



Press Contact:

Canary Promotion | 215-690-4065
Megan Wendell, megan@canarypromo.com
Rose Mineo, rose@canarypromo.com

High-resolution images are available upon request and online at:
www.canarypromo.com/Sruti

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 28, 2014

Internationally Renowned Classical Indian Dancer Malavika Sarukkai Makes Philadelphia Debut in Weeklong Residency, April 6-12, 2014

*Master classes, public workshops and one-night-only feature performance
Ganga: Nitya Vaahini presented by Sruti, The India Music and Dance Society*

PHILADELPHIA — **Sruti, The India Music and Dance Society** presents the first Philadelphia-area performance by internationally acclaimed dancer **Malavika Sarukkai** on **April 12**. *The New York Times* hails the “clarity of Ms. Sarukkai’s dancing, her ability to define and shape space, and especially her uncommon rhythmic precision.” A master of the traditional Indian *Bharatanatyam* dance style, Sarukkai commands a presence on the world stage, and her limited engagement in Philadelphia will include a week of opportunities for dancers and audiences to further their understanding of the beauty and power of the dance form. These events will take place **April 6-12** in venues across the city, culminating in the performance of her seminal work, *Ganga: Nitya Vaahini (The Eternal River)*, at the **Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts**. *[Full schedule of events follows.]*

One of India’s leading dancemakers, Sarukkai has performed in her native India and abroad for more than three decades at venues including The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., Lincoln Center in New York City and Jacob’s Pillow, America’s longest running international dance festival. Her artistry has been recognized with several international awards, including the Padma Shree from the President of India and the Mrinalini Sarabhai Award for Excellence in Classical Dance, and her life and work was the subject of *Samarpanam*, a film commissioned by the Government of India. Remarks **Lisa Kraus**, guest curator for the residency: “Sarukkai is an artist at that exceedingly rare level of a Baryshnikov. Her eloquence in performance goes far beyond the sum of its parts.”

As part of her weeklong residency with Sruti, Sarukkai will teach and demonstrate *Bharatanatyam* techniques through workshops, a lecture-demonstration, and the Philadelphia premiere of ***The Unseen Sequence***, a “wonderful narrative” (*The Hindu*) of Sarukkai’s work that received excellent reviews after its initial November 2013 release in Chennai, India, and has been selected as a featured presentation for the 2014 Dance on Camera Festival at Lincoln Center. The free screening will take place at **Drexel University**, followed by a personal post-performance discussion with the artist. Sarukkai will also offer a

general public lecture and demonstration at the South Asian Temple Hall in the **Philadelphia Museum of Art**, the type of space where *Bharatanatyam* was traditionally performed. The Wednesday evening event will be held during the museum's "Pay What You Wish" promotional hours.

Special opportunities for dancers will include a sequence of master classes at **Montgomery County Community College**, demonstrating the arc of training in Bharatanatyam while providing students with a rare opportunity to work with the master artist. Additionally, a workshop for select professional dancers at the **Painted Bride Art Center** will explore connections and differences across dance styles, with innovative segments co-led by Sarukkai and other notable artists including **Kun-Yang Lin**, in an exploration of dance and devotion; **Germaine Ingram**, a foremost exponent of jazz tap, on rhythm and musicality; and celebrated ex-Cunningham dancer and featured performer in iconic post-modern works **Valda Setterfield**, who, together with Sarukkai, will consider the relationship of dance and text and the topic of "presence." Informative blog posts, essays and other materials about the residency will be available online at www.srutimalavika.org.

The residency will culminate with the Philadelphia premiere of Sarukkai's seminal solo work **Ganga: Nitya Vaahini (The Eternal River)**. The piece has evolved choreographically over a decade and pays homage to the river Ganges and its importance in terms of Indian culture, history, environment and spirituality. "In each of the four dance compositions," says Sarukkai, "I use different textures of soundscape, rhythm and dance design. The language of the songs chosen is pan-Indian, from 15th-century poet Tansen to commissioned contemporary lyrics by S.V. Seshadri and Priya Sarukkai Chabria." Audiences journey with Sarukkai as she meets other rivers, gathering their flows within her until she surrenders her identity to the ocean. The performance will be accompanied by Nandini Sharma Narayanan's vocals and a live orchestra of award-winning musicians playing traditional instruments: Srilatha Shamshuddin on Nattuvangam, Srilakshmi Venkataramani on violin, Balaji Azhwar on mridangam and Sai Shravanam Ramani on tabla.

Sarukkai's one-night-only performance of *Ganga: Nitya Vaahini (The Eternal River)* is onstage at the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts' Zellerbach Theatre on Saturday, April 12, 8:00 p.m., followed by a post-performance discussion at 9:30 p.m. The Annenberg Center is located at 3680 Walnut St. in Philadelphia. Tickets range from \$20-\$55 and can be purchased at annenbergcenter.org/tickets or by calling 215-898-3900.

Sruti Dance Residency Events

For more information or to RSVP, please visit www.srutimalavika.org.

Sunday, April 6 from 9:30 a.m.—2:30 p.m.

Master Classes by Malavika Sarukkai

Montgomery County Community College

The public is invited to observe, free of charge. Participation will be by application.

Monday, April 7 at 7 p.m.

Philadelphia Premiere Screening of *The Unseen Sequence*

With Post-Performance Discussion by Malavika Sarukkai

Drexel University

URBN Annex, 3501 Filbert Street

Free admission

Wednesday, April 9 from 6:30—7:30 p.m.

Lecture and Demonstration by Malavika Sarukkai

Philadelphia Museum of Art, South Asia Exhibit Hall

Presented as a “Pay What You Wish” museum event

Thursday, April 10 from 10 a.m.—4 p.m.

Professional Dance Workshop by Malavika Sarukkai,

Kun-Yang Lin, Germaine Ingram and Valda Setterfield

Painted Bride Art Center

Participation will be by application.

Saturday, April 12 at 8 p.m.

Performance of *Ganga: Nitya Vaahini (The Eternal River)* by Malavika Sarukkai

With Post-Performance Discussion

Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts' Zellerbach Theatre

Tickets: \$20-\$55

About Malavika Sarukkai

For over three decades, Malavika Sarukkai has been a hallmark dancer and choreographer in the traditional *Bharatanatyam* style. She performed onstage for the first time in Mumbai when she was twelve, and has been dancing ever since for diverse audiences in cities and towns all over India and throughout the world. Venues that have presented her include Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival (USA); Theatre du Rond-Point, Theatre de la Ville (France); Queen Elizabeth Hall (UK), International Arts Festival (Adelaide, Australia); Singapore Arts Festival; Biennale de la danse (France); Edinburgh Festival; and Smithsonian Institution Inaugural of Chola Bronzes (Washington, D.C.). A firm believer in the continuity of Indian classical tradition, Ms. Sarukkai preserves key elements of *bharatanatyam* while providing a personal interpretation of the dance's cultural significance. A favorite of Indian dance critics, she inspired the phrase “innovative-within-tradition” to describe her boundary-pushing dances. Malavika's artistry was featured in the BBC/WNET television documentary *Dancing*, a nine hour series on world dance and the film *Samarpanam*, specially commissioned by the Government of India, has been made on her life and work. She has been honored with numerous Indian awards including the Padma Shree from the President of India, the Kalaimamani from the State Government, the Mrinalini Sarabhai Award for

Excellence in Classical Dance, the Nrityachoodamani from Sri Krishna Gana Sabha, Sanskriti award, the Haridas Sammelan award and the SNA Award by Central Sangeet Natak Akademi, Delhi.

About Sruti, The India Music and Dance Society | www.sruti.org

Sruti is a volunteer-run organization with the principal mission to promote and present Indian classical music and dance. Founded in 1986 and based in Philadelphia, the 501(c)3 nonprofit seeks to educate the community about Indian arts and presents ten or more world-class music and dance recitals every spring and fall season. Sruti works in collaboration with presenting organizations like the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, Annenberg Center at the University of Pennsylvania, Painted Bride Arts Center, Drexel University and Montgomery County Community College. To showcase artists and students on a local level, Sruti organizes Thyagaraja Aradhana and Sruti Day, two day-long annual community events that commemorate leading composers. The nonprofit publishes an annual magazine, Sruti Ranjani, and a periodical, Sruti Notes.

Acknowledgements

This program has been made possible by a grant from The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage.

###

To request photos, audio clips and more information, please contact:

Canary Promotion | 215-690-4065
Rose Mineo, rose@canarypromo.com
Megan Wendell, megan@canarypromo.com