

PROGRAM NOTES

**TEATRO CRDANCE 2026 SEASON
MARCH 21, 2026, 7:30PM**

MMAC THEATER 248 W60 NEW YORK, NY 10023

**ARTISTIC DIRECTOR/CHOREOGRAPHER/PRODUCER: CATERINA RAGO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: CHERYL KAPLAN
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR: CHRISTOPHER DINAPOLI**

Running time: 90 minutes with Intermission

><

I. GAYATHRI PRATHA: GOVARDHANA GIRIDHARA, undated.
CHOREOGRAPHER: PADMABHSHAN GURU SRI VEMPATI CHINNA SATYAM
DANCER: GAYATHRI PRATHA
MUSIC: CARNATIC CLASSICAL MUSIC.

GOVARDHANA GIRIDHARA, undated. Gayathri Pratha performs a series of episodic dance-dramas titled **GOVARDHANA GIRIDHARA, undated.** The choreography, known as *Kuchipudi*, is a classical Indian dance form from Andhra Pradesh. As Pratha reveals: “In learning this piece, I’m struck by how something so ancient can feel unexpectedly modern.” *GOVARDHANA GIRIDHARA* is a celebrated Sanskrit composition by composer and saint Sri Narayana Theertha, said to have been written between 1580 and 1660 CE and first appearing in his magnum opus, *Sri Krishna Leela Tarangini*, a cornerstone of the Kuchipudi repertoire, narrating episodes from the life of Lord Krishna through lyrical poetry that was designed to be sung, enacted and embodied through dance.

This composition glorifies Lord Krishna as Govardhana Giridhara, the divine protector who lifted the Govardhana mountain to shield the people of Brindhavan. The dance portrays Krishna as mischievous child, from stealing butter to compassionate leader and, ultimately, a divine force protecting devotees. The first episode depicts young Krishna and his mother Yashoda as she milks cows when we find Krishna mischievously consuming all the milk. A scold turns to laughter, revealing their affection. The second episode depicts Krishna playfully stealing the garments of milkmaids. The central episode narrates the story of Govardhana: faced with a drought, the villagers of Brindhavan turn to Indra, the god of rain. When Indra unleashes torrential rains, Krishna lifts a mountain with his finger. Krishna is finally revealed as Sri Venkateshwara, the consort of Goddess Lakshmi and a remover of obstacles.

CHOREOGRAPHER: PADMABHSHAN GURU SRI VEMPATI CHINNA SATYAM.

The choreography of Govardhana Giridhara is attributed to Padmabhshan Guru Sri Vempati Chinna Satyam, 1929–2012, who was one of the most influential figures in the modern history of Kuchipudi. He played a pivotal role in codifying the form for the contemporary stage while preserving its tradition. As the founder of the Kuchipudi Art Academy in Chennai, he trained generations of dancers who carried the form across India and the world. The dance has been preserved and transmitted through oral tradition and embodied practice, passed from guru to disciple, student to student. Each generation carries forward not only the choreography, but the values, discipline, and storytelling sensibility that define Kuchipudi.

MUSIC: The music for *GOVARDHANA GIRIDHARA* is rooted in the Carnatic classical music tradition, the South Indian classical music system structured around *raga* (melodic framework) and *tala* (rhythmic cycle). Each episode is tied to a specific raga, allowing the music to evoke distinct emotional states. Ragas, such as *Hindolam* and *Darbari Kanada*, are explored, enhancing moods ranging from

playful innocence to gravitas and devotion. The composition is accompanied by flute and violin, while “nattuvangam”, the rhythmic syllabic recitation (“*tha*”, “*dhim*”, “*thom*” etc) conducted by the nattuvanar, maintains tempo and structure to be in constant dialogue with the dancer.

ABOUT GAYATHRI PRATHA: **GAYATHRI PRATHA** is a Kuchipudi Dancer based in New York and New Jersey. Gayathri has performed throughout the USA and internationally, including the Battery Dance Festival. NY, Glasgow Mela, Scotland and The Nehru Center, London. Pratha is passionate about bringing Kuchipudi to a broad audience. She is the Logistics Lead at *Virtual Arts for Humanity*, a non profit organization giving artists a platform to showcase their work while giving to a good cause. Pratha is a 2024 Indian Raga Fellow, having choreographed and produced videos for their platform. She’s a first place winner for South Asian Arts Symposium Competition and worked under the guidance of Guru Sri Vedantam Satya Narasimha Sastry while studying Carnatic Vocal under Smt. Padmavathi Pappu Ravi Shankar. Pratha holds a Bachelor in Technology Systems Management and Computer Science Degree from Stony Brook University. As a Project Manager, Pratha aims to integrate artificial intelligence into healthcare to improve patient outcomes. This is the Company’s first collaboration with **TEATRO CRDANCE**. To learn more, go to @gayathripratha.

><

II. TAYLOR TEEN ENSEMBLE: CLOVEN KINGDOM, 1976, Adapted Selections

CHOREOGRAPHER: PAUL TAYLOR

TAYLOR TEEN ENSEMBLE DIRECTOR: AMANDA STEVENSON

DANCERS: SKYLAH ALOMAR, SYLVIA ARRINGTON SHANNON, ANNIE BAKAJ, ALISE BROWN, MADISON LUCAS, FEI NUNZIATA, ZARA GAMBOA, SOFIA GLUCK, NIALYNN MIRO, GIANA NEVAREZ TEVERE, GABBY RAMIREZ, AMAYA REDDEN.

MUSIC: ARCANGELO CORELLI, HENRY COWELL, MALLOY MILLER

COSTUMES: *Inspired by the original costume design of Scott Barrie and Headpieces by John Rawlings*

CLOVEN KINGDOM, 1976: This evening’s performance includes adapted selections from Paul Taylor’s 1976 work *CLOVEN KINGDOM* that first premiered in New York. As the philosopher Spinoza noted: “Man is a social animal.” Taylor’s choreography is an elegant and arresting dance that examines civilization in its most dignified and primal forms. The dancers move through a formal waltz, interspersed with animalistic movements. The dichotomy shows how we are not separate from animals; we are animals.

CHOREOGRAPHER: PAUL TAYLOR, 1930-2018, was a trailblazing choreographer of American modern dance. After beginning his career with the Martha Graham Dance Company, he established the Paul Taylor Dance Company in 1954, where he remained a virtuoso performer until 1974, when he turned exclusively to choreography. During his 64-year career as a dancer maker, Mr. Taylor created 147 works, with an extraordinary range of subject matter. His works showcase athletic prowess and offer cogent observations on life’s complexities. Mr. Taylor left an extraordinary legacy of creativity and craft not only to American modern dance, but to the performing arts throughout the world.

ABOUT TAYLOR TEEN ENSEMBLE: The Taylor Teen Ensemble is a pre-professional performing company that offers young dancers an opportunity to perform sections of Mr. Taylor’s diverse choreography. By audition only, the TAYLOR TEEN ENSEMBLE, directed by Amanda Stevenson, has toured throughout the tri-state area performing in festivals, K–12 public as well as private schools and larger venues such as Symphony Space, KNJ Theater at Peridance and SUNY Purchase. Based in New York City, the Taylor Teen Ensemble was formed in 2013. This is the Company’s first collaboration with **TEATRO CRDANCE**. To learn more, go to paultaylordance.org/center-dance-education

><

TAYLOR TEEN ENSEMBLE: BATTLEWORKS ETUDE

Based on movement from Robert Battle's Flock, The Hunt, Jewel Lost and Rush Hour

CHOREOGRAPHER: ROBERT BATTLE, Arranged by Erika Pujič

TAYLOR TEEN ENSEMBLE DIRECTOR: AMANDA STEVENSON

DANCERS: SKYLAH ALOMAR, SYLVIA ARRINGTON SHANNON, ANNIE BAKAJ, ALISE BROWN, MADISON LUCAS, FEI NUNZIATA, ZARA GAMBOA, SOFIA GLUCK, NIALYNN MIRO, GIANA NEVAREZ TEVERE, GABBY RAMIREZ, AMAYA REDDEN.

MUSIC: ORIGINAL MUSIC BY CARL LANDA

BATTLEWORKS ETUDE is part of Dancing Legacy's *Repertory Etudes Collection*, conceived and curated by Carolyn Adams and Julie Adams Strandberg. *Repertory Etudes* are short dances based on signature works by significant American choreographers that offer people, from all walks of life, the opportunity to explore, discuss and appreciate their connection to American dance and its cultural relevance. For more information, go to: www.dancinglegacy.us/

CHOREOGRAPHER: ROBERT BATTLE is a dancer, choreographer and the former Artistic Director of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. He received his BFA from the Julliard School. For further information, go to: paultaylordance.org.

><

~ INTERMISSION ~

III. CRDANCE: MORSO D'AMORE, 2021

CHOREOGRAPHER: CATERINA RAGO

DANCERS: ROSE BARBANTAN, AMINA KONATÉ, CARA MCMANUS, MICAH MCKEE, CATERINA RAGO, TESSA SIEBER.

MUSIC: MAMMA LA RONDINELLA BY CANZONIERE GRECANICO SALENTINO; UNABI BY CHRISTEN LIEN; DIES IRAE BY ZBIGNIEW PREISNER.

COSTUME DESIGN: CATERINA RAGO

MORSO D'AMORE, 2021. A major work, *MORSO D'AMORE* upends the classic tarantella: a dance rooted in the traditions of Southern Italy during the 15th to 17th centuries. Since its 2021 USA premiere at the Martha Graham Theater, *MORSO D'AMORE* has become a significant contemporary work. To cure the body of the poisonous bite of the tarantula, it was said that three or four days of dancing in a trance-like state would relieve the body of physical and psychological trauma. In *MORSO D'AMORE*, (*Bite of Love*), the dance is imagined as a state of ecstasy or rebellion, recalling a strange imprisonment. A cycle of capture and release is at hand in this complex work that crosses global cultures to examine personal and political crisis.

CHOREOGRAPHER: CATERINA RAGO is Founding Artistic Director, Choreographer and Principal Dancer of **CRDANCE**. Born in San Lucido, Italy and based in New York, Rago received commissions from Steffi Nossen Dance Foundation, Accademia Nazionale di Danza, Ailey/Fordham University, Marymount Manhattan College and Peridance Center. She joined the Martha Graham Dance Company in 2009 after completing its Professional Training Program, remaining with the company until 2012. Rago serves as a regisseur of Graham's works, restaging repertory at universities throughout the USA and Europe. Her reconstructions include *Panorama, 1935* for Accademia Nazionale di Danza at Rome's *Soirées Dans, Acts of Light: Ritual to the Sun, 1981* and *Dancing Movie Stars Festival* in collaboration with Fondazione Roma Tre Teatro Palladium, as well as Karole Armitage's *American Dream* for the *Ravello Festival*. Rago was named an Emerging Choreographer by MET Dance, Houston. As Choreographer and Principal Dancer for **CRDANCE**, Rago's work has been performed at New York Live Arts, the Martha Graham Theater, KNJ Theater and Teatro de la Ciudad Francisco de Paula Toro in Mexico. Rago teaches Choreography and Dance in the USA and

Europe in programs from **Tecniche Di Danza Moderna/TDM** and **TEATRO CRDANCE** to the Joffrey Ballet School and Peridance Center where she is on the faculty.

CRDANCE is a bold force in modern dance, reshaping the boundaries and experience of dance. Founded in 2007 by Artistic Director Caterina Rago, this Italian and American company, known for its visceral movement language, honors modern dance tradition to forge a new platform for performance, dance education and its research. Under the leadership of Caterina Rago and Executive Director Cheryl Kaplan, **CRDANCE** has expanded its presence across the United States and internationally through its extensive performance repertoire, educational initiatives and global collaborations with artists. **TEATRO CRDANCE**, cultivates emerging and established dancers and choreographers, transforming **CRDANCE**'s mission to create a hub for artistic exchange. **TEATRO CRDANCE** is a monthly performance series and vehicle for collaboration, taking dance to new directions through interdisciplinary dialogue, mentorship and cross-cultural projects. Committed to artistic and technical excellence, **CRDANCE** nurtures emerging talent through **TECNICHE DI DANZA MODERNA/TDM**, its educational division, offering master classes in modern dance technique and repertory. Honoring the legacy of modern dance as it re-imagines its future, **CRDANCE** is at the intersection of tradition and change, mapping new ideas onto the history of dance. To learn more, go to www.crdance.org

><

TEATRO CRDANCE GIVES SPECIAL THANKS. Caterina Rago and TEATRO CRDANCE are grateful to the extraordinary individuals and audiences like you, who provide vital and generous support to our mission of expanding the art of dance. Special Thanks to Cheryl Kaplan, Rose Barbantan, Amina Konaté, Micah Mckee, Cara McManus, Tessa Sieber, Taylor Teen Ensemble, Amanda Stevenson and Gayathri Pratha, as well as Vincent Paradiso and Christopher DiNapoli.

><

SUPPORT TEATRO CRDANCE AT ANY LEVEL by going to www.crdance.org and clicking **SUPPORT**. Or send a check today to: *CRDANCE Company, LLC, CATERINA RAGO, 57 W75 Street, NY, NY 10023 #5F*. We're committed to creating works and teaching programs with value. We respectfully ask that you make a donation to **TEATRO CRDANCE**. Our work provides educational and artistic value to dancers at all stages in the USA and internationally, making a significant impact. Thank you.

PROGRAM NOTES *Written/Edited by © Cheryl Kaplan, 2026. All rights reserved.*

PHOTOGRAPHY *Courtesy © Caterina Rago Dance, 2026. All rights reserved.*