



LEELA INSTITUTE OF KATHAK

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



LEELA
BRINGING JOY AND UPLIFTMENT
THROUGH KATHAK TO ALL

ADVANCE

We advance the universal value of kathak

ARTISTS

We place artists at the center of our work

RELATIONSHIPS

We center our work on relationships

ELEVATE

We elevate the standard of the art

COLLECTIVE

We ground our work in the practice of collective creativity

INNOVATE

We innovate while remaining grounded in tradition

TRANSFORM

We transform the field of kathak and beyond



LEELA DANCE COLLECTIVE

Elevating kathak dance on the world stage

"In the midst of a crowded shopping street, everything stopped for a moment while the artists exploded in sound and color. I felt an immediate connection...This community experience of watching kathak with strangers was badly needed after living through the isolation of the pandemic..."

- Deepa Patel (audience member)

INNOVATION WITHIN TRADITION

Leela Dance Collective is committed to championing the integrity and authenticity of kathak dance, while at the same time evolving the art form to make it relevant to contemporary audiences. The collective's groundbreaking productions - from *SPEAK*, a collaboration featuring leading female artists in kathak and tap, to *Son of the Wind*, a traditional dance ballad based on India's epic, the *Ramayana* - have garnered critical acclaim and introduced audiences around the world to the richness and depth of Indian classical dance and music.

IMPACT

11

cities

25

performances & digital presentations

20

artists featured

10K

audience members reached

RE

Did You Know?

Kathak is a percussive dance form, meaning the sounds made by the dancers' feet are an integral part of the dance. For ReSound, we created custom-built, acoustically-designed portable 4'x4' floorboards, which make it possible for dancers to set up and perform anywhere - in streets, parks, and parking lots.

RESOUND

Conceived & Choreographed by Rina Mehta



"ReSound came out of the pandemic. We wanted to revitalize our communities and our neighborhoods — to perform where we work, play, go out to dinner ...We literally just wanted to bring the joy of the dance to audiences, to neighborhoods, and to uplift our own spirits."

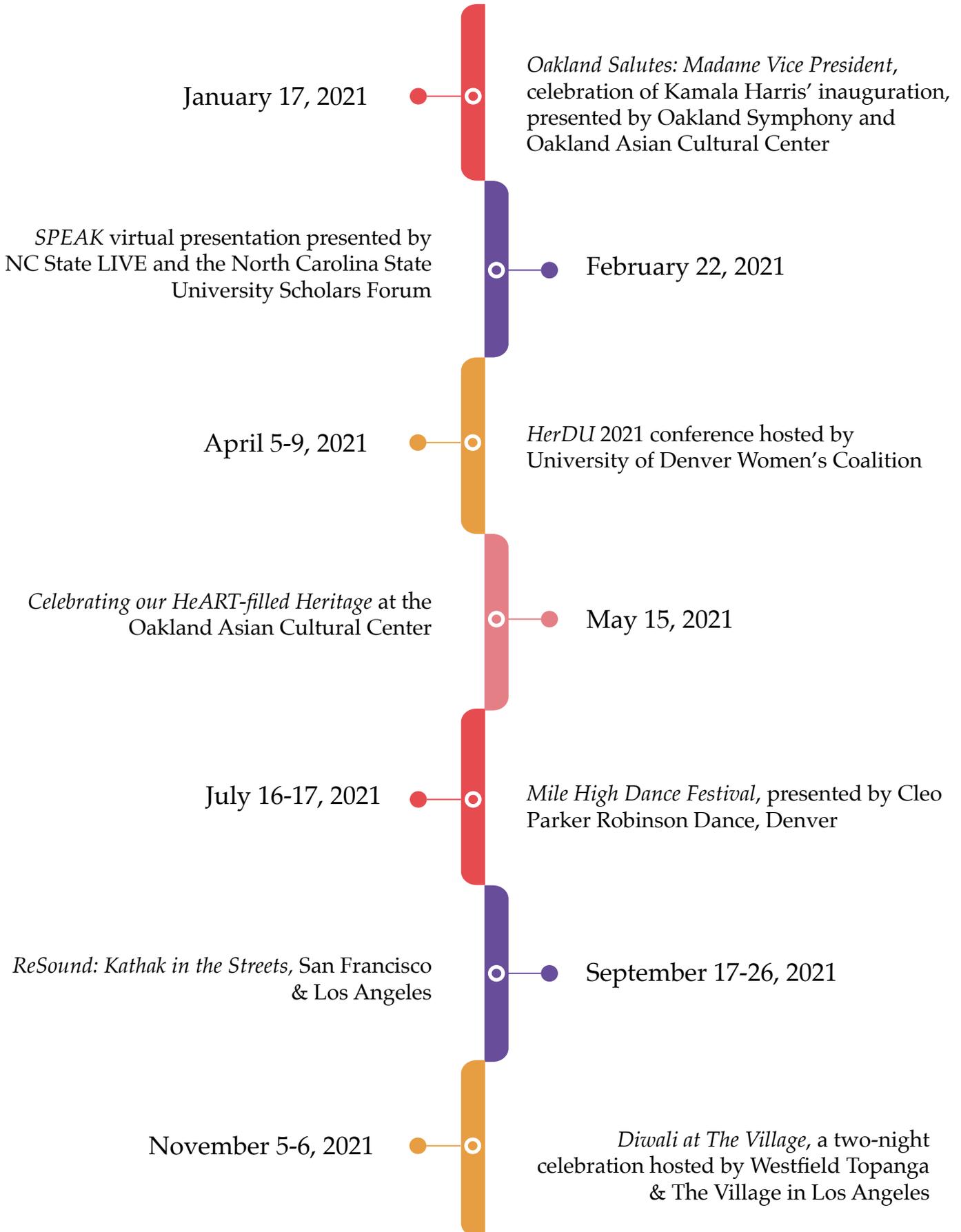
- Rina Mehta, interview with San Francisco Classical Voice

KATHAK IN THE STREETS

In September 2021, Leela Dance Collective took to the streets with ReSound, a ten-day festival that brought free outdoor performances and low-cost workshops to diverse neighborhoods and public spaces all over the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles.

Our goal was to revitalize neighborhoods and connect with our communities through music and dance as we began to recover from the stress and isolation of the pandemic. We succeeded in reaching more than 1400 audience members, many of whom had never seen or experienced classical Indian dance before, and received an overwhelmingly positive response.

NOTEWORTHY PERFORMANCES & DIGITAL PRESENTATIONS



"In the variable timing of her cyclonic spins and thrown poses, in the wit and mathematical wizardry of her bare feet and bell-ringed ankles, in her broad and amusing storytelling, precise enough to make the invisible palpable, [Nivas] showed herself an expert in all sides of her art."

- Brian Siebert, New York Times



UNEDITED

Our newest center, Leela New York, officially announced its presence with *Unedited*, a solo concert by Leela Co-Founder and Principal Artist Rachna Nivas. Featuring dance, poetry, storytelling, and highly improvised interplay between the musical artists and dancer, *Unedited* gave two sold out performances and received rave reviews.



LEELA ACADEMY

Providing world class education in kathak dance

"If you want to be part of a lineage that extends generations of Indian classical dancers, learn philosophy, mathematics, grace, discipline, and the value and fulfillment of hard work, this is the place for you."

- Minal Doshi (Leela Parent)

A GLOBAL REACH

Leela Academy boasts studios in four major cities across the United States - Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York, and Denver. In addition, the Academy offers classes and workshops virtually, making it possible for students to study and train with us from anywhere in the world.

Our comprehensive training is unique in its approach, combining rigorous arts education and mentorship, while providing students with a platform to become artists, cultural ambassadors, and leaders.

IMPACT

4

locations

22

teachers

250

students

50

classes per week



LEELA YOUTH DANCE COMPANY

Activating youth voices through world-class training and mentorship in classical dance and music

2021 HIGHLIGHTS

July

August

December

LYDC engages youth in critical dialogue at its youth summit, *"Who Are We?"*

LYDC launches new branches in LA and Denver, expanding from 13 to 31 members

LYDC performs at Dorothy Chandler Pavilion for LA's 62nd Holiday Celebration

MEMBERS

Sharra Kutty
 Namita Nair
 Maanibha Sengupta
 Anirra Kutty
 Avni Madhu
 Poorvi Sangli
 Vismaya Nair
 Tvisha Soni
 Malika Saoji
 Divija Keswani

Anika Pisal
 Mahika Goswamy
 Ananya Bhardwaj
 Anushka Bettigiri
 Pragya Agarwal
 Monishka Tanwani
 Kaavya Venuturupalli
 Shreem Chakravarti
 Saanshi Panigrahi
 Varnika Bhat

Maanvi Dhadoti
 Shriya Patel
 Prisha Patel
 Keiona Nadig
 Anvi Joshi
 Praajnya Gowder
 Sakshi Gadgil
 Sanya Mohanty
 Aarna Dhawan
 Nisha Nikhil



STREETSIDE BAITHAK

In November, Leela Academy debuted a free, outdoor monthly performance series, *Streetside Baithak*, co-presented by Namaste Spiceland in Thousand Oaks and Pasadena. Galvanized by the success of the *ReSound* festival, we were inspired to take dance directly into the neighborhoods where people live, work, and socialize.

The series provided a vital avenue to share our music and dance, and create a gathering place for the community.

Did You Know?

The word Baithak comes from the Hindi word for 'to sit'. The traditional baithak is a forum for musicians, dancers, and audience to sit together, share and exchange ideas, and create music together in an intimate setting. The audience is encouraged to make noise and interact with the performers, becoming active participants rather than observers.

LEELA FOUNDATION

Securing a future for India's artistic and cultural heritage.



"...at Leela there is an energy and a commitment that I feel is unique...it's really about the individuals who make Leela...It's about building the art and truly supporting the artists and each other in good and bad times. That is the uniqueness that I want to call out about Leela."

- Seema Kantak (Leela Donor)

PATRONAGE MATTERS

As the first and only self-standing endowment for Indian classical dance and music, the Leela Foundation is dedicated to creating the financial infrastructure necessary for India's artistic heritage to thrive for generations to come.

The goal of the Foundation is to provide direct support in the form of fellowships, residencies, and awards, to artists and educators who serve as tradition bearers and cultural ambassadors, and to fuel innovation and excellence in the field.

IMPACT

312

donors

\$875K

raised

\$23K

awarded to artists

8

artists supported

FOUNDATION AWARDS

In December 2021, the Leela Foundation conferred its annual Foundation Awards to three kathak artists whose artistry and dedication continually inspires us. The awards, which include a cash award of \$2,000, recognize the dedicated service these artists have shown to kathak dance over their long careers, and their role in continuing the legacy and lineage of the legendary Pandit Chitresh Das.

MADHURI DEVI SINGH

Madhuri Devi Singh is a disciple of Pandit Ram Narayan Mishra. Trained in Kolkata, she has performed to great acclaim in India and made her international debut in 2006 at the Kathak at the Crossroads festival in San Francisco. She continues to teach the next generation of kathak dancers.

GRETCHEN HAYDEN

Gretchen Hayden is an internationally recognized performer and teacher, and senior-most disciple of Pandit Chitresh Das. She teaches kathak at Tufts University, Wellesley College and MIT and is the Founder and Artistic Director of Chhandika, a Boston-based kathak institute.

JOANNA DE SOUZA

Joanna de Souza began her study of kathak in 1978, and in 1987, she received her Master's degree in kathak through the Prayag Sangit Samiti - where she stood first across India. Based in Canada, she is a nationally and internationally recognized performer and founder and director of M-DO/Kathak Toronto.

ENDOWMENT PERFORMANCE

Portfolio Snapshot

(Jan. 1, 2021 - Dec. 31, 2021)

	Jan. 1, 2021	Dec. 31, 2021
Invested Funds	\$379,044.76	\$545,624.91
Cash	\$123,374.74	\$256,331.00

Endowment Payout*

\$13,673

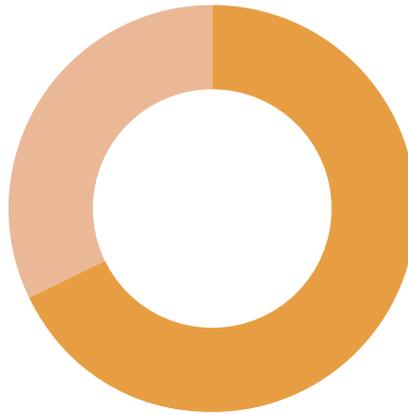
Annualized Rate of Return

15.8%

Asset Allocation

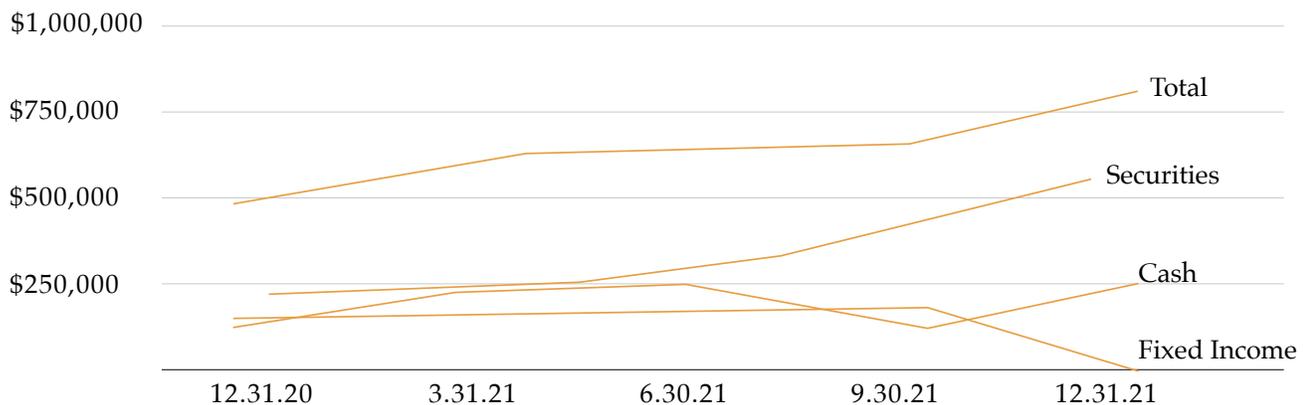
(as of December 31, 2021)

- Securities - 68%
- Cash - 32%



Portfolio Performance

(Jan. 1, 2021 - Dec. 31, 2021)



*The Leela Endowment's payout is based on an annual spending rate of 4.5%. Endowment funds support artist salaries, residencies, and fellowships.

DONORS AND PATRONS

Champions' Circle (\$100K & Up)

Shruti Mahajan and Kashyap Deorah
Tarsadia Foundation

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

Anonymous
Shaila and Dinesh Mehta
Meera and Jasant 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
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
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Pratima and Navin Doshi
Robyn Friend and Dr. Neil Siegel
Seema Kantak and Shreeraj Karulkar
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
Minoo Gupta
Bindu and Kumar Koneru
Bala and R. Krishnamurthy
Sarah Morelli and Stephen Scaringe
Madhu and Babu Mehta
Kanan and Sanjay Panchal
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Dr. Ruchi Mathur and Dr. Mark Pimentel
Indira and Yalamanchilli Rao
Shelly Mahendra and Lakshman Rao
Kinna and Dr. Nitin Shah
Hetal and Kunal Sharma
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
Shobha and Nitin Mehta
Seema Mehta
Naheed and Dayton Misfeldt
Poonam Narkar
Network for Good
Babita Panwala

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 Bambania
Shobha and Sudhir Banker
Seema Barua and Alex Le Arvind Bhambri
Kumar Bhatia
Swati and Vijay Bhatt
Sunita and Mahesh Bhuta
Jennifer Boeche
Lauri Bortz
Madhu and Vijay Chheda
Priyanka Chheda
Hima Chintalapati
Sabina and Raman Chitkara
Debra Cronin
Anna Cross
Samuel Culbert
Oscar Dallas Smith
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
Samta Gupta
Nootan and Arvind Halani
Kusum Hegde
Inji Islam
Vahinidevi Jaganath
Divya Jain

DONORS AND PATRONS

Neha Jain
Rajiv Jain
Yogita and Ishwar Jasuja
Candace Jennings
Bandita Joarder
Seema and Kiran Kamat
Anjana and Vikram Kamdar
Tarala and Pravin Kapadia
Kumud and Suren Kapadia
Sumedha Khanna
Mona and Rupesh Kotecha
Erica and Sathvik Krishnamurthy
Liz and Brady Kroupa
Pratibha and Singhal Kumar
Preeti Kumar
Sonali Lakhani
Michele and Don Linn
Kari Lopez
Elena and Victor Magno
Bharathi and Kanaiya Mahendra
Roopa Maniar
Santrupti Margad and Deepesh Rai
Vandana and Kaushik Master
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Geeta and Anil Mehta
Kala Mehta
Lavina Mehta and Sathiyam Kutty
Nila and Arvind Mehta
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Rama and Jayant Mehta
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Van Meyer
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Shoba and Manohar Samat
Chhaya and Jairaj Samtani
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Shravida Shetty
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Bhavya Singh
Venktesh Shukla
Cheryl Templeton
Brinda Thomas
Anand Tiwari
Durga and Raghu Toppur
Padma and H.P. Trivedi
Vibha and Umang Vanjara
Surekha Vashi
Preston Walton
Sarah Wong

OPERATING FINANCIALS

Expense by Program Area

- Performances - 25.2%
- Academy - 42.2%
- Administration - 10.0%
- Fundraising - 22.6%



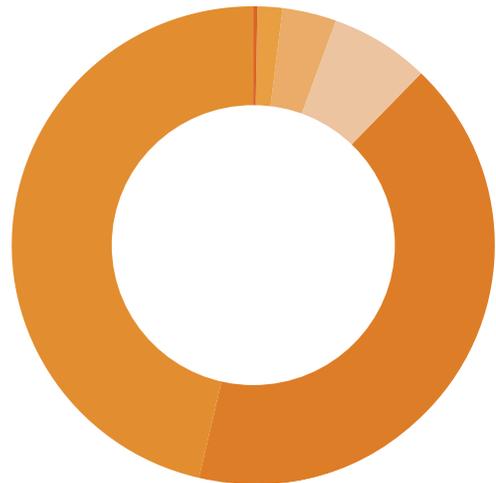
Income by Program Area*

- Performances - 15.8%
- Academy - 47.3%
- Administration - 26.8%
- Fundraising - 10.1%



Income by Type

- Earned Income: Performances - 1.7%
- Earned Income: Academy - 41.5%
- Endowment Distribution - 6.7%
- Individual Donations - 0.5%
- Corporate Support - 3.4%
- Foundation & Government Support - 46.2%



**Income by Program Area reflects the fact that we received several one-time Covid relief grants for general operating support in 2021; we did not produce any ticketed performances, resulting in lower than usual performance income.*



OUR TEAM

Board of Directors, Los Angeles

Harkishan Vasa, Chair
Ronda Berkeley, Secretary
Dinesh Mehta, Treasurer
Nitin Shah
Swamy Venuturupalli
Anna Cross

Board of Directors, San Francisco

Ronda Berkeley
Sarah Morelli, Secretary
Bina Nivas
Evanthia Spanos
Minoo Gupta

Artists

Principal Artists

Seibi Lee
Rachna Nivas
Rina Mehta

Soloists

Seema Mehta
Joanna Meinl
Sarah Morelli
Cimeron Ahluwalia
Shefali Jain

Ensemble Dancers

Sonali Toppur
Ahana Mukherjee
Carrie McCune
Ria DasGupta

Musicians

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

Leela Academy Faculty

Rina Mehta, Artistic Director
Seibi Lee, Artistic Director
Rachna Nivas, Artistic Director
Sarah Morelli, Artistic Director
Cimeron Ahluwalia
Poonam Narkar
Sonali Toppur
Ahana Mukherjee
Carrie McCune
Ria DasGupta

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

Administrative Staff

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

Lavina Mehta, Academy Director
Carrie McCune, Collective Manager

FUNDERS & SPONSORS

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

Corporations

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Google Benevity

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Kirtilal's
Monali Jain Foundation
Sephora
Upaya
Wells Fargo



