

Lincoln Center's

# white light festival

October 16–November 16, 2016

SPECIAL EDITION

**PLAYBILL**

# CONTENTS

Welcome	4
<b>Is Humanity Getting Better?</b>	6
Throughout history we have caused and faced innumerable crises. How are we doing these days?	
LEIF WENAR	
<b>Harmony Through Art</b>	16
Ehrenkranz Artistic Director Jane Moss discusses the highlights of this year's White Light Festival	
KARISSA KRENZ	
<b>Music in the Anthropocene</b>	22
Listening deeply to the Earth—as both artist and human—is more essential than ever	
JOHN LUTHER ADAMS	
<b>Movement in Every Language</b>	28
Inspired by its biblical namesake tale, <i>Babel(words)</i> explores a world divided by language	
ANN CREWS MELTON	
<b>Creative Pathways</b>	32
How the choices we make reflect ourselves, art, and history	
JEREMY DENK	
<b>What Is It About India?</b>	60
The choreographer and curator shares his love for India through this year's <i>Sounds of India</i> programs	
MARK MORRIS	
<b>An Extraordinary Mosaic</b>	64
Twenty-first century India is an eclectic, burgeoning society in transformation	
PAVAN K. VARMA	
<b>A Complicated Relationship</b>	70
Thoughts on humanity's long and tangled affair with technology	
TOM CHATFIELD	
<b>Animating Audiences</b>	76
Puppetry's magic lies in the creative exchange between skilled artists and imaginative audiences	
MERVYN MILLAR	
<b>Other Dimensions of the White Light Festival</b>	80
<b>White Light Festival Calendar</b>	96



# BEING HUMAN

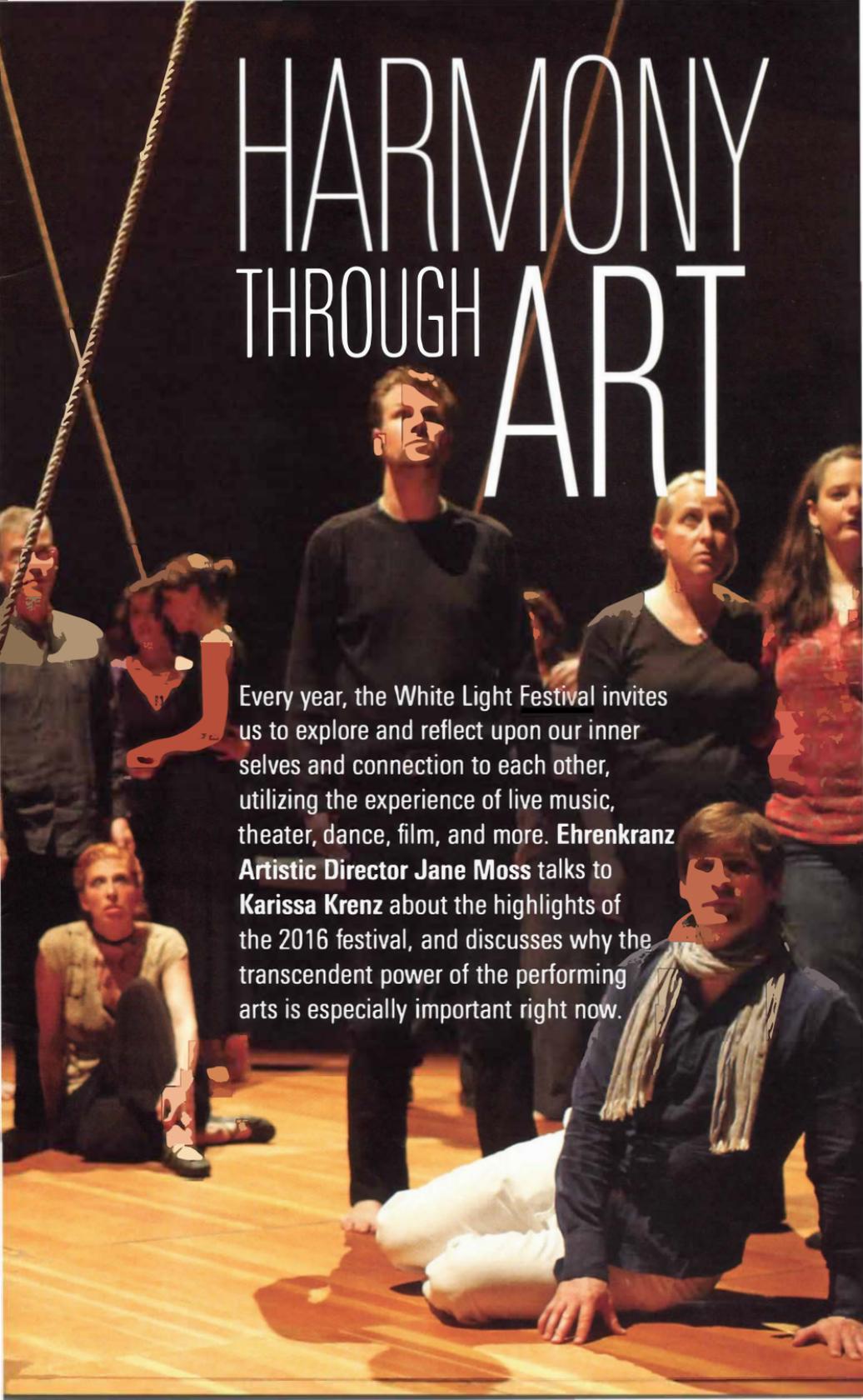
**Welcome** to the 2016 White Light Festival, Lincoln Center's celebration of art's power to illuminate our interior lives. This year, we focus on what it means to be human—or, more important, humane—in an increasingly fractious world, and how creative expression can be a unifying force regardless of our differences and circumstances.

Our seventh annual festival opens with *Human Requiem*, the intimate reinvention of Brahms's emotional *Ein deutsches Requiem*, conducted by Simon Halsey and featuring the Rundfunkchor Berlin. Other presentations include *Babel(words)*, choreographed by Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui and Damien Jalet with set design by Antony Gormley, which explores the importance of cross-cultural communication; Miwa Matreyek's *This World Made Itself*, which looks at our relationship with nature; and an evocative interpretation of Monteverdi's *The Return of Ulysses* by the Handspring Puppet Company, directed by William Kentridge. Also, in a White Light Festival first, we've invited choreographer Mark Morris to curate *Sounds of India*, a special focus on South India, a region of the world with a pulsing vitality that is conveyed through innovative creativity inspired by classical traditions.

As always, White Light encourages thoughtful discussion beyond the concert hall. Our White Light Conversation brings together a range of astute minds, from researchers to philosophers, to discuss what it means to be human from a variety of perspectives. Throughout the festival, artist discussions offer insights into the meaning and process behind their works. White Light Lounges, which take place after most of the festival's performances, are a place to engage and connect with the artists and other audience members. Finally, this special *Playbill* further considers various subjects addressed in the festival through in-depth essays and articles.

Each year, I am gratified to see how meaningfully the White Light Festival touches audiences and artists alike. For both festival regulars and first-time attendees, we hope the festival presentations offer a helpful antidote to the challenging world we face, and reveals and supports what is the best of being human.

**Jane Moss**  
Ehrenkranz Artistic Director  
and White Light Festival Director

A group of people in a dark space with ropes, possibly a circus or performance setting. The people are dressed in dark clothing, and the lighting is dramatic, highlighting their faces and the ropes. The background is dark, and the overall atmosphere is one of anticipation and focus.

# HARMONY THROUGH ART

Every year, the White Light Festival invites us to explore and reflect upon our inner selves and connection to each other, utilizing the experience of live music, theater, dance, film, and more. **Ehrenkranz Artistic Director Jane Moss** talks to **Karissa Krenz** about the highlights of the 2016 festival, and discusses why the transcendent power of the performing arts is especially important right now.

**The 2016 White Light Festival is, once again, encouraging audiences to gather together for an introspective look through the prism of the performing arts. What are you encouraging us to think about this year?**

What is always interesting about the White Light Festival is how thematic threads emerge from the programming. This year we have a number of presentations that explore what I categorize as humanity, which includes the communal component of our being.

We open the festival with *Human Requiem*, an extraordinary staged version of the Brahms Requiem for piano four hands with the Berlin Radio Choir conducted by Simon Halsey. It is a remarkable meditation on grief and mourning, and how those things—something we all experience—can bring us all together. What is particularly unusual about this Requiem is that Brahms wrote it for the survivors, in contrast to other works in this genre, which are generally focused on the people who died and where they are going. Given current events in the world today, Brahms's version seems exceptionally fitting—and is a powerful community experience.

There is also Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, Damien Jalet, and Antony Gormley's *Babel(words)*, a dance piece with text based on the biblical tale of the Tower of Babel that explores our inability to communicate. The challenge of hearing and understanding each other is obviously a fundamental issue facing humanity—and to me it's never been more apparent than in this particular year.

Handspring Puppet Company's *The Return of Ulysses*, directed by William Kentridge, closes the festival. This Monteverdi opera explores longing and—one could argue—happy endings. I find it

particularly fascinating that when one looks back to the old Greek myths, one can see the continuum of human expression. First articulated over 3,000 years ago, they still provide fresh inspiration to creators working today—as they have throughout the millennia, which includes Monteverdi, who created this particular work in Renaissance Italy. It is a powerful statement of our evolution on the one hand, and yet the fixed nature of our storytelling on the other.

**It seems that the humanity thread runs throughout the majority of the presentations this fall.**

We have another Requiem, Verdi's this time, with the London Symphony Orchestra, and under the leadership of the dynamic conductor Gianandrea Noseda it is certain to be a very engaging experience. And Samuel Beckett is part of the festival again as well—I think his work is an ongoing punctuation for the festival, because he, of course, like no other author, gets at the existential component of being a human, and the essential longing and nothingness that is at the center of our existence.

I am also looking forward to the wonderful Miwa Matreyek's *This World Made Itself*, which is really a meditation on nature. I'm thrilled to include this work in the festival, because our relationship with the Earth is a whole other aspect of human existence that offers us such respite and succor. And it also reminds us of who we are in the much greater scheme of things.

This year's panel discussion will look at the issue of the many dimensions of humanity from an array of perspectives, ranging from the scientific to the spiritual. There seem to be such sharp fissures everywhere, and when you think back

*This World Made Itself*



PHOTO: MIWA MATREYEK

to the ideals of the Enlightenment, with its presumed perfectibility of human nature, one is left to question how much progress are we making.

**Could you tell us a bit about *Sounds of India*, this year's special focus on South India, and why you invited Mark Morris to be its curator?**

India offers another perspective on humanity and transcendence. It is a country balancing the lives of 1.2 billion people—it's a jam-packed crowded chaotic society, and spiritual expression is one of the ways they cope with those very chaotic dimensions of life there.

Mark Morris has had a longstanding major interest in India, and I was so happy he agreed to take on this curatorial role for us. Mark is quite unusual in his curiosity and knowledge about a wide range of music and artistic expression, so to be able to illuminate his passion—in this case, for India—is wonderful. India is a very appropriate and immense subject for the White Light Festival as well, so to begin with a particular focus—South India, as opposed to the entire country—is helpful.

**Since we're talking about humanity in what is proving to be such an emotionally difficult year for so many, what do you hope the White Light Festival can bring to people?**

The time in which we're living is extremely fraught, fractious, and divisive, and art is an extraordinary unifier—it's a wonderful community-building experience. I think art can not only elevate the spirit, it also provides an antidote to small-mindedness. It can be a powerful reminder of the sublime, beautiful, transcendent truths of the human condition that unify us and inspire great generosity. The performing arts are especially about having those experiences, because there are performers and an audience. The way an emotional response to a work of art bonds a live audience together is quite unique and reminds us of the many universal ways we are all connected. The deepest parts of ourselves are touched and illuminated by great works of art, and in those depths, otherness dissolves. ■

Karissa Krenz is a New York-based performing-arts writer, creative professional, and flâneuse. She is the editor of this special White Light Festival *Playbill*.

Lincoln Center's

# white light festival

October 16–November 16, 2016

*Friday, October 28, 2016 at 7:30 pm*

*Sunday, October 30, 2016 at 5:00 pm*

*Pre-concert lecture by Lakshmi Vishwanathan on Friday, October 28 at 6:15 pm  
in the Anya and Andrew Shiva Gallery, John Jay College*

## *Sounds of India*

Curated by Mark Morris

## Kerala Kalamandalam Kathakali Troupe

**Dussasana Vadhom ("The Killing of Dussasana"), from the *Mahabharata***

*This performance is approximately 60 minutes long and will be performed without intermission.*

*Please join the artists for a White Light Lounge immediately following the performance.*

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The White Light Festival presentation of *Sounds of India* is supported by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

**These performances are made possible in part by the Josie Robertson Fund for Lincoln Center.**

Gerald W. Lynch Theater at John Jay College

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## UPCOMING WHITE LIGHT FESTIVAL EVENTS:

### **Sounds of India**

*Saturday, October 29; Thursday, November 3; and Saturday, November 5 at 7:30 pm*

#### **Mark Morris Dance Group**

**Mark Morris**, choreographer

#### **MMDG Music Ensemble**

O Rangasayee

Serenade

The "Tamil Film Songs in Stereo" Pas de Deux

Pure Dance Items (World premiere)

*Preperformance discussion with Mark Morris on*

*November 5 at 6:15 pm*

### **Sounds of India**

*Tuesday, November 1 at 7:30 pm in the Gerald W. Lynch Theater at John Jay College*

**V. Selvaganesh**, hybrid drums and khanjira

**Vikku Vinayakram**, chathur ghatam

**V. Uma Shankar**, ghatam and konnakol

**Swaminathan**, khanjira and konnakol

**A. Ganesan**, morsing and konnakol

*Preperformance artist discussion at 6:15 pm*

### **Sounds of India**

*Wednesday, November 2 and Friday, November 4 at 7:30 pm in the Gerald W. Lynch Theater*

#### **Nrityagram Dance Ensemble**

**Surupa Sen**, choreographer

#### **Nrityagram Music Ensemble**

*Śrīyah*: Sankirtanam; Panchtaal Pallavi; Lalita Lavanga; Aali; Sri Devi

*Postperformance artist discussion on November 2 in the Anya and Andrew Shiva Gallery*

### **A Little Night Music**

*Thursday, November 3 at 10:00 pm in the Stanley H. Kaplan Penthouse*

#### **Nrityagram Music Ensemble**

**Jateen Sahu**, vocals and harmonium

**Rohan Dahale**, voice and mardala (percussion)

**Sanjib Kunda**, violin

**Manu Raj**, bamboo flute

For tickets, call (212) 721-6500 or visit [WhiteLightFestival.org](http://WhiteLightFestival.org). Call the Lincoln Center Info Request Line at (212) 875-5766 to learn about program cancellations or to request a White Light Festival brochure.

**Visit [WhiteLightFestival.org](http://WhiteLightFestival.org) for full festival listings.**

Join the conversation: #LCWhiteLight

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*We would like to remind you that the sound of coughing and rustling paper might distract the performers and your fellow audience members.*

*In consideration of the performing artists and members of the audience, those who must leave before the end of the performance are asked to do so between pieces. The taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment are not allowed in the building.*

# Synopsis

By Lakshmi Vishwanathan

“The Killing of Dussasana” is an episode from the *Mahabharata*, an epic tale of war and retribution between the five Pandavas and their hundred cousins, the Kauravas. The main characters are Draupadi, the wife of the five Pandava brothers (Yudhishtira, Arjuna, Bhima, Nakula, and Sahadeva) and Krishna, their friend and mentor. The Kauravas are led by the two eldest brothers, Duryodhana and Dussasana.

Introduction: In a game of dice, the Pandavas lose their kingdom, land, and everything to the Kauravas. In the end, the victors demand that the Pandavas pawn their wife, Draupadi. When Draupadi is dragged to the arena and humiliated by Dussasana, she vows to take revenge.

## Scene 1: Krishna and Draupadi

Krishna is seated as Draupadi approaches him. Distressed and agitated by the humiliation to which she had been subjected, she falls at the feet of Krishna. She demands justice and insists that war is the only means of avenging her suffering at the hands of the evil Dussasana, who not only tried to disrobe her, but also attempted to violate her chastity.

## Scene 2: A dialogue between Krishna, Duryodhana, and Dussasana

Krishna tries to persuade Duryodhana to give half the kingdom to the landless Pandavas. An angry Duryodhana refuses and orders the capture of Krishna. Dussasana comes to enslave Krishna and tie him up with a rope. As Krishna is an avatar of Vishnu, the powerful Lord of the universe, he assumes his cosmic form, and

renders Duryodhana and Dussasana unconscious. He then vanishes from the court.

## Scene 3: Krishna preaches the Gita (Bhagavad Gita) to Arjuna

The Kauravas and Pandavas are positioned on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. Arjuna leads the Pandavas to war with Krishna as his charioteer. A reluctant and despondent Arjuna asks Krishna: “Why should I kill my Gurus and my relatives? What does this war mean to me?” Krishna responds with an awe-inspiring sermon on the duties and responsibilities of a true warrior. He convinces Arjuna about the importance of doing his duty, by extolling the virtue of truthfulness. Krishna then displays his magnificent cosmic form to Arjuna, who sheds his dejection and prepares to take on his enemies.

## Scene 4: The angry Bhima and Dussasana

Bhima, filled with wild rage, meets Dussasana on the battlefield. He prays to Lord Vishnu and assumes the ferocity of one of Vishnu’s incarnations, which is half lion and half human. Dussasana is vanquished in the battle that follows, and Bhima, the fearful creature, tears into his belly and bathes in his blood. Draupadi arrives on the scene. Bhima rushes towards her, smears her hair with blood and binds it with Dussasana’s entrails. Draupadi is happy that she has been avenged. Krishna appears, and soon Bhima’s fearsome rage abates. He seeks Krishna’s blessings.

## Dhanasi: the finale

In a traditional dance sequence, the actor who plays Krishna bows to the Almighty and the audience.

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# Note on the Program

By Lakshmi Vishwanathan

Kathakali translates literally as “story-play.” This genre of theater-art traces its geographical roots to what the tourism industry has famously promoted as “God’s own country”—the state of Kerala in the south-west of India. Like other classical performances in India, Kathakali has a long and complex history with origins in the *Natya Sastra*, a treatise on dramatic arts of the 2nd and 3rd centuries. In ancient Sanskrit theater, *Nataka*, or drama, is an amalgam of *Nritta* (dance), *Gita* (vocal music), *Vadya* (instrumental music), and *Abhinaya* (histri- onics). The last includes *Mudras* (hand ges- tures). Kathakali evolved its own technique of producing plays, using texts in Sanskrit and Malayalam (the language of Kerala) by respected writers. In this drama, the dia- logues are not spoken but sung by two expert singers who narrate the story and situations. The actors play their roles using elaborate hand gestures (as many as 700), stylized facial expressions, and a typical earthy body language. Often the acting is accompanied by rhythms played on the drums. The elaborate narration is punctuated with pure rhythmic dance with calcu- lated moves called *kalasam*.

Kathakali evolved from earlier theatrical performances known as Krishnattam and Ramattam, both part of temple rituals in the ancient royal kingdoms of Kerala. Dedicated training and full-time involve- ment in the art became possible under the patronage of kings, particularly two power- ful kingdoms in Kerala. The superior schol- arship of patrons well versed in the *Natya Sastra* also produced many plays and brought innovations. Chief among them was the poetic aspect and the evolution of negative but powerful characters like Ravana in the *Ramayana*. The anti-hero of Kathakali is admired as much as heroes like Krishna and Arjuna.

The physical training for Kathakali begins at a young age. It lasts a minimum of five years, with flexibility in movement helped by regular Ayurvedic body massages. Every part of the facial muscles requires training too, and actors emote using their eyebrows, eyes, cheeks, and lips. The ges- tures known as *hastha mudra* (symbols pro- duced by the hands) take years to master. *Nritta*, or pure dance, is performed to the rhythms played by the drums, with a particu- lar stance and positioning of the feet. It is believed that tapping the earth with the soles of the feet is not sacred; therefore the feet are tilted to the sides when they strike the floor. Unlike other dancers, Kathakali dancers wear their bells just below their knees and not around their ankles.

In its present form, Kathakali is highly visi- ble and is an easily identifiable perfor- mance tradition that has been kept alive by a few committed institutions, with some government support. On the stage in India and abroad, we see a spectacular show with the most colorful and somewhat intimidating costuming. It is accompanied by music that is a mix of poetry and prose narrating a story, usually from the Indian Sanskrit epics like the *Ramayana* or *Mahabharata* and underlining the triumph of good over evil. The drama sizzles, not because of the spoken word but by a series of suggestive gestures and dynamic movements illustrating the accompanying text, which is sung in a particular style based on the *raga* system of Carnatic music. Within a space less than 15 feet square, the actors dance, gesticulate, and emote with their faces covered by heavy make-up, and their heads decorated with formidable hand-crafted crowns.

Special make-up artists are employed to give each character an identity. Hours of meditative silence envelop the dressing room. The color scheme is symbolic: For example, Krishna wears green with a

white ribbon outlining the face. His eyes and eyebrows are exaggerated with black kohl. His mouth is extended and painted a bright red. His crown has a crest of peacock feathers. All noble characters are made up with shades of this green color. Fierce characters wear more elaborate make-up, with intricate white lines on the face, a red margin around the nose, and a white ball on the tip of the nose. This is called *Katti* (knife). A wicked character like Dussasana has this pattern on his face, with a dark patch around the eyes, a pair of protruding canine teeth, and a fiery red beard (*chokkanadi*). Another type is called *Kari* (black), a grotesque face with a black and white basket-like crown, and black beard. Shiva as a fierce hunter is seen in such a get-up. In contrast, the gentle female characters (played by men) have faces painted in a golden yellow, with shiny decorative white spots.

The costume of the male characters consists of a tight fitting jacket with several strands of gold beads covering the chest, a series of scarves with knotted ends, and a multilayered billowing white skirt. Every performance has a ritual start, with the preliminaries performed behind a curtain held by two men. The play culminates in a climactic scene, most often played as dawn breaks after an all-night show. In some plays, long fights reach a crescendo in a frenzy of passion and bloodshed. The audience is a silent witness to fierce scenes where convention and realism meet. There is a special mode

of acting such a scene called "display of blood." The air resounds with loud shrieks let out by possessed characters like Bhima. Such horrific scenes are enacted only by experienced actors.

This is one drama where the power of acting is enigmatic, yet so dynamic that even the negative characters are played by expert lead actors who are held in high esteem. The spiritual connotation of the triumph of good over evil common to all Indian mythological tales makes Kathakali also a sacred performance. Actors pray in earnestness before each performance, not only for the success of the play, but for divine grace to protect them while they portray superhuman characters both good and evil. Intellectuals have described Kathakali as the "theater of the mind." It has the power to communicate a plethora of emotions without speaking to the audience, kindling their imagination to visualize another time, another world.

*Lakshmi Vishwanathan is an award-winning exponent of Bharatanatyam, a style of Indian classical dance. As a researcher and writer, she has contributed articles to leading newspapers, academic journals, and arts portals. She has authored four acclaimed books on dance, music, and the cultural heritage of South India.*

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*For an interview with Mark Morris on curating Sounds of India, please turn to page 60.*



By Rabindranath Tagore

My soul is alight with your infinitude of stars. Your world has  
broken upon me like a flood.

The flowers of your garden blossom in my body. The joy of life  
that is everywhere burns like an incense in my heart. And the  
breath of all things plays on my life as on a pipe of reeds.

*For poetry comments and suggestions, please write  
to [programming@LincolnCenter.org](mailto:programming@LincolnCenter.org).*

# Meet the Artists

## Kerala Kalamandalam

The dawn of the 20th century saw a cultural renaissance throughout India. In the south Indian state of Kerala, the poet Vallathol Narayana Menon realized that the traditional performing arts had to be taken public in order to survive. He set out to preserve Kathakali and other stylized art forms. Kakkad Karanavappad, an eminent scholar, and Manakkulam Mukundaraja, a cultural activist, were a source of inspiration to Vallathol in the establishment of Kerala Kalamandalam along the banks of the Bharathapuzha River in 1934. This was the first step in the cultural history of Kerala to institutionalize the classical performing arts that were, until then, left to the patronage of provincial rulers and landlords.

With the establishment of Kalamandalam, the social and cultural emancipation of traditional artists became a reality. Major Kathakali artists were invited to live at Kalamandalam, where they performed and taught talented students. The late Pattikamthoti Ravunni Menon, the doyen of the North School of Kathakali, headed the faculty for nearly 15 years. He groomed great artists such as Kalamandalam Krishnan Nair, Ramankutty Nair, and Padmanabhan Nair, who brought global fame and recognition to their alma mater. Kalamandalam celebrated its silver, golden, and diamond jubilees in full grandeur, with the prime ministers of India at the time inaugurating the nearly weeklong celebrations.

Kalamandalam, a premier public institution that harmonizes the practical and theoretical areas of the traditional arts, offers high-school education to its students and degree courses in 14 art disciplines. In 2006 Kalamandalam was declared a Deemed University for Art and Culture. Since then, post-graduate programs in Kathakali, Kutiyattam, and Mohiniyattam have been introduced. Kalamandalam now

functions across two campuses in south-western India.

## Gerald W. Lynch Theater at John Jay College

John Jay College of Criminal Justice of the City University of New York, an international leader in educating for justice, offers a rich liberal arts and professional studies curriculum to upwards of 15,000 undergraduate and graduate students from more than 135 nations. In teaching, scholarship and research, the college approaches justice as an applied art and science in service to society and as an ongoing conversation about fundamental human desires for fairness, equality, and the rule of law.

Since opening its doors in 1988, the Gerald W. Lynch Theater has been an invaluable cultural resource for John Jay College and the larger New York City community. The theater is dedicated to the creation and presentation of performing arts programming of all disciplines with a special focus on how the artistic imagination can shed light on the many perceptions of justice in our society. The theater is also a member of CUNY Stages, a consortium of 16 performing arts centers located on CUNY campuses across New York City.

The Gerald W. Lynch Theater has hosted events in the Lincoln Center Festival since its first season in 1996, as well as performances by the Lincoln Center's Great Performers series, New York City Opera, Gotham Chamber Opera, Metropolitan Opera Guild, and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater/Ailey II. The theater has also been the site of many television and film specials, including A&E's *Live by Request*, Comedy Central's *Premium Blend* and *Robert Klein in Concert*, and VH1's *Soundtrack Live*.

## White Light Festival

*I could compare my music to white light, which contains all colors. Only a prism can divide the colors and make them appear;*

*this prism could be the spirit of the listener.*  
—Arvo Pärt. Now in its seventh year, the White Light Festival is Lincoln Center's annual exploration of music and art's power to reveal the many dimensions of our interior lives. International in scope, the multidisciplinary festival offers a broad spectrum of the world's leading instrumentalists, vocalists, ensembles, choreographers, dance companies, and directors complemented by conversations with artists and scholars and post-performance White Light Lounges.

## **Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc.**

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts (LCPA) serves three primary roles: presenter of artistic programming, national leader

in arts and education and community relations, and manager of the Lincoln Center campus. A presenter of more than 3,000 free and ticketed events, performances, tours, and educational activities annually, LCPA offers 15 programs, series, and festivals including American Songbook, Great Performers, Lincoln Center Festival, Lincoln Center Out of Doors, Midsummer Night Swing, the Mostly Mozart Festival, and the White Light Festival, as well as the Emmy Award-winning *Live From Lincoln Center*, which airs nationally on PBS. As manager of the Lincoln Center campus, LCPA provides support and services for the Lincoln Center complex and the 11 resident organizations. In addition, LCPA led a \$1.2 billion campus renovation, completed in October 2012.

## **Kerala Kalamandalam Kathakali Troupe**

Kalamandalam Krishnakumar, *Actor and Troupe Leader*

Kalamandalam Ravikumar, *Actor*

Kalamandalam Soorianarayanan, *Actor*

Kalamandalam Mukundan, *Actor*

Kalamandalam Vijayakrishnan, *Percussion (Chenda)*

Kalamandalam Ramadas, *Percussion (Maddalam)*

Kalamandalam Sreeraj, *Percussion (Chenda)*

Kalamandalam Unnikrishnan, *Percussion (Maddalam)*

Kalamandalam Harish Kumar, *Vocalist*

Kalamandalam Ajesh Prabhakar, *Vocalist*

Kalamandalam Sivadas, *Make-up (Head)*

Kalamandalam Sreejith, *Make-up Assistant*

Arun, *Green Room Assistant*

Gopikrishnan R., *Official and Troupe Manager*

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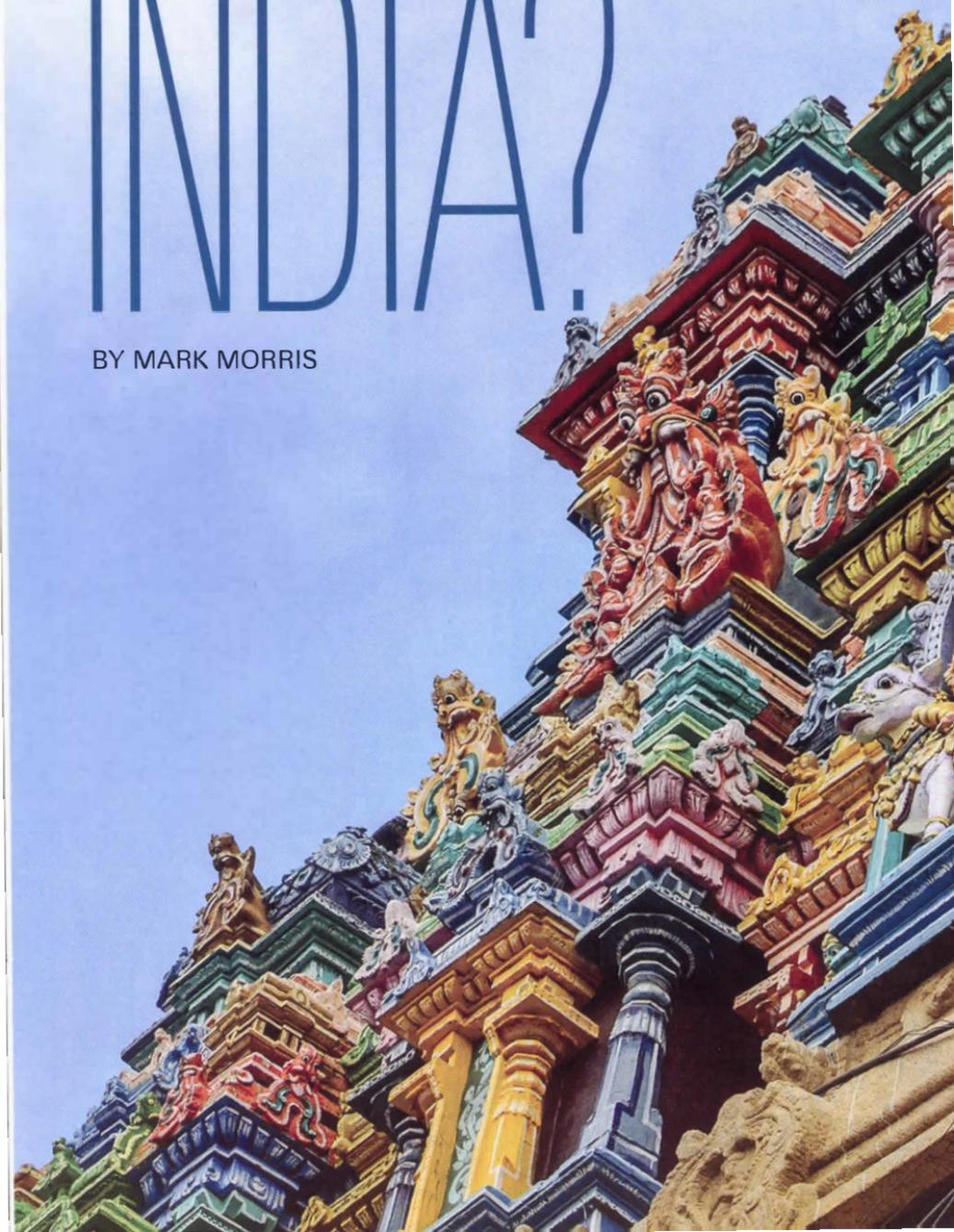
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# WHAT IS IT ABOUT INDIA?

BY MARK MORRIS





Choreographer and *Sounds of India* curator **Mark Morris** writes about how he fell in love with India, why he finds his experiences there so fascinating, and what we can all discover about this captivating culture.

I first traveled in India in 1981 on a State Department–sponsored tour as a member of Laura Dean Dancers and Musicians, performing in five cities over two weeks. I fell in love with India—and with a man. I learned then what I’ve observed many times since, simply and generally put: First-time visitors feel immediately welcome and at ease; or feel panic and want to go back home. In both cases, and in my experience, India is overwhelming. As for me, I immediately felt entirely comfortable and very eager to return. For years I lacked the money, the time, or both. It would be a decade before I returned.

On that initial trip to India we were fortunate to attend a number of dance and music concerts. Although I was somewhat familiar with North Indian (Hindustani) music—like the great Sitar artist Ravi Shankar, the percussionist Alla Rakha (father of the marvelous musician and friend Zakir Hussein), and Uday Shankar (brother to Ravi and proponent of the classical dance form Bharatanatyam)—I’d never encountered the miracles of Kathak dance or South Indian (Carnatic) music. On first hearing the divine M. S. Subbulakshmi, I was deeply taken with her singing, and back in the States, I bought all of the recordings of hers I could find, which wasn’t that easy at the time. (Seek out her music and listen. Trust me.)

Every couple of years, over the course of a couple of decades, I visited the South of India primarily, drawn to the music, the dance, the cuisine, the history, and the people. On every visit, I made it a point to attend Madras Music Season, the incredible annual winter music festival in Chennai (formerly Madras). At most of the concerts I attended (sometimes as many as three

a day) I was one of just two or three non-Indians in the audience of hundreds of music lovers. Why were there so few visitors to this amazing festival, with its dizzying, extravagant, deep music?

I have made many loyal, dear friends in India: dancers, choreographers, musicians, scholars, critics, photographers, political activists, designers. I love going to India even though it is way too hot for me. On a trip in 2004, arriving in Chennai, I learned that the great Subbulakshmi had died. It being India, photographs of her corpse lying on a pallet, prepared for cremation, surrounded by music pandits and government notables, heaped with marigolds, was above the fold on the front page of every newspaper in the country. Appropriate adoration, respect, love, and honor for a revered, cherished artist—a national treasure and conscience had “dropped her body.” We can still hear her voice on recordings (which are still broadcast over tinny temple speakers) and in the inheritors of her art, the profound singers of today.

I am no expert on the numberless arts of India. Rather, I am a true amateur, with a working knowledge, deep respect, and devotion to Indian culture. I am often humbled and a little embarrassed by my ignorance after so many years of attempting to follow the supremely sophisticated wanderings of a *raga*, a dance drama, or the impenetrable complexities of the *Mahabharata*. I have much more to learn, and that is a prospect that thrills and delights me. The enticement is inescapable. Through the artists we are presenting during the White Light Festival, I invite audiences to experience through sight and sound and imagination a very small sample, and very great variety of South Indian music and its related lyric arts.

Don't imagine that this art is beyond you. Please don't prepare yourself for something you don't know. Just come and sit, look, listen, and live the time we all share in the theater. I know you will be opened, moved, and changed. ■



Ganesha writing the *Mahabharata*



Nrityagram Dance Ensemble

PHOTO: SHALINI JAIN

## Three Questions for Mark Morris

### How has Indian art and culture informed your own work in general?

This may sound a little presumptuous or even crazy, but I have long maintained that watching my own dances through the lens of Indian dance is helpful. All of my work, and pretty much all Indian dance, is tied very directly to melody (*raga*), rhythm (*tala*), gesture (*mudra*), and expression (*abhinaya*). I offer dance that communicates and aligns with music in the same way. Music visualization? Sure.

### Why did you choose to highlight these particular artists in *Sounds of India*?

I wish I could present dozens more. I have a close and deep relationship—going back 20 years—with the company known as Nrityagram. I consider the artists there to be amongst the finest dancers anywhere in the world. They have been seen many times in New York, but not in the context of a concentrated and focused festival. And the astonishing

vocal artist T. M. Krishna, who is very well-known in India for his great singing, historical knowledge and his modern politics, must be heard in person to be adequately appreciated. The photographer Dayanita Singh, also known worldwide, has been blurring the line between pictures and books for years. And my dear friend, the dancer/scholar/writer Lakshmi Vishwanathan, will be on hand to explain and to guide us through the history and context of the arts we are presenting. These are just a small sample of the many fine artists who will appear in *Sounds of India*. Oh, and my marvelous dancers and musicians!

### Why do you think it's important for Western audiences to experience Indian arts? What can it teach us?

It is important for everyone to experience all the art of the world that they can handle. I'm not out to teach anybody anything. Profound humanity, kindness, sophistication, joy, and sheer beauty are plenty, and available to everyone. ■

# white light festival calendar

October 2016

16	Sun.	7:30	Human Requiem	🌙 SH
18	Tue.	7:30	Human Requiem	🎤 🌙 SH
19	Wed.	7:30	Human Requiem	🌙 SH
20	Thu.	7:30	This World Made Itself	🌙 CST
21	Fri.	7:30	This World Made Itself	🌙 CST
21	Fri.	7:30	Immortal Bach	🌙 SM
22	Sat.	7:30	This World Made Itself	🎤 🌙 CST
25	Tue.	6:15	Film/Pather Panchali (Apu Trilogy)	BWA
25	Tue.	9:15	Film/Aparajito (Apu Trilogy)	BWA
25	Wed.	6:15	Film/The River	BWA
26	Wed.	7:30	Babel(words)	🎤 🌙 RT
25	Wed.	8:45	Film/Apur Sansar (Apu Trilogy)	BWA
27	Thu.	7:30	Babel(words)	🌙 RT
27	Thu.	7:30	Bombay Jayashri	🌙 GLT
28	Fri.	7:30	Kerala Kalamandalam Kathakali Troupe	🎤 🌙 GLT
29	Sat.	7:30	Mark Morris Dance Group	🌙 GLT
30	Sun.	3:00	Verdi Requiem	🎤 DGH
30	Sun.	5:00	Kerala Kalamandalam Kathakali Troupe	🌙 GLT

## white light lounges

Keep the White Light spirit alive with White Light Lounges following most performances. Come mingle with the artists and your fellow concertgoers while enjoying a complimentary glass of wine or sparkling water.

White Light Lounges take place adjacent to the performance venue.

Human Requiem | Oct. 16, 18–19  
 This World Made Itself | Oct. 20–22  
 Immortal Bach | Oct. 21  
 Babel(words) | Oct. 26–27  
 Bombay Jayashri | Oct. 27  
 Kerala Kalamandalam  
 Kathakali Troupe | Oct. 28, 30  
 Mark Morris Dance Group  
 Oct. 29, Nov. 3, 5

V. Selvaganesh | Nov. 1  
 Nrityagram | Nov. 2, 4  
 T.M. Krishna | Nov. 6  
 (T)here to (T)here | Nov. 11–12  
 Venetian Coronation | Nov. 12  
 The Return of Ulysses | Nov. 14–16  
 Medieval to Modern | Nov. 16



November 2016

1	Tue. 7:30	V. Selvaganesh	GLT
2	Wed. 7:30	Nrityagram Dance Ensemble	GLT
3	Thu. 7:30	Mark Morris Dance Group	GLT
3	Thu. 10:00	A Little Night Music/Nrityagram Music Ensemble	SKP
4	Fri. 7:30	Nrityagram Dance Ensemble	GLT
4	Fri. 10:00	A Little Night Music/MMDG Music Ensemble	SKP
5	Sat. 4:00	White Light Conversation	SKP
5	Sat. 7:30	Mark Morris Dance Group	GLT
6	Sun. 5:00	T.M. Krishna	GLT
9	Wed. 7:00	All That Fall	DUKE
10	Thu. 7:00	All That Fall	DUKE
10	Thu. 8:00	(T)here to (T)here	BAC
10	Thu. 9:00	All That Fall	DUKE
11	Fri. 7:00	All That Fall	DUKE
11	Fri. 8:00	(T)here to (T)here	BAC
11	Fri. 9:00	All That Fall	DUKE
12	Sat. 3:00	All That Fall	DUKE
12	Sat. 7:00	All That Fall	DUKE
12	Sat. 7:30	Venetian Coronation	ATH
12	Sat. 8:00	(T)here to (T)here	BAC
12	Sat. 9:00	All That Fall	DUKE
14	Mon. 7:30	The Return of Ulysses	GLT
15	Tue. 7:30	The Return of Ulysses	GLT
16	Wed. 7:30	The Return of Ulysses	GLT
16	Wed. 7:30	Medieval to Modern	ATH

**ATH** Alice Tully Hall  
Broadway at 65th Street

**BAC** Baryshnikov Arts Center,  
Jerome Robbins Theater  
450 West 37th Street

**BWA** Bruno Walter Auditorium  
The New York Public Library  
for the Performing Arts,  
111 Amsterdam Avenue  
at 64th Street

**CST** Clark Studio Theater  
165 West 65th Street,  
7th floor

**DGH** David Geffen Hall  
Broadway at 65th Street

**DUKE** The Duke on 42nd Street  
229 West 42nd Street

**GLT** Gerald W. Lynch Theater  
at John Jay College  
524 West 59th Street

**RT** Rose Theater  
Jazz at Lincoln Center's  
Frederick P. Rose Hall,  
Broadway at 60th Street

**SKP** Stanley H. Kaplan  
Penthouse  
165 West 65th Street,  
10th floor

**SH** Synod House,  
the Cathedral of  
St. John the Divine  
1047 Amsterdam Avenue  
at 110th Street

**SM** Church of St. Mary  
the Virgin  
145 West 46th Street

Lincoln Center's

# white light festival

October 16–November 16, 2016

*Friday, November 4, 2016 at 10:00 pm*

## *A Little Night Music*

### MMDG Music Ensemble

Georgy Valtchev, *Violin*

Anna Luce, *Violin*

Jessica Troy, *Viola*

Michael Haas, *Cello*

Colin Fowler, *Piano*

### NICO MUHLY *Drones & Viola* (2010–12)

TROY, FOWLER

### LOU HARRISON *Suite for Cello and Piano* (1995)

HAAS, FOWLER

### MESSIAEN *Selected Preludes* (1928–29)

La colombe

Chant d'extase dans un paysage triste

Un reflet dans le vent

FOWLER

### ESA-PEKKA SALONEN *Homunculus* (2007)

VALTCHEV, LUCE, TROY, HAAS

*This program is approximately one hour long and  
will be performed without intermission.*

Please make certain all your electronic devices are switched off.

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The White Light Festival presentation of *Sounds of India* is supported by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

*This performance is made possible in part by the Josie Robertson Fund for Lincoln Center.*

Steinway Piano

Stanley H. Kaplan Penthouse

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The **MMDG MUSIC ENSEMBLE**, formed in 1996, is integral to the Mark Morris Dance Group. Its repertory ranges from 17th- and 18th-century works to modern and contemporary scores. The musicians also participate in Access/MMDG, the Dance Group's educational and community programming at home and on tour. The ensemble is led by Colin Fowler, who began collaborating with MMDG in 2005.

**COLIN FOWLER** (piano), music director for the Mark Morris Dance Group, studied at Interlochen Arts Academy and The Juilliard School. A versatile musician and conductor, he is a veteran of numerous Broadway shows, including the Tony Award-winning musical *Jersey Boys*. He is currently the organist at Marble Collegiate Church on Fifth Avenue and serves as music director at Park Avenue Synagogue. He has also performed and recorded with many leading classical musicians and ensembles, including Deborah Voigt and the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

**MICHAEL HAAS** (cello) is a member of the acclaimed Momenta Quartet, which has received two Koussevitzky Fund Commissions and released its debut album on Albany Records in 2015. He also performs regularly with the Orchestra of St. Luke's and Princeton Symphony, and holds degrees from the Curtis Institute of Music and The Juilliard School.

**ANNA LUCE** (violin) is a modern and Baroque violinist. She studied at the University of Texas in Austin, and has performed and recorded with the Smithsonian Chamber Orchestra and served as concertmaster of *Ars Nova* in Washington, D.C. She appears regularly with the American Baroque Orchestra, Mark Morris Dance Group, and in the pit for Broadway's *Hamilton*.

**JESSICA TROY** (viola) wears a variety of freelance hats, from touring with the MMDG Music Ensemble to performing on Baroque viola with such groups as the Sebastian Chamber Players and Trinity Baroque Orchestra. She is a member of the Orchestra of St. Luke's and Westchester Philharmonic, has performed with Novus NY, and recorded for Lou Reed and Ani DiFranco.

**GEORGY VALTCHEV** (violin) has appeared as a soloist, recitalist, and chamber musician throughout the U.S., Europe, and Asia. He studied at The Juilliard School as a scholarship student of Dorothy DeLay, and since 2011 has been a guest concertmaster of the London Philharmonic Orchestra. He has been a soloist with orchestras in Boston, Chicago, Dallas, and New York.