

# Shyama Iyer

Curriculum Vitae

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Member of the Dramatists Guild

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## EDUCATION

### **Yale University David Geffen School of Drama: Class of 2025**

Major: MFA in Dramaturgy & Dramatic Criticism; Theater Management (Producing)

Mentors: Dr. Katherine Profeta, Dr. Catherine Sheehy, Dr. Kee-Yoon Nahm, Dr. Eric M. Glover, Dr. Shilarna Stokes, Jeanine Tesori

### **Ohio State University Department of Theatre, Film, and Media Arts, Master of Arts, Conferred: May 2022**

Major: MA in Theatre & Performance Studies; Thesis: *The Utility of Bhava-Rasa Theory in Contemporary Musical Theatre*

Mentors: Dr. Stratos Constantinidis, Mandy Fox

### **Western Kentucky University, Department of Theatre & Dance, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Conferred: May 2020**

Major: BFA in Performing Arts, Concentration: Musical Theatre; Minor: Performing Arts Administration, Dance

## TEACHING (all teaching experiences are paid, professional experiences)

### **Teaching Fellow for *Peachy & the Restaurant Play* at Yale University, Spring 2025**

Teaching Fellow to Dr. Shilarna Stokes. Experience included facilitating discussions, giving lectures, and leading dramaturgical analysis; Class size: 12

### **Teaching Fellow for *Drama in the South Asian Diaspora* at Yale University, Fall 2023**

Teaching Fellow to Dr. Shilarna Stokes. Experience included facilitating discussions, giving lectures and grading student work; Class size: 22

### **Lecturer at Louisville Academy of Music, Summer 2024**

Lead interactive Carnatic music Lectures and Demonstrations; Class size: 6

### **Teaching Associate for *Intro to Theatre* at the Ohio State University, Fall 2021 - Spring 2022**

Lead a bi-weekly class for four undergraduate sections. Designed engaging lectures with active participation and moderating thoughtful discussions with students; Class size: 35 students per section;

### **Guest Lecturer for *Drama in the South Asian Diaspora* at Yale University, November 2021**

Lecture on Bhava-Rasa Theory and combining Indian classical theatrical traditions in contemporary Western contexts; Class size: 15

### **Lecturer for *Dance In Culture Guest Lecture* at Western Kentucky University, 2017 to 2024**

Lecture on Indian classical dance-theatre history. Class size: 20

### **Carnatic Classical Vocal Instructor, 2016 - present**

Beginner to intermediate vocal lessons offered online and in-person through the Guru Vandana Arts Academy; Class size: individual lessons (academy consists of 20 students)

**Bharathanatyam Classical Dance Instructor, 2014 to present**

Beginner to intermediate dance lessons offered online and in-person through the Guru Vandana Arts Academy; Class size: individual lessons (Academy consists of 50 students)

**Artist-in-Residence at South Central Regional Library in Louisville, KY, August 2019**

Lectures, workshops, and information sessions on Indian dance, theatre, and music. Class size: 5 per session

**CONFERENCES / PRESENTATIONS****Association for Theatre Higher Education (ATHE), August 2021, Austin TX**

Topic: The Utility of Bhava-Rasa Theory in Contemporary Musical Theatre

**Interdisciplinary Arts Colloquium, March 2021, the Ohio State University**

Topic: The Utility of Bhava-Rasa Theory in Contemporary Musical Theatre

**SouthEastern Theatre Conference, February 2020, Louisville KY**

Topic: Storytelling in Indian Classical Dance-Theatre

**Research Experiences and Creative Heights Conference, March 2018, Western Kentucky University**

Topic: "Storytelling in Indian music-theatre vs. American music-theatre."

**AWARDS / GRANTS / FELLOWSHIPS****Yale Women's Faculty Fund SEED grant, December 2024, Yale University**

Grant award to support the development of *The Fortune Teller*.

**Graduate Fellowship, August 2020 - August 2021, the Ohio State University**

Full sponsorship of one year of graduate education at the Ohio State University

**IndianRaga Fellowship, July 2019, San Diego, CA**

Bharatanatyam dance Fellow; Collaborated with artists from all over the world to create state of the art videos

**Life-time Experience Grant, July 2019, Western Kentucky University**

Awarded funds from Western Kentucky University to travel to California to take part in Bharatanatyam workshops

**Outstanding New Student Award, May 2017, Western Kentucky University**

For academic achievement and involvement in the Department of Theatre & Dance

**Faculty Undergraduate Student Engagement Grant, March 2017, Western Kentucky University**

Awarded funds from Western Kentucky University to travel to Bangalore, India for five weeks and study Sanskrit, Indian Rhythm, Indian Classical Voice, and Indian Classical Dance.

**Cornelius A. Martin Award, August 2016, Western Kentucky University**

For achievement demonstrated through previous academic history

**CHOREOGRAPHY** (all experiences are paid / ticketed events.)***Metamorphoses*, Lead Choreographer, Yale School of Drama, 2024**

(Style: Contemporary)

Mary Zimmerman's play on Greek Mythology, directed by Alexis Woodard. Assisted with character movement work, fight choreography, and worked independently to create chunks of extended movement sequences in the play. Cast size: 9

***The Fortune Teller, Lead Choreographer/Performer, Yale School of Drama, 2024***

(Style: Bharathanatyam)

A 40 minute dance-theater production that reimagines the Tamil dance-theater form "Kuravanji" as a fortune teller warning a modern woman of the pitfalls love, womanhood, and gendered mischaracterization. Cast size: solo

***Arlington, Lead Choreographer, The Yale Cabaret, 2024***

(Style: Contemporary)

Choreographed and performed as the role of an unnamed woman who "dances the last 20 minutes of her life." Cast size: solo

***Gopa-Gopi, Lead Choreographer, The Geeva Arts Festival, 2024***

(Style: Bharatanatyam)

An hour long Dance Drama that tells the story of the Gopas and Gopis adventures with Krishna. Created for the company dancers of Guru Vandana Arts Academy. Cast size: 11

***How to Play a Trick, Lead Choreographer, Western Kentucky University Evening of Dance 2024***

(Style: Indian Contemporary)

A six minute piece that explores the physicalities, heartaches, and camaraderie that comes from 'playing a trick'. Created for the Western Kentucky University company dancers. Cast size: 10

***The Rasa Jar, Lead Choreographer, The Yale Cabaret, 2023***

(Style: Indian Contemporary) A song cycle that combines research into ancient Indian aesthetics with contemporary musical theatre. Premiered at the Yale Cabaret. Cast size: 4

***Journeys, Lead Choreographer/Performer, The Yale Cabaret/The Kentucky Center For the Arts, 2022, 2023***

(Style: Bharatanatyam) A dance play about migration, friendship, and finding community, based on Iyer's mother's diary entries from 1997. Premiered at the Yale Cabaret and second run at Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts. Cast size: solo

***Violet, Assistant Director/Choreographer, The Ohio State University, 2022***

(Style: Musical Theater) A disfigured woman takes a life-changing bus journey to see a televangelist, finding love and self-acceptance along the way. At the Ohio State University theater department. Cast size: 12

***Re-Bloom, Lead Choreographer, Dance Film, 2022***

(Style: Bharathanatyam) Cast size: solo

***Ornamentation, Lead Choreographer, Dance Film, 2022***

(Style: Indian Contemporary) Cast size: solo

***Raasa Dhirana, Lead Choreographer, The Geeva Arts Festival, 2021***

(Style: Bharatanatyam) Krishna and the Gopis have an adventure in the forest, their interactions blossoming into five vibrant Thillanas. Created for the eleven company dancers of Guru Vandana Arts Academy

***The Ramayana, Lead Choreographer, The Guru Vandana Arts Academy, 2020***

(Style: Bharatanatyam) A dance-drama of the famous epic, created for the company dancer-actors of Guru Vandana Arts Academy

***Dhol! A Dance Extravaganza, Lead Choreographer, 2019***

(Style: Bollywood) A high energy bollywood and Indian folk piece created for the Western Kentucky University dancers.

**COMPOSITION/WRITING*****A Game of Dice, 2024 (Book/Music/Lyrics)***

A Game of Dice reimagines the Mahabharata's pivotal gambling match as a modern musical about power, tradition and human dignity. When Yudhishtira's addiction leads him to wager everything—including his wife Draupadi—in a fateful game against his cousins, both families must confront how their obsession with winning has cost them their humanity.

***The Sound of An Anklet, 2024 (Music/Lyrics)***

*The Sound of An Anklet* is loosely based off of the *Sillapatikaram*, an ancient Tamil Epic Poem. In this adaptation, newlyweds Kruthi and Karthik are put in a perilous situation when their friend Megha, a marine archeologist discovers an ancient anklet lodged at the bottom of the ocean. The artifact ignites Megha's battle with her corrupt supervisors, Kruthi's inner artistry, and a chase for truth and justice.

***The Rasa Jar, 2023 (Music/Lyrics)***

This song cycle combines research into ancient Indian aesthetics (Bhava-Rasa Theory) and musical modes (Carnatic Ragas) with American musical theater, creating a fun interactive evening in which audience members are given beads that indicate what they feel as each song commences.

**PERFORMANCE EXPERIENCE****Selected Indian Classical Dance Experience**

<i>Kairavi Kumudha Kantha</i>	January 2025	Madipaakam Sabha, Chennai, India
<i>The Fortune Teller</i>	December 2024	Yale Cabaret, New Haven CT
<i>Solo</i>	October 2024	Hindu Temple of KY, Louisville, KY
<i>Kumbakonam</i>	January 2023	Nirantaram Festival, Bangalore, India
<i>Journeys</i>	December 2022	Yale Cabaret, New Haven, CT
<i>Nannu Brovu Lalitha Solo</i>	January 2022	Nirantaram Festival, Bangalore, India
<i>Rama Returns: A Diwali Margam</i>	November 2021	Mansfield Indian Association, Mansfield, OH
<i>Solo</i>	August 2021	Krishna Geetham Performing Arts, Bay Area, CA
<i>Raasa Dhirana</i>	July 2021	Geeva Heritage Festival, Louisville, KY
<i>Nannu Brovu Lalitha</i>	June 2020	Geeva Heritage Festival, Louisville, KY
<i>Kabali</i>	July 2019	Geeva Heritage Festival, Louisville, KY
<i>Vaigai Express: A Trip to Madurai</i>	April 2019	St. Louis Indian Dance Festival, St. Louis, MO
<i>Anveshana Finding Guru</i>	July 2018	Geeva Heritage Festival, Louisville, KY
<i>KrishnaLeela</i>	December 2017	Sangeetha Sambhrama, Bangalore, India
<i>Solo Performance</i>	September 2017	International Festival, Bowling Green, KY
<i>Kanakanjali</i>	August 2017	Hindu Temple of KY, Louisville, KY

<i>Dharpan: Mirror Mirror</i>	July 2017	Geeva Heritage Festival, Louisville, KY
<i>Kubja: Hunchback of Mathura</i>	July 2017	Guru Vandana Arts Academy, Louisville, KY

### Selected Theatre / Musical Theater Experience

<i>Arlington</i>	Woman	April 2024
<i>Lonely Artists Cabaret @ 54 Below</i>	Singer	January 2024
<i>The Rasa Jar</i>	Woman 2	October 2023
<i>The Drowsy Chaperone</i>	Janet	March 2020 (Rehearsed until Tech)
<i>Bowling for Beginners</i>	Ellen	August 2019
<i>The Liars' Bench (Workshop)</i>	Olive	October 2019
<i>Hair</i>	Ronnie	November 2018
<i>9 to 5: The Musical</i>	Ensemble	April 2018
<i>Legally Blonde</i>	Vivienne	April 2018
<i>The Magic Tower</i>	Linda	March 2018
<i>What's Your Damage</i>	McNamara	November 2017
<i>Mother Courage and Her Children</i>	Katrin	November 2017
<i>Hello From Bertha</i>	Lena	April 2017
<i>One For the Road</i>	Nicky	March 2017
<i>West Side Story</i>	Teresita	October 2016
<i>Once on This Island</i>	Storyteller	November 2014
<i>The Jungal Book</i>	Mowgli	September 2016