

Guru Smt. Akila Rao - Nattawangam



Guru Smt. Akila Rao is the founder and artistic director of Sri Vidya Dance School in Sunnyvale, CA. Trained in the Kalakshetra tradition, she began her Bharatanatyam journey at the age of 7 under Guru Pasumarthy Ramalinga Sastry and completed her arangetram by 16, performing across India in numerous ballets and competitions. She has since trained with renowned Gurus including The Dhananjayans, The Charis, and others, and also studied Carnatic music under Sri D. Seshachari of the Hyderabad Brothers. A senior manager at SLAC (Stanford Linear Accelerator Center), Akila balances a thriving professional career with an active presence in the Bay Area arts community. She has co-hosted the Margazhi and other global festivals under the Sri Vidya Dance School banner, promoting over 100 artists annually since 2017.

She has received various awards including the prestigious U.S. Presidential Award as a global ambassador for promoting fine arts. Her students have received various prestigious awards for cultural outreach through collaborations with the Sivapadam troupe. Akila continues to mentor and support many productions and emerging artists, including participation in the annual Cleveland Thyagaraja Aradhana Festival, her own multi-style production *Panchabhoota Linga Shiva* and her annual recitals for *Prajna*. Through Sri Vidya Dance School, she aims to instill a lifelong love for Indian culture and classical arts in each student.

Sishya Hasika Sridhar

Hasika's Bharatanatyam journey has flourished under the loving guidance of Guru Smt. Akila Rao, through whom she has refined her technique, expression, and abhinaya. She is also deeply grateful to Guru Smt. Vidhya Vijayakumar, who introduced her to Bharatanatyam at the age of four. Hasika has performed at numerous temples, cultural events, and competitions across the Bay Area and beyond, including two performances at the Cleveland Thyagaraja Aradhana, with a third upcoming. She has also performed internationally in Paris and participated in events such as Guruvaram, Maithry Utzav, and Papanasam Sivan. She is blessed to have attended workshops with renowned gurus including Smt. Leela Samson, and Sri. Mohanan, which has deepened her understanding of rhythm, and spirituality. A ninth grader at Monta Vista High School, Hasika is also a dedicated musician. A cellist in her school orchestra, she has performed at Disneyland, won awards, and looks forward to an upcoming orchestra tour to Europe. She plays piano and loves painting. She has represented the City of Cupertino as a cultural exchange ambassador to Japan. Hasika proudly dedicates her arangetram to her Guru, family, friends, and the rich tradition of Bharatanatyam.

Guru Smt. Snigdha Venkatramani



Guru Snigdha Venkataramani is an accomplished Carnatic vocalist and has undergone training under veteran vocalists Padmabhushan Guru Nookala Chinna Satyanarayana, Sh. K. Vageesh and Smt. K. Sudha, Smt. Sarada Subramanian and Guru Smt Radhakrishna. She is currently training under the internationally-acclaimed Carnatica Brothers- Sh. K.N. Shashikiran and Chitravina P. Ganesh. She has

released two music albums - "SAMARPANAM", of Carnatic music compositions and "NATYA MANJARI", which comprises a repertoire for Bharatanatyam dance. Snigdha is also an established Bharatanatyam dancer having trained under Padma Bhushan Dr. Saroja Vaidyanathan. A highly sought after vocalist for dance having performed with several senior Gurus and promising youngsters, Snigdha has composed music for several dance productions to critical acclaim. Snigdha was awarded "Smaran Kala spoorthi" for her years of contribution in multifarious ways to the Indian classical arts. Snigdha teaches Carnatic vocal and Bharatanatyam under her institution 'Laya Dhvani Academy of performing arts' and her students have won prizes in many prestigious regional and national competitions.

Guru Sri. Ravindra Bharathy Sridharan - Mridangam

Hailing from the well-known Embar family, Ravindra Bharathy Sridharan has been a performer for the last 43 years, having accompanied many leading musicians both in US and India, in both music and dance. He is one of the prime disciples of Vidwan Sri Neyveli Narayanan and founder/director of the percussion school Nadhopasana Academy of Fine Arts, where he nurtures the next generation of young talents. Ravi has been a recipient of awards such as the Sangeetha Seva Puraskar award by Kalalaya in 2017, the Prof. T.R. Subrahmanyam Award by the prestigious Cleveland Aradhana in 2023 for Best Teacher and from the Neelakanta Sivan Cultural Academy for his decades of service in propagating Carnatic music in the United States. He was awarded the title 'Kala Shiromani' from Kalaanjali Dance Company and Parampara Rakshak by VVS Foundation and Saa Maa Arts. Ravi enjoys bringing the music and dance communities together for various initiatives and many of them through his non-profit organization, Guruvaram Performing Arts.



Guru Sri. Vikram Ragukumar - Violin

Guru Vikram Ragukumar had his initial training under violinist Vidwan Guru H.V. Krishnamurthy at Vijaya College of Music, Bangalore. He later pursued intensive training under the able guidance of AIR A grade violinist Vidwan Guru Sri. B. Raghuram. Guru Vikram has performed extensively in India and the USA, as a solo violinist and as an accompanist for Classical music and dance performances. He is currently furthering his understanding of music by training under the guidance of Vidushi Guru Smt. Asha Ramesh. By day, he works as a software engineer in the Bay area.



Guru Sri. Ashwin Krishnakumar - Flute

Guru Ashwin Krishnakumar is an accomplished classical flute artist who trained under several legendary gurus – Guru Sri A V. Prakash and Guru Sri B. N. Suresh. He was recognized with a scholarship from the Central Govt. Of India (CCRT) to pursue advanced training in the art form. He has performed extensively as a soloist and is a sought-after accompanist for various music and dance performances. He is furthering his musical interests under the guidance of Guru Dr. T. S. Sathyavathi – a renowned musicologist and prime disciple of flute legend Guru Sr. R. K. Srikanthan. Ashwin also teaches his art form to students in the Bay Area.



इगो रोवेया वान्ट इतेठो

Bharatanatyam Arangetram of

KUM. HASIKA SRIDHAR

Saturday, February 28th 2026



Visual & Performing Arts Center, De Anza College,
21250 Stevens Creek Blvd, Cupertino, CA 95014



Pushpanjali

Pushpanjali symbolizes the offering of flowers to take the blessings of Gods in all the directions, the Guru and the Audience.

Ragam: Simhendramadhyamam | **Talam:** Adi

Composer: Sri. K. Hariprasad

Choreography: Sri. K. Mohanan

Abhang - Tandava Nritya Kari

The abhang (devotional poem) describes Lord Ganesha's joyful dance to the beats of the mridangam, witnessed by various gods and goddesses, including his parents, Shiva and Parvati.

Ragam: Darbari Kaanada | **Talam:** Adi

Composer: Sant Ramdas

Choreography: Smt. Leela Samson

Alaripu

Alaripu sets in motion the traditional Bharatanatyam margam, showcasing a pure dance movement that slowly increases in speed thus giving the effect of a blossoming flower.

Ragam: Nattai | **Talam:** Chathusra

Composition: Tanjore Quartet

Choreography: Smt. Rukmini Devi Arundale

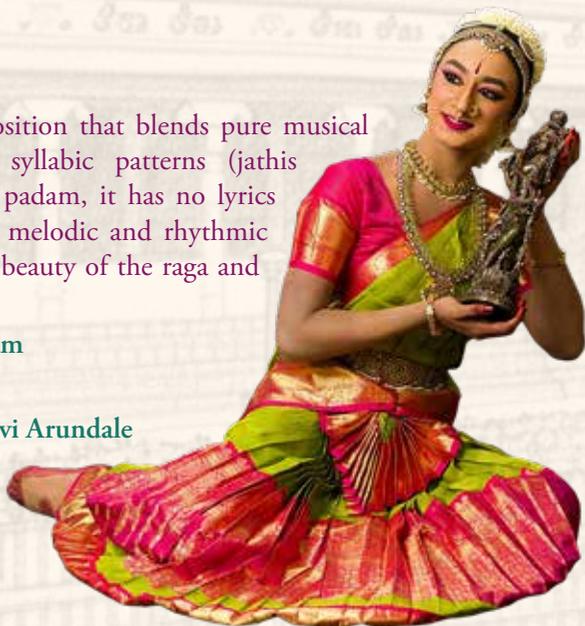
Jathiswaram

A jathiswaram is a dance composition that blends pure musical notes (swaras) with rhythmic syllabic patterns (jathis or adavus). Unlike a varnam or padam, it has no lyrics (sahityam) but relies entirely on melodic and rhythmic structure to express the aesthetic beauty of the raga and tala.

Ragam: Kalyani | **Talam:** Rupakam

Composition: Tanjore Quartet

Choreography: Smt. Rukmini Devi Arundale



Varnam - Angayar Kanni

Varnam is the centerpiece in Bharatanatyam margam. It holds a place of importance by balancing Nritta (pure dance/movement) and Abhinaya (expressive storytelling). This prominent navarasa ragamalika (a garland of ragas featuring nine emotions) varnam is a masterpiece in the Bharatanatyam repertoire. This pada varnam, is a tribute to Goddess Meenakshi (Angayarkanni, the one with "fish-shaped eyes") of Madurai. The lyrics describe the various divine plays (Thiruvilaiyadalgal) of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati, with each section of the composition unfolding a specific emotion (rasa) through a change in raga.

Ragam: Ragamalika | **Talam:** Adi | **Composer:** Sri. Lalgudi Jayaraman

Choreography: Smt. Akila Rao; jathis by Sri. Shankar Kandasamy



Keerthanam - Natamadum Nathan

Keerthanam is a key element of the Bharatanatyam margam which uses a beautiful lyrical base to express devotion. In this keerthanam, the lyrics convey a vivid picture of the scene in the "Kanaka Sabha" (golden hall of Chidambaram temple), how Goddess Shivagami (Parvati), the Ganges in Shiva's matted locks, the crescent moon, and the serpent all sway beautifully along with Shiva. The divine assembly witnessing the dance: Lord Balakrishnan sings, Lord Brahma keeps the talam (rhythm), Nandi plays the mridangam (drum), and Narayana (Vishnu) plays the yazh (a type of ancient string instrument).

Ragam: Purvikalyani | **Talam:** Khandha Chaapu

Composer: Sri. Gopalakrishna Bharatiyar | **Choreography:** Sri P. T. Narendran

Keerthanam - Bhogendra Shayeenam

The song is a beautiful ode to Lord Padmanabhaswamy (Lord Vishnu), the primary deity of the iconic Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple in Thiruvananthapuram, where the Maharaja resided. The lyrics describe the majestic form of Lord Vishnu, who

reclines on the serpent king, Adi Sesha (Ananta), in the Ksheera Sagara (milky ocean).

Ragam: Kunthalavaraali | **Talam:** Khandha Chaapu

Composer: Maharaja Swati Tirunal | **Choreography:** Smt. Akila Rao

Padam - Yaarukagilum Bhayama

Padam is a unique component of the Bharatanatyam margam which primarily focuses on abhinaya, the expressive portrayal of the protagonist. The lyrics depict an abhisarika nayika (a heroine who boldly goes to meet her lover, despite social norms). In the song, she speaks to her friend, asking, "Whom should I fear? Let people talk. What is there to hide?"

Ragam: Begada | **Talam:** Misra Chaapu

Composer: Sri. Subbarama Iyer | **Choreography:** Smt. Bragha Bissel

Kavadi Chindu - Azhagu Deivamaga Vandu

A popular Tamil devotional offering (Kavadi Chindu) praising Lord Murugan, as a beautiful, divine presence who blesses his devotees with joy and removes sorrows, asking for guidance and protection. This composition is in praise of presiding deity of Kazhukumalai near Tirunelveli.

Ragam: Senchurutti | **Talam:** Adi

Composer: Sri. Periasamy Thooran

Choreography: Smt. Akila Rao

Thillana

The final piece that ties the entire Bharatanatyam margam together is the Thillana which is rich in Nritta (Pure dance) woven together with korvai sequences (rhythmic patterns). This traditional and iconic thillana is in praise of Lord Nataraja of Chidambaram, the blissful, radiant and beautiful god praised by saints and husband of Shivagami, imploring him to bless and protect his devotees.

Ragam: Hamsanandi | **Talam:** Adi | **Composer:** Sri. Dandayudhapani Pillai

Choreography: Smt. Rukminidevi Arundale

Mangalam

This popular Mangalam is in praise of Lord Rama and portrays the various qualities of the Lord as he blesses his devotees and brings peace and prosperity to the entire world. This Mangalam has always been a part of the Sri Vidya School since its inception in 1975. An homage to the founder of the school, Late. Smt. Indira Rao.

Raagam: Kurinji | **Taalam:** Adi | **Composer:** Saint Bhadrachala Ramadasu

Choreography: Smt. Akila Rao

