

SWAPANTHI DANCE ACADEMY PRESENTS

Naisha Patel

RANGAPRAVESH
NRTYA PRABHA



Poway Center for the Performing Arts
August 6th, 2023



“When we see the Beloved in each person, it’s like walking through a garden, watching flowers bloom all around us.” ~ Ram Daas

THE ARTIST

Naisha Patel



Meet Naisha Patel, a young woman who exemplifies Aristotle's quote: ***"Excellence is an art won by training and habituation."*** From a young age, Naisha has embodied persistence and drive in all her pursuits, including ice skating, skiing, and dance.

As she crossed the threshold of five, she found dance and ice skating inextricable. Moving far beyond the label of extra curricula, dance and figure skating seemed to infest every domain of Naisha's life. This was the result of her own discipline and dedication coupled with unwavering direction and hawk-eyed guidance of her teachers.

Her dedication to Bharatanatyam and figure skating has not only given her self-confidence but has also instilled in her the values that make her shine bright on and off the ice. Naisha is a devoted student of the Swapanthi Dance Academy, which has been a source of tremendous inspiration for her. Her passion for dance is also fueled by her academic foundations in the sciences.

Aside from possessing amazing talent, Naisha also has a big heart. She spends her free time serving the community by volunteering for various organizations, such as the Junior Optimist Club. Her dedication and determination make her a role model for others, as she continues to rebound every time she falls. With her skill set and passion, Naisha has the potential to achieve any goal she sets her mind to.

As Naisha stands on stage, she reflects on the people who have impacted her life, regardless of the time they spent with her. She recognizes the importance of the community and how it takes a village to raise a child. Naisha is grateful for each person who has touched her life in a unique way, and she acknowledges the outpouring of love and support she has received on this special day.





Event Flow

1. PUSHPANJALI

Raga: Hamsavinodini | Tala: Adi

2. JATHISWARAM

Raga: Rasikapriya | Tala: Adi

3. SHIVASHTAKAM

Raga: Mohana | Tala: Adi

4. VARNAM

Raga: Mayamalavagoula | Tala: Adi (2 Kale) | Composer: Papanasam Shivan

INTERMISSION

5. VAISHANAV JANATO

Raga: Mishrakamach | Tala: Adi | Composer: Narsinh Mehta

6. RAMO NAMA BHABHUVA

Raga: Ragamalika

7. HANUMAN CHALISA

Raga: Mohana | Tala: Adi | Composer: Saint Tulsidas

8. THILLANA

Raga: Kadanakutuhalam | Tala: Adi | Composer: Dr. M.Balamuralikrishna

9. MANGALAM

Raga: Surati | Tala: Mishrachapu | Composer: Jadadguru Sri Sri Chandrashekhara Bharati Swamiji

CLOSING CEREMONY



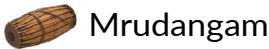


Nrtya Prabha - Radiating Dance

Bharatanatyam is an attempt to embody the divine beauty, charm, rhythms, and symbols that exist in heaven. It is a means of spiritual elevation for Naisha and the audience. In Bharatanatyam, the body should catch up to the tune, the hand must explain the meaning, the eye must speak the emotion, and the feet must beat the time measure.

MUSIC

Indian Classical music which encompasses:



BHARATANATYAM

BHA-Bhava (Expression)
RA-Raga (Music, Melody)
TA-Tala (Rhythm)
NATYAM (Dance)



DANCE

Bharatanatyam, a dance of grace, A celebration of beauty and culture. With every step, a story unfolds, Elegant hand gestures and feet that hold, Eternal stories in every performance, A dance that will leave you in a trance.

TYPES OF DANCE

Nritta - Body movements and footwork

Nritya - Facial expressions

Natya - Nritta and Nritya

COSTUME

A sari, six yards of woven silk, is custom tailored into different parts to provide freedom of movement.

THE GURU



Aparna Sundaram



Bharatanātyam has been Aparna's first love since the age of five. After initial training under Smt. Sowbhagya (India), Aparna specialized in Abhinaya under Smt. Dr. Vasundhara Doraiswamy (India). After moving to the US, she continued dance under Smt. Indumathy Ganesh. Following years of intense practice and mastery of the dance, Aparna accomplished her solo Arangetram under the guidance of her Guru Smt. Indumathy Ganesh in 2003.

Aparna has performed extensively and has earned the recognition and respect of dance critics for her exquisite execution of Bharatanātyam, and has been bestowed the title of "Natya Tilakam", for her flawless rhythm, flowing grace and powerful projections of the various Abhinaya. She has performed in numerous sabhās and academies in India and abroad. Aparna has also participated in several dance competitions, representing India at state and national levels, often earning first place accolades.

Aparna has performed in numerous dance festivals in San Diego, California. She has enacted dance dramas in keeping with the Natyashastra culture. In 2016, she directed Indradhwaja Mahothotsava under the guidance of Smt. Radhika Nandakumar.

Aparna runs her dance school "Swapanthi Dance Academy", rigorously training her students in Bharatanātyam. "Learning should never stop", "Swara to Ishwara" and "Nartan to Paramātman" are her guiding philosophy and beliefs.



Program



1. PUSHPANJALI

Raga: Hamsavinodini | Tala: Adi

“While dancing, don’t just breathe in air, but breathe in the ‘space’ around you... through every pore... it may make your dance fuller, expansive and have reach far beyond your tiny self... as though the entire space around you, dances within you.”

Naisha begins her repertoire with Pushpanjali, an invocatory item of a classical dance. It is derived from the Sanskrit words “pushpa”, meaning flowers, and “anjali” meaning offering or salutation. The piece is set to a rhythmic pattern of graceful body movements, intricate footwork, expressive facial expressions, and hand gestures, known as mudras to convey different emotions.

She holds flowers in her hands and offers *praNaama* (respects) to the deities, gurus, artists, and audience. Through the performance of Pushpanjali, Naisha expresses devotion, humility, and gratitude to the divine, seeking blessings for a successful and auspicious dance performance. It sets the tone for the rest of the program and establishes a connection between the dancer, the audience, and the spiritual realm.





2. JATHISWARAM

Raga: Rasikapriya | Tala: Adi

"I see dance being used as communication between body and soul, to express what it too deep to find for words." ~ Ruth St. Denis

Jathiswaram is one of the most complex items in the Bharatanatyam repertoire. It is a nritta (pure dance) item that tests Naisha's posture and control of movements through sculpturesque poses, rhythmic movement, and repetitive musical notes (swaras).

Unlike other items in a Bharatanatyam repertoire, Jathiswaram does not involve storytelling or narrative elements. It focuses primarily on providing a platform for Naisha to exhibit technical prowess, control, and stamina. It challenges her ability to maintain a steady rhythm (tala), and execute complex footwork sequences, and showcase artistic expression within the framework of a rhythmic composition. Although Jathiswaram conveys no meaning or theme, her strength and profound vigor through the item brings out the beauty of this pure dance.

Melody, without word of syllable, has a special power to unite us with our being. In Jathiswaram, melody and movement come together. Naisha takes leave of her subjective consciousness and identifies herself with the universal consciousness.



3. SHIVASHTAKAM

Raga: Mohana | Tala: Adi

“The source of all movement, Shiva’s dance, gives rhythm to the universe. He dances in evil places, in sacred, he creates and preserves, destroys, and releases. We are part of this dance, this eternal rhythm, and woe to us if blinded by illusions. We detach ourselves from the dancing cosmos, this universal harmony”

The word “Shivashtakam” is derived from two components: “Shiva,” which refers to Lord Shiva, and “ashtakam,” which means a composition consisting of eight verses. Shivashtakam, popularly known as “Prabhun Prananatha” is a devotional composition that praises Lord Shiva.

The hymn extols the divine qualities and attributes of Lord Shiva. It is recited by devotees to express their reverence, seek his blessings, and deepen their spiritual connection with the Lord.

The Shivashtakam mantra holds several benefits for the mind of both the chanter and the listener.

- Healing power “Peace of mind and helps in keeping negative energy, evils, and negative thoughts away.”
- Better decisions “Good health, prosperity, and wisdom dawns.”
- Brings abundance “Induces positivity, confidence, and willpower as well as the removal of obstacles in endeavors.”



SCAN THE QR CODE
FOR SONG LYRICS/TRANSLATION





“O Lord ‘Shiva’, you are my strength. Hold my hand in my weakness and teach my heart to fly. With you, there’s nothing to fear, nothing to worry about. Hold me light in your embrace, so that I can be stronger than the challenges in my life. Om peace...!!!”

4. VARNAM

Raga: Mayamalavagoula | Tala: Adi (2 Kale) | Composer: Papanasam Shivan

“Dancing is an art. The floor is my canvas. And I am the brush and whatever it creates comes from the heart.”

Varnam is the most beautiful, rich, exquisite, and intense item in the Bharatnatyam repertoire. It is announced as the piece-de-resistance of the traditional recital. There is a perfect synchronization of “bhava” (emotion), “raga” (melody or tune), and “tala” (rhythm), thus giving the dancer an abundant scope for displaying her rhythmic talents along with varied “abhinaya” (expressions). This piece tests the dancer’s stamina and grace as it is the longest and most demanding item. Varnam creates the impression of beauty, grandeur, and profundity by alternating between pure dance sequences and expressional lines.



5. VAISHNAV JANATO

Raga: Mishrakamach | Tala: Adi | Composer:
Narsinh Mehta

“An eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind.” ~ M. K. Gandhi

“Vaishnav Jan To” is a beautiful devotional Gujarati hymn closest to the heart of the father of the nation, Mahatama Gandhi, penned centuries back by Narsinh Mehta a 15th century poet. Vaishnav Janato was Gandhi’s moral weapon, putting it at the epicentre of Ghandhi’s Ahimsa philosophy, “be the change you want to see in the world”.

It represents the ideal code of conduct that all human beings should aspire. It also draws upon concepts from Krishna consciousness, with ideas such as giving up material desires and freeing oneself from illusion (maya).

The song extols the virtues of compassion, humility, and selflessness, and encourages listeners to emulate the example of a true Vaishnava in their own lives. One who is a Vaishnav (Devotee of Vishnu) knows the pain of others and does good without letting pride enter his mind. The melody of “Vaishnav Jan To” is simple yet stirring.



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FOR SONG LYRICS/TRANSLATION



6. RAMONAMA BHABHUA

Raga: Ragamalika

"If we want to be touched by the consciousness that we refer to as Krishna, we need Leela - the path of the playful." ~ Sadhguru

"Ramonama" refers to the name of Lord Rama.

When little Krishna is having difficulty in sleeping, mother Yashoda narrates the beautiful story of Lord Rama and Sita. Listening to this story, Little Krishna's eye sparkles.



[Mother Yashoda is telling Sri Krishna a story]

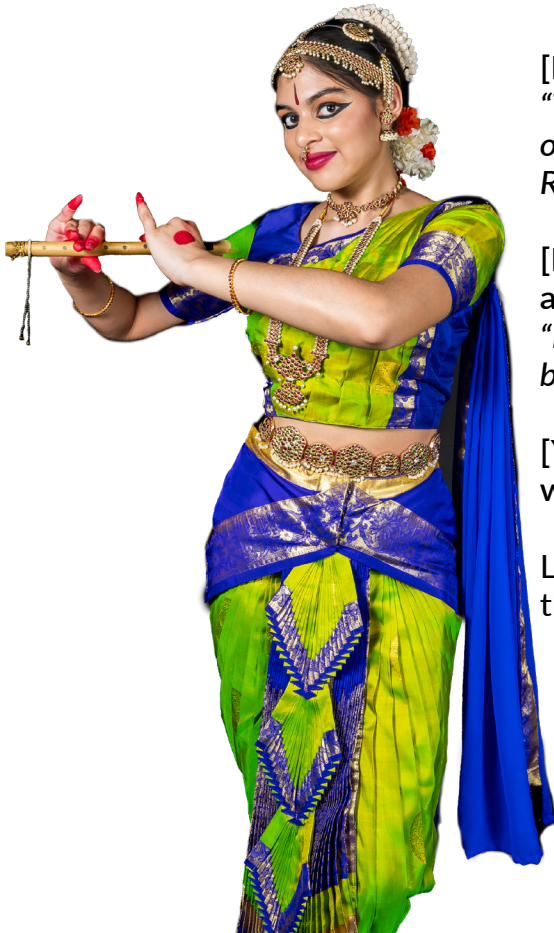
"There was once a king named Rama. His wife was Sita. On the order of His father, Rama lived in the Pancavati Forest. There Ravana kidnapped Sita."

[Hearing His mother narrate His own activities performed in ancient times Sri Krishna suddenly called out]

"Lakshmana! Where is My bow? Where is My bow? Where is My bow?"

[Yashoda pacifies the agitated child reminding him that he was Krishna and not Rama]

Let us see Naisha depict this epic story of Yashoda reciting the Ramayana to baby Krishna. This dance is poetry in action.



7. HANUMAN CHALISA

Raga: Mohana | Tala: Adi | Composer: Saint Tulsidas

“He gives the strength and courage to overcome difficulties quickly, just like lightning strikes quickly and powerfully.” ~ Hanumanji

Hanuman Chalisa extols the greatness of the super-hero Sri Hanuman. It is a garland of forty verses strung by Goswami Tulsidas, a 16th-century poet-saint and devotee of Lord Rama.

The lyrics of “Hanuman Chalisa” describe the various qualities and attributes of Lord Hanuman, including his strength, devotion, and unwavering commitment to serving Lord Rama. The hymn praises Lord Hanuman’s selfless devotion and his willingness to go to any length to serve his Lord.

The hymn also describes how Lord Hanuman aided Lord Rama in his quest to defeat the demon king Ravana and rescue his wife Sita.

Benefits of reciting the Hanuman Chalisa with faith and devotion:

- It gives us the abilities needed for success in spiritual and material endeavor.
- It grants us success in whatever we undertake.
- It bestows peace of mind and happiness.
- It helps us to overcome difficulties in life.



SCAN THE QR CODE
FOR SONG LYRICS/TRANSLATION



8. THILLANA

Raga: Kadanakutuhalam | Tala: Adi | Composer: Dr. M.Balamuralikrishna

“When you dance, your purpose is not to get to a certain place on the floor, it’s to enjoy each step along the way.” ~ Wayne Dyer

Thillana breaks into movement like the final burning of camphor accompanied by a measure of din and bustle.

The lively climax of the Arangetram exhibits exuberance of rhythm with alluringly sculpturesque poses and pure dance. It brings out the ecstasy of human spirits by technical purity and vitality to convey a feeling of supreme bliss with rhythmic korvais (patterns).



9. MANGALAM

Raga: Surati | Tala: Mishrachapu | Composer: Jadadguru Sri Sri Chandrashekhara Bharati Swamiji

*"Dance is meditation in movement, a walking into silence where every movement becomes a prayer."
~ Bernhard Wosien*

The mangalam is the final piece in the arangetram repertoire. In this piece, Naisha expresses her thanks to God, her Guru, the musicians, and the audience.

The purpose of this dance is to receive blessings for a successful and prosperous future.





Music Ensemble



SUSHEELA NARASIMHAN (VIOLINIST): Mr. Narasimhan learned violin from Sri H.K. Venkatram in Shimoga for about a year and later on from Sri H.K. Narasimha Murthy for about 6-7 years in Mysore. He has composed many Pallavis on Lord Raghavendra Swamy and runs a Melakartha Pallavi Concert Series. He has a Ph.D in Mechanical Engineering and works as a Senior Thermal Engineer for Nvidia in Santa Clara.



BALAJI MAHADEVAN (MRIDANGIST): An M.Tech from I.I.T Roorkee, Balaji Mahadevan is a prolific Mridangam and Tabla player who has made a niche for himself in the Bay Area, not only in these two instruments but also as a skilled professional playing the Thavil, Dhol, Khol, Dholak and other ethnic percussion instruments. Hailing from Chennai, he had the privilege of getting his dedicated initial training from two very renowned gurus—Sri K.K.S Mani and Sri B.V Madhu Sudhanan, a disciple of Sri Karikudi Mani.



WILL MARSH (GUITARIST): Will Marsh has been performing classical sitar for fourteen and guitar for twenty years. Will has worked with Grammy-winning musicians and producers and has been featured on national television. He believes passionately that music is essential to all of humanity. He holds his MFA in World Music Performance from the California Institute of the Arts and has studied with some of the world's greatest musicians including Ustad Aashish Khan (eldest son of Ali Akbar Khan), Roshan Bhartiya, Tushar Bhaita and Shakir Khan.



PRASANNA RAJAN (FLUTIST): Prasanna Rajan has been learning Carnatic Flute under the tutelage of flute maestro Sri Shashank Subramanyam. He also plays Hindustani flute and western trumpet. He has performed several solo flute concerts both Hindustani and Carnatic in the US and India. He has played as an accompanist to many dance arangetrams and dance productions in the Bay Area. He has a Master's degree in Translational Medicine from UCSF and is currently working for Blue Shield of California.



AMOGH KAUSHIK (VOCALS): Amogh has been learning music for the past 18 years. His gurus are Sri Anand Sheshadri, Sri Murali Parthasarathy, Dr. Sri R.S. Nandakumar, Smt. Vathsala, and Sri Shayan Sheshagarani and is currently learning with Sri Anand Sheshadri and Sri Murali Parthasarathy. He has always loved singing and experimenting with western musical instruments, including piano and electronic modular synthesis. He graduated from University of San Francisco with a Bachelor's degree in chemistry aspiring to become a medical doctor.



ABHIJEET MODAK (KEYBOARD): Dr. Abhijit Modak learned keyboard playing and music composition under the tutelage of Mr. Diwakar Katare in Pune, India. He has been conducting and performing in various orchestras over the past 17 years.



9 Rasa's / Human Emotions



SRINGARA | LOVE



VEERA | BRAVERY



ADBHUTA | AMAZEMENT



KARUNA | EMPATHY



BHAYANAKA | FEAR



RAUDRA | ANGER



HASYA | LAUGHTER



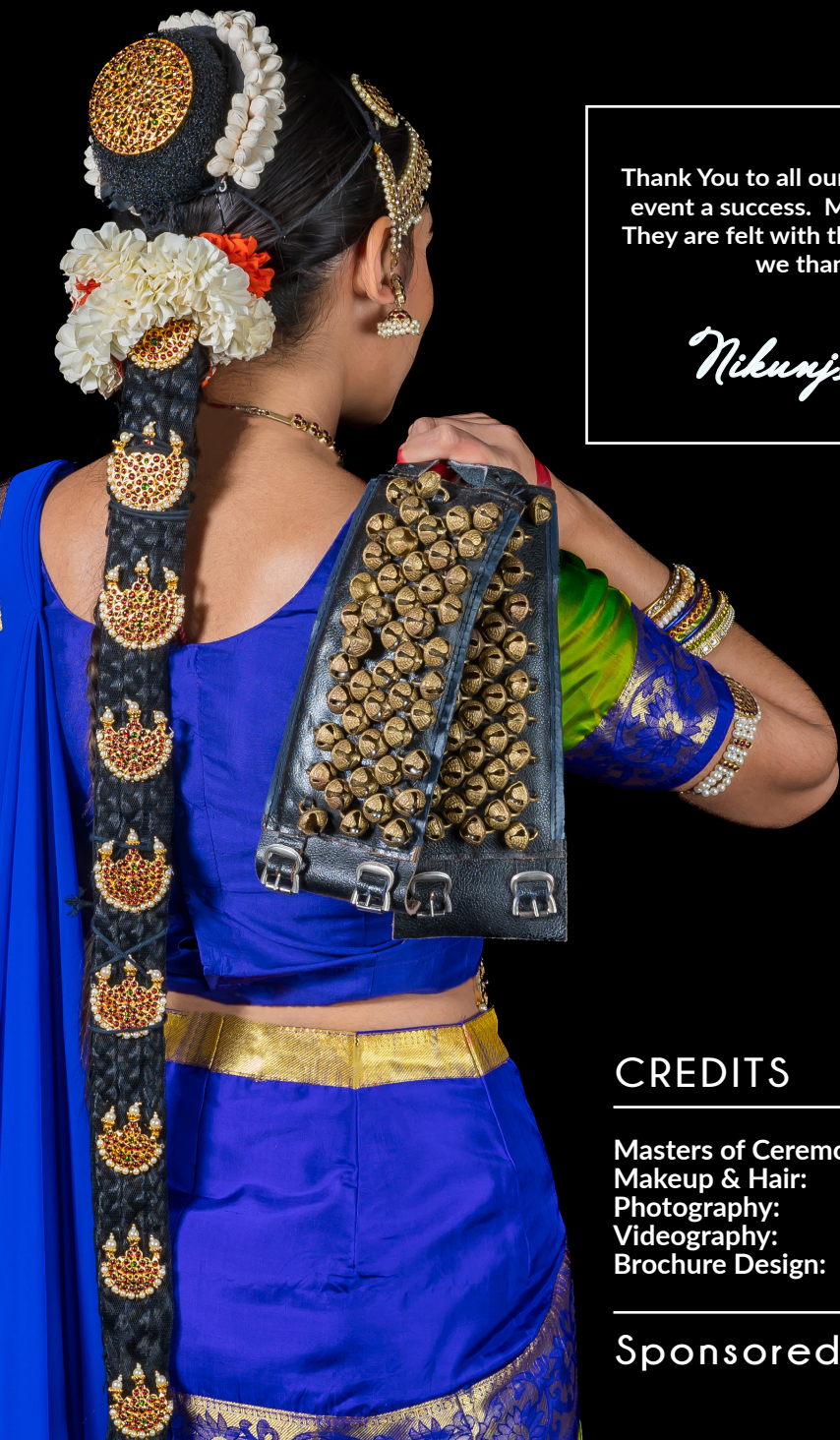
BHAYANAKA | FEAR



SHANTA | PEACE



BIBHATSA | DISGUST



Thank You to all our family and friends who contributed to make this event a success. Many beautiful things cannot be seen or touched. They are felt with the heart. Your presence today is one of them, and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

Nikunj, Shila, & Naisha Patel

CREDITS

Masters of Ceremonies:	Prem Shah, Shital Patel, & Sejal Gandhi
Makeup & Hair:	Visalini Sundaram & Sangita Desai
Photography:	Vishnu Priya & Chris Brake
Videography:	Serg Swiderski
Brochure Design:	Sheila Balaji

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