

2017-18
UMS LEARNING GUIDE

Written in Water Ragamala Dance Company

2017—18



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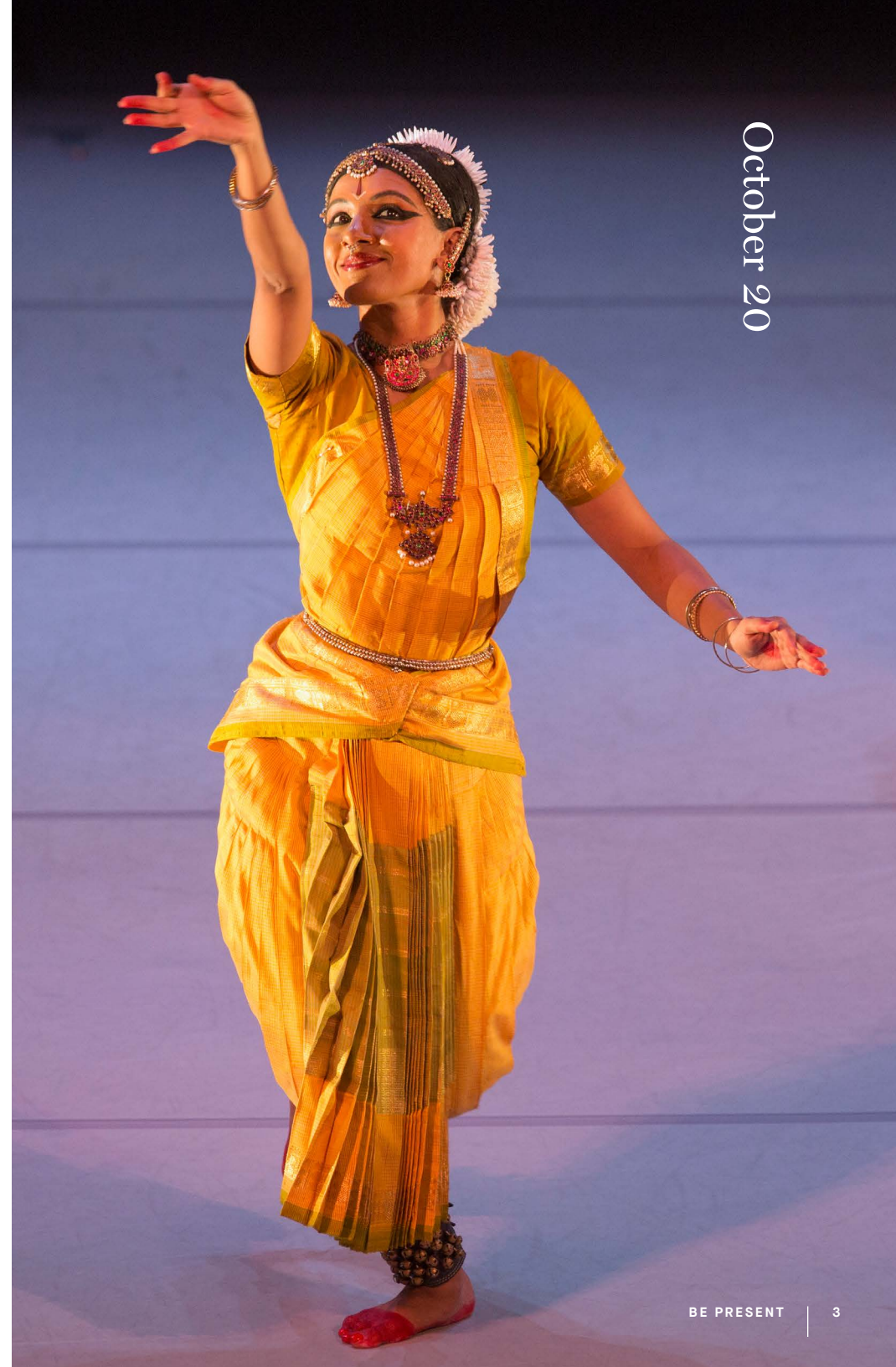
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UMS SCHOOL DAY PERFORMANCE

Ragamala Dance Company

Friday, October 20 // 11 am–12:05 pm
Power Center

October 20



Attend

Coming to your E-mail Inbox!

Map and Driving Directions

Logistical Details (drop-off/pick-up locations)

Venue Information

734.764.2538 — UMS.ORG



The Details



VENUE ADDRESS

Power Center, 121 Fletcher St, Ann Arbor, MI 48109

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBER

734.764.2538

ARRIVAL TIME

Between 10:30-10:50 am

TICKETS

We do not use paper tickets for School Day Performances. We hold school reservations at the door and seat groups upon arrival.

FOOD

No food or drinks (including school lunches) are allowed in the theater.

ACCESSIBILITY

We aim to maximize accessibility at our performances and below are details regarding this performance's points of accessibility. If you have further questions, e-mail umsyouth@umich.edu or call 734.615.0122.

The following services are available to audience members:

- Wheelchair, companion, or other special seating
- Courtesy wheelchairs
- Hearing Impaired Support Systems

PARKING

There is handicapped parking very close to the Power Center on Fletcher Street and in the parking structure behind the Power Center on Palmer Drive. The first three levels of the Palmer Drive structure have five parking spots on each level next to each elevator. There are a total of 15 parking spaces in the garage.

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBILITY

The Power Center is wheelchair accessible and has 12 seats for audience members with special needs.

BATHROOMS ADA

Compliant toilets are available in the green room (east corner) of the Power Center for both men and women.

ENTRY

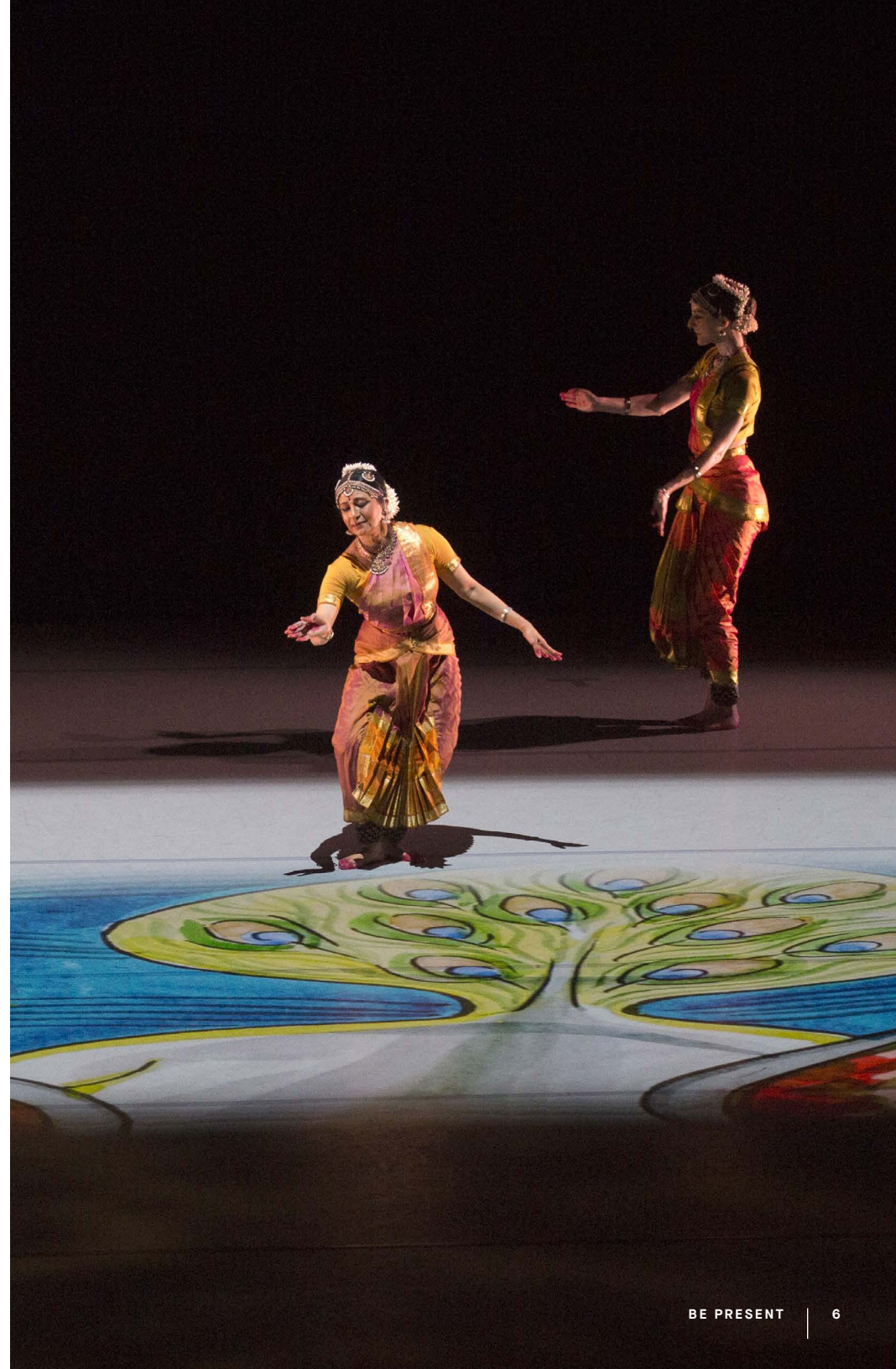
The front doors are not powered; however, there will be an usher at that door opening it for all patrons.

Learn

Ragamala Dance Company



734.764.2538 — UMS.ORG



LEARN

Why?



UMS EDUCATION ARTISTSIC STATEMENT

Under the direction of Raneer Ramaswamy and Aparna Ramaswamy, Ragamala Dance Company's work explores the dynamic tension between the ancestral and the personal. As choreographers and performers, Raneer and Aparna create dance landscapes that dwell in opposition — secular and spiritual life, inner and outer worlds, human and natural concerns, rhythm and stillness — to find the transcendence that lies in between. As mother and daughter, each brings her generational experience to the work — the rich traditions, deep philosophical roots, and ancestral wisdom of India meeting and merging with their combined perspectives as Indian-American artists.

Ragamala Dance Company merges classical language of Bharatanatyam with a contemporary Western aesthetic to create timeless pieces that freely move between the past and present. Raneer and Aparna strive to make the classical language of Bharatanatyam understandable and accessible to American audiences. The resulting works help to preserve and refresh an ancient dance form.

UMS is excited to bring Ragamala Dance Company to the School Day Performance stage. We trust it will provide an enlightening opportunity to discover South Indian art and culture with a 21st century perspective. We invite you to immerse yourself in a bountiful confluence of tradition, culture, music, and dance.

LEARN

Why?

ONLINE: CONNECTING TO THE PERFORMANCE

[Watch excerpts of *Written in Water*](#)

featuring Raneé and Aparna Ramaswamy
and composer-musician Amir ElSaffar.

Artist

RAGAMALA DANCE COMPANY: FIVE THINGS TO KNOW

01

Ranee Ramaswamy founded Ragamala Dance Company in 1992 and currently serves as co-artistic director, choreographer, and principal dancer along with her creative partner and daughter, Aparna Ramaswamy.

02

Bharatanatyam is the traditional South Indian dance form practiced by the Ragamala Dance Company. Ranee Ramaswamy merges the classical language of Bharatanatyam with contemporary Western aesthetic to create timeless and innovative pieces.

03

Ragamala Dance Company's work, *Written in Water*, brings together internationally celebrated artists: composer Amir ElSaffar leads a musical ensemble combining Iraqi, Jazz, and Carnatic instruments, and Keshav's paintings are projected onto the stage to create a mystical dance landscape.

04

Ranee Ramaswamy currently serves on the National Council on the Arts. She has worked tirelessly for the last three decades to find a place for the classical form of Bharatanatyam in the landscape of American Dance.

05

Ranee and Aparna strive to make the classical form and gestures of Bharatanatyam understandable and accessible to American audiences. They have worked in schools, the community, and through collaborations that push the art form.

LEARN

Artist

ONLINE: GETTING TO KNOW RAGAMALA DANCE COMPANY

[Watch and learn about the making of *Written in Water*](#) and the influences behind the work.

Art Form

BHARATANATYAM

BHARATANATYAM

Bharata – mnemonic comprising three shortened words “bha”, “ra”, & “ta”

Bha – from “bhava” meaning feelings and emotions

Ra – from “raga” meaning melody and the melodic structure in Carnatic music, a system of music associated with southern India

Ta – from “tala” meaning rhythm

Natyam – Sanskrit for dance

Bharatanatyam refers to a form of dance in which these three elements (bhava, raga, tala) are expressed.

ORIGINS OF BHARATANATYAM

The Bharatanatyam style originated in South India in the Tamil Nadu region and is part of the wider Natyashastra dance style. The Natyashastra is the overarching umbrella from which originated all other classical Indian dance forms: *Odissi*, *Kathakali*, *Kathak*, *Manipuri*, *Kuchipudi*, *Mohiniyattam*, *Bharatanatyam*, and *Sattriya*.

Bharatanatyam was regularly practiced by *devadasi* — women who were dedicated to the services of the temples in South India. These *devadasi*, or servants (dasi) of divinity (deva), worked with *nattuvanars* (dance masters) to pass down the dance traditions of Bharatanatyam from generation to generation. The dance form’s performance spread from the temples to the royal courts in South India, especially in Tamil Nadu, whose patronage supported the dancers.

Repeated foreign invasions in the North India prevented Bharatanatyam from developing in that region, but the form and its music continued to evolve in the South.

The four sons of the *nattuvanar* Subbarayan — Chinnayya, Ponnayya, Vadivelu, and Sivanandam — refined the music of Bharatanatyam, influenced no doubt by their musical mentor, the composer Muthuswami Dikshitar. These developments shaped a precursor of what we call Bharatanatyam today.

British rule and propaganda in India threatened to stifle Bharatanatyam. Dancers, who were rejected by royal courts, were forced to seek patronage from ordinary wealthy people, leading to the decline of the *devadasi* community and its reputation. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, social reformers sought to eradicate the art form completely, and the classical dance of South India was almost extinct.

A few families preserved the knowledge of Bharatanatyam, and the form was revived with the help of Indian freedom fighters, Westerners interested in Indian arts, people outside the *devadasi* class who have learned the dance form, and *devadasis* themselves. Over the years, increasing awareness and appreciation of classical Indian traditions allowed *nattuvanars* and dancers to resume practicing Bharatanatyam, and the dance form became one of the most widespread and popular Indian dance forms.

Art Form

MOVEMENT

Choreography is the series or combination of movements that creates these fundamental patterns in time and space. Like words in a sentence, the individual movements are just as important as the product of their combination. In dance there are many different types of movement. Here are some options to explore as you think about dance.

TYPE	DEFINITION
Sustained	An even release of energy that stays constant, either fast or slow, but not both.
Percussive	Sudden bursts of energy that start and stop quickly.
Swinging	A drop of energy into gravity that sustains and follows through.
Suspended	This is the movement at the end of a swing, before gravity takes over.
Collapse	A sudden and complete release of energy, like fainting and either of the full body or a single body part.
Explosive	A gathering of energy that is released as a burst of one huge sudden action, either of the full body or a single body part.

Art Form

ELEMENTS

The elements of dance — easily remembered with the use of the acronym BEST: Body, Energy, Space, and Time — can be helpful guides in watching or thinking about dance. (from Cornett, C. (1999). The Arts as Meaning Makers. Person Education, Inc.)

BODY

Parts:

Head, shoulders, elbows, hands, knees, feet, etc.

Isolation:

Movements restricted to one area of the body such as the shoulders, rib cage, or hips

Shapes:

Curved/angular, small/large, flat/rounded

Actions:

(Non-locomotor) Stretch, bend, twist, rise, fall, circle, shake, suspend, sway, swing, collapse or (Locomotor) walk, run, leap, hop, jump, gallop, skip, slide

Locomotor:

Movements that occur in general space when a dancer moves place to place

Non-locomotor:

Movements that occur in a person's space with one body part anchored to one spot and that are organized around the spine or axis of the body

ENERGY

Force:

Smooth or sharp

Weight:

Heavy or light

Strength:

Tight or relaxed

Flow:

Sudden or sustained, bound or free

SPACE

Level:

Low, middle, high

Levels:

The height of the dancer in relation to the floor. When a dancer is at a low level, a part of their torso might touch the floor; when a dancer is at a high level, they might be in the air or on their toes

Direction:

Forward, backward, up, down, sideways

Size:

Large or small

Destination:

Where a dancer moves

Pathways:

Patterns we make with the body on the floor and in the air

Focus:

Where a dancer looks

TIME

Rhythm:

Pulse, beat

Speed:

Pace, tempo, rate

Accent:

Light or strong emphasis

Duration:

Fast/slow, short/long

Phrases:

Dance sentences, patterns, and combinations

Art Form

DANCE TERMINOLOGY



BHARATANATYAM REPERTOIRE

Nritta – a technical performance emphasizing speed, form, pattern, range, and rhythm over interpretation.

Nritya – a solo performance communicating a story, spiritual themes, messages, or feelings through expressive gestures and slower body movements.

Natyam – a group performance that communicates a play or story. Each dancer uses body movements associated with their character. Natyam can also be performed by a solo dancer whose body movements change to depict different characters.

Art Form

COSTUMES & MAKEUP

COSTUMES

A classical Indian dance costume reflects the history and tradition of the region from where the dance originated. Tamil Nadu, the region where Bharatanatyam originated, features a costume made of colorful silk fabric containing borders embroidered with fine gold thread. There are two styles of Bharatanatyam costumes known as the pant-style costume (pant costume) and the saree costume (skirt costume).

The pant-style costume includes:

- Blouse
- Davani (wraps around the blouse)
- Pants
- Pleats (fan-like piece attached to both pant legs)
- Seat (hugs the pants and the fan at the hip area)

The saree costume includes:

- Blouse
- Davani (wraps around the blouse)
- Skirt
- Pleats (fan-like piece attached to both pant legs)
- Fan (a small fan that is tied around the waist)

JEWELRY AND ACCESSORIES

South Indian dance jewelry is called “temple jewelry.” It is traditionally made of rubies, gold, and pearls. These days, many dancers wear artificial “costume” jewelry.

The jewelry includes:

- Chutti (head piece)
- Sun and Moon (jewels attached on the top of the head on each side of the chutti)
- Necklace
- Mattal (jewels attached to the earrings and run over the ears)
- Earrings
- Jimiki (dangling jewels of the earrings)
- Mukuthi (side nose ring)
- Bullaku (center nose ring)
- Bangles (gold bracelets)

FLOWERS

Flowers decorate the hair of a dancer and may be real flowers or fake flowers made of soft paper often in colors of orange and white.

MAKE-UP

Eyes:

To accentuate and elongate the eyes, a dancer uses black eyeliner and applies it in thick layers around the curves of the eyes.

Cheek bones:

To define the facial features, red blush is used to accentuate the cheeks.

Lips:

Dark-colored shades of lipstick such as maroon complete the overall facial appearance of the dancer.

Pottu:

Dot on the forehead.

Painted feet and fingers:

Red dye known as alta is used to paint the fingertips of the hands and toes of the feet to resemble henna.

The red color accentuates the hand gestures and feet movements of the dancer.

Art Form

GESTURES

RASA

Rasa is the emotion experienced by the audience.

Shringar - erotic

Hasya - humorous

Karuna - pathetic

Paudra - terrible

Veera - heroic

Bhayanaka - fearful

Bibhatsa - odious

Adbhuta - wondrous

Shanta - peaceful

BHAVA

Bhava is the emotion portrayed by the actor.

Rati - delight

Hasya - laughter

Shoka - sorrow

Krodh - anger

Utasha - heroism

Bhaya - fear

Jugupsa - disgust

Vismaya - wonder

Calm - peace

MUDRAS

Hand gestures are important in Bharatanatyam. They are called mudras. In pure dance, hand gestures are used to complement the body movements. In expressive dance, they are used like sign language to tell a story. There are 28 single-handed gestures and 24 double-handed gestures. Each one can mean many different things, depending on how it is held around the body, the way the dancer moves, and what facial expressions are used with it.

NAVARASAS

Navarasas are facial expressions used during traditional Bharatnatyam dances. In Bharatnatyam, rasa is an emotion experienced by the audience because of a performer's facial expression and bhava is the emotion portrayed by the actor, and the combination of the two is called rasa-abhinaya.

LEARN

Performance

“When you write
in water, it’s not
concrete, so it is
something that is
constantly changing.”

—RANEE RAMASWAMY



LEARN

Performance



Written in Water Ragamala Dance Company

Friday, October 20 // 11 am–12:05 pm
Power Center

RAGAMALA DANCE COMPANY

Ranee Ramaswamy and Aparna Ramaswamy,
directors

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

In *Written in Water*, the dancers activate the space by negotiating snakes and ladders — which represent the heights of ecstasy and depths of longing in Hindu and Sufi thought — to connect the human with the transcendent and reveal mysteries within the self.

Forging new artistic paradigms, Ragamala brings together internationally-celebrated artists: composer Amir ElSaffar leads a musical ensemble with a distinct alchemy of Iraqi, jazz, and Carnatic instruments, and Keshav's lush paintings are projected onto the stage to create a mythic, mystical dance landscape. Additional artwork by Nathan Christopher.

LEARN

Performance

ONLINE: RAGAMALA DANCE COMPANY

[View more footage](#) of the making
of *Written in Water* by Ragamala
Dance Company.

Connect

Being an Audience Member

Arts Online

Writing about Live Performances

About UMS

Credit and Sponsors

734.764.2538 — UMS.ORG



Being an audience member

AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE 101

- No talking, unless audience participation is requested by the performers.
- Avoid fidgeting and moving around in your seat during the performance. Slumping sideways blocks the view for audience members behind you, and extra movements can be distracting to your neighbors.
- Do not take flash photography. The flash can be distracting to the performers on stage.
- Turn off and put away cell phones and other electronic devices.
- If you need to cough during the performance, wait for the pause between movements of a piece or try to “bury” your cough in a loud passage of music.
- If you need assistance, please speak to a UMS usher.
- Most importantly, relax and enjoy the performance!

WHEN SHOULD I CLAP?

The audience claps to welcome the performers as they come on stage.

The audience also claps at the conclusion of each piece on the program, but not between movements of a single piece. This can be tricky, because many musical works have several movements with pauses in between. A work’s movements will be listed in the program or announced at the performance. Not sure when the piece is over? Watch the conductor, who will lower their hands at the end of the piece.

When in doubt, it’s always safe to wait and follow what the rest of the audience does.

Being an audience member

ENGAGING WITH THE PERFORMANCE

Encourage your students to engage with and reflect on the performance by asking these questions:

- How did the performance make you feel?
- What does this performance remind you of?
- What was the most memorable part of the performance for you?
- How does this performance relate to where you live?
- During the performance, close your eyes and imagine a “mind movie” using the performance as a soundtrack. What did you see in your mind?
- Did the performance tell a specific story?
- Do you have any questions about the performance?

GLOSSARY: ELEMENTS OF PERFORMANCE

Space – venue/building, stage, distance between objects

Lighting – location of light, use of darkness, color, movement, light in the audience

Sound – sound created by voices or movements of performers and audience members, the location of the sound (behind the stage or off stage), use of musical instruments or recorded music

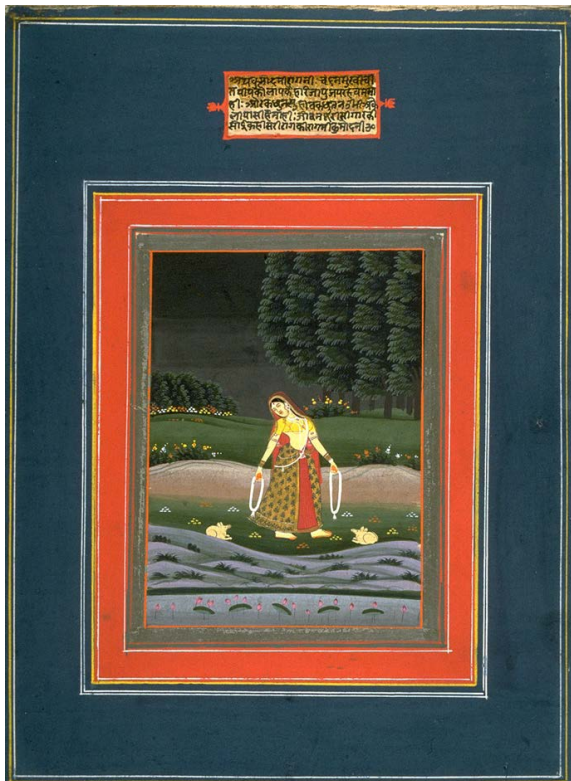
Movement – movement of performers, images, objects, or audience members; speed, size, or shape of movements

People:

- Dancers
- Actors
- Musicians
- Stage Crew
- Ushers
- Audience Members

Being an audience member

CONNECTING TO OTHER ART FORMS



Kamodani Ragini

Artist Unknown, India, Rajasthan, Jaipur School (artist)
1795–1805

ink and color on paper

Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Leo S. Figiel and Dr. and Mrs. Steven J. Figiel, 1981/2.50

Ragamala literally means a ‘garland of musical melodies’ and has also given rise to the series of Ragamala paintings. Ragamala paintings visualize specific moods, emotions, and qualities such as love, anguish, valor, weakness, and strength and are meant to evoke the same affective responses of their musical modes. Specific ragas are associated with specific times of the day, seasons, and emotions. The woman depicted here is separated from someone she loves so she is sorrowful and meditates about him. Forest animals keep her company and she holds garlands that could signify bounty and beauty, attributes that also apply to the woman herself. The text above the illustration refers to stories or incidents associated with the raga.

The artwork was provided by the University of Michigan Museum of Art to connect to the 2017-18 UMS School Day Performance series. UMMA has a long tradition of service to K-12 students and educators of southeastern Michigan. This work is currently on exhibition in the museum. For more information about the University of Michigan Museum of Art and their programs for youth, teens, teachers, and schools, visit their [website](#).

Arts Online: Explore and Discover

SITES WE SUGGEST

UMS

ums.org

UMMA

umma.umich.edu

THE KENNEDY CENTER, ARTSEDGE

ArtsEdge.org

ANN ARBOR DISTRICT LIBRARY

aadl.org

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC

nyphil.org

AMERICAN THEATRE

americantheatre.org

DANCEMAGAZINE

dancemagazine.com

NPR: NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO

npr.org

MICHIGAN RADIO

michiganradio.org

PBS: PUBLIC BROADCASTING SERVICE

pbs.org

NEW YORK TIMES

nytimes.com

2017-18 SCHOOL DAY PERFORMANCES: ARTIST WEBSITES

RAGAMALA DANCE COMPANY

ragamaladance.org

SPHINX VIRTUOSI

sphinxmusic.org/sphinx-virtuosi

CHANTICLEER

chanticleer.org

URBAN BUSH WOMEN

urbanbushwomen.org

PIEDMONT BLUES: A SEARCH FOR SALVATION

geraldclaytonblues.org

Recommended Reading

UMS School Day Performance Series. All titles are in circulation at the library. For more information about the Ann Arbor District Library and their programs for youth, teens, teachers, and schools, visit. aadl.org.

[Reserve a book or DVD](#)

TEEN 2017-18 UMS SCHOOL DAY PERFORMANCE SEASON

“Cuba Mía: Portrait of an All-Women Orchestra” [DVD]

This documentary features the Camerata Romeu Orchestra as they play pieces combining Cuban and classical influences.

“Kinshasa Symphony” [DVD]

This documentary introduces the Orchestre Symphonique Kimbanguiste in the Congo, where the musicians must stay focused despite ongoing violence.

Softly, with Feeling: Joe Wilder and the Breaking of Barriers in American Music, by Edward Berger

Read about the life of Joe Wilder, who was among the first black men to serve in the Marines and later play trumpet for Broadway and studio orchestras.

The Art of Music, edited by Patrick Coleman

This collection of essays reflects on the connections between visual and musical art forms.

How to Listen to Jazz, by Ted Gioia

Approachable patterns and introductions to influential artists comprise this beginner’s guide to jazz.

The Detroit Symphony Orchestra: Grace, Grit, and Glory, by Laurie Lanzen Harris

This engaging history of the DSO details how the organization has grown and persevered through hardship.

Snakes and Ladders: Glimpses of India, by Gita Mehta

Read essays about India’s political and cultural history from a personal perspective.

A New America: How Music Reshaped the Culture and Future of a Nation and Redefined My Life, by Tommy Mottola

Music executive Tommy Mottola reflects on his experiences working with popular Latin@ artists and explores how Latin music has affected American culture.

Folk City: New York and the American Folk Music Revival, by Stephen Petrus

Petrus presents photos and detailed information conveying the impact that New York City’s music scene has had on the revival of folk music in the United States.

Handmade in India: A Geographic Encyclopedia of Indian Handicrafts, edited by Aditi Ranjan and M.P. Ranjan

This large and colorful compendium features artwork from across India with accompanying details.

The Conference of the Birds, by Peter Sís

Sís presents the English translation of the Sufi epic poem with added illustrations.

African American Women: Photographs from the National Museum of African American History and Culture, by Natasha Trethewey and Kinshasha Holman Conwill

This volume of the *Double Exposure* series features photographs of African American women conveying a diversity of emotions.

Recommended Reading

Continued.

US/THEM

"I Am Eleven: A Documentary" [DVD]

Eleven-year-olds around the world share their thoughts on war, love, family, and other critical topics.

Indivisible: Poems for Social Justice, edited by Gail Bush and Randy Meyer
American teens express their diverse perspectives in this collection of poems.

Malala: Activist for Girls' Education, by Raphaële Frier

This brief biography of Malala Yousafzai portrays her work to allow universal access to education.

The Day Our World Changed: Children's Art of 9/11, by Robin F. Goodman
Kids and teens ages 5-18 present their drawings, collages, and other artwork in light of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.

Kids Who Are Changing the World, by Anne Jankeliowitch

The Goodplanet Foundation compiles 45 interviews with children around the world who developed their own projects to improve the environment.

She Takes a Stand: 16 Fearless Activists Who Have Changed the World, by Michael Elsohn Ross

This collection presents 16 mini-biographies of women who have fought for human rights.

YOUTH 17/18 UMS SCHOOL DAY PERFORMANCE SEASON

Hinduism and other Eastern Religions: Worship, Festivals, and Ceremonies

Around the World, by Trevor Barnes

Learn about some of the world's major religions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Shintoism, Taoism, and more.

88 Instruments, by Chris Barton

A young boy in a music shop tries to decide which instrument to play, but they all sound so appealing!

The Conductor, by Laëtitia Devernay

Create your own story in this wordless picture book depicting a man slowly cueing each part of nature into metaphorical song.

Bird & Diz, by Gary Golio and Ed Young

This tribute to jazz musicians Charlie "Bird" Parker and Dizzy Gillespie poetically reflects their signature bebop style.

The Conference of the Birds, by Alexis York Lumbard and Demi

Lumbard translates and retells the Sufi epic poem about birds searching for their king with detailed illustrations.

Excuse me, is this India? by Anita Leutwiler and Anushka Ravishankar

Follow the riddles alongside a mouse explorer to find India.

To Market! To Market! by Anushka Ravishankar and Emanuele Scanziani

Explore an Indian marketplace with a little girl who does not know what to buy.

Recommended Reading

Continued.

The Music of Life: Bartolomeo Cristofori and the Invention of the Piano,

by Elizabeth Rusch

Cristofori longs for an instrument that can play loud and soft music, which leads to his invention of the piano.

Feel the Beat: Dance Poems that Zing from Salsa to Swing, by Marilyn Singer

This rhythmic book of poems introduces various types of social dances.

The Legendary Miss Lena Horne, by Carole Boston Weatherford

This biography details the life of Lena Horne, a successful singer, actress, and civil rights activist.

Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement,

by Carole Boston Weatherford

Free verse poems and multimedia collages introduce Fannie Lou Hamer, a civil rights activist.

Performance Art, by Alix Wood

Wood introduces performance art as it manifests through diverse mediums.

Esquivel! Space Age Sound Artist, by Susan Wood and Duncan Tonatiuh

This biography introduces Juan García Esquivel, who grew up with mariachi music and eventually created his own signature lounge music.

Writing about Live Performance with your students

A LETTER TO PERFORMERS

Grade Level: Elementary School Students (K-5)

Students will compose a personal letter to a performer from the School Day Performance. The student will write about their feelings, observations, and questions from the performance. With a teacher's assistance, students may send these letters to the performers.

BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE

Discuss the following with your students:

1. Live Performances
2. The Art Form
3. The Artist
4. Origin of the Art Form or Artist

DURING THE PERFORMANCE

To help students organize their thoughts during the performance, encourage them to consider the following:

- I Notice...
- I Feel...
- I Wonder...

Once the performance is done, have students write down their notes, observations, and reflections. They will use these notes to help them write their letters.

AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

Instruct students to write a letter to the performers. In completing this exercise, students should:

- Use standard letter-writing conventions ("Dear...", "Sincerely,")
- Mention when and where the performance took place
- Use the notes they took to share their experiences, observations, and questions with the performers

Writing about Live Performance with your students

TWO THUMBS UP: WRITING A PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Grade Level: Middle & High School Students (6-12)

BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE

Have students, in groups or as individuals, conduct background research on the performance they will be attending. Students should research and take notes on the following:

- **Art Form**
- **History of the Art Form**
- **Terminology**
- **The Artist**
- **Comparisons to similar artists and art form**

Some of this information may be found in this Learning Guide. For more information on artists and art forms, follow the sources in the “Sites We Suggest” and “Recommended Reading” sections of this Learning Guide.

Before the performance begins, consider the following questions:

- What expectations do I have for the performance?
- Do I already have an opinion about what I will experience at the performance?

DURING THE PERFORMANCE

Ask students to take mental notes during the performance. As soon as the performance ends, have students write down thoughts and words that come to mind related to the performance.

Encourage students to consider these prompts:

- What is striking to me?
- Is it vastly different from what I thought it would be?
- Has the venue transformed into something else during the performance? How?
- Are there images or ideas popping into my head? What are they?
- Is there something about the performance I may remember forever? What made it so?
- Is the audience quiet and drawn in to what is happening? Are they loud? Are they interacting directly with the performers? Are the performers directly interacting with the audience?

AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

Instruct students to compare their pre-performance notes to their post-performance observations and write a 2-3 page review.

Things to consider when writing a review:

A critic's job is to:

1. *Share an experience* – what did it feel, sound, look like?
2. *Provide context* – a broader frame of reference around what happened to help reader understand importance or significance of the experience
3. *Evaluate* – was it any good?

A strong review answers these three questions:

1. What is artist trying to do?
2. How well are they doing it?
3. Was it worth doing in the first place?

Critics typically use two modes of thought when writing a review:

1. *Analytical* – describing the grammar of the art, its execution and interpretation by the performers, and its historical, cultural, and social relevance; using concrete language, terminology, and facts
2. *Impressionistic* – describing the overall experience; using abstract language, feelings, and emotions

Encourage students to take a strong stance on aspects of the performance, just as long as they can back up their argument with evidence. If a student writes, “I didn't like...” or “I particularly enjoyed...”, ask them to elaborate.

Writing about Live Performance with your students

MORE WRITING PROMPTS FOR REFLECTION, EXPLORATION, AND DISCOVERY:

- What was your overall reaction to the performance? Did you find the production compelling? Stimulating? Intriguing? Challenging? Memorable? Confusing? Evocative? Bizarre? Unique? Delightful? Meaningful? Explain your reactions.
- What themes of the play especially stood out in production? What themes were made even more apparent or especially provocative in production/performance? Explain your responses.
- Is there a moment in the performance that specifically resonated with you either intellectually or emotionally? Which moment was it and why do you think it affected you?
- Describe the pace and tempo of the performance (e.g., slow, fast, varied). Did it feel like the pace of the production maintain your interest throughout? Were there any moments in which you felt bored, rushed, lost, or confused? What elements of the work or interpretation led you to feel this way?
- Was there a moment during the performance that was so compelling, intriguing, or engaging that it remains with you in your mind's eye? Write a vivid description of that moment. As you write your description, pretend that you are writing about the moment for someone who was unable to experience the performance.
- How did the style and design elements of the production (e.g. sets, costumes, lighting, sound, music, if any) enhance the performance? Did anything in particular stand out to you? Why?
- What was your favorite musical selection from this performance? Why?
- During the performance, image a story or movie playing out in your mind, set to the music or action on stage. After the performance, write a story based on the narrative you imagined.
- All of these performances involve one or more performers on stage at any given moment. Which performer did you relate to the most? Why?

About UMS



UMS EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

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Intern

UMS was selected as one of the 2014 recipients of the National Medal of Arts, the nation's highest public artistic honor, awarded annually by the president of the United States at the White House to those who have "demonstrated a lifetime of creative excellence." The National Endowment for the Arts oversees the selection process.

One of the leading performing arts presenters in the country, UMS is committed to connecting audiences with performing artists from around the world in uncommon and engaging experiences. With a program steeped in music, dance, and theater, UMS presents approximately 60-75 performances and over 100 free educational activities each season.

At UMS, diversity is embraced as both a powerful educational resource and a guiding value for all our work. Our educational philosophy is dedicated to multidisciplinary artistic and educational experiences that represent a range of cultural traditions and viewpoints. Understanding our similarities and differences informs our culture, our values, and helps us navigate the world. By learning together, we can discover something new and extraordinary about each other. Throughout our K-12 Education Season, we invite educators and students to celebrate diversity in order to inform, strengthen, and unite us as community.

About UMS

2017-18 SCHOOL DAY PERFORMANCES



Ragamala Dance Company

Friday, October 20 // 11 am–12:05 pm
Power Center

Sphinx Virtuosi

Monday, October 30 // 11 am–12 noon
Hill Auditorium



Chanticleer

Friday, November 10 // 12 noon–1 pm
Hill Auditorium

Urban Bush Women

Friday, January 12 // 11 am–12 noon
Power Center



Us/Them

Thursday & Friday, January 25 & 26 // 11 am–12 noon
Arthur Miller Theatre

Piedmont Blues: A Search for Salvation

Wednesday, March 14 // 11 am–12 noon
Michigan Theater

Thank You!

CREDITS AND SPONSORS

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

PROVIDED BY

Pamela Reister (UMMA) &
Kayla Coughlin (Ann Arbor District Library)

EXTRAORDINARY GIFTS. EXTRAORDINARY LEARNING THROUGH THE ARTS.

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