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ANCIENT INDIAN TEMPLE DANCING REVIVED IN USD PERFORMANCE

Viji Prakash, an internationally acclaimed artist who is working to revive India's ancient tradition of temple dancing, will perform on Sunday, April 18, at 6 p.m. in Shiley Theatre at the University of San Diego.

Entitled "Devadasi (Maid-Servant of God)," Prakash's performance will enact the Bharata Natyam, a classical dance that began in India as early as 200 B.C. as a religious adoration.

The Bharata Natyam was revered as a demanding, highly stylized expression of art and worship featuring beautifully costumed dancers. But over time, the tradition was diverted into a sensual entertainment for royalty.

"The association of temple dancers with a form of 'sacred prostitution' caused this art form to fall into disrepute in the late 19th century," said event organizer Lance Nelson, a USD Religious Studies professor. "Thanks to the work of contemporary dancers like Viji Prakash, the Bharata Natyam has been restored and revitalized as an exquisite art form for the stage."

Prakash, who goes on world tours each year from her native Los Angeles, is known for her mastery of form and expressive ability. In a review of her work in *The Oregonian*, she was praised as "a master storyteller, employing every muscle in her face and body to communicate a broad spectrum of emotions."

She will be joined in the USD performance by her daughter and

student, Mythili Prakash, a seasoned performer who has been hailed by critics in India as a "child prodigy." The Prakashes will be accompanied by a traditional ensemble of live musicians, including vocal, violin, flute, cymbal, and drum artists.

The "Devadasi" performance is sponsored by the USD Associated Students' Cultural Art Board and the USD Department of Theological and Religious Studies in cooperation with the Center for World Music. General admission is \$10, admission for USD faculty and staff is \$5, and USD students will be admitted free.

For further information, please contact Dr. Nelson at 260-4600, ext. 4921, or the Center for World Music, 436-8277.