manages to make the link between millennial heritage (Odissi style practice appeared on the 2nd century BC) and the truth of a modern style that tends to be spectacular. Given the final standing ovations and an encore as strong as welcomed, it is clear that the audience appreciated it. Like a trip in one go through poetry, narrative legends and exploration of space, "Ananya" is a digest of delicate perfection and synchronic beauty. The superb voices, the percussions, the coated strings, the clear sound of the flute and all the musicians on stage are in total harmony with the amazing game of ankles around which the dancers tinkle a bunch of little bells with every movement. Impressive. And what about the proliferation of signs drawn by arms and hands! From this entire perfectly harmonious ensemble emerges a vitality that is matched only by the virtuosity that accompanies it. And in a flash, the sensual ardor goes to the most graceful serenity. Wonderful evening.

Tony di Troia, La Marseillaise, 12/07/2010.

Madhavi Mudgal 's fluid and spirral dance

The small odeon of Fourvière, a Gallo-Roman site, overlooking Lyon, is an ideal setting for Madhavi's rigorous graphics

First of four parts, "Rangi Stuti" is based on verses from Abhinaya Darpana, a collection of the intricacies of Indian classical dance developed in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. "Kumarasambhavam", derived from the poet Kalidasa's Sanskrit texts (fifth century), talks about the love of Shiva and Parvati. Between these, high-energy short sequences are fitted where the quest for immobility is a kind of absolute achievement for the movement studied in millimeters and microseconds.

What music accompanies these complex traces, often modernized, because, as Madhavi states at the end of a rehearsal conducted under a blazing sun, "the Indian tradition provides a very rigid framework in which creativity is totally free"? It is his brother, Madhup Mudgal, who composes for her choreographies presented in the best worldwide venues and festivals.

Fragility and power - Madhup Mudgal is a singer, he runs the Gandharva Mahavidyalaya in New Delhi, the oldest school of Indian classical music, founded in 1939 by the father, Vinay Chandra Maudgalya, a leading figure in Indian classical music. At the University in New Delhi, Madhup Mudgal has brilliantly studied on the structures of the khayal singing. Two of his daughters work with Madhavi, the first dancer Arushi, tipped to succeed to his aunt, and Sawani, one of two singers who gives a semblance of fragility and tension to the musical structure.

Véronique Mortaigne, Le Monde, Lyon, 08/07/2010

Madhavi And Arushi MUDGAL In A Memorable Odissi Performance

Meru Education Foundation presented Madhavi MUDGAL and her niece and disciple, Arushi MUDGAL in an Odissi dance performance at the National Heritage Museum in Boston on Sunday, September 28, 2008.

A sequence that engaged the audience with a truly aesthetic experience. The movements of the two dancers were carefully synchronized. Sometimes the dancers faced each other, sometimes away from each other and sometimes they faced the audience together. They took turns sitting, standing, laying down on stage, covering the entire stage with horizontal, diagonal, semi-circular symmetrical movements, moving their heads, necks, shoulders, hands and bodies with flawless control. The call and response sequences between Guru and Shishya and the sculpture like poses in the rest stops in the music were delightful. Pravaha was a synergy of precision in footwork, grace, abhinaya and ethereal music. Gloria Saulnier of Reading, MA was a member of the audience who summed it up as "I felt I was looking at one person, but two images of the same person. It was incredible. I cannot imagine the training and the work that must have gone into preparing this pièce...

Shuchita Rao 10/02/2008

DANCE REVIEW | FALL FOR DANCE FESTIVAL

Float Like a Bird and Sting Like a Missile

In the premiere of "Odissi: Pravaha," the acclaimed classical Indian dancer and Choreographer Madhavi MUDGAL offered a spirited, moving invocation to Shiva. She began with a solo that showed her meticulous tranquillity, but was soon joined by her niece Arushi MUDGAL. Watching both proved fascinating. While Arushi possessed a daring delicacy, it was Madhavi to whom the eye was drawn, not simply for the articulation of her footwork, but also for the harmony of her dancing body.

September 22, 2008, The New York Times

FALL FOR DANCE: Invigorating Sampler from Afar

Madhavi MUDGAL's refined, strikingly animated "Odissi: PRAVAHA," a world premiere in which the choreographer and her niece, Arushi MUDGAL, exemplified the deliquescent arms and upper body, as well as the engaging alertness and sparkling eyes of the Odissi style. Madhavi MUDGAL opened with a solo, accompanied by five exemplary musicians seated on the floor at stage right, in which her warmth and meticulously placed gestures filled the stage to a degree that belied her petite stature. Her lustrous draped costume of turquoise and purple emphasized the curves of her bowing and dipping phrases. When Arushi Mudgai joined her, wearing the identical costume with the colors reversed, their duet became a dialogue of symmetry and oppositions. The program note cited "the meeting of complementary principles," and the two women -- one more grounded, and serene, the second more vibrant and darting -- embodied this with éloquent refinement. The musicians -- most doubling as instrumentalists and singers -- added richly to the performance.

Danceviewtimes, September 29, 2008



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