

## **‘Sangam’**

‘Sangam’ - the Sanskrit word for ‘confluence’

Two art forms, Indian Classical Dance and Western Art Music, find a common meeting place and flow together

## **Program**

### **Sun Narrative Dance**

Music based on Mesomedes 'Hymn to the Sun' (ancient Greek melody) / 'Phrygian Dream' by Elaine Kaplinsky

A tribute to the Indian Sun God or Soorya who is believed to ride across the heavens in a golden chariot drawn by seven horses, the dance expresses the life giving and destructive powers of the Sun God.

The *Hymn to the Sun* is a setting of a piece by the Greek writer Mesomedes. The modulating pedal is used to alter the pitch to imitate one of the ancient tunings for kithara. Kaplinsky is a New York composer; in her words “*Phrygian Dream* is a kind of ongoing trill, danceable in the old style”. This is achieved by a pattern of 4 digital delay notes which ‘dance’ across the stereo effect after each note. The introduction and connection between the pieces is improvised.

### **Earth Narrative Dance**

Music – ‘Enchanted Dawn’ on the Raga ‘Todi’ by Ravi Shankar arr. Giles

The dance is the story of Sita from the Indian epic “Ramayana” who is asked to prove her fidelity by a test of fire. Unable to bear this, she prays to Mother Earth, who opens to take her into her bosom.

Originally composed by Shankar for flute and harp, this adaption for solo harp arrives at a more earthy sound suitable for the narrative, while the electro-acoustic harp comes closer to the sound of the Indian stringed instruments like the sitar or vina, and use of pitch bending enhances this effect.

### **Introspection**

by Carlos Salzedo - Harp solo arr. Giles

In looking for a solo interlude that would fit the unusual nature of this program, and also suit the electro-acoustic harp, I decided to adapt this piece from Salzedo’s *5 Preludes for Harp Alone*. The quintuple meter is meditative; the introduction is a freely improvised addition and the use of the sustain pedal allows for an expansion of the melodic lines and phrases, with the concluding ‘Vision’ becoming even more luminous than on the acoustic harp.

### **‘Jugalbandi’**

Improvised interaction between dance and music

The Indian tradition of Jugalbandi is an improvised duet between singers or instrumentalists and sometimes between dance and instrumentalist. The form is usually alternating sections of decreasing length until the two parts merge. In this performance we adapt the form freely, music alternating with dance, using each

section as an inspiration for the next.

### **Water Narrative Dance**

Music – 'Hinchinbrook Riffs' by Nigel Westlake

This dance is a tribute to the Indian river Ganga, which is worshipped by the Hindus. The stories of the young girls who play in the river, the priests who worship the river and the widow who comes to float the ashes of her husband in the river merge as Ganga flows.

Hinchinbrook is part of the "Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area" being Australia's largest island National Park. Westlake first encountered the island whilst cruising the coral coast on his father's yacht and was inspired by the overwhelming grandeur of the rugged peaks & lush tropical gorges. The use of digital delay causes the 'riffs' to interplay & trip over themselves, causing interesting rhythmic & melodic variants that surge & ebb in wave-like formations. The adaptation of "Hinchinbrook Riffs" for Harp was made possible by the ANU, under the auspices of the H.C. Coombs Creative Arts Fellowship.

### **Padma Menon**

Padma Menon is a leading practitioner of the traditional Kuchipudi style of classical Indian dance. She studied under the legendary Indian guru Vempati Chinna Satyam and is acknowledged as one of his foremost disciples. She has studied contemporary western dance, yoga and the Indian martial art form of Kalaripayattu. She has a Masters in Choreography from the Rotterdam Dance Academy and has featured in many international festivals including Cadance and Holland Dance Festival. Padma has won several awards both in India and overseas including the Canberra Times Artist of the Year. She has been invited to international conferences such as DanceUsa where she was one of three choreographers representing the Netherlands. [www.padmamenon.com](http://www.padmamenon.com)

### **Alice Giles**

Alice Giles is celebrated as one of the world's leading harpists. First Prize winner of the 8th Israel International Harp Contest, she has performed extensively as soloist world-wide. Recital highlights include London's Wigmore Hall, New York's 92nd Street Y, Merkin Hall and Frankfurt Alte Oper. She is a frequent guest at international music festivals and as soloist with orchestra, gives regular master classes in Europe and North America as well as an annual summer course in Australia, where she is currently Senior Lecturer at the ANU School of Music. She is director of the Seven Harp Ensemble, and was on the jury of the Israel International Harp Contest, USA International Harp Competition and Cardiff European Harp Competition. Further information: [www.harpcentre.com.au](http://www.harpcentre.com.au)