

**Asia Society and PRAYAAS**

Presents

**A Lecture/Demonstration with  
Madhavi Mugdal and Leela Samson**

Part of the ANUBHAV Series



**Tuesday, October 1, 7:00 P.M.**

**Asia Society**

**725 Park Avenue at 70<sup>th</sup> Street**

**New York City**



## BIOS

### MADHAVI MUDGAL

One of the leading classical dancers of India, Madhavi Mudgal is a highly renowned exponent of the Odissi style. A prime disciple of the legendary Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra, she is credited with bringing a greatly refined sensibility to her art form. Having established a niche in the international dance scene as a soloist, she has also been acclaimed for her choreographic works with her group of dancers. Her work has received repeated acclaim in the major cities and dance festivals throughout the world. Apart from her performances, Madhavi is also recognized as one of the foremost teachers of her generation. She has also conducted dance workshops all over the world. Numerous awards and honors have come her way, including the Sanskriti Award, the Padmashri, presented by the President of India, the Central and Orissa State Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, the Delhi State Parishad Samman, and the Nritya Choodamani. Madhavi was also honored by the Government of France with the CHEVALIER award.

### LEELA SAMSON

Leela is a virtuoso performer and sensitive interpreter of Bharata Natyam. She is a consummate teacher, choreographer and writer. She is the recipient of the Sanskriti Award in 1982, the Padmashri Award in 1990, the Nritya Choodamani Award in 1997 and the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 2000. She served as Director of the Kalakshetra Foundation from 2005 to 2012. Since 2010, she has served as the Chairman of Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi – the apex body of dance, drama and music in India. In 2011, she was appointed Chairperson of the Central Board of Film Certification.

### RAJIKA PURI (Moderator)

An exponent of Bharatanatyam and Odissi is known for her innovative work with these forms. She explores different kinds of music - like flamenco, and American music - even composing for her evening-length works herself. She is now known for a form of danced storytelling in English, in which she sings and chants as she dances. Her latest work, commissioned by the Chennai Festival, is ELENI of SPARTA or 'Helen of Troy', heroine of the great Greek epic, *The Iliad*.

MADHAVI MUDGAL (Odissi)

### **Pallavi**

A visual representation of musical motifs, Pallavi means ‘to elaborate, to flower.’ Music and movement build up gradually into complex patterns through sequences arranged in an aesthetic order, bringing out the architectonics of the technique.

Music: Madhup Mudgal

Choreography: Madhavi Mudgal

### **Madhave Ma Kuru Manini**

An ashtapadi from the Gita Govinda portraying Radha as the ‘Kalahantarita Nayika’- one who has quarreled with her beloved and sent him away, and now wastes away in love, longing for him, yet is too proud to forget her wounded vanity. Chiding Radha for her sullen behavior, a sakhi says:

“When Krishna pleads tenderly, you react harshly, when he is loving, you are quarrelsome, when he approaches you expectantly, you turn away, rejecting him. O Radha - it is for this reason that even the sandal balm seems like poison to you, the soothing moonbeam and the joys of love play torment you. O friend- give up this baseless pride!”

“When the sweet spring winds blow - Krishna waits for you - what greater pleasure exists, O proud one? Why do you despair and cry thus, O Radha? The women folk laugh at you.”

“Come and reward your eyes with Krishna reclining on a bed of lotus flowers - waiting for you.”

“Why condemn yourself to loneliness, O Radha? Go and unite with him.”

Music: Pandit Jasraj

Choreography: Madhavi Mudgal

LEELA SAMSON (Bharata Natyam)

## **Ashtapadi**

The ashtapadi is a love poem taken from the work of Jayadeva, and is arguably the most celebrated love poem in the Sanskrit language.

While Hari roamed the forest making love to all women, Radha's hold on him loosened and envy drove her away. But anywhere she tried to retreat, even in a thicket of wild vines, the sounds of bees buzzing circling overhead depressed her. She told her friend the secret - Sweet notes from his alluring flute echo nectar from his lips. His restless eyes glance, his head sways, ear-rings play upon his cheeks. My heart recalls Hari in his love dance, playing seductively, laughing, mocking me.

A circle of peacock plumes caressed by moonlight crowns his hair. A rainbow drapes his cloud-dark body, My heart recalls Hari in his love dance, playing seductively, laughing, mocking me.

Meeting me under a flowering tree, he calms my fear of dark time. Delighting me deeply by quickly glancing looks at my heart. My heart recalls Hari in his love dance, playing seductively, laughing, mocking me.

Raga: Mishra

Tala: Adi

Music Composer: Madhup Mudgal

Choreography: Leela Samson

LEELA SAMSON (Bharata Natyam)

### **Kalabhairava Ashtakam**

Kalabhairava is the fearsome aspect of Lord Shiva. Kalabhairava is the controller and manager of Time. It is recited daily in the temple of the deity in the holy city of Varanasi. It is believed that those who study these verses, which are a source of knowledge, increase the righteousness of their person and destroy grief, attachment, depression, greed and anger.

Raga: Hamsadvani

Tala: Adi

Composer: Adi Shankara Bhagavat Pada

Music: Traditional

Choreography: Sheejith Krishna

All compositions rendered or sung by  
Gopalakrishnan Shrikanth.

**Dance OutSPOKEN: 10 Minutes**

Conversation between Madhavi Mudgal and Leela Samson  
moderated by Rajika Puri

## **SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

DAKSHINA - Daniel Phoenix Singh Dance Company

Primary Sponsor of Madhavi Mudgal's US tour

YORK UNIVERSITY, TORONTO, CD - Primary

Sponsor of Leela Samson's Tour

Sangeetha Kowsik, Program Booklet

### **About Performing Arts at Asia Society**

Asia Society's Performing Arts Program is an intrinsic component of Asia Society's commitment to sharing vital aspects of Asian culture, by placing creative expression at the center of a more comprehensive understanding of culture. Whether it is experimental artists exploring new territory or traditional artists bringing to life the voices of a great legacy, the Performing Arts Program has created a powerful platform for connecting and engaging with Asian culture within a deeper cultural context. We have presented extraordinary artists from renowned names such as Lang Lang, Tan Dun, Abida Parveen, Shen Wei, David Henry Hwang, Sardono and Malavika Sarukkai, to the latest emerging voices. Beginning in 1957, with New York's first performance by Indian maestro Ravi Shankar, the Performing Arts Program has since presented over a thousand performances, including original commissioned work from Asian and Asian-American artists, as well as American artists influenced by Asia, such as Phillip Glass and Vijay Iyer. From Indonesian hip-hop to electronica from Shanghai; experimental dance to the deeply moving traditions of India's *Kuttiyatam*, Burmese *Zat Pwe* or Chinese *Kunqu* opera, we foster artistic exchange and provide creative opportunities for artists.

For more information, please visit [asiasociety.org](http://asiasociety.org)

### **Asia Society Staff**

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**Elaine Merguerian**, Director, Communications

**Eric DeArmon**, A/V Manager

### **About Anubhav**

Anubhav literally means 'an experience.' The main purpose of this series is to experience various dance forms through lecture/demonstrations, workshops and dialogues by legendary dance personalities from India.

### **About PRAYAAS**

PRAYAAS is a creative collaboration by Trinayan Dance Theater and Prashant Shah in support of presenting legendary and emerging artists of Classical Indian dance.



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