

Nrityagram Dance Ensemble

SURUPA SEN (Artistic Director, choreographer, soloist) was the first student to graduate from Nrityagram. She began her Odissi training with the architect of Odissi, Guru Kelucharan Mahapatra. She also learned Odissi with Guru Protima Gauri, Abhinaya (expressional dance) with Guru Kalanidhi Narayanan, and the Natyashastra under the supervision of Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam.

For over two decades, Surupa has researched and expanded the dance vocabulary of Odissi, and developed an aesthetic style that distinguishes the dancers from the Nrityagram Gurukula.

Attracted to choreography from childhood, Surupa has focussed on making new dances using an expanded Odissi language, rooted in traditional Odissi and the Natyashastra. She has a keen interest in music and rhythm composition and has worked closely with Pt. Raghunath Panigrahi since 1999.

Surupa has choreographed seven full-length ensemble shows for Nrityagram, which are *Śrī: In Search of the Goddess* (2001), *Ansh* (2005), *Sacred Space* (2005), *Pratimā: Reflection* (2008), *Śriyah* (2010), *Samhāra* (2012) and *Āhuti* (2019); two full-length duet shows *Samyoga* (2012) and *Songs of Love and Longing* (2013) and two full-length solo shows *Yadunandana* (2017) and *Vinati: Songs from the Gita Govinda* (2021). She has also created two virtual shows - *Vinati*, a solo for World Music Institute's Dancing the Gods Festival and *Upadāna: An offering* for the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival.

Surupa received the Raza Foundation Award in 2006, the Yagnaraman Award from Sri Krishna Gana Sabha, Chennai in 2008, the prestigious Nritya Choodamani from Sri Krishna Gana Sabha, Chennai in 2011 and the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award 2018 - the highest honour for the Performing Arts in India.

Surupa is Artistic Director and choreographer at Nrityagram.

PAVITHRA REDDY (dancer) lives at a neighbouring farm and started her Odissi training in Nrityagram's rural outreach programme in 1990. She was the first student to graduate from the rural outreach programme. She learned Odissi under the tutelage of Surupa Sen and has worked with dancers and movement specialists from across the globe.

Pavithra joined the Nrityagram Dance Ensemble 1993 and has performed solo and with the Ensemble at some of the most prestigious venues across India and the world.

In addition to being a full-time performer, Pavithra teaches in Nrityagram's residential and outreach programs and is the Director of Outreach Activities.

ANOUSHKA RAHMAN (dancer) initially learnt Odissi in Kolkata, where she also completed a post graduate degree in Odissi Dance. She joined Nrityagram 2018 and has studied under the tutelage of Surupa Sen. Anoushka has performed with Nrityagram since 2021.

ROHINI BANERJEE (dancer) is a senior disciple of Guru Sharmila Biswas, who trained her from the age of twelve. She has toured extensively in India and abroad as a part of her Guru's company and recently started her journey as a soloist. Rohini has danced with Nrityagram since 2021.

DAQUIL MIRIYALA (dancer) joined Nrityagram's Village Outreach Programme in 2010 and became a residential student in 2011, where she trained in dance while continuing her academic studies.

She has learned Odissi under the tutelage of Gurus Surupa Sen and Pavithra Reddy. In 2021 she was selected to be a part of the Nrityagram Dance Ensemble.

JATEEN SAHU (lead vocal, harmonium) learned Odissi singing under the tutelage of Guru Ramahari Das at The Music College, Odisha. He lives in Mumbai and has worked with Nrityagram since 2008. He is also a concert singer.

ROHAN DAHALE (mardala - percussion) began his training with Guru Kelucharan Mahapatra and has continued to learn from Guru Banamali Maharana for the past twelve years. He lives in Mumbai and accompanies Odissi dancers from the region. At present, he is percussionist at the dance village and travels and performs with the Ensemble.

PARSHURAM DAS (bamboo flute) is a disciple of Pt. Mohini Mohan Pattnaik. He graduated from the Music College, Odisha and in addition to freelancing as a music accompanist, he teaches at Utkal University of Culture, Bhubaneswar. He has been with the Nrityagram Dance Ensemble since 2002.

SIBA NAYAK (violin) has a postgraduate degree in Hindustani Violin from the Utkal University of Culture, Bhubaneswar. He freelances as a music accompanist and has worked with the Nrityagram Dance Ensemble since 2018.

LYNNE FERNANDEZ (lighting designer, technical director, Executive Producer)

has worked as an actress and light designer with many notable directors including Barry John, Joy Michael, Ranjit Kapoor, and Lillete Dubey, and was one of the first professional lighting designers in India. Her theatre work has been presented at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, in the West End and off-Broadway.

She came to Nrityagram in 1993 as Production and Technical consultant to the newly founded Ensemble. She stayed on as Technical Director and in 1997 was appointed Executive Director of the Nrityagram Village, School, and Ensemble.

As Executive Director, she is responsible for administration, fund-raising, and project development.

Her recent projects include Kula, a residence where arts practitioners can live and create new work. She is presently working on building a Performing Arts Centre comprising a theatre, an exhibition space and rehearsal studios. She has also overseen the emergence of the Ensemble on to the international arena.