

DANCE

Magical Dance Spectacle

Kerala Dance Theatre does Ramayana kathakali style

By **JYOTHI KIRAN**

The Kerala Dance Theatre is a collaboration of independent artists who perform the dramatic art forms of Kerala. It will present scenes from the Indian epic Ramayana in the kathakali theatrical style at UCLA December 2.

The Ramayana tells the story of the great battle between Rama and Ravana. The scenes dramatized will include the exploits of many fascinating characters: Maricha, Jatayu, Hanuman, Prahasthan, and others. With the exaggerated expressions, body movements, and stunningly elaborate costumes typical of kathakali, this performance of the Ramayana will be unearthly and uniquely beautiful.

Kathakali is one of the most imposing and colorful of the ancient dance forms of

India. Originating in Kerala, this dance represents the crowning achievement of the centuries-old tradition of indigenous theater. It is a magical world where Gods and titans materialize before one's eyes to reveal their elemental passions and fury. Kathakali provides a live commentary on the ethos and psyche of a people who cherish the art as their most prized possession.

The roots of kathakali can be traced back at least 1,500 years, although the kathakali as it exists today is not more than 300 years old. Kathakali had its beginnings in animistic beliefs and rituals of the region and continued its synthesis with other elements of the evolving society. It also symbolizes a blending of the Aryan and the Dravidian cultures, for in shaping its techniques, it freely assimilated various elements from various dances, dramas, and rituals that came into contact with this region at various periods in history.

Performing with the Kerala Dance Theatre on December 2nd is a special guest artist, **Sasidharan Nair** from Darpana

Academy in Ahmadabad, India. Sasidharan has performed to critical acclaim throughout India as well as North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia. Recently, he toured with the production of "Purush," a cast of all male dancers who performed in India and throughout the United States.

Performing in this production are **Jan Zeitlin, Arpita Banerjee** and **Radha Carman**. These three artists have devoted their lives to the study of the dances of Kerala and have spent years in India training under the guidance of legendary masters of the arts. ♦

Sat, Dec 2, 7pm. NW Campus Auditorium, UCLA, Los Angeles. \$12 gen., \$8 students/children 4-10. (310) 837-8568, (818) 995-6468. Call ahead to confirm the venue.



Radha Carman



Sasidharan Nair

The Kerala Dance Theatre presents

The Ramayana

A Kathakali Dance Drama

with guest artist

Sasidharan Nair

Saturday, December 2, 1995

7:00pm

UCLA - Northwest Campus Auditorium (near Sproul Hall)

Tickets: \$12, \$8 students and children (4-10)

discounts will be given for tickets purchased before November 23rd

