

Arpana summer around LA –Nandini Kannan



This summer was truly an eventful summer for Arpana - locally and internationally! While many members of ADC were away in Croatia and Canada, a handful of us were in LA to take on events locally. From Anaheim International Dance Festival to the Mathiya Convention in San Diego, from the Cerritos

Library to Fontana Multicultural Festival - ADC performed at multiple events. For me, personally, it was definitely a new kind of challenge. Our Guru was abroad in Croatia, so these programs and rehearsals were managed completely by the senior students- from interacting with coordinators to speaking to an audience- something usually taken care of by Ramya Aunty herself. It was wonderful to be able to develop more public speaking skills, and especially introduce the art form that we love. It was lovely to see the diversity of the audience members who watched with keen eyes. There were also many children who were mimicking the hastas and dancing along while watching, which was so precious!! Dance is a universal language of communication and it is critical to keep spreading awareness of the various dance forms to keep these traditions alive in the country that is our home today. Dancers who performed in this series were Amy Vanmali, Amrita Khoshoo, Preethi Selvan, Shilpa Jagannath, Ranjana Ravikumar, Zil Patel, Nikeeta Shah, Sheila Balaji & Varshini Satish

Arpana “Damsels” on the east coast - Saru Janahan

The 2013Arangetrees batch started out their summer with a dance tour extravaganza! Dancers Tanmayi Vashist (14), Mangala Janahan (13), & Amrithabala Janahan (8), travelled to 4 different cities on the east coast dancing at various senior homes and temples. Dubbed "The 3 Damsels," the girls started their tour in Toronto, Canada where they had two dance concerts to packed audiences of enthusiastic seniors who doted on the girls.

Next was a 3 day, 5 performance run in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania where gracious host and coordinator Jayanthi Venkataraman arranged for them to perform at local senior homes including a Lutheran Church. Here, the girls shared

their enthusiasm with the seniors, not only performing but also teaching them hastas and footwork. The seniors loved it!

From PA, they travelled on to Ottawa, Canada, where they performed at the Ottawa Sivan Temple. The alankaram utsavam, chariot festival, was in progress and was conducted with great pomp and fanfare. The occasion was fun and colorful with over a 1000 devotees/spectators. The damsels enjoyed performing not once, but twice in front of the Ther (chariot) during the festival!



Their last performance of this tour was at the Rajarajeswari Peetam in Rush, NY where they performed before the Devi and the devotees during the Beema Ratha Shanthi (70th birthday) celebrations of Peetadipati Sri Chaithanyananda. All in all, an exciting and memorable tour.

Arpana summer in Europe – Alisha Sarakki

This summer, my entire (former) perception of dance was blown to bits. Never before had I been exposed to so many different styles of dance. One after the other,



elements of different cultures – from African, Brazilian, Spanish, Egyptian, to Harlem New York with Lindy Hop - rained down in rapid succession, forcing me to consider, reconsider and compare the similarities and differences, the styles and objectives behind each movement. It was

amazing how everything was all somehow interconnected by one word – dance. The workshops not only enriched our experience in dance, they opened (as cheesy as this sounds) windows to an entirely different world of new perspectives and

opportunities. I'm now more interested in different forms, not just Bharatha Natyam. The workshops provided a sort of diving platform into the rest of the world of dance, and now I can't wait to learn more forms, more styles. I hope this interest will lead me through a journey though dance for a lifetime; a journey born in Croatia.

It all started with our performance in Germany on June 28th in Karlsruhe, a small town about an hour and a half's drive away from Frankfurt on the autobahn. The first day was spent exploring the surroundings - a huge pond, complete with turtles and lilies and a fountain in the middle made a beautiful place to walk around. That afternoon, we had our first rehearsal (about 2 hours before the performance), practicing with the lights on stage as two men set the chairs up in the auditorium. It seated about one hundred people and was a very intimate setting, beautifully illuminated by warm lights scattered all about the setting. Later, we scrambled to get ready after a nap that had lasted into the time allocated for us to do our makeup, jewelry and costumes. Still half-asleep, we got backstage and frantically drank Amy's energy powder mixed with water, trying to wake ourselves up. The performance seemed to be appreciated by the Germans, as well as our hosts, who took us out to a celebratory Indian dinner after the performance ended at 8:30.

Our travels in Croatia, Italy (for a day) and Germany were filled with incredible sights, experiences, and tastes. We began our trip in Germany, which was very green, clean and orderly. Each of the sites we explored was beautiful and historically significant – the Cologne cathedral, a castle very near the Rhine river with beautiful view in Heidelberg, the historic Berlin Wall and the most memorable of all, the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial. The trees which existed during the time of the concentration camp still stood, untouched by fire or any of the destruction that had surrounded them, and more than one of us had tears in our eyes at some point in that memorial. In Rijeka, Croatia, there was all the charm of a small-town life. Street markets, handcrafted goods at reasonable prices, roadside gelato stands – it was all there. The weather was very warm, but we quickly got used to it with the help of all the gelato in the area. Venice was extremely hot and people-packed. There was much to see and do there, and eating pasta and pizza in an actual Italian restaurant was absolutely delicious – best pasta I've ever had in my life! We spent only a day in Venice, and then returned to Croatia to start our workshops.

Summer Internship at the Getty – Srilekha Jandhyala

As a Getty Multicultural Intern, I spent my summer at The Velaslavasay Panorama learning and experiencing Los Angeles' rich art and museum scenes. But after working at The Panorama I did not expect the way this space and my experience here converged, shaped, and informed me about who I am and the meaning of expression. What I once saw as a humongous wall that barricaded me from being a 'regular' teen, my cultural and artistic education, particularly in Indian classical dance, has now become the bridge I cross at every turn to understand and appreciate people of diverse backgrounds and interests.

That transformation happened most significantly when I travelled as an Arpana Dance Company performer to Japan during the Kinnara- Arpana Tsunami Relief Benefit Concert Tour in December 2011. Like many of us Indo-Americans, our Taiko counterparts were first generation Japanese-Americans. And even though some of them were war veterans, had experienced the internment camps, while some of us were still in college and high school, we shared a defining common ground - a deep respect for our traditions and culture. The Japan tour was an overwhelming experience of cultural connectedness.



So when Sara Velas, Director, gave me the opportunity to host an XYZ Event, I immediately contacted two of the most influential artists in my life- my Guru Ramya Harishankar and friend George Abe, whom I toured with in Japan. On August 11, through The Velaslavasay Panorama and its XYZ Club I was able to curate a show that shared arts forms including Bharata Natyam,*

Japanese flute, and Tabla, to an engaged audience. Participants learned about Abhinaya, the history of Japanese bamboo flutes, and tabla syllables, guests were invited to an extended artistic discussion in the Panorama garden. Although the artists spanned generations and cultures, the audience and the artists as a whole connected on the value of expression.

**The XYZ Club was founded in response to the perilous economic climate engulfing The Velaslavasay Panorama. A need to experiment with preservation tactics arose. And thus, The XYZ Club. New members are welcome and encouraged to participate in this monthly initiative - an evening of cordial experimentation and relaxed socialization in the garden & grounds of The Velaslavasay Panorama.*