



CREATIVE CURRENTS @ KALADHARA

Summer 2026: A Season of Dance and Devotion

As we prepare for an exciting summer season, our dancers are hard at work bringing to life a diverse collection of performances that showcase their dedication, growth, and love for the art form. This year's presentations include Eka Bhakti, a production exploring the many facets of devotion, as well as four debut solo performances that mark important milestones in our dancers' artistic journeys.

In this issue, our dancers share their thoughts, experiences, and reflections as they prepare for the stage. From navigating challenging choreography and discovering new layers of expression to balancing excitement and anticipation, their words offer a glimpse into the journey behind the performances.

We invite you to join us in celebrating the hard work, passion, and commitment of our students as they embark on this memorable season of dance.

If you would like to see a topic in the newsletter, please send your ideas to kaladhaaravideos@gmail.com.

SHRIKA PIDIKITI



Arangnetram on June 6th, 2026
El Camino HS Performing Arts Center

How has the community of your fellow students and family shaped your experience?

My family has always encouraged me, whether it's through attending practices, helping me stay motivated, or simply being there during stressful moments. Their support has given me the confidence to keep pushing myself. At the same time, my fellow students have played such an important role in this experience. Training alongside them has created a strong sense of community, as we have supported each other and learned from one another while doing what we love.

How has your relationship with Bharatanatyam evolved since your very first class?

I have to admit, my first few classes, I was scared that I will not be able to succeed in Bharatanatyam. Over time, my relationship with the art form has grown much deeper, and I have grown more confident. It has become not just a dance style, but my source of happiness.

✧ When you dance, your purpose is not to get to a certain place on the floor. It's to enjoy each step along the way. –Wayne Dyer ✧

AKSHARA VAIDYANATHAN



Arangnetram on June 13th, 2026
El Camino HS Performing Arts Center

What is the most profound piece of advice or wisdom your Guru has shared with you that you will carry forward long after your debut?

One valuable lesson I have learned from my guru and parents throughout this journey is to persevere, especially when the process becomes difficult. This is something that I can carry with me throughout my life and use it as a lesson to endure through all the highs and lows in life in order to achieve a tangible output.

What is one personal goal you are aiming to achieve by completing this journey?

One way completing my arangnetram serves as a stepping stone in my dance journey is towards facing my stage fright. Performing multiple pieces for an extended period of time, pushed me to improve my stamina and discipline and in doing so, shaped me into a more confident dancer and person.



AVNI MAHENDRA



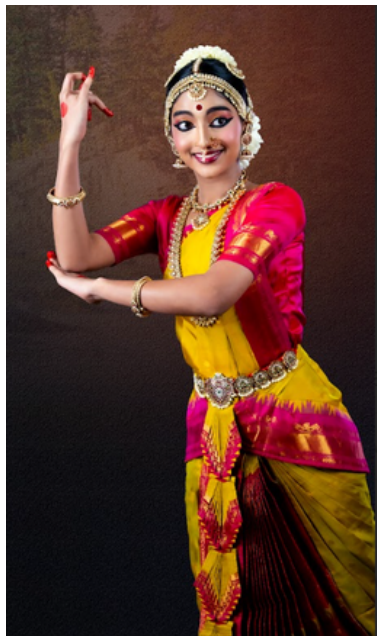
Arangetram on June 20th, 2026
CK McClatchy HS Performing Arts Center

What is one non-physical lesson that you've learned in the studio and now apply to your life outside of dance?

The most valuable non-physical lesson I've learned in the studio is mental strength. In dance, mindset is everything – maintaining an "I can do it" attitude is what drives progress. I now carry this same determination outside the studio, approaching any obstacle with the conviction that I must push through rather than back down.

How do you find your own "voice" or expression within the structured grammar of the dance?

Bharatanatyam is deeply structured, but within that discipline lies room for personal expression. I find my "voice" by fully immersing myself in the music and its meaning and then going beyond it. When I release the pressure to perform perfectly and instead focus on connecting to the piece, something genuine comes through. That connection allows me to embody characters through my own perspective, and in doing so, hoping to speak to the audience in a way that is authentically mine.

VAISHVI
GADAMPALLI

Was there a specific varnam passage that felt like a breakthrough moment for you? How did it change your perspective on your training?

The chittaswaram in the varnam was my greatest challenge, technically demanding and mentally exhausting to master. But pushing through it, showed me something I now carry into every aspect of my training: focused determination is the difference between a passage that defeats you and one that defines you

Arangetram on June 21st, 2026
Cordova HS Performing Arts Center

Once the final Mangalam has been danced and the stage lights dim, what does "the next chapter" of your dance journey look like to you?

To me, "the next chapter" means passing on the skills and lessons I have learned to my younger peers. I hope to inspire and guide younger students just as my teachers guided me, while also continuing to learn, grow, and explore more in my own dance journey.

EKA BHAKTI

– ONE DEVOTION, COUNTLESS EXPRESSIONS



MEDHA AIYAH

If you could ask one of the great historical masters of Bharatanatyam a single question, what would it be?

How did you transform the full spectrum of human emotion into a single feeling of devotion?

For me, moving between emotions mid-performance still feels like shifting between separate worlds. I imagine any great Bharatanatyam master would have found a way to dissolve those boundaries entirely where rage and tenderness and sorrow all flowed from the same source. That question would tell me everything about how far I still have to grow.

NEHA SESHADRI

Which Ragam always makes you want to dance, even if you're tired?

Kambhoji never fails to pull me back in. There is something about its richness and expansiveness that feels both grounding and energizing, the moment I hear it, exhaustion fades and something in me re-engages. The ragam opens space for impactful nritta while still leaving room for deeply felt abhinaya. Dancing to Kambhoji never feels mechanical, even after the longest rehearsals. It feels immersive – like the ragam itself is reminding me why I fell in love with dance in the first place.

GOPIKA
SRIVASTAVA

What is your "go-to" pre-performance snack or ritual?

If you were expecting a green juice or a handful of almonds, I hate to disappoint. For nearly a decade, my pre-performance ritual has been, without fail – a Crunchwrap and nacho fries from Taco Bell. Something about that combination just settles me before I step on stage, and at this point I'm not willing to mess with the formula. Call it comfort, call it superstition – either way, it works.



ANVITA CHINTADA



What is the most difficult part of translating a specific theme or poem into movement, and how did you overcome that hurdle during rehearsals?

During rehearsals, I constantly questioned whether a gesture or expression accurately conveyed the intended Bhava, since even a slight change in movement could alter the rasa, or the emotional experiences the audience receives. One of the most difficult parts was maintaining a clear emotional intention throughout the entire performance. I am continuing to work on overcoming this hurdle by closely observing and working with my gurus and peers, taking the time to understand their interpretations and energy.

VATSALYA NARAYAN



How does working in a group/thematic setting change your energy compared to a solo performance?

When I dance by myself, I try to step beyond my own perspective and embody different emotions and characters. In a solo performance, I am responsible for shaping the entire journey, while in a group, the dynamics emerge naturally through shared movement, storytelling, and collaboration. The energy, nritya, and nritya are shared among the dancers, creating a collective experience.

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**Scan QR code
to RSVP for
"Eka Bhakti"**



AARYA JANDHYALA



What is one thing this production demanded from you beyond dance itself?

For me, when these dance practices first started, I realized it wasn't just about the steps and the choreography. It meant I had to start waking up early on Saturdays and Sundays – days when I usually love to sleep in! And on weekdays, I'm used to heading to bed early. So, if I had to name one thing this production demanded from me, it would definitely be my 'sleep quota.' It has been a big change to my routine, but I feel like it is totally worth it. When you love to dance as much as I do, all that hard work just makes the upcoming performance feel that much more special!



Eka Bhakti on June 7th, 2026 | El Camino HS Performing Arts Center



FROM CHARACTER TO CONNECTION

How do you approach the challenge of conveying complex emotions or mythological narratives to a modern audience?

Emotions are universal ; only the language around them changes. A raised eyebrow, a trembling lip, eyes welling with longing – these need no translation across generations. The secret is stripping Abhinaya down to its rawest human truth, then dressing it in the audience's own vocabulary. A mother's grief in a mythological narrative is simply a mother's grief – whether it's Devaki or a woman on a subway platform. When I anchor the expression in that shared emotional core, and release the need to "explain" the mythology, the story breathes. The gesture becomes a conversation, not a performance. Context refines, language adapts but the feeling always arrives first. I believe that " If I am able to feel the "voice of the character I portray", then it reaches the audience"

— Mathura Vijay