

Anjani's Kathak Dance of India to perform Jan. 24 at UCSD

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ANJANI'S KATHAK DANCE OF INDIA TO PERFORM JAN. 24 AT UCSD

Anjani's Kathak Dance of India bringing to life a 4,000-year-old classical Indian dance will perform at 8 p.m. Jan. 24 in Mandeville Auditorium at the University of California, San Diego. The performance is sponsored by the UCSD University Events Office.

Wearing colorful, authentic costumes and adorned with 108 bells on each ankle, the dancers execute the moves of Kathak dance with bristling energy, elaborate footwork and distinctive style.

"There was so much to hear and see," wrote the Los Angeles Times of a performance, "the quick, dense slaps of bare-footed dancers whose torsos remained elegantly still as they shifted slightly from side-to-side, the bright jangling of so many tiny bells circling their ankles, and the pop-pop thrumming of the tabla."

Dancer and choreographer Anjani Ambegaokar is artistic director of the company and director of a Kathak dance school in Los Angeles. She received her master's degree in Kathak dance from M.S. University of Baroda, India, and trained in Kathak dance with one of the masters of the dance, Pandit Sundarlaljee Gangani. She has performed in Europe, the Middle East, Canada and the United States, as well as India, and is the only Kathak dancer to receive National Endowment for the Arts choreographer fellowships.

"Choreography in Kathak dance is an expression of various movements and emotions to me," says Anjani. "It has taught me patience, endurance, understanding, compromise and acceptance of various situations. As a teacher, I have become more aware and conscious of my own dance form."

Among Anjani's students is her daughter, Amrapali Ambegaokar, now a dancer with the Kathak dance company who trained with Anjani for 12 years and also briefly with Pandit Sundarlaljee Gangani. She toured India twice with Anjani.

"The storm-creating 'due' of Anjani and her daughter Amrapali brought... live 'lightening' on the stage with dazzling artistry, power and rhythm that could never be erased from the memory of this cultural capital," wrote the Indian Express.

In addition to the Kathak dancers, the touring troupe includes tabla player Ramesh Kumar, vocalist Mala Ganguly who also plays harmonium, and Indian bamboo flute player David Phillipson. Anjani's choreography features both traditional and contemporary themes in which the dancers create a harmony of motion and interplay with the instruments.

Anjani's choreography also incorporates Kathak dance with mathematics to elaborate the rhythmic intricacies of the dance, but as the Los Angeles Times notes: "Although Kathak performers are fond of trying to explain the

dance's Byzantine numerical formulae, sometimes as with rapid fire footwork of tap or flamenco, it's better just to sit back and be amazed."

The troupe has toured from New York to Hawaii and from Florida to Alaska. In Anchorage, the Daily News wrote that Anjani's "warp-speed footwork" was "full of slaps, and stamps" and "created a cascade of sounds accented by the hundreds of bells."

The India Journal summarizes: "Graceful walks and still poses, rhythmic movements and fast spins, graceful gestures and intricate footwork, these are just words to explain Kathak, the north Indian dance form. One needs to be in the audience to experience the effects of this very colorful performance."

Tickets for Anjani's Kathak Dance of India are \$16 general admission, \$14 for faculty, staff and senior citizens, and \$12 for students. Tickets are available at the UCSD Box Office, 534-8497, and at Ticketmaster outlets. For further information, call the UCSD University Events Office at 534-4090.

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