

# Hopkins Center for the Arts

at Dartmouth

presents

Ranee Ramaswamy and Aparna Ramaswamy, Artistic Directors

## Ragamala Dance Company

*Fires of Varanasi: Dance of the Eternal Pilgrim*

**Fri, September 17, 7:30 pm**

**Sat, September 18, 2 & 7:30 pm**

The Moore Theater • Dartmouth College • 2021

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*The presentation of Fires of Varanasi: Dance of the Eternal Pilgrim was made possible by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.*

*This project is also supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Wetzel Family Fund for the Arts and the David E. Skinner II 1942 Fund.*



# Credits

**Creators/Directors/Choreographers:**

Ranee Ramaswamy and Aparna Ramaswamy

**Choreographic Assistant:**

Ashwini Ramaswamy

**Dramaturg:**

Ranee Ramaswamy

**Original Compositions:**

Prema Ramamurthy, Ranee Ramaswamy, S. Sakthivel Muruganantham, and Lalit Subramanian

**Development of Score:**

Ranee Ramaswamy and Aparna Ramaswamy, with the musical ensemble

**Choreography of Bho Shambho:**

(performed by Aparna Ramaswamy)

Padmabhushan Smt. Alarmél Valli

**Dancers:**

Aparna Ramaswamy, Ranee Ramaswamy, Ashwini Ramaswamy, Kasi Aysola, Chaitra Chandrashekhar, Jessica Fiala, Sri Guntipally, Ramya Kapadia, Tamara Nadel, Radhika Naidu, Alan Tse

**Musicians:**

Preethy Mahesh (vocal), Lalit Subramanian (vocal), C.K. Vasudevan (nattuvangam),

S. Sakthivel Muruganantham (mridangam), Ramanathan Kalaiarasan (violin), Sruthi Sagar (flute)

*Maulav Ganga* (performed by Ranee Ramaswamy) pre-recorded by Vidwan Sri T.M. Krishna (vocal), with K. Arun Prakash (mridangam), R.K. Shriram Kumar (violin), and Bhagyashri (tanpura), included by special permission from the artists

**Scenic and Lighting Design:**

Willy Cessa

**Costumes:**

D.S. Aiyellu, Ranee Ramaswamy, and Carole Bruns Couture

**Production Manager/Sound Engineer/Prop Construction:**

Maury Jensen

**Associate Lighting Designer/Technical Director:**

Mary Shabatura

**Set Construction:**

Joseph Stanley

**Sound Recording, Editing, and Mixing:**

Kalaiarasan Ramanathan, Baba Prasad, Michael DeMark

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Erik Madsen-Bond

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The Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center,

with support from Ranee Ramaswamy and Aparna Ramaswamy's Guggenheim Fellowships

**Creative Producer:**

Laura Colby, President, Elsie Management

**Special Thanks:**

This work is a reflection of the long training Ranee, Aparna, and Ashwini have had under our respected *guru* Smt. Alarmél Valli. As a *guru* par excellence, she has molded our technique, elevated our thinking, imparted clarity of aesthetic, and mined the depth of abhinaya. As she has said many times, a true *guru* is like a banyan tree and the students are its numerous roots that drop to form individual trees. We are humbled to take root to form our own plants, but always be a part of that magnificent tree. With deep respect and love to the one who has given us everything.

# Program Notes

Varanasi, India is a city where past, present, and future mingle within a single space—the sacred city is a portal between the ancient and the current. We have created *Fires of Varanasi: Dance of the Eternal Pilgrim* as a narrative nested within a narrative, nested within another narrative—the art forms, philosophies, and rituals borne from our Hindu ancestry which remain a source of hope, solace, and truth; the pilgrim who travels through time and space singing and dancing the name of the Sacred; and finally, the powerful voices of those who journey from one home to another.

We began envisioning this project after the death of our father/grandfather away from his homeland of India. A devout Hindu, his desire was for his ashes to be scattered in the Ganges River in Varanasi just as our ancestors before him.

For millennia, Varanasi has symbolized the crossing place between this world and the ‘far shore.’ Cremation fires burn night and day, and one is surrounded by rituals of death, both beautiful and apocalyptic. Ours is a religious tradition that contemplates life and death as an integrated whole. Upon death, the funereal fires dissolve the five elements of the physical body in order to take these elements to a new body.

Our dance tradition of Bharatanatyam provides a rich and expansive lexicon that serves as our wellspring. With a history that goes back over two millennia, the form grows within and with each practitioner. Through this language, we celebrate body and spirit and the joyous and healing quest for physical and spiritual transcendence.

The creation process of *Fires of Varanasi* began well before the pandemic, yet the themes of mortality and resilience became even more salient, and the sharing of stories and honoring of ancestors even more urgent. We are incredibly grateful to our commissioners and funders who made this work possible. We could not have created this work without the commitment of our dancers, musical and technical collaborators, and staff, who spent hundreds of hours with us and each other over Zoom and WhatsApp.

Finally, we dedicate *Fires of Varanasi: Dance of the Eternal Pilgrim* to the memory of our dear friend, Patricia Barretto, who lost her battle with cancer in March, 2020. Patricia was a visionary and a force, and we miss her greatly. Thank you, Patricia, for blessing this work with your light.

Aparna Ramaswamy and Ranee Ramaswamy

# Program

## **Fires of Varanasi: Dance of the Eternal Pilgrim**

The Sacred pilgrimage routes, The Ganges River and the patron deity Shiva together form the cosmic trinity of Varanasi, each providing a *tirtha*—or metaphorical crossing place—where one may leave the mundane and enter into the world of immortality. We unfold this work as a sacred pilgrimage, which seeks the mystical connection between the divine and the human, where ultimately the physical journey transforms into a psychic one.

### **SCENE ONE *Darshanam, To See and Be Seen***

#### ***Agni***

The fire god, Agni, is the intermediary between Gods and humans, and a witness of our actions. The blessings of Agni are sought on all solemn occasions, including birth, marriage and death. He is conceptualized in ancient Hindu texts to exist at three levels—on earth as fire, in the atmosphere as lightning, and in the sky as the sun.

The banks of the Ganges River become the alter to worship the sun every morning, bringing light and life, an end to the actual and metaphoric darkness.

#### ***Sankalpam, Conviction to the Deity of Cosmic Balance***

As the veil of darkness lifts, we prepare to glimpse Shiva, the reigning deity of Varanasi.

### **SCENE TWO *Liquid Shakti***

#### ***The Power of the Ganges River***

The Ganges River—mythologized as falling from heaven to earth—is a manifestation of Shakti, the female life-energy of Shiva. Bathing in the Ganges River is an essential daily act of the pilgrim in Varanasi, invoking the water as a giver of life, immortality and healing.

#### **The Myth of the Rivers**

The Ganges is believed to feed thousands of rivers and water bodies, forever making the gods present and humans linked.

In His incarnation as Vamana, Vishnu transformed into Trivikrama, lifting His left foot and, with His big toe, tearing the sheath of the universe and releasing Ganga from the heavens. Shiva calmed Her ferocious waters in His hair, releasing Her in small streams.

As Vishnu's incarnation of Krishna, He saved the Yamuna River. The water of the Yamuna seethed with the poison of the snake-demon Kaliya. Nothing grew on the river bank; no bird or beast was spared. To save the river and the people, Krishna leapt onto Kaliya's head, assuming the weight of the whole universe, dancing the snake into submission.

#### ***Ganga as Mother Goddess***

Goddess Ganga is the liquid essence of life, the celestial river cascading from heaven to nourish humanity.

Goddess Ganga is worshipped through an immersive engagement with the river. The repetitive pouring of water by devotees recognizes the life-giving force of the water, the ability to wash away troubles, and the acceptance of old age and death. The devotee ultimately seeks the embrace of Mother Ganga to cross over into a place of joy after death.

# **Program continued**

## **SCENE THREE *The Purification of the Living and the Salvation of the Dead***

### ***Weaving Eternity***

“An extraordinary weaver has woven this shawl of life, by stretching the vertical threads of one’s actions and the horizontal threads of destiny. This human body is a combination of past actions and destiny.”

—15th c. Sufi poet Kabir Das of Varanasi

### ***The Eternal Pilgrim***

In her longing for Shiva, the 5<sup>th</sup> century Bhakti poet Karaikal Ammayar yearned to shed her body—flesh, skin, and gender—to emphasize the true essence of her humanity.

I aspired to only one thing;  
I settled on it and left the rest  
I kept in my heart only that lord  
whose crest bears the Ganga  
whose matted locks  
are adorned with the sun and moon  
whose palm holds the flames—  
and I have become his servant.

At twilight,  
flawlessly in time to the rhythm  
of heavenly drums  
effortlessly bearing fire in his palm  
the beautiful one dances.

### ***The City of Shiva***

The cosmic dance of Shiva symbolizes the interplay of dynamic and static divine energy flow, containing the five principles of eternal energy—creation, preservation, destruction, illusion, and emancipation.

The ecstatic pilgrimage journey begins and ends at the Kasi Vishweshvara temple—the center of Varanasi, a city where people surrender their earthly bodies to death and receive spiritual bodies like Shiva himself.

For additional information, please visit Ragamala’s website to access Fires of Varanasi: An Illustrated Guide, developed by Ranee Ramaswamy:  
[ragamaladance.org/fires-of-varanasi-links](http://ragamaladance.org/fires-of-varanasi-links)

# About the Artists

**“Ragamala shows how Indian forms can be some of the most transcendent experiences that dance has to offer.”** *The New York Times*

Driven by the artistic vision of mother-daughters Ranee Ramaswamy, Aparna Ramaswamy (Artistic Directors) and Ashwini Ramaswamy (Choreographic Associate), **Ragamala Dance Company** is committed to the idea that while history is time bound, the stories we share are timeless. Rooted in the South Indian dance form of Bharatanatyam, Ragamala’s work is expansive—extending beyond the stage to embody their immigrant experiences and show a kindred relationship between ancient and contemporary within today’s world.

Ragamala has toured 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), 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.

For upcoming tour dates or to subscribe to Ragamala’s e-newsletter, please visit, [www.ragamaladance.org](http://www.ragamaladance.org) Or contact us at, [info@ragamaladance.org](mailto:info@ragamaladance.org)

612-824-1968

Facebook: @ragamala • Instagram: @ragamala\_dance  
YouTube: [youtube.com/c/RagamalaDanceCompany](https://youtube.com/c/RagamalaDanceCompany)

For booking information, please contact,  
Laura Colby, Director, Elsie Management  
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**Ranee Ramaswamy and Aparna Ramaswamy (Artistic Directors/Creators/Choreographers)**  
**Principal Dancers**) explore the dynamic tension between the ancestral and the contemporary, highlighting the fluidity between the secular and the spiritual, the inner and the outer, the human and the natural. Working in an intergenerational partnership

between mother and daughter, their creative vision merges the rich traditions and deep philosophical roots of their Indian heritage with their hybridic perspective as first generation Indian-Americans. As protégés and senior disciples of legendary dancer/choreographer Padma Bhushan Smt. Alarmél Valli, known as one of India’s greatest living masters, Ranee and Aparna’s training in the South Indian classical dance form of Bharatanatyam is the bedrock of their creative aesthetic.

Among their recent awards and honors are a Bogliasco Foundation Fellowship (Italy), Guggenheim Fellowships, and a Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center Research Fellowship (Italy). Their choreographic work has been commissioned by the Kennedy Center (Washington, D.C.), Lincoln Center (New York), American Dance Festival (Durham, NC), Walker Art Center (Minneapolis), International Festival of Arts & Ideas (New Haven, CT), and the Arts Center at NYU Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates), among others, and supporters of their work include the National Endowment for the Arts, National Dance Project, MAP Fund, and Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. They have developed work in residence at MANCC (the Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography), the Arts Center at NYU Abu Dhabi, the Hopkins Center at Dartmouth, Northrop (Minneapolis), and during an NPN residency at The Yard.

Ranee currently serves on the National Council on the Arts, appointed by President Barack Obama. She is a recipient of a Doris Duke Performing Artist Award, a United States Artists Fellowship, a McKnight Distinguished Artist Award, a Bush Fellowship for Choreography, and 15 McKnight Artist Fellowships for Choreography and Interdisciplinary Art, among others. [www.raneeramaswamy.com](http://www.raneeramaswamy.com)

Aparna is a recipient of a Doris Duke Performing Artist Award, a Joyce Award, a Bush Fellowship for Choreography, and four McKnight Artist Fellowships, among others. Described by *The New York Times* as “thrillingly three-dimensional... rapturous and profound,” she has been selected as one of *Dance Magazine*’s 25 to Watch and is an empaneled artist with the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR). Her projects include solo, evening-length

## About the Artists *continued*

works which have toured widely, nationally and internationally, and commissions from the American Dance Festival and the Silk Road Ensemble, among others. ([www.aparnaramaswamy.net](http://www.aparnaramaswamy.net))

**Ashwini Ramaswamy (Choreographic Associate/Dancer)** has spent over 25 years studying Bharatanatyam from her gurus - her mother Ranees Ramaswamy, sister Aparna Ramaswamy, and the legendary Smt. Alarmel Valli of Chennai, India. *The New York Times* describes Ashwini as “weaving together, both fearfully and joyfully, the human and the divine...there is a continual flow of energy coursing through her limbs.” As a founding member of Ragamala, she has toured extensively, performing throughout the U.S. and in Russia, Taiwan, Indonesia, Japan, the U.K., and India. Ashwini has received commissions from the SPCO’s Liquid Music Series, American Dance Platform, and Great Northern Festival, residencies at the Baryshnikov Arts Center (NYC), UNC Chapel Hill (North Carolina), and National Center for Choreography (Akron, OH), and support from the National Dance Project, MAP Fund, USArtists International, Minnesota State Arts Board, Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, South Asian Arts Resiliency Fund, a Jerome Hill Artist Fellowship, and McKnight Foundation Artist Fellowships for Dance and Choreography. Her choreography has been listed among the ‘Best of the Year’ in the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, *Minnpost*, and *Big Dance Town*. As a 2019 *City Pages* ‘Artist of the Year’, Ashwini’s work was highlighted for ‘illuminating Bharatanatyam’s future.’ Her current work, *Let the Crows Come*, will begin touring nationally in the fall of 2021. [www.ashwiniramaswamy.com](http://www.ashwiniramaswamy.com)

**SMT. Prema Ramamurthy (Composer)** has been an outstanding vocalist and composer for more than four decades. She received intensive training under the great Maestro ‘Padmavibhushan’ Dr. Mangalampalli Balamurali Krishna, specialized in the art of ‘Pallavi singing’ from Vidwan Sri T. V. Gopalakrishnan, and learned the art of singing ‘Padams & Javalis’ from the veteran musician, Mrs. T. Muktha. An A-TOP Grade Artist of All India Radio and Doordarshan TV, she has won critical acclaim as a composer, and has performed in many of the top venues and festivals of India, the U.S., Europe, Asia, the Middle East, Australia, Mexico, and South Africa.

**Willy Cessa (Scenic and Lighting Design)** has worked as a director, light director, and light designer since 2001. In 2007, he met Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui in Paris for the project *La Zon-Mai* at the Cité Nationale de l’Histoire de l’Immigration. Since that time, they have collaborated on 13 projects for Cherkaoui’s Antwerp-based company Eastman. Additionally, he has worked with multiple renowned artists and institutions, including Yabin Wang, Aakash Odedra, Herman Diephuis, Esther Aumatell, Fanny de Chaillé, Damian Jalet, Le Centre Dramatique Régional des Pays de la Loire, Cie Les Aphoristes, Cie KLP, Danse l’Afrique Danse!, and Franck II Louise.

**Kasi Aysola (Dancer)** is a dancer, choreographer, and *nattuvangam* artist who trained under Guru Viji Prakash and Mythili Prakash in Bharatanatyam and under the late Guru Vempati Ravi Shankar and Yamini Saripalli in Kuchipudi. He is the Co-Founder & Artistic Director of Prakriti Dance, an innovative dance company that creates sensitive work reflecting today’s world. Kasi is pursuing Indian performing traditions with the intention to inspire new generations of dancers to delve into the enriching world of Indian performing arts. For him, dance is a lifelong journey of exploration and discovery.

**Chaitra Chandrashekhar (Dancer)** is a disciple of Guru Dr. Mala Shashikanth and Guru Vid. Asha Ravindra, and has practiced and honed the art form of Bharatanatyam for over two decades, performing at prestigious cultural events and competitions from a young age. She completed major levels of examinations conducted by KSEEB (Educational Board of Karnataka) in India and attained pre-*vidushi* honorary title. She is currently an Apprentice with Ragamala, learning under Ranees Ramaswamy and Aparna Ramaswamy since 2020.

**Jessica Fiala (Dancer)** began training with Ranees and Aparna Ramaswamy in 2006 and has performed with Ragamala throughout the US and in India, the UK, and the UAE. She holds an interdisciplinary master’s degree in museum studies and cultural studies from the University of Minnesota, with research published in the anthology *The Ruined Archive* and the journals *Diálogos com a arte* and the *Journal of Somaesthetics*. Jessica is also a research associate at the consulting firm 8 Bridges Workshop.

## About the Artists *continued*

**Sri Guntipally (Dancer)** has been learning Bharatanatyam under Ranee Ramaswamy and Aparna Ramaswamy since 2018. She is an Apprentice with Ragamala and has performed with the company at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts. Sri graduated high school in 2021 as valedictorian at Eagle Ridge Academy, a U.S. Presidential Scholar Candidate, and National Merit Scholar. She is attending the University of Minnesota to study Human Physiology, and aspires to be a dancing doctor.

**Ramya S. Kapadia (Dancer)** is a Knoxville-based Bharatanatyam dancer/choreographer and a Carnatic vocalist. Ramya has toured around the world to present solo and ensemble works and is a much sought-after vocalist and composer for Bharatanatyam dancers. She has received the Emerging Artist award, Choreography Fellowship and Individual Artist awards from the Durham Arts Council and the NC Arts Council and is a teaching artist with United Arts the Durham Arts Council.

**Tamara Nadel (Dancer)** is a disciple of Ranee Ramaswamy and Aparna Ramaswamy and a founding member of Ragamala, performing throughout the U.S., India, and abroad. She has received grants and fellowships from the McKnight Foundation, Jerome Foundation, and Minnesota State Arts Board, among others. In 2017, she premiered a solo created for her by Ranee Ramaswamy, illuminating the synergies between Hindu and Jewish mystical traditions. Tamara is Ragamala's Director of Institutional Development and a board member of Minnesota Citizens for the Arts.

**Radhika Naidu (Dancer)** joined Ragamala in October 2019 as a participant in the development of *Fires of Varanasi*. As an immigrant to the U.S. in her teens, and having visited Varanasi, she was particularly drawn to and inspired by Ranee and Aparna's portrayal of the theme of this project through Bharatanatyam. In her spare time, Radhika is a practicing pediatrician.

**Alan Tse (Dancer)** is a creative soul expressing his artistic skills through design, dance, and yoga. Born and raised in Hong Kong, Alan moved to the Twin Cities 2 decades ago. He has danced with Sole to Soul Dance Conversion, Ballet of the Dolls, MotionArts, and has performed in works by Myron Johnson, Jim Liberthal,

Pam Gleason, Taja Will, and more. Alan is currently a company member of Continental Ballet Company, and is very excited to be performing with Ragamala Dance company for the first time since *Sethu*, almost 20 years ago. Alan holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Graphic Design and is currently an art director for Neka Creative, serving clients both nationally and internationally. He also finds his balance through his daily practice of yoga and is a certified yoga instructor.

**Preethy Mahesh (Vocal)** is a Carnatic musician who has been accompanying eminent dancers since 2002. She owes her art to her respected *gurus* Sri DK Jayaraman and Sri S Kalyanaraman. A graded artist of All India Radio she has performed extensively as a soloist and has recorded multiple commercially-available albums of dance music. She has performed in some of the world's best theatres with accomplished artists such as Priyadarsini Govind, Shobana, Padmabhushan Alarmél Valli, Revati Ramachandran, Parvati Ghantasala, The Dhananjayans, and Ragamala. In recognition of her contribution to the art, has been honored her with the titles Gana Kokilam, Sangeetagna, and Nritya Sangeeta Varshini.

**Lalit Subramanian (Composer/Vocal)** is a vocalist proficient in both the South Indian (Carnatic) and North Indian (Hindustani) styles of Indian classical music. He is the disciple of renowned Carnatic musicians Tiruvarur Sri S. Girish and Neyveli Sri R. Santhanagopalan, and renowned Hindustani musician Pandit Shekhar Kumbhojkar. Lalit has won multiple awards and performs at various venues in the U.S. and India, both as a solo vocalist and as an accompanist for dance performances. He also plays the *mridangam* and the *tabla* and has trained under *tabla* artist Pandit Anand Godse. He has been a junior artiste at All India Radio as a Hindustani vocalist, and holds a graduate degree in Carnatic music from India. Lalit has been working with Ragamala Dance Company since 2008.

**C.K. Vasudevan (Nattuvangam)** is student of renowned Carnatic percussion maestro, Sangeetha Kalanidhi Dr. Umayalpuram Sivaraman, and has been trained by Padma Bhushan Smt. Alarmél Valli in the art of *nattuvangam*. Mr. Vasudevan has provided vocal support to several renowned dancers at the major festivals and theatres of India, and in Europe, the U.S., Canada, Japan, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East.

## About the Artists *continued*

He has a diploma in *mridangam* from the Tamil Nadu Government Music College, and is a recipient of multiple honors, including the Vaadhy Kalaimani, Laya Kala Sironmani, and Rukmani Thala Samuthiram awards and the title Laya Vidyadara.

**S. Sakthivel Muruganantham (*Mridangam*)** has been a preeminent performer on the *mridangam*, specializing in the accompaniment of classical dance, for 34 years. He learned by traditional Gurukulavasam under the great Guru Shri Mayavaram G. Somasundaram Pillai and later under Guru Shri Bakthavatchalam, and Guru Shri M. Balachander. Mr. Sakthivel has accompanied preeminent dancers at leading festivals and theaters in India and worldwide, including Dr. Vyayanthimala Bali, Padmabhushan Alarmél Valli, Shri Leela Samson, and Priyadarshini Govind, and great gurus such as Shri K.J. Sarasa, Shri Udupi Lakshmi Narayan, and Shri Narasimhachari. His titles include Laya Vidhyadhara from Smt. Alarmel Valli's Deepashika, Natya Sangeetha Kala Bharathi from Bharath Kalachar, Laya Kala Vipanchee from Vipanchee Trust, Laya Kala Ratna, Laya Sironmani, and Mridanga Mamani.

**Ramanathan Kalaiarasan (Violin)** is the son of distinguished Mirudanga Vidwan Sangeetha Bhusanam Professor Thiru A.S. Ramanathan. A disciple of Smt. Dhanadevi Mithradeve, he graduated with honors from Annamalai University, Chidambaram, India, with the

title of 'Sangeetha Bhushanam.' He has over 25 years' experience accompanying leading dancers in India and abroad, and recording music and dance DVDs for E-Parampara Infotainment and Swathi Soft Solutions. He is a permanent staff member/performer with Padmabhushan Sri. V.P.Dhananjyan and Smt Shantha Dhananjyan's Bharatha Kalanjali. His honors include Best Violin Artist for Dance from Sri Krishna Gana Sabha, Best Accompanying Artist for Dance from VDS Arts Academy, and the Sudharani Raghupathy Endowment Award for senior musician from Natyarangam—the dance wing of Narada Gana Sabha, Chennai.

**Sruthi Sagar (Flute)** has earned a place for himself in the field of Carnatic Music. A disciple of Kalaimamani Dr. Sunder for more than fifteen years, he had his initial training on the Flute from Shri B. V. Balasai and his father Shri Sudarsana Rao. Sruthi Sagar has performed at prestigious venues and festivals throughout India and is a recipient of the Air India Radio first prize and other coveted awards such as Kuzhal Isai Chelvan, Yuva Kala Bharathi, and Yuva Kala Vipanchee. Since 2005, Sruthi Sagar has been a Central Government scholarship awardee, and recipient of a Young Achiever's Scholarship conferred by the Government of India. He has performed at the Olympic Games in London as part of the STACCATO Band.

The creation and touring of *Fires of Varanasi* has been made possible in part through grants from the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; the National Endowment for the Arts; and The Dr. Dash Foundation, whose mission is to preserve and promote rich Indian heritage and culture. Additional support for the creation comes from the Marbrook Foundation; the MAP Fund, supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; New Music USA, made possible by annual program support and/or endowment gifts from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust, Baisley Powell Elebash Fund, & The Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation; the Fredrikson & Byron Foundation; the APAP Cultural Exchange Fund; American Dance Abroad; Ranee and Aparna Ramaswamy's 2018 Guggenheim Fellowships; Ranee and Aparna Ramaswamy's 2020 McKnight Fellowship; a residential fellowship at the Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Center in Italy; and a residency at the Bogliasco Foundation in Genoa, Italy.

Additional support for Ragamala's work comes from The McKnight Foundation; The Goodale Family Foundation; Target; RBC Wealth Management; the voters of Minnesota through a Minnesota State Arts Board Operating Support grant, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund; and Friends of Ragamala.

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