Vision-Aid
A non-profit organization serving the visually disadvantaged presents

Samprati - Beyond Time
A dance ballet

Concept and Choreography:
Smt. Padmini Ravi

3 pm on Saturday, July 18th, 2015
Rogers Center for the Arts,
Merrimack College,
315 Turnpike Street
North Andover, MA 01845
The Vision-Aid Directors

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Vision-Aid thanks Platinum Sponsor - Harvard Pilgrim Healthcare!

Vision-Aid is profoundly grateful to our Platinum Sponsor - Harvard Pilgrim HealthCare (HPHC) for generously supporting the Vision-Aid Online Academy, our flagship initiative, which will help Vision-Aid scale new heights and reach many more teachers and visually impaired students in under-served regions. Our 'vision' is to empower the visually impaired, helping them to live with independence and dignity. The cause is one that HPHC aligns with and we tremendously value their support to Vision-Aid in bringing light into the lives of those who suffer from blindness and low vision.
July 2015

Dear Friends:

On behalf of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Karyn and I welcome you to the event “Samprati-Beyond Time.”

Vision-Aid is a non-profit cultural organization that advocates on the behalf of those who suffer from vision-impairment, working with them and other underserved so that they can live fulfilling lives. Tonight’s performance, “Samprati-Beyond Time,” choreographed by Ms. Padmini Ravi and organized by a group of dance teachers and schools from all over Massachusetts will raise awareness for blindness and vision-related health issues across the world.

We are grateful for all the hard work Vision-Aid does to help those who suffer from vision-related disabilities and we send our sincerest thanks to its board of directors, board of advisors, staff and volunteers.

Please accept our best wishes as you gather for tonight’s performance.

Sincerely,

[Signatures]

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In the constantly evolving universe, change appears to be the only constant. Yet the word timeless has been a central element of human vocabulary. What is timeless? Samprati - The Dance Drama explores the concept.

The production opens with a special timeless concept – the Holy Trinity. While the Holy Trinity may be referred to differently in different religious, the association of three with the concept of divinity is universal. In the Hindu tradition, the male energies Bramha, Vishnu, Shiva symbolizing creation, sustenance and rejuvenation and the corresponding female energies of Saraswathi, Lakshmi, Parvathy symbolizing knowledge, wealth and strength form the basis of the universe. South Indian musicians revere the holy trinity of composers – Thyagaraja, Muthuswamy Dhikshitar and Shyama Shastry. The first half of the presentation explores the concept of trinity or Thryam.

Perhaps the most timeless of all aspects of the universe is the human travel through life and the desire for a happy journey. No matter the place or the time, in every country, in every culture at all points in time, the desire for happiness is the ultimate aim. Yet as the journey is progressed, people are constantly struggling to understand how to tide through challenges.

This concept is beautiful conceptualized and described with poetic imagination and grandeur by the great Saint Poet Thyagaraja in the Nauka Charitram. The genius of Thyagaraja shines through in this piece where he visualizes a journey on the Yamuna with Gopis and Krishna. In the Indian tradition, the Gopis represent humans and Krishna, Godhead.

Krishna embodies love. Love has been classified into three kinds in Indian tradition – Vatsalya, parental love, Shringara love between a man and a woman and Bhakti love of the human soul for the divine. As a child, his pranks with mother Yasodha highlights Vatsalaya. As an adult his play with the Gopis is the epitome of Shringara. Yet both these are always laden with Bhakti.

In Samprati, we will see the journey of life through Thyagaraja’s imagination. There are times when the Gopis are playing with Krishna, adorning Him, adoring Him and yet at other times, they are arguing with him. They find fault with Him. They feel that He does not know how to steer the boat – a symbol that humans often feel that God is not supporting them or steering their boat of life. When there is a hurricane and the boat begins to leak, the Gopis turn to Krishna who asks them to discard their clothes to plug the holes in the boat and takes it to safety. Clothes, the symbol of materialistic attachments should be used only to plug holes in the boat of life to allow a safe journey. We should not remain attached to them for they are meaningless in the spiritual journey of life.

The story of Gopi and Krishna are beautiful and truly timeless. They delight the young and the old alike. The Indian classical dance form is also timeless for it has stood the test of time for over 2000 years delighting audiences on the banks of the Charles in the 21st century as it delighted audiences on the banks of the Yamuna eons ago. Padmini Ravi, the brilliant choreographer along with the talented dancers in the Boston area bring this production to life with a dazzling display of exciting choreography that promises to keep you at the edge of the seat throughout the production. There is not a dull moment in the production and Samprati promises to be etched in your hearts and minds forever.

As Thyagaraja tries to open the mind’s eye through the dramatic Nauka Charitram, the production Samprati works to bring vision to those visually challenged through Vision-Aid. We thank you for your presence and assure you great blessings from the visually challenged whose lives will be forever transformed with your support and surely make their journey through life a little easier.

Funds from this year’s event will help Vision-Aid reach the visually impaired in 3 new locations in India through the newly launched Vision-Aid Online Academy (VOA) - Aligarh, Berhampur and Kanyakumari.
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**Vision-Aid programs at work in 2015**

**Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh**  
(Vision-Aid programs started 2004)

Vision Aid Charitable Services Society (VACS) in Vizag is the flagship partner for Vision-Aid USA. It operates a center in Dwarkanagar, Visakhapatnam, offering 4 comprehensive courses in Computer Applications for the visually impaired. The Vizag team also offers training camps in surrounding blind schools and delivers online classes that are streamed to several remote locations over the internet through the Vision-Aid Online Academy (VOA).

**Kolkata, West Bengal**  
(Vision-Aid programs started in 2012)

Susrut Eye Foundation & Research Center, located in Salt Lake area of Kolkata, is a leading eye care provider in the city. Susrut offers state of the art services at an affordable cost to all sections of society and partners with Vision-Aid to offer free low vision screening and vision rehabilitation services in its base hospital as well as thorough its rural outreach program.

**Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh**  
(Vision-Aid programs started in 2015)

The Ahmadi School for the Blind in Aligarh is one of India's oldest blind schools, being established in 1927. The school already has a computer training lab. In 2015, Vision-Aid is establishing a partnership to setup a Vision-Aid Online Academy Station (VOS) to allow students at the school to participate in Vision-Aid courses. Vision-Aid will also provide free laptops to the blind students in the school.

**Mangalore, Karnataka**  
(Vision-Aid programs started in 2013)

Seva Bharathi, a non-profit volunteer-driven service organization was set up in 1991 to help people in distress. Vision-Aid works with Seva Bharathi's Roman & Catherine Lobo School for the Blind to offer computer training to school students as well as other local visually impaired residents in the area.

**Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu**  
(Vision-Aid programs started in 2015)

CADRE-India is a volunteer driven organization working in partnership with the rural poor of India in the southern tip of India –Kanyakumari. Established in 1993, Cadre has a proven track record of service to the disabled and poor. Starting in 2015, Vision-Aid will deliver online classes through the Vision-Aid Online Academy to students at CADRE.

**Berhampur, Odisha**  
(Vision-Aid programs started in 2015)

Milton Charitable Foundation for The Visually Handicapped is a volunteer-driven, non-profit working for the welfare of the poor and down trodden, visually handicapped children and adults. Their center is located at Berhampur of Ganjam district Odisha, South India. Starting in 2015, Vision-Aid will deliver online classes through the Vision-Aid Online Academy to students at Milton School.
Choreography and Production

**Smt. Padmini Ravi**, a world-renowned Bharatanatyam dancer, dance teacher and choreographer, is an exemplary exponent of this rich and ancient dance form of India. A recipient of the India’s prestigious Sangeetha Nritya Academy Award as well as the Rajyotsava Award for her contribution to the field of dance, Padmini Ravi’s name is synonymous with innovation, integrity and quality. She Ravi has gained international recognition for her innovative approach to dance, and in exploring synergistic relationships with allied art forms such as theater, folk forms, classical music, and cinematography. She received a grant from the Ford Foundation to produce a feature film “Shringara”, the first classical arts-related film of its kind. She has trained over 500 students internationally, many of whom have now become great dancers in their own right.

**Artists**

**Aarohi Darisi**, a disciple of Smt. Neha Parikh at the Chidambaram Nritya Kala Academy, has been learning Bharatanatyam and Carnatic music since she was 5 years old. She has participated in many cultural events.

**Akansha Deshpande**, a rising junior at Bishop Feehan High School, has been learning Bharatanatyam at Noopur Nritya Academy under Smt. Vyjayanthi Iyengar and performed regularly at temples and charity events.

**Akshaya Krishnaswamy**, disciple of Smt. Sridevi Ajai Thirumalai, has been a student at the Natyamani School of Dance for over 15 years. An avid dancer, she has performed extensively in India and the United States.

**Amrita Thirumalai**, a 6th grader, has been learning Bharatanatyam from her mother Sridevi Thirumalai at the Natyamani School of Dance and Carnatic music from Guru Tara Anand. She completed her arangetram in 2014.

**Anagha Kumar**, is a rising sophomore at Hopkinton High School this fall. She has been learning bharatanatyam for over seven years under the guidance of Guru Meena Subramanyak. She has a passion for dance, photography, traveling, and reading.

**Ananya Gurjar**, an 8th grader at Marshall Simonds Middle School, has been learning Bharatanatyam from Smt. Ranjani Saigal. She is passionate about dance and also loves to read, travel, and volunteer for good causes.

**Ananya Venkatesan**, a rising Sophomore at Nashua School South, has been learning bharatanatyam from Ms. Neha Parikh of Nirthyakala Dance Academy. A youth member of IANH and NETS, she has participated in many dance performances and won competitions.

**Anushya Pandian**, a student of Guru Sridevi Thirumalai for over 14 years, had her arangetram in 2010 and has performed both in India and USA. Anushya is a Junior at Regis college, majoring in Biochemistry.

**Ashya Singh**, a rising sophomore at Westford Academy, is a student of Smt. Ranjani Saigal at Eastern Rhythms Dance School. She has learnt bharatanatyam for over 10 years and has loves the arts -piano, singing, dance and drawing.

**Divya Odhayapan**, a rising senior at Mansfield High School, has been learning bharatanatyam from Smt. Sridevi Thirumalai. She completed her arangetram in September, 2014 and performed extensively at various cultural events.

**Hema Iyengar** is a Bharatanatyam teacher and founder of the Nritya Anjali School Of Dance in the metrowest area. She learnt dance under the guidance of various gurus in India, including Madurai Muralidharan. She has participated in past Vision-Aid productions like “Krishna” and “Silapadhikaram”, and performed for many non-profits.

**Janani Swamy**, a disciple of Smt. Rajee Narayan of Nritya Geethanjali, Mumbai for over 30 years, is also a Carnatic vocalist and recognized as an accomplished dance vocalist and has several recitals in India and North America to her credit. She is a Chemical Engineer and Vice President of Biologics Operations at Genzyme in Framingham, MA.

**Jeyanthi Ghatraju**, a Bharatanatyam dancer and choreographer with a mission to perform for charity, has been a Co-Producer of Vision-Aid dance production since 2009. She offers Degree Programs in Performing Arts through her affiliation with Alagappa Performing Arts Academy and several of her students have performed their arangetrams. She was awarded the coveted US Presidential Gold Service Award in 2013 for her community service.

**Jeyasakthi Kannan**, a 6th grader at Marshall Simonds Middle School is a disciple of Guru Ranjani Saiag for past 7 years. She has performed twice in Vision-Aid fund raisers and in various cultural events. Her most favorite hobbies are playing clarinet, cooking and arts.

**Manasi Danke**, a rising senior at Chelmsford High School, has been learning Bharatanatyam under the tutelage of Smt. Ranjani Saigal and completed her Arangetram in 2014. She has performed in many cultural and fundraising events.
Mari Shakthi Muthuswamy, the artistic director of the Bharatanatyam school, Anvita Natyalaya in North Andover, MA, received training in Bharatanatyam from Sri Kalaimamani S.K.Kameswaran & Natya Thilakam Saroja Kameswaran and has performed in many fundraisers, productions and temple festivals in India and in the US.

Medha Hiremath, a Bharatanatyam disciple of Smt. Sridevi Ajai Thirumalai, completed her Arangetram in July 2014 in Mysore, India and has performed at various Boston area events. She will be attending the Purdue University’s College of Engineering this fall.

Meena Subramanyam, an exponent of the acclaimed Kalakshetra style of Bharatanatyam, has also trained in Mohini Attam from maestros in India. She has taught many students at her dance school Natya Vidyalaya. She holds a Ph.D in Microbiology and is the Vice President of the Translational Sciences group at Biogen, Cambridge, MA.

Nidhi Pillai, a 6th grader at Miles River Hamilton, is a Bharatnatyam student of Guru Ranjani Saigal for almost 8 years. She has participated in many cultural events and is passionate about creative writing, soccer and track events.

Nikita Minocha completed her Arangetram in August 2013, under the tutelage of Guru Ranjani Saigal. She has participated in several Vision-Aid fundraisers and other cultural events to benefit the community. She will be attending Boston University in the fall.

Pallavi Krishnamurthy has been learning Bharatanatyam under Guru Sridevi Thirumalai from the age of 7, and had her Arangetram in 2013. She has performed in several Natyamani School of Dance programs. Pallavi is a junior at the Winsor school in Boston.

Pallavi Nagesha, a Bharatanatyam dancer and teacher at the Rasarang School of Performing Arts, is also the Artistic Director of Meru Education Foundation, an organization that brings unique learning programs based on the languages, arts and culture of India. Pallavi’s passions include theater. She is a prolific writer for local Indian news media.

Poornima Risbud, the artistic director of Rasarang School of Performing Arts, was trained in Kathak by Dr. Maya Rao & Bharatanatyam by 'Natyakala Prapurne' Guru Nirmala Manjunath. Her production 'Abhignana Shakuntalam' mesmerized audiences and won critical
acclaim. Besides her love for dance, Poornima is a database administrator and Vice President at the State Street Bank.

Preetika Kulkarni has been learning dance under Ms. Neha Parikh. She will be a freshman at Nashua High School South in Fall and has performed at various events.

Pooja Kumaravel, a 6th grader at Clarke Middle School in Lexington, has been learning dance under Smt. Jeyanthi Ghatraju. She has performed in many fundraising events. Pooja enjoys math, art, playing viola, and swimming.

Radhika Jaishankar, a classical dancer adept at Bharathanatyam, Mohiniyattam and Kuchipudi art forms. She teaches Bharathanatyam & Bollywood dance, and is doing her Ph.D in Pharmaceutical Sciences.

Ranjani Saigal is the director of the Eastern Rhythms dance school in Burlington, MA. Her students have won National Awards and she herself has received wide acclaim for her productions on DNA, Ramayana and Savitri. She is a co-founder of Lokvani.com, co-chair of TIE-SE, and Executive Director of Ekal Vidyalaya.

Rishika Sai Makkena, a rising freshman at North Andover High School, is a student of the Guru Jeyanthi Ghatraju. She has performed in numerous charity events. She enjoys karate, playing the saxophone, and dancing in her free time.

Sadhika Hiremath, a rising sophomore at Westford Academy, has been learning Bharatanatyam under the tutelage of Smt. Sridevi Thirumalai and has performed at various events in the Boston area. She completed her Arangetram in July, 2014 in Mysore, India.

Sahaja Surapaneni, a Sophomore at Nashua High School North, is a student of Ms. Neha Parikh at Chidambaram Nritya Kala Academy. She has participated in and won many Bharatanatyam and Bollywood dance competitions.

Sandhya Reddy, a rising sophomore at the University of Southern California, has been learning Bharatanatyam for from Smt. Suman Adisesh. She has performed at various cultural events and completed her Arangetram in 2014.

Sangita Raghunathan, a disciple of Smt. Padmini Ravi, and founding member of Srishti - The Creation, which performs to help causes through their passion for dance, is a graded artist from Doordarshan. She works at the Univ. of NH and teaches dance through her school, Sanskruthi.

Sanjana Puri, a freshman at Lexington High School, completed her Arangetram in April 2015 and learned from Smt. Ranjani Saigal. She has participated in many cultural events and is passionate about dance and writing.

Shilpa Bhat has been learning from Smt. Jayshree Bala Rajamani and completed her Arangetram in 2012. A recent graduate of Acton Boxborough Regional High School, she will be attending Case Western Reserve University in fall.

Shilpa Narayanan completed her arangetram in 2013 under Guru Jeyanthi Ghatraju. She continues to learn dance from Guru Sujatha Meyyappan, Carnatic music from Guru Tara Anand and attends the University of Connecticut.

Sirisha Nouldhuri, a rising Junior at Mass Academy, has been learning Bharathanatyam from Smt. Sridevi Thirumalai and performed at many Telugu Association events, and annual events of Natyamani School of Dance.

Shrey Hegde, a graduate of Acton Boxborough Regional High School has been learning Bharatanatyam from Guru Jeyanthi Ghatraju. She completed her Arangetram in 2013 and will attend the University of Connecticut this fall.

Smitha Radhakrishnan, a Sociology professor at Wellesley College, teaches courses that invite students to develop vocabularies for thinking about inequality, power, and difference. She has performed Bharatanatyam in USA, South Africa, and India and serves on the Navaras Board.

Soumya Rajaram, an accomplished Bharatanatyam dancer with several performances to her credit, has trained at The Kalakshetra Foundation and is a recipient of the national merit scholarship for dance by the Govt. of India. She works at the Navarasa Dance Theater, and trains students at her school, Samskrithi School of Dance in Lexington MA.

Suman Adisesh is the artistic director of Spandha School of Dance and Creative Arts in Acton, MA. A disciple of Padmini Ravi, she has performed for several fundraisers, for the Indian Doordarshan and has travelled USA / Canada performing as part of Srishti - The Creation. A Network Engineer by profession, she works for F5 Networks.

Suma Cherki is a rising Sophomore at Nashua South High School and has been learning Bharatanatyam from Ms. Neha Parikh for over 7 years. She has participated in many dance performances in New England area.

Swntha Saravanakumar learns Bharatanatyam from Smt. Ranjani Saigal. She has performed in several cultural programs and learns Carnatic music from Smt.Aparna Balaji. She also enjoys painting, reading and track events.

Vennela Mannava, a rising junior at Westford Academy, has been learning Bharatanatyam from Smt.Jayshree Bala Rajamani and completed her arangetram in 2014. An avid dancer, she has performed at various cultural events.
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Salma is well on her way to identify her calling while Manasa found dance as an effective form of expression!

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