

# PARIVAAR

A CELEBRATION OF  
COMMUNITY AS FAMILY

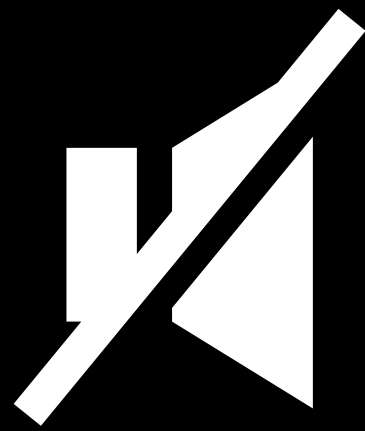
curated by  
**Shruthi Rajasekar**

**DIGITAL PROGRAM**  
of FILM ARTISTS

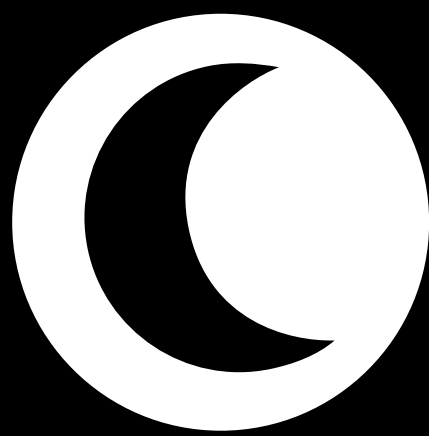
# Welcome!

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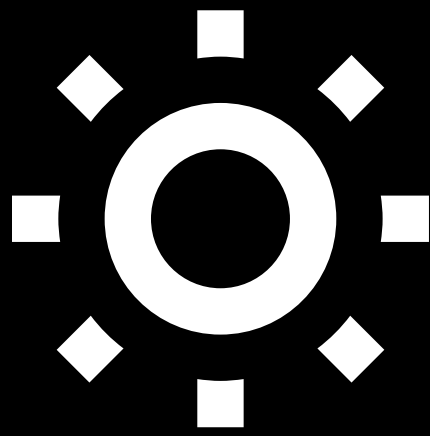
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*Content has been edited for consistency.  
In alphabetical order:*

**Aadithya Vasudevan and Achyuthan Balaji,  
students of Amrithavarshini Global Academy of Carnatic music**

Aadithya Vasudevan and Achyuthan Balaji are both students of Amrithavarshini Global Academy of Carnatic Music that is led by Gurus Dr. KN Renganatha Sharma and Dr. Mohana Sharma. There are about 18 students in the Twin Cities who learn from the two eminent teachers. Aadithya and Achyuthan are supported in Mridangam by Sreyas Bhattathiripad who is under the tutelage of Kalaimamani Murugaboopathi. [youtube.com/@AmrithavarshiniGlobalAcademy](https://www.youtube.com/@AmrithavarshiniGlobalAcademy)

**Ameera Sultana Khan**

Ameera Sultana Khan is a Bengali-American Muslim whose Islam is informed from a myriad of sources, including memorization of the Qur'an, Sunni, Sufi, progressive Muslim perspectives, anti-patriarchal, and liberation theology-oriented traditions. She joined the Muslim Youth Leadership Council to join empowered Muslims reclaiming their narratives across the country, and has held numerous workshops on reclaiming Queer Islamic History, Muslim Identity, and Shari'a Laws. With the purpose of education around these topics, she performs standup comedy. <https://www.facebook.com/bengalbrony>

**Ananya Dance Theatre,  
Founder & Artistic Director: Ananya Chatterjea**

Ananya Dance Theatre, an ensemble company of BIPOC women and femme professional dance artists, creates original contemporary dance theater at the intersection of artistic excellence and social justice. We work to dismantle hierarchies and build liberation, inspired by the lives and dreams of BIPOC women and femmes around the globe. Our company was named a Regional Cultural Treasure by the Ford Foundation and McKnight Foundation in 2021. We will celebrate our 20th season in 2025. <https://www.ananyadancetheatre.org/>

**Angika Dance Academy, founded by Guru Sujatha Akurati**

Angika Dance Academy is an institution dedicated to the training and performance of Bharatanatyam, a traditional Indian dance form. It was founded by Guru Sujatha Akurati.

<https://www.facebook.com/angikadance>

### **Aniccha Arts (2004) Artistic Director Pramila Vasudevan**

Pramila Vasudevan is a movement-centered artist, cultural worker, and maker of community-rooted/routed transdisciplinary work. Vasudevan is founder and artistic director of Aniccha Arts (est. 2004), an experimental arts collaborative producing site-specific performances that examine agency, voice, and group dynamics within community histories, institutions, and systems. She is the recipient of a Joyce Award (2022) United States Artists Fellowship (2022), Guggenheim Fellowship in Choreography (2017), a McKnight Foundation Fellowship in Choreography (2016) amongst other grants.

### **Anu Krishnan, Creative Director of Shruthilaya School of Carnatic Music**

Anu Krishnan is the creative director of her music school — Shruthilaya, based in the Twin Cities. Anu is an accomplished Carnatic vocalist who specializes in tutoring the next generation in pure South Indian classical and semi classical music. She has presented many Carnatic music programs throughout the Twin Cities area and abroad. She resides in Plymouth MN and enjoys composing, teaching and sharing her music and knowledge with the next generation.

<https://www.facebook.com/ShruthiLayaAtTwincities>

### **Dr. A. Pavan**

Pavan has been a regular figure in Twin Cities as a Tabla player and teacher for over 30 years. Trained by several maestros in multiple stylistic schools, he is known for his innovative teaching and creative endeavors with his wife, Pooja Goswami. His “50 Lessons for Tabla” on YouTube and “Aavartan” ensemble have received critical acclaim. He is a firm believer in the unifying force of music, to elevate beauty and love, above all else.

<https://www.youtube.com/@tabaliya>

### **Chitra Vairavan**

Chitra Vairavan is an artist, seeker, contemporary Indian dancer/choreographer and educator born and raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin (occupied Potawatomi, Ho-Chunk, Menominee land) and culturally-grown as an artist in Mni Sota Makoce (on occupied Dakota Oyate land) for twenty years. With ancestral roots in Kandanur and Rayavaram, South India, she is immersed in Tamil/Thamizh culture and progressive U.S. politics. Her practice is rooted in deep listening, spatial observation, poetry, vulnerability and ancestral memory.

[www.chitravairavan.com](http://www.chitravairavan.com)

## **GowriLakshmi Nagarajan Founder/Artistic Director of Nrithyaveda School of Dance**

Our Guru Gowrilakshmi Nagarajan is the founder and Artistic Director of NVSD. She started her bharathanatyam learning from Guru Prema Karunanidhi in Madurai, Advanced Nattuvangam Training under Dr Panruti Suresh, and Margam learning under Kalaimamani Madurai R Muralidharan. In 2004, she was honored with the prestigious “Yuva Kala Bharathi” award from Bharathi Yuva Kendra Madurai. She also participated in 50 Jathis challenge Guinness Book of Records, Asia Book of Records, and India Book of Records. [nrithyavedasd.wixsite.com/schoolofdance](http://nrithyavedasd.wixsite.com/schoolofdance)

## **Kala Vandanam - Founder and Director: Suchitra Sairam**

Kala Vandanam shares the beauty of Bharatanatyam and allied arts through education, outreach, performance and presentation. Embodying key qualities of the Kalakshetra style - precision and grace in technique, subtle expressional dance, and elegant aesthetics - it integrates the best of eastern and western sensibilities. Kala Vandanam fosters every artist blossoming in their own time, with core values of 1) practicing with humility and joy, 2) striving for excellence, and 3) constructive introspection for growth. [www.kalavandanam.com](http://www.kalavandanam.com)

## **Layyasaaram Institute of Indian Arts**

Layyasaaram Institute of Indian Arts, a public charitable organization, through our simple motto of Perform, Educate and Collaborate, we endeavor to promote initiatives to spread awareness and knowledge about Indian culture, music and arts across the continental United States. Layyasaaram organizes music and dance performances of local and visiting artists and musicians. Layyasaaram conducts training and outreach programs, lectures, demonstrations and workshops. Layyasaaram organizes concert tours and cultural exchange programs by recognized artistes. [www.layyasaaram.org](http://www.layyasaaram.org)

## **Madhu Bangalore, Director, SAATH**

Madhu is an actor, director, and improviser in Twin Cities. Madhu has directed and acted in shows with SAATH. He has also performed with Sheep Theater, Pangea World Theater, Exposed Brick Theater, Waterfront Productions, and several other production houses in the Twin Cities. He is the founding member of DesiProv – An all South Asian improv comedy group and performs improv with several other groups at Huge Improv Theater.

## **Marcus Wise**

Marcus is a top-tier tabla drummer, teacher, and ambassador of East Indian classical music. He has performed and recorded with artists including The Door's John Densmore, sitarist David Whetstone, guitarist Dean McGraw, R&B singer Alexander O'Neal, classical Indian musician Nirmala Rajasekar, jazz artist Anthony Cox, sarod player Bruce Hamm, and many more. For over 35 years Marcus has accompanied two of the world's great poets, Robert Bly and Coleman Barks, on national stages.

[youtube.com/watch?v=wVIACoJJx2I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wVIACoJJx2I)

## **Minnesota Friends Karaoke Inc. (MNFK), founded by Shankar Krishnan and Gnanapriya Shankar**

Christened by its founder, MNFK started its musical journey on the auspicious occasion of "Diwali" in 2008 since then growing in stature to get recognition and accreditation from the large Indian community living in the Twin Cities by hosting theater plays and cultural nights featuring artists visiting from India while also encouraging local talents to exhibit their performances as and when possible.

[minnesotafriendskaraoke.com](http://minnesotafriendskaraoke.com)

## **MN Devaganam Kids' Ensemble, Sishyas of Sadagopan Tirunaryanaswami Divyaprabandha Pathasala.**

Shri Sadagopan Tirunaryanaswami Divyaprabandha Pathasala (STD PATHASALA) is a not-for-profit organisation established in 1986 by Swami Sriramabharati for the propagation of 4000 Divya prabandham in a musical form known as devaganam as envisioned by swami Nathamunigal. This mission was set to motion under the guidance of Guru VV Sadagopan, a great Nadayogi himself. Swami Sriramabharati has set the entire 4000 to music and has performed the same as Araiyaar Sevai, an age-old temple art form. [songwhip.com/stdpathasala](http://songwhip.com/stdpathasala)

## **Naadha Rasa Center for Music, founded and directed by Nirmala Rajasekar**

27 years ago, Nirmala Rajasekar founded the Naadha Rasa Center for Music with the mission to build bridges and foster dialogue through music. At Naadha Rasa, students of all ages learn in order to deepen their love, appreciation, and understanding of music. Naadha Rasa members and ensembles perform locally, nationally and internationally, including leading the Veena Gaanam ensemble at the Cleveland Thyagaraja Aradhana. The nonprofit wing, Naadharasa, has been a catalyst in mobilizing community aid. [facebook.com/profile.php?id=100081752015662](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100081752015662)

## **Nirmala Rajasekar**

Vocalist, composer, performer, and educator Nirmala Rajasekar is one of today's leading Saraswathi veena players. A dynamic musician and passionate arts advocate, Nirmala has received several distinctions in her career, including her NAACP Image Award-winning collaboration with the Sounds of Blackness, the Bush Fellowship, the McKnight Fellowship, the Government of Tamil Nadu, India's Kalaimamani Award, and, most recently, the 2023 AP Anderson (Red Wing, MN, USA) and 2024 Laya Kalai Arasu Award (Tamil Nadu, India).

[www.nirmalarajasekar.com](http://www.nirmalarajasekar.com)

## **Om Nair Narendra**

Om is in Eden Prairie High School, and learns Carnatic Saxophone from Harish Pandav from Mysore, India.

## **Dr. Pooja Goswami Pavan**

Pooja, a McKnight Fellow for Music, is an award-winning Hindustani vocalist, composer, educator and scholar. Her silky yet strong voice, from decades of intensive training, can move in three octaves effortlessly, allowing her to sing a versatile repertoire consisting of Khayal/Tarana, Thumri/Dadra, Ghazal, Bhajan, Sufiana, and Hori/Kajri/Chaiti. A constant innovator and collaborator, she attempts to highlight the universal idea of love and beauty through music, transcending faiths, cultures and musical traditions. [youtube.com/@poojagoswami74](https://youtube.com/@poojagoswami74)

## **Ragamala Dance Company,**

**Aparna Ramaswamy, Executive Artistic Director,**

**Ranee Ramaswamy, Founder/Artistic Director**

Led by mother-daughters Ranee, Aparna, and Ashwini Ramaswamy (students of the legendary Padma Bhushan Alarmel Valli), Ragamala Dance Company is a leading Bharatanatyam company in the U.S. The company has been presented at the Kennedy Center (Washington, D.C.), Lincoln Center (New York), Northrop (Minneapolis), Cal Performances (Berkeley), NYU Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates), Bali Arts Festival (Indonesia), Sri Krishna Gana Sabha (Chennai, India), and National Centre for Performing Arts (Mumbai, India), among others.

[www.ragamaladance.org](http://www.ragamaladance.org)

## **Raga Surabhi Music School, Lakshmi Subramaniyan**

Lakshmi Subramaniyan is a trained Carnatic Vocalist. Lakshmi began her musical journey when she was five. She received her formal Carnatic music lesson from Padma Shri. Dr. Gayathri Sankaran - disciple of Padma

Bhushan Sangeetha Choodamani Lalgudi Jayaraman. Lakshmi is the creative director of Raga Surabhi Music school and has been training students in Vocal music.

### **Rita Mustaphi, Artistic Director of Katha Dance Theatre**

Rita Mustaphi is choreographer, dancer, educator & a disciple of the legendary maestro, late Pandit Birju Maharaj in Kathak style of Indian classical dance. She is Founder and Artistic Director of Katha Dance Theatre & School In Minnesota (est. 1987). She has performed nationally and internationally from Carnegie Hall, NY to Khajuraho Festival in India. With a career spanning 36+ years and receiving several awards, she still creates thought-provoking dances that move audiences emotionally, intellectually and musically. [www.kathadance.org](http://www.kathadance.org)

### **Ritika & Shinjan**

As cultural carriers of Bengali folk music, Ritika and Shinjan connect global story listeners with rich traditions of oral musical storytelling in South Asia. As a duo, they are known and loved for drawing the listener into familiar, future, and faraway worlds as they connect our everyday with 200 year-old songs and poems in Bangla. Along with their musical immersions, they share a love for single-origin, high elevation, long leaf tea.

[ritikaganguly.com/blog/ritika-and-shinjan-ongoing](http://ritikaganguly.com/blog/ritika-and-shinjan-ongoing)

### **Shakuntala Maheshwari, Artist and Owner of Shakuntala Design Inc.**

I create art that reflects my experiences without being bound to particular mediums; I am a photographer, graphic designer, henna artist, painter, and textile artist. In my artwork I aim to create pieces that are a mesh of my Indian heritage and my current life - of folk art and graphic design, traditional styles with modern materials, impermanent with permanent. I enjoy applying the designs and techniques of henna, rangoli, and batik in inventive ways. [www.shakuntaladesign.com](http://www.shakuntaladesign.com)

### **Nritya Kalakshetra Academy of Performing Arts**

Sivanuja Balaji, Founder and Artistic Director of Nritya Kalakshetra Academy of Performing Arts, is a disciple of Adyar K. Lakshman and Krishnaveni Lakshmanan of Kalakshetra Foundation (Chennai, India). She also learned under the guidance of Dr. Padma Subramaniam on karmas and Natyashastras. Recognized for her contributions, Sivanuja serves as coordinator for Griffin College, London in Minnesota and neighboring states, Guest Artist at Ordway and Community advisory panel, and on the Cowles Center's Program & Education Committee.

<https://www.facebook.com/Nrityakalakshetraacademy>



## **South Asian Arts & Theater House (SAATH)**

SAATH — South Asian Arts & Theater House is a 501c(3) nonprofit which promotes social harmony and cultural diversity through dance, performing arts and related South Asian traditions. SAATH brings together people irrespective of nationality, race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, etc. to form a vibrant, welcoming community dedicated to dance, diversity, and inclusion. Every year they highlight a sensitive social topic in their show while providing positive entertainment.

[www.saathmn.org](http://www.saathmn.org)

## **Stephen McCarty and Anthony Varghese**

Steve and Tony have been playing in groups in the Twin Cities for the last decade. Tony likes the Blues and Indian classical music. In high school, Steve played everything from classical music to show tunes. Being exposed to a variety of music since a young age and throughout his life was the catalyst for The Jazz Standards, seeking new ways to interpret music from the Great American Song Book.

<https://www.facebook.com/TJSMN>

## **Students of Srinivasan V: (Some of) His Mrudangam Parivaar**

Practicing the South Indian classical percussion art form (Mrudangam) for over 30 years, I want to share the beauty of the simple but stunning, complex yet colorful rhythmic elements of this 2000+ year art form to EVERYONE who is willing to step away from a cell phone for an hour daily and practice!! “Art is what makes us Human”; so, let’s all learn and practice one!

## **Taraangini School of Dance, Artistic Director: C.K. Amirthavalli**

C.K. Amirthavalli founded the “Taraangini School of Dance” in 2005, to teach and preach the legacy of Rukmini Devi Arundale (founder of Kalakshetra). The sole aim of the dance school is to maintain excellence and discipline in the approach towards arts, to groom young aspirants to perfection, guide the children to have a strong connection with their Indian roots and also to give back to the community through the same.

<https://www.taraanginidance.com>

## **Thanjavur K. Murugaboopathi**

Thanjavur K. Murugaboopathi is one of India’s leading percussionists. A brilliant artist who tours extensively, he has taught and groomed many mridangam players, including several Minnesotans. Thanjavur Murugaboopathi trained in the rare gurukulam method with his guru, Tanjore Upendran, for 10 years. Through his roles with the Global Carnatic

Musicians' Association and Narada Gana Sabha, Murugaboopathi supports the artist community at large. He received the Kalaimamani Award from the Government of Tamil Nadu, India.

[www.murugaboopathi.com](http://www.murugaboopathi.com)

### **Utkalaa Odissi Dance School,**

#### **Founded by: Deepanjali Kar**

Deepanjali is a disciple of PadmaShree Guru Gangadhar Pradhan from Odissa Dance Academy, Bhubaneswar. As a young artist, she has performed across India at various regional and national dance festivals including regional Door Darshan and Konark Dance Festival. In the US, she is passionate about spreading her love of Odissi dance through pedagogy and choreography on to the next generation.

### **Vedamaalya Viswanathan and Vedith Viswanathan**

Vedamaalya Viswanathan is an 8th grader at Wayzata Central Middle School. She started her Carnatic learning under Guru Kalaimamani Nirmala Rajasekar. Vedith Viswanathan is a 4th Grader at Wayzata Kimberly Lane Elementary school. Vedith started his Carnatic music learning under Ashwini Devi. Now, they are pursuing their Carnatic journey under Guru Dr. Bhavana Mohanasundaram. They are so thankful for this opportunity to be a part of this grand event. Thank you.

## **Footage Credits:**

Principal footage for *Parivaar* was filmed by Kylee and Christian Creative for the Schubert Club.

### *Additional credits from artist-submitted footage:*

**Ragamala Dance Company** - Videographers: Dancing Camera, The Joyce Theater and Caitlin Hammel

**Aniccha Arts** - Videographer: Sequoia Hauck

**Chitra Vairavan** - Videographer: Tamara Ober

**Ritika & Shinjan** - Videographer: Shinjan Sengupta

### **Dancers in the footage from Chitra Vairavan:**

Chitra Vairavan, Pramila Vasudevan, Gayatri Lakshmi Narayan, Valerie Oliveiro.

### **Performers in the footage from Ananya Dance Theatre:**

Mariadela Belle Alvarez, Noelle Awadallah, Lizzette Chapa, Ananya Chatterjea, Douglas R. Ewart, Kealoha Ferreira, Juliet Irving, Kavya Kaviraj, Douglas Kearney, Parisha Rajbhandari, Taylor West



**Schubert  
Club**