

Part 1 ~ 10: Avatars of Truth

The *Dasavatar* (ten incarnations) depicts the mythology of Vishnu's ten visits to earth. Vishnu, the preserver, is a central god in the Hindu pantheon. The *Dasavatar* is a set of moral fables that are, in general, interpreted as the triumph of good over evil in human history's turning points and even evolution—from fish to man. NATyA delves deeper into the multiple truths that the *Dasavatar* offers – “truth cannot be contained in the stories” – and connects the dynamic myths to contemporary experiences.

1. Matsya (Fish): The End and the Beginning



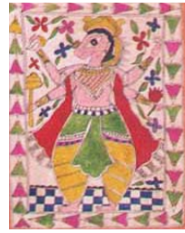
When a sage finds a tiny fish who speaks to him, he realizes that the end—and the beginning—is upon the world. The oceans rise in a deluge, but the little fish grows to fill it, and leads the world to safety.

2. Kurma (Tortoise): The Tension of the Balance



As a tortoise, Vishnu took no sides in the fight between good and evil, but kept the tension alive to continue the churning of the ocean. In today's fields, children are forced to work. As they slice the tall cane to feed the world's sweet tooth, one is injured. But they must continue. The delight of sweet and the pain of injury are interwoven; you cannot have one without the other today.

3. Varaha (Boar): Save the Earth



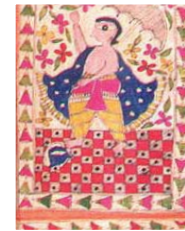
Varaha rescued Mother Earth by lifting her up from the underworld with his strong tusks. In 1973, as women in the Himalayas go about their daily work, they find out that developers from the city are destroying the trees they rely upon and love. Individually, they are helpless to change their destinies, but together, they surround the trees with their bodies and block the onslaught.

4. Narasimha (Half-man, half-lion): I am not alone



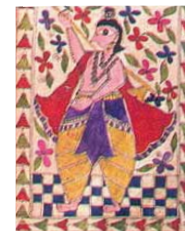
Just as the child Prahalad discovered the Divine in a pillar, a girl discovers her inner connection to nature. As the girl innocently plays, Nature becons her to explore and dance with — a tree, a stream, the rain. The girl realizes the interconnectedness of her life to that of nature and the sublime.

5. Vamana (Dwarf): Power Overpowered



Vamana, the dwarf, took three steps to mark the universe and thus ended the greed of King Bali. In 1930 Indians do the same in their independence struggle. The British defend aggressively, but the Gandhians continue their non-violent march, growing in strength and recovering from losses. In the 'third step', the British are expelled by the weaponless Indians. A new nation is born.

6. Parasurama (Warrior): The Impossible Choice of Violence



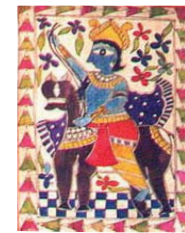
Sometimes violence is necessary, as Parasurama revealed. However, violence causes many effects beyond the obvious. In a war zone today, a family cowers in hiding. Violence surrounds them and they are helpless, trying to survive and stay together. After a second barrage of violence, they experience relief, and move towards a new world.

7. Rama (King): Mandela's Virtue



Rama established a new sense of order and virtue. Similarly, a young Nelson Mandela explains to his wife his decision to join the anti-apartheid struggle. As a leader, he inspires his people to fight against oppression. He is arrested for 27 years but emerges to foster hope in millions, as he leads the move forward into a democratic South Africa.

8. Krishna (Cowherd): Joy of Play



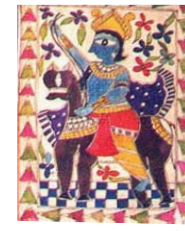
Krishna depicts finding the divine in music, dance, and play. It is spring now, and the air is alive with the celebration and romance of Holi, the festival of colors. Friends plot mischief, throw colored powders on each other, dance, and celebrate.

9. Buddha (Enlightened One): Suffering Is



A man breaks away from dance to realize the pervasiveness of human suffering. He becomes the enlightened Buddha. A woman pleads with Buddha to revive her dead child. He tells her to bring him mustard seeds from a home that has known no death. When she cannot, she realizes Buddha's message.

10. Kalki (The Future): Begin Again



The cyclic experiences of isolation, anger, and greed escalate. A new voice reminds us of the wisdom within and to begin the cycle anew.

Music Credits for 10: Avatars of Truth

Ravi Shankar, Shiv Kumar Sharma, Prem Joshua, Zakir Hussain, A. R. Rahman, Prasant Radhakrishnan, Tan Dun, African Cream Freedom Choir, Tumela Meloi, Johnny Clegg, Navraj Gurung, Bhaskar Chandravarkar.

NATyA

NATyA is a young Bay Area dance company whose mission is to help audiences appreciate classical Indian dance traditions — their vibrant energy, geometry, rhythm, sophisticated alphabet of gestures and expressions, and their history. Through narration, contemporary music, and portrayals of familiar world stories, NATyA brings out fresh blossoms from ancient roots. Founders Smitha Radhakrishnan and Vallari Shah are joined by Deepa Subramaniam, Jyotsna Vaideeswaran, and Nitya Venkateswaran. Together, they bring to the stage dozens of years of Bharatnatyam training, hundreds of performances, and extensive choreographic experience in the US, Canada, Europe, South Africa, and India.

Alyssa Nickell is NATyA's poet, and composed and recorded the original poetry for this production.



VidyA

VidyA creates groundbreaking sound that merges the virtuosity of jazz with the melodic and rhythmic nuance of South Indian classical music. Led by critically-acclaimed saxophonist Prasant Radhakrishnan along with Gautam Tejas (violin), David Ewell (bass) and Sameer Gupta (drums), VidyA produces a soulful, penetrating sound that pushes the labels of “fusion” or “world music.” VidyA translates the language of Carnatic music into the idiom of jazz, weaving in and out of the two genres while all the time merging them into one.

NATyA and VidyA

present



Avatars of Truth & Melody

A tapestry of dance, poetry, and music connecting the 10 myths of Vishnu to the contemporary

May 26, 27, 28, 2007 | CounterPULSE, San Francisco

www.natya.info

www.vidyamusic.com

Part 2 ~ 10: Avatars of Melody

In a series of five compositions, VidyA reflects the avatars through original interpretations of ten raagas, or classical melodies, defying the boundaries between the classical and the contemporary.

Raagas are a defining feature of Indian classical music. A raga is a set of logical musical tones and nuances that invoke various musical situations suitable for compositions and improvisations. The patterns and unique characteristics of raagas have the power to paint in vibrant colors, generating layers of mood and feeling. Contemporary jazz, on the other hand, offers improvisational freedom and a vast breadth of musical influences. VidyA's music connects these aspects of both forms seamlessly in their original brand of Carnatic-Jazz.