

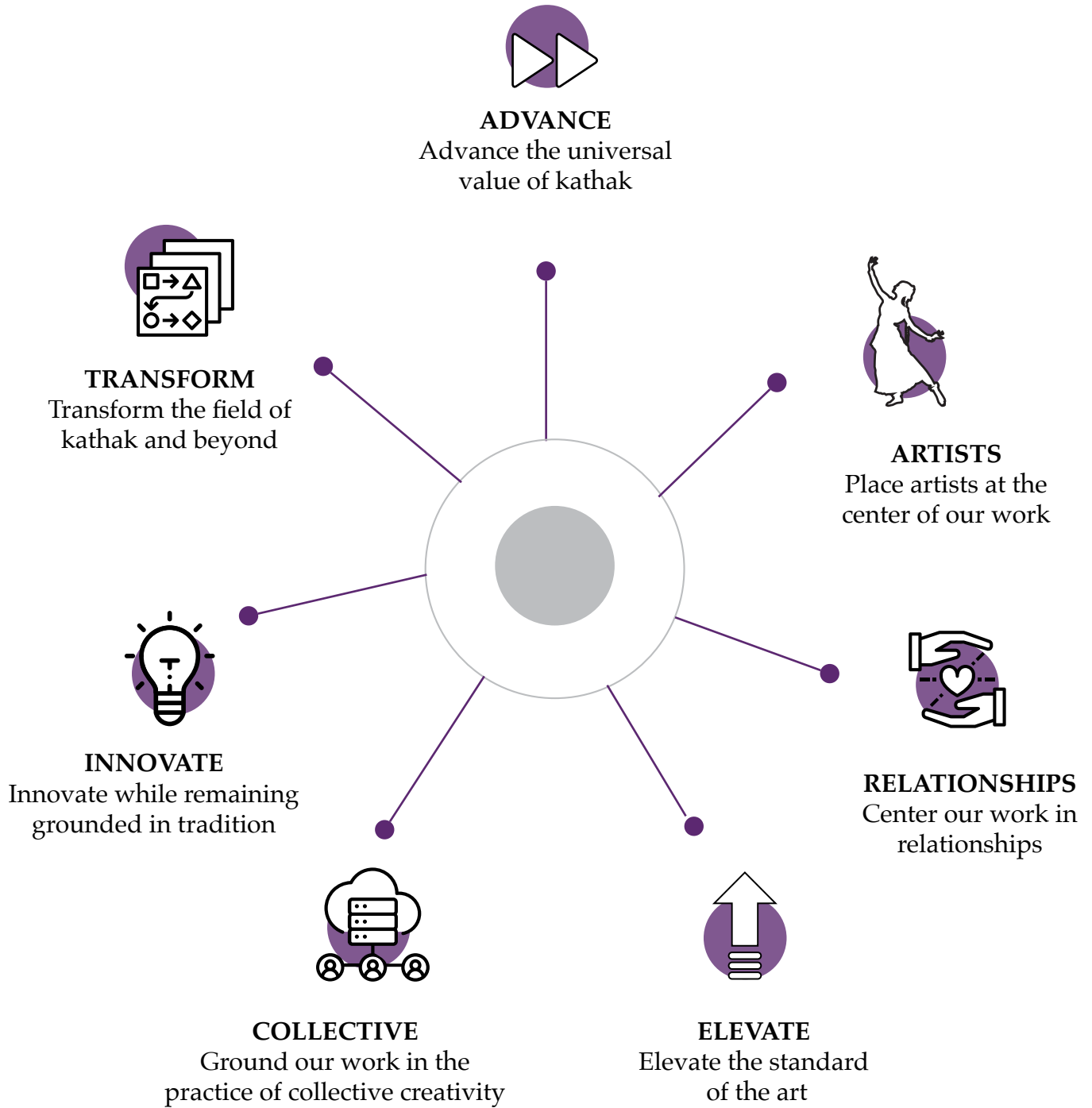


Leela Institute of Kathak  
**Annual Report**



# Core Values

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## A Fieldwide Approach

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Leela Institute of Kathak uses an integrated, field wide approach that includes three main components to advance India's rich artistic traditions.



Our critically acclaimed dance company, the Leela Dance Collective, establishes Indian classical dance on the world stage by supporting the creation and performance of cutting edge works of Kathak dance.



The Leela Academy provides world-class education and pre-professional training in Kathak to dedicated and talented children, youth, and adults.



The Leela Foundation provides the financial infrastructure that is critical for the viability and sustainability of India's artistic and cultural heritage.



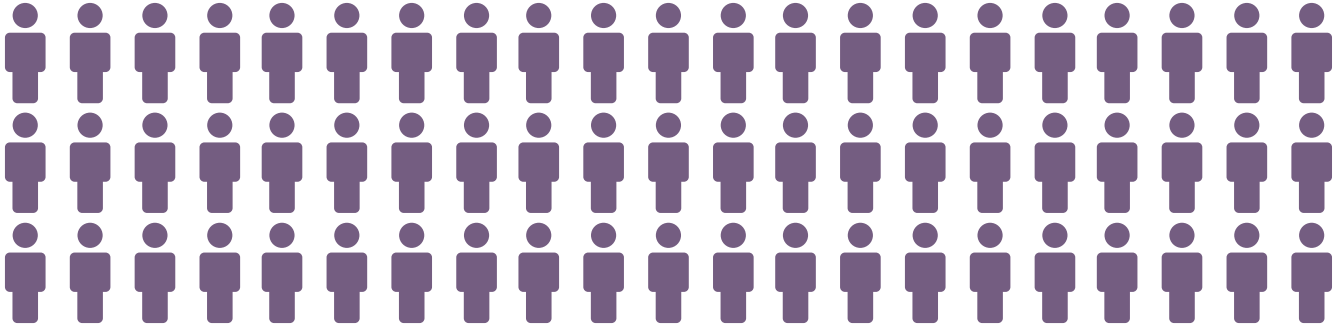
## About Leela Dance Collective

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Leela Dance Collective is proud to carry forward the legacy of the legendary kathak master, Pandit Chitresh Das, and the art of kathak itself. Led by Das' senior disciples - Seibi Lee, Rachna Nivas, and Rina Mehta - the collective creates, performs, and tours traditional and innovative works of kathak dance for audiences worldwide. Ultimately, the collective's vision is to elevate kathak on the world stage while providing diverse audiences and communities with access to the richness and depth of Indian classical dance and music.

# 7910

Number of Audience Members



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## 14

Performances



## 95

Artists Served



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## 1315

In Person Audience



## 6595

Reached through media  
and digital platforms



*"SPEAK, by far, was one of the most captivating dance events I've witnessed"*  
- Steve Roby, Big Island Music



## The Hawaii Tour

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In February 2020, before the start of the pandemic, SPEAK embarked on a three-island tour of Hawaii featuring performances, workshops, and artist talks that engaged diverse audiences and communities. The Speak Hawaii tour was made possible through support from the Esper A. Petersen Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts.

**2.12.20**

Maui Arts and Cultural Center  
Maui, Hawaii  
Attendance: 669

**2.14.20**

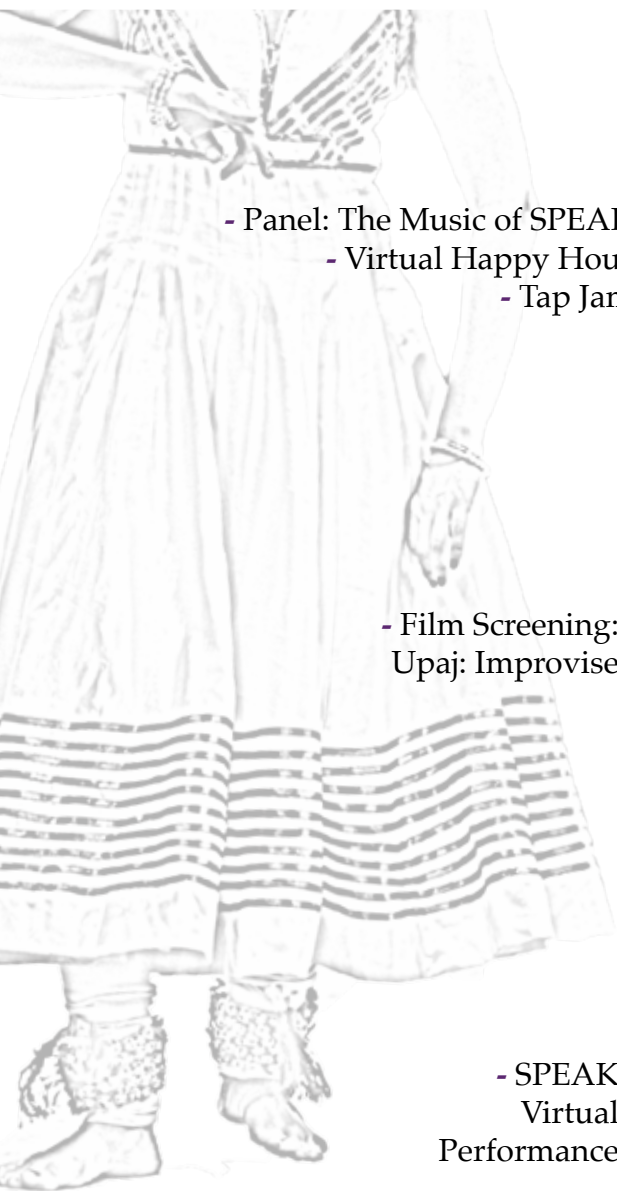
University of Hawaii  
Hilo, Hawaii  
Attendance: 360

**2.16.20**

Kahilu Theatre  
Waimea, Hawaii  
Attendance: 286

# SPEAK goes Virtual

In April, the Page Theatre in Winona, MN presented a 10-day virtual residency, centered around LDC's kathak-tap collaboration, SPEAK. The residency featured 14 programs, from panel discussions and artist talks to workshops and performances, and reached more than 4500 people across the country.



- Panel: A Page in History:  
Kathak and Tap Unite

- Panel: The Music of SPEAK  
- Virtual Happy Hour  
- Tap Jam

- Film Screening:  
Upaj: Improvise

- SPEAK  
Virtual  
Performance

4.21

- Kathak & Tap  
Master Class

4.22

4.23

- Tap Master Class  
- Introduction to  
Kathak Workshop

4.24

4.27

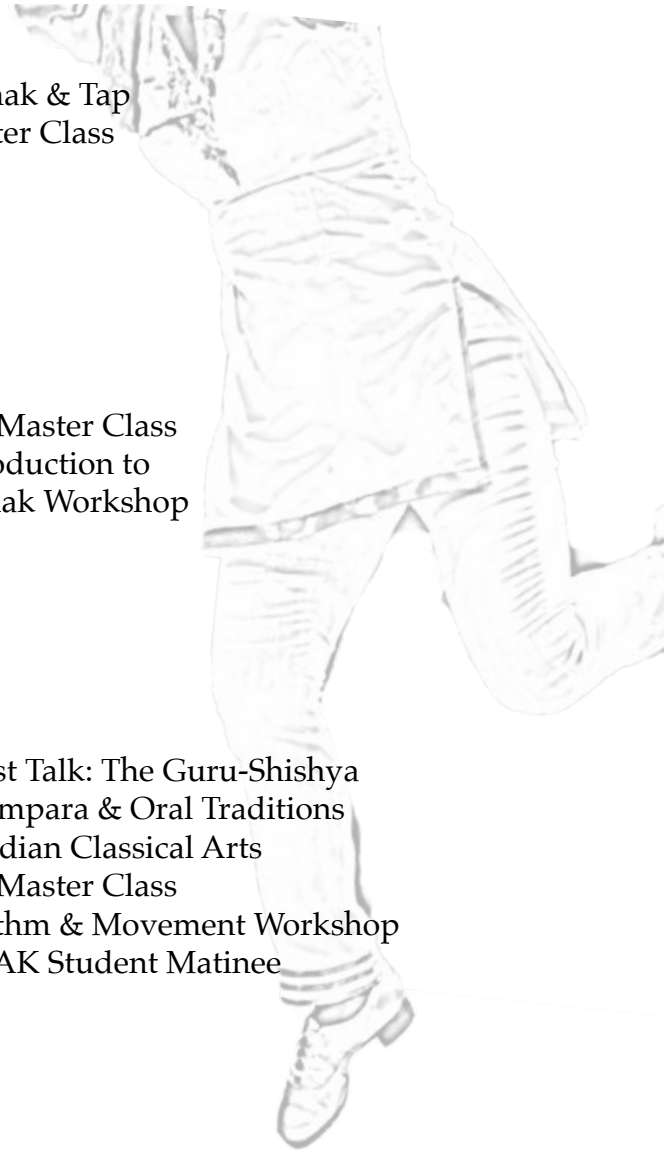
- Artist Talk: The Guru-Shishya  
Parampara & Oral Traditions  
in Indian Classical Arts  
- Tap Master Class  
- Rhythm & Movement Workshop  
- SPEAK Student Matinee

4.28

4.30

- Panel: Women in Dance  
- Introduction to Kathak Workshop

5.1







## Kathak: An American Story

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In April 2020, Leela Dance Collective presented a 10-part livestream series, *Kathak: An American Story*, chronicling the journey of the critically-acclaimed Chitresh Das Dance Company. The company is credited for establishing kathak on the American mainstage over the course of 35 years with its innovative and groundbreaking productions. The livestream series paid homage to the legendary kathak master, Pt. Chitresh Das and all of the dancers and musicians that were a part of the company. Their artistry and work paved the way for kathak dance in America and Leela Dance Collective is honored to be carrying forward the company's legacy. *Kathak: An American Story* reached 8500 viewers across the globe.



## About Leela Academy

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The Leela Academy is committed to helping passionate and talented individuals achieve their full potential as artists, leaders, and global citizens through world-class education in kathak. The Academy's approach and curricula, grounded in the philosophy and pedagogy of Pt. Chitresh Das, provide access to Indian classical dance and music education, enrich the lives of individuals and families through arts, and preserve and pass on India's artistic heritage.



## Leela Youth Dance Company

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The Leela Youth Dance Company (LYDC) provides young South Asian women, ages 12-17, with a platform to become artists, cultural ambassadors, and leaders. LYDC members receive pre-professional training in kathak dance and have the opportunity to perform nationally at prestigious venues and festivals such as the WorldWideWomen's Girl's Festival, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Philadelphia Youth Festival, and many others. The program is unique in its approach, combining rigorous arts education, mentorship, and leadership training. In July 2020, LYDC held its first annual two-day Youth Conference, organized entirely by members of the LYDC with guidance from faculty. Titled "Who Are We?", the conference featured kathak performances and lecture-demonstrations along with panels and round table discussions on South Asian identity, cultural bias, and the role of the arts in facilitating cross-cultural exchange. The conference is just one example of how the Leela Youth Dance Company is nurturing the voices of young South Asian women, empowering them to represent their communities and cultural heritage with vision and leadership.



## Going Global

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In March 2020, within 48 hours of the lockdown orders going into effect, Leela began offering free online kathak courses. The response was overwhelming. During the first two weeks alone, Leela teachers volunteered their time to teach more than 50 new students in the U.S, Canada, England, Mexico, Serbia, Costa Rica, and more. We also transitioned our ongoing classes to zoom, and were able to serve our long-term students without any interruption. As it became clear that the shift to virtual and online learning would continue over the long term, we began adapting both our curriculum and infrastructure to the new reality.

In September, Leela's affiliate schools in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Denver, and New York joined forces to launch our new Global Academy. This has enabled us to welcome students of all ages from anywhere and everywhere in the world. In 2020, our academy served over 260 students, offering nearly 30 virtual classes each week, as well as a variety of workshops, intensives, and special programs for students of all levels. As our student body continues to grow, we are proud to be building a truly global community of students, teachers, and dancers.



## Impact

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260

Students



22

Educators



1258

Cumulative Hours  
of Training



## About Leela Foundation

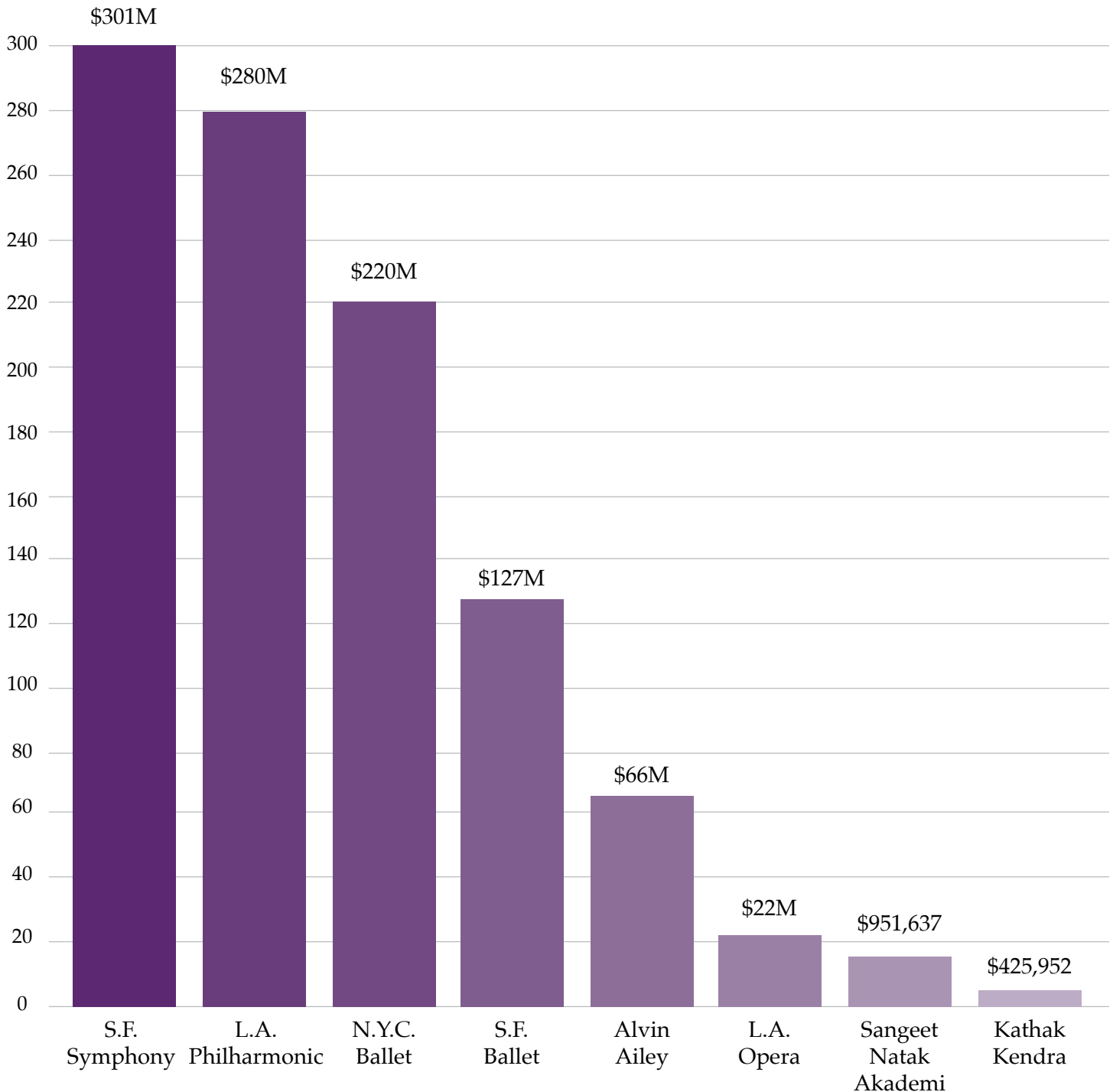
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The Leela Foundation is the first and only self-standing endowment for Indian classical dance and music, and is committed to establishing the financial infrastructure necessary for India's artistic and cultural traditions to thrive and take their place on the world stage. This means providing crucial financial support to those artists that embody and advance these traditions; supporting innovation and excellence in the field; and supporting cornerstone educational programs. To date, we have raised more than \$600,000 in seed funding to establish the endowment. Our aim is to raise \$2 million over the next two years and ultimately provide direct financial support to emerging and established artists and tradition bearers.

# Patronage Matters

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Indian classical arts are one of the richest cultural traditions in the world. They are also one of the most under-resourced. A look at the infrastructure for classical dance and music in the West is revealing. Every major city across the United States is home to a major ballet company, symphony, and opera. These institutions are supported by major endowments that ensure a viable future for art in America. These endowments, supported by individual patrons who firmly believe in the inherent value of classical art, reflect the value society places on these art forms. An equivalent infrastructure of arts organizations and endowments does not exist for Indian classical dance and music.



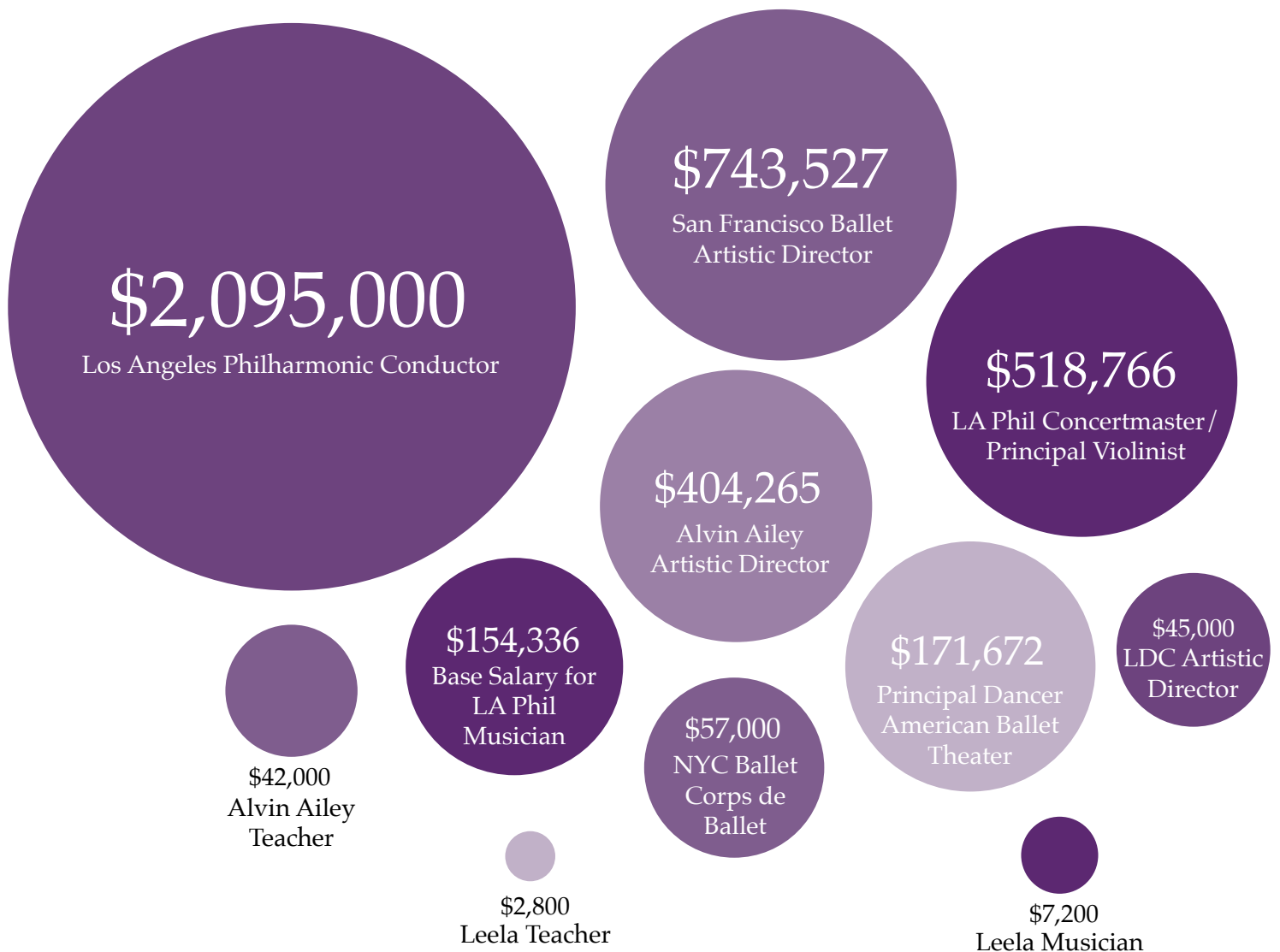
# Patronage Matters

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**The financial infrastructure for Indian classical art trails far behind that for classical art in the West.**

No place is this more evident than in the salaries available to ballet dancers and Western classical musicians as compared to the salaries available to Indian classical artists. At Leela we are committed to placing artists at the center of all we do. We operate with the understanding that artists should be provided for, cared for, and have space to grow their art. This means providing the financial support artists need to advance India's artistic traditions and cultural heritage with dignity, authenticity, and success.

\*Information sourced from Guidestar.org and Glassdoor.com





## Foundation Awards

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In December 2020, the Leela Foundation conferred its first artist awards for dedicated service to Jayanta Banerjee, Ben Kunin, and – posthumously – Debashish Sarkar. Each of the three artists received a cash award of \$2,000. As the Endowment grows, we hope to increase both the number and the amount of these awards each year. It was especially meaningful, in a time when the pandemic has created a crisis for those who make their living in the arts, to be able to make these awards to three of India's finest classical musicians.

## Meet Our Awardees



**Debashish Sarkar**  
(1957-2020)

Preeminent vocalist and musician



**Jayanta Banerjee**

One of India's leading sitarists and composers



**Ben Kunin**

Distinguished and sought-after sarod player



# A Community of Support

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Leela's Community Campaign provides a way for our community of patrons, students, and fans to actively participate in raising funds that provide direct support to established and emerging artists and fuel innovation and excellence in the field. This year, community members galvanized by hosting a series of virtual fundraising parties and events, raising \$30,000 for the endowment.

**September 20**

Pragati, hosted by Leela's Board of Directors, a virtual gala featuring an exclusive concert by renowned vocalist Saili Oak.

**October 17**

Darpan: An Introspection, hosted by Preetha & Hari Nair  
Featuring a performance by Leela Youth Dance Company members Namita and Vismaya Nair

**October 18**

Dance and Prana, hosted by Ravi Tilak  
A conversation between kathak artist Rina Mehta and philanthropist & business leader Ravi Tilak

**November 7**

Sanskriti, hosted by Lavina Mehta & Sathiyam Kutty  
Featuring a performance by Leela Youth Dance Company members Sharra and Anirra Kutty

**October 25**

Sanskriti, hosted by Robert & Shital Chatwani  
Featuring a performance by Leela Youth Dance Company member Diya Chatwani

**December 12**

Jigyasa: An Exploration of Joy, hosted by Minoo Gupta  
A Fireside Chat with philanthropist and tech leader Minoo Gupta and kathak artist Rachna Nivas

# Endowment Performance

## Portfolio Snapshot

(Jan. 1, 2020 - Dec. 31, 2020)

	Jan. 1, 2020	Dec. 31, 2020
Invested Funds	\$272,407.42	\$379,044.76
Cash	\$133,134.26	\$123,374.74

**Endowment Payout\***

**\$10,963**

## Asset Allocation

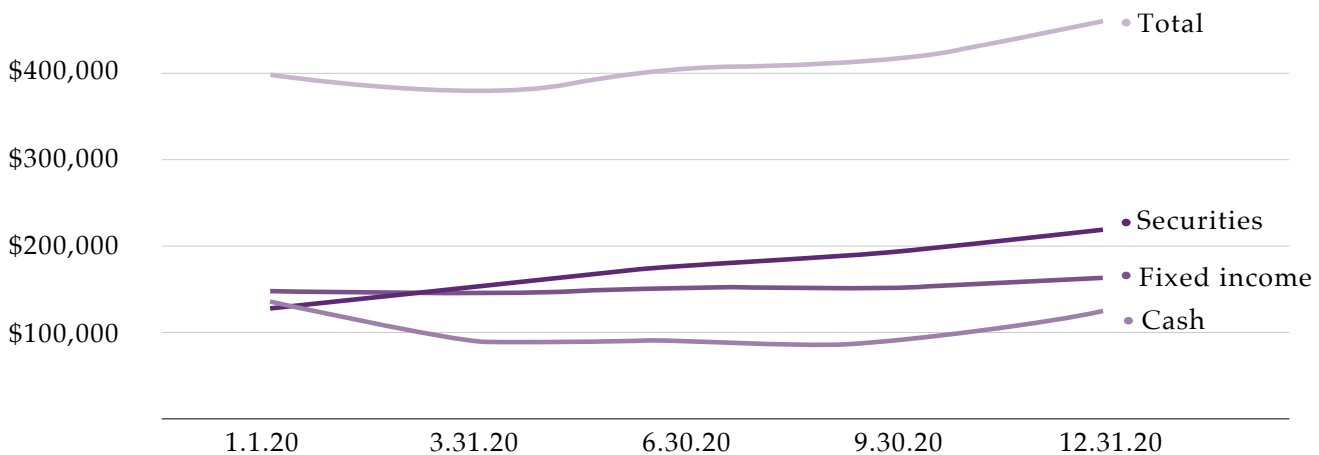
(as of December 31, 2019)

- Fixed Income - 32.4%
- Cash - 24.6%
- Securities - 43%



## Portfolio Performance

(Jan. 1, 2020 - Dec. 31, 2020)



\*The Leela Endowment's payout is based on an annual spending rate of 4%. Endowment funds support artist salaries, residencies and fellowships.

# Donors and Patrons

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Leela Institute of Kathak is supported by a community of individuals who believe in the inherent value of art to transform and advance society. We are grateful for their generous contributions, which support our programmatic activities and the Leela Foundation, and ultimately contribute to building a financial infrastructure to support the field of Indian classical dance and music in perpetuity.

## **Champions' Circle (\$100K & Up)**

Shruti Mahajan and Kashyap  
Deorah

## **Founder's Circle (\$50K To \$99,999)**

Anonymous  
Shaila and Dinesh Mehta  
Meera and Jasvant Modi  
Bina and Yogesh Nivas  
Ann Petersen and Lesley Pam  
Dr. Irma & Dr. Ushakant Thakkar

## **Patrons (\$25K to \$49,999)**

Preetha and Hari Nair  
Gita and Subramaniam  
Janakiraman  
Rachna Nivas & Prakash  
Janakiraman  
Leah and Dr. Gary Schoolnik

## **Leaders (\$10K To \$24,999)**

Uma and Avadhesh Agarwal  
Anonymous  
Poonam and Prabhu Goel  
Minoo Gupta  
Mary and Dr. Clemens Lee  
Palayam Foundation  
Jyotsna and Sharad Patel  
Rika and Manu Shah  
Nalini and Uka Solanki  
Kusum and Harkishan Vasa

## **Advocates (\$5K To \$9,999)**

Neelima and Milind Bhat  
Gita and Mukesh Desai  
Pratima and Navin Doshi  
Robyn Friend and Dr. Neil Siegel  
Meena and Jitu Mehta  
Chandrika and Sumant Patel  
Aruna and Dinker Shah  
Kinna and Dr. Nitin Shah  
Vinita and Amar Singh  
Usha and Sudesh Sood  
Dr. Rita Singhal and Dr. Swamy  
Venuturupalli

## **Ambassadors (\$2,500 To \$4,999)**

The DasGupta Family  
Rajani Dinavahi and Abizer  
Gaslightwala  
Shobhana Gandhi  
Bindu and Kumar Koneru  
Bala and R. Krishnamurthy  
Sarah Morelli and Stephen  
Scaringe  
Madhu and Babu Mehta  
Seema and Amit Patel  
Dr. Ruchi Mathur and Dr. Mark  
Pimentel  
Indira and Yalamanchilli Rao  
Shelly Mahendra and Lakshman  
Rao  
Hetal and Kunal Sharma  
Seema Kantak and Shreeraj  
Karulkar  
Mallika Parulekar

## **Supporters (\$1,000 To \$2,499)**

Susan and Santanu Barua  
Ronda Berkeley and Mel Green  
Shital and Robert Chatwani  
Shaila and Vijay Chauhan  
Chhandam Youth Dance Company  
Nilima Dave  
Minal and Neil Doshi  
Reena Kapoor and Anurag  
Wadehra  
Valerie Kaur and Sharat Raju  
Seibi Lee and Joel Schoolnik  
Mitali and Hitesh Mehta  
Seema Mehta  
Shobha and Nitin Mehta  
Naheed and Dayton Misfeldt  
Poonam Narkar  
Kanan and Sanjay Panchal  
Saroj and Gordhan Patel  
Pravin Patel  
Marna and Suresh Ramnath  
Aruna and Manohar Shinde  
Raminder and Harpreet Singh  
Evanthia Spanos  
Keerthy Sundar

Sonali Toppur  
Sonal and Govind Vagashia

## **Friends (\$100 To \$999)**

Ritu Alvares  
Suresh Babu  
Doli Bambhania  
Shobha and Sudhir Banker  
Seema Barua and Alex Le  
Arvind Bhambri  
Kumar Bhatia  
Swati and Vijay Bhatt  
Sunita and Mahesh Bhuta  
Madhu and Vijay Chheda  
Priyanka Chheda  
Hima Chintalapati  
Sabina and Raman Chitkara  
Anna Cross  
Samuel Culbert  
Hemali and Dr. Ravi Dave  
Joyee DasGupta  
Heena and Indra Desai  
Preeti and Nalin Desai  
Prashanthi Docca  
Mandy Fazeli and Rashid Razavi  
Vinata Gangolli  
Tara and Daniel Goleman  
Oleg Gorelik  
Deepa Gupta  
Nootan and Arvind Halani  
Inji Islam  
Vahinidevi Jaganath  
Divya Jain  
Neha Jain  
Rajiv K. Jain  
Yogita and Ishwar Jasuja  
Candace Jennings  
Seema and Kiran Kamat  
Anjana and Vikram Kamdar  
Tarala and Pravin Kapadia  
Kumud and Suren Kapadia  
Erica and Sathvik Krishnamurthy  
Liz and Brady Kroupa  
Pratibha and Singhal Kumar  
Preeti Kumar  
Sonali Lakhani

## Donors and Patrons (continued)

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Michele and Don Linn  
Kari Lopez  
Elena and Victor Magno  
Bharathi and Kanaiya Mahendra  
Roopa Maniar  
Santrupty Margad and Deepesh Rai  
Vandana and Kaushik Master  
Maya and Hem Mathur  
Geeta and Anil Mehta  
Kala Mehta  
Lavina Mehta and Sathiyam Kutty  
Nila and Arvind Mehta  
Purnima Mehta-Taylor  
Rama and Jayant Mehta  
Van Meyer  
Surekha and Hasmukh Modi  
Lata and Maruti More  
David Moreno  
Purnima Mudnal and Arun Bharat  
M. Nagle  
Sheila and Kishore Naik  
Vineet Nair  
Koji Oka  
Kavitha Padmanabhan and Murugu Navaneetha  
Shuba and Santosh Panicker  
Roopa and Srinivas Panuganti  
Choudhary Patel  
Sharda and Mahesh Patel  
Mitula and Raj Patel  
Shriya and Prisha Patel  
Purnima and Jyoti Prakash  
Anisa Rahim  
Agnes K. Rothblatt  
Jeannie Ruffoni  
Alka Sabherwal  
Shoba and Manohar Samat  
Chhaya and Jairaj Samtani  
Mayuresh Saoji  
Vandana and Bhanu Sardesai  
Tara and Nirmal Sethia  
Seema Shah  
Tiffany and Amit Shah  
Farah Yasmeen and Salim Shaikh  
Suraj Shantakumar  
Meenaxi and Ashvin Sheth  
Shravida Shetty  
Leepi Shimkhada and Ravi Mahalingam  
Vikram Sikand  
Bhavya Singh  
Venktesh Shukla  
Cheryl Templeton

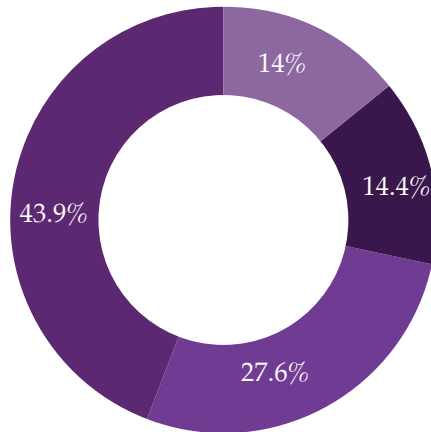
Durga and Raghu Toppur  
Padma and H.P. Trivedi  
Vibha and Umang Vanjara  
Surekha Vashi  
Sarah Wong

# Financials

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## Expense by Program Area

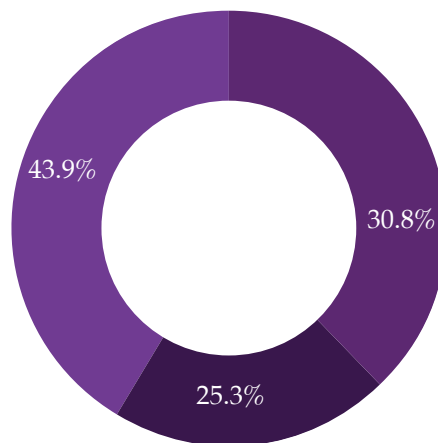
- Performance - 43.9%
- Academy - 27.6%
- Administration - 14%
- Fundraising - 14.4%



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## Income by Program Area

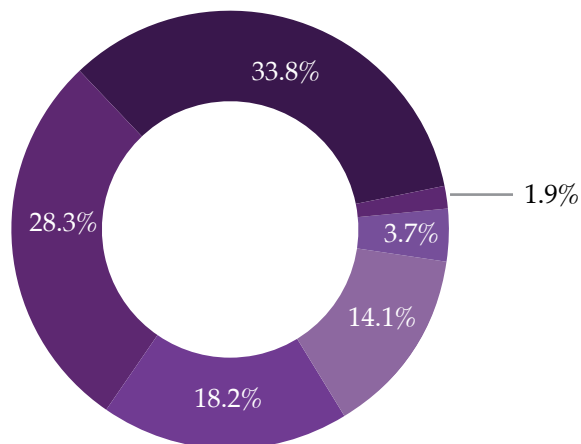
- Performance - 30.8%
- Academy - 43.9%
- Fundraising - 25.3%



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## Income by Type

- Grants - 33.8%
- Performance - 28.3%
- Academy - 18.2%
- Endowment - 14.1%
- Investment - 3.7%
- Individual - 1.9%



# Funders & Sponsors

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## Foundations

### Los Angeles

The Annenberg Foundation  
Association of Performing Arts Professionals  
California Arts Council  
Dance Resource Center  
Esper A. Petersen Foundation  
Ford Theatre Foundation  
Los Angeles County Department of Arts & Culture  
Los Angeles City Department of Cultural Affairs  
MAP Fund  
MidAtlantic Arts Foundation  
National Endowment for the Arts  
New Music USA  
Sarva Mangal Trust  
Tarsadia Foundation  
University of Denver

### San Francisco

California Arts Council  
Grants for the Arts  
San Francisco Arts Commission  
William & Flora Hewlett Foundation  
Walter & Elise Haas Fund  
Zellerbach Family Foundation

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## Corporations

Amgen  
Atlassian  
Bank of America  
Boeing  
GE  
Google Benevity

Intel  
Kirtilal's  
Monali Jain Foundation  
Sephora  
Upaya  
Wells Fargo

# The Leela Team

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## Board of Directors, Los Angeles

Harkishan Vasa, Chair  
Ronda Berkeley, Secretary  
Dinesh Mehta, Treasurer  
Nitin Shah

Swamy Venuturupalli  
Anna Cross  
Trina Chaudhuri

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## Leela Dance Collective

### Principal Artists

Seibi Lee  
Rachna Nivas  
Rina Mehta

### Soloists

Seema Mehta  
Joanna Mehl  
Sarah Morelli  
Cimeron Ahluwalia  
Shefali Jain

### Ensemble Dancers

Sonali Toppur  
Ahana Mukherjee  
Ria DasGupta  
Carrie McCune

### Musicians

Jayanta Banerjee, Music Composition & Sitar  
Kalinath Mishra, Tabla  
Ben Kunin, Sarod  
Satyaprakash Mishra, Tabla & Pakhawaj  
Vaibhav Mankad, Vocals

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## Leela Academy Faculty

Rina Mehta, Artistic Director Los Angeles  
Seibi Lee, Artistic Director San Francisco  
Rachna Nivas, Artistic Director New York  
Sarah Morelli, Artistic Director Denver

Cimeron Ahluwalia  
Poonam Narkar  
Sonali Toppur  
Ahana Mukherjee  
Carrie McCune

Ria DasGupta  
Neha Tummala  
Neeraja Yadwakar  
Seema Barua  
Pallavi Salvi  
Rakshitha Ballal  
Shilpi Nikhil  
Suchitra Paranjpe  
Ritu Joshi  
Monika Ramnath

*\*We are proud to list the combined faculty of our online global Academy, who participated in our 2020 summer programs and Fall Session*

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## Leela Academy Faculty

Monika Ramnath, Executive Director  
Shreya Mehta, Creative Director  
Pallavi Salvi, Academy Director

Lavina Mehta, Academy Director  
Carrie McCune, Collective Manager

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## Affiliate Schools

Leela Los Angeles  
Leela San Francisco  
Leela Denver  
Leela New York

Chhandika, Boston, MA  
M-Do Kathak Toronto, Toronto, CA  
Chhandam Nritya Bharati, Mumbai, India

