**WELCOME SPEECH**

**FOR**

**RAMANATH BHAT**

Good evening Ladies and Gentleman, (**Do you want to mention your wife? If so, you can say**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I take great pleasure in welcoming you all to Arangetram, the graduation dance performance of our daughter, Roshni. As a disciple of Srimati Jyoti Raghavan, and as a fervent and dedicated student of the Nratyanjali School of Dance in Westford, MA., Roshni has inspired us with both her interest in the history and practice of this classic form of Indian self expression, and the fruits of her rigorous training, perseverance and practice. Continuously, for the last ten years, our daughter has meticulously pursued her passion for this discipline and has achieved an impressive level of knowledge, grace, and devotion to our heritage. She has really earned her place on this stage, as she performs for all of us at this Dance graduation.

In addition to her dedication to her dance education and practice, at Nratyanjali School of Dance, Roshni is also involved in various extra curricular activities. She loves playing soccer, volunteering at the library, being involved in the BMH School Building committee, and she has also served as President of the Class for 2018. We are so proud of our daughter for being involved with, and interested in, so many diverse and meaningful activities, and as each project teaches Roshni about different aspects of life, self expression, and leadership, her foundation to be a strong, interesting compelling young woman strengthens more and more. We, as her parents, are very gratified as we observe and we are inspired by her commitment to the projects and practices about which she cares so much, By observing her own growth and involvement, we, too, learn.

Our culture has provided a rich and diverse history, filled with art, music, theater, and, of course dance, as a means to illustrate our heritage. Roshni, by choosing to focus on this particular dance practice, has made an intelligent and multi faceted choice. Bharatnatyam is an artistic discipline of high order. It embodies the physical expression of man’s devotion to God and the opening of his heart to beauty and joy, expressed through high stylistic and graceful gestures and body movements. Bharatnatyam carries all the important elements necessary to live life to its full glory: it inspires us to maintain an awakened mind, to learn about ancient recurring cultural themes, and to focus on practicing concentration and discipline while literally following in the footsteps of our history.

As I have spent the past several years observing my daughter learn and grow from her involvement in this regimen, I find myself asking, “What is the purpose of artistic pursuit of life?” Is it just one more thing we do like go to gym?... or go horse riding? ...or learn fencing?... Or play tennis? ... Does it improve a child’s quality of life? A wise man named Thomas Crum said this, “What would it be like, if you lived each day, each breath, as a work of art in progress? Imagine that you are a Masterpiece, unfolding every second of every day, a work of art taking form with every breath.” As parents, we may wonder whether it is necessary for a child to have artistic pursuits. If you ask me it is the most beautiful gift parents can give to a child, as they learn so much more than the obvious... in pursuit of the arts, they have the potential understand and practice discipline, they have the chance to expand their vision and imagination with creativity, expressions, emotions... and so much more. Also, the different orientation engaged when one pursues creativity as opposed to strictly learning “book knowledge,” acts to enhance curiosity and personal outlook... in short, intellectual discipline and creative release and expression make for a beautiful partnership.

So, the achievement of Arangetram signifies so much more than the acquisition of certain skills in the performing arts– it is a long immersion in the art and science and history of a rich and storied **culture**. That is why today’s event is very significant- it is a moment greater than a dance graduation that we are celebrating. With this performance, we are honoring and acknowledging Roshni’s achievements... as a fine young woman, a talented dancer, and also, as the newest member of our legacy. (**Name your wife**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I are so happy that all of you have come to see this beautiful program, and I promise you will not be disappointed..... you will be entertained and you will also learn as Roshni performs her dance.

With the blessing of her Guru, Roshni is all set today to convey an enthralling performance with the intention to touch your heart and soul and thereby seek your encouragement and blessings.

Jacques D’Amboise said “Dance is your pulse, your heart beat, your breathing, rhythm of your life.” I am proud to say that I have seen that in Roshni and I’m sure you will see that soon as well.

We are thrilled to wish Roshni the best of luck and once again I welcome you all.

As a customary practice we intend to start the event by rendering our respects and prayers to the supreme God of dance Lord Nataraja and seek his blessings.

Please sit back, relax and enjoy,

Thank you.