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## "Sleeping Beauty" Reawakens In Traditional Indian Dance Adaptation

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By VALERIE NAHMAD SCHIMEL

Nearly everyone knows the story behind the famed children's fairy tale "Sleeping Beauty," but an energetic new adaption of the classic story could help promote a new level of cultural understanding. The Rhythms School of Dance will present two performances August 31 and September 1 that will use the beloved story to help showcase the beauty of traditional Indian classical dance.

Artistic Director Ranjana Warier says using a familiar story like a fairy tale provides a creative way to connect Indian traditions with other cultures. "The problem with traditional Indian dance is that it is abstract and obscure. There are symbolisms and complex codes and if you are not familiar with all these details, it's hard to stay engaged. This dance drama puts customs into a story that people already know very well. Instead of highlighting the differences, the performance will show our similarities," said Warier.



Ranjana Warier

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"Few things like the arts can bring people together, providing the kinds of collective experiences that build great communities," said Dennis Scholl, VP/arts at Knight Foundation. "By providing a hybrid performance, the Rhythms School of Dance will provide a way for our diverse community to connect and celebrate all that our various cultures have to offer."

As a 2012 Knight Arts Challenge Miami winner, Warier has brought together a team of professional Indian classical dancers and advanced students for the production, which will include English narration to help make the ancient Indian art form understandable. The colorful and high energy show is ideal for all ages and will also include a surprise twist at the end. There will also be a lecture series surrounding the performances to demystify the complexity of traditional Indian storylines.

Ranjana Warier was introduced to Indian classical dance at the age of six and thrives on preserving and promoting India's artistic traditions. She has performed at events worldwide and says dance is a wonderful way to breakdown cultural barriers. "South Florida, like India, is a melting pot of cultures coming together. People are recognizing a lot of things they haven't been open to before because of the beautiful diverse

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