

Monday, September 26, 2022

## Ranee and Aparna Ramaswamy's Ragamala Dance Company announces 30th Anniversary Celebration and International 22/23 Season

Company: Ragamala Dance Company  
Venue: Various Locations  
Location: Minneapolis, MN

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Ranee and Aparna Ramaswamy's Ragamala Dance Company, now in its 30th year, announces their 22/23 Season, which features seven performances in Kerala, India, and culminates with a 30th Anniversary Gala Celebration in July 2023. For more information, visit [ragamaladance.org/upcoming](http://ragamaladance.org/upcoming).

Ragamala Dance Company is the vision of award-winning mother/daughter artists Ranee Ramaswamy and Aparna Ramaswamy. Over the last four decades, Ranee and Aparna's practice in the South Indian dance form of Bharatanatyam has created a unique trajectory for culturally rooted performing arts in the United States to create an exemplary company within the American dance landscape. Through both intimate solos and large-scale theatrical works for the stage, Ranee and Aparna empower the South Asian American experience. By engaging the dynamic tension between ancestral wisdom and creative freedom, they reveal the kindred relationship between ancient and contemporary that is urgently needed in today's world. [ragamaladance.org](http://ragamaladance.org)

"every gesture radiates joy or generosity or a sense of striving toward some higher form of being."

– The New York Times

"People say that immigrants have a longing within them... I have always felt this longing. I have a longing for this dance form. I have a longing for my teacher's expression of this dance form, about the truth it gives a person, about the joy we can show through it, about the musicality, and how deeply we can communicate with our audiences. This has always been true for me from a very young age."

[Ranee Ramaswamy] and I are very different personalities, yet we have a very similar work ethic and a shared love. We have a love for our form, for our teacher, for the creative work. We have a great amount of respect for one another. We have never had any sort of generational tension. It feels as if Ranee and I don't just exist in our current generations—rather, we come from a culture where our generational view is very long. We exist in that together; each of us adds a layer in a story that continues forever. We walk that path together. It's a beautiful thing." – Aparna Ramaswamy

Ragamala Dance Company was selected to participate in the first phase of The Wallace Foundation's new five-year arts initiative focused on arts organizations of color, created as part of the foundation's efforts to foster equitable improvements in the arts. Following an open call in 2021 that drew over 250 applicants, Ragamala Dance Company was selected as one of 18 nonprofit organizations representing a diverse range of artistic disciplines, geographic locations, and communities served. Alongside the other selected organizations, Ragamala Dance Company will receive five years of funding to develop and pursue a project to address a strategic challenge. Researchers will document each organization's work with the aim of developing useful insights about the relationship between community orientation, resilience, and relevance.

As part of a national cohort of 18 arts organizations of color—selected for high-quality work, deep community roots, and rich contributions to the field—Ragamala's project will focus on cultivating the next generation of South Asian American artists, arts curators, and arts leaders. With this work, Ragamala looks to continue to revolutionize the U.S. dance landscape by empowering South Asian artists and arts administrators, with the goal of decolonizing the structures that support artists in the U.S.

As part of this pivotal initiative, the foundation will also be embedding an ethnographer with Ragamala throughout the next season. Her work will document our legacy, to empower future generations of South Asian and BIPOC artists.

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

Avimukta

September 26 - October 1, 2022

Creative and technical residency at The Cowles Center for Dance & the Performing Arts

KERALA, INDIA

Fires of Varanasi, Soorya Festival

October 11 - 17, 2022

Rooted in the expansive South Indian dance form of Bharatanatyam, Ragamala Dance Company manifests a kindred relationship between the ancient and the contemporary. In their latest evening-length performance, Fires of Varanasi: Dance of the Eternal Pilgrim, eleven dancers conjure a realm where time is suspended and humans merge with the divine. Award-winning creators Ranee Ramaswamy and Aparna Ramaswamy imagine a metaphorical crossing place that enters into a ritualistic world of immortality, evoking the birth-death-rebirth continuum in Hindu thought to honor immigrant experiences of life and death in the diaspora.

#### MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

Solo by Aparna Ramaswamy, part of The Cowles Center's Fall Forward Festival.

November 19 - 20, 2022 at 7:30pm | Tickets: \$30 in-person, pay-as-you-are livestream

[thecowlescenter.org/2223/fall-festival](https://thecowlescenter.org/2223/fall-festival)

Acclaimed soloist and Co-Artistic Director of Ragamala Dance Company, Ramaswamy's newest solo further explores her unique layered aesthetic that brings together lineage, rigor, cultural wisdom, and imagination.

"[Ramaswamy] preserves ancient dance forms with stunning virtuosity and expressivity to create a living tradition that is resonant for modern times." – The Boston Globe

Ashwini Ramaswamy and Kevork Mourad: Invisible Cities, The Cowles Center - Great Northern Festival Northrop

January 27 - 28, 2023 at 7:30pm | Tickets: \$35 in-person, pay-as-you-are livestream

[thecowlescenter.org/2223/invisible-cities](https://thecowlescenter.org/2223/invisible-cities)

Ragamala's Choreographic Associate Ashwini Ramaswamy collaboratively reimagines Italo Calvino's metaphysical novel with a dynamic group of dance artists—Ranee and Aparna Ramaswamy (Bharatanatyam); Berit Ahlgren (Gaga), Alanna Morris (Modern), and Joseph 'MN Joe' Tran (Breaking), and visual artist Kevork Mourad, who creates Invisible Cities' interactive, immersive projections in real time.

#### ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

Mythology Makes Us, in partnership with The Coven

January - June 2023

An engagement series in partnership with The Coven, Mythology Makes Us brings history and mythology into the present day through talks, demonstrations, screenings, and community meals/gatherings. The Coven is a network of radical community and co-working spaces where changemakers connect, learn, and grow, and which centers the experiences of women, non-binary, and trans individuals.

#### SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

Fires of Varanasi, Meany Center for the Performing Arts

February 9 - 11, 2023 at 8pm | Tickets: \$48+

[meanycenter.org/tickets/2023-02/production/ragamala-dance-company](https://meanycenter.org/tickets/2023-02/production/ragamala-dance-company)

#### RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

Let the Crows Come, Modlin Center at the University of Richmond

with live music

March 1, 2023 at 7:30pm | Tickets: \$5 - \$35

Evoking mythography and ancestry, Let the Crows Come uses the metaphor of crows as messengers for the living and guides for the departed. Featuring Ramaswamy (Bharatanatyam), Alanna Morris (Modern/African Diasporic), and Berit Ahlgren (Gaga), Bharatanatyam dance is deconstructed and recontextualized to recall a memory that has a shared origin but is remembered differently from person to person. Composers Jace Clayton (dj/rupture) and Brent Arnold extrapolate from Prema Ramamurthy's classical Carnatic (South Indian) score, utilizing centuries-old compositional structures as the point of departure for their sonic explorations.

[tickets.modlin.richmond.edu/0/4985](https://tickets.modlin.richmond.edu/0/4985)

## HOUSTON, TEXAS

Fires of Varanasi, Performing Arts Houston

March 10, 2023 at 7:30pm | Tickets: \$29 - \$99

[performingartshouston.org/events/ragamala-dance-company-2023-03-10-730-pm](https://performingartshouston.org/events/ragamala-dance-company-2023-03-10-730-pm)

## PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

Fires of Varanasi, McCarter Theater Center

March 15, 2023 at 7:30pm | Tickets: \$35 - \$55

[mccarter.org/season/2022-2023/ragamala-dance-company-the-fires-of-varanasi](https://mccarter.org/season/2022-2023/ragamala-dance-company-the-fires-of-varanasi)

## CHICKASHA, OKLAHOMA

Let the Crows Come, University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma

March 23, 2023 at 7:30pm

Presented by the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma as part of the 22nd Season of the Davis-Waldorf Performing Arts Series

<https://usao.edu/arts-and-culture/dwpas/22-23-ashwini-ramaswamy.html>

## SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

Sacred Earth, Performance Santa Fe

with live music

April 2, 2023 at 4pm | Tickets: \$35-115

<https://secure.performancesantafe.org/8057>

Rooted in the expansive South Indian dance form of Bharatanatyam, Ragamala Dance Company manifests a kindred relationship between the ancient and the contemporary. Sacred Earth explores the interconnectedness between human emotions and the environment that shapes them. Performed with a stellar musical ensemble, the dancers create a sacred space to honor the divinity in the natural world and the sustenance we derive from it. Inspired by the philosophies behind the ephemeral arts of kolam and Warli painting, and the Tamil Sangam literature of India, Sacred Earth is Ranee and Aparna Ramaswamy's singular vision of the beautiful, fragile relationship between nature and man.

## SANTA MONICA, CALIFORNIA

Let the Crows Come, BroadStage

with live music

April 7 - 8, 2023 at 7:30pm | Tickets: \$40 - \$70

[broadstage.org/showinfo.php?id=454](https://broadstage.org/showinfo.php?id=454)

## ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

Performance by Padma Bhushan Smt. Alarmel Valli

May 2023

Choreographer Padma Bhushan Alarmel Valli is acclaimed internationally for her ability to turn traditional dance vocabulary into deeply personal poetry. Her dance is uncompromisingly classical but at the same time an undeniable language of self-expression. Alarmel Valli seamlessly weaves together threads of the sacred and the sensual, the human and the divine.

Alarmel Valli is guru to Ragamala Dance Company Artistic Directors Ranee and Aparna Ramaswamy since they met her in Minneapolis in 1984. Their training with this master artist formed the foundation of their aesthetic and has been fundamental to the work of the company.

Valli's performances have been presented at landmark opera houses and theaters worldwide. Highlights include the Bolshoi Theatre, the Vienna International Dance Festival, the Edinburgh Festival, the Avignon Festival, the Venice Biennale, and the Royal Albert Hall in London, among others.

## MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

### 30th Anniversary Gala Celebration

July 2023

Join Ragamala Dance Company to celebrate thirty years of award-winning dance and look forward to the next thirty in their hometown of Minneapolis.

### About The Wallace Foundation

The Wallace Foundation's mission is to foster equity and improvements in learning and enrichment for young people, and in the arts for everyone. Wallace works nationally, with a focus on the arts, K-12 education leadership and youth development. In all of its work, Wallace seeks to benefit both its direct grantees as well as the fields in which it works by developing and broadly sharing relevant, useful knowledge that can improve practice and policy. For more information, please visit the Foundation's Knowledge Center at [wallacefoundation.org](http://wallacefoundation.org).

### About Ragamala Dance Company

Ragamala Dance Company was founded in 1992 by Raneer Ramaswamy and is under the leadership of Artistic Directors Raneer Ramaswamy and Aparna Ramaswamy, and Choreographic Associate Ashwini Ramaswamy (mother and daughters). Rooted in the South Indian dance form of Bharatanatyam, the company has been hailed by The New York Times as "soulful, imaginative, and rhythmically contagious."

Ragamala Dance Company is a pioneering, intergenerational, family-run organization committed to the idea that while history is time bound, the stories we share are timeless. Ragamala's work in the performing arts field is expansive. Ragamala sets its gaze far beyond the stage to realize the kindred relationship between ancient and contemporary that is urgently needed in today's world. Ragamala engages in a collaborative practice with myriad artists and aesthetics and is rooted in the idea of Bharatanatyam as a dynamic living tradition. Raneer and Aparna's training under legendary artist Alarmél Valli is the bedrock of a creative ethos that springs from beauty, truth, and spirit.

Featuring Aparna Ramaswamy as Principal Dancer, Ragamala has been commissioned and presented extensively throughout the U.S., India, and abroad, highlighted by the Kennedy Center (Washington, D.C.), Joyce Theater (New York), Lincoln Center (New York), Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival (MA), Walker Art Center (Minneapolis), American Dance Festival (Durham, NC), The Soraya (Southern California), Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, International Festival of Arts & Ideas (New Haven, CT), Cal Performances (Berkeley), Arts Center at NYU Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates), Just Festival (Edinburgh, U.K.), Bali Arts Festival (Indonesia), Sri Krishna Gana Sabha (Chennai, India), and National Centre for Performing Arts (Mumbai, India), among others.

Raneer Ramaswamy serves on the National Council on the Arts, appointed by President Barack Obama. Among her recent awards and honors are a Guggenheim Fellowship, Doris Duke Performing Artist Award, Bogliasco Foundation Fellowship (Italy), Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center Research Fellowship (Italy), United States Artists Fellowship, and McKnight Distinguished Artist Award.

Aparna is a recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, Doris Duke Performing Artist Award, Bogliasco Foundation Fellowship (Italy), Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center Research Fellowship (Italy), Joyce Award, and Bush Fellowship for Choreography, among others, and has been selected as one of Dance Magazine's 25 to Watch for 2010.

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

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<https://www.ragamaladance.org/upcoming>

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Schedule  
September 26, 2022: 8:00pm

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