

Pratidhwani Presents Rabindra Nath Tagore's CHITRANGADA - THE WARRIOR PRINCESS

Indian Dance Ballet Performs at Meydenbauer on August 21, 2010

Seattle, WA August 10, 2010 - Pratidhwani - a Seattle area based organization of South Asian performing artists will present CHITRANGADA - THE WARRIOR PRINCES - an Indian dance ballet at the Theatre at Meydenbauer Center in Bellevue WA on August 21st, 2010 at 7:30PM.

The story of Chitrangada comes from the great Indian epic *The Mahabharata*. Arjuna – the exiled prince of Indraprastha, had traveled far to the kingdom of Manipur in the eastern Himalayas. There, he met Chitrangada, the beautiful daughter of the king of Manipur, and was moved to seek her hand in marriage. The king demurred on the plea that, according to the matrilineal customs of his people, the children born of Chitrangada were heir to the throne of Manipur and he could not allow his heirs to be taken away from Manipur by their father. Arjuna agreed to the stipulation that he would take away neither his wife Chitrangada nor any children borne by her from Manipur and wed the princess on this premise.

The Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore re-imagined the story as a dance drama about love, illusion, and conquest. Tagore's version of the story differs a little from the original *Mahabharata* tale, and explores the inner complexities of the human psyche. Tagore's Chitrangada is no beautiful princess and lacks feminine grace. Raised as the future king of Manipur, she is a fearless warrior and hunter, often dressed in a man's attire. In a chance encounter in the woods, she meets and falls madly in love with Arjuna. However when Arjuna spurns her love, she is convinced that he would never love her the way she is. In desperation, Chitrangada prays to Madan, the god of love, to transform her into a beautiful woman. When she meets Arjuna again, he cannot help but fall in love with her. She starts a life of illusion and hypocrisy – refraining from stately duties to conceal her true self. Eventually, when raiders attack her kingdom, Chitrangada steps forward as the warrior princess that she is to protect her people. Impressed by this woman who is his equal in warfare, and no longer in love with her just for her beauty, Arjuna wholeheartedly welcomes Chitrangada for the true woman she is.

In this 150th birth anniversary year of the Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore, Pratidhwani is once again pioneering the Indian arts scene in Seattle. CHITRANGADA - THE WARRIOR PRINCESS is danced mostly to instrumental music. Beautiful lyrics in Bengali, penned by Tagore himself tell the story, which will also be presented as English narration throughout the ballet. This international approach to this classically inspired dance presentation - performed by 45 dancers in seven different dance styles, makes all language barriers irrelevant.

CHITRANGADA will be performed on August 21, 2010, 7:30PM at the Theatre at Meydenbauer Center in Bellevue, WA.

Website: <http://www.pratidhwani.org/chitrangada>

Tickets: Available online at <http://www.pratidhwani.org/chitrangada/tickets.html>

Regular : \$15

Premium : \$18

Seniors, Children under 12, and Pratidhwani/TPS Members: \$3 discount.

About Pratidhwani

Pratidhwani is a non-profit cultural organization based in the Seattle area. We are, at our core, a group of professionals of Indian heritage, who are extremely enthusiastic and passionate about the artistic traditions of our homeland. The main objective of the organization is the promotion and cultivation of the performing arts of the Indian subcontinent. Recognizing that the performing arts of India encompass a vast and varied number of styles, genres and traditions, different wings of the organization provide a platform for as many art forms as we can.