SHANTALA SHIVALINGAPPA PUTS CONTEMPORARY SPIN ON CLASSICAL INDIAN DANCE IN CHICAGO DEBUT MARCH 5–7 AT THE DANCE CENTER

CHICAGO—The Dance Center of Columbia College Chicago offers Chicago audiences a chance to see a contemporary spin on the classical South Indian dance form Kuchipudi when Shantala Shivalingappa makes her Chicago debut with her work Akasha March 5–7, 2015 at The Dance Center, 1306 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago. The Dance Center’s presentation is in association with Eye On India.

Kuchipudi incorporates pure dance, which is rhythmic and abstract, and expressive dance, which is more narrative and uses each part of the body to bring the text, poem or story to life. “Kuchipudi is a harmonious combination of these two aspects, alternating moments of pure dance, rhythmic, bright, vivacious, full of beauty and grace, and narrative moments based on the Hindu mythology, where the focus is on the use of gestures, facial expressions and body language,” Shantala describes.

Akasha (which means “space” or “sky” in Sanskrit) is danced solo by Shantala with four accompanying musicians from India: a vocalist, flutist and two percussionists. “It is said that that Akasha originates in sound, which is a vibration, or said another way, a form of energy and movement,” Shantala writes. “This Space is manifested in various ways at different levels of perception. Starting from the space we perceive around us, the space which surrounds us, the space of the universe which contains everything we know (in Indian thought, this Space is the fifth element and completes the four-fold Air, Water, Fire, Earth), and ending in its subtlest form: that of Space beyond space-time.”

SHANTALA SHIVALINGAPPA
Shantala Shivalingappa, a “child of the east and west,” was born in Madras, India, and raised in Paris. She grew up in a world filled with dance and music, initiated at a young age by her mother, acclaimed dancer Savitry Nair. Lauded by artists and connoisseurs around the world, Shantala brings a captivating contemporary sensibility to the 2,000-year-old traditional South Indian Kuchipudi dance form. Deeply moved and inspired by the grace and purity of Kuchipudi, she dedicated herself to intense and rigorous training from one of its greatest teachers, Vempati Chinna Satyam. She proceeded to work with prestigious artists such as Maurice Bejart, Peter Brook, Bartabas, Ushio Amagatsu (Sankai Juku), and Pina Bausch.

Savitry Nair joins the company for The Dance Center residency. Deeply trained in classical Indian dance like her daughter, Savitry teaches, responds to and reflects upon Shantala’s work.

RESIDENCY ACTIVITIES
A post-performance conversation with Shantala takes place Thursday, March 5, and a pre-performance talk with Savitry Nair takes place Friday, March 6 at 7 p.m., both free to ticket holders. Shantala also will participate in The Dance Center's FREE DanceMakers series, which features contemporary dance artists offering insight into their choreographic process, Monday, March 2, 7–8:30 p.m. at the American Rhythm Center, Fine Arts Building, 410 S. Michigan Avenue, 3rd floor, Chicago. Preregistration is required.

FUNDING
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The Dance Center of Columbia College Chicago is the city’s leading presenter of contemporary dance, showcasing artists of regional, national and international significance. The Dance Center has been named “Chicago’s Best Dance Theatre” by Chicago magazine, “Best Dance Venue” by the Chicago Reader and Chicago’s top dance venue in 2014 by Newcity, and Time Out Chicago cited it as “…consistently offering one of Chicago’s strongest lineups of contemporary and experimental touring dance companies.” Programs of The Dance Center are supported, in part, by Alphawood Foundation, the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, The MacArthur Fund for Arts and Culture at Prince, New England Foundation for the Arts, The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, The Irving Harris Foundation, City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, National Performance Network (NPN) Performance Residency Program and the Arts Midwest Touring Fund. Additional funding is provided by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Illinois Arts Council Agency. Special thanks to Friends of The Dance Center. For information, call 312-369-8330 or visit colum.edu/dancecenterpresents


**Ticket Information**
The Dance Center presents Shantala Shivalingappa March 5–7, 2015, Thursday–Saturday at 8 p.m. at The Dance Center, 1306 S. Michigan Ave. Single tickets are $30. All programming is subject to change. The theatre is accessible to people with disabilities. For information, call 312-369-8330 or visit colum.edu/dancecenterpresents

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