

## Community focus

## Gauri Jou presents Shakuntala on March 19, 2010

**CHICAGO** - After five most successful Indian "O"-it Ballet programs in the past such as Queen of Jhansi (2005), Fire - the fiery tale (2007) and East Meets West (2008) among others, Indian Dance School is now all set to bring their latest creation, "Shakuntala" on Friday, March 19, 2010 at 7.30 p.m. at Prairie Center for the Arts, 201 Schaumburg Court, Schaumburg, IL 60193: The dance drama will feature more than 100 dancers and presented in combination of Indian Classical Dance Kathak, Bharama-am, Bollywood and Jazz s-les.

Shakuntala is a name that sparks an aura of indefinable beauty and the innocence of young Love. Shakuntala was the daughter of celestial apsara Menaka and sage Vishwamitra and was abandoned by her parents' right after she was born. The baby is found by sage Kanva who gives her refuge in his ashram and raises her like his own daughter. Shakuntala grows up to be a breath taking beauty. In a chance encounter she meets the love of her life, King Dushyant and they get married with Mother Nature as the witness.

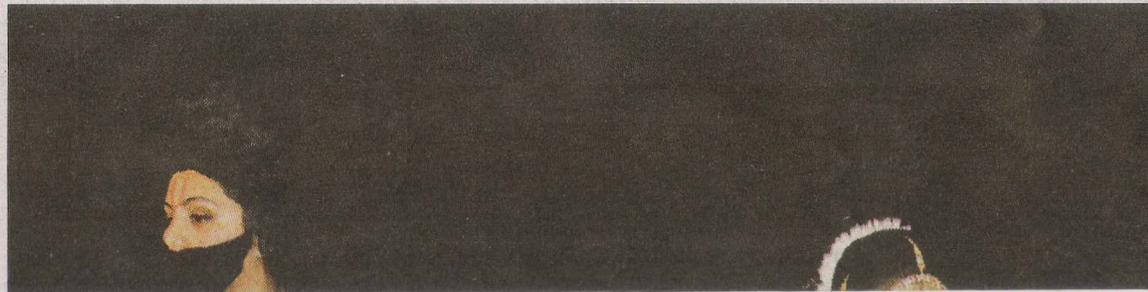
King Dushyanta returns to the capital with a promise to send his envoy to escort her up to him and gifts his signet ring as a token of remembrance. One day when she

swallows it. When Shakuntala presents herself at the court, Dushyant fails to acknowledge her as his wife, as he is under the spell of the curse. A heart-broken Shakuntala pleads before him to remember her. But he fails to remember her even after repeated pleas and asks for some proof. The loss of the signet ring earlier means that Shakuntala has no proof at all of her meeting and marriage with Dushyanta. Disappointed, she leaves the court and goes to a far away land. There, she gives birth to a son and starts her life as a hermit.

In the mean time, a fisherman has accidentally caught the fish that had swallowed the signet ring. On cutting the fish, he gets the ring and takes it for selling to a jeweler who recognizes the royal signet ring and produces it before the king. On seeing it, Dushyanta comes out of the spell and remembers all about Shakuntala. Overcome with guilt for his failure to recognize his wife,



A scene from Shakuntala.



the child's parents he realizes that it is his and Shakuntala's son, later known as king Bharat. Shakuntala also forgives him and they return to the palace.

Shakuntala is one of the most passionate love stories ever written and we are so excited to bring this story to life, told Gauri Jog, a

Durvasa stops at Shakuntala's hut and calls for hospitality, Shakuntala fails to hear his call as she is lost in her thoughts about King Dushyanta. The infuriated sage curses her saying: "He whose thoughts have engrossed you would not remember you anymore." On the plea of her playmates, the angry sage relents but adds a condition to his statement saying: "He can only recall you upon producing some significant souvenir."

Days pass by, but no one from the palace comes to take Shakuntala to her beloved husband. Sage Kanva sends her to the royal court to meet the king, as she is pregnant with Dushyant's heir. On her way to the court, Shakuntala's signet ring accidentally drops into a river and a big fish



A scene from Shakuntala.

Dushyanta makes a Herculean but unsuccessful effort to find her. While on a hunting expedition

some years later, he comes across this little kid in the jungle, who is fearlessly playing with lion cubs

and other animals. Dushyant suddenly feels a fatherly feeling towards the child; on searching for

dancer, choreographer and teacher of Indian Dance School. Gauri Jog has been running a dance school since 1999 in Chicago area and her group has performed on numerous occasions at various social, political and sports events. She is very instrumental in performing at fund raising activities by various charitable organizations in North America. Indian Dance School has performed at more than 100 shows since its inception. Her shows are characterized by professionalism, creative content, storyline and fusion with numerous other styles such as Jazz, Ballet, Mexican, Flamenco and Bharatnatyam. Last year her dance at Olympics rally was admired by various media all over North America. For more information contact 847-755-9625.