

**Asian Arts & Culture Program Series**



**NEWS RELEASE**

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**For Immediate Release**

**CONTACT: Sue McFarland, 413-577-2486  
aacp@acad.umass.edu**

**WHAT: From the Heart of a Tradition: Aniruddha in Performance**  
**WHEN: Sunday, March 2, 4:00 PM**  
**WHERE: Bowker Auditorium, UMass, Amherst**

**“A rare treat for lovers of Indian dance and music”**

*A performance that is powerful, immediate and highly lyrical.*

The Asian Arts & Culture Program, University of Massachusetts, Amherst presents **Aniruddha Knight and Ensemble** in a stunning dance concert with live music on Sunday, March 2 at 4pm in Bowker Auditorium, UMass. Presenting a fresh and individual perception of South India’s best-known dance form, the 200-year old hereditary style of Bharata Natyam, Aniruddha is a young male dancer in the lineage of nine generations of India’s most distinguished family of professional musicians and dancers. Aniruddha reveals a profound understanding and mastery of technique and improvisational skill in his performance. Today, Aniruddha is a representative of the face of young America: biracial, bicultural and, as an artist, completely contemporary.

Aniruddha is the third generation in his family to perform and teach in the United States. His grandmother, the world-famous performer T. Balasaraswati known affectionately as Bala was first introduced to American audiences in 1962 under the sponsorship of the Asia Society in New York. Teaching and performing throughout the United States for twenty years, T. Balasaraswati dance was an influence in the development of American modern dance and shaped the American audience’s understanding of this South Indian dance form. Aniruddha’s mother and teacher the late Lakshmi Knight was Balasaraswati’s daughter and principal student who became a well known interpreter of her family’s style.

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In his concert, Aniruddha introduces the unique characteristics of Balasaraswati's style of Bharata Natyam which makes it distinct from other Bharata Natyam styles. Such as, the dancer is trained first as a musician then to be a dancer. Secondly, sections of interpretive narrative dances are unrehearsed and improvised in performance, and the musicians proceed from one line of music to the next based on a variety of signals from the dancer. Lastly, the composition called *Tirmanam* is performed with a line of music and text, a practice exclusive to this style. The combined effect of these factors result in an extraordinarily intense musical relationship between the dancer and the accompanists during a concert.

Accompanying musicians include the famous vocalist Vegavahini Vijayaraghavan, the daughter of T. Brinda (one of handful female musicians who together with her cousin Bala transformed the role of women artists in South India in the 20th century). Vegavahini specializes in the family repertoire of padams and javalis that are jewels of music for Bharata Natyam. The two sisters Usha Shivakumar and Vidya Sankaranarayanan are accompanying vocalists who long been long associated with the Balasaraswati family style. Percussion accompaniment is provided by Aniruddha's father, Douglas Knight on the mridangam and T.R. Moorthy will be the flautist. This concert is a unique treat for the senses and should not be missed by dance and music lovers!

Bowker Auditorium is located in Stockbridge Hall right across from the Parking Garage. The Campus Parking Garage offers a special one dollar parking rate to show patrons.

For Tickets:

Fine Arts Center Box office 1-800-999-UMAS or 545-2511 or online [www.fineartscenter.com](http://www.fineartscenter.com).

The University offers a special rate for groups of twenty or more. All adult general admission tickets will receive a 15% discount off the \$15 individual ticket price. All tickets, both group and individual, for Students 17 & under are \$7.00.

**-End-**

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[www.umass.edu/fac/asian](http://www.umass.edu/fac/asian) or call the AACCP office: (413) 577-2486.

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**Calendar Editor:**

**Performance**

**From the Heart of a Tradition: Aniruddha in performance.** South Indian dance and music.  
Sunday March 2, 2008, 4:00 PM Bowker Auditorium, UMass, Amherst. Tickets: \$15 General,  
\$7 Youth 17 & under. For tickets call: 1-800-999-UMAS or 545-2511. Online at  
[www.fineartscenter.com](http://www.fineartscenter.com). Information: Asian Arts & Culture Program (413) 577-2486