

## Asha for Education – Madison Chapter

<http://www.ashanet.org/madison>

*Asha for Education* is a non-profit volunteer-run organization dedicated to socio-economic change in India. In pursuit of this goal, Asha focuses on supporting basic education projects in the belief that education is a critical pre-requisite for socio-economic change. *Asha* means hope in Hindi and symbolizes the belief that educating today's children will provide the seeds for far-reaching changes in the future. Asha's main focus is to carefully select socio-economic projects in India that have a significant education component. Asha raises funds to support these projects by soliciting donations (both individual and corporate), organizing fund-raisers and selling merchandise. Asha also gives volunteers the opportunity for personal leadership in various activities and raises awareness about pressing social issues, *thus helping to prepare a generation of socially responsible citizens*. Asha, founded in the summer of 1991 at the University of California, Berkeley, today, has more than 40 chapters worldwide with more than 300 active volunteers, and it has disbursed over a total of **\$1 million** to more than 120 different projects all over India.

The Madison chapter of Asha for Education has been active since 1997. Over the years, we have disbursed close to \$15,000 to several projects -- the most recent ones being the Little Stars School in Uttar Pradesh, the Swanirvar Project in West Bengal, the Gandhian Institute of Rural Development (GIRD) in Manipur, and the Vivekananda Foundation's rural education project in Karnataka. We raise funds through donations solicited *via* a bi-annual newsletter (*Asha Deep*), special events (concerts like this) and sale of merchandise (T-shirts, calendars, mugs, greeting cards, Diwali diyas). We also work towards raising social awareness by organizing invited talks and discussions. Recent examples include the 1998 *Eye-On-India* discussion series, the screening of *Making of the Mahatma*, a video festival (*Power to the People*), and invited talks by speakers including Medha Patkar, Nafisa Barot, Sandeep Pandey and Madhukar Deshpande.

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### Our thanks to:



Funded in part by the Associated Students of Madison. ASM does not necessarily endorse the beliefs or actions of this organization.



MULTI-CULTURAL COUNCIL

**WORT89.9FM**



**ASHA** Madison  
an action group for basic education in India

presents

राखेर राखेइ

An Indian Dance Drama  
by  
Navarasa Dance Theater



featuring

**Aparna Sindhoor**

with

**Rosemary Candelario, Sharmila Gopinathan,  
Bindu Panikkar & Christian Willauer**

Mills Concert Hall, UW-Madison  
Friday, October 5th 2001, 7.30pm

## Program

**7:30 – 7:40 pm: Introduction**

An introduction to Asha for Education and the artistes

**7:40 – 9:00 pm: River Rites**

*Choreography and Direction* **Aparna Sindhoor**

*Story* **Raju Sivasankaran**

*Music* **Warren Senders**

(Some songs are from the people's movement in the Narmada valley)

*Dancers* **Aparna Sindhoor**

**Sharmila Gopinathan**

**Rosemary Candelario**

*Light & Sound* **Christian Willauer**

*Narration* **Bindu Panikkar**

A dance drama that celebrates the current struggles of thousands of people to halt the building of big dams on the Narmada River in Gujarat, India. The uprooting of millions of people is happening not only in the Narmada valley but all over the world. This dance drama is dedicated to the people of the *Narmada Bachao Andolan* (Save Narmada Movement, [www.narmada.org](http://www.narmada.org)). Interweaving Bharatanatyam (Indian classical dance), Indian folk dance, and yoga, River Rites depicts the people's resistance, particularly the activism of women in the movement. Using images of folk arts, this drama depicts the Narmada as a symbol of people who live in harmony with nature. The static line formations in *Rangoli*, a traditional form of painting on the floor with colors, have become the inspiration for dance movements. Another traditional art form drawn upon in River Rites is *Kolata*, where dancers create rhythm while dancing with sticks.

**9:00 pm: Q & A, vote of thanks**

### About the artistes

**Aparna Sindhoor**, who hails from Mysore in India and now lives in the United States, is an accomplished choreographer and dancer trained in Bharatanatyam (one of the Indian classical dance forms) for over 20 years. Aparna started her dance training at a young age with her mother, Dr. Srivalli.T. S. The talented 11-year-old Aparna was spotted by Dr. K. Venkatalakshamma, one of the foremost proponents of the Mysore style of Bharatanatyam where *Abhinaya* (facial expression) and graceful *Jathis* (pure dance compositions) are emphasized. Since her *arangetram* (graduation solo recital) in 1989, Aparna has performed widely in India, North America and Germany. Currently, Aparna is the artistic director of the Navarasa Arts Academy ([www.navarasa.org](http://www.navarasa.org)) in Boston, where she also teaches Bharatanatyam.

Aparna has conceived and choreographed 15 full-length dance works. In some of her works (*A Concise Portrait of Indian Woman* and *Vachanadara*), she has expanded the limits of the traditional Bharatanatyam recital in terms of the subject, style and production by using regional folk dance as part of the choreography. Since 1996, Aparna has been working on stories (*The Incident and After*, *The Hunt*, *Clothes*, *Draupadi*, *River Rites*) written by people of color. She uses Indian classical dance, yoga and folk dances to tell contemporary stories of significance and relevance. She has created a new style of performing using song, dance and narration giving a new dimension to the content of the performance. This has made her work more interesting and accessible to diverse audiences.

Aparna Sindhoor's choreography is "*hauntingly effective*", a body of work that "*conveys boldly dramatic stories*". Another critic raved: "*Aparna Sindhoor does not just dance. She becomes one with the stage*". MS Magazine states in their June/July 2001 issue: "*Choreographers often bring their passions and outrages to the stage. Aparna Sindhoor takes it a step further- she brings the stage to others....*"

**Raju Sivasankaran** is a playwright, poet, actor and dancer; and a computer scientist. Three of his plays have won the James Baldwin Playwright Award. His poems have been published in Blue Collar Review. He has worked with Aparna Sindhoor as a co-director and script writer for the past 4 years.

**Rosemary Candelario** has been dancing for as long as she can remember. She studied ballet for over 18 years before switching to Modern dance. In addition to performing with Aparna Sindhoor, she has performed with Brian Crabtree, Kelley Donovan and Dancers, Hillary Ross and Abydos.

**Sharmila Gopinathan** started dancing since age 4 and learnt Bharatanatyam with Mr. V. Krishnakumar and Ms Chandrakala. In 1987 she did her *arangetram* with late Guru Kalaimamani Shree Shanmugha Sunderam Pillai, recipient of the Kalaimamani award. She has explored various other dance forms such as Kuchipudi, tap, jazz, West African, ballroom and Latin styles, Mexican Ballet Folklorico and Kathak.

**Bindu Panikkar** has worked with many theatre and telecast productions in Kerala, India. She has worked with Hyphen Communications in the conceptualization, production and post-production duties of social documentaries, commercials, and television productions, featured in Doordarshan (an Indian national television network) and Asianet (an Indian cable television network). She has also assisted in set designing and lighting at the Little Theatre.

**Christian Willauer** is active and promotes community based peace activities and participates in the Navarasa Dance Theater in stage management, lighting and sound.