

THE HUNGRY STONES NOV. 16-18

ABOUT KATHA DANCE THEATRE

Founded in 1987 by Artistic Director Rita Mustaphi, Katha Dance Theatre (KDT) is based in Kathak, a classical dance technique native to North India. KDT provides an essential cultural lifeline to all who wish to learn and perform Kathak through its award-winning company, school, and outreach programs. KDT produces shows that reflect multicultural experiences within its community and promote cross-cultural collaboration. Kathak is a percussive dance whose elements of storytelling, poetry, mime, and theater makes it a dynamic multimedia experience—vibrantly sensual, powerful, and pulsating in nature.

ABOUT KATHAK DANCE

Kathak is an Indian classical dance tradition prevalent in Northern India. Its origins can be traced back to as early as 400 BCE. Nurtured in Hindu temples, it was disseminated by Kathakaars, a community of storytellers who traveled the country using Kathak to share mythological stories from Hindu scripture. With the spread of Islam in 800 CE, Kathak was later influenced by the Muslim culture, causing it to grow more entertaining and less didactic. The dance form has continued to grow and change over time, with KDT at the forefront of Kathak's evolution.

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Each year as I start to write this Artistic Director's note, I am more and more swept away by the power of our community: the cast, the crew, the production staff and our volunteers that have worked tirelessly to bring this story to life for you amidst laughter, excitement, and the pure joy of working together. I am honored to be a part of this process!

I am also thrilled at the opportunity to re-choreograph, direct and dance again for a new version of *The Hungry Stones*, which originally premiered in 1994. Using Kathak, a traditional dance technique native to North India, *The Hungry Stones* reflects on universal themes about how stones—and landscape, in general—act as witnesses to history.

If you are new to our audience, we welcome you to KDT and invite you to join our family every year! Behind the scenes, the creators of *The Hungry Stones* have all put their unique stamp upon this production. My appreciation is boundless for the expertise they all have offered to KDT. The well-trained KDT dancers add a great deal to our ensemble with their professionalism and talent. I hope that this production transports you to another world!

ABOUT RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Born in Kolkata on May 7, 1861, Rabindranath Tagore was a prolific and influential Bengali poet, author, playwright, essayist, songwriter, and artist. He is widely known for introducing the use of colloquial language into Bengali literature. Although he began his writing career in India, he eventually gained worldwide recognition and acclaim from peers like W.B. Yeats. In 1913, he became the first non-European winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature for his poetry collection *Gitanjali*. He was also politically inclined, often acting as a vocal supporter of Indian independence from Colonial rule. Following an artistic career that spanned multiple decades, Tagore passed away in 1941 at the age of 80.

PROGRAM

– The show is 90 minutes long with no intermission –

Please refrain from video and/or audio recording of this performance

"Once upon a time the palace had been churned by constant lust, by the flames of wild pleasures. Cursed by those passions, those vain desires, every stone now hungered and thirst, striving to consume every soul that came near."

Tagore, *The Hungry Stones*

The Story...

The Hungry Stones is based on a short story, "*Khudhita Pashan*" (1895), by Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore. Set in colonial India, set in the realm of fantasy, the story paints an ecstatic portrait of passion where ancient stones remain alive as witnesses to history.

The Hungry Stones tells the tale of a newly appointed tax collector who is sent to a small town with a river running through it. Along the river stands an old Mughal palace made of marble. It was the home of Emperor Mahmood Shah who had built this palace for his pleasure and luxury. The tax collector initially spends his days carrying out routine office chores. But as night descends, he is drawn to the beautiful palace. He soon finds the dilapidated rooms and courtyards that appear so plain in daylight hours, begin to vibrate with the unfulfilled passions and dreams of the past. Legend has it that only one man ever escaped the grip of these hungry stones, and he was driven mad. As the tax collector becomes entranced, one wonders whether he will ever be able to escape the clutches of 'the Hungry Stones'.

ARTISTIC PERSONNEL

STORY, LYRICS & COMPOSITION: Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore

PLAYWRIGHT: Rahoul Ghosh

POETRY TRANSLATION: Smarajit Mitra and Sayan Ghosh

CLASSICAL MUSIC COMPOSITION: Rajeeb Chakraborty

CHOREOGRAPHY & DIRECTION: Rita Mustaphi

THE ENSEMBLE (CALCUTTA, INDIA): Pandit Ramesh Mishra, Rajeeb Chakraborty, Sontosh Kumar, Kousic Sen, Indrani Sen, Indranil Sen, Debasis Sarkar, Siza Roy, Reena Shrivastava, Subhas Mondal, Kakan Ghosal, Bonnie Nag, Sangeeta Banerjee, Sutapa Chatterjee, Gautam Nag, Kishore Chatterjee, Adhir Chatterjee, Jayanta Chatterjee, Rana Chatterjee, Biplav Bhattacharya, and Samaresh Bhattacharya.

CREW

VOICEOVERS: Leif Jurgensen and Rita Mustaphi

MUSIC EDITING: Kalyan Mustaphi

REHEARSAL MASTER: Rupa Nair

COSTUME DESIGN: Sandhya Raman (New Delhi, India)

SET DESIGN: Anup Giri (Kolkata, India)

LIGHT DESIGN: Mike Grogan

STAGE MANAGER: Rebecca Tanner

ASL INTERPRETER (SUNDAY SHOW): Alan Farnham

CAST

NARRATOR/TAX COLLECTOR: Anurag Sharma

GYPSY WOMAN/COURTESAN: Rita Mustaphi

MEHER ALI-THE MAD MAN: Derek Phillips

PERSIAN COURTESAN: Mukta Sathe

THE EUNUCH: Derek Phillips

THE COURTESANS/STONES: Sarika Haris, Monica Singh, Nivedita Sahnii, Madhulika Srikanth, Anisha Sharma, Aanchal Sahni, Saniya Shah and Rimika Dhara

ARTIST BIOS

KATHA DANCE THEATRE COMPANY

Rita Mustaphi (Persian Lady) is a choreographer, dancer, and educator of Kathak dance. She strives to create works that provoke feeling, stimulate the senses, and activate the mind. A native of Kolkata, India, she graduated from University of Calcutta with major in physiology and Rabindra Bharati University with a major in dance. She also studied intensively under the guidance of Pandit Birju Maharaj, the legendary master of Kathak dance. She began teaching in the Twin Cities in 1978, and in 1987, she realized her dream of founding a professional company and school of Kathak dance—Katha Dance Theatre, and is now the Artistic Director. KDT is Minnesota's first Asian Indian dance company as well as one of only 12 professional Kathak companies in the U.S.

In 31 years, Rita Mustaphi has choreographed more than 50 evening-length works that have been performed locally, nationally, and internationally. Notably, she has performed at India's 50th Anniversary celebration at New York's Carnegie Hall and several times over the years at the International Kathak Dance Festivals in New Delhi, India. Her choreography has been presented at the prestigious Khajuraho Dance Festival in India. Her selected choreographic credits include, *Ritusamhara - The Seasons* (2017), *Sufiana - the Sufi Ecstasy* (2016), the Kathak & Chhau dance collaboration *Pourush - The Masculine* (2015); *Rubaiyat - Life in a Day* (2014), *Karna - the Abandoned Hero* (2013), KDT's 25th anniversary production *In Retrospect* (2012), and *EKAM - The Supreme Oneness* (2011). Her works have been set to everything from Persian music to traditionally American jazz, gospel, and R&B.

Mustaphi is a roster artist for COMPAS, Creative Classroom's global culture program. She is a recipient of three McKnight Fellowships for Choreography, a Leadership award from the Council of Asian Pacific Minnesotans, a 2011 Lifetime Achievement award from the India Association of Minnesota, and a 2012 Education award from the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts in the category of Excellence in Vision.

Mukta Sathe (Persian Courtesan) learned Kathak from Guru Sanjeevani Kulkarni in Nasik, India, and won the national "Swar Sadhana" competition while touring throughout the country.

She has studied Kathak with Rita Mustaphi for over eleven years. Her performance credits with KDT as a company member stretch back to 2005. Her selected performance credits include, *Ritusamhara - The Seasons* (2017), *Sufiana - the Sufi Ecstasy* (2016), the Kathak & Chhau dance collaboration *Pourush - The Masculine* (2015); *Rubaiyat - Life in a Day* (2014), *Karna - the Abandoned Hero* (2013), KDT's 25th anniversary production *In Retrospect* (2012), and *EKAM - The Supreme Oneness* (2011) also including a chance to perform at the prestigious Khajuraho Dance Festival in India (2017).

She attended many intensive workshops conducted by Pandit Birju Maharaj in Minneapolis and also attended Chicago's International Kathak Festival in 2004 and participated in workshops conducted by Kathak Maestro Pandit Birju Maharaj, Ms. Saswati Sen, and Kumudini Lakhia. Mukta also teaches Kathak at KDT's Edina location.

Anurag Sharma's (Narrator/Tax Collector) passion for dance inspired him to begin learning Kathak in 2004 from Rita Mustaphi at Katha Dance Theatre. Recently, Anurag had a lifetime opportunity to complete six months intensive training directly under the living legend and Padma Vibhushan awardee Pandit Birju Maharaj in New Delhi, India. During his training he traveled and performed with Pandit Birju Maharaj's Dance Company in several states in India and USA. Anurag attended the 3-Day International Kathak Festivals in Chicago (2004 & 2009) and Kathak workshops conducted by the senior gurus and teachers from all over the world, including Kathak Maestro Pandit Birju Maharaj. Anurag has performed extensively with the Katha Dance Theatre locally, nationally, and internationally since 2005 to present. In July 2016, Anurag had the opportunity to tour and perform in a Kathak Ballet—*Romeo & Juliet*—with Pandit Birju Maharaj's Dance Company at the Madison Square Garden in New York, Wisconsin, and Chicago. In February 2017, Anurag had another great opportunity: to perform as a lead dancer in KDT's production, a dance opera titled *Karna - The Abandoned Hero* at the prestigious Khajuraho Dance Festival in India. In October 2017, with the blessings of his Gurus Rita Mustaphi and Pandit Birju Maharaj - Anurag performed a solo Kathak recital - 'Rangmanch Pravesch' in Minneapolis, MN. Anurag has also taught Kathak at the Katha Dance Theatre School since 2009.

Derek Phillips (the Eunuch & Meher Ali, The Madman) is a native of Kansas City, Missouri and a 1977 graduate of Carleton College. He began his dance career with the Nancy Hauser Dance Company and later toured nationally with the Children's Theatre Company. Derek has been a roster artist for the Minnesota State Arts Board Artists-in-Education Program and conducted annual residencies for the Montevideo, Minnesota Public Schools for over twenty years. He has taught as part of the Dance/Math program at Whittier Community School for the Arts in Minneapolis and instructed and performed for the City Children's Nutcracker Project. He has also served as Development Assistant for Intermedia Arts' capital campaign and Adjunct Dance Education Coordinator for the Perpich Center for Arts Education. Currently, Derek is a teaching artist for the Children's Theatre Company, Young Dance, and The Cowles Center for Dance & the Performing Arts. He tours internationally with Katha Dance Theatre, performs English country and sword dances with Minnesota Traditional Morris and Guyz with Tiez, and is a 2016 recipient of a Minnesota SAGE Award.

Monica Singh (Courtesan) has studied Kathak for 20 years under the guidance of Rita Mustaphi. Since 2006, she has performed in several KDT shows throughout the Twin Cities and North America. Her selected performance credits include, *Ritusamhara - The Seasons* (2017), *Sufiana - the Sufi Ecstasy* (2016), the Kathak & Chhau dance collaboration *Pourush - The Masculine* (2015); *Rubaiyat - Life in a Day* (2014), *Karna - the Abandoned Hero* (2013), KDT's 25th anniversary production *In Retrospect* (2012), and *EKAM - The Supreme Oneness* (2011). She has also taken master classes with Pandit Birju Maharaj and Ms. Saswati Sen.

Sarika Haris (Courtesan) began her dance journey in India, where she studied Bharatanatyam, the South Indian classical dance style, for over nine years. Her passion for dance motivated her to learn Kathak under the guidance of Rita Mustaphi since 1999. Her selected performance credits include, *Ritusamhara - The Seasons* (2017), *Sufiana - the Sufi Ecstasy* (2016), the Kathak & Chhau dance collaboration *Pourush - The Masculine* (2015); *Rubaiyat - Life in a Day* (2014), *Karna - the Abandoned Hero* (2013), KDT's 25th anniversary production *In Retrospect* (2012), and *EKAM - The Supreme Oneness* (2011). She has also taken master classes with Pandit Birju Maharaj and Ms. Saswati Sen. She has performed in numerous KDT productions, including the lead role in *Chandalika, The Untouchable*. In 2017, she performed in India's prestigious Khajuraho Dance Festival. She teaches Kathak dance at KDT's Hopkins location.

Nivedita Sahni (Courtesan) studied at the Jaipur school of Kathak dance with guru Benny Kalra and later from Smt Bharti Gupta at Kathak Kendra School in New Delhi. In Minnesota, she has studied under Rita Mustaphi's guidance for over six years and completed workshops with Pandit Birju Maharaj and Ms. Saswati Sen. She performed in one of the lead roles in KDT's 2015 production of *Pourush - the Masculine*. Her other performance credits include *Ritusamhara - The Seasons* (2017), *Sufiana - the Sufi Ecstasy* (2016), *Rubaiyat - Life in a Day* (2014), *Karna - the Abandoned Hero* (2013)

KATHA DANCE THEATRE APPRENTICES

Madhulika Srikanth (Courtesan) is an apprentice with KDT. She studied Kathak in India for 12 years with Upasana Tiwari and Manjiri Kiran Mahajani. She has performed at the Uday Shankar Ballet Festival as well as Hori in Jaipur, India. She has also attended multiple summer workshops with Pt. Birju Maharaj and Ms. Saswati Sen in Mumbai. She made her debut with KDT this year in *Ritu - The Seasons*.

Rimika Dhara (Courtesan) has been studying Kathak dance under the guidance of Guru Bhavana Lele in India since 2017. She is now continuing her passion as the disciple of Guru Rita Mustaphi here in Minnesota. While here, Rimika has performed for the Bengali Association of Minnesota. In the past, she has attended workshops conducted by Pandit Birju Maharaj and Guru Saswati Sen, and has performed at several events and dance dramas in Mumbai. She has also received several dance awards in India and in Dubai.

Aanchal Sahni (Courtesan) has been learning Kathak dance under the guidance of Rita Mustaphi since 2007 and has attended master classes with Pandit Birju Maharaj and Saswati Sen. Her performance credits include, *Rubaiyat - Life in a Day* and *Pourush - The Masculine*.

Anisha Sharma has been learning Kathak dance from Rita Mustaphi since 2009 and attended Kathak workshops with Pandit Birju Maharaj and Saswati Sen. Her performance credits include, *Rubaiyat - Life in a Day* and *Pourush - The Masculine*.

Saniya Shah (Courtesan) has been learning Kathak dance under the guidance of Rita Mustaphi for over 10 years and has attended master classes with Pandit Birju Maharaj and Saswati Sen. This is her debut performance with KDT.

THE DESIGNERS

Sandhya Raman, New Delhi, India (Costume Design) is an alumna of India's National Institute of Design and was part of NID's first batch of Apparel Design students. She is one of the few professionals who has designed costumes for a number of India's classical dancers, including Anita Ratnam, Aditi Mangaldas, Kishan Maharaj, and Malavika Sarukkai. Ms. Sandhya, who as a design consultant for the "Discovery of India" permanent exhibition at Mumbai's Nehru Centre created dioramas depicting the costumes and fabrics of India, has also put her skills to use in cinema costuming, and textile development. A recipient of the Stree Shakti Puraskar for her contribution towards using design for development, she has worked with differently-abled individuals and helps young girls in Bulandshahar hone their skills for income generation and self-sustenance.

Mike Grogan (Light Designer and Production Manager) has been active in the Minneapolis arts scene since 1990. He has designed for numerous performance groups including Theater Mu, Outward Spiral Theater Company, Zenon Dance Company, and many others. Mike has been involved in the opening of several spaces in his career, most recently the opening of the new space for Nimbus Theatre. He originally started working on the technical side of theater while he was in school, but when he started designing lighting for dance productions, he realized that he had found his career. In the years since, he has designed lights for many groups spanning the disciplines of

dance, theater, and music. He began as the lighting technician at Ruby's Cabaret, later becoming Assistant Technical Director for The Minnesota Dance Alliance's Studio 6-A and eventually moving up to become Production Director and Resident Lighting Designer for the space. In 2001, Mike started his work as Production Manager and Resident Lighting Designer for Intermedia Arts, and became the Production Manager and Resident Lighting Designer for Ballet of the Dolls/The Ritz Theater in 2006. From 2014-16, he was the Production Manager and Lighting Designer for James Sewell Ballet. In 2010, he also started his own company, Mike Grogan Lighting LLC.

Anup Giri Kolkata, India (Set Design) is an Indian artist based in Kolkata, India. He graduated in Fine Arts from Indian College of Arts and Craftsmanship from Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata in 1981. He later studied painting at Academy of

Fine Arts in Dresden, Germany in 1992. Anup specialises in depicting the life and culture of tribal people of India. His solo exhibitions have taken place in Kolkata, New Delhi, Mumbai, and Hyderabad, India and in countries such as Bangladesh, Sikkim, Singapore, Japan, London, Germany, and Texas, USA. He has designed sets for various projects for the Indian government.

Leif Jurgensen (Voice Over) has been acting in the Twin Cities for over 25 years. He has performed with Children's Theatre Company, Red Bird Theatre, Collective Unconscious Performance, Exposed Brick, Wayward Theatre, Minnesota Dance Theatre, Frank Theatre, and 15 Head. He studied Viewpoints and Suzuki with the SIT Company in New York. Leif is also a Teaching Artist with CTC's Neighborhood Bridges and Early Bridges Program.

THANK YOU

This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through grants from the Minnesota State Arts Board and the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council: thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund; by the McKnight Foundation; by Target; and by the generosity of Katha Dance Theatre's private donors.

Sustaining Contributors (\$16,000-\$60,000)

The Minnesota State Arts Board and the McKnight Foundation.

Major Contributors (\$5,000-\$15,000)

The National Endowment for the Arts, Minnesota State Arts Board, The Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, Target Foundation, St. Paul Culture STAR Grant, and Dr. Dash Foundation.

Patrons (\$1,000-\$4,999)

Kalyan Mustaphi and The Xcel Foundation; Basant and Veena Kharbanda.

Sponsors (\$500-\$999)

Rita Mustaphi, Ram and Neena Gada, Rupa and Rahul Nair, Sayee Bellamkonda and Sudharani Uppala.

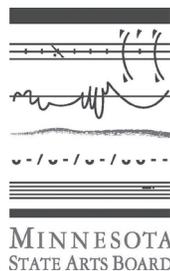
Friends (\$100-\$499)

William Temple Blackwood, Sridhar Koneru, Amit Chandra, Ameriprise, Pranab and Kajal Chatterjee, Medtronics, Shanti Shah, Ben and Mary Stephens, Dr. Tarit Banerjee, Sharika Kurumathur, Raj and Lata Menon, Anne Von Bibra, Anuradha and Anurag Sharma, Ashok and Aparna Mandal and Anonymous donors.

Donors (\$1-\$99)

Sandhya Joshi and Gopal Sadgopal, Dr. Barbara Younoszai, Arijit Mondal, Marcia Boehnlein, Frances Boehnlein, Sonia Prickett, Lucial Moldovan, James Peitzman, Donald LaCourse, Maithili Shinde and Arjendu Pattanayak

For information on making a contribution to Katha Dance Theatre, please call us at 763-533-0756 or email us at info@kathadance.org.



STAFF

Rita Mustaphi, *Artistic Director*
Kalyan Mustaphi, *Executive Director*
Nina Hagen, *Marketing & PR Assistant*
Sreedevi Vengalil, *School Office Manager*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Anu Jain, *President*
Kalyan Mustaphi, *Treasurer*
Anurag Sharma, *Secretary*
Rita Mustaphi
Smriti Maheshwari

We want to hear from you! Please fill out a survey about this performance here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YSZDC2X>