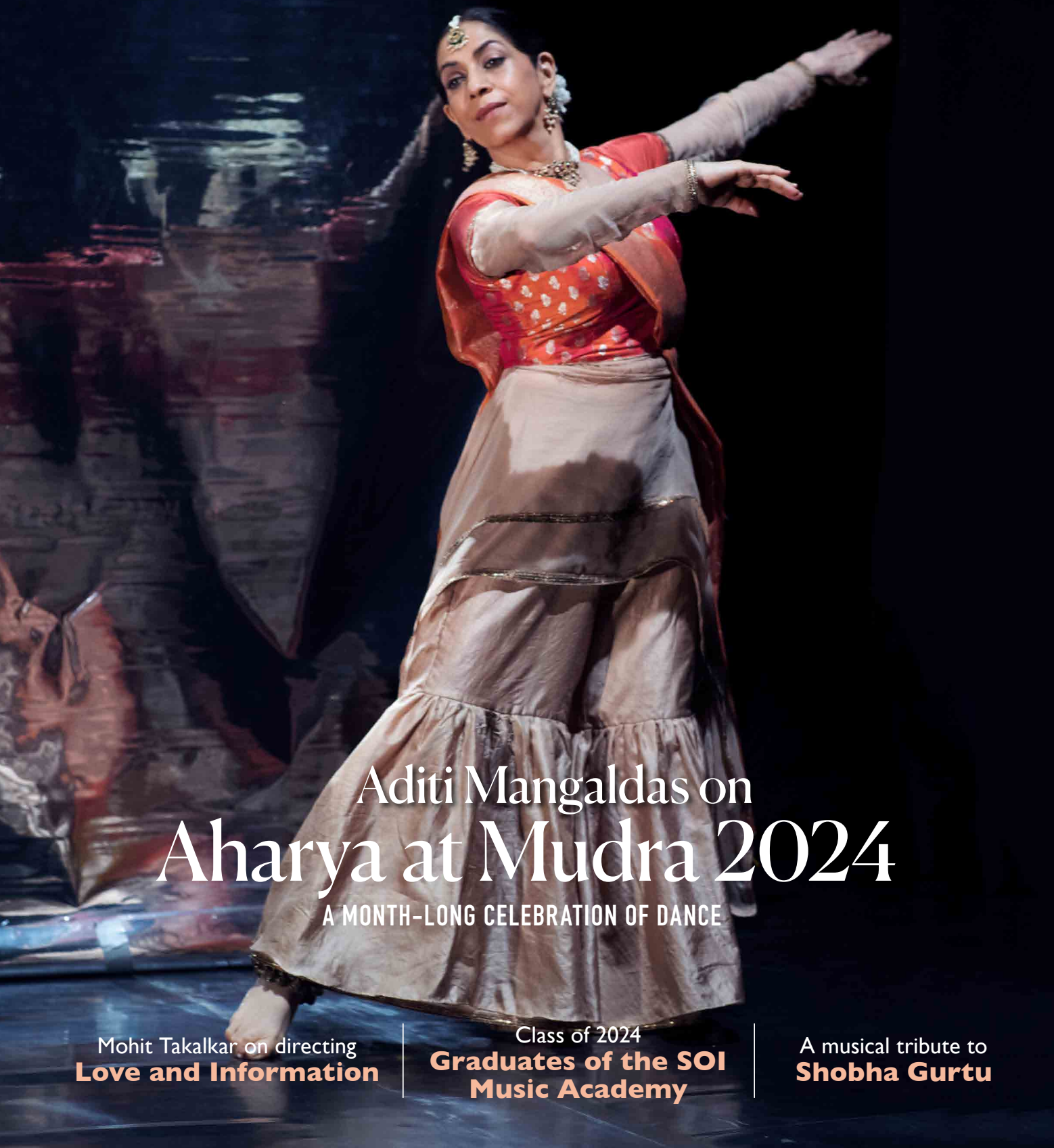


 NCPA

APRIL 2024

# ON Stage<sup>®</sup>

VOLUME B • ISSUE 9



## Aditi Mangaldas on Aharya at Mudra 2024

A MONTH-LONG CELEBRATION OF DANCE

Mohit Takalkar on directing  
**Love and Information**

Class of 2024  
**Graduates of the SOI  
Music Academy**

A musical tribute to  
**Shobha Gurtu**

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*for the love of*  
**unlocking possibilities.**  
*for the love of progress*



# Chairman's Note



The NCPA is now reaching a gratifying level of performances in all its genres.

The annual *Mudra* dance festival and *Saz-e-Bahar* festival of Indian instrumental music continue to present stalwarts in their respective art forms such as Aditi Mangaldas, Sujata Mohapatra and Aneesh Pradhan.

April is as much a month for veteran artistes as it is for young talent. Spring Board, our new initiative to provide a platform to young bands, and the annual concert by students of the SOI Music Academy only affirm that the future is bright.

The NCPA's fine production, *Kalgitura*, the first play to have emerged from *Darpan*, a programme to promote new talent in Marathi theatre, has recently won four awards.

Our long-standing association with illustrious artistes gives us occasions to commemorate their achievements. The birth centenary of the great Shobha Gurtu is being observed this month. We extend our congratulations to the renowned poet-lyricist Gulzar on being conferred the Jnanpith Award for his contribution to literature. The NCPA had the pleasure of presenting Pankaj Udhas on our stage over many decades, the most recent being in August 2023. The gentle voice behind many memorable ghazals leaves a void.

In many countries, support to the arts comes largely from designated government bodies, art councils, etc. with a small contribution also from the public and audience. There is a common misconception that the box office is a major source of income but financial success cannot only emanate from a full house, particularly in our venues, unless we raise our ticket prices to absurd levels. The raison d'être of the NCPA is to present quality in superbly crafted theatres which, like the great performance spaces the world over, are limited in space and capacity for intimacy and communication.

It is our fervent appeal to all the art-loving persons who wish to see our great Indian and other forms of international art survive, nay, flourish: your contribution and ideas are always welcome. How would you feel for a brainstorming session to fertilise this idea?

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K. N. Suntook".

**Khushroo N. Suntook**

# From the Editor



What sets apart an institution for the performing arts from an auditorium? When lights go off in the latter once the audience leaves, the space—comatose and drab—comes back to life only with the next performance. The empty stage and seats, accustomed to falling into periodic disuse, seem to squeak with inertia every time they are hired.

At the National Centre for the Performing Arts, there is no such respite for the spaces. The evenings and weekends may be for ticketed shows, but the afternoons are just as busy when tiny ankles wrapped in *ghunghroos* showcase their year's worth of learning Kathak, or when students of architecture take a guided tour of the campus to understand why the sound in the last seat of the E block of the Tata Theatre is just as clear as it is in the front row. Research scholars start trickling into the libraries soon after they open. Music aficionados come by for listening sessions of rare archival recordings or to hone their understanding of symphonic and operatic works. The gallery has its steady stream of visitors right until closing hours. There is never really a dull moment.

April is a month that celebrates this multifarious, holistic nature of the NCPA. For every grand performance at the *Mudra* dance festival, there are workshops, talks and an exhibition on this year's theme of *aharya*. For every recital at the *Saz-e-Bahar* festival of Indian instrumental music, there is an expert-led talk to initiate the audience into the instrument they are about to listen to.

The Little Theatre recently witnessed play readings for the second edition of the Marathi theatre initiative, *Darpan*. It was here that *Kalgitira* was first narrated to a jury before it went on to win the competition, be performed at the NCPA and across Maharashtra, culminating in four prestigious awards.

Many a space at the NCPA transforms into classrooms after school hours for children to learn music history and an instrument of their choice with academic rigour that demands total commitment. The annual concert of the SOI Music Academy at the Jamshed Bhabha Theatre, all within the same premises, is a shift in venue that fittingly encapsulates their journey from students to blossoming musicians.

The Tata Garden awaits two young music bands this month in the maiden edition of Spring Board, created to catapult promising musicians into the mainstream. Few platforms that repose faith in young talent exist because box office returns often sway curation in the favour of established artistes. But not all decisions at an arts centre are guided by numbers.

To take some liberty with T. S. Eliot's words, April, at the NCPA, is verily a kind month.

*Snigdha Hasan*

**Snigdha Hasan**

# Saz-e-Bahar

Festival of Indian  
Instrumental Music

Apr 5, 2024

**Dr. Aneesh Pradhan**  
tabla

**Milind Raikar**  
violin

Apr 6, 2024

**Mambalam S. Sivakumar**  
nadaswaram

**Manish Pingle**  
slide guitar

Pre-event talk on instruments  
by Dr. Suvarnalata Rao at 6:00 pm



**Godrej Dance Theatre, NCPA | 6:30 pm**

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*Constellations really makes one think, is well acted and beautifully directed. The more I live, the more I feel that we are indeed akin to "particles" described in physics with limited choices that are, however, predetermined and preordained.*


**- Dr Farokh Udwadia**

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# Content, Context AND Form

At *Mudra* 2024, Indian classical dance exponents will delineate the motivations that determine the splendours of *aharya* adorning an artiste.

By Aishwarya Sahasrabudhe

S ometime during our conversation for this article, Kathak stalwart and choreographer Aditi Mangaldas takes a moment to gaze upon the setting sun. To her, the interplay of deep orange hues in the sky with the trees means more than merely recognising that the leaves are green or the sky is orange. When twilight falls on the pleasant spring evening, she notices the darker and lighter shades of green and the yellowed autumnal leaves. Mangaldas, with a career spanning over four decades, draws upon this sublime landscape to discuss how *aharya* becomes impactful when it is inspired by detailed observation. Later, she will also discuss

ancient miniatures and modern couture undergirding costume design to note that *aharya* is determined by “aesthetics, content, form” and most of all by “context”.

At this year’s edition of *Mudra*—the NCPA’s annual thematic dance festival—six exponents of Indian classical dance will explore, with their troupes, the conceptualisation of *aharya*, or the textiles, make-up and jewellery as well as stage design characteristic of varied dance forms. Through multiple performances, workshops and exhibitions, the month-long annual festival will bring to the stages at the NCPA Kathak, Odissi, Bharatanatyam and Manipuri blended with

classical text and folk cultures to highlight how *aharya*, along with movement and rhythm, shapes a performance.

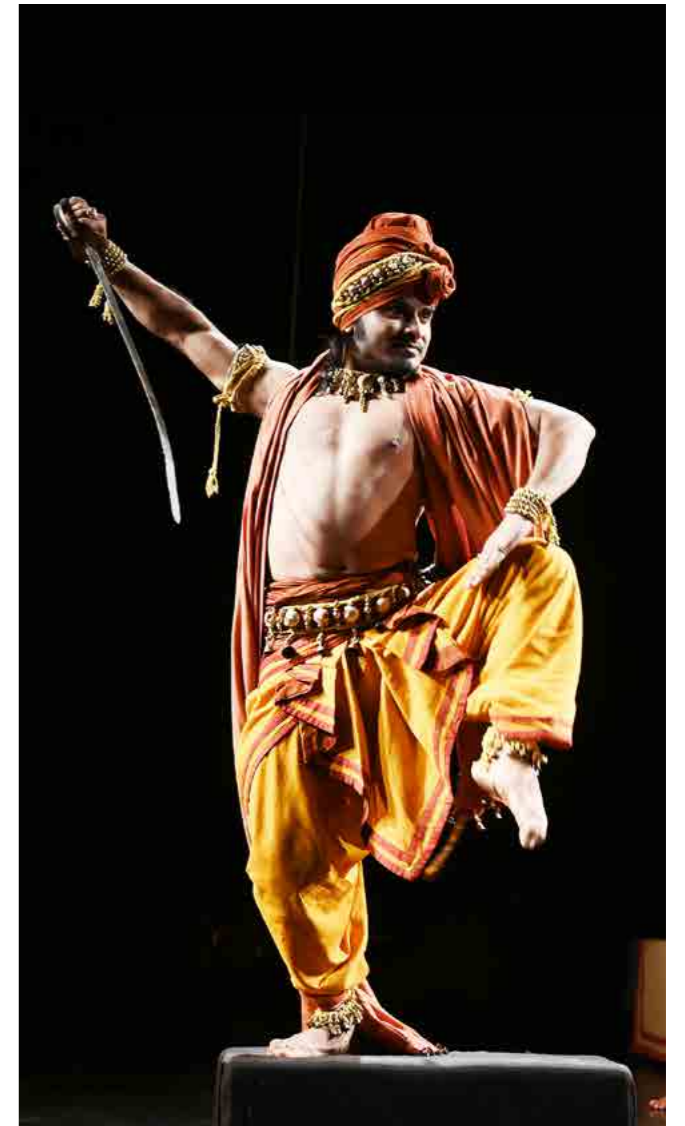
## Reconstructing text

At *Mudra*, research scholar and Bharatanatyam artiste Piyal Bhattacharya will present his study of the performance traditions described in Bharata’s *Natyashastra* through his signature production, *Marga Nritya*. Curating the *aharya* for this enterprise is challenging, the dancer concedes, because even as he decodes the couture of ancient *nartakis* using archaeological panels and sculptural evidence, he also tries to borrow from living traditions to go beyond simply “copying” the text.

Imitating *aharya* would mean representing only a particular period, he explains, but art cannot be confined to one era. With this production, launched in 2011, Bhattacharya’s aim has instead been to “reconstruct” the performance styles prescribed in the *Natyashastra*—a foundational text for most Indian artistic practices.

*Aharya* for *Marga Nritya* is an elaborate affair. It comprises adornments made out of wooden beads wrapped in 24-carat gold foil using a special white wax. Bhattacharya’s reading of the *Vastusutra Upanishad* has led him to examine the “philosophy of lines and angles” to design lightweight jewellery that will enable mobility for dancers without deviating from scriptural mores.

The costume is made either from exquisite muslin or raw silk, sourced from Bhagalpur in Bihar, with its borders stitched separately akin to an overlay. Bhattacharya is going to incorporate natural make-up, devoid even of a pancake base, for this recital. He



Piyal Bhattacharya (extreme right) with his troupe







Aditi Mangaldas

explains, “We have created a base with *shankha* or conch dust and coffee powder and a little bit of pearl ash, topped with real gold blusher.”

Bhattacharya will conduct a workshop at *Mudra* to elaborate on these aspects of his troupe’s *aharya*, including the Assamese-style eagle mask that is part of his recital. The dancer will perform an adaptation of the mythological play *Nagananda*, composed in the seventh century, to narrate the story of Jimutvahana, who sacrifices himself to save the Nagas.

### In context

According to Mangaldas, “Imagination is a very important part of any artistic endeavour.” It is *aharya* that helps ignite an audience’s imagination by becoming a crucial entry point into a performance. So, she emphasises upon the need to employ *aharya* contextually and bring costume, light, soundscape

**Kathak stalwart Aditi Mangaldas believes it is *aharya* that helps ignite the audience’s imagination by becoming a crucial initiation into a performance. She emphasises upon the need to employ it contextually and bring costume, light, soundscape together as a broad spectrum of entryways into a multidimensional performance**



Sujata Mohapatra

together as a broad spectrum of entryways into a multidimensional performance. For her, costume reflects the mood of the dance. For instance, while performing a *tarana* she asks what she is invoking—monsoon or summer, love or anger—to decide the colour, texture and cut of her fabric.

Elaborating upon the need to recognise this contextual specificity, she illustrates the long-standing use of the dupatta in Kathak. Going beyond a gendered understanding of the wrap, Mangaldas suggests that this fabric is not about giving the female dancer’s form a third dimension. Bringing *aharya* out of accepted notions of morality, she explains that more than covering one’s bust or head, the dupatta has to resonate with the performance. In one of her productions, both, male and female artistes don the dupatta. “Not only covering their head, but their full

face,” she says, to symbolise our inability to see who we are within.

At *Mudra*, the stalwart will present two Kathak solos and group recitals, showcasing excerpts from mythology that revolve around several themes, including the divine forms of Krishna, Shiva and the element of fire. Here, her *aharya* will be a symbolic reflection of “the imagination of the god”. In her interpretation of Krishna, the costume will allow free and swift movements for the dancer, and a dupatta, favouring green and blue hues, will kindle the image of the peacock feather that adorns his crown.

In a similar vein, Odissi danseuse Sujata Mohapatra will use *aharya* to portray Ardhanarishvara, the deity embodying the male and female forms of Shiva and Parvati. For Mohapatra, the *aharya* of dance denotes a coming together of a stylistic narrative encompassing the *bhushana*, or ornaments, blended with ragas, music and choreography.

In describing the innovations in the attire and jewellery to be used in her performance, Mohapatra pays tribute to the imaginative vision of her guru, the pioneering stalwart of Odissi, Kelucharan Mohapatra. She describes how the Odissi costume that is popular today can be traced to the saree he would tie, similar to a dhoti, in a rather innovative way that is nonetheless rooted in traditional practice.

She ventures that shifts in costume are significant, particularly to deliver a theme or emotion to the audience. In a dance-drama, she elaborates, donning a character or showing *panchbhoota* [the five elements] or six seasons means introducing slight makeovers—like changing the pattern of the dupatta—to show varying climates. Eventually, *aharya* ought to centre on practicality and neatness, she elaborates, and on minimising loud ornaments and heavy make-up which can overshadow the artiste’s talent.

### Exploring aesthetics

*Aharya* then is about delivering an aesthetic most suited to the content and context of a performance. Such are the contemplations of Bharatanatyam artiste

Artistes from Sheela Unnikrishnan’s Sridevi Nrithyalaya will perform at the festival



Manipuri Raas Leela choreographed by Latasana Devi



Latasana Devi





Saathi uses award-winning mask maker Bhagwan Kadu's work in her performance. Photo by Jimeet Pawaskar



Prachi Saathi. Photo by Navin Ravindran

**At this year's edition of *Mudra*, the NCPA's annual thematic dance festival, six exponents of Indian classical dance with their troupes will explore the conceptualisation of *aharya*, or the textiles, make-up and jewellery as well as stage design characteristic of varied dance forms**

Prachi Saathi who reconciles classical dance with Warli art in *When Walls Dance*, which she will present at *Mudra*. Drawing from the extensive research by her uncle and woodscape artist Rajendra Chaudhari, she blends the folk art form with Bharatanatyam to tell the story of a young girl, Champa, and her namesake tree. For this performance, she recalls, before she had a story, she knew her *aharya*. It was during a visit to a Warli village, where the feel of the sari fabric and jewellery in the marketplace stirred her creativity into shaping a narrative.

*Aharya* serves as a subtle messenger that accentuates mood or character, Saathi says. For instance, to de-age quickly, she adopts a short plait as her hairstyle. Bedecked in Warli jewellery, complete with a crescent moon bindi, a *khun* blouse and a hibiscus flower headgear designed by Chaudhari, her *aharya* epitomises the folk essence that is characteristic of the tribe.

Saathi's performance creates the world of a young person onstage whilst integrating animation and multimedia projection with classical movement. The underlying idiom of Bharatanatyam reflects a poignant narrative accentuated by her collaborator Upasana Nattoji Roy's animation. Crafted from figures painted by Chaudhari, the multimedia work blends dance and motion design bringing forth Roy's perception of "animation, design and multimedia as another performer and character in the narrative." Each element complements and supports the other to create a complete picture. Saathi explains, "I don't approach live performance and projected elements as two mediums different from each other but as one unified experience."

Designing *aharya* is a collective endeavour here. Saathi credits Chaudhari, Roy, Mumbai-based costume

maker Gulambhai Tailor, award-winning mask maker Bhagwan Kadu and her family as moving factors instrumental in breathing life into the motifs of the production.

Another spectacle revolving around *aharya* is Manipuri stalwart Latasana Devi's recital that highlights the form's renowned costumes. Comprising the distinctive *raas leela* attire, the *polloi*, along with a showcase of martial arts like *Thang-ta* and *Pung Cholom*, the dancer is set to showcase Manipur's classical and folk aesthetic in all its sublime glory. A practitioner and teacher of the dance form for decades, her focus is on presenting *aharya* associated with Manipuri in complete adherence to tradition, without even the slightest deviation. This authentic depiction of a culture threatened by relegation to oblivion amidst rising conflict is critical, she avers.

"Manipur is burning," Latasana Devi laments and, in a performance themed on '*palem*' or mother, she depicts a land crying for her children in this volatile climate. The curtain ultimately falls on the bride whose *aharya* exemplifies a mother yearning for a peaceful beginning, like the bride about to embark on a new journey.

In classical dance, *aharya* then spurs on the quest towards the metaphysical, taking audiences on a journey inspired as much by movement and emotion as by a design aesthetic tailored to suit shifting contexts. ■

*Mudra Dance Festival 2024 will be presented between 4th and 27th April at the NCPA.*

# MUDRA

DANCE FESTIVAL

## *Celebrating* AHARYA



### PALEM (Mother)

Manipuri by  
LATASANA DEVI  
& TROUPE



### WHEN WALLS DANCE

Bharatanatyam by  
PRACHI SAATHI

APR 4, 2024 | 6:30 PM | EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE, NCPA



### JIMUTE HRIDAYAM

Marga Nritya by  
PIYAL BHATTACHARYA  
& TROUPE



### SIVAM

Bharatanatyam by  
SRIDEVI NRITHYALAYA

APR 27, 2024 | 5:00 PM | EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE, NCPA



### ARQ (the essence)

Kathak & Contemporary by  
ADITI MANGALDAS  
& TROUPE



### VIBHUSHA

Odissi by  
SUJATA MOHAPATRA  
& TROUPE

APR 28, 2024 | 5:00 PM | TATA THEATRE, NCPA



SOI Music Director Marat Bisengaliev conducts the SOI Academy Orchestra

endearing and significant musical exchange is awaited as the students will perform these compositions with the SOI Chamber Orchestra. The orchestra is comprised of their teachers.

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's 'Dance of the Buffoons' from the opera *The Snow Maiden*, Alec Rowley's Miniature Concerto, Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 21 and Edvard Grieg's Piano Concerto Op. 16 are some of the works being performed at the concert.

Started in 2012 as the NCPA Special Music Training Programme, the academy has been imparting

**The choir will perform Tchaikovsky's 'Once Upon a Dream' from Disney's *Sleeping Beauty* and Duke Ellington's 'It Don't Mean a Thing', while the percussion ensemble will feature Waltz Joke by Shostakovich, Caccini's 'Ave Maria' and other exciting compositions.**

# The Class of '24

The young graduates of the SOI Music Academy gear up for their annual concert, along with a special performance. **By Aishwarya Bodke**

**T**he tepid April breeze heralds the approaching summer break and respite from textbooks. But at the NCPA, it is the harbinger of the annual concert of the SOI Music Academy, where bright young graduates take the stage.

Under the direction of SOI Music Director Marat Bisengaliev and rigorous training by the teachers at the academy, students will come together to showcase the fruits of their labour. The concert will feature soloists of the academy with the SOI Chamber Orchestra and the happy addition of the SOI Music Academy chorus and the percussion ensemble this year. "I am very happy with

the results—especially the percussion classes—which will surely reflect in the concert this year," says Bisengaliev.

This year, three students—Anwita Bhandari, Dhaina Rajpal and Tarini Kheruka—will graduate from the seven-year course, and one—Maira Noor Singh—from the 11-year course. Please refer to the table on the following page for a detailed list.

The concert at the majestic Jamshed Bhabha Theatre promises to be a memorable one. The programme for children steps away from the standard repertoire and includes popular songs, film music and special pieces that need a different kind of orchestration. An



(From left) Margarita Gapparova, Aida Bisengaliyeva, Olga Lyapina, Maira Noor Singh, Aliza Jetha, Tarini Kheruka, Yulia Gallyamova, Anwita Bhandari

**“The objective is to foster a warm and favourable culture to build professional players. We all look forward to getting our graduates back to the NCPA to help us grow a new generation of musicians who will take the tradition forward.”**



The SOI Music Academy chorus with teacher Olga Vyhodceva



The students' percussion ensemble with teacher Igor Avdeev

and choir. The teachers of the academy, all professional musicians trained across Europe, are all full-time members of the Symphony Orchestra of India. They work closely with the students over a sustained period to impart sound knowledge of the musical tradition as well as the instrument they choose to learn. From lessons that go beyond the classroom to encouraging and preparing them to not only participate but excel in international music competitions is a hallmark of the commitment of the teachers. Expectedly, with every graduating class, the institution has produced skilled and complete musicians, ready to enter the world of performance.

“Twelve years is a long time, and yet, it is only last year that we had our first graduates from the 11-year course. They are now successfully pursuing further studies overseas. I am very proud of what the academy has achieved so far in India. We are definitely headed in the right direction,” Bisengaliev tells us. He elaborates, “The objective is to foster a warm and favourable culture to build professional players. We all look forward to getting our graduates back to the NCPA to help us grow a new generation of musicians who will take the tradition forward.”

Over the years, the students have made their mark in concerts at the NCPA, an international and several domestic tours and at prestigious global competitions. Last year, the SOI Academy Orchestra also garnered generous praise from renowned conductor Maestro Zubin Mehta upon his visit.

This April, the students will also give a special performance at the Museum of Solutions (MuSo), a unique experimental museum for children inaugurated last year in Mumbai. With workshops, exhibitions, performances and screenings, MuSo seeks to challenge outdated modes of instruction and replace them with a child-

Student	Instrument	Course	Teacher
Anwita Bhandari	Cello	7 years	Margarita Gapparova and Yulia Gallyamova
Dhaina Rajpal	Saxophone	7 years	Alexey Yurushkin
Tarini Kheruka	Piano	7 years	Aida Bisengaliyeva
Maira Noor Singh	Violin	11 years	Olga Lyapina

conservatoire-level musical education, which was previously unheard of in the country. The holistic curriculum allows one-on-one training in a primary instrument, as well as second-study piano lessons, music history, music theory, group singing through the Solfeggio method, orchestral playing, chamber music



Aliza Jetha with teacher Osman Yarullin



Maira Noor Singh with teacher Olga Lyapina



Dhaina Rajpal with teacher Alexey Yurushkin



Anwita Bhandari with teachers Margarita Gapparova and Yulia Gallyamova



Tarini Kheruka with teacher Aida Bisengaliyeva

led, curiosity-driven approach. Their programming strives for inclusivity and sustainability in which children are at the centre—a defining attribute of the SOI Music Academy as well.

The upcoming concert is bound to create a collective space for students, where they can feel inspired by their peers and the music. Collaborations like these enable new talents to be recognised and friendships to be forged. The choir will perform pieces including *Air* by Bach, Tchaikovsky's 'Once Upon a Dream' from Disney's *Sleeping Beauty* and Duke Ellington's 'It Don't Mean a Thing', while the percussion ensemble will feature *Waltz Joke* by Shostakovich, Caccini's 'Ave Maria', *Hedwig's Theme*

by Williams, 'Popcorn' by Hot Butter and other exciting compositions.

Not all students who take up the performing arts turn it into professional careers or transition into artists. All of them, though, become the audiences of tomorrow. They will be the decision makers, writers and parents equipped with the discipline and sensitivity of a musical education. At the NCPA, the school of music is a delicate wheel of time that not only nurtures artistes but art itself. ■

.....  
*Students from the SOI Music Academy will perform under the baton of Marat Bisengaliev on 14th April at the Jamshed Bhabha Theatre.*

# A Roaring Victory

The play *Kalgitura*, winner of the NCPA's Marathi theatre initiative *Darpan*, wins four awards at Zee Natya Gaurav Puraskar 2024.

The NCPA's Marathi production *Kalgitura* achieved a gleaming victory at the recently held Zee Natya Gaurav Puraskar. The play that won the maiden edition of *Darpan*—the NCPA's initiative to promote new talent in Marathi theatre—*Kalgitura* brought home four awards out of six nominations it had received. The winning categories included 'Special Recognition for Production', 'Best Writing', 'Best Music' and 'Best Light Designing'.

Last year, *Kalgitura* debuted at the *Pratibimb Marathi Natya Utsav*, the annual Marathi theatre festival that shines a spotlight on the vibrant theatrical traditions of Maharashtra. After a successful run at the NCPA, the play went on to tour several other cities of the state.

The play follows the story of the revival of a unique folk tradition nurtured for centuries in some rural pockets of Maharashtra. Talking about the achievement, director Sachin Shinde says, "It is a matter of great joy that our play has received four awards at the prestigious Zee Natya Gaurav Puraskar. This accolade belongs to artistes who have painstakingly worked towards preserving folk art, our audiences and the magnanimous people of the Umarani village responsible for keeping the *kalgitura* tradition alive and helping us in our journey. We dedicate this award to them."

We spoke to Bruce Guthrie, Head of Theatre & Films at the NCPA, after the award ceremony. Excerpts from the conversation.

## ON Stage: How do you view the journey of *Kalgitura*?

Bruce Guthrie: Finding new plays can be a hit-or-miss situation. The fact that *Kalgitura* went through the whole process with our mentors and came out the other end as a clear, funny and touching production is a real achievement. The team has been an absolute joy to work with. Touring a show can be extremely challenging but they have approached it with so much passion. The opening at *Pratibimb 2023* was a special evening for everyone. It was met with a lot of excitement from the audience and that feeling has been replicated wherever the play has travelled over the last eight months. It is only a matter of time before the word-of-mouth on the play grows so significantly that it becomes a must-see work of theatre, irrespective of whether you speak Marathi.

## OS: What does its success say about the writing initiative, *Darpan*, and what does the 2024 edition look like?

BG: It says we were fortunate! All of the ingredients fell into place. It was serendipitous. You need a little luck to go with hard work and expertise when it comes to a new piece. This year has had its own challenges. Some plays were radically different from year one. We trust in the process and the expertise of our mentors and recognise that not every play born out of *Darpan* will have the same journey as *Kalgitura*. In the third year, we are exploring options of having a writers' residency included as part of the initiative. We



The entire team of *Kalgitura* backstage at Zee Natya Gaurav Puraskar



(From left) Playwright Datta Patil; Bruce Guthrie, Head of Theatre & Films, NCPA; Producer Rajeshri Shinde; Director Sachin Shinde

don't want it to be just a writing competition but to provide an opportunity for writers to develop their ideas and showcase their work to directors and theatre groups. And just because a script is not selected does not mean it will not have a future life. Our goal has to be to provide an opportunity for as many excellent plays to be produced as possible.

## OS: How does the NCPA's incubation of a promising script help it transform into a production of high professional value that

may not be easy to achieve otherwise given the shoestring within which much of regional theatre operates?

BG: We are still learning and all of us agree that we can do better. As of now, the mentors provide excellent and robust feedback to the writers and groups. Once we have the winning script, I attend the rehearsals and offer up thoughts where appropriate. The fact that we are producing the show, which takes a huge burden off of them from a financial and promotional point of view, is a step in the right direction. We can and will do more.

## OS: What has been the Marathi theatre community's response to *Kalgitura* and *Darpan* at large?

BG: It is still too soon to say. As the saying goes, one swallow does not make a summer. We are only entering the third year of *Pratibimb* and it will be *Darpan's* sophomore year. The fact that *Kalgitura* has received the recognition that it has is a great thing for the initiative, but more importantly, it is a wonderful triumph for the writer and the theatre group. It is a work of real significance and I see it being around for a very long time.

We look forward to replicating this success with our Gujarati Festival *Vasant* in March 2025 and then our Hindi Festival *Anand*, later in 2025. These festivals will have their own writing initiatives as part of the work that we programme. Creating, facilitating and producing work in multiple languages is our medium-term goal and I have no doubt that there is a great appetite for such work. ■

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# Mangala Vadyam

Sheik Chinna Moulana and the world of the nadaswaram.

By Kamala Ganesh

“I was in Srirangam for a wedding. At four am, on the dark banks of the Kaveri, I was playing the nadaswaram, ceremonially accompanying the oiling of the bridegroom’s hair before his ritual bath. You see, in the Isai Velalar community, we play the nadaswaram at all the important rituals during weddings and temple ceremonies. That is our traditional occupation. From a nearby *mandapam* wafted the melodious sounds of another nadaswaram. The solitary figure in that quiet temple porch was Sheik Chinna Moulana, the grand old man of the nadaswaram. Such respect he commanded, so many awards and honours, and here he was diligently doing his early morning practice. My father, also my first guru, chided me. ‘You tire so quickly while practising. Look at him, at his age, doing ‘asura sadhakam’—practising with manic energy. This is a tough instrument to master, *amma*, you have to practise relentlessly,” reflects Kalyanapuram Srinivasan on his memories of Chinna Moulana. Srinivasan, who heads the Nadaswaram section of the Tamil Nadu Government Music College in Thiruvaiyaru, belongs to a hereditary nadaswaram-playing community. He first trained through the *gurukulam* system of immersive learning, living in the guru’s home, and later studied at Rajah’s College of Music, Thiruvaiyaru. Now he teaches in an institution where the pedagogic practice is based on modern training methods. He plays at local temple festivals, but also in concerts. In a way, he mirrors the transformations in this classical music system that started from the late 19th century.

The legendary artiste T. N. Rajarattinam Pillai (1898-1956) is foremost among those who enabled the nadaswaram to meet the challenges of this new era, as scholar Terada Yoshitaka details in his recent book, *T.N. Rajarattinam Pillai: Charisma, Caste Rivalry and the Contested Past in South Indian Music* (2023).

The succeeding generation that took these changes further included giants like Karukurichi Arunachalam, Gosaveedu Sheik Hassan, Ponnuthayi, Namagiripettai Krishnan, Vedaranyam Vadamurthy and Chinna Moulana. The birth centenary of the last three artistes is being celebrated all over South India this year.

My article outlines the context and current issues in the nadaswaram world. It then focuses on Sheik Chinna Moulana (1924-1999), a talented artiste who made a signal contribution to the form, structure and practice of nadaswaram. His unusual identity as the rare Muslim deeply engaged with a classical musical form embedded in the South Indian Hindu religious context offers some clues to the dynamic and syncretic

exchanges between religion and the performing arts in South India.

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Nagaswaram, popularly termed nadaswaram, is associated with auspicious domestic and temple-related public ceremonies and known thus as *mangala vadyam*, steeped in the cultural ethos of southern India. A wind instrument somewhat similar to the shehnai, the pipe of this double reed aerophone is much longer, with an ebony body, finger holes and a rosewood bell at the distal end. The *seevali*, or reed piece, inserted into the top end is in contact with the artiste’s lips. The techniques of fingering, breathing and tonguing demand considerable physical stamina and skill. The nadaswaram used to be the centre piece of a performance ensemble of Carnatic music called *Periya melam* that also included thavil or percussion and other supporting instruments. The ensemble dates from the Vijayanagar period, though the instrument itself is older. There are descriptions of similar instruments in Sangam literature.

As in all social histories of people, institutions and things in India, there is a caste connection. Traditionally, nadaswaram and thavil players belonged to the Melakkarar caste in the Thanjavur region of Tamil Nadu, with hereditary rights of playing within temples and in processions of idols outside them and for various other auspicious domestic and public occasions. The women of the caste were custodians of the *sadir* dance form that eventually evolved into Bharatanatyam.

Even so, the nadaswaram ensemble was not entirely caste-driven, nor exclusive to Thanjavur. It flourished in the whole of South India, mainly under the patronage of temples. There were nadaswaram-playing communities from Maruttuvar, Nair, Pandaram and Mudaliyar castes too. There were also a few Muslims.

In the era of colonialism, social reform and nationalism, Carnatic music drifted out of temples and royal courts and moved to the proscenium stage. A new concert format evolved for a new audience. Vocalists, violinists, veena and mridangam players captured the mainstream concert space. Nadaswaram and thavil artistes were slow to change. They were indispensable for temple rituals; this gave them both income and social status. The nadaswaram had a piercingly loud quality, more suitable for open-air performances. Yoshitaka points out that the caste divide among Carnatic musicians started sharpening during this time, with Brahmins dominating the concert scenario and the non-Brahmin Isai Velalar relegated to



Sheik Chinna Moulana's father and first guru, Sheik Kasim Sahib



Chilakaluripet gurus at the Madurai Muslim Melakkara Jamath in the early 1940s



Chinna Moulana playing the nadaswaram with his grandsons S. Kasim and S. Babu



Chinna Moulana (third from left) with his second guru Sheik Adam Sahib (third from right) in Chilakaluripet

the periphery. He frames this within the antagonisms created between Brahmins and non-Brahmins through the Dravidian nationalist movement.

The sidelining of the nadaswaram in the 20th-century concert scenario has been noted and criticised by several commentators. This, along with initiatives from nadaswaram artistes themselves, has started making a positive impact. Already from the time of Rajarattinam Pillai, modifications began to be made to the structure of the instrument, ensemble and musical style, making it more compatible with indoor venues. In the last two decades, urban *sabhas* have become more receptive to full-length concerts by individual nadaswaram artistes instead of confining them to music festival inaugurations. The Music Academy, Madras is holding a three-day festival dedicated exclusively to the nadaswaram soon—a sign of the times. The growth of Government-funded music colleges with nadaswaram departments has opened the doors for heavily subsidised training for students from all strata of society, regardless of caste, religion or gender. A critical evaluation of these changes, especially on whether institutional education matches the earlier *gurukulam* system in access and quality, is part of the contemporary debate.

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In the history of the nadaswaram, Chinna Moulana holds a unique position not only as a superlative performer but as an outsider who achieved national and international fame. A Telugu-speaking Muslim migrant from Andhra, he succeeded in a field dominated by the Isai Velalar of the Thanjavur region with their ancient

lineage. He was born in Karavadi, a village in Prakasam district, in a traditional nadaswaram-playing family. For three centuries, they have had the hereditary right of playing at the local Rama temple, given to them by a local zamindar through a *manyam* or land grant. Chinna Moulana's grandsons Sheik Kasim and Sheik Babu, distinguished nadaswaram artistes themselves, have meticulously preserved these historical documents. Chinna Moulana started learning the nadaswaram from his father Sheik Kasim Sahib and later moved into the *gurukulam* of the well-respected Sheik Adam Sahib at Chilakaluripet in adjoining Palnad district for a few years. From childhood, Chinna Moulana had been captivated by the music of Rajarattinam Pillai, and in the early 1950s, he moved to Kumbakonam hoping to polish his style by learning from him. Rajarattinam Pillai, at the peak of his illustrious career, was too busy. Chinna Moulana joined the *gurukulam* of Rajam Pillai and Duraikkannu Pillai at Nachiyar Koil (Thirunarayur Nambi Temple) near Kumbakonam and studied there for eight years. Duraikkannu Pillai's style was close to that of Rajarattinam Pillai. Chinna Moulana eventually settled down in Srirangam. He rapidly achieved recognition and distinction in India and internationally and was honoured with the Sangita Kalanidhi from the Music Academy, Madras; Padma Shri; Sangeet Natak Akademi award, among numerous others. He was *Asthana vidwan* at Tirupati and Srirangam temples and at the Sringeri Shankara Mutt. In 1964, he established the Saradha Nadhaswara Sangeetha Ashram, a *gurukulam* for students. His grandsons have established the Sheik Chinna Moulana Trust for supporting nadaswaram students and artistes.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY: S. KASIM EXCEPT BOTTOM RIGHT PHOTO COURTESY: FEROSE BABU

Chinna Moulana's inherent talent and thirst for innovation and his integration of the styles from Chilakaluripet and Thanjavur gave a special edge to his music. A signature feature was his elaborate *alapana* built on a broad foundation. His improvisation of musical phrases (*briga*) to embellish the main melody with high speed, appropriate gait and weight, were dazzling displays of skill and creativity. Yet each note would be enunciated, clear and pure. He was particular about learning the *sahitya* or text of the compositions, whether they were in Telugu, Tamil or Sanskrit. His playing resembled vocal music, what in Hindustani music is called *gayaki ang*. Chinna Moulana was influenced by Hindustani music and was close musically and personally to Bismillah Khan.

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Remarkably, Chinna Moulana was a practising Muslim, keeping up the minimum requirements of Islam. But he was also an ardent devotee of Srirangam's presiding deity Ranganatha. His *ishta devata* (chosen deity) was Rama, in his native Karavadi temple. There are stories galore of his religious piety. Grandson Kasim, who accompanied him to Varanasi, remembers him chalking out their itinerary, "First Ganga *snanam*, next *darsanam* of Kashi Vishwanatha and then Bismillah Khan's house." Eminent musicologist Dr. Rama Kausalya recalls his visits to the Tamil Nadu Government Music College in Thiruvaiyaru where she was Principal. He would come by with a tulsi leaf tucked behind his ear, after praying at Saint Tyagaraja's samadhi nearby. Not that Chinna Moulana escaped the challenges of being accepted, both by the nadaswaram community and his *jamath*. He belonged to a profession steeped in the sacred domain of Hinduism, replete with the worship of idols of gods and goddesses. But his was not a solitary case. He had a community behind him anchored in a historical ethos of accommodation and exchange.

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Chinna Moulana belonged to a community of Telugu-speaking Muslim nadaswaram artistes from Guntur, Nellore, Vijayawada, Ongole and elsewhere in Andhra and Telengana. These families are hereditarily connected with various local temples. Although many younger members pursue other professions, in every family there are at least a few who continue to learn and play the nadaswaram. Kasim estimates that there may be a thousand such families, including the few who migrated to Tamil Nadu, which constitute an endogamous universe within which, following the South Indian custom, marriages between cross cousins and between maternal uncle and niece are common. Endogamy and a hereditary prestigious occupation together created a tight sub-caste of sorts, enabling a dual religious identity to co-exist.

Kasim and Babu have kept up the lifestyle of their grandfather—largely Tamilised and Hinduised. During concerts, they are dressed in the conventional Isai Velalar style, which is also followed in the mode of speech, customs and festivals at home. N. R. P.



Sheik Mahboob Subhani, his wife Kaleeshabi and their son Ferose Babu carry forward the syncretic practice in nadaswaram playing

Ravichandran, a traditional nadaswaram artiste and a close associate of Kasim and Babu, mentions the similarities in habits and practices, "They visit Hindu places of pilgrimage, have elaborate pujas at home, are particular about astrological calculations like *rahu kalam*. The women wear veil only for *jamath* activities. I have played at their family weddings. A *moulvi* is present for the *nikah*, but the rest of the ceremonies are like other Tamil Hindu weddings."

Yet another Telugu Muslim family in Tamil Nadu that has made a mark in nadaswaram is the couple Sheik Mahaboob Subhani, his wife Kaleeshabi Mahaboob and their son Ferose. They are the eighth and ninth generations of players in their family, and are originally from Satuluru in the Guntur district, where they learnt from illustrious gurus like Sheik Chinna Peer Sahib and Sheik Jaan Sahib. They too migrated to Srirangam in the 1980s and became disciples of Chinna Moulana. Kaleeshabi is the first Muslim woman to play the nadasawaram on public platforms. The Subhani family has won accolades and awards in India and abroad. Their lifestyles are also considerably Hinduised, with strong Telugu roots.

There are others in Andhra Pradesh who are lesser known but reflect the same broad features of connection to temples and intermingling of Hindu and Muslim identities. They remain as a shining example of the plural, syncretic cultural fabric of the traditional performing arts in India. ■

*The nadaswaram will be showcased at Saz-e-Bahar, the two-day festival of Indian instrumental music, at the Godrej Dance Theatre on 5th and 6th April. The recitals on each day will be preceded by a talk by Dr. Suvarnalata Rao, Programming Head-Indian Music & Research Scientist, NCPA, on the specific instruments to be presented.*

*Dr. Kamala Ganesh is an eminent sociologist based in Mumbai. She is a student of Carnatic music and has written on it for the Economic and Political Weekly. She has edited the book Jafferkhani Baaj: Innovation in Sitar Music by sitar maestro Abdul Halim Jaffer Khan. She is currently working on the theme of syncretic traditions in the performing arts in India.*

Date Time	Presentation
5 April 6 pm (talk)	Dr. Aneesh Pradhan (tabla)
6.30 pm (recital)	Milind Raikar (violin)
6 April 6 pm (talk)	M.S.Sivakumar (nadaswaram)
6.30 pm (recital)	Manish Pingle (slide guitar)

PHOTO COURTESY: FEROSE BABU



Extensions includes Maahi Sharma, Tanish Ganatra, Arslan Parv ez, Mahir Muchhala, Khushi Prasad, Raunak Upadhyay along with Jordan Rodrigues and Marcelo Fernandes

# To New . Beginnings

The first edition of the NCPA's Spring Board is set to bring talented young musicians from two local bands to the forefront.

By Benaifer J Mirza

From left: Zaaira Mulchandani, Zidaan Mulchandani, Isaiah Rodrigues and Isaac Rodrigues from Urban Soul and Blues Collective



Kylen Mendes, drummer for Urban Soul and Blues Collective



Urban Soul and Blues Collective bassist Shri Lavanya Pudipeddi



Spanish opera singer and conductor Plácido Domingo once said, “When a young artiste is ready, one has to bring him into the limelight.” Spring Board, a new initiative by the NCPA, intends to do just that.

It is every artiste’s dream to perform in a packed auditorium. The thrill of those resounding claps, the standing ovation is incomparable. However, young and aspiring artistes have a limited number of platforms to showcase their talent in theatres and auditoriums. Ironically, the ratio of the talent pool to the opportunities available is rather uneven. Spring Board endeavours to fill that vacuum by giving young and talented artistes a platform where they will imbibe first-hand knowledge of what goes into the making of a superlative performing artiste.

### **A dream is born**

Speaking about the aim and intent behind Spring Board, Farrahnaz Irani, General Manager - Chairman’s Office and International Music, shares, “In India, music is no longer just a hobby. The number of kids learning music and working seriously to make a career in it is growing every day. However, since these talented young musicians are still finding their feet, many of them agree to do shows for free. Spring Board will not only give them the experience of a ticketed and marketed show, but also the opportunity to use this platform as a base to spring them into the mainstream, giving their résumé a much-needed boost.” In a nutshell, Spring Board will offer young artistes the right tools to polish their skills and give their art and talent further direction and purpose, along with the right kind of exposure for a bigger and better future in the field.

Scheduled to be held on 20th and 21st April, the inaugural edition of Spring Board will see two multi-talented bands—Urban Soul and Blues Collective (USB-C) and Extensions. Irani notes that USB-C comprises young students, who had attended workshops at the NCPA to help better their stage presence and musicality, and were thereafter noticed and approached for Spring Board; and Extensions is a group of students learning music, ready to be known by the audiences.

USB-C includes Zaaira Mulchandani and Isaiiah Rodrigues on vocals, Shri Lavanya Pudipeddi on bass, Kylene Mendes on drums, Isaac Rodrigues on guitar and Zidaan Mulchandani on keys and vocals. Zaaira and Zidaan, who are twins, and Isaac and Isaiiah, who are siblings, were studying at the same school and spontaneously decided to jam one day. That is how the core band, ZIZI—an acronym for their first names—was formed. ZIZI became USB-C after their bassist Lavanya, whom they met at a jam session, and drummer Kylene, who went to the same school as the twins, joined in.

Extensions includes Mahir Muchhala on keyboard, Jordan Rodrigues and Arslan Parvez as sub keyboardists, Maahi Sharma and Khushi Prasad on vocals, Raunak Upadhyay on guitar, Tanish Ganatra on drums and Marcelo Fernandes as sub drummer. They all met in college and over weeks of performing together, discovered that they shared similar interests in genres and styles that they listened to. On realising that they work well together, they decided to form Extensions.

### **The thrill of it**

Speaking about what inspired USB-C to participate in Spring Board, Zidaan says, “We just love the thrill of playing for an audience. We now want to test our mettle so that we can push ourselves even more and gauge and hone our skills to become better artistes and performers.”

Mahir from Extensions says, “As a band, our passion for music and the chance to connect with our audience drives us. This event is a golden opportunity for us to showcase our creativity, talent and hard work to a wider audience. Sharing the stage with other talented musicians and being part of a vibrant musical community adds to our excitement.”

Arslan from Extensions is excited about the opportunities that Spring Board is set to offer. He looks forward to observing and interacting with fellow musicians, which will help provide valuable insights. The event, he notes, will foster a deeper understanding of their knowledge and musicality.

Zidaan echoes the sentiment and hopes that performing at Spring Board will help the band garner recognition from established personalities in the field of music, widen their network and, hopefully, help them get more opportunities to perform. The band also seeks to address some key areas, such as how to expand their repertoire, build stage confidence and work on perfecting their technique.

The first edition of an event always comes with its own set of hurdles and hiccups. Speaking about some of the challenges that Spring Board could possibly be facing, Irani says, “Given the experience that the NCPA has, the curation has been relatively easy. However, we have just opened the box office and it might be a challenge to bring in people who don’t know the bands, to give their time and money to come and support them.”

Spring Board is nothing short of a dream come true for every talented and up-and-coming band that is looking to break into the music scene. It serves to be as much of a learning ground as a platform to perform. Hoping to make this a regular event, Irani and the NCPA look forward to seeing immense support from the audience towards blossoming artistes. ■

*Spring Board will be held on 20th and 21st April in the Tata Theatre Garden.*

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## The Age of TMI

We are surrounded by too much information, something that Caryl Churchill—one of Britain's greatest living playwrights—foresaw more than a decade ago, when she wrote *Love and Information* to much critical acclaim. Ahead of the premiere of the NCPA production, we speak to director Mohit Takalkar about making sense of the play's narrative and structure.

By Prachi Sibal



“What is love? And what is information? Did you eat? Have you reached? Are these phrases that convey love or information?”

questions Mohit Takalkar when talking about directing the upcoming NCPA production of Caryl Churchill's *Love and Information*, in association with Aasakta Kalamanch, Pune.

Written as a series of over 50 disparate scenes divided into seven sections, the play is an exercise in reimagining the medium. It is no wonder then that it appeals to Takalkar whose last two works, the award-winning *Hunkaro* and *Ghanta Ghanta Ghanta Ghanta Ghanta*, broke barriers of form and narrative.

At first read, *Love and Information* is breezy, affecting and pithy. The second time around, it gets under your skin, revealing itself through conversations that have myriad possibilities. There are no stage directions, no character attributions and virtually no notes for performance.

There is a wide range of subjects covered from mental illness to privacy erosion to memory atrophy. The scenes are of varying lengths and the structure allows for the reader/viewer to narrow in on a world oversaturated with information. There is poetry, there are universal truths, there is tenderness and there is strife. It is like scrolling through Instagram or eavesdropping in a busy coffee shop.

Takalkar will remind you that the play was written in 2012 when social media was not at its peak and smart devices were not all-consuming. “Now everyone has a device. I'm not so worried about that. People are going to get bored and have shorter attention spans. We see that with cricket and everything else. That is not the enemy here. [What's of concern is] we are being bombarded by information and we are not able to decipher it,” he explains.

**There is a wide range of subjects covered from privacy erosion to memory atrophy. The scenes are of varying lengths and the structure allows for the viewer to narrow in on a world oversaturated with information. There is poetry, universal truths, tenderness and strife. It is like scrolling through Instagram or eavesdropping in a busy coffee shop.**

## “When Caryl Churchill writes *Love and Information* at the age of 75 after she has done everything else, it is a responsibility to zero down on the point ... The challenge is not to make the scene interesting but for the narrative to make sense”

### A new syntax

For Takalkar, the play was both fascinating and immediate. “Each scene can be a separate play and leaves you at a place where a play could start,” he says adding, “There’s politics, mental health, children and sex. It is our world and there is a certain urgency to it.”

After *Hunkaro*, Takalkar’s search was for pieces that would require audience participation. He was also looking for ones that would redefine the grammar of writing for stage. It is the culmination of this that led him to *Love and Information*. “I come from the Marathi tradition with some of the strongest playwrights like Vijay Tendulkar and Mahesh Elkunchwar. And there came a structure with it. Over time you could identify if a play was written in the Tendulkar tradition, for example,” he explains.

“British writing that started with Sarah Kane and Sam Steiner has been trying to break this idiom and find a new syntax, a new grammar for writing. Unless it comes from the playwrights, we won’t be able to change the syntax of the performance. It will still have the start, middle, end, the character and the plot.”

Takalkar has already left the linear behind, and with a non-linear, often fragmented, narrative, come new challenges. Decoding the playwright’s mind and the patterns behind it, according to Takalkar, are the most difficult but also the most exciting parts of the exercise.

“How to make sense of it? And how to have continuity in the story? It’s a slippery slope. When Caryl Churchill writes it at the age of 75 after she has done everything else, it is a responsibility to zero down on the point. You could make anything of it. How do you choose between the 10 different possibilities? The challenge is not to make the scene interesting but for the narrative to make sense,” he elaborates.

### The love and the information

It might be difficult to decode, but Takalkar assures us that it’s all there in Churchill’s play. She is trying to draw our attention to the fact that there is information, there is knowledge, there is universal wisdom, and then there is love. “Right now, we are confusing the three; we think information is wisdom and that knowledge is also wisdom,” he explains.

“In a world filled with information and knowledge, there are these truths. They come in short bursts. You can miss them, but when they come, they shine for a brief moment,” he adds, saying that Churchill’s love isn’t necessarily a romantic notion but encompasses axioms of trust and faith.

It is in these little bursts submerged in information and knowledge, where the performance of the writing lies. “Towards the end, in one of the scenes, someone asks, ‘Do you love me?’ And further towards the end,

there is the answer, ‘I do.’ I think therein lies the play. There is love, but it is lost,” he says.

### Behind the scenes

For Takalkar, it is the text that demands its process and he claims to have left the traditional route behind nearly 15 years ago. He now believes in getting on the floor and working out the possibilities that it generates. This is quite evident in the open rehearsal room in Mumbai’s Lokhandwala. Everyone in the room has a voice, and Takalkar wouldn’t have it any other way.

In a work-in-progress scene, actors take the reins as they play out the parts. Every time they return to it, more detail and new challenges are thrown their way. And every time, a new, sharper interpretation emerges.

It sounds unending, and while the play may keep evolving, where in a non-traditional process does one stop? “Everything is bound by design. Once the design of the play starts speaking, it gets controlled. Then we keep exploring within those confines,” he says, reminded of *Ghanta Ghanta Ghanta Ghanta Ghanta*, an adaptation of Steiner’s *Lemons Lemons Lemons Lemons Lemons*, where a cloud hanging overhead became central to the design.

### The point

In *Hunkaro*, Takalkar’s play with Ujaagar Dramatic Association which bagged seven Mahindra Excellence in Theatre Awards, the first few minutes can seem difficult. You are looking for answers and virtually everyone in the theatre is wondering what to make of it. Slowly, the play unravels and rewards the audience for their patience and effort.

It has since become Takalkar’s guiding principle. “We have dumbed down the general audience. Why won’t they understand?” he asks. “We are not asking them to make sense of Greek tragedy but of life and the people around them. If people don’t want to put in work, then I can’t make anything.” He strongly rejects the idea that people are drowned in the happenings of the world and come to the theatre, or to art itself, for entertainment alone. “During the World Wars people were dying, but they would still go underground and listen to music. The best writing and films came out of that time.”

*Love and Information*, Takalkar believes, is more accessible than his other plays. “I will keep challenging people to think more. It doesn’t take much. There may not be immediate gratification but if you ponder a bit, it’s there,” he observes, completing the arc of a conversation about a play that speaks to an age of instant gratification. ■

Love and Information will be presented from 25th to 28th April at the Experimental Theatre.

**LOVE.** SECRET. CENSUS. FAN. TORTURE.  
LAB. SLEEP. REMOTE. IRRATIONAL.  
AFFAIR. MOTHER. FIRED. MESSAGE. GRASS.  
TERMINAL. SCHIZOPHRENIC. SPIES. DREAM.  
RECLUSE. GOD'S VOICE. THE CHILD WHO DIDN'T  
KNOW FEAR. STAR. WEDDING VIDEO. SAVANT.  
EX. MEMORY HOUSE. DINNER. PIANO. DANCE.  
FLAGS. FLASHBACK. LINGUIST. MATHS. SEX. GOD.  
RASH. CHILDREN. SHRINK. THE CHILD WHO  
DIDN'T KNOW SORRY. CLIMATE. CENSOR. WIFE.  
DECISION. THE CHILD WHO DIDN'T KNOW PAIN.  
EARTHQUAKE. CHINESE POETRY. MANIC. GRIEF.  
FATE. STONE. VIRTUAL. SMALL THING. LAST  
SCENE FACTS. RANDOM. DEPRESSION. MORSE.  
SEMAPHORE. SIGN LANGUAGE. BIRDSONG.  
PAINTING. PIG LATIN. SANTA. TABLES. GENES.  
DOG. KEYS. MAGAZINE. GOOGLE. TWITTER.  
ZEN. COLD. **INFORMATION.**  
SILENCE.

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**138 CHARACTERS. 50 SCENES.  
11 ACTORS. 1 STAGE.**

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AN NCPA PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH AASAKTA

# Love and Information

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A PLAY BY:

**CARYL CHURCHILL**

DESIGNED & DIRECTED BY:

**MOHIT TAKALKAR**

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APR 25 & 26, 2024 | 7:30 PM  
APR 27, 2024 | 9:00 PM  
APR 28, 2024 | 4:00 PM & 7:30 PM  
EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE, NCPA

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The Danish Chamber Players. Photo by Julia Severinsen



## The Meeting of Cultures

From the return of India-born Danish conductor Maria Badstue to the India debuts of the Georgian Sinfonietta, Danish Chamber Players and Indian American soprano Indira Mahajan, the NCPA presents many an international collaboration with the Symphony Orchestra of India. Concerts such as these that transcend borders indicate just how important it is to foster the inextricable link between music and culture.

By Beverly Pereira

Last month, the audience at the NCPA witnessed the vibrant music of Georgia at a memorable concert by the Tbilisi State Chamber Orchestra, 'Georgian Sinfonietta'. Straddling Eastern Europe and West Asia, the transcontinental country has always taken great pride in preserving its

rich tradition of folk music, polyphonic sacred music and the high level of the art of opera and classical music from the Western and Russian traditions. At their concerts at the Tata and Prithvi theatres, they presented Mendelssohn's String Symphony No. 10, and String Quartet No. 14, "Death and the Maiden",

by Schubert (arranged by Mahler), and the very rarely performed Mendelssohn's Piano Concerto in A Minor with the talented Georgian pianist Tamara Licheli. Musicians of the Symphony Orchestra of India then took to the stage to perform with the Tbilisi-based orchestra a delightful set of pieces based on Georgian folk songs and dance called 'Miniatures on Georgian Folk Tunes' by Sulkhan Tsintsadze.

Founded in 2008, the Georgian Sinfonietta is proficient in an extensive repertoire of music ranging from the Renaissance period to contemporary music performed authentically on historical instruments. In 2012, with the support of the Ministry of Culture of Georgia, the orchestra acquired a French harpsichord by American harpsichord maker William Dowd and other Baroque string instruments, making them quite literally the first Baroque orchestra in the Caucasus. Comprising 15 musicians, the Georgian Sinfonietta has performed across Europe. Last year saw a unique performance of

**"The American part of the programme consists of two very powerful works from the 20th century that have become standard repertoire in the States but not so much in Europe yet. For the Danish Chamber Players, it will be a dream to dwell in the big, beautiful sounds of the larger orchestra."**

Venetian Baroque composer Benedetto Marcello's two concertos for bassoon, strings and basso continuo, as well as two remarkable concerts of Baroque music in Finland. Its annual Tbilisi Baroque Festival, now in the 10th year, has become popular in both the country and abroad. The festival hosts specialists of early music, world-renowned ensembles and soloists.

Its artistic director and violinist Giorgi Kerelashvili is no stranger to India, having brought in his unique touch to the SOI over several seasons since 2019 upon invitation by orchestra manager Onay Zhumabayeva. He counts the SOI among the fine orchestras of the world. "I was taken aback at the first rehearsal with the diverse programme and professionalism. Their seasons are always outstanding and interesting," says Kerelashvili. "The idea of cooperation between our orchestras had existed for a long time, and I am glad that this year it became a reality. It was heartening that we performed four miniatures on Georgian folk tunes and one on an Indian folk motif—because in my opinion this is the idea of cultural exchange." Come October, musicians of the SOI will perform for the very first time with the Georgian ensemble at the Tbilisi State Conservatoire Grand Hall.

This month, the NCPA will see the arrival of an ensemble of eight high-profile chamber musicians known as Ensemble Storstrøm - Danish Chamber Players. Proficient in French chamber music as well as Danish and Nordic music, the ensemble comes in all the way from KUMUS, a centre for music and art in Fuglsang, Denmark. The ensemble was slated to perform at the NCPA back in 2022, but the concert was held off due to the pandemic. "None of the musicians in our ensemble have ever been to India before. We are very curious and don't know what to expect. But it is fantastic that we can meet and play together, and that music is such a global intuitive language," says Maj Kullberg, General Manager, Danish Chamber Players. The concert at the NCPA on 7th April will see all eight musicians of the Danish Chamber Players present a programme comprising Debussy's Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun, Fantasy in F minor, D. 940 by Schubert (arranged by Westh), Selections from Lyric Pieces by Grieg (arranged by Westh) among other works.



“We have chosen a programme with some of the most iconic composers in the classical repertoire whom we will present in a slightly different way than they are usually heard. Some of the pieces in the programme are lesser-known works by the composers, while the iconic classical pieces are presented in new, intimate chamber music versions—most of them arranged by the pianist of the Danish Chamber Players, Jakob Westh,” says Kullberg.

The Danish Chamber Players perform around 100 concerts and events each year and host two annual festivals aside from being engaged in recordings and commissioning of works from prominent composers to renew and update the classical repertoire with a focus on Danish music. Founded in 1991, it is interesting to note that its choice of instruments is not commonly seen in ensembles of its kind. “When the ensemble was founded, they wanted to hire the best musicians and didn’t focus on what instruments the applicants played. With the harp and the piano, we always have to look for a special repertoire, or make new arrangements of well-known music. This is a challenge, but it is also what gives

the ensemble their special sound and character,” says Kullberg. French music by Ravel, Debussy and Fauré suits the ensemble very well, she explains, because the French Impressionist composers loved to use the harp and flute in a beautiful way.

The cultural collaboration between Denmark and India will be in full force on 12th April when the Danish Chamber Players team up with the SOI Chamber Orchestra to present what promises to be a spectacular evening under the baton of Maria Badstue. The feted Danish conductor will return to the NCPA as part of the exciting INDK Symphonic Collaboration she spearheads. “The Danish Chamber Players have worked with Badstue on many occasions, and she is a fine artiste who we feel really listens well to the musical language that emerges [during such collaborations]. This makes it fun and rewarding to perform with her,” says Kullberg, adding that the ensemble last worked with Badstue on an opera by Peter Maxwell Davies called *Seven Years with a Mad King*.

At the NCPA, the programme will traverse from Mahler’s Adagietto from Symphony No. 5 and

**“The idea of cooperation between the Georgian Sinfonietta and the SOI had existed for a long time ... I’m glad that we performed four miniatures on Georgian folk tunes and one on an Indian folk motif—because in my opinion this is the idea of cultural exchange”**



**“This is an opportunity to represent Indian opera singers outside of the United States and continue to represent our accomplishments outside of ‘traditional’ careers. It demonstrates that we are represented in many spaces within the music industry, including opera.”**

Beethoven’s Symphony No. 4 to Appalachian Spring by Copland. “The American part of the programme consists of two very powerful works from the 20th century that have become standard repertoire in the States but not so much in Europe yet. For our chamber musicians, it will be a dream to dwell in the big, beautiful sounds of the larger orchestra. That is a luxury for us! And our harpist is looking forward to playing the Mahler Adagietto, which, in my opinion, is one of the most beautiful pieces ever written,” says Kullberg.

Marian Anderson Award-winning soprano Indira Mahajan will bring her richly textured vocals to the stage when she performs Knoxville Summer of 1915 with the Danish Chamber Players and the SOI Chamber Orchestra. “I am really looking forward to the INDK Symphonic Collaboration with the Danish Chamber Players and the SOI. This will be the first time I perform Samuel Barber’s piece. I heard a recording of the great opera singer Leontyne Price sing this piece when I was a student in the conservatory. It’s a beautiful piece that depicts life in the American South, a part of the world I am familiar with as my mother was born in the south. I spent time and still have family there. I believe my experiences can help me to interpret and convey the text and the mood of this wonderful piece,” says Mahajan.

Although Mahajan has worked with Badstue at Portland Opera for the critically acclaimed opera *Thumbprint* composed by Kamala Sankaram, the soprano is looking forward to this project that comes with a new set of ‘firsts’. Aside from performing Barber’s Knoxville for the first time, it will be her first time working with the Danish Chamber Players. The concert will bring the celebrated soprano to India for the very first time, too. Mahajan was born in New York City to a father who was born in Dalhousie, India. “As an Indian American, this visit is deeply personal and significant for me. It is also very significant because it is an opportunity to represent Indian opera singers outside of the United States and continue to represent our accomplishments outside of ‘traditional’ careers. It demonstrates that we are not a monolith, and we are represented in many spaces within the music industry, including opera. Seeing accomplished women represented in various art forms and careers is very important for younger generations as well. It is also important to remind the world that opera is for all people.” ■

*The Danish Chamber Players will perform on 7th April on the Jamshed Bhabha Theatre Stage. The SOI Chamber Orchestra will perform with the Danish Chamber Players and Indira Mahajan under the baton of Maria Badstue on 12th April at the Tata Theatre.*

# A Gentle Force

Ahead of a tribute concert on Shobha Gurtu's birth centenary, accompanying musicians and disciples share their recollections of the Thumri Queen with an admiring listener.

By Deepak Mahaan



Shobha Gurtu in a recital at the Tata Theatre in 1983. Photo from the NCPA Library Archives.

I was a student at university when I first heard the vocals of Shobha Gurtu and, most amazingly, inside a movie hall. As the credits of Raj Khosla's blockbuster *Main Tulsi Tere Aangan Ki* unfurled to the accompaniment of the song 'Saiya Rooth Gaye', I presumed the feminine voice was that of Begum Akhtar. But when the playback credits stated that the singer was a certain Shobha Gurtoo (yes, that is how the name was spelt on the screen), I became curious about this female singer whose nasal twang resembled that of the much-adored Queen of Ghazals so closely.

Looking around for songs before the era of YouTube was always a massive effort, and to trace a relatively unknown voice was even more tedious. Hence, spending my meagre pocket money on a record of a

newcomer had to be a judicious decision that could only be taken after careful listening. Although I found no records of Gurtu on the shelves of music shops, my vigil led me to discover that she had earlier given playback in films like *Phagun* and *Duniyadari* as well as *Pakeezah* (though the composition was not included in the film). Surprisingly, all of the compositions, including a *qawwali* with the legendary Mohammed Rafi, had escaped my ears and later too, one caught snatches of her singing occasionally from the non-film song programmes of Vividh Bharati.

However, from 1980 onwards when cassette tapes flooded the market and private stage shows began to gravitate towards the smaller cities of India, Gurtu came to be heard on a regular basis in the public domain. There is no denying that initially a major attraction for most listeners was the texture of her voice which was akin to that of Begum Akhtar and although Gurtu was not into singing ghazals at that time, her fine repertoire of *thumri*, *kajri*, *khayal* and *hori* had begun to create a steady stock of admirers.

Nonetheless, the real and delightful experience was hearing Gurtu in person. There was an inherent earthiness in her voice and her singing showed humility; an emotive expression which seemed like an outpouring of gratitude before a celestial being. Exhibiting a near-perfect grip on the classical intonations and a high level of proficiency, her renditions were like gentle submissions to a divine power. Unlike many of her contemporaries, Gurtu treated audiences with utmost respect, never displayed haughtiness and even gleefully deviated from her prepared list of compositions to accommodate requests of the listeners.

**Unlike many of her contemporaries, Shobha Gurtu treated audiences with utmost respect, never displayed haughtiness and even gleefully deviated from her prepared list of compositions to accommodate requests of the listeners**

Watching her live performances, I felt she immersed herself into the 'mood' of the composition and delivered myriad inflections of the verses in different ragas in a state of meditative trance. My observation as a listener is endorsed by one of India's leading tabla players, Aneesh Pradhan, who had the good fortune of accompanying Gurtu on stages across India and overseas for several years. Pradhan notes that Gurtu "moved on to a different mental space" while performing, almost as if she was in direct communion with a higher spirit. Gurtu's disciple and well-known singer, Rajashree Kelkar Pathak, who will be paying tribute to her guru at the NCPA, recalls Gurtu's

spontaneity onstage where she would come up with “inspiring variations that were completely unheard and unrehearsed before.”

Every artiste’s personality has a distinct bearing on his or her craft whereby the personal idiosyncrasies, beliefs and attitudes permeate into their creations. Shubha Joshi, a long-standing disciple of Gurtu, opines Gurtu’s singing was a reflection of her refined and courteous persona. “Madam Gurtu was a gentle soul who respected her accompanists so much that irrespective of their age, she would touch the feet of the tabla and harmonium players before singing,” says Joshi. Pradhan concurs, saying, “Shobha Tai’s simplicity and sense of camaraderie with her accompanying musicians was as much evident onstage as it was offstage.” Her care stretched on to her relationship with her students and Pathak recounts, “She treated disciples as her own family, taking care of minute details of their food and travel even amidst her hectic schedules.” Gurtu was not a conventional teacher but “a playful mate who would joyfully coax her students to sing along so that they could imbibe the intricacies of a particular composition.” Both Pathak and Joshi believe it was “her way of inspiring rather than binding down disciples within rigid tentacles of technique and theory.”

True to her gentility, Gurtu was not into exaggerated displays of gyrations or histrionics, but let it not be presumed that her soft demeanour ever allowed the quality of her performance to suffer. “Though the atmosphere in the green room was never sombre, the humour and laughter would recede after she began identifying the compositions [to be presented onstage],” Pradhan says.

Like all good artistes, Gurtu went beyond the narrow and rigid confines of conventions. As such, to improve the emotive quotient of her renditions, she would at times add an element of ‘adaa’ (enactment) to her singing and one can feel those vibrations in compositions like ‘Saiya Nikas Gaye’, ‘Baan Naino Ka’, ‘Rangi Saari Gulabi Chunariya Re’, ‘Najaria Lage Nahin Kahin Aur’ and many others. Though an accomplished singer of pure classical Hindustani music, Gurtu acquired fame with her subtle interpretations and inputs of light classical music which earned her the sobriquet of Thumri Queen, alongside her contemporary Girija Devi. Although Gurtu provided *thumris* a distinct appeal with her *abhinaya ang*, my personal preference is for her *bhajans* that carry a *virakti* (disaffection) from the mundane world and which, in spite of her moving renditions, have remained highly underrated by most music aficionados.

Gurtu was not blessed with a sugary-sweet voice but if she compels attention, it is because of her wonderful emoting of the mood through her singing. Her *bhajans*—like ‘Kanha Re Tori Jovat Rah Gayi Baat’, ‘Palak Ughado Dinanant’—evoke such tender feelings

that one can almost feel the pain of Meera’s separation from Krishna. Referring to her penchant for infusing the romantic element of Krishna in her singing, Gurtu’s son Narendra had once stated that onstage, she was always a Radha. Yet, in all humility, her timbre blends and identifies more with the mystic devotion of Meera as her voice has an element of pain wrapped within itself.

The beauty of art and the skill of an artiste, however, are such that every listener can have a different interpretation of a creative composition. Gurtu was born as Bhanumati Shirodkar in Belgaum in 1925 and received her first musical initiations from her mother Menakabai Shirodkar, a professional dancer as well as a disciple of vocalist Alladiya Khan. She acquired finesse under the tutelage of Ghamman Khan who also strengthened her ties to the Jaipur-Atrauli *gharana*. However, her marriage to Vishwanath Gurtu and subsequent move to Mumbai proved fortuitous as it expanded her professional and artistic horizons, resulting in a meaningful career in singing.

Her proficiency made her an artiste welcome in several countries across the globe. Performing at various prestigious art centres and auditoriums with distinction, Gurtu’s skills were duly acknowledged with the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award and the Padma Bhushan. Though influenced by the prowess of Begum Akhtar, Bade Ghulam Ali Khan and elements of Banaras and Jaipur *gharanas*, the beauty of Gurtu’s singing is that, like the best of artistes, she rose beyond

constrictions to delight and capture hearts and ears alike of commoners, critics and connoisseurs.

Old-timers fondly remember her wonderful *jugalbandi* with the Kathak maestro Birju Maharaj, whose feet resonated his belief that “dance makes you beautiful”. Maharaj collaborated with many singers, yet his association with Gurtu at Carnegie Hall in New York is termed as an exceptional fusion of sublime grace and skill. Pradhan nostalgically recalls several other occasions when her singing transported audiences to ecstasy and that is surely no exaggeration since Gurtu had an instinctive feel for the *sur* (musical note) as well as the mood of the poetry. And, since she knew the art of transporting her own joy to her audiences, it is no wonder that she still has many admirers humming her tunes, from Dallas to Delhi. ■

Rangi Sari Gulabi: A Tribute to Shobha Gurtu *will be presented by Rajashree Kelkar Pathak on 13th April at the Experimental Theatre.*

*Deepak Mahaan is a documentary filmmaker and an eminent author. A specialist on cinema and sports, he has published numerous pieces in prestigious publications in India and abroad. For more information, please visit [www.deepakmahaan.com](http://www.deepakmahaan.com)*

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# Kaifi Azmi: A Man of Action

In *This Week at the NCPA* on 94.3 Radio One, radio and podcast host **Hrishikesh Kannan** spoke to filmmaker Sumantra Ghosal about *Kaifnama*, a documentary on the life and times of poet and thinker Kaifi Azmi, screened at the NCPA in February. Excerpts from the conversation.

**Hrishikesh Kannan:** I want to start with the beginnings of *Kaifnama*. Were you always intrigued by Kaifi saab's poetry? Was he a friend? How did the idea of this documentary come about?

**Sumantra Ghosal:** Kaifi saab was very old by the time I met him. So, I am afraid that friendship didn't quite work out. Was I into his poetry? No, I wasn't. So how did this strange thing happen? Because of a lady called Shabana Azmi, who decided that since I was a middle-class Bengali boy who had no idea of Urdu and didn't watch a great deal of mainstream cinema, I should be the right person to make the film on her father for his birth centenary. She approached me and said, "Would you do this?" and without thinking, I said "Of course!" Which was a stupid thing to do, but in hindsight, it wasn't too bad.

It was stupid because of my naivety in this whole business of Urdu poetry and my lack of knowledge about Kaifi saab, which is foolish to confess, but that is the truth. But what happened thereafter is that I started by translating his poetry into English, because I thought that would be the best way to understand the text. I wanted the film to be about Kaifi Azmi the poet, not the lyricist. And I wanted to deal with his poetry myself, so I did that by translating it into English. You have to wrestle with a text to translate it, but this gives you context and subtext because you have to dive deep into the poem to understand its layers. That's how it began, and then, Shabana, who is a terrific producer, left me to my own devices and I went about and made the film in the best way I thought was right and possible for me to do. We didn't have a large budget to do all this, and she actually watched the film for the first time at the NCPA. So, kudos to her trust in me. The fact that we have remained friends means I haven't done too badly by her father.

**HK:** *Kaifnama* is a 90-minute film directed by you in Urdu as well as English. Now, I saw an extraordinary movie made by Baba Azmi, Kaifi saab's son and Shabana's brother, called *Mee Raqsam*, and a lot of it was set in Mijwan, which is Kaifi saab's hometown.

**SG:** That's right.

**HK:** A large part of his childhood and youth were spent there. Did you go to Mijwan?



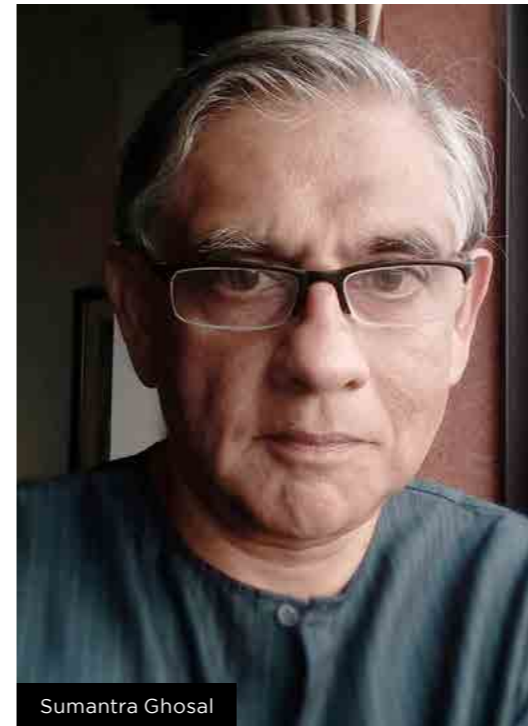
Kaifi Azmi in a still from the documentary

*"I first met Kaifi saab around 1998 ... a lot of the film is told in his words and the words of his wife, Shaukat aapa, because, back then, I interviewed her as well. That footage was with me, unused, unedited, unseen, and it found its place in the documentary."*

**SG:** Yes, the research was done mainly in Mumbai, but I did go to Mijwan. It was such an extraordinary and definitive part of his life. Not just at the beginning of his life but towards the end too. He went back there and invested time, energy and money in changing the fortunes of an entire village. He brought craft to it, he brought employment to it, he brought education to it, and most importantly, I think he brought feminism to a village that was not a feminist village by a long haul. I think what he did there gives the film an arc and a growth that would not have been there if he was only a poet. What he did, many of the progressive writers did not do. They concentrated on writing, they concentrated on their poetry, but as Shabana and Javed both say repeatedly, Kaifi Azmi was a man who fit his action to his words and went out and did something deep and long-lasting.

**HK:** The film includes reminiscences by Shaukat Azmi, Shabana and Baba. Instances that they narrated from their childhood, their youth and their life with the great man. Were there other sources you have used in the documentary?

**SG:** It's a strange coincidence that I had wanted to make a film



Sumantra Ghosal

*"Towards the end of his life, Kaifi Azmi went back to Mijwan and invested time, energy and money in changing the fortunes of an entire village. He brought craft, employment and education to it, and most importantly, I think he brought feminism to the village."*



Shabana Azmi in a still from the documentary

on writers [who belonged to the Progressive Writers' Movement] around 1998. And that's when I first met Kaifi saab because I interviewed several progressive writers at that time. A lot of the film is told in his words and the words of his wife, Shaukat aapa, because, back then, I interviewed her as well. That footage was with me, unused, unedited, unseen, and it found its place in the documentary. Shaukat Azmi was a feisty and fabulous woman who spoke her mind, even when she had disagreements with her husband. She was his mainstay and his support in all that he did. She gave up Mumbai at the drop of a hat because he wanted to go back to Mijwan, which I don't think she was very happy to do but she supported him in every way. Theirs was a fantastic relationship. But you have to see the film to realise how modern that relationship was. There was certainly no giving up of oneself totally, in terms of one's feminism and one's *wajood*.

There were interviews with lots of other people in the family, but Javed Siddiqui is someone I must mention. He has worked closely with Kaifi saab and is a poet, lyricist and scriptwriter. He speaks extensively and beautifully about Kaifi saab in the film.

**HK:** Shabana Azmi often talks about growing up in a house with socialism and Kaifi saab's commitment to socialism. At any given point of time, there would be people reading poetry, telling stories, members of the Indian People's Theatre Association... The Azmis inhabited a truly secular and emancipated world. Even today, Javed saab and Shabanaji have these incredible Holi parties. It is such a tribute to secular India. I'd like you to comment on that.

**SG:** I think Javed and Shabana are exemplary in the way that they are not reactionary, they're utterly secular. These are values that I think we are losing. One is seeing that happen because one has lived long enough to compare it with something else. So, to my mind, that is an extraordinary story of courage as well because they have not hesitated to proclaim their secular truth and core. They celebrate Diwali, they celebrate Holi, they celebrate Eid. They have grown up in places and in cultures where to be secular was de rigeur, and not to be secular would be obnoxious and unforgivable.

**HK:** *Kaifnama* is a Cinematix production. It is produced by Mijwan Welfare Society. This screening is an NCPA presentation

in collaboration with Cinema Collective. Could you discuss Cinema Collective and the initiative to put together such exclusive screenings?

**SG:** Cinema Collective is an outstanding example of a community coming together. It is run by filmmakers Priti Chandriani, Veena Bakshi and Lygia Mathews, and they have decided to promote documentaries which are relevant but don't get the platform that they perhaps should. They have been running this in tandem with the NCPA for about six years and they have shown a bunch of outstanding works of documentary to packed halls. That gives us poor filmmakers, in every sense of the word, a platform and an occasion to celebrate.

**HK:** I would like to now use this opportunity to congratulate you in a roundabout way—Zakir Hussain picking up those Grammys brought to mind your film *The Speaking Hand – Zakir Hussain and the Art of the Indian Drum*, which is now 20 years old.

**SG:** Yes, and I would love to be at that screening if it ever happens. Perhaps Cinema Collective will take up your challenge and show a 20-year-old film of an evergreen tabla player.

**HK:** What are your memories of filming it?

**SG:** You cannot be with Zakir Hussain for five minutes without making enduring memories. I was lucky to have been with him for about two or three years. I toured with him on *Planet Drum*, which won him his first Grammy more than 30 years ago, because I was making a documentary on it for him and for Mickey Hart. Those memories are truly priceless.

**HK:** I appreciate your time and I hope to speak to you very soon. Thank you.

**SG:** Thank you so much. ■

*This interview was broadcast as part of This Week at the NCPA on 94.3 Radio One. The show is aired every Wednesday at 9 am and is hosted by Hrishikesh Kannan, National Brand Head - Radio One India Network. Kannan is a radio and podcast host and producer, voice over artiste and MC/compère. The interview has been transcribed by Roshan Dastoor and edited for clarity in print.*

# Performing Arts: Theatre

A monthly column exploring diverse aspects of the performing arts. This month, the Artistic Director of Gillo Repertory Theatre, **Shaili Sathyu**, shares her thoughts on children's right to theatre and the arts.

**Growing up in a family of artistes**, it was the norm to be surrounded by books, music, drawings, art materials and the messy chaos of works in progress. It was only when I started attending the 'big school' that I realised my childhood was not the same as that of my classmates. Their parents had very different jobs and their homes looked very different from ours. Watching my mother and father spend days sketching, making costumes, writing, rehearsing and performing was what felt normal to me. It was only later in life that I could comprehend the huge role of the arts in my childhood. But more than the skills and exposure, I think the sensibility and aesthetics that were inculcated bit by bit, drop by drop, nurtured my interest in the arts and theatre.

Over the last 15 years of working with the Gillo Repertory Theatre, we have tried many ways of sharing the experience and joy of the arts with children and young people across India. During this journey, I came across a document titled 'Charter of Children's Right to Art and Culture' which includes 18 principles "to affirm in 27 languages the right of girls and boys from every part of the world to art and culture." The charter was created in 2011 from an idea by La Baracca – Testoni Ragazzi, a group in Bologna that has been involved in theatre for children and youth for almost 50 years. The charter firmly believes: "Children are citizens who, since the beginning of their lives, have the right to experience and enjoy the physical and mental spaces that art and culture can offer, sharing with adults a condition of closeness and belonging."

This one-page text has had a profound impact on me and helped me gather my thoughts into tangible actions and projects. It has helped me fathom why I work in theatre for young audiences and what my goals are. It has especially helped in shaping our project 'Gillo on the Go', under which we have travelled



across parts of Maharashtra, Karnataka and Uttarakhand, taking culture-based engagements to children in remote and rural areas. One of the core ideas is to provide access to theatre and the arts.

In India, some states have a thriving performing arts culture that is deeply embedded in the social fabric of the region. In others, children are far removed from the performing arts and only have mass media and digital content to engage with. So much so that at Gillo, more than 50 per cent of the child audience experiences a live performance for the first time in their lives. I am sure it is similar for other troupes that perform for children. As daunting as this may feel for the artistes, it always fills my heart when we bring theatre to a child for the first time. The sparkle in their eyes, the body leaning forward as if to become a part of the performance, the smile on their faces and giggles in between make for a very fulfilling sight. The way a child shares the fears of a character, or even warns an actor about dangers they are unaware of, are instances of audience involvement that never cease to enthrall us. This total involvement of children, when they buy into the story and the world the play creates, never misses the mark. I have seen actors perform with half conviction or struggle to be truthful because they don't really feel the story or its world, but

as soon as they share the space with children, they dive in and create magic with the audience.

Artistic experiences have proven to be a powerful medium for lifelong learning, for sparking curiosity and imagination. They provide a sense of identity and belonging, a space to understand the self and the world around us, and ways to be part of a collective. The arts are central to human development as they help build us as a people and as individuals.

And that is why we say that all children should be provided access to the arts, not just as a service, but as a right.

I remember an eight-year-old boy who came to watch our play *She-He-She* in Kolkata. After the performance, his father asked what he liked best, and the child replied, "The horse, it was beautiful." The father said he didn't see any horse onstage. The child replied, "I saw the horse because the actors told me about it, and they saw it too. It was beautiful and majestic."

Some people consider arts experiences for children a privilege. It is time we saw them as the norm. From time immemorial human civilisation has had the arts embedded in its everyday life. In a country like India, we are blessed with a myriad of ways in which the arts are intrinsically woven into our social fabric. We have a treasure that can and should be shared with the next generation. Not necessarily to 'preserve' it, but to make it a part of the continuum of our living culture.

Recently, we spent a day at a primary school in a small village outside Udaipur. Through the day we performed short plays for children, played games, sang songs, danced and laughed together. All these are the earliest ways in which babies and their families interact, and these are the same impulses that stay with us over our entire lives. At the end of the day, as we



Gillo Repertory Theatre travelled across the Kumaon region of Uttarakhand in October and November 2023 with theatre performances and arts workshops for children in government and private schools

*I urge fellow theatre artistes to share a small part of their year with children around them. A week or a month or more, whatever is possible. If we do this, we will soon have children all over the country living their childhood through the arts.*

were packing up, I overheard a student tell his friend, “Aaj meri poori zindagi ka sabse achchha din tha!” (Today was the best day of my whole life). And this child was only seven.

Anyone who has sung a lullaby or danced to soothe a child or been a keen audience to their imaginative adventures has, knowingly or otherwise, infused the arts in a young person’s life. Many teacher-artistes working with theatre-in-education have created beautiful explorations and memories for everyone involved. Studies have proven that arts participation is closely linked to children’s social-emotional development. So why are we not able to provide this experience to all children?

I urge fellow theatre artistes to share a small part of their year with children around them. A week or a month or more, whatever is possible. If we do this, we will soon have children all over the country living their childhood through the arts.

Whether we look at theatre for children through the lens of education or art, we can create a wide range of experiences so that children can build a relationship with the arts. By doing this, we are more likely to become an empathetic and connected society in which children have a sense of belonging to a land, a people—with an outlook that embraces the world. ■

## Songs of Revolution

In his brief but highly prolific life, Chilean poet, singer, theatre director and communist activist Víctor Jara nurtured and celebrated folk music which also became his chosen medium to take the message of emancipation to adoring masses. A national icon who was tortured and killed in the coup of 1973 that overthrew the government of Salvador Allende, he continues to be invoked in songs beyond Chile. We present an excerpt from *Victor Jara: An Unfinished Song*, in which his wife and dancer-activist **Joan Jara** shares the story of a remarkable life.

**Despite his success in the theatre**, Víctor had not lost touch with his roots. Folk music continued to be an intrinsic part of his life, his guitar a constant companion. In these crowded years, he was developing powers as a composer and performer, which were later to become a major part of his life and work, a means of communicating immediately with hundreds of thousands of people whom through the theatre alone he could never hope to reach.

As I grew closer to him, I realised how profound was Víctor’s necessity for music and how important his guitar was to him. I could have been jealous of it because it was almost as though it were another person with whom he conversed. He played when

he was depressed or especially happy, when he was relaxed, or to help him relax when he was nervous.

Víctor had never studied musical theory, and he couldn’t write down the scores of his own songs. He had learned as the peasants do, by ear, and his style of playing was reminiscent of the region of Ñuble, his mother’s birthplace, where he had spent his summers at theatre school. When he composed, too, it was instinctively, with only his own creativity to guide him.

He always seemed to have two or three songs inside him. As he had said to me in one of his letters, ‘Something seems to take root in me and then has to find a way of getting out.’ His pockets were always full of scraps of paper with notes and verses scribbled

on them. He would have ideas while riding on a bus, walking in the street, at lunch or reading the newspaper.

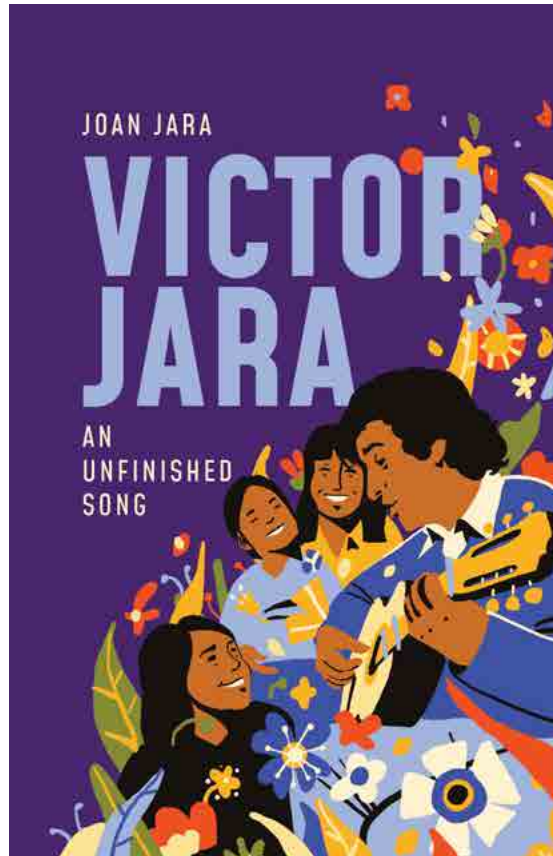
Because his work was so instinctive, it was important for him to try it out on an audience. I was the nearest person, so as soon as he had something ready or had worked out an idea, he would play or sing it to me, asking for my opinions and comments. I was a built-in listening post. Because of this, I could see what he was looking for—the development of authentic folk music, which would enhance rather than disguise its fundamental character, which would enrich its expressive possibilities so that the music could complement and underline the meaning of the text.

His first songs were very personal ones, almost autobiographical. His newfound happiness gave him the possibility of untying some of the knots inside him and expressing his feelings, his thoughts about his father and mother and their poverty, and the anxiety of his childhood. He wrote of the priests who had frightened him so much and had seemed to hold the peasants to ransom with fear of Hell and of the Devil; he emphasised his belief that love between human beings was more important than religion: 'I believe only in the warmth of your hand in mine.'

In 1962, almost immediately after returning from his European tour, Víctor directed the recording of an album of folk songs with Cuncumén. It contained songs from every region of Chile, from the far north to the island of Chiloé in the south and was called *Una Geografía Musical de Chile*. The innovation on this album included two of Víctor's own songs—'Paloma, quiero contarte' and 'Canción del minero'.

Cuncumén had always been a group dedicated exclusively to investigating and performing traditional folk songs and dances collected in the country. In Chile, as elsewhere, there were two prevailing schools of thought about folklore: one school saw folk as something static, already petrified, to be investigated only in an anthropological way and preserved for museums; the other, to which Víctor belonged and which was only just beginning to make itself felt, saw it more as a living expression which could be contemporary and was capable of transformation providing it was firmly attached to its original roots.

This discussion continued throughout the first few years of the sixties, causing controversy and sometimes bitterness. Although Víctor left Cuncumén at the end of 1962, he always



*In Chile, there were two schools of thought about folklore: one school saw folk as something static, already petrified, to be investigated only in an anthropological way and preserved for museums; the other, to which Víctor belonged, saw it more as a living expression which could be contemporary and was capable of transformation if it was firmly attached to its roots*

maintained contact with them and supported them during the years that followed in their particular field of research into authentic folklore, even when, to many people, they seemed old-fashioned and out of touch with the times. Víctor felt that although it was wrong to be dogmatic about folklore, it was also important to investigate and know as much as possible about the old traditions and the people who created them.

He himself had the opportunity to develop this side of his work when, in 1963, he was approached by Gregorio de la Fuente, then director of the Casa de la Cultura de Ñuñoa—a cultural institute in a suburb of Santiago—and asked to set up a school of folklore. With the help of one of the members of Cuncumén, Maruja Espinoza, Víctor set about organising the classes and teaching the folk dances, which he especially enjoyed, while Maruja concentrated on teaching guitar. A large and enthusiastic group of students made it possible within a couple of years to form a very lively performing group from which several soloists later emerged.

It was still possible at that time to find peasant singers settled in the outlying districts of Santiago and the surrounding countryside. Víctor encouraged the students to get out into the country at weekends to collect and record local folk songs, and he himself did the same whenever he had the time. He also took a group on a field trip to the north of Chile, where the music and dances were completely different.

Víctor's methods were probably very unscientific. He did not ask his students to use a written questionnaire as some of the academic investigators did, which

often produced a barrier of incomprehension. Instead, he encouraged both respect and friendship. With a bottle of wine and a guitar, an investigation session was converted into a real exchange of experiences. It was urgent and important to carry out this work. The global expansion of the music industry and the multinational record companies was rapidly swamping Latin America, a secondary market which could be used as a dumping ground for the remainder of the international record industry. ■

*This is an excerpt from Víctor Jara: An Unfinished Song by Joan Jara. No part of this excerpt may be quoted or reproduced without prior written consent from its publisher, LeftWord Books.*



An NCPA Presentation  
in collaboration with Rage Productions



SHERNAZ PATEL RAJIT KAPUR

# THE SIDDHUS OF UPPER JUHU

the city. the chaos. the comedy.

An English Play

Directed by  
Rahul da Cunha

Cast:  
Rajit Kapur, Shernaz Patel,  
Meera Khurana,  
Kajli Sharma & Shishir Sharma

Apr 13, 2024 | 7:00 pm | Tata Theatre, NCPA

An NCPA Presentation  
in collaboration with The Hoshbruba Repertory & Art for Causes



# Main Pal Do Pal Ka Shayar Hoon

Hindustani Play

A play based on **Sahir Ludhianvi's** life

Writers: Mir Ali Husain & Himanshu Bajpai | Director: Danish Husain

Actors: Danish Husain, Vrinda Vaid 'Hayat', Shantanu Herlekar,  
Srijonee Bhattacharjee, Siddarth N. Padiyar & Donald Krist

Creative Producer: Amita Talwar

APR 20, 2024 | 7:00 PM | TATA THEATRE, NCPA

# The Performing Arts Dispatch

A series on houses of culture from around the world. In focus this month: Dance Theatre of Harlem.

By Aishwarya Bodke



In the throes of the American civil rights movement, Martin Luther King, Jr. was visiting Memphis, Tennessee, to lead a march by striking sanitation workers. As he gazed out from the balcony of the Lorraine Motel one evening, he was fatally shot. King's assassination sparked a storm of outrage and anguish across the US. More than 100 inner cities experienced violent outbreaks and riots. However, this dark day in 1968 also spurred the genesis of an establishment that would go on to cradle Black artistic identity for decades.

A young Arthur Mitchell was then with the New York City Ballet—the first black principal dancer in a major dance company. While working on a commission from the American government to assist in the founding of the National Ballet of Brazil, he heard the mournful news on the radio and that was enough to bring him back home. He returned to Harlem, a predominantly black neighbourhood in

DTH Artiste Ingrid Silva in *Return*; Photo by Rachel Neville



Upper Manhattan, with a resolve to make a difference for his community.

Mitchell, along with his former ballet master Karel Shook, established a school in a garage at 466 West 152nd Street, which to this day houses the Dance Theatre of Harlem

(DTH). The 18-member, multi-ethnic company maintains a pioneering repertoire that includes treasured classics, neoclassical works as well as innovative contemporary works that use the language of ballet to celebrate African American culture.

The historical roots of ballet lie in the courts of European nobility, and so, the art form remained exclusivist for a long time. The DTH has been a beacon of inclusivity, putting dancers of colour in the forefront ever since Mitchell started his classes in the humble garage. The doors were left wide open. Passersby looked in, their eyes getting acquainted with the shattering of years of prejudice, which expected to see only white ballerinas onstage. Even ballet shoes were designed to match the tone of white skin. Brown pointe shoes arrived 200 years too late, after generations of dancers had painted, dyed or covered them in make-up. Mitchell also relaxed the rigid dress code of ballet to encourage enrollment by young men, who would prefer to dance in denim shorts and T-shirts. The principle of inclusivity was the very *raison d'être* of the dance theatre.

This vision has firmly forged the faith that ballet is for everyone. During his days at the New York City Ballet, Mitchell was the famed protégé of George Balanchine—the Russian choreographer and co-founder of The School of American Ballet. Mitchell's arrival encouraged Balanchine to go beyond the accepted norm. He choreographed specific roles for him, including the groundbreaking pas de deux in *Agon*, where Mitchell partnered with Diana Adams, a white ballerina. This was in 1957, during the early years of the civil rights movement, and was perhaps one of the most graceful acts of defiance.

The company's repertoire continues to feature ballets of Balanchine as he was instrumental in the evolution of the DTH in its early years. Virginia Johnson, a budding ballerina at the time, became a founding member and later the Artistic Director. She now assumes the role of Artistic Director Emerita; the baton was passed on to longtime Resident Choreographer Robert Garland last year.

The upcoming 55th Anniversary Season is particularly special, for it



The Dance Theatre of Harlem School provides classical ballet and dance training through a holistic curriculum. Here, young ballerinas gather by a portrait of the founder Arthur Mitchell. Photo courtesy: Dance Theatre of Harlem

*The Dance Theatre Harlem has been a beacon of inclusivity, putting dancers of colour in the forefront ever since Mitchell started his classes in a humble garage*

also celebrates Mitchell's 90th birth anniversary. A festival-style weekend of performances includes popular works like William Forsythe's *Blake Works IV (The Barre Project)* and Garland's *Return*, set to the music of James Brown and Aretha Franklin. Premiering pieces feature Robert Bondara's *Take Me With You*, a contemporary pas de deux set to the music of Radiohead and the company debut of Balanchine's classical gem *Pas de Dix*.

The DTH officially debuted in 1971 at the Guggenheim Museum and had its first full season in New York in 1974. Several successful seasons have taken place at the Rose Theater at Jazz at Lincoln Center and the New York City Center, among other prestigious venues. However, due to acute financial difficulties, the company was on a hiatus from 2004 to 2012. "This means that there was a generation of little girls who didn't see brown ballerinas," Johnson had

said in a statement. Since 2012, she has ushered in a new era for the company and expanded its repertoire, making the DTH an extraordinary tour de force.

That every member of the institution's diverse population feels physically and emotionally safe is something which cannot be compromised—only then can movement be truly liberating, the founding members believe. The DTH's well-known arts education and community engagement programme 'Dancing through Barriers' provides young people and adults of all ages an opportunity to connect and discover their true potential by being a part of an inclusive community built on the values of tolerance, equity and diversity. Their residency for seniors incorporates the basics of ballet technique and various dance styles adapted for all abilities.

The educational wing comprises the Dance Theatre of Harlem School, which provides classical ballet and dance training to students from ages three to 18 through a meticulously crafted curriculum that allows them to study other disciplines as well.

Various other community initiatives reflect their core value of empowerment

through arts for all. 'Sunday Matinée' has welcomed people from across the city to witness performances by special guest artistes and students for decades. 'Thursdays @ DTH' is an open rehearsal that gives an insight into the process of dance-making and how company members, ballet masters and choreographers work together. In this democratic exchange, audiences also get a chance to preview new ballets for the upcoming season, ask questions and meet the company members.

It is with an irrepressible spirit that the DTH has been a carrier of the Harlem Renaissance—an intellectual and cultural revival of African American art. Centuries of microaggressions in ballet are unlearned and reclaimed here with fortitude, and then perhaps a pirouette. For the mighty King had once said, "Hate is too great a burden to bear." ■

# The Printed Word

Every month, we introduce a must-read book from the NCPA Reference Library, which has an extensive collection of books on theoretical and practical aspects of the performing and visual arts, ranging from ethnomusicology to architecture to folk traditions. Here, **Sudha Ravishankar** discusses a well-researched work on the theory and evolution of Indian music.

## Perspectives on Music: Ideas and Theories

By Ashok Da Ranade

Published by Promilla & Co. in association with Bibliophile South Asia, 2008

The NCPA Reference Library, exclusively dedicated to the performing arts, is one of a kind, with rare books, texts, discourses on art, music, movies and other disciplines under the broad purview of the arts—a haven for avid researchers, academia, those in the arts, students and connoisseurs.

While taking a tour of the library, noted ethnomusicologist Dr. Ashok Ranade's *Perspectives on Music: Ideas and Theories* spoke to my musical sensibilities and the student in me was curious to understand the nuances contained within the book.

The book is a series of essays traversing extensively into varied aspects of music—from traditional to confluence music, cultural and intercultural exchanges, the technical nuances of the form, musicology, globalisation and Indian music.

The contents of the book could perhaps be broadly classified into four main categories: the sociocultural narrative; the spiritual connection; the technical aspects of music; and an ethnomusicologist's thoughts on the music of Maharashtra. The sociocultural narrative is rooted in the inevitability of the exchange that emanates from the coming together of two or more cultures. The book opens with an inquiry into the Indo-Iranian experience and at the outset, cautions the reader against loosely used words like 'influence' when discussing cultural exchange, which indicates a two-way process. The book gradually moves into explaining old concepts and new views in popular and confluence music and the evolution of music in the nationalist space, including the trials and tribulations of composers, the exchange that ensued when Indian and Western musical practices came into contact, which also includes the Western concept of the national anthem. I found the conclusion to this section in the last essay of the book on the relevance of music and education in multi-cultural societies. Dr. Ranade interestingly delves into the evolution of the term from 'multi-ethnic' and 'multi-racial' to 'multi-cultural', which he calls its most justifiable version.

In the discourse on the spiritual connect, the reader learns the subtle differences between spirituality, religion and religiosity. It links the concept of body, mind and soul and how music has evolved and should be sustained. The author also presents an interesting account of two saints—Swami Vivekananda and Gulabrao Maharaj, both unique individuals who made valuable contributions to music and efforts to propagate the same. An essay

relevant to this section also explores the *shringara bhava* in music and its influence in religion.

The book explores technical areas of music, its deconstruction and emergence of musical forms from *bhajans* to *bandishes*. One of Dr. Ranade's major contributions is his categorisation of Indian music into six areas: primitive/*adima*; folk/*lok sangeet*; art/classical; devotional/religious; popular/*jana* and confluence. These categories, though not discussed individually, are among the cornerstones of the book and form the framework for the essays in this section. Also discussed are traditions of composition and improvisation in Indian music and how they differ from Western classical music. In India, oral traditions have been integral to the preservation of much of our literature and music. The book explores the relevance of oral traditions along with the importance of archival recording and preservation.

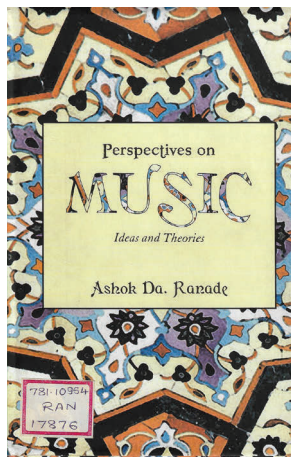
In addition to being an ethnomusicologist, Dr. Ranade was also a vocalist trained in Hindustani music. This combination shines through in the section on the music of Maharashtra, where he captures the ethos, ethnicity and changing trends in performance styles and audience engagement. Through his essays, he also highlights some lesser-known instances pertaining to the dynamic world of music. For instance, how in 1926, Pandurang Atmaram Chitre broadcast a radio programme from his terrace.

The book, published in 2008, is relevant today as it is rooted in Dr. Ranade's core understanding that "the reach, role and effect of music as an ameliorative force can only be appreciated when

music is placed in the progressively expanding perspectives of art, culture and life." It explains important concepts like *guru-shishya parampara* and *riyaz*, provides extensive information on the finer aspects of the form and with its wide-ranging essays, speaks to students, academicians, connoisseurs and practitioners of music alike. ■

*Sudha Ravishankar is an academician, a published author and podcaster. She has always been fascinated by both the practice and theory of media and culture, and has worked on both sides for over 30 years. She is currently pursuing her PhD in communications from Symbiosis University, Pune.*

*The NCPA Reference Library is open to visitors from 10 am to 5.15 pm on weekdays. The reference library membership is complimentary for NCPA Members and Friends of the SOI. The books and LPs in the Stuart-Liff music library are available for reference to Friends of the SOI at no cost. The reference library membership is open to the general public at a nominal annual fee of ₹500/- (April-March). Casual membership for visitors (outstation visitors only) is available at ₹100/- per day. For more information, please call 022-6622 3715.*



# For the Record

Every month, **Jimmy Bilimoria** delves into the musical treasures of the NCPA's Stuart-Liff Collection. Here, he writes about the Chilean opera singer, Renato Zanelli, who started his career as a baritone and later became a tenor of the first order.

Chile, in South America, has produced a handful of operatic singers in the last century, like Sofia del Campo, Carlo Morelli and Ramón Vinay. Among these, stands out the name of Renato Zanelli who enjoyed a fine career in the most important opera houses in the world during a period full of rivals—baritones Giuseppe De Luca, Pasquale Amato, Giuseppe Danise and tenors Aureliano Pertile, Giovanni Martinelli, Giacomo Lauri-Volpi. Zanelli was considered the best Otello in his time and was heir to Francesco Tamagno, Leo Slezak and Giovanni Zenatello.

Zanelli was born in Valparaíso in central Chile on 1 April 1892. He had five brothers and one sister, all of whom studied music. However, only two of them were destined for the operatic stage: Zanelli and his brother Carlos, who later changed his name to Carlo Morelli.

On completing his education in Switzerland and Italy, Zanelli returned to Chile to take care of the family business. However, singing, which happened to be a pleasant amateur interest, began to be taken more seriously under the guidance of a leading Chilean teacher. By 1916, Zanelli made his debut in Santiago as a baritone playing Valentine in *Faust* which was followed sometime later by performances as Conte di Luna in *Il Trovatore* and Tonio in *Pagliacci*.

Seeing the need for more experience, Zanelli left for the US, where he gave a few concerts before auditioning for the noted opera manager Giulio Gatti-Casazza, who was pleased by what he heard and engaged him for the 1919-20 season at the Metropolitan Opera in New York. In November, a performance of *Aida* with Giovanni Martinelli, Claudia Muzio and Gabriella Besanzoni introduced him to the Metropolitan audiences. He also sang in *Pagliacci* with Enrico Caruso, in *La forza del Destino* with Rosa Ponselle and in *Le Coq d'Or* opposite Maria Barrientos.

Zanelli then went to Chicago to sing Escamillo (*Carmen*), Tonio and di Luna. At the end of the season, he undertook a tour of American cities, after which he returned to his native land.

After his time in the US, Zanelli felt that his voice lacked some resources expected of a first-class baritone. He sought assistance in Italy with leading teachers who convinced him to be a tenor. An intensive period of study followed, after which he made his debut as Raoul in *Les Huguenots* at Naples in 1924. The change from being a baritone to tenor was not easy yet he eventually emerged as a tenor of the first rank.



He first attempted Otello at Turin in 1926. It was not much of a success. Realising that the only way to succeed is to study the part intensely, he did what was needed and in 1928, the long-awaited triumph was his. This was also the year in which Covent Garden heard him as the Moor with Giovanni Inghilleri as Iago. A repeat performance in 1930 was with Margaret Sheridan and Mariano Stabile as Iago.

Zanelli was hailed as the legitimate successor to Giovanni Zenatello, whose classic interpretation of Otello in 1926 was very vivid and Zanelli was one of the few singers to whom the role could be entrusted with confidence. Success followed in South America and Milan's La Scala during the seasons from 1929 to 1933.

He sang in *Lohengrin*, *Die Walküre* and *Tristan und Isolde* in Italian. Further, he sang the tenor parts from *Carmen*, *Norma*, *La Forza del Destino*, *Andrea Chénier*, *La Traviata*, *Pagliacci* and *Aida*.

In 1934 he returned to the US as a tenor. However, apart from some concerts, he was unable to sing as he was diagnosed with cancer.

He returned to Chile where his condition deteriorated rapidly. On 25 March 1935 he passed away and was laid to rest in Santiago. Richard Capell, of the *Daily Mail*, wrote: "The dramatic vividness of Zanelli's Otello was something rarely seen on the operatic stage. He held the eye, he held one's sympathies. This Otello, one knew, was truly a commander, a man out of the ordinary, his movements spoke of active blood and a proud mind. The greatest heroic ring may not be in Zanelli's voice, yet this true artist made his veiled, compressed, cello-like tone seem characteristic of Otello's nature. Yes, a great Otello worthy of the wonderful part, the hardest and the grandest in all opera."

LPs of Zanelli, which include four selections from *Otello*, are part of the Stuart-Liff Collection. ■

The NCPA houses the world-famous Stuart-Liff Collection of 6,000 books, 11,000 LPs and 12,000 CDs on Western classical music. This collection was generously donated to the Centre in 2009 by Vivian Liff, on behalf of George Stuart and himself, as a gesture of their friendship with Chairman Mr. Khushroo N. Suntook, an avid collector and connoisseur himself. The collection is an invaluable source for research by musicologists and students as well as for general music lovers. The library housing the collection is open from 10 am to 5.15 pm on weekdays.

COURTESY OF THE GEORGE GRANTHAM BAIN COLLECTION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, WASHINGTON, D.C.

# Kaleidoscope

Your window to the latest in the performing arts across India and the world.



## Cinematic gold

The Film Foundation's World Cinema Project—founded by Martin Scorsese and funded by George Lucas—will team up with Film Heritage Foundation (FHF) to restore Girish Kasaravalli's debut film *Ghataashraddha*, just in time for its 50th anniversary. Based on U.R. Ananthamurthy's novel of the same name, the 1977 Kannada film explores the story of a young widow grappling with the crutches of a sexually regressive society. The restoration will be led by archivist, filmmaker and FHF Founder Shivendra Singh Dungarpur at L'Immagine Ritrovata in Italy. The original camera negatives preserved at the National Film Archive of India will be utilised for the process. This is not Scorsese's first venture into the preservation of an Indian film. His foundation was instrumental in restoring Uday Shankar's 1948 film *Kalpana*. For more information, please visit [filmheritagefoundation.co.in](http://filmheritagefoundation.co.in)

## Badge of honour

Renowned poet, lyricist and filmmaker Gulzar and Sanskrit scholar Rambhadracharya were recently conferred the Jnanpith Award. Along with the Sahitya Akademi Award, the Jnanpith Award is the foremost honour for literature in India. This marks the second time the award has been given for Sanskrit and the fifth time for Urdu. Considered one of the finest Urdu poets of our time, Gulzar's



oeuvre needs no introduction, and the award joins a long list of accolades. Gulzar has been the recipient of the Sahitya Akademi Award for Urdu in 2002, Padma Bhushan in 2004, Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 2013 and several National Film awards for his unparalleled work in Hindi cinema. His words have been presented to eager audiences at the NCPA on many occasions. The most recent edition of Citi NCPA *Aadi Anant* featured Tagore's poems on childhood, translated from Bangla to Hindi by Gulzar and presented in his inimitable voice. The presentation was musically woven together by composer Shantanu Moitra. Over the years, the Jnanpith Award has been presented to literary geniuses, including Mahasweta Devi, Amrita Pritam and Ali Sardar Jafri, to name a few. For more information, please visit [www.jnanpith.net](http://www.jnanpith.net)



## Follow the herd

About 30 puppets representing the migrating animals of the Serengeti will journey 20,000 km from West Africa in spring 2025 to locations in Senegal, Morocco, Gibraltar, Spain, France, the UK, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden and finally Norway. An art project by The Walk Productions and Ukwanda, *The Herd* hopes to start a global conversation about the climate crisis through a "soft, beautiful evocation to think differently." Palestinian artist and Artistic Director of

The Walk, Amir Nizar Zuabi wants the project to create visceral engagement, like they did with their best-known work, *Little Amal*, a 12-foot puppet of a 10-year-old Syrian girl. The project travelled from Turkey to the UK to raise awareness about the global refugee crisis. *Little Amal* met world leaders, including the pope, reaching an estimated two billion people. Large-scale participatory public art crossing boundaries is known to stir local knowledge about pressing concerns that are global. For more information, please visit [www.walkwithamal.org](http://www.walkwithamal.org)

## Star of the show

Acclaimed conductor Carlo Rizzi was recently awarded the honour of Grande Ufficiale (Grand Officer) of the Ordine della Stella d'Italia (Order of the Star of Italy). The distinction is one of the highest civilian honours in Italy and recognises



Rizzi's commitment and contribution to promoting Italian music and culture globally. The conductor has performed at prestigious venues around the world, including La Scala in Milan, Metropolitan Opera in New York, Palais Garnier in Paris as well as the NCPA in 2017. Currently, he serves as the Artistic Director of Opera Rara and the Conductor Laureate of the Welsh National Opera. With a long-standing reputation as one of the most prominent operatic conductors, Rizzi's mastery as a symphonic conductor, too, is widely celebrated, as it was at the Jamshed Bhabha Theatre, where he conducted Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, an opera gala and *La Bohème Revisited*, an innovative production of Puccini's masterpiece. For more information, please visit [opera-rara.com/artist/carlo-Rizzi](http://opera-rara.com/artist/carlo-Rizzi) ■

- Aishwarya Bodke

# Jazz Odyssey

CLASSIC TO MODERN BRILLIANCE

- Shreya Bhattacharya Vocals
- Clement Rooney Piano
- Amandeep Singh Guitar
- Emmanuel Simon Percussion
- Jarryd Rodriguez Sax
- Arjun Chakraborty Drums
- Avishek Dey Upright Bass

APR 14, 2024 | 6:30 PM

EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE, NCPA



PRESENTS



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



International Jazz Day  
- Mumbai -

Curated By LOUIZ BANKS

Apr 30, 2024 | 7:00 pm  
Tata Theatre, NCPA



LOUIZ BANKS   GARY LAWYER   GINO BANKS   SHELDON D'SILVA   EMMANUEL SIMON   CLEMENT ROONEY   SAMANTHA NOELLA



SHREYA BHATTACHARYA   VINAYAK POL   ADRIAN D'SOUZA   VAIBHAV WAVIKAR   UMESH WARBHUVAN   NUSRAT APOORV   OMKAR DHUMAL



NIRANJAN JOSHI   HARSH BHAVSAR   SAYAR MITRA   YOHAAN PISSURLENKER   SOUNAK SAHA   ARKA CHAKRABORTY



HOST  
DENZIL SMITH

## A Multitude of Voices

*ON Stage* brings you edited excerpts from the *NCPA Quarterly Journal*, an unsurpassed literary archive that ran from 1972 to 1988 and featured authoritative and wide-ranging articles. In the final of a three-part series, singer and composer **G.N. Joshi** shares his encyclopaedic knowledge of the artistes that shaped the music-recording industry in 20th-century India.

When the Gramophone Company tried to draw upon the repertoire of the exponents of classical music, it invariably faced serious difficulties. The musicians were reluctant to share their knowledge with others and make their treasures accessible to the public. They refused to record and, if they were at all persuaded to do so, would stipulate such high fees that recording them ceased to be commercially viable. The company, therefore, focussed attention on the more popular singers. It was easier to persuade them to record and their discs earned large profits. In the initial period, along with the imported records, the company recorded and issued for sale discs made by these popular singers. Amongst these are many who are still remembered, for their sweet voices and attractive style of presentation. The names of Jankibai, Malkajan, Gauharjan, Mushtaribai, Kamala Jharia, Angurbala, Indubala, Dulari, Joharajan and Mehboobjan linger in our memories even today.

The other types of musician-artistes, who were accessible and whose discs had good sales potential, were the *qawwali* and *ghazal* singers and the performers of *kirtanas* and devotional songs. The *naats* (Muslim religious songs) and *qawwalis* of outstandingly popular singers like Pearu Quwal, Kaloo Quwal, Bhai Chhela, Master Rohit, K. C. Dey, Ashraf Khan, Fakiruddin Quwal, Aga Faiz, Ali Hussain Pyara Sahib still evoke affectionate response from listeners.



Asha Bhosle and Mohammed Rafi recording a song from the film *Teesri Manzil*

For centuries the poet-saints of India propagated their teachings through devotional songs. Tulsidas and Surdas in the north, Kabir in the Punjab, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in Bengal, Narsi Bhagat in Gujarat, Meerabai in Rajasthan, Dnyaneshwara, Eknatha, Namdeva, Tukarama in Maharashtra wrote hundreds of devotional songs which have been preserved with reverence for centuries by devotees. These compositions provided

artistes with rich and varied poetic material which found an immediate echo in the hearts of audiences. The Gramophone Company took the decision to record a large number of such devotional compositions and amongst the artistes projected in this section were Juthika Ray, K. C. Dey, Dilip Kumar Roy, Master Vasant Amrut, Vishnupant Pagnis, Abhram Bhagat, Dula Bhagat, Phulaji Buwa, Bai Sunderabai. Excerpts from the Guru Granth Sahib and

*Shabad* written by Guru Nanak and Guru Govind were immensely popular with the Sikh community.

I have confined my remarks so far to the North Indian scene partly because I have worked in the North for many years and my concern has been mostly with the Hindustani tradition, and partly also because the Hindustani system covers a much wider area and population. But the impact of the gramophone in the South has been considerable from the very early days.

Lovers of Carnatic music speak nostalgically of the records of Coimbatore Thayi and Bangalore Nagarathnam, of the recordings of the incomparable Veena Dhanam and a 78-rpm disc of Shanmukhavadi (the mother of M. S. Subbulakshmi). Some of the great classical musicians of the early decades of this century—Veena Sheshanna, Bidaram Krishnappa, Ponnuswami Pillai and Ramaswami Pillai (nadaswaram *vidwans*)—have all left behind samples of their musicianship. The South, too, had its quota of stage stars—S. V. Subbia Bhagavathar, S. G. Kittappa, K. B. Sundarambal—all of whom recorded extensively. Of the classical renderings of the 1930s, a very popular pressing was the rendering of *Nagamomu* by Musiri Subramania Iyer. Many of his contemporaries—Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar, Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, Maharajapuram Santhanam, G. N. Balasubramaniam, Dwaram Venkataswamy Naidu (violin), Rajamanickam Pillai (violin), T. Chowdiah (violin), T.N. Rajarattinam Pillai (nadaswaram)—have all left the imprint of their art on discs, though few of them recorded extensively.

In more recent days, we have had LPs from such distinguished singers as D. K. Pattamal, M. L. Vasanthakumari; also from very distinguished instrumentalists like the great Palghat Mani Iyer (mridanga), K. S. Narayanaswami (veena), T. R. Mahalingam (flute), Ramani (flute), S. Balachander (veena), T. Viswanathan (flute), M. S. Gopalakrishnan (violin). This is by no means a complete list but will give an idea of the wide representation of Carnatic music on discs. Finally, there is M. S. Subbulakshmi who has cut more titles than any other exponent of the Carnatic tradition. There are the unique *suprabhatams*, a wide range of *varnams* and *kritis*, and a variety of *bhajans*.

Of the many playback singers of the screen, Yesudas is undoubtedly the biggest today. Narratives from the epics,

mythological and historical episodes were recorded by Goswami Narayan, Ramanand Sharma, Kathavachak and others and were in great demand. In Maharashtra, Shahirs P. D. Khadilkar, Nanivadekar, Piraji Sarnaik and others recorded *powadas* (ballads) capturing significant moments in the history of the Marathas. They adhered to a traditional style adopted 300 years ago to awaken the heroic sentiment of Maratha warriors and rouse them to fight the repressive rule of the Mughals.

The phonograph often proved to be a trendsetter in the field of music

*The introduction of playback singing around the year 1950 opened a new chapter in film music. The technique of lending voice to non-musical heroes and heroines offered opportunities to a large number of male and female artistes.*

and determined public taste in large measure. In Maharashtra, the immense popularity of stage music paved the way for interest in classical music. The great artistes of the period recorded by the Gramophone Company include masters like Rahimat Khan, Faiyaz Khan, Abdul Karim Khan, Inayat Khan, Nissar Hussain Khan, Allauddin Khan, Amir Khan, Bade Gulam Ali Khan, Ahmadjan Thirakwa, Ramkrishnabuwa Vaze, Narayanrao Vyas, Vinayakrao Patwardhan, Kesarbai Kerkar, the Dagar brothers, Mogubai Kurdikar, Omkarnath Thakur, Gangubai Hangal, Mallikarjun Mansur and Hirabai Barodekar. In recent years, this large repertoire has been further enriched by the LP recordings of outstanding artistes like Ravi Shankar, Ali Akbar Khan, Vilayat Khan, Bismillah Khan, Pannalal Ghosh, Bhimsen Joshi, Kishori Amonkar, Allarakha, D. V. Paluskar, Ram Narain, Kumar Gandharva, Pandit Jasraj and Jitendra Abhisheki.

Various companies have also recorded, with great advantage, many light classical, minor modes and folk songs from different regions of India. Akhtari Faizabadi, better

known in later times as Begum Akhtar, won unprecedented acclaim with her renderings of *ghazals* and *dadras* on Megaphone and later on the H.M.V. labels. Rasoolanbai, Siddheshwari Devi, Girija Devi and others became popular with their recordings of *thumris*, *tappas* and *dadras*. Jankibai, Gauharjan, Malkajan and others (who have been mentioned earlier) had also recorded *horis*, *chaitis*, *sawanis*, *dadras* and *ghazals*. Small companies in Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan even recorded songs containing the mutual abuses showered with gusto during weddings by the mothers of the bride and bridegroom. These *gali* songs delighted listeners in villages.

After 1930, the *bhavageets* in Maharashtra opened an era of 'lyrical' music. The writer of this article is given the credit for pioneering and popularising lyric-singing in Maharashtra. Compositions of eminent poets like B. R. Tambe, Madhav Julian, N. G. Deshpande, Anil, Yeshwant, Girish Borkar, Kusumagraj and others were recorded by him and others carried on the work. These records proved to be so popular that even stage music had to change its pattern on the lines of *bhavageets*. In recent times, poems of well-known poets like G. D. Madgulkar, Mangesh Padgaonkar and Shanta Shelke have been recorded by Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhosle, Manik Verma, Sudhir Phadke, Arun Date and other newcomers and these have all found favour with listeners.

### Film music

Between the years 1930 and 1940, there was much advance in the technique of film production. Once again, Bengal and Maharashtra led the way, producing pictures of high quality. New Theatres in Calcutta and Prabhat Film Company in Poona established a distinctive style in music through their films. The names of music composers Raichand Boral, Timir Baran, Anupam Ghatak of Bengal and Master Krishnarao, Keshavrao Bhole, Dada Chandekar, Sudhir Phadke of Maharashtra are associated with the chaste, classical-based music which they scored for many a successful film. The songs of actor-singers—like K. L. Saigal, Pahari Sanyal, K. C. Dey, Kanan Devi, Shanta Apte, Shanta Hublikar, Shahu Modak, Govindrao Tembe, Vishnupant Pagnis—left a lingering flavour, which still has its own appeal. It was V. Shantaram who in 1934 first introduced songs on discs from his film *Sairandhari*. These



newcomers Yesudas and Vani Jairam are now legendary figures and the number of their individual recordings has surpassed all expectations.

Lata Mangeshkar's achievement is indeed phenomenal. She holds a world record for the number of songs rendered for films. They are estimated to be more than 20,000. She has sung in almost all Indian languages and in addition to film songs, she has recorded devotional music and lyrics. Her voice is familiar in every corner of the country and popular in distant parts of the world.

records fascinated listeners and the Gramophone Company was besieged by demands for songs from other films. It had to go all out to secure contracts from film producers for exclusive rights to record the songs from their films.

In those days, transfer from a film track was unheard of. The actor-singers on the screen had to re-record the songs in H.M.V. Studios and the procedure continued for nearly 20 years. In the first few years of the talkies, producers paid more attention to the production of pictures in regional languages like Bengali, Marathi, Telugu and Malayalam, and Hindi films were made on an experimental basis. As the inter-provincial market for film expanded, film producers found it more profitable to make pictures in Hindi and ensure an all-India appeal. Bombay soon became known as the Hollywood of India and a crop of film companies appeared, the better known among them being Prabhat, Bombay Talkies, Filmistan, Prakash, Ranjit Studios, Sagar Films, Minerva Films, etc. This led to a sudden demand for new voices, for musicmakers and musicians. This was the time when Devika Rani, Ashok Kumar, Arun Kumar, Pradeep, Motilal Ishwarlal, Kantilal, the comedian Charlie, Leela Chitnis, Snehaprabha, Sitara Devi, Nasimbanu, Sheela, Savita Devi and Maya Banerji became popular on discs. At the same time, the period coincided with the discovery of the very fine musical talent of Noorjehan, Khursheed, Suraiya, Amirbai Karnataki, Wahidan Bai and other artistes. Ghulam Haider, Shyam Sunder,

*The phonograph often proved to be a trendsetter in the field of music and determined public taste in large measure. In Maharashtra, the immense popularity of stage music paved the way for interest in classical music.*

Rafiq Gaznavi, Naushad, Khemchand Prakash, C. Ramchandra and Anil Biswas composed and directed music for films which soon won immense acclaim for their fine musical scores. New styles appeared, leading to fast-changing trends in music composition and soon their market appeal brought about a fusion of varied modes which might perhaps be described as a kind of national integration.

The introduction of playback singing around the year 1950 opened a new chapter in film music. The technique of lending voice to non-musical heroes and heroines offered opportunities to a large number of male and female artistes possessing voices suitable for the mike. Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhosle, Suman Kalyanpur, Arati Mukerjee, P. Susheela, Mohammed Rafi, Manna Dey, Mukesh, Hemant Kumar, Kishore Kumar and Talat Mahmood and

The enthusiasm for rock, beat, pop music in the West also influenced the "composition" and presentation of film music in India. Large orchestral ensembles of Indian and Western musical instruments have become essential ingredients for the recording of a film song, resulting quite often in a crude fusion of the East and the West.

The demand for Indian discs in the international market has increased steadily. The India-made gramophone record finds its way to every corner of the world, the main markets being the UK, US, East European countries, Middle East, West Indies, East Africa, Malaysia, Singapore and Fiji. The orders from outside India for these records are so great that the Gramophone Company could register a phenomenal rise in its export trade.

For the broad mass of the Indian people, who are still burdened by poverty, the phonograph is still an item of luxury. Its educational potential has yet to be utilised. But its value as a mode of entertainment is generally recognised. After all, a phonograph brings to the owner music of his own choice and of the kind which is always at his command. It is undoubtedly true that the invention of Thomas Edison and Charles Cros has brought indescribable happiness to countless homes in this country. ■

*This article first appeared in its entirety in the NCPA Quarterly Journal in June 1985 (Volume 14, Issue 2).*



# SPRINGBOARD

## URBAN SOUL BLUES COLLECTIVE



**APR 20, 2024**

Zaaira Mulchandani, Lavanya Pudipeddi  
Zidaan Mulchandani, Isaiah Rodrigues  
Kylen Mendes, Isaac Rodrigues

## EXTENSIONS



**APR 21, 2024**

Mahir Muchhala, Arslan Parvez,  
Maahi Sharma, Khushi Prasad,  
Raunak Upadhyay, Tanish Ganatra

**TATA GARDEN, NCPA | 6:30 PM**

# Programme Guide

April 2024

(Programmes are subject to change. Please check the website and refer to our emails for updated information.)



## WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC



Masterworks of Chamber Music, 2nd,  
Jamshed Bhabha Theatre Stage

### Masterworks of Chamber Music

Marat Bisengaliev, violin

Ralph de Souza, violin/viola

Members of the Symphony Orchestra of India

Jamshed Bhabha Theatre Stage

Tuesday, 2nd – 7.00 pm

#### An NCPA Presentation

SOI Music Director **Marat Bisengaliev** and **Ralph de Souza**, former violinist of the Endellion String Quartet, together with members of the SOI perform an evening of chamber music. Haydn's Op. 76 quartets are considered to be among his most ambitious chamber works, with No. 1 nicknamed 'Jack-in-the-box' after the humorously surprising coda of its finale. Modelled on Debussy's quartet written 10 years earlier, Ravel's first and only quartet displays emotional reticence and technical mastery with innovation, in favour of a return to classic standards.

#### Programme:

Spohr: Duo for two violins, Op. 3 No. 1 (Excerpts)

Haydn: Quartet in G major, Op. 76 No. 1

Ravel: Quartet in F major

Tchaikovsky: String sextet in D minor,

Op. 70 "Souvenir de Florence"

#### Tickets:

₹900 & 450/- (Members)

₹1,000 & 500/- (Public)

(Inclusive of GST)

Box Office now open

## WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC

### Talks on Western Classical Music

Stuart-Liff Collection Library

Wednesday, 3rd – 4.00 pm

and

Little Theatre

Thursday, 4th – 6.00 pm

#### An NCPA Presentation

Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 4

In this series of talks on Western classical music, **Dr. Cavas Bilimoria** takes listeners through musical concepts, the lives of composers and their famous works, sprinkled with examples of recorded music. In the first set of talks this month, Dr. Bilimoria will discuss Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4. The composition synthesises the many expressive elements close to his heart—his love for Beethoven's work, folk music, the Russian countryside and the extremes of joy and angst that were fundamental to his expressive voice. The piece also bore a dedication "to my best friend," a reference to Nadezhda von Meck, a wealthy patron whom Tchaikovsky never met but had close correspondence with.

#### Entry free

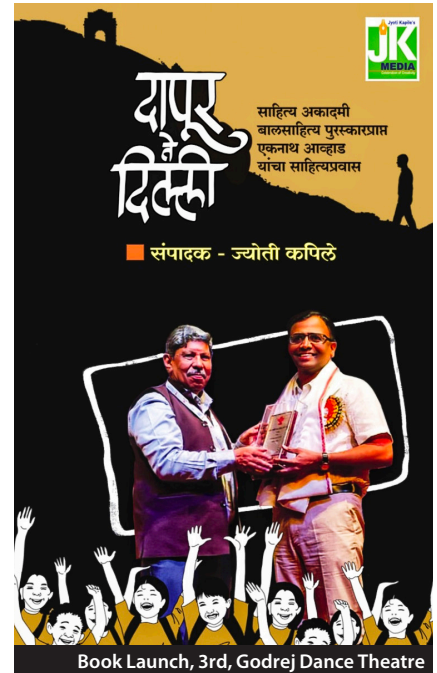
Admission on a first-come-first-served basis.

## MULTI ARTS & PRESENTATION

### Launch of Marathi book *Dapur to Delhi* and Poetry Reading of celebrated author **Eknath Avhad**

Godrej Dance Theatre

Wednesday, 3rd – 6.30 pm



#### An NCPA Library Presentation

Join us for the launch of author **Eknath Avhad's** newest work, *Dapur to Delhi*. Avhad, who was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Bal Sahitya Puraskar in 2023, has earned widespread acclaim for his contribution to Marathi poetry for children. He will be in conversation with **Siddharth Deshpande**, Chief Finance Officer of the NCPA. The event, which will include a poetry reading session featuring selections from Avhad's noted works, will be moderated by **Sujata Jadhav**, Head of Libraries and Documentation Centre (NCPA). Immerse yourself in the rich verses of Marathi poetry, where every word resonates with emotion and depth. Whether you're a seasoned aficionado or a newcomer to the world of poems for children in Marathi, this event promises to inspire and captivate your senses.

Entry free on a first-come-first-served basis.

## Become a Member

### Dear Supporter of the Arts,

Thank you for being a part of the NCPA community. Your presence in our theatres is a cherished one.

As part of our commitment to preserving India's rich artistic heritage and presenting innovative work in Indian Music, Dance, International and Western Classical Music, Theatre & Films, and Photography, it is our continual endeavour to give our audiences curated cultural experiences that stay with them.

From community outreach initiatives that take the joy of the performing arts to public spaces across the city to music and dance education programmes that shape the performers of tomorrow, from workshops, masterclasses and performance opportunities for young artistes to accessibility to the arts for children from less privileged sections of society—the NCPA's work goes beyond presenting performances.

Thematic festivals and residencies developed over the years, seminars, discourses and exhibitions unique to the NCPA and the love they receive from the audiences inspire us to create work of enduring value.

Since it was founded in 2006, the Symphony Orchestra of India, the country's first and only professional orchestra, has been a flag bearer for not only Western classical music in India but also one for India's musical heritage in the West. The SOI has performed with such renowned artistes as Zakir Hussain, Hariharan, Niladri Kumar, Rakesh Chaurasia and Shankar Mahadevan and collaborations such as these have played a role in familiarising audiences the world over with the dynamism and richness of Indian classical music just as they have fostered a growing audience for Western classical music in India.

When you pledge your support to the NCPA, it goes a long way in furthering the role of the arts in enriching society. As a member of the NCPA, you are part of not only a discerning audience, but also an enabler of education, access to the arts, and a cherished ally in nurturing young talent.

Join us in this fulfilling journey by becoming a Friend of the SOI or a Silver member of the NCPA. Be a part of a thriving community of art aficionados and avail of a range of special discounts and perks detailed in the panels on the back. In addition to priority booking windows, there are exclusive artiste interactions and specially curated member-only events to choose from throughout the year.

There is also much to look forward to with the upcoming re-launch of our food and beverage spaces. Members will have access to a variety of dining options, exclusive spaces and much more!

We look forward to having you join us in this enriching endeavour,

Please turn over for the Membership form.



# Membership Application Form

Please fill in the form below and submit it along with recent passport-sized photograph/s to the Membership Department. You can also apply for membership/become a Friend of the SOI online. Please log on to [www.ncpamumbai.com](http://www.ncpamumbai.com) for details.

I wish to become a: (Please tick one of the boxes below)

Silver member of the NCPA

Friend of the SOI

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Joint Member Name (in case of couple membership): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Pin Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Joint Member Email (in case of couple membership): \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Joint Member Date of Birth (in case of couple membership): \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_ Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Cheque No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Drawn On: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## NCPA Silver Membership (inclusive of GST):

Annual Membership	Rates ₹:
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	14,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Couple	24,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Family (A couple & two children aged 6-21)	35,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior Citizen (Individual)	8,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior Citizen (Couple)	12,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Artiste (Across all genres. Belonging to the artistic community with an affiliation to an artistic group. Discretion for recognition as an artiste rests with the NCPA)	8,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Defence Personnel	8,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Student (6-21 years)	8,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Differently Abled	1,500

## Special Membership Packages

	Rates ₹:
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Membership	On Request
<input type="checkbox"/> Group Membership	On Request

## Membership Benefits:

- ▶ Avail generous discounts on tickets for events and workshops
- ▶ Enjoy three-day priority booking facility
- ▶ Access privileged seating to more than 36 free events in a year across various genres.
- ▶ Receive a personal free copy of the NCPA's monthly arts magazine and programme guide, **ON Stage**, couriered to your doorstep
- ▶ Receive advance e-mail notification of events
- ▶ Get a personalised membership card and gain free access to the NCPA Books and Music library
- ▶ Enjoy exclusive discounts offered by our brand partners
- ▶ Exclusive invite to two members-only shows
- ▶ Exclusive invite to an annual members' night
- ▶ Avail 25% discount on two tickets during your birthday month
- ▶ Avail 5% discount on food and beverages served at the NCPA café & restaurant when launched

## Friend of the SOI (Membership Rates inclusive of GST):

Annual Membership	Rates ₹:
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	25,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Couple	45,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Family (A couple & two children aged 6-21)	60,000

## Friends of the SOI will also be deemed Silver members of the NCPA. In addition to the benefits mentioned on the left, they will enjoy:

- ▶ Acknowledgement in the SOI programme books and on the SOI website
- ▶ Two tickets to any two concerts of the SOI Chamber Orchestra in the year\*
- ▶ Priority booking advantage (6 days before public & 3 days before NCPA Silver Members)
- ▶ Invitation to one private reception every season
- ▶ Access to the NCPA Library and the Stuart Liff library
- ▶ Access to the Members' Bar at SOI season concerts
- ▶ Exclusive offers with our brand partners

Cheques for both NCPA and SOI should be drawn in favour of 'National Centre for the Performing Arts' and submitted along with a stamp sized photograph to:

The Membership Department, Tata Theatre, NCPA, NCPA Marg, Nariman Point, Mumbai 400 021.

**Email:** [membership@ncpamumbai.com](mailto:membership@ncpamumbai.com)  
**Tel.:** 66223719

GST of 18% (9% CGST & 9% SGST) is applicable on fees for all membership categories (for NCPA & SOI) from July 1, 2017.

\*For more information on these and other membership packages, please refer to the upcoming issues of **ON Stage** and log on to [www.ncpamumbai.com](http://www.ncpamumbai.com)

## FILM

### Short Film Corner

Short Film Screenings

Little Theatre

Wednesday, 3rd – 6.30 pm

An NCPA Presentation in collaboration with White Wall Screenings

There are so many wonderful short films being made in India, with auteurs at work in their own regions, and bold, new voices who are experimenting with form and technique. Short Film Corner hopes to connect movie lovers with these films and open a dialogue with filmmakers, who in turn, get a chance to connect with their audiences.

### Scenes from a Pandemic

Hindi Film (21 mins)



Scenes from a Pandemic, 3rd, Little Theatre

A young ambitious woman moves to Mumbai for her first job straight out of college. Three months after her move comes the onset of the pandemic and her life changes for ever. Spanning two years, *Scenes from a Pandemic* is the story of a young woman's relationships with her mother, her best friend and her career during a tumultuous phase of life.

Writer-Director: **Tanmaya Shekhar**

### Guddi Maasi

Hindi Film (10 mins)



Guddi Maasi, 3rd, Little Theatre

Guddi Maasi, a matchmaker from Varanasi, arranges child marriages with older men and is a part of shady money deals. Or is she?

Directed by **Janvi Madabusi**

### Nazariya

Hindi Film (17 mins)



Nazariya, 3rd, Little Theatre

*Nazariya* provides a slice of life in the story of a newly-wed couple on their honeymoon. The expectations they have from each other are never expressed and never understood. These small misunderstandings can create a distance not seen but felt deep inside.

Directed by **Rashmi Somvanshi**

**Admission on a first-come-first-served basis. NCPA Members will get preferential seating till 6.20 pm.**

## DANCE

### NCPA Mudra Dance Festival 2024

*Mudra* is an annual thematic dance festival presented by the NCPA around International Dance Day. The festival features performances centered around specific themes, making it a unique and culturally rich event. Exploring a key element of Indian classical dance, 'Aharya', this year, we will celebrate the uniqueness of jewellery, textile and make-up used in classical dance styles across India. The festival will see a mélange of performances, workshops and exhibitions depicting stories from Indian mythologies and folktales across cultures focusing on *aharya*.

### PERFORMANCES

#### Manipuri

by **Latasana Devi and Bharatanatyam**  
by **Prachi Saathi**

### Experimental Theatre

Thursday, 4th – 6.30 pm

**Latasana Devi** is a performer, teacher, choreographer and founder of Kaina Foundation, a non-profit organisation. She is a disciple of Bipin Singh, Darshana Jhaveri, Kalavati Devi and Guneswari Devi. She stood first in the Sangeet Nritya Pratiyogita organised by the Government of West Bengal and has received a scholarship from the Manipur State Kala Academy, Imphal and a Junior Fellowship from the Ministry of Culture, New Delhi. She is a 'Top' grade artiste in Doordarshan and an empanelled artiste of the ICCR.

In this presentation, the audience will be treated to a variety of colourful and attractive Manipuri dance costumes including the richly bedecked 'polloi' (also part of the Meitei bridal attire) along with intricate jewellery and headgear. The performance, featuring artistes from Manipur, will have Manipuri classical and folk dances and traditional martial arts, *pung cholom* and *dhol cholom*.

**Prachi Saathi** has been an accomplished Bharatanatyam dancer for over two decades. After her initial training with Vaibhav Arekar, Saathi received further guidance under Lata Raman. Presently, she is under the able tutelage of Rama Vaidyanathan. She has completed her Master's in Bharatanatyam. She is an 'A' grade Doordarshan artiste and is also empanelled with the ICCR.

Saathi is set to showcase *When Walks Dance*, a distinctive performance that seamlessly merges two ancient art



Prachi Saathi, 4th, Experimental Theatre

forms: the traditional Indian dance, Bharatanatyam, and the art of the indigenous Warli tribe. This innovative presentation incorporates cutting-edge technology and multimedia elements, such as motion design and projection. The overarching aim of the project is to embrace a 'more-than-human' perspective on life, drawing inspiration from the inherent connection to nature prevalent in tribal and pre-modern lifestyles.

**Tickets:**

₹270 & 180/- (Members)

₹300 & 200/- (Public)

## Marga Nritya

by Piyal Bhattacharya and  
Group Bharatanatyam

by Sridevi Nrithyalaya

Experimental Theatre

Saturday, 27th – 5.00 pm

A scholar of the *Natyashastra*, **Piyal Bhattacharya** has been working on the practical reconstruction of Bharata's text. The main aim of this research is to dig up the long-lost performance tradition described in the *Natyashastra* in totality. He has studied the Saraswati veena, pakhawaj, pung achoba, miravu, and dhruwad and rudra veena of the Dagar *gharana* under Asit Banerjee. As part of his research to trace the migration of the ancient Indian harp system to Myanmar, he even travelled to the country to learn the traditional Burmese harp.

**Sridevi Nrithyalaya**, an institution that specialises in the Melattur style of Bharatanatyam, was founded in 1987 by Sheela Unnikrishnan. Sridevi Nrithyalaya has produced many successful solo dance artistes and promising dance teachers, along with more than 450 solo choreographies, 43 thematic presentations and 19 mega dance-dramas. The institution has been invited to perform at many prestigious dance shows and festivals around the world, including the London Olympics where five of Nrithyalaya's artistes participated, alongside other Indian artistes.

**Tickets:**

₹360 & 270/- (Members)

₹400 & 300/- (Public)

## Kathak

by Aditi Mangaldas and  
Odissi

by Sujata Mohapatra

Tata Theatre

Sunday, 28th – 5.00 pm

**Aditi Mangaldas** is a leading dancer and choreographer in the classical Indian dance form of Kathak. With extensive training under renowned gurus of the form, Kumudini Lakhia and Birju Maharaj, Mangaldas is recognised for her artistry, technique, eloquence and characteristic energy that mark every performance. She heads the Aditi Mangaldas Dance Company – The Drishtikon Dance Foundation.

Noted for her innovative use of costume and lighting, Mangaldas elevates her performances to a realm beyond conventional boundaries. With a dynamic choreographic style, she pioneers new-age Kathak, pushing the boundaries of traditional dance forms. Her meticulous attention to *aharya* (costume and adornment) plays a pivotal role in the visual spectacle of her presentations, adding a layer of aesthetic richness to her already mesmerising performances. Mangaldas seamlessly intertwines tradition with modernity in a way that is both groundbreaking and deeply evocative.

**Sujata Mohapatra** is considered a benchmark of excellence in Odissi today. Her performances have catapulted the art form to the global stage. Mohapatra spent 20 years under the tutelage of Kelucharan Mohapatra. In recognition of her perseverance, vast body of work and the profound impact



Sujata Mohapatra, 28th, Tata Theatre

she has had on the Indian dance community, the Indian Government has conferred on her the Sangeet Natak Akademi Puraskar.

Mohapatra's choreography pays homage to the authentic roots of Odissi. With each step and gesture, she unravels a cultural tapestry showcasing artistic finesse that has been carefully preserved and nurtured over time. Amidst the graceful cadence of her dance, Mohapatra generously shares poignant anecdotes from her personal journey, providing the audience with a glimpse into the traditions, challenges and triumphs of taking forward Guruji's legacy.

**Tickets:**

₹630, 450 & 270/- (Members)

₹700, 500 & 300/- (Public)

(Inclusive of GST)

Box Office for the Festival now open

## WORKSHOPS, EXHIBITION & TALKS

### Talk on 'Aharya'

by Dr. Malati Agneswaran

Dilip Piramal Art Gallery

Thursday, 25th – 3.00 pm to 4.00 pm

**Dr. Malati Agneswaran** is a writer, research scholar, teacher, dancer and choreographer. She has been associated with the Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya (University of Mumbai) for over 30 years. She is a recipient of a senior fellowship for dance from Sangeet Natak Akademi and is an 'A' grade artiste in Mohiniattam.

Entry free on a first-come-first-served basis.

### Workshop & Exhibition on 'To stitch or knot – a dialogue between fabric and form'

by Sandhya Raman

Dilip Piramal Art Gallery

Thursday, 25th to Sunday, 28th – 11.00 am to 4.00 pm

**Sandhya Raman**, an alumna of the National Institute of Design (NID) in Ahmedabad with a Master's in Apparel and Textile Design, has had a versatile career spanning 25 years. She is the co-founder of Desmania, a leading design



Sandhya Raman, 25th to 28th,  
Dilip Piramal Art Gallery

consultancy firm. She also serves as a strategic design consultant for Arunachal Pradesh State Weavers Coop. Federation (AWFED). She is actively involved in training, developing, designing and upgrading the skills of artisans, thus enabling them to have a wider reach across urban markets. Over the years, her work with costuming for classical dancers, understanding dance forms and resolving ergonomic issues related to dance costumes has created a new language in the field. She has worked closely with several dance companies such as Battery Dance (New York), Natya Dance Theatre (Chicago), Bharatkala Natya Academy (Atlanta) and Sampradaya Dance Creations (Canada), amongst many others. The Government of India has conferred on Raman the Stree Shakti Puraskar for her contribution to empowering women, craftsmen and artisans.

Raman's exhibition will showcase her extensive research in the field of Indian textiles and weaves used in classical Indian dances. On the last day of the exhibition, there will be a workshop on costume design. It will delve into the various motifs and patterns used in jewellery and textiles that have been adapted over the ages and influenced the world of art. Participants will learn how to use patterns and drapes to create distinct costumes, stylish ways of draping a saree along with some design and styling tips.

**Registration fees: ₹1,770/- (inclusive of GST)**

## Workshop on 'Insights of Natyashastra'

by Piyal Bhattacharya

Dilip Piramal Art Gallery

Friday, 26th – 2.00 pm to 5.00 pm &  
Saturday, 27th – 10.00 am to 1.00 pm

In this workshop, **Piyal Bhattacharya** will share deep insights into the long-lost performance tradition of Bharata's *Natyashastra*. Participants will learn more about the practical reconstruction of dance and music tradition of that period with an emphasis on *aharya*.

**Registration fees: ₹1,770/- (inclusive of GST)**

## Talk on 'Evolution of Aharya in the context of Indian culture and dance'

by Dr. Radha Kumar

Dilip Piramal Art Gallery

Saturday, 27th – 3.00 pm to 4.00 pm

**Dr. Radha Kumar** is an expert in the field of Indian culture. She is an Associate Professor with St. Xavier's College, Mumbai, working with the Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology. She also has a Sangit Alankar in Sitar and Bharatanatyam. Apart from choreographing, staging and performing various dance ballets on historical themes, Dr. Kumar is a consistent researcher who has presented and published papers in various research journals and conferences in India and abroad.

**Entry free on a first-come-first-served basis.**

## Workshop on 'Dance Make-up'

by Sujata Mohapatra

Dilip Piramal Art Gallery

Monday, 29th – 1.00 pm to 3.00 pm

## Workshop on 'Re-imagining Dance Costumes'

by Aditi Mangaldas

Dilip Piramal Art Gallery

Monday, 29th – 3.00 pm to 5.00 pm

An Odissi dancer par excellence,

**Sujata Mohapatra** has a compelling stage presence, having mastered the technique and subtle proportions of the Odissi form. Participants in this workshop will be enriched by Mohapatra's vast repertoire of Odissi. She will delve into one of the key aspects of *aharya*—the art of make-up in dance and bringing to life various characters onstage.

Renowned choreographer, performer and artiste **Aditi Mangaldas** is known as much for her mesmerising recitals as for her innovation and introduction of newer perspectives into the vocabulary of the traditional Kathak repertoire. In this workshop, Mangaldas will explore the most integral aspect of *aharya*—costumes—and how one can experiment with it to enhance choreography and storytelling whilst maintaining tradition.

**Registration fees includes both workshops: ₹1,500/- (inclusive of GST)**

**For further details on the workshops, please call: 8879114939 / 8879313834 or email: [mdsouza@ncpamumbai.com](mailto:mdsouza@ncpamumbai.com), [ashetty@ncpamumbai.com](mailto:ashetty@ncpamumbai.com)**

## INTERNATIONAL MUSIC

### The Jazz Masters

Listening Sessions

conducted by Sunil Sampat

The Lure of the Trumpet in Jazz

Little Theatre

Friday, 5th – 5.30 pm

### An NCPA Presentation

There is no shortage of intrigue and adventure in the history of the trumpet in jazz. One trumpet legend actually ran for US President, another claims to have "changed jazz about six times" and yet another has been a pioneer of the jazz sound. Jazz trumpet players also fancy themselves as vocalists.

**Sunil Sampat** will unravel these and other marvellous tales on this subject along with rare video footage from this aspect of jazz: the jazz trumpet.

**Admission on a first-come-first-served basis.**

**NCPA Members will get preferential seating till 5.20 pm**

## INDIAN MUSIC

### Saz-e-Bahar

Festival of Indian Instrumental Music

Godrej Dance Theatre

Friday, 5th & Saturday, 6th – 6.30 pm

An NCPA Presentation

Supported by EdelGive Foundation

The Indian subcontinent abounds in a variety of musical instruments, and a considerable specialisation is displayed in instrumental usage. Instruments present music solo, provide melodic or rhythmic accompaniment, or produce drones.

The 11th edition of this two-day festival will showcase four instrumentalists wielding instruments of different categories—drums-percussion (tabla), string-bowed (violin), air-blown (nadaswaram) and string-plucked (slide guitar).

**On each day at 6.00 pm, Dr. Suvarnalata Rao will present a pre-event talk on specific instruments presented on the respective days.**

**5th April**

**Dr. Aneesh Pradhan (tabla)**

**Milind Raikar (violin)**



Aneesh Pradhan, 5th, Godrej Dance Theatre

Acclaimed as a soloist and an accompanist for vocal music, instrumental music and dance, **Aneesh Pradhan** is a disciple of the illustrious tabla maestro Nikhil Ghosh from whom he inherited a rich repertoire of traditional solo compositions. A recipient of several prestigious awards, he performs, teaches and has recorded numerous times for domestic and international record labels. He also composes music for film, theatre and



Milind Raikar, 5th, Godrej Dance Theatre

dance projects. He holds a doctoral degree in history and his study and research in the areas of history, music education, performance and patronage has led to several significant international publications including books.

**Milind Raikar** was introduced to music by his father, Atchut Raikar, and later on, mentored by violin maestro D. K. Datar. He also had the privilege of learning from the legendary vocalist Kishori Amonkar, whom he provided violin accompaniment during her concerts. Despite being proficient in Western music, he committed himself to Indian music, performing widely in India and in prestigious venues across the world. A recipient of several accolades, Raikar carries forth the tradition by training students at his academy in *gayaki ang* (vocalism) on violin.

**6th April**

**Mambalam S. Sivakumar (nadaswaram)**

**Manish Pingle (slide guitar)**

Having been trained by his father, M. L. Srinivasan, **Mambalam S. Sivakumar** had a debut on the concert platform



Mambalam S. Sivakumar, 6th, Godrej Dance Theatre



Manish Pingle, 6th, Godrej Dance Theatre

at the tender age of 10. He also trained with the renowned nadaswaram maestro, Mylai S. Rajendran and went on to perform in several prominent music festivals. Sivakumar has had an opportunity to work under the baton of many distinguished music directors and earn prestigious awards and accolades for his service to music.

In this recital, **U. M. Ganapathy** (thavil) and **D. Prathap** (nadaswaram support) will accompany Sivakumar.

**Manish Pingle** received initial training in Indian slide guitar under Vishnu Walivadekar, and thereafter he sought advanced training with sitar maestro Shahid Parvez. Besides performing in major festivals across India and overseas, he has had the privilege of collaborating in several fusion projects with international artistes like American saxophonist George Brooks, English singer, songwriter and slide guitarist Michael Messer, French composer Hector Zazou and African Kora player Lamine Cissokho. A qualified sound engineer, Pingle is a recipient of many prestigious awards.

**Daily Tickets:**

₹270/- (Members)

₹300/- (Public)

**Box Office now open**

## WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC

### Danish Chamber Players

Jamshed Bhabha Theatre Stage

Sunday, 7th – 5.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation

One of the five national Danish ensembles, The Danish Chamber Players are cultural ambassadors not only for Danish chamber music but the promotion of classical music through first-class concerts and





Danish Chamber Players, 7th, Jamshed Bhabha Theatre Stage

extensive music pedagogical work. An extensive international schedule of over 100 concerts and events every year helps convey the music to a diverse audience, besides having over 110 new works commissioned from prominent composers. On their Mumbai tour, they will present new and intimate chamber music versions from French Impressionism by Debussy and Ravel; the Viennese School in the 19th century by Schubert, arranged by their pianist Jakob Westh; and beautiful music from the Nordic region by Grieg.

### Programme

Debussy: Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun  
 Mozart: Flute and Harp Concerto in C major, K.299  
 Grieg: Selections from Lyric Pieces  
 Piazzolla: Buenos Aires Spring, Buenos Aires Summer  
 Beethoven: Prometheus Overture  
 Schubert: Fantasy in F minor, D.940  
 Brahms: Hungarian Dances No.15 & 16

### Tickets:

₹900 & 450/- (Members)  
 ₹1,000 & 500/- (Public)  
 (Inclusive of GST)  
 Box Office now open

## THEATRE

### All Stars Comedy

Stand-up Comedy (90 mins)

English/Hindi

Godrej Dance Theatre

Sunday, 7th – 5.00 pm & 7.30 pm

### An NCPA Off-Stage Presentation in collaboration with The Habitat

A star-studded comedy line-up from The Habitat's daily All Star Stand-up



Shashwat Maheshwari, 7th, Godrej Dance Theatre

Comedy show now at an auditorium near you. Here is the perfect opportunity to experience laughter like never before.

Performed by **Sumukhi Suresh, Shreeja Chaturvedi, Mohammed Hussain, Shashwat Maheshwari, Sumit Sourav & Siddharth Dudeja**

**Suggested age: 18+**

### Tickets:

₹450/- (Members)  
 ₹500/- (Public)  
 Box Office now open

## THEATRE



Purane Chawal, 7th, Tata Theatre

### Purane Chawal

Hindi Play (100 mins)

Tata Theatre

Sunday, 7th – 7.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation in collaboration with D For Drama production

Set in contemporary Mumbai, this Hindi adaptation of Neil Simon's *The Sunshine Boys* delves into the world of two retired comedy geniuses who are brought together after 12 years to reprise their iconic comedy act for the biggest festival of comedy in the country. The only problem is they can't

stand each other. Will they be able to put aside their differences and create the same magic they once did?

Adaptation of *The Sunshine Boys* by Neil Simon

Directed by **Sumeet Vyas**

Adapted by **Farrukh Seyer** and **Avinash Gautam**

Cast: **Kumud Mishra, Shubhrajyoti Barat, Ghanshyam Lalsa/Ishar Sunya, Ayesha Raza, Kirti V.A., Divyendu Saurav & Prashant Pandey**

Sets: **Vivek Jadhav**

Lights: **Vikrant Thakar**

Sound: **Divyendu Saurav**

### Tickets:

₹1,620, 1,350, 1,080, 900, 450 & 270/- (Members)  
 ₹1,800, 1,500, 1,200, 1,000, 500 & 300/- (Public)  
 (Plus GST)  
 Box Office now open

## SCREENING



*The Motive and the Cue*, 10th, Godrej Dance Theatre

### The Motive and the Cue

A new play by Jack Thorne

Theatre Screening

Godrej Dance Theatre

Wednesday, 10th – 6.00 pm

An NCPA-National Theatre Live (London) Presentation

**Sam Mendes** (*The Lehman Trilogy*) directs **Mark Gatiss** as John Gielgud and **Johnny Flynn** as Richard Burton in this fierce and funny new play.

1964: Richard Burton, newly married to Elizabeth Taylor, is to play the title role in an experimental new Broadway production of *Hamlet* under John Gielgud's exacting direction. But as rehearsals progress, two ages of theatre collide and the collaboration between

actor and director soon threatens to unravel.

Written by **Jack Thorne** (*Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*) and designed by **Es Devlin** (*The Crucible*), the Evening Standard award-winning best new play was filmed live during a sold-out run at the National Theatre.

**Tickets:**

₹450/- (Members)

₹500/- (Public)

Box Office now open

**FILM**

**Reality Check**

Documentary Film Screening

Little Theatre

Thursday, 11th – 6.30 pm

An NCPA Presentation in collaboration with Cinema Collective

The Reality Check film series promotes and encourages documentary filmmakers in India, whose work reflects life and culture in the country today in a provocative blend of creativity and integrity.

**Ayena – Mirror**

Hindi/Urdu Film with English Subtitles (70 mins)



*Ayena*, 11th, Little Theatre

A momentary act of revenge transformed the lives of two young Indian women forever. After surviving an acid attack and having to carry the scars of human brutality on their faces, both Ritu and Faraha have to navigate a sea of odd currents daily.

Strangely enough, Ritu's scars bring her fame. She occasionally finds herself talking on television, on the runway at fashion events and even in a Bollywood film. Still, she often feels lonely. She wants to be loved and embraces an

ambiguous relationship with a fellow female acid attack survivor. Faraha, on the other hand, has come to terms with her post-attack singlehood and her new lease of life. As she begins to enjoy freedom and independence, a desire to become a mother slowly brews inside her.

By intertwining the shadows and lights, hope and hopelessness in Ritu and Faraha's lives, *Ayena* becomes a mirror in which we can also see our own reflections.

Producer & Director: **Siddhant Sarin** (The Films)

Co-Director: **Debankon Solanky**

Co-Producers: **Arunas Matelis & Alгимante** (Studio Nominum), **Sarah Kang** (Seesaw Pictures)

Editor: **Nilanjan Bhattacharya**

Music Composer: **Gintaras Sodeika**

The film screening will be followed by a discussion.

Admission on a first-come-first-served basis. NCPA Members will get preferential seating till 6.20 pm.

**INDIAN MUSIC**

**NCPA Citi Promising Artistes Series**

**Rohit Khavale (pakhawaj)**

**Kasturi Deshpande Manjrekar (khyal)**

(Approx. 90 mins)

Experimental Theatre

Friday, 12th – 6.30 pm

Supported by Citi

Currently being trained by Suresh Talwalkar under the 'NCPA Citi Support to Gurus' initiative, **Rohit Khavale** received initial training in pakhawaj from Maheshwar Bhagure at Shri Sant Eka Janardhani Gurukul. He has been a recipient of Mitra Foundation Scholarship and Art Hub Scholarship. Khavale has performed solo across the country and has accompanied Kathak dancers in their performances. He has also accompanied his gurus in solo performances and in 'Taal Yatra', an Indian classical ensemble led by Talwalkar.

**Kasturi Deshpande Manjrekar** presents a style of *gayaki* that is a



**Rohit Khavale**, 12th, Experimental Theatre



**Kasturi Deshpande Manjrekar**, 12th, Experimental Theatre

unique blend of Jaipur, Agra and Gwalior *gharanas*. Currently training with Arun Kashalkar, Manjrekar has been a recipient of the Citi NCPA Scholarship for Young Musicians in 2021-23. She has also won National Scholarship for Young Artists and Bharat Ratna Pt. Bhimsen Joshi Scholarship. She has won several awards at music competitions and delivered performances around the country. Manjrekar has been awarded a gold medal while pursuing her master's in music at the University of Mumbai and is currently pursuing her doctorate.

Entry free on a first-come-first-served basis.

Register now on

[www.bookmyshow.com](http://www.bookmyshow.com)

**INTERNATIONAL MUSIC**

**Movies Under the Stars**

Make Way for Tomorrow (1937)

Film Screening

(B&W- 92 mins)



Make Way for Tomorrow, 12th, Little Theatre

### Little Theatre

Friday, 12th – 6.30 pm

### An NCPA & Film Heritage Foundation Presentation

*Make Way for Tomorrow*, by **Leo McCarey**, is one of the great unsung Hollywood masterpieces, an enormously moving Depression-era depiction of the frustrations of family, aging and the generation gap. **Beulah Bondi** and **Victor Moore** headline a cast of incomparable character actors, starring as an elderly couple who must move in with their grown children after the bank takes their home, yet end up separated and subject to their offspring's selfish whims. An inspiration for Yasujiro Ozu's *Tokyo Story*, this is among American cinema's purest tearjerkers, all the way to its unflinching ending, which McCarey refused to change despite studio pressure.

Director: **Leo McCarey**

Screenplay: **Viña Delmar**

Based on a novel by

**Josephine Lawrence**

And a play by **Helen** and **Nolan Leary**

Cinematography: **William C. Mellor**

Cast: **Victor Moore, Beulah Bondi, Fay Bainter, Thomas Mitchell, Porter Hall & Barbara Read**

Admission on a first-come-first-served basis. NCPA Members will get preferential seating till 6.20 pm

### WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC

### SOI Chamber Orchestra Danish Chamber Players

Maria Badstue, conductor

Indira Mahajan, soprano

Tata Theatre

Friday, 12th – 7.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation



Maria Badstue, 12th, Tata Theatre

**Maria Badstue** returns to conduct the SOI Chamber Orchestra. She has been praised as “one of the best young Danish conductors of today” by Berlingske Media. She is a recipient of the prestigious 2019-2021 Taki Alsop Conducting Fellowship, and in the 2022-23 season, she made her debut in Italy, France and the United States.

Marian Anderson Award-winning soprano **Indira Mahajan** is praised for her “strongly centered, richly textured soprano” by *New York* magazine and her “poignant soprano” for her moving portrayals by *The New York Times*.

### Programme:

Copland: Appalachian Spring

Barber: Knoxville Summer of 1915

Mahler: Adagietto from Symphony No. 5

Beethoven: Symphony No. 4

### Tickets:

₹1,080, 720 & 450/- (Members)

₹1,200, 800 & 500/- (Public)

(Inclusive of GST)

Box Office now open

### SCREENING

### Nabucco

by Giuseppe Verdi

Opera Screening

(Approx. 175 mins)

Godrej Dance Theatre

Saturday, 13th – 4.00 pm

### An NCPA-The Metropolitan Opera (New York) Presentation

The success of **Giuseppe Verdi**'s third opera, a stirring drama about the fall of ancient Jerusalem at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar “Nabucco”, catapulted the 28-year-old composer to international fame. The music, and Verdi himself, were subsumed into a surge of patriotic fervour culminating in the foundation of the modern nation of Italy. Specifically, the ‘Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves’ also called ‘Va, pensiero’, in which Israelites express longing for their homeland, came to stand for the country's aspirations for unity and that exciting era in Italian history, the *risorgimento* or resurgence. In a remarkable career spanning six decades in the theatre, Verdi composed 26 operas, at least half of which are at the core of today's repertoire. His role in Italy's cultural and political development has made him an icon in his native country. **Temistocle Solera**'s libretto takes some liberties with biblical history while the characters, other than the title role, are dramatic inventions, but the story stays close to events as they are related in Jewish



Nabucco, 13th, Godrej Dance Theatre

scriptures: primarily Jeremiah, as well as two Kings, two Chronicles, Daniel and the Psalms. The first part takes place around the destruction of the first temple in Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E., with the remainder of the opera set in various locations in the city of Babylon. *Nabucco's* score, with its contrasts of the dynamic and the serene, provides an ideal frame for the personal and communal aspects of the drama. The chorus is assigned a major role, giving voice to a wide spectrum of feelings, from terror at the beginning to despair, faith and finally bright hope. Rather than depicting a character that goes mad, as in so many other operas, Abigaille's aria reflects a personality that embodies madness through sheer malice. The opera contains a brief scene of madness for the title character, but Verdi gives more emphasis to Nabucco's return to sanity in his poignant Act IV aria 'Dio di Giuda'. A supreme example of operatic prayer, of course, is found in 'Va, pensiero'. The simplicity of the choral melody and the unity of the vocal line perfectly encapsulate the communal sentiment.

Conductor: **Daniele Callegari**

Cast: **Liudmyla Monastyrska, Maria Barakova, SeokJong Baek, George Gagnidze & Dmitry Belosselskiy**

**Tickets:**

₹450/- (Members)

₹500/- (Public)

Box Office now open

## INDIAN MUSIC

### Rangi Sari Gulabi: A Tribute to Shobha Gurtu

by **Rajashree Kelkar Pathak**  
Experimental Theatre  
Saturday, 13th – 6.30 pm

An NCPA Presentation

**Shobha Gurtu** (1925-2004) was known for her inimitable mastery of semi-classical forms. This recital is being presented during her birth centenary year as a tribute to her musical eminence.

**Rajashree Kelkar Pathak** has had the privilege of training under Sarala Bhide, a senior disciple of Shobha Gurtu, and later on, from the virtuoso herself for a number of years. Pathak



Rajashree Kelkar Pathak, 13th, Experimental Theatre

is a recipient of several awards and accolades including an award from the All India Radio for *thumri* and *ghazal* and a gold medal at the Bombay University light music competition. Having equal command over *khayal* as well as *thumri*, *dadra*, etc., she is an 'A' grade artiste of AIR and Doordarshan. Besides her performances at numerous prestigious venues, she has also sung for films.

The song selection will include masterpieces of Shobha Gurtu in forms like *thumri*, *dadra*, *kajri*, *hori* and such others, highlighting the uniqueness of the celebrated master-musician.

**Tickets:**

₹270 & 180/- (Members)

₹300 & 200/- (Public)

Box Office now open

## THEATRE

### The Siddhus of Upper Juhu

English Play (90 mins)

Tata Theatre

Saturday, 13th – 7.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation in collaboration with Rage Productions

Balvinder Siddhu, also known as Bubbles, a 50-year-old, well-paid financial executive, and his loyal Parsi wife, Behroze, live on the 14th floor of a typical modern Upper Juhu high-rise called Sea View Towers. Despite having



The Siddhus of Upper Juhu, 13th, Tata Theatre

poured their life savings into this 2.5 BHK flat in Mumbai, everything civil and civic seems to go wrong.

Directed by **Rahul da Cunha**

Cast: **Rajit Kapur, Shernaz Patel, Meera Khurana, Kajli Sharma & Shishir Sharma**

**Tickets:**

₹2,250, 1,800, 1,350, 1,080, 900, 720 & 450/- (Members)

₹2,500, 2,000, 1,500, 1,200, 1,000, 800 & 500/- (Public)

(Plus GST)

Box Office now open

## THEATRE

### Qisse aur Kavitaayein

Hindi (90 minutes)

Tata Garden

Saturday, 13th – 7.00 pm

An NCPA Off-Stage Presentation

We bring to you a unique amalgamation of poetry infused with music. Stories about life, love and laughter are sure to move you and bring you an experience to remember amidst nature at the beautiful Tata Garden at the NCPA. Boasting a line-up that includes the country's most popular poets and storytellers—such as **Helly Shah, Mehak Mirza Prabhu, Rakesh Tiwari, Ishpreet Balbir** and a new voice on the circuit, **Aanchal Anita Dhara**—the evening will present an eclectic mix of your all-time favourites and fresh voices.



Mehak Mirza Prabhu, 13th, Tata Garden

concert that will showcase their accomplishments over the past year. The concert will feature soloists of the academy with the SOI Chamber Orchestra, SOI Music Academy Chorus and percussion ensemble.

Admission passes will be available at the Box Office from 26th March for Members & 29th March for Public.

### INTERNATIONAL MUSIC



Rakesh Tiwari, 13th, Tata Garden

Curated by Priya Malik

Suggested age: 15+

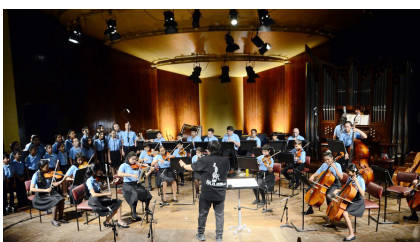
Tickets:

₹449/- (Members)

₹499/- (Public)

Box Office now open

### WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC



SOI Music Academy, 14th, Jamshed Bhabha Theatre

## SOI Music Academy

Marat Bisengaliev, conductor

Jamshed Bhabha Theatre

Sunday, 14th – 5.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation

Supported by EdelGive Foundation

Under the direction of SOI Music Director **Marat Bisengaliev**, the students of the SOI Music Academy come together for their annual



Shreya Bhattacharya, 14th, Experimental Theatre

## Jazz Odyssey: Classic to Modern Brilliance

Experimental Theatre

Sunday, 14th – 6.30 pm

An NCPA Presentation

Shreya Bhattacharya, vocals

Clement Rooney, piano

Amandeep Singh, guitar

Emmanuel Simon, percussion

Jarryd Rodrigues, saxophone

Arjun Chakraborty, drums

Avishek Dey, upright bass

Witness a seamless blend of classic and modern jazz, immerse yourself in the extraordinary as you are guided through the evolution of jazz from timeless classics to modern brilliance. Mark your calendars for a night of musical exploration at the NCPA Jazz Odyssey, where each note resonates with the spirit of innovation, promising an unforgettable experience through the realms of jazz sophistication.

Tickets:

₹675 & 450/- (Members)

₹750 & 500/- (Public)

(Plus GST)

Box Office now open

### INTERNATIONAL MUSIC

## April Blossoms - 2

Piano Recital by Students of

Blossom Mendonca

(approx. 120 mins)

Little Theatre

Sunday, 14th – 6.30 pm

A second-generation piano teacher and the founding director of Living Voices - Mumbai, **Blossom Mendonca** has been teaching the piano for over 40 years. With a musical teaching lineage that includes Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Liszt and more directly, Blanche Viegas, Olga Craen, Tehmie Gazdar and Mario Monreal, she feels compelled to spread the joy that music has given her. She has had several students who have been recipients of local, national and international awards at the ABRSM and Trinity College London examinations, and winners of several local, national and international competitions. The recital will present performances by some of her students.

Admission on a first-come-first-served basis.

### THEATRE

## Chanakya

Hindi Play (150 mins)

Tata Theatre

Sunday, 14th – 7.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation in collaboration with Dharmajam Production

Chanakya was a great statesman, a visionary and arguably one of the



Chanakya, 14th, Tata Theatre

earliest patriots of the country, who single-handedly carved India (as we know it today) out of the chaos of infighting and exploitation by the regional kings of the time. A love for one's society and nation is one of the greatest virtues. Patriotism binds an individual to his society and inspires the strong to work towards the betterment of the weak. *Chanakya* brings the man who advocated these sayings to life once again, but in a modern context.

Written by **Mihir Bhuta**

Directed by **Manoj Joshi**

Cast: **Manoj Joshi, Sanjay Bhatia, Bhuvanesh Shetty, Kavita Rathod Rana** & others

**Tickets:**

₹1,800, 1,350, 1,080, 900, 720 & 450/- (Members)

₹2,000, 1,500, 1,200, 1,000, 800 & 500/- (Public)

(Plus GST)

Box Office now open

## WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC

### Talks on Western Classical Music

Stuart-Liff Collection Library

Tuesday, 16th – 4.00 pm

and

Little Theatre

Thursday, 18th – 6.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation

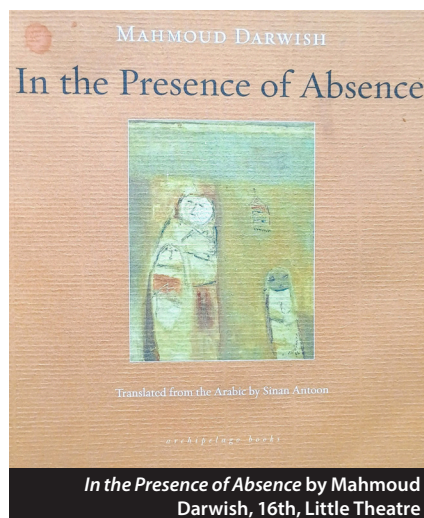
Debussy: *La Mer*

In the second set of talks in April, **Dr. Cavas Bilimoria** dives into Claude Debussy's emblematic *La Mer*. French for 'The Sea', it comprises 'Three Symphonic Sketches' for its three movements. Master of orchestral impressionism, Debussy paints a picture of the ever-changing play of light, colour and reflection produced by moving water. Fittingly, the woodblock print of Katsushika Hokusai's 'The Great Wave off Kanagawa' was the composer's choice to adorn the title page of the score.

Entry free

Admission on a first-come-first-served basis.

## MULTI ARTS & PRESENTATION



### Page to Stage

Poetry Performance

Mahmoud Darwish –

*In the Presence of Absence*

Design and Direction by

Dr. Omkar Bhatkar

Little Theatre

Tuesday, 16th – 6.30 pm

NCPA Library in collaboration with Metamorphosis Theatre and Films

Mahmoud Darwish's poetry transcends borders and inspires generations with its universal themes of hope, longing and resilience.

*In the Presence of Absence (Fi Ḥaḍrat al-Ghiyāb)* was published in the original Arabic in 2006. As with every work Darwish published in the last four decades, its appearance in the Arab world was a notable event. Darwish, one of the most popular and prominent Arab poets, died two years after writing this book. Thinking this might be his final work, he summoned all his poetic genius to create a luminous text that defies categorisation.

Dr. Omkar Bhatkar's exploration of Mahmoud Darwish's final text is a sublime experience that takes the audience into a unique hybrid world of verse and prose, shadowed by mortality, an oneiric journey of exile, return and the delicate sensations of life.

Entry free on a first-come-first-served basis.

## WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC



Gauthier Herrmann, 17th & 18th, Experimental Theatre

### Artie's Festival India

Experimental Theatre

Wednesday, 17th & Thursday, 18th – 7.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation

Hugo Meder, violin

Mathilde Borsarello Herrmann, violin

Violaine Despeyroux, viola

Gauthier Herrmann, cello

Jean-Michel Dayez, piano

**Gauthier Herrmann** discovered India in 2001 as a young solo cellist and never stopped coming back. He returned soon after with his Trio con Fuoco and later with the Neemrana quartet. By then, the seeds of Artie's Festival had been sown, and in March 2008, the first concerts of the festival took place at the NCPA. Since then, Artie's Festival has travelled to other parts of Southeast Asia, Central Asia, the Gulf and, of course, all over Europe.

The 27th Edition of Artie's Festival at the NCPA will be presented in April 2024. The programming for the festival, always curated by Herrmann and NCPA Chairman Khushroo N. Suntook, includes well-known masterpieces, relatively less-known music and reductions of famous orchestral works.

Programme:

17th April

Lekeu: Sonata in G major

Ravel: Piano Trio in A minor

Shostakovich: Piano Quintet in G minor, Op. 57

### 18th April

Schumann: Piano Quartet in E-flat major, Op. 47

Dvořák: Piano Quintet No. 2 in A major, Op. 81

#### Tickets:

₹720 & 450/- (Members)

₹800 & 500/- (Public)

(Inclusive of GST)

Box Office now open

## THEATRE

### Humare Ram

Hindi Play (200 mins)

Jamshed Bhabha Theatre

Saturday, 20th and Sunday, 21st – 3.00 pm & 7.00 pm

Saturday, 27th and Sunday, 28th – 3.00 pm & 7.00 pm

*Humare Ram* is a grand theatrical experience packed with extraordinary performances, dialogues, lights, music, timeless costumes, special effects and larger-than-life spectacles.

For the first time, *Humare Ram* brings several scenes from the Ramayana that may have never been shown onstage. The play begins from the perspective of Lava and Kusha after their mother Sita takes final refuge in the arms of Bhumi. The angry sons pose certain questions about their mother to their father, Lord Rama.

Through the perspective of Lord Surya, the play takes the audience on a journey of the love, ordeals, trials and triumphs of Lord Rama and Sita. The play includes certain undiscovered scenes from Valmiki's Ramayana that have not been explored.

Writers: **Rahul R Bhuchar & Naresh Katyan**

Directed by **Gaurav Bhardwaj**

Cast: **Ashutosh Rana, Rahul R Bhuchar, Danish Akhtar, Harleen Kaur Rekhi, Karan Sharma, Taun Khanna & others**

Produced by **Felicity Theatre**

Tickets only available on [www.bookmyshow.com](http://www.bookmyshow.com)

## THEATRE

### Dekh Behen - Part Two

English/Hindi Play (80 mins)



*Dekh Behen - Part Two, 20th, Experimental Theatre*

### Experimental Theatre

Saturday, 20th – 5.00 pm & 7.30 pm

An NCPA Presentation in collaboration with Akvarious Productions

Five years have passed since the events of the first play, and Kanupriya, aka Kannu, is getting married in Jaipur. It is a vegetarian, alcohol-free wedding, filled with orthodox in-laws and judgmental guests. But the gang of girls is back and committed to having a good time. They are older, but probably not wiser. Retaining all the fun of the first, and dealing with new and pertinent issues, this sequel to the Akvarious superhit is another crazy celebration of female friendship.

Written by

**Dilshad Edibam & Tahira Nath**

Directed by

**Perna Chawla & Shikha Talsania**

Cast: **Astha Arora, Dilshad Edibam, Garima Yajnik, Lisha Bajaj, Perna Chawla, Shikha Talsania, Tahira Nath & others**

Set Design by **Parth Varshney**

Light Design by **Yael Crishna**

Sound Design by **Varrunn Bangera**

Produced by **Akarsh Khurana & Saatvika Kantamneni**

Age: 18+

Tickets:

₹630 & 450/- (Members)

₹700 & 500/- (Public)

(Plus GST)

Box Office now open

## INTERNATIONAL MUSIC

### Spring Board

Tata Garden

Saturday, 20th & Sunday, 21st – 6.30 pm

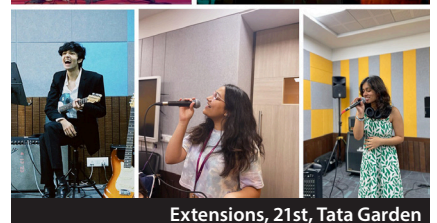
### An NCPA Presentation

Up-and-coming talented artistes have few platforms to showcase their skills before live audiences. With that in mind, the NCPA has launched Spring Board, a platform to give gifted musicians a chance to experience the exhilaration of a live ticketed performance and to help cement their place in this space. In its first edition, Spring Board will catapult two bands into the space of marketed shows.

Come support these young stars of the city and be a part of their journey that will one day be a part of the memories that will last you a lifetime.



Urban Soul Blues Collective, 20th, Tata Garden



Extensions, 21st, Tata Garden

20th April –  
Urban Soul Blues Collective  
21st April – Extensions

Tickets:  
₹450/- (Members)  
₹500/- (Public)  
Box Office now open

## THEATRE



### Main Pal Do Pal Ka Shayar Hoon

Hindustani Play (120 mins)  
Tata Theatre  
Saturday, 20th – 7.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation in  
collaboration with The Hoshruha  
Repertory & Art for Causes

The play is based on the life of Sahir Ludhianvi, a great poet of Urdu literature and an unforgettable lyricist of songs in Hindi cinema.

Hoshruha Repertory, in collaboration with Art for Causes, brings to the stage the 20th-century wordsmith's life and work in a semi-autobiographical theatrical presentation. The play attempts to bring a 360-degree perspective on his life interspersed with some of his iconic songs and poems.

"Aao Ke Koi Khwaab Bunein" composed by **Aneesh Pradhan** and first sung by **Shubha Mudgal**

Writers:

**Mir Ali Husain & Himanshu Bajpai**

Director: **Danish Husain**

Creative Producer: **Amita Talwar**

Musicians/Singers: **Shantanu Herlekar** (harmonium), **Srijonee Bhattacharjee** (vocalist), **Siddharth Nityanand Padiyar** (percussion) & **Donald Krist** (guitar)

Actors: **Danish Husain, Vrinda Vaid 'Hayat', Shantanu Herlekar, Srijonee Bhattacharjee, Siddharth N. Padiyar & Donald Krist**

Costumes & Set Design: **Himani Mehta Dehlvi**

Tickets:  
₹1,800, 1,350, 1,080, 900, 450 & 270/- (Members)  
₹2,000, 1,500, 1,200, 1,000, 500 & 300/- (Public)  
(Plus GST)  
Box Office now open

## THEATRE



### Stand up with D Girls

Hindi and English (85 mins)  
Godrej Dance Theatre  
Saturday, 20th – 7.30 pm

An NCPA Off-Stage Presentation  
in collaboration with Being  
Association

In today's time, when standing up for an issue or even doing stand-up comedy is difficult, this solo is a satirical take on both situations. We have always been told that our behaviour decides what type of girl we are. It is important to know the type because that decides our fate. Everything is already decided for us, yet you get to watch shocking news about us every day. The show journeys through those types, exploring great literature and

poems in between, which tell us a tale of D Girls.

Written, directed & performed by **Rasika Agashe**

Lights Design & Operation: **Rahul Rai**  
Projector operation: **Shubham Goswami**  
Production Manager: **Rakhi Kashyap**

Tickets:  
₹450/- (Members)  
₹500/- (Public)  
Box Office now open

## THEATRE

### Red

English Play (90 mins)  
Experimental Theatre  
Sunday, 21st – 4.30 pm & 7.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation in  
collaboration with Water Lily

In *Red*, we witness the renowned painter Mark Rothko at the pinnacle of his creativity but struggling through the creation of a series of large paintings, commissioned to feature in New York's brand-new Four Seasons Restaurant.

Set in the late 1950s, and based on a series of real events, *Red* takes a compelling look at the ever-changing relationship between an artist and his creations.

Writer: **John Logan**

Director: **Daniel Owen Dsouza**





Cast: **Vikram Kapadia & Daniel Owen Dsouza**  
Design: **Viraj Sushi Karnik & Daniel Owen Dsouza**  
Light Design: **Gurleen Judge**

**Suggested age: 12+**

**Tickets:**  
₹450/- (Members)  
₹500/- (Public)  
**Box Office now open**

## THEATRE



*Cast Off All Shame, 21st, Godrej Dance Theatre*

**Cast Off All Shame**  
English & Hindi Play (80 mins)  
Godrej Dance Theatre  
Sunday, 21st – 6.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation in collaboration with Story Circus

*Cast Off All Shame* begins with the spirit of Bhakti poet Janabai coming alive and taking over a radio show as a radio jockey. She then talks to various women callers who reach out to her with everyday issues of gender and patriarchy. Thus, the solo theatre piece consists of a series of vignettes—some hilarious, some gut-wrenching—about Indian women from a variety of classes and settings. Their situations are illuminated by women Bhakti poets—

Janabai, Lal Ded, Akka Mahadevi, Avvaiyyar, Soyarabai—whose poems appear as ‘characters’ in this show.

Punctuated with soulful poetry and stories, *Cast Off All Shame* remains an entertaining, engaging and empowering experience.

Written, directed and performed by **Ulka Mayur**

**Tickets:**  
₹360/- (Members)  
₹400/- (Public)  
**Box Office now open**

## THEATRE

**The Devil Wears Bataa**  
English Play (120 mins)

Tata Theatre  
Sunday, 21st – 7.00 pm

There is nothing political about this play, because, let’s face it, nobody understands politics, not even the politicians themselves. The play is a hilarious fictitious take on how an orange-faced, blonde-haired, pompous, loud-mouthed businessman in the Oval Office and a sharp-witted Sardarji who is the Indian PM, go about their devious plans of finding the successors to their seats of power. The Indian and American governments share something comedic in common without realising it. That is, until they meet of course.

Written & directed by **Meherzad Patel**  
Cast: **Danesh Irani, Dilnaz Irani, Jigar Mehta, Darius Shroff, Varun Narayan, Danesh Khambata & others**

A Silly Point Production

**Tickets:**  
₹1,800, 1,350, 1,080, 900, 720 & 450/- (Members)  
₹2,000, 1,500, 1,200, 1,000, 800 & 500/- (Public)  
(Inclusive of GST)  
**Box Office now open**

## THEATRE

**Love and Information**  
English/ Hindi/ Marathi (120 mins)  
Experimental Theatre



*Love and Information, 25th to 28th, Experimental Theatre*

Thursday, 25th & Friday, 26th – 7.30 pm  
Saturday, 27th – 9.00 pm  
Sunday, 28th – 4.00 pm & 7.30 pm

An NCPA Production in association with Aasakta Kalamanch, Pune

How do we look at ourselves and others? How do we make connections? How do we love? These are some of the questions that are thrown up by Caryl Churchill’s *Love and Information*, a play written in 2012 that challenges traditional theatrical norms with its unconventional structure. Comprising over 50 scenes in seven sections, the play follows a non-linear narrative and is devoid of central characters, emphasising the cumulative impact of diverse, brief scenes ranging from seconds to minutes.

The vignettes mirror the rapid pace of channel-hopping or scrolling through social media, highlighting potential implications for relationships in an era dominated by instant gratification and short attention spans. The play’s kaleidoscopic structure touches on an array of themes such as memory atrophy, privacy erosion, alienation from the self and the decay of genuine emotion. Through its experimental form and astute observations, *Love and Information* speaks directly to the way we make meaning of our lives and existence when there is an over-exposure and saturation of different kinds of information.

Playwright: **Caryl Churchill**  
Director: **Mohit Takalkar**  
Cast: **Ashish Mehta, Dusha, Kashish Saluja, Lovleen Misra, Mahesh Saini, Mallika Singh Hanspal, Mohit Solanki, Mrinmayee Godbole, Prajesh Kashyap, Rachel Dsouza, Rytasha Rathore & Siddhesh Dhuri**

Age: 18+

Tickets:  
₹900, 720 & 450/- (Members)  
₹1,000, 800 & 500/- (Public)  
(Plus GST)  
Box Office now open

## THEATRE



Peek-A-Boo, 28th, Godrej Dance Theatre

**Peek-A-Boo, A Musical**  
Children's Play in English (70 mins)  
Godrej Dance Theatre  
Sunday, 28th – 11.30 am & 4.30 pm

**An NCPA Presentation in association with Stagecraft Theatre**

*Peek-A-Boo, A Musical*, takes you on a journey into the fantastic world of books, as seen through the eyes of two young children.

Join them as they travel with Gulliver to Lilliput or to Neverland with Peter Pan, with the wind from the Willows on their backs, as they hunt for treasure with Long John Silver, while eating chocolates from Willy Wonka's factory, reminiscing the good old Malgudi Days and revelling in the romance of *Pride and Prejudice*, ensuring they don't get entangled in *Charlotte's Web*.

Fun and entertainment, mystery and adventure at every step!

Written by **Ankita Athawale**

Directed by **Vikash Khurana**  
Cast: **Aditi Chandwani, Aditi Dalal, Isha Rao, Mohit Nehra & Sahir Mehta**  
Music composed & arranged by **Anurag Kulkarni**  
Choreographed by **Simran Dutt**

Age: 10+

Tickets:  
₹450/- (Members)  
₹500/- (Public)  
Box Office: 26th March for Members & 29th March for Public

## INTERNATIONAL MUSIC



International Jazz Day, 30th, Tata Theatre

**International Jazz Day**  
Tata Theatre  
Tuesday, 30th – 7.00 pm

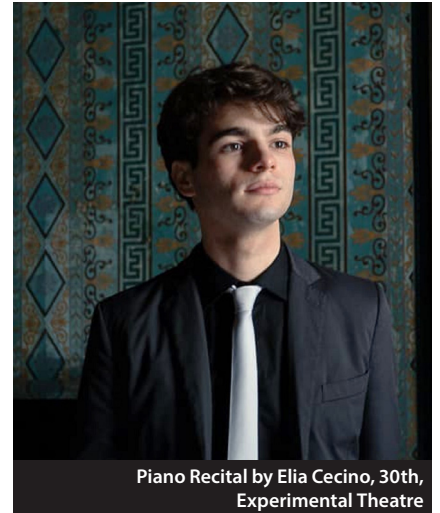
**An NCPA Presentation**

In Mumbai, International Jazz Day has been celebrated for the last 12 years. The upcoming edition, curated by **Louiz Banks**, will feature a huge line-up of artistes spread over a span of three hours. From jazz standards to jazz fusion, the concert will feature some of the finest musicians and singers in the country. The NCPA, along with Banks, celebrates this iconic day live at the Tata Theatre, Mumbai.

Tickets:  
₹1,350, 1,080, 900 & 720/- (Members)  
₹1,500, 1,200, 1,000 & 800/- (Public)  
(Plus GST)  
Box Office now open

## WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC

**Piano Recital by Elia Cecino**  
Experimental Theatre



Piano Recital by Elia Cecino, 30th, Experimental Theatre

Tuesday, 30th – 7.00 pm

**An NCPA, Mehli Mehta Music Foundation and Istituto Italiano di Cultura di Mumbai Presentation**

Known for his intense and sensitive interpretations of Chopin and Beethoven, **Elia Cecino**, winner of the first prize at the València Iturbi International Piano Competition 2023, is considered to be among the greatest pianists of the new generation. A prizewinner of multiple international piano competitions and with a well-received discography to his name, Cecino enjoys a busy international touring schedule performing solo at multiple venues across the world such as Palau de la Música Catalana in Barcelona, Laeiszhalle in Hamburg, La Fenice Opera House and Teatro Malibran in Venice, etc. He has also performed as a soloist with multiple orchestras such as the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Orchestra del Teatro La Fenice, Israel Philharmonic, among others with critiques bearing testament to his nuanced playing.

**Programme:**

Chopin: Sonata No. 2 in B-flat minor, Op. 35  
Brahms: Variations on a theme by R. Schumann, Op. 9  
Sonata No. 1 in C major, Op. 1

Tickets:  
₹720 & 450/- (Members)  
₹800 & 500/- (Public)  
(Inclusive of GST)  
Box Office: 26th March for Members & 29th March for Public

 NCPA

**SOI** symphony  
orchestra of  
india



DANISH CHAMBER PLAYERS

An NCPA Presentation

**SOI**  
CHAMBER  
ORCHESTRA

&

**DANISH CHAMBER PLAYERS**

**Maria Badstue** conductor

**Indira Mahajan** soprano

**COPLAND** Appalachian Spring

**BARBER** Knoxville Summer of 1915

**MAHLER** "Adagietto" from Symphony No. 5

**BEETHOVEN** Symphony No. 4

**Apr 12, 2024**

**7:00 pm**

**Tata Theatre, NCPA**

Book now on **bookmyshow**

Box Office: **+91 22 66223754**



# What's Next

May & June 2024

(Programmes are subject to change. Please check the website and refer to our emails for updated information.)

## INDIAN MUSIC



*Baul Robi* - Rabindranath Tagore, 3rd May, Experimental Theatre

### **Baul Robi: An exploration of folk music-based melodies of Tagore**

(Approx. 75 mins)

Experimental Theatre

Friday, 3rd May – 6.30 pm

An NCPA Presentation in association with Shahana, Tagore Centre for Indian Music and Culture

This event will be presented to commemorate the 163rd birth anniversary of **Rabindranath Tagore** (1861–1941), the legendary Nobel laureate, poet, novelist, painter and composer, who has had a far-reaching impact not only on Indian literature but on music as well. His spiritual approach

and a natural connection with the divine are evident in all his creations, making him unique in the annals of world literature.

Tagore was deeply influenced by the folk music of Bengal, particularly the songs of the *bauls*, the wandering minstrels. These songs are simple in their language and expression but carry deep esoteric meanings about the futility of material existence and the need to lead a spiritual life.

*Baul Robi* is presented by Shahana Shilpi Sangha, the performing group of Shahana, Tagore Centre for Indian Music and Culture. It is a multimedia exploration of music accompanied by visuals, illustrating how Tagore was inspired by local traditions, which ultimately led to the development of an idiom that was his own, both in terms of language and music. Songs selected for this presentation also include a few that were written for his esoteric plays. Musically, the influence of renditions of the *bauls* and boatmen is palpable with an undercurrent of some *raga*-based melodies. In addition, the musical arrangements also reveal elements of innovation based on the choral format of singing, and the use of instruments, such as dotara, khol, manjira, etc., highlight the folk flavour of Bengal.

#### Tickets:

₹315 & 270/- (Members)

₹350 & 300/- (Public)

Box Office: 9th April for Members & 12th April for Public

## SCREENING

### **Carmen**

by Georges Bizet

Opera Screening



*Carmen*, 4th May, Godrej Dance Theatre

(Approx. 205 mins)

Godrej Dance Theatre

Saturday, 4th May – 4.00 pm

An NCPA-The Metropolitan Opera (New York) Presentation

**Georges Bizet** was known as a brilliant student and prodigy, but his works only found lasting success after his untimely death—most notably through *Carmen*, which premiered three months before he died. The score of *Carmen* contains so many instantly recognisable tunes that it can be easy to overlook how well-constructed it is. The major solos are excellent combinations of arresting melody and dramatic purpose—from the baritone's famous 'Toreador Song' to the tenor's wrenching 'Flower Song' to the title character's alluring 'Habanera' and 'Seguidilla'. The duets and ensembles are equally beguiling. Acclaimed English director **Carrie Cracknell** brings a vital new production of one of opera's most enduringly powerful works, reinvigorating the classic story with a staging that moves the action to the modern day and finds, at the heart of the drama, issues that could not be more relevant today: gendered violence, abusive labour structures and the desire to break through societal boundaries.

Conductor: **Daniele Rustioni**  
Cast: **Angel Blue, Aigul Akhmetshina, Piotr Beczala & Kyle Ketelsen**

**Tickets:**

₹450/- (Members)

₹500/- (Public)

**Box Office: 9th April for Members & 12th April for Public**

**THEATRE**

**Pratibimb Marathi Natya Utsav**

A Stage for Marathi Stories

Godrej, Experimental & Tata Theatre

Friday, 17th to Sunday, 19th May

An NCPA Presentation

Born out of the objective to inspire, encourage and support Marathi theatre, the NCPA's *Pratibimb Marathi Natya Utsav* returns this summer. The three-day festival will be a melange of plays, readings, workshops, campus tours, talks and discussions by Marathi theatre experts. The line-up will be a mix of popular as well as experimental plays from a variety of established and up-and-coming theatre groups. True to its name, *Pratibimb* offers a reflection of the vibrant tradition of theatre in Maharashtra known for its thought-provoking themes that present the world around us in a new light. Get ready to partake in this celebration of Maharashtra's rich cultural heritage.

Supported by Shilpa Kumar

**Box Office: 26th March for Members & 29th March for Public**

**SCREENING**

**Nye**

A new play by Tim Price

Theatre Screening

Godrej Dance Theatre

Wednesday, 29th May – 6.00 pm

An NCPA-National Theatre Live (London) Presentation

**Michael Sheen** plays Aneurin 'Nye' Bevan in a surreal and spectacular journey through the life and legacy

of the man who transformed Britain's welfare state. From campaigning at the coalfield to leading the battle to create the National Health Service, Bevan is often referred to as the politician with the greatest influence over the UK without ever being Prime Minister.

In *Nye*, confronted with death, Bevan's deepest memories lead him on a mind-bending journey through his life; from childhood to mining underground, the Parliament and fights with Churchill.

Written by **Tim Price** and directed by **Rufus Norris** (*Small Island*), this epic is a new Welsh fantasia.

**Tickets:**

₹450/- (Members)

₹500/- (Public)

**Box Office: 26th April for Members & 29th April for Public**

**INTERNATIONAL MUSIC**



Eliane Elias Live in Concert, 30th May, Tata Theatre

**Eliane Elias Live in Concert**

Tata Theatre

Thursday, 30th May – 7.30 pm

An NCPA Presentation

Brazilian jazz pianist, singer, composer and arranger, double Grammy award-winner, double Latin Grammy award-winner, twelve-time Grammy nominee, three Gold Disc award-winner and

three-time best vocal award winner **Eliane Elias** will make her India debut at the Tata Theatre on 30th May 2024. This is a concert you do not want to miss.

**Tickets:**

₹2,700, 2,250, 1,800, 1,350, 1,080 & 900/- (Members)

₹3,000, 2,500, 2,000, 1,500, 1,200 & 1,000/- (Public)

(Plus GST)

**Box Office now open**

**SCREENING**

**La Forza del Destino**

by Giuseppe Verdi

Opera Screening

(Approx. 245 mins)

Godrej Dance Theatre

Saturday, 8th June – 4.00 pm

An NCPA-The Metropolitan Opera (New York) Presentation

Music Director **Yannick Nézet-Séguin** conducts Verdi's grand tale of ill-fated love, deadly vendettas and family strife, with soprano **Lise Davidsen** as the noble Leonora, one of the repertory's most tormented—and thrilling—heroines. Director **Mariusz Treliński** delivers the company's first new *Forza* in nearly 30 years, setting the scene in a contemporary world and making extensive use of the Met's turntable to represent the unstoppable advance of destiny that drives the opera's chain of calamitous events. The distinguished cast also features tenor **Brian Jagde** as Leonora's forbidden beloved, Don Alvaro; baritone **Igor Golovatenko** as her vengeful brother, Don Carlo; bass-baritone **Patrick Carfizzi** as Fra Melitone; and bass **Soloman Howard** as both Leonora's father and Padre Guardiano.

Conductor: **Yannick Nézet-Séguin**

Cast: **Lise Davidsen, Judit Kutasi, Brian Jagde, Igor Golovatenko, Patrick Carfizzi & Soloman Howard**

**Tickets:**

₹450/- (Members)









₹500/- (Public)

**Box Office: 9th May for Members & 12th May for Public**

# Events at a glance

April 2024

Day	Date	Time	Event	Venue
Tue	2nd	7.00 pm	Masterworks of Chamber Music Marat Bisengaliev, violin Ralph de Souza, violin/viola Members of the Symphony Orchestra of India	Jamshed Bhabha Theatre Stage
Wed	3rd	4.00 pm	Talks on Western Classical Music	Stuart-Liff Collection Library
Thu	4th	6.00 pm		LITTLE THEATRE
Wed	3rd	6.30 pm	Launch of Marathi book <i>Dapur to Delhi</i> and Poetry Reading of celebrated author Eknath Avhad	Godrej dance theatre
Wed	3rd	6.30 pm	Short Film Corner Short Film Screenings	LITTLE THEATRE
Thu	4th	6.30 pm	NCPA <i>Mudra</i> Dance Festival 2024 (4th to 29th April)  Manipuri by Latasana Devi and Bharatanatyam by Prachi Saathi  <i>Marga Nritya</i> by Piyal Bhattacharya and Group Bharatanatyam by Sridevi Nrithyalaya  Kathak by Aditi Mangaldas and Odissi by Sujata Mohapatra  Workshops, Exhibition & Talks	EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE
Sat	27th	5.00 pm		EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE
Sun	28th	5.00 pm		TATA THEATRE
Thu to Mon	25th to 29th	-		BRAMMA art gallery
Fri	5th	5.30 pm	The Jazz Masters Listening Sessions conducted by Sunil Sampat The Lure of the Trumpet in Jazz	LITTLE THEATRE
Fri	5th	6.30 pm	<i>Saz-e-Bahar</i> Festival of Indian Instrumental Music (5th & 6th April)  Dr. Aneesh Pradhan (tabla) Milind Raikar (violin)  Mambalam S. Sivakumar (nadaswaram) Manish Pingle (slide guitar)	Godrej dance theatre
Sat	6th	6.30 pm		Godrej dance theatre
Sun	7th	5.00 pm	Danish Chamber Players	Jamshed Bhabha Theatre Stage
Sun	7th	5.00 pm & 7.30 pm	All Stars Comedy Stand-up Comedy English/Hindi	Godrej dance theatre

 THEATRE	 DANCE
 INDIAN MUSIC	 MULTI ARTS & PRESENTATIONS
 INTERNATIONAL MUSIC	 FILMS / SCREENINGS
 WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC	 PHOTOGRAPHY & EXHIBITION

Day	Date	Time	Event	Venue
Sun	7th	7.00 pm	<i>Purane Chawal</i> Hindi Play	TATA THEATRE
Wed	10th	6.00 pm	<i>The Motive and the Cue</i> A new play by Jack Thorne Theatre Screening	Godrej dance theatre
Thu	11th	6.30 pm	Reality Check Documentary Film Screening	LITTLE THEATRE
Fri	12th	6.30 pm	NCPA Citi Promising Artistes Series: Rohit Khavale (pakhawaj) Kasturi Deshpande Manjrekar ( <i>khayal</i> )	EX THEATRE
Fri	12th	6.30 pm	Movies Under the Stars <i>Make Way for Tomorrow</i> (1937) Film Screening	LITTLE THEATRE
Fri	12th	7.00 pm	SOI Chamber Orchestra Danish Chamber Players Maria Badstue, conductor Indira Mahajan, soprano	TATA THEATRE
Sat	13th	4.00 pm	<i>Nabucco</i> by Giuseppe Verdi Opera Screening	Godrej dance theatre
Sat	13th	6.30 pm	<i>Rangi Sari Gulabi: A Tribute to Shobha Gurtu</i> by Rajashree Kelkar Pathak	EX THEATRE
Sat	13th	7.00 pm	<i>The Siddhus of Upper Juhu</i> English Play	TATA THEATRE
Sat	13th	7.00 pm	<i>Qisse aur Kavitaayein</i> Hindi	Tata Garden
Sun	14th	5.00 pm	SOI Music Academy Marat Bisengaliev, conductor	jb BLOSSOM THEATRE
Sun	14th	6.30 pm	Jazz Odyssey: Classic to Modern Brilliance	EX THEATRE
Sun	14th	6.30 pm	April Blossoms - 2 Piano Recital by Students of Blossom Mendonca	LITTLE THEATRE
Sun	14th	7.00 pm	<i>Chanakya</i> Hindi Play	TATA THEATRE

Day	Date	Time	Event	Venue
Tue	16th	4.00 pm	Talks on Western Classical Music	Stuart-Liff Collection Library
Thu	18th	6.00 pm		LITTLE THEATRE
Tue	16th	6.30 pm	Page to Stage Poetry Performance Mahmoud Darwish - <i>In the Presence of Absence</i> Design and Direction by Dr. Omkar Bhatkar	LITTLE THEATRE
Wed & Thu	17th & 18th	7.00 pm	Artie's Festival India	EX THEATRE
Sat & Sun	20th & 21st	3.00 pm & 7.00 pm	<i>Humare Ram</i> Hindi Play	jt JANSHED THEATRE
Sat & Sun	27th & 28th			
Sat	20th	5.00 pm & 7.30 pm	<i>Dekh Behen - Part Two</i> English/Hindi Play	EX THEATRE
Sat	20th	6.30 pm	Spring Board (20th & 21st April)	Tata Garden
Sun	21st	6.30 pm	Urban Soul Blues Collective Extensions	Tata Garden
Sat	20th	7.00 pm	<i>Main Pal Do Pal Ka Shayar Hoon</i> Hindustani Play	TATA THEATRE
Sat	20th	7.30 pm	Stand up with D Girls Hindi and English	Godrej dance theatre
Sun	21st	4.30 pm & 7.00 pm	<i>Red</i> English Play	EX THEATRE
Sun	21st	6.00 pm	<i>Cast Off All Shame</i> English & Hindi Play	Godrej dance theatre
Sun	21st	7.00 pm	<i>The Devil Wears Bataa</i> English Play	TATA THEATRE
Thu & Fri	25th & 26th	7.30 pm	<i>Love and Information</i> English/Hindi/Marathi	EX THEATRE
Sat	27th	9.00 pm		
Sun	28th	4.00 pm & 7.30 pm		
Sun	28th	11.30 am & 4.30 pm	<i>Peek-A-Boo, A Musical</i> Children's Play in English	Godrej dance theatre
Tue	30th	7.00 pm	International Jazz Day	TATA THEATRE
Tue	30th	7.00 pm	Piano Recital by Elia Cecino	EX THEATRE





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**JAMSHED BHABHA  
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