



PRESENTS

# **SHANTALA SHIVALINGAPPA in *AKASHA***

**Doris Duke Theatre  
July 3–7, 2013**

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR & DANCER: Shantala Shivalingappa

CHOREOGRAPHERS: Shantala Shivalingappa & Vempati Ravi Shankar

ARTISTIC ADVISOR: Savitry Nair

TECHNICAL COORDINATOR & LIGHTING MANAGER: Nicolas Boudier

RHYTHM CREATION: B.P. Haribabu & N. Ramakrishnan

SOUND MANAGER: Gary Miller

SINGER: J. Ramesh

NATTUVANGAM & PAKHWAJ

(CYMBALS & PERCUSSIONS): B.P. Haribabu

MRIDANGAM (PERCUSSIONS): N. Ramakrishnan

FLUTIST: Rajagopal Shakthidhar Vijalapur

TOUR MANAGEMENT: Valérie Cusson

TOUR ADMINISTRATION: [H]ikari

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER: Pierre Barnier, Per Diem & Co

CO-PRODUCERS: Carolyn Carlson, Centre Chorégraphique National de Roubaix  
Centre National de Création et Diffusion Culturelles Châteaullon  
International Festival of Arts and Ideas  
Jacob's Pillow Dance  
Sunny Artist Management, Inc.

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# PROGRAM

In Sanskrit, the classical language of India and Hinduism, *Akasha* means Sky or Space. It is said that *Akasha* originates in sound—a vibration or form of energy and movement.

Space is manifested in various ways at different levels of perception. It begins with the space we perceive around us; then the space that surrounds us; followed by the space of the universe, which contains everything we know (in Indian thought, this Space is the fifth element and completes the four-fold Air, Water, Fire, Earth); and ends in its subtlest form, Space beyond space-time. The Infinite Undefinable Space of Being is inconceivable by mind, imperceptible to the senses, and pervades, holds, and contains all that exists.

That *Akasha* is Luminous and the Source of All. Through the vibrations of sound and movement, and through the pure, timeless energy that emanates from them, Infinite Space rises. Boundless within our self, one can almost feel Infinite Space expanding.

## **OM NAMO JI ADYA** (2013)

CHOREOGRAPHY	Shantala Shivalingappa
DANCER	Shantala Shivalingappa
POEM	Dhyaneswar (13th century)
MUSIC	Hridayanath Mangeshkar
SINGER	Shantala Shivalingappa
LIGHTING DESIGN	Nicolas Boudier

I offer my salutations to the Supreme Being described in the Vedas.  
The one who can only be known when the individual soul merges with the Supreme Soul.  
I prostrate myself before him.  
In the form of Ganesh, the elephant-headed God, you are the light that enlightens our intellect.  
The sound "A" comes from your lotus-like-feet.  
"U" emanates from your belly.  
"M" comes from your crown.  
These three sounds merge into the one primordial, universal sound: "OM."  
By my Master's grace, I offer salutations to this "OM", seed of the universe.  
And I pay tribute to the one who enchants us by the grace and beauty of her form,  
and blesses us with inspiration—Sharada, Goddess of Art and Knowledge.

## **KRISHNAM KALAYA** (2013)

CHOREOGRAPHY	Vempati Ravi Shankar
DANCER	Shantala Shivalingappa
POEM	Narayana Tirtha (16th century)
MUSIC	traditional composition
LIGHTING DESIGN	Nicolas Boudier

Look my friend! The Child Krishna, radiant with beauty!  
Even playing in the dirt, his mouth full of mud, he is still charming!  
This child is none other than Krishna, the Supreme God,  
the Light of the universe, the conqueror of demons.  
He dances and plays with young shepherdesses and enchants us with his divine flute.  
He embodies Supreme Truth and Compassion.  
He is the shore of the ocean of difficulties on earth; the shelter of all Yogis.  
He is the essence of the Vedas.  
Like the flow of the mighty river Ganges, the love flowing from his heart fills all music and literature.  
He is the supreme protector.  
Look at this divine child!

## **JAYA JAYA DURGE** (2013)

CHOREOGRAPHY Shantala Shivalingappa  
DANCER Shantala Shivalingappa  
POEM Narayana Tirtha (16th century)  
MUSIC J. Ramesh  
LIGHTING DESIGN Nicolas Boudier

*Poem in praise of Durga, a form of the Goddess Mother who embodies power and destruction of Evil. Her multiple arms hold various weapons such as the sword, the trident, the arch, the disk, etc. Her mount is a tiger.*

Glory to you, O Durga!  
Conqueror of demons.  
From you emanate space, sky, and the entire universe.  
Your feet are like lotus flowers.  
You bless the entire world with well-being.  
Oh sister of Narayana, you embody Supreme joy.  
The bells adorning your feet are filled with precious stones.  
In their tinkling, we hear the sounds of the sacred texts.  
Celestial musicians sing your praises.  
You are the Supreme Witness of the universe.

A section is danced on a brass plate, a specific kind of Kuchipudi technique.

## **KIRTANAM** (2013)

CHOREOGRAPHY Vempati Ravi Shankar  
POEM Annamacharya (14th century)  
MUSIC traditional composition  
LIGHTING DESIGN Nicolas Boudier  
DANCER Shantala Shivalingappa

*This poem tells the story of a love quarrel between Goddess Alamelu Manga, the narrator, and her husband God Venkateshwara. Shivalingappa plays both characters one after the other. She also plays other secondary characters of the story, marking the passage from one character to another with a whirl.*

Enough! These deceptive words!  
Stop pulling the trail of my sari!  
Go away! Why do you seek my company?  
You are stone-hearted and deception is your main asset.  
My body, which once shivered with pleasure under your fingers, now considers your touch foul.  
All desire has left me.  
You spend your time running after pretty women, expert at singing their praise,  
each time discovering new ways to seduce them.  
My God! These marks on your shoulders, a sign of your romantic games with others!  
I suppose I should just wish you luck with your new conquests!  
What a sad fate is mine!  
You always come back with new excuses and apologies,  
but that does not keep you from falling again for other women.  
Oh you, the one who destroys all sorrows.  
Promise that you will be loyal to me once more, and thus revive the light of our love.

## **BHAIRAVA** (2013)

CHOREOGRAPHY	Shantala Shivalingappa
POEM	Traditional Poem
MUSIC	J. Ramesh
LIGHTING DESIGN	Nicolas Boudier
DANCER	Shantala Shivalingappa

*Bhairava is an aspect of God Shiva (who is also the Lord of the Dance) in his terrible and destructive form. He is the Divine Protector; the Supreme Guardian. In his hands he holds the small sacred drum, which gives its rhythm to the universe.*

His power is prodigious, but under this terrifying aspect lies infinite benevolence.

For the well-being of all, he destroys demons and overcomes Evil.

The trident and sword are his weapons, a tiger skin is his clothing.

His immense hair is contained in a bun on his head from which flows the sacred river Ganges.

He wears a necklace of skulls; his skin is smeared with ash; divine snakes dance around his neck and his chest. His eyes are the moon and the sun and his third eye is the Fire of Knowledge and Destruction.

We offer you our salutations, Oh Bhairava, Supreme Protector.

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## **COMPANY**

**SHANTALA SHIVALINGAPPA** (Artistic Director, Choreographer, and Dancer) Born in Madras, India and brought up in Paris, France, Shivalingappa is the child of east and west. She grew up in a world filled with dance and music, initiated at a tender age by her mother, dancer Savitry Nair.

Deeply moved and inspired by Master Vempati Chinna Satyam's pure and graceful style, Shivalingappa dedicated herself to Kuchipudi, and received an intense and rigorous training from her master. Driven by a deep desire to bring Kuchipudi to the western audience, she has performed in important festivals and theaters, earning praise and admiration from all.

Acclaimed as a rare dancer by artists and connoisseurs in India and Europe, Shivalingappa combines a perfect technique with flowing grace and a very fine sensitivity. Since the age of 13, she has also had the privilege of working with some of the greatest artists of our time including Maurice Béjart, Peter Brook, Bartabas, Pina Bausch, and Ushio Amagatsu. Such experiences make her artistic journey a truly unique one.

Today, Shivalingappa shares her time among various activities such as creating Kuchipudi choreographies. This creative time builds a new repertoire marked by her personal touch, which she tours in solo, accompanied by her four musicians. She also tours with the Tanztheater Wuppertal of Pina Bausch.

Finally, Shivalingappa is collaborating with different artists to explore dance and music.

Those collaborations have generated, among others, works such as *Play*, a duet with dancer and choreographer Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui; *Nineteen Mantras*, a modern opera inspired by Hindu myths, which was directed by Giorgia Barberio Corsetti and choreographed by Shivalingappa; and *Peer Gynt*, directed by Irina Brook for the Salzburg Festival and performed by Shivalingappa through dancing, singing, and acting.

**KUCHIPUDI** is a classical dance form of South India. It takes its name from a small village called Kuchipudi in the state of Andhra Pradesh, where it was born around the 15th century. Like all Indian classical dance forms, its technique is rooted in the *Natya Shastra*, a 2,000 year-old treaty on dramatics, which gives a very precise and highly developed codification of dance, music, and theater. Kuchipudi also received its influence from the popular, religiously themed folk dance and music traditions, prevalent at the time in that particular region, and which developed themes of religious devotion. The result is a style that is highly evolved and structured, but also vibrant, lively, extremely intricate, and utterly graceful.

Kuchipudi uses two important techniques—pure dance and expressive dance. These techniques are developed in different ways in each of the Indian classical dance styles. Pure dance, or *nrtta*, is rhythmic and abstract. The footwork executes the complex rhythmic patterns of the accompanying music, while the rest of the body, from the head to the tip of the fingers, follows sometimes with

forceful precision, and other times with flowing, graceful movements. Expressive dance, or *abhinaya*, is narrative. Here, each part of the body is used to bring alive the text, poem, or story, recited in the song. The hand gestures, *mudras*, are codified into a very precise language. The facial expressions are stylized in order to convey a wide range of complex to subtle, sentiments and feelings. The whole body comes alive to communicate the emotions that arise from the song.

Kuchipudi is a harmonious combination where the dancer alternates or blends together moments of pure dance and moments of narrative dance, based on Hindu mythology. The focus is on the use of gestures, facial expressions, and body language. The Kuchipudi performance is accompanied by a live, classical orchestra comprised of singing, flute, veena and percussion. The dance, music, and rhythm are very closely intertwined as each element is developed in relation with the other.

In the field of Kuchipudi, Master Vempati Chinna Satyam has clearly marked the last four decades. Through his dedication, extraordinary talent, and sheer hard work and through his collaboration with greatly knowledgeable and sensitive scholars, composers, and musicians, he brought Kuchipudi from its little village to the forefront of the artistic scene in India and the world. He renewed and restored a diluted and cruder form of Kuchipudi at a time when it was fading in rigor and vibrancy, forging a very personal, precisely structured, pure, and elegant style.



Let these questions about today's performance fuel your discussions, and keep an eye out for additional questions around the Pillow grounds:

- Have you had the chance to watch classical Indian previously, and if so, what was the context?
- The Doris Duke Theatre is an intimate black box theatre. How might this performance feel different, had it been performed on a large proscenium stage?
- What connections can you find between ideas of classicism in ballet and classicism in Indian dance forms like Kuchipudi?
- Kuchipudi dance uses all extremities—legs arms, and head, but also feet, hands and fingers, and even eyes. Did you focus on one part of the body or enjoy the entire picture as a whole?

Seeing Dance, Talking Dance is a new Pillow program encouraging different ways of seeing, discussing, and appreciating dance, supported by Engaging Dance Audiences, administered by Dance/USA, and made possible with generous funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation

# COMPANHIA URBANA DE DANÇA

July 10-14 | Ted Shawn Theatre

"knocked the ball  
out of the park"  
— The New York Times

## COMING SOON!

Companhia Urbana combines evocative contemporary choreography and hip-hop and b-boy styles. They perform the vibrant work *ID: Entidades*, as well as *Chapa Quente* ("hot plate" in Portuguese), inspired by the streets of Rio and pumping with youthful adrenaline.

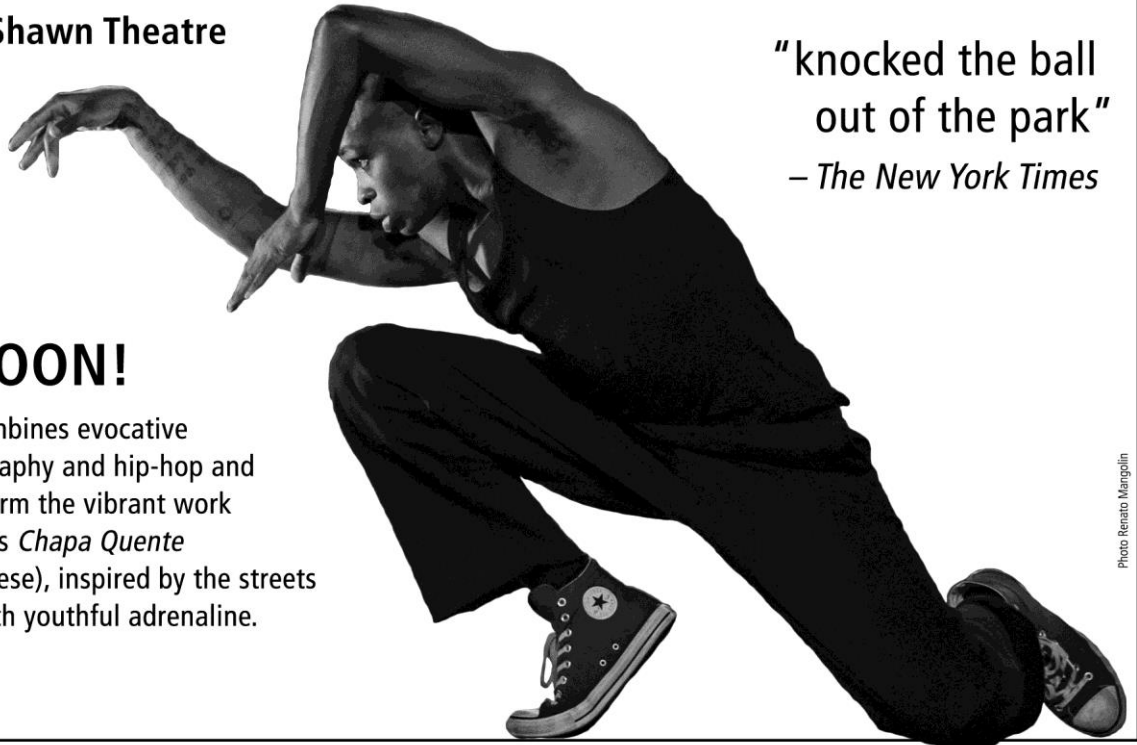


Photo Renato Mangolin

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THE KRESGE FOUNDATION



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# PILLOWNOTES

by Philip Szporer

*The PillowNotes series comprises essays commissioned from our Scholars-in-Residence to provide audiences with a broader context for viewing dance.*

Shantala Shivalingappa enlivens the stage with an original and inclusive approach to classical traditions. Not only a marvelous technician, she is a performer with universal appeal who expands the possibilities of what dance can be.

Kuchipudi, the form she is versed in, is a dance style from South India dating from the 3rd century B.C.E., rooted in the temple dance drama tradition. It originated in the hamlet of Kuchipudi in Andhra Pradesh. Born in Madras, India, Shivalingappa was raised in Paris since infancy and still lives there. She has gained renown with her own choreographic creations, as well as working with notable artists such as Peter Brook, Maurice Béjart, Ushio Amagatsu, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, and memorably embracing contemporary abstract dance techniques as a member of the late Pina Bausch's Wuppertal Tanztheater company. But her Kuchipudi training remains her first love, and the style to which she has dedicated herself.

An articulate and inviting stage persona with phenomenal integrity, Shivalingappa's intention is to present her works with purpose, energy and purity, as a means of illustrating the power of the Kuchipudi form. Audience members viewing her dance get an immediate understanding of the dimensions of tremendous and, to quote Yeats, "terrible beauty." In many ways her work as a dance artist is interdisciplinary in nature. The blending of cultures and vocations fuels the discussion of ethnocultural diversity and, as such, issues such as national symbols, race, and matters of faith and culture, seed a good measure of her dance investigations as well.

Shivalingappa, who holds an MA in ethnology from the Sorbonne, lives a life of dance. Almost as long as she can remember, she has danced. She is a child of East and West. She started studying Indian dance at the age of six, at the behest of her mother, the master teacher and performer Savitry Nair, who trained her in the more well-known Bharata Natyam style of classical South Indian dance. (Apart from teaching in Paris, Nair had links with Béjart at the famous Mudra school in Brussels, as well as with Bausch in Germany). It was on a trip back to Madras, when she was about fifteen or sixteen, that Shivalingappa took a class with her mother's master, Guru Vempati Chinna Satyam, who then became her own master. Satyam is credited with revitalizing Kuchipudi as a secular dance form during the last several decades, adapting the technique to be articulated through the female as well as the male. Shivalingappa was attracted to his teaching and dedicated herself to Kuchipudi and its disciplined study, but that first day, when learning a variation from the master's son, was a defining moment. As she has described in an interview in *Time Out: New York*, "The feeling of those movements in my body was like *coup de foudre*, as we say in French—it was love at first sight. It was a very strong, intense experience just in my body—and a very organic kind of experience—and I just went mad for Kuchipudi."

In classical dance, performers work within a set of rules. The certain precision that comes in Indian classical dance also has a restless quality. Kuchipudi blends the sensuousness and fluidity of Odissi with the geometric line of Bharata Natyam and a strong storytelling element, though Shivalingappa chooses to devote herself to more movement-oriented choreography. The hand gestures, or *mudras*, are codified, and facial expressions are stylized so as to convey a wide range of complex and subtle sentiments and feelings. In Shivalingappa's performance, the whole body comes alive to communicate the emotions that arise from the music. As she has commented, "[In] Kuchipudi especially, it's really bringing out the *raga*, the mood, the lyrics, so the whole thing comes together with the dance. It should be one whole." She moves with strong legs and feet, while the upper body is, by contrast, graceful, the back and the torso movements swaying and undulating. Her appearance is airy, with quick footwork and lots of jumps, and yet deeply rooted in the ground.

It's easy to think that cultural preservation was the motivation for Shivalingappa's dance training, but what may have begun as such has transformed into something else. Kuchipudi remains her basis, but she is among a growing number of 'bilingual' performers fluent in both Indian classical and contemporary forms. Shivalingappa is able to reference the expressive qualities of each dance form, creating highly charged work uniquely her own. Through her interactions with choreographers like Bausch, she is mediating between cultures, and exploring multiple meanings in her own work. Shivalingappa's mastery can equally strip away the ornamentation, narrative and decorative elements of the classical form, thereby simply accessing its pure technique.

In her third Pillow appearance, Shivalingappa presents *Akasha*, which in Sanskrit means sky or space. In this work commissioned by Jacob's Pillow, she explores, with her sheer technical mastery, "space manifested in various ways at different levels of perception," in the tangible sense we know and recognize, as well as the ineffable awareness of the infinite and the "space of being." Shivalingappa dances accompanied by a live ensemble of musicians—comprising vocals, flute, nattuvangam and pakhwaj (cymbals and percussions), and mridangam (percussion)—seated cross-legged to the side of the stage. It's an intimate connection between dance and music, dancer and musician.

Shivalingappa's creative freedom allows her to draw on whatever influences she needs to express her concepts, but her work is neither a fusion nor a conscious blending of cultures and styles. Her goal seems to be to bring more and more people into the fold of Indian dance. She certainly does not claim to represent all aspects of what it means to be an Indian dancer or a Kuchipudi practitioner. Yet, overcoming stereotyping, this is an artist who is creating a dance vocabulary uniquely her own. In the process, she also implicitly challenges pre-conceived notions of what Indian dance is with her own artistry, grace, and beauty.