

 NCPA

# ON Stage<sup>®</sup>

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Not Curtailed.*

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behind the scenes at the NCPA

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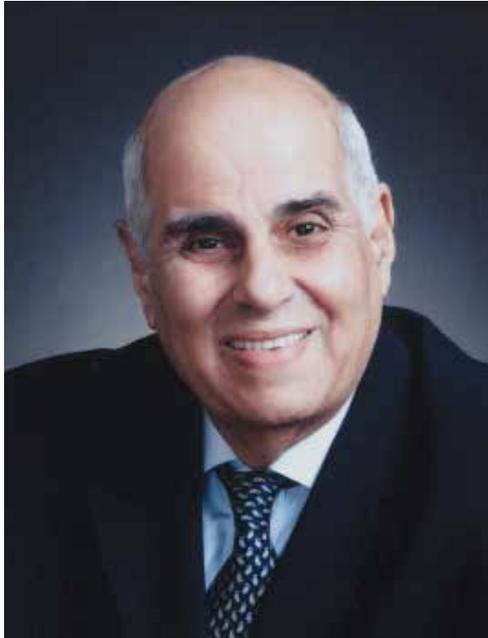
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# Chairman's Note



There seems to be a constant stab by the press, the wise men of various renowned medical organisations, and of course, the business community, all of whom give their considered views on the slippery subject of the virus and how best to tackle it.

The truth seems to be that almost nobody knows the actual progress or otherwise of this damned elusive Pimpernel. Yes, "they seek him here, they seek him there" but nobody really knows.

So, let's follow what our authorities say, and within that range, take carefully considered decisions.

Most of Europe seems to be taking on the virus and is gradually loosening restrictions; we will consult the best minds and move forward. The uncertainty and cost of cancellations, delays, and consequent financial adjustment needs to be tackled, and we will decide soon on the way forward, and hope that our members and other communities may (touch wood) see the reasoning behind our moves. We are planning, practising, teaching and setting our various projects on what we believe is the best path.

So, dear friends, we will move, definitely cautiously but at the same time, without unnecessary fear.

Have a great year.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K. N. Suntook". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line underneath the name.

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Khushroo N. Suntook

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# MERELY A PAUSE

The temporary suspension of performances in view of the recent surge is a decision taken in the best interest of the artistes, audience and staff. The brief intermission is by no means a pause in work that goes on behind the scenes at full steam.

**W**hat does it take to stage a performance? Curation, a word used rather liberally, which, when employed in its true sense, encompasses months of work.

At the NCPA, it begins with the germ of an idea, to which learned members of advisory committees associated with the genres or the heads of genres themselves play devil's advocates. This helps—to borrow a phrase from a recent article in *The Sydney Morning Herald*—“slow us down before we slip up on our own certainty”. Once it passes scrutiny, the idea is refined further. Artistes are then identified, contacted and, perhaps the biggest challenge of it all, dates are worked out to bring them down.

When planning seasons in close liaison with international consultants, conductors and

soloists are contacted even earlier because the best in the industry have chock-full calendars. Several rounds of animated discussions are held before a Baroque masterpiece or a little-known gem of a nocturne makes it to the programme.

Seasons, festivals and commissioned plays, then, entail a great degree of involvement but even when offering the stage to premiering productions or those that have had a run, quality is of paramount importance. This means saying no more often than a yes. When

it's showtime, it all deceptively appears to be on autopilot.

Suspending a performance, therefore—besides a coveted ticket turning into a worthless piece of paper—is the suspension of the culmination of efforts, energy and time invested in the curatorial process.

Setbacks such as these, however, are quickly forgotten and yet another cycle of curation begins because when the world opens up and the city is safe enough for art-loving people to congregate, we must be ready.

“The pause in performances is financially damaging, thwarts the spirit of artistes and makes it difficult for our members to plan a visit. However, the only thing certain is the uncertainty of our times and we must adapt. We have spent this time planning, and exploring new directions that would involve different genres to come together and cross-fertilise ideas. A grand tribute to India's Independence is in the works. Our search for local talent has grown more intense,” says Mr. Khushroo N. Suntook, Chairman, NCPA. He further elaborates on other areas of work that the organisation's senior management has been occupied with. “Work on various facilities such as the restaurant, substantial expansion of the theatres and the infrastructure required for an international-class performing arts centre is underway. All this, of

course, is subject to permissions received from various authorities, but we are confident that since we are doing this for the enhancement of the city's prestige and image, the government, which always has been sympathetic to the vision of the NCPA, will surely support us in this endeavour. Allied with this, several technical facilities are being upgraded. The library, the new studio, state-of-the art recording equipment, etc. are all part of the modernisation of the NCPA.”

There is little doubt that the digital medium is going to remain a key component of consuming culture even after live performances are back. To reach audiences beyond its theatres who tuned in to watch the NCPA's online offerings during the lockdown from around the world and India, work on the digital platform continues in full swing.

Outreach and education are other areas where the thrust of activities moved online, opening up avenues beyond Mumbai. Outdoor spaces across the city are being explored to take the arts to people in a safe manner. Planning is underway for the SOI's tours within India—incidentally, a concert scheduled in Pune last month had to be postponed—even as performing abroad looks tricky at the moment.

The NCPA premises must remain safe at all times to ensure the well-being of its resident staff. Arrangements have been made for regular testing of employees and deep-cleaning and sanitisation of the complex. The upkeep of the many rare and valuable musical instruments when not being played has been discussed in detail here before. Constant communication among the senior management, heads of genres, the technical, legal, marketing, editorial, PR, social media, finance, HR, membership, box office, administration and security departments has been key to the smooth running of the organisation.

Much like the silence on stage minutes before a performance is no indicator of the buzz backstage, this momentary pause holds the coiled spring of creative energy, ready to open out as soon as it is prudent to do so. ■





# STAGES OF PERFORMANCE

**With the current surge in Covid cases causing another round of cancellations and postponements of cultural events, we present an overview of what's happening at performing arts centres and festivals around the world.**

**By Kusumita Das**

**T**he year 2022 appears to be a picture of déjà vu. Performance venues and artistes around the world continue to be faced with the challenge of keeping the show going, in view of the risks and uncertainties that have become par for the course in this pandemic-struck world. At the NCPA, we saw a stark January, where all performances had to be suspended amid the Omicron surge.

While most of Europe and the U.S., well into their booster shots, are opting to not cut off their audiences

from cultural events altogether despite the threat of the virus, in India, performance venues are justifiably hesitant to take such risks. The vaccination campaign for the adult population is an ongoing exercise, and has only recently been extended to children between 15 and 18 years. Booster shots for health workers and the elderly with comorbidities were rolled out less than a month ago. A congested and populous city like Mumbai, where the majority of families reside in cramped spaces and use public transport, practically

SHUTTERSTOCK

rules out any scope for physical distancing. However, even as the First World proceeds with caution, everyone is staring at an unclear map ahead. Several big-ticket stage productions have cancelled shows altogether, while some others are planning limited runs. Large-scale festivals appear to have no wriggle room, and most of them have been postponed indefinitely. We bring you the lowdown from around the world.

Jeff Still, Tracy Letts, and Ian Barford in Steppenwolf's Production of *THE MINUTES*.



## The stage is lit again

The pandemic has made it hard for performance venues to make up their minds—whether to shut down, go on a hiatus or follow a hybrid model. Over the holiday season, there were reports of about a dozen Broadway shows, including hallmark attractions like *The Lion King*, *Hamilton* and *Aladdin*, getting cancelled amidst the rapid spread of the Omicron variant. However, towards mid-January, the iconic theatre collective took a call to cautiously raise the curtains, and even bring back the hugely popular Broadway Week, after a two-year hiatus, with two-for-one ticket sales, starting 18th January to 13th February. Over the months of February, March and April, several productions will see famous television stars take the stage. Previews for Sarah Jessica Parker and Matthew Broderick-starrer *Plaza Suite*, a comedy by Neil Simon, begin on 25th February, for the grand opening night in March. Other productions to follow close on the heels are Richard Greenberg's 2003 Tony-winning play *Take Me Out*, which will see *Suits* actor Patrick J. Adams and *Modern Family*'s beloved Jesse Tyler Ferguson. The “velvety voiced” *Schitt's Creek* star Noah Reid will be making his Broadway debut in Tracy Letts's Pulitzer-finalist drama, *The Minutes*, to be staged in April, while Emmy winner Debra Messing will be seen in *Birthdays Candles*, a new play by Noah Haidle, also in April. These shows are expected to pull Broadway out of the holiday slump that was, and one is now crossing their fingers for a springtime resurgence.

Across the Atlantic, London theatres are striving to keep the lights on. The cloud of cancellations loomed large at the start of the year, but a slew of major productions shall resume their act. The West End will be going ahead with *Dirty Dancing*, its prized offering adapted from the Patrick Swayze-starrer cult

A scene from *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*



hit, in February. And at the Gielgud Theatre, the Aaron Sorkin adaptation of Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird* will be staged, in early March. Potterheads can also rejoice, because *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*, the West End's most awarded play (adapted from the eighth Harry Potter book) in the history of Olivier Awards, will return at the Palace Theatre.

## Festivals bear the brunt

While independent theatre productions are managing to find some respite, festivals haven't been as lucky. London's renowned fringe festival, The Vaults, featuring stand-up, cabaret and theatre, was due to showcase its 10th edition this year, from January to March. But it appears to have fallen prey to the uncertainties of the pandemic and has been cancelled, for the second year in a row.

MICHAEL BROSILOW, 2020 (THE MINUTES); MATTHEW MURPHY (HARRY POTTER AND THE CURSED CHILD)



A scene from Opera Australia's production of *La Bohème* at the Sydney Opera House

On the other side of the world, Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney have cancelled three of their major music festivals. The touring punk festival Full Tilt cancelled its Adelaide edition, while Victoria's heavy metal festival UNIFY Forever has been tentatively pushed to March. The much-awaited Sidney King Street Carnival has been postponed indefinitely. *Hamilton*, *Frozen the Musical*, and Sydney Festival show *Queen Lear* have all been forced to cancel their performances. However, seasons at the Sydney Opera House remain unscathed. On the schedule this month are productions of operas *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Turandot* and *La Bohème*, a host of musical theatre and comedy performances, including *SIX the Musical*, a pop musical phenomenon that re-introduces the six wives of Henry VIII.

Among film festivals, only the Berlin International Film Festival will be going ahead with a fully in-person six-day edition amidst strict Covid restrictions, starting 10th February. Parties and public events have been cancelled and the red carpet event will be significantly scaled down. The U.K. won't be taking any chances; the BFI Future Film Festival will be held online from 17th to 20th February, while the Dublin International Film Festival will be observing a hybrid model, with 100 films being showcased all over the capital and 20 percent of its programme presented online.

### Music to the ears

The immortal compositions of classical masters won't fall silent in the upcoming months, even though the much-coveted Mozart Week, held in Salzburg, had to be cancelled. Europe's numero uno orchestra, the Vienna Philharmonic, has a packed calendar. Their 5th Chamber Music Concert in the Vienna State Opera will include works by Beethoven and Mozart, after which performances in Frankfurt, Essen and New York have been scheduled. In France, operatic entertainment will be getting a shot in the arm as Mozart's *Don Giovanni*

Nikolaj Coster-Waldau stars in *Against the Ice*, which will be screened as part of The Berlinale Special Programme 2022



and *The Marriage of Figaro* will take to the stage at Opéra Bastille. The schedules of iconic music festivals held in the balmy European summer are already in place. The 2022 Bachfest in Leipzig and the Salzburg Festival Whitsun are both preparing to hold court in June.

At New York's Carnegie Hall, the U.S. premiere of Sergei Taneyev's final work, *At the Reading of a Psalm*, by the American Symphony Orchestra was cancelled in late January "due to Covid-19-related challenges with having a large orchestra and chorus on stage". Other symphonic works not involving a choir, however, will continue to be presented.

### The Middle East faring better than the West

The Middle East appears to have freed itself from the clutches of the pandemic to fill up its cultural calendar with some large-scale live events. On 14th March, the Dubai Opera will be hosting the Dresden Opera Ball, a gala event modelled on the Semper Opera Ball, the largest classical entertainment event in the German-

PRUDENCE LUPTON (LA BOHEME); LILIA JONSDOTTIR / NETFLIX (AGAINST THE ICE)



The Israel Philharmonic Orchestra with Zubin Mehta on the podium

YEUGENE WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

speaking world. The event will comprise a red carpet reception, stellar classical music performances and a grand ballroom dancing fiesta. The event is expected to be a one-of-a-kind blend of European and Arabian culture.

In Israel, the Sphera Festival, a contemporary music festival featuring the country's top artistes, is set to take place at the end of February and is already sold out. The home of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, the Lowy Concert Hall will present a series of concerts under the baton of Zubin Mehta, including a special concert with pianist Martha Argerich.

### Closer to home

At Singapore's Esplanade - Theatres on the Bay, a rich offering of music and theatre will be presented throughout the year. *Inside the Music: Freedom in*

*Jazz*, presented by leading musicians, will provide a brief introduction to the genre while *The Universe According to Niu*, a puppetry production for children, will be presented till March 2022. The 2021/22 season of the National Symphony Orchestra, Taiwan, will include, among other things, French Fantasy with Jun Märkl & NSO, a concert that will include works by Saint-Saëns and Berlioz. In addition to a full season of opera, ballet and drama, the New National Theatre, Tokyo, is also making Fujikura Dai's opera *A Dream of Armageddon* available to watch for free on its website until 28th February.

While an uncertain couple of months are causing artistes, organisations and audiences much frustration, the hope is that eventually, and perhaps soon, things will fall into place and the performing arts will, once again, thrive rather than merely survive. ■

## ON THE CONUNDRUM THAT IS THE U.K.

"The key challenge we are faced with is that the rules, advice and guidance are different for England, Wales and Scotland, which is causing chaos for everyone. While Scotland and Wales have banned indoor gatherings that exceed 200 people, no such restrictions have been levied on England. As of now, in England at least, live events are allowed to take place with the strict requirement to be masked. While some venues ask for proof of vaccination, others don't, and everyone is suffering because of this uncertainty. This is resulting in people staying at home, even though performances are taking

place. The half-filled houses are taking a toll on artistes' incomes, and this isn't a sustainable model in the long term. Even if people are not seriously infected by the virus—which in Omicron's case they aren't—the requirement to isolate cuts down staff, leading to cancellations. But for now, it looks like unless we are faced with another dramatic twist in the tale, events will continue in this pattern."

- Edward Smith, Consultant to the Symphony Orchestra of India and former Chief Executive of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra



# THE MENTAL BURDEN

The psychological impact of the pandemic that the world remains in the grip of is manifesting itself in myriad ways, posing unique challenges to office-goers, artistes as well as senior management of cultural organisations.

By Snigdha Hasan, with inputs from Dr Cavas Bilimoria

**M**uch has changed over the last two years: the way we work, travel, socialise, engage with the arts, create art...in essence, our very being.

Working away from the workplace, in particular, has been a double-edged sword. There is the new-found gift of time and energy saved from hours spent in daily commute. There is also the feeling of being cast adrift in the absence of a routine that, for many of us, governs other facets of life too. There is the freedom to curl up with a book well beyond midnight and turn off the alarm clock for once. And there is the missing warmth and intellectual stimulation that arises from interacting with colleagues—like-minded people who congregate under one roof to work towards a greater goal, having put on hold the rigours of domesticity.

“There is nothing like an in-person office where you can discuss ideas, plan the next seasons and the way forward for several other areas of work that fall within the purview of a multi-genre arts organisation like the NCPA. It is much easier and more productive to hold

meetings in the office where you can simply walk into a conference room and discuss things face to face instead of organising online meetings and having to deal with network glitches and poor audibility,” says Mr. Khushroo N. Suntook, Chairman, NCPA.

## Work and workplace

‘The Future of Work after Covid-19’, a report published by the McKinsey Global Institute in February 2019, takes cognisance of this barrier to in-person communication and its outcome. “Covid-19 has, for the first time, elevated the importance of the physical dimension of work,” states the report, based on a study carried out in eight countries with diverse economic and labour market models including India, China, the U.S. and the U.K. “We found that some work that technically can be done remotely is best done in person. Negotiations, critical business decisions, brainstorming sessions, providing sensitive feedback, and onboarding new employees are examples of activities that may lose some effectiveness when done remotely.”

The recurring waves of the pandemic, however, call for agility to adapt to new health and safety risks. Whether it entails returning to the workplace after working from home for weeks on end or having to desert the office at short notice, both cause disruption to a mode of working sanded down after much adjustment, and ironing out of logistical issues including the use of public transport, which, in a megalopolis like Mumbai, makes a mockery of physical distancing.

Such uncertainty has fuelled anxiety levels among people across countries and age groups. According to the first global estimate of the impact of the pandemic on mental health published in *The Lancet* in October 2021, cases of major depressive disorder and anxiety disorders increased by 28 per cent and 26 per cent respectively in 2020. The pandemic has been particularly unkind to women and the youth with the additional burden of cases being more commonly reported among the two groups. It was also found that countries with high Covid-19 infection rates and major reductions in the movement of people saw the biggest rise in cases of these disorders. It wouldn't be wrong, then, to join the dots and say that India emerges to be especially vulnerable in this respect.

### **When the music stops**

A community that finds itself particularly vulnerable under these oscillating circumstances is that of artistes and other professionals allied to the performing arts. In a paper titled “‘Losing Work, Losing Purpose’: Representations of Musicians’ Mental Health in the Time of Covid-19” by Dr. George Musgrave, Senior Lecturer, Westminster School of Arts, it is suggested that the mental health challenges that musicians are faced with are broadly rooted in: (1) employment-related anxieties concerning loss of income, and fears about their futures, and (2) status-based existential anxiety relating to a loss of meaning in their lives—being plagued by questions

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**According to *The Lancet*, countries with high Covid-19 infection rates and major reductions in the movement of people saw the biggest rise in cases of major depressive and anxiety disorders**

like, ‘Who am I if I am not performing for others?’ This duality has been encapsulated as losing work and losing purpose.

‘Performing Artists’ Mental Health: Silent Victim of Covid-19’, a report by Athletes and the Arts (AATA), an initiative that works towards integrating the science of sport and the performing arts for the mutual benefit of both, sums up the financial side of it simply. “[Artistes] rarely have guaranteed salaries. The vast majority make money by performing. If nobody is putting on performances, nobody can earn money performing.”

Artistes are often thought to be lone wolves, preferring to work in isolation. However, they also thrive on consistent and close interaction with fellow artistes, and at the time of performing, with the audience. Losing that support system and being isolated can have a stronger impact on them than, say, a corporate professional who is used to working remotely via video conferences, Zoom calls, etc., the AATA report elaborates.

Suspended performances, travel constraints, being stranded in a place away from one’s family can all be dispiriting. The recurring waves worsen the situation, for just as things begin to normalise and artistes embrace fresh performance opportunities, another surge sets in motion yet another round of cancellations.

### **The silver lining**

Close to home, the NCPA has played its part in shielding the musicians and artistes associated with it in various capacities from financial worries, giving them a platform to engage with the audience and equipping them with the requisite knowledge to deal with unique problems in the face of the pandemic. The Citi-NCPA Scholarship for Young Musicians in advanced training in Hindustani Music has continued without a pause as has the Support to Gurus initiative in association with HSBC, and Citi that supports eminent gurus to nurture disciples in the discipline of the musical art form they specialise in. Performances under the NCPA-Citi Promising Artistes Series that showcases beneficiaries of these schemes have been recorded at the NCPA over the last two years—irrespective of whether the conditions allowed for an in-person audience—and made available online so that young talent continues to reach connoisseurs.

Collaboration with organisations dedicated to the cause of Indian music from across Maharashtra and beyond has been integral to the NCPA’s scope of work. Financial support to one such collaborator from Pune, Ganwardhan, was provided for a Hindustani classical recital by Hemang Mehta in November 2021.

Various workshops, supported by HSBC, have been tailored to help musicians cope with the challenges of the lockdown. Experts have covered relevant topics such as the convergence of digital space and the performing arts, mental health in the times of the Coronavirus, legal issues in the digital domain, and sound recording, live-streaming and home production.

A research study on the cultural skills sector in India, commissioned by the NCPA to Art X Company, supported by the British Council, has been undertaken with an aim to improve conditions and provide a greater opportunity to those currently working as creative and backstage teams in theatre. The objective is to create an online resource for designers, technicians, stage and production managers, which would be followed up by a four-week residency course with top artistes from around the world in 2023.

NCPA *Vistaar*, an online lecture demonstration series on dance, supported by Godrej Agrovet, has been instituted to provide a platform to young artistes across India to connect with schools in different parts of the country. Here, children learn the performative aspects of a dance form as well as the culture and tradition attached to it.

The NCPA has been able to retain all musicians of the Symphony Orchestra of India throughout this period which saw the dissolution and disbanding of many great ensembles all through the artistic world. There are, however, challenges unique to as large an ensemble as the SOI. An orchestra has anywhere between 80 and 100 musicians or more. The musicians who make up the SOI hail from around 25 countries and having them all together on stage is a logistical hurdle with varying travel and quarantine guidelines for each of these countries. Flying down guest conductors and soloists for a season in the wake of the new surge is equally challenging.

That said, the SOI has a dedicated set of resident musicians (from across the world and India) who have been in Mumbai, away from their families, constantly rehearsing, playing in concerts each time it is safe to organise one, and teaching students of the SOI Music Academy while also discovering new talent. Students, who have been encouraged to participate in online competitions throughout the pandemic, have come out with flying colours.

“The pandemic has necessitated certain changes and adjustments to individual practice, group rehearsals and concert performance. Each musician, as always, needs to practise his or her individual part at home. But at rehearsals as well as in concerts, the compulsory distancing on stage has its drawbacks. The real challenge has been to be able to hear

**The NCPA has played its part in shielding artistes associated with it from financial worries, giving them a platform to engage with the audience and equipping them with the requisite knowledge to deal with unique problems in the face of the pandemic**

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the ‘group sound’. The distancing between the musicians on stage lets the musician hear himself or herself clearly but not the collective sound so vital to good orchestral playing. Further, the audience size is also truncated so that in a hall meant for a thousand people, hardly three or four hundred can attend. Making music together and playing concerts for the public where there is a capacity audience is a different feel altogether,” says Dr. Cavas Bilimoria, SOI physician, who had been the Administrator of the music academy.

The current circumstances, however, have also presented new opportunities. The orchestra has been performing interesting and hitherto unexplored programme choices that have been well received at both, the Tata and Prithvi theatres. There is a renewed focus on chamber music as well as symphonic music for a pared-down orchestra.

The many lockdowns since March 2020 may have, on the face of it, rendered the link between connoisseurs and the performing arts tenuous. Consider this, however: Although physical music stores in the U.K. were closed from March to June, and again in November 2020, vinyl sales in the country reached a 30-year high in 2021 with 5.3 million records sold across the year, proving the hunger for music and good sound.

And why just the U.K.? Each time the NCPA has reopened in the last two years, the audience has come out in encouraging numbers, cognisant of the havoc the pandemic has wreaked on the world of culture. It is this support for the arts that will go a long way in healing unseen wounds. ■

# Concert of Gratitude

**No performing arts centre can survive without the support of its patrons. To express the deep appreciation we feel for our members and friends, we ended 2021 with a special concert**

**2**021 was a difficult year for everyone. And so, as things began to open up towards the end of the year, the NCPA and the Symphony Orchestra of India felt it was right to end the year with a special concert exclusively for NCPA Members and Friends of the SOI—a small thank you for supporting the NCPA over the years and particularly through the pandemic. Rohinton Nariman, former justice of the Supreme Court, was invited to speak as chief guest at the event, and in his address to the audience at the start of the evening, showed his deep knowledge and appreciation of music.

Mr Khushroo N Suntook, Chairman, NCPA, who co-founded the SOI with violin virtuoso Marat Bisengaliev in 2006, spoke of there being no substitute for live performances and the enormous response worldwide to even a chink of an opening is proof of this fact. He also touched upon the orchestra's journey over the years. "This is the fourth concert of this season at the NCPA and I must congratulate our players who remained here during the terrible period we went through, and developed their techniques, and continued teaching online. A gratifying feature this season is a number of Indian players who have now taken their place in our regular ensemble, a promise that Marat gave many years ago that it would take at least 10 to 14 years to have Indian players has at last fortified and you will see more young players in our orchestra in future seasons," he said.

The programme chosen for the evening was largely composed of lighter fare, and featured several members of the SOI as soloists. The first half of the evening was dedicated to Saint-Saëns's *The Carnival of the Animals*. One of the composer's best-known compositions, with each movement depicting a different animal (or animals), the work also offers a



Cellist Saluat Karibayev played Bruch's *Kol Nidrei*



Ruslan Galilov was the solo clarinetist in Giora Feidman's *Let's be happy*



Pianist Assel Dautpayeva (seen here playing *The Carnival of the Animals*) also played Chopin's *Grande Polonaise Brillante* later



Mr. Khushroo N Suntook, Chairman, NCPA (right) with chief guest Rohinton Nariman, former justice of the Supreme Court



Chaminade's flute concertino featured Aruzhan Bissengaliyeva as the flautist

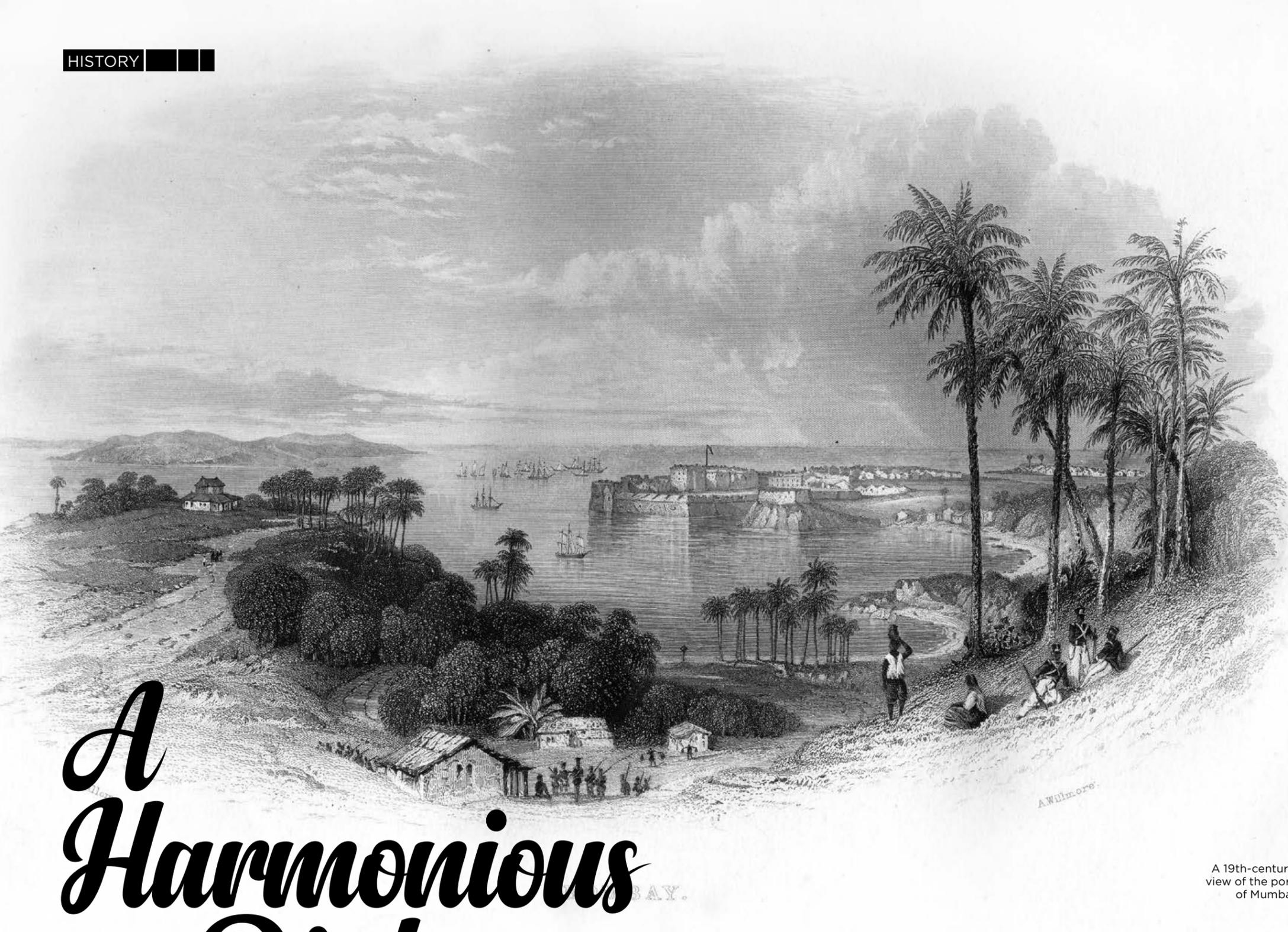


Sarasate's *Navarra* for two violins featured Zeinep Suleimenova and Akmaral Zhangazina

number of members of the ensemble the opportunity to shine as soloists, and the musicians of the SOI delivered with aplomb.

The second half of the evening featured numerous works of varying character including Chopin's *Grande Polonaise Brillante* by pianist Assel Dautpayeva, Chaminade's flute concertino with Aruzhan Bissengaliyeva as the flautist, Ruslan Galilov as the solo clarinetist in Giora Feidman's *Let's be happy*, and Sarasate's *Navarra* for two violins executed with great virtuosity by Zeinep Suleimenova and Akmaral Zhangazina. A poignant interlude to the largely light-hearted programme was Bruch's *Kol Nidrei* performed with heartfelt urgency by SOI cellist Saluat Karibayev.

The orchestra, led this evening by concertmaster Anton Kholodenko, rounded out the programme with waltzes and polkas by Johann Strauss, Jr., which left the enthusiastic audience wanting more, even as we were closing in on two hours. The SOI delivered an imaginative Christmas medley written specially for the ensemble by composer Kaizad Patel. Smiles of recognition and joy spread through the audience as the work weaved together themes from 20 beloved Christmas songs and carols. And finally, in a nod to Vienna's iconic New Year's Day concert, the snare drum's beat heralded Johann Strauss, Sr.'s, ever-popular *Radetzky March*. The Mumbai audience knew only too well their role in this ever-popular concert closer and needed no cue to clap along to the beat. ■



A 19th-century view of the port of Mumbai

# A Harmonious Dialogue

In the first of a three-part essay that discusses a crucial intercultural musical exchange between Italian pianist and scholar Giovanni Scrinzi and vocalist and musicologist B.R. Deodhar, tabla player, composer and author **ANEESH PRADHAN** discusses Victorian attitudes towards Indian music in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Contrary to popular belief that intercultural musical exchanges are relatively recent occurrences of the past few decades, there is enough documentary evidence to prove that this was a reality dating back several centuries. Evidently, a web of socio-economic and political networks made these dialogues a reality. They manifested themselves in a subconscious assimilation of musical ideas across cultures or through conscious efforts on the part of musicians and musicologists to study and incorporate elements from other musical systems.

Conditions in India in the 19th and early 20th centuries were also conducive to similar musical exchanges and were impacted by the colonial context. Focusing on one such encounter that took place in Bombay (now Mumbai), a city that attracted diverse cultural influences, this paper examines the circumstances and conflicting ideologies that motivated the dialogue and shaped its contours.

## *Parity between Western and Indian music*

The 19th century saw the rise of national consciousness among the Indian intelligentsia and a growing urge for social and political change. With a view to constructing a pan-Indian cultural identity, members of this social stratum promoted certain aspects of indigenous culture to challenge colonial racial superiority. Endeavours to classicise Indian music and to propagate it as a symbol of an ancient culture dating back to a glorious Hindu-Sanskritic past were part of the nationalist scheme to combat the highly prejudiced accounts of Indian history provided by British colonial administrator historians like James Mill and other writers of his ilk.<sup>1</sup>

With particular reference to Indian music, the latter had drawn a mix of reactions from British travellers to India, ranging from indifference, ignorance, and mild curiosity, to antipathy, oblique praise.<sup>2</sup> The reconstruction of the past and the need to establish a national cultural identity to correct this colonial disdain of Indian civilisation and culture was therefore accompanied with a strong desire to prove India's ability to be on par with Western

1 Mill gave a despairing account of the Indian civilisation and Hindu character. Writing about the Hindu character, Mill observed: "In truth the Hindu like the Eunuch excels in the qualities of a slave". "People of Europe", he wrote, "even during the feudal ages, were greatly superior to the Hindus". He further adds, "In the still more important qualities, which constitute what we call the moral character, the Hindu ranks very low". See James Mill, *The History of British India*, (first pub. in 1818), Vols. I & II, Notes by Horace Hayman Wilson, "Introduction" by J.K. Galbraith, Chelsea House Publishers, New York, 1968, Vol. II, p.365. Cited by, J.V. Naik, "An Early Appraisal of the British Colonial Policy", *Journal of the University of Bombay*, Arts No. Vol. XLIV & XLV No.80-81, 1975-76, pp.243-270.

2 Examples of such impressions can be found reproduced in Ketaki Kushari Dyson, *A Various Universe: A Study of the Journals and Memoirs of British Men and Women in the Indian Subcontinent, 1765-1856*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1978, pp.336-338.



Students of the Deodhar Music School at Girgaon, Mumbai

culture. Thus, efforts were made to project Indian music as an art and science that encompassed all that Western music had to offer. For instance, growing national consciousness may have prompted some to prove that Indian music could be notated just like Western music. Equally, the inclination of the Indian intelligentsia to emulate colonial rulers whose connection with India was regarded by most intellectuals including social reformers, with a few exceptions, as divinely ordained, may have inspired

some to incorporate aspects of Western music such as a system of notation.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, *shrutis* or microtones within the gamut of notes employed in Indian music were sought to be mathematically defined, in order to assert that indigenous music was not only an art but was equally a science in no way inferior to Western music.<sup>4</sup>

But pertinent to the present discussion is the concept of harmony in Indian music that also found place in 19th-century endeavours to match all that

Western music had to offer. Some commentators rued the fact that the concept of harmony was non-existent in Indian music, and they strongly believed that its inclusion would enhance the quality of the latter. Clearly, this was a reflection of the reformist sentiment prevailing in some sections that sought to incorporate Western concepts to ameliorate Indian society of its ills.

In Bombay, Kaikhushru Naoroji Kabrajee (1842-1904), founder of the Parsi Gayan Uttejak Mandali, a music club established in 1870, while exhorting Parsi families to take to learning and performing music also proposed that Western harmony and rhythm be introduced in Indian music to rectify defects that he thought existed in Indian music.<sup>5</sup>

At a function held in 1886 by the Bombay branch of the Poona Gayan Samaj, a music club originally established in Poona (now Pune) in 1874, Kabrajee spoke in favour of incorporating harmony in Indian music and utilising aids from European music without losing national identity, thus indicating yet again his fascination for European music, his desire to make indigenous music suitable for European listeners, and his belief in a common musical character for the country as a whole.<sup>6</sup>

Conversely, there were others who believed that the concept of harmony was already present in Indian music. In the discussions held during the third Gandharva Mahavidyalaya (hereinafter GM) conference organised in Bombay from 4th to 7th December 1920, participants opined that harmony existed in Indian music, but that it did not manifest itself in the way it did in Western music.<sup>7</sup> These and previously mentioned reflections of Indian scholars were obviously motivated more by a nationalist fervour than a thorough understanding of Western music.

The GM deliberations invited a candid and firm

response from Giovanni Scrinzi (c.1864-1935), an Italian pianist, scholar of Western music and music critic for *The Times of India*, based in Bombay since the late 19th century. His was not the first instance of a more informed European engagement with Indian music. There had been previous occasions when British amateur musicians and music enthusiasts stationed in various parts of India interacted with Indian musicians. Their experiences were mentioned not only in travelogues, but also found expression in their performance repertoire and academic works dating back to the late 18th century. Notwithstanding their viewpoint of Indian music being a representation of an exotic and ancient orient and the shortcomings in methodologies and approaches, their writings on the subject are of historical importance.<sup>8</sup>

However, these were isolated examples of intercultural dialogue, as the overwhelming and lasting impression of colonial writing on the subject was indisputably prejudiced. Often coloured by Victorian social mores of chastity, temperance and morality, colonial authors equated women performers with prostitutes and condemned them and their colleagues as a depraved lot.<sup>9</sup>

In the light of these European responses to Indian music, this paper argues that Scrinzi's was a nuanced perspective that not only addressed questions related to the theory of music, but also extended to practical aspects of music-making. His life and work in Bombay, as documented by vocalist, scholar and music educationist B.R. Deodhar (1901-1990), and the writings he left behind, demonstrate his passion to move beyond his cultural sphere to establish his viewpoint with regard to Indian music. ■

©Aneesh Pradhan. The author wishes to acknowledge with gratitude the valuable comments shared by Sudev Sheth, Shubha Mudgal and Gert M. Wegner.

3 See preface of Mr. Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande, *Swar maalika*, (Gujarati), Bombay Gayan Uttejak Mandali, Bombay, 1909. For a brief discussion about the prevalent views on the merits and demerits of using an indigenous system of notation and the Western system, see Charles Capwell, "Musical Life in Nineteenth-Century Calcutta as a Component in the History of a Secondary Urban Center", in *Asian Music*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Autumn - Winter, 1986), University of Texas Press, Austin, 1986, pp. 139-163. For an analysis of the Indian intelligentsia's inclination to regard colonial rule as 'Divine Providence', see J.V. Naik, "Perceptions of the British Rule in Maharashtra: A Selective Study", in A.J. Quaisar and S.P. Verma (ed.), *Art and Culture: Endeavours in Interpretation*, Abhinav Publication, New Delhi, 1996, pp.107-118.

4 An illustration of this trend can be found in the Bhavanrao A. Pingle, *Indian Music*, (n.p.), Bombay, 2nd ed., 1898, pp.217-279. For a detailed discussion on the debate related to *shrutis*, see Suvarnalata Rao and Wim van der Meer, "The Construction, Reconstruction, and Deconstruction of Shruti" in Joep Bor, Françoise "Nalini" Delvoye, Jane Harvey, Emmie te Nijenhuis (eds.), *Hindustani Music - Thirteenth to Twentieth Centuries*, Codarts and Manohar, New Delhi, 2010, pp. 673-696.

5 Pestanjee Firozeshah Kapadia, *Gayan Uttejak Mandali: tenee ponee sadinee tawaareekhno ahewaal*, (Gujarati), "Mrs. Freni M. Cama", Mumbai, 1946, p.28.

6 Balwant Triumback Sahasrabuddhe, *Hindu Music and the Gayan Samaj*, The Madras Jubilee Gayan Samaj, Madras, 1887, p.72.

7 It may be mentioned here that the GM had been established in 1901 at Lahore by vocalist and music educationist Vishnu Digambar Paluskar, but had shifted its headquarters to Bombay in 1908 and had held five music conferences in the city between the years 1918 and 1922. For a discussion on the music conferences held by the GM in Bombay, see Aneesh Pradhan, *Hindustani Music in Colonial Bombay*, Three Essays Collective, Gurgaon, pp.107-121.

8 V.N. Bhatkhande, *A Short Historical Survey of the Music of Upper India*, "B.S. Sukthankar", Bombay, 1934, p.34. For analyses of Western engagement with Indian music through the colonial period, see Raymond Head, "Corelli in Calcutta: Colonial music-making in India during the 17th and 18th centuries", in *Early Music*, 13(4), Oxford University Press, November 1985, pp.551-552; Gerry Farrell, *Indian Music and the West*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1997; Ashok Da. Ranade, *Indology and Ethnomusicology: Contours of the Indo-British Relationship*, Promilla & Co., Publishers, New Delhi, 1992.

9 Rev. M.A. Sherring, *Hindu Tribes and Castes*, Vol.1, Thacker, Spink, and Co., Calcutta, n.d., p.274. More examples of similar stigmatisation are referred to in Joep Bor, *The Voice of the Sarangi: An Illustrated history of bowing in India*, National Centre for the Performing Arts, Quarterly Journal, Vol.XV, 324; Vol. XVI, 1, Sept., Dec.'86 and March '87, pp.81-82.



# THE HYPOTHETICAL TENTH

How a team of musicologists and computer scientists completed Beethoven's unfinished symphony.

By Ahmed Elgammal, *The Conversation*

**W**hen Ludwig van Beethoven died in 1827, he was three years removed from the completion of his Ninth Symphony, a work heralded by many as his magnum opus. He had started work on his Tenth Symphony but, due to deteriorating health, was unable to make much headway: All he left behind were some musical sketches.

Ever since then, Beethoven fans and musicologists have puzzled and lamented over what could have been. His notes teased at some magnificent reward, albeit one that seemed forever out of reach.

Now, thanks to the work of a team of music historians, musicologists, composers and computer scientists, Beethoven's vision has come to life. I presided over the artificial intelligence side of the project, leading a group of scientists at the creative AI startup Playform AI that taught a machine both Beethoven's entire body of work and his creative process.

A full recording of Beethoven's Tenth Symphony was released on 9th October, 2021, the same day as the world premiere performance took place in Bonn, Germany—the culmination of a two-year-plus effort.

## Past attempts hit a wall

Around 1817, the Royal Philharmonic Society in London commissioned Beethoven to write his Ninth and Tenth symphonies. Written for an orchestra, symphonies often contain four movements: the first is performed at a fast tempo, the second at a slower one, the third at a medium or fast tempo, and the last at a fast tempo. Beethoven completed his Ninth Symphony in 1824, which concludes with the timeless “Ode to Joy.” But when it came to the Tenth Symphony, Beethoven did not leave much behind, other than some musical notes and a handful of ideas he had jotted down.

There have been some past attempts to reconstruct parts of Beethoven’s Tenth Symphony. Most famously, in 1988, musicologist Barry Cooper ventured to complete the first and second movements. He wove together 250 bars of music from the sketches to create what was, in his view, a production of the first movement that was faithful to Beethoven’s vision.

Yet the sparseness of Beethoven’s sketches made it impossible for symphony experts to go beyond that first movement.

## Assembling the team

In early 2019, Dr. Matthias Röder, the director of the Karajan Institute, an organisation in Salzburg, Austria, that promotes music technology, contacted me. He explained that he was putting together a team to complete Beethoven’s Tenth Symphony in celebration of the composer’s 250th birthday. Aware of my work on AI-generated art, he wanted to know if AI would be able to help fill in the blanks left by Beethoven. The challenge seemed daunting. To pull it off, AI would need to do something it had never done before. But I said I would give it a shot.

Röder then compiled a team that included Austrian composer Walter Werzowa. Famous for writing Intel’s signature bong jingle, Werzowa was tasked with putting together a new kind of composition that would integrate what Beethoven left behind with what the AI would generate. Mark Gotham, a computational music expert, led the effort to transcribe Beethoven’s sketches and process his entire body of work so the AI could be properly trained.

The team also included Robert Levin, a musicologist at Harvard University who happens to be an incredible pianist. Levin had previously finished a number of incomplete 18th-century works by Mozart and Bach.

## The project takes shape

In June 2019, the group gathered for a two-day workshop at Harvard’s music library. In a large room with a piano, a blackboard and a stack of Beethoven’s sketchbooks spanning most of his known works, we talked about how fragments could be turned into a complete piece of music and how AI could help solve this puzzle, while still remaining faithful to Beethoven’s process and vision.

The music experts in the room were eager to learn more about the sort of music AI had created in the past. I told them how AI had successfully generated music in the style of Bach. However, this was only a harmonisation of an inputted melody that sounded like Bach. It did not come close to what we needed to do: construct an entire symphony from a handful of phrases.

Meanwhile, the scientists in the room—myself included—wanted to learn about what sort of materials were available, and how the experts envisioned using them to complete the symphony.

The task at hand eventually crystallised. We would need to use notes and completed compositions from Beethoven’s entire body of work—along with

the available sketches from the Tenth Symphony—to create something that Beethoven himself might have written.

This was a tremendous challenge. We did not have a machine that we could feed sketches to, push a button and have it spit out a symphony. Most AI available at the time could not continue an uncompleted piece of music beyond a few additional seconds.

We would need to push the boundaries of what creative AI could do by teaching the machine Beethoven’s creative process—how he would take a few bars of music and painstakingly develop them into stirring symphonies, quartets and sonatas.

**We would need to use notes and completed compositions from Beethoven’s entire body of work—along with the available sketches from the Tenth Symphony—to create something that he himself might have written**

## Piecing together Beethoven’s creative process

As the project progressed, the human side and the machine side of the collaboration evolved. Werzowa, Gotham, Levin and Röder deciphered and transcribed the sketches from the Tenth Symphony, trying to understand Beethoven’s intentions. Using his completed symphonies as a template, they attempted to piece together the puzzle of where the fragments of sketches should go—which movement, which part of the movement.

They had to make decisions, like determining whether a sketch indicated the starting point of a scherzo, which is a very lively part of the symphony, typically in the third movement. Or they might determine that a line of music was likely the basis of a fugue, which is a melody created by interweaving parts that all echo a central theme.

The AI side of the project—my side—found itself grappling with a range of challenging tasks. First, and most fundamentally, we needed to figure out how to take a short phrase, or even just a motif, and use it to develop a longer, more complicated musical structure, just as Beethoven would have done. For example, the machine had to learn how Beethoven constructed the Fifth Symphony out of a basic four-note motif. Next, because the continuation of a phrase also needs to follow a certain musical form, whether it is a scherzo, trio or fugue, the AI needed to learn Beethoven’s process for developing these forms.

The to-do list grew: We had to teach the AI how to take a melodic line and harmonise it. It needed to learn how to bridge two sections of music together. And we realised it had to be able to compose a coda, which is a segment that brings a section of a piece of music to its conclusion. Finally, once we had a full composition, the AI was going to have to figure out how to orchestrate it, which involves assigning different instruments for different parts.

And it had to pull off these tasks in the way Beethoven might do so.

## Passing the first big test

In November 2019, the team met in person again—this time, in Bonn, at the Beethoven House Museum, where the composer was born and raised. This

meeting was the litmus test for determining whether AI could complete this project. We printed musical scores that had been developed by AI and built off the sketches from Beethoven’s Tenth. A pianist performed in a small concert hall in the museum before a group of journalists, music scholars and Beethoven experts. We challenged the audience to determine where Beethoven’s phrases ended and where the AI extrapolation began. They could not.

A few days later, one of these AI-generated scores was played by a string quartet at a news conference. Only those who intimately knew Beethoven’s sketches for the Tenth Symphony could determine when the AI-generated parts came in. The success of these tests told us we were on the right track. But these were just a couple of minutes of music. There was still much more work to do.

**When it comes to the arts, I see AI not as a replacement, but as a tool—one that opens doors for artistes to express themselves in new ways**

## Ready for the world

At every point, Beethoven’s genius loomed, challenging us to do better. As the project evolved, the AI did as well. Over the ensuing 18 months, we constructed and orchestrated two entire movements of more than 20 minutes apiece.

We anticipate some pushback to this work—those who will say that the arts should be off-limits from AI, and that AI has no business trying to replicate the human creative process. Yet when it comes to the arts, I see AI not as a replacement, but as a tool—one that opens doors for

artistes to express themselves in new ways.

This project would not have been possible without the expertise of human historians and musicians. It took an immense amount of work—and, yes, creative thinking—to accomplish this goal. At one point, one of the music experts on the team said that the AI reminded him of an eager music student who practises every day, learns, and becomes better and better.

Now that student, having taken the baton from Beethoven, is ready to present the Tenth Symphony to the world. ■

*This piece was originally published on The Conversation. The author, Ahmed Elgammal, is Professor, Director of the Art & AI Lab, Rutgers University. The symphony titled, Beethoven X: The AI Project, is available on YouTube Music.*



# CATHARSIS MEETS BRILLIANCE

AS THE NCPA PREPARES TO SCREEN BRITISH PLAYWRIGHT AND SCREENWRITER TOM STOPPARD'S LATEST PLAY *LEOPOLDSTADT*—A SWEEPING WORK THAT HAS BEEN CALLED BREATHTAKING AND UNFORGETTABLE—WE TAKE A LOOK AT THE DECADES-LONG CAREER THAT HAS BEEN NOTHING SHORT OF EXTRAORDINARY.

By Akshaya Pillai

**I**t was one of those rainy afternoons, the kind where thunder and tenebrosity forces a professor to leave the kids to themselves, when I first heard the name Tom Stoppard.

A classmate whose last name I have since forgotten was narrating *Shakespeare in Love*. This is how, before watching Joseph Fiennes and Gwyneth Paltrow speak in iambic pentameter, Stoppard's illusory period comedy existed in my imagination. An ordinary-looking Shakespeare battling writer's block finds his muse in a dreamy woman who, despite all her riches, joins his troupe to quench her thirst for poetry. Perhaps why the movie stayed with me for so long has something to do with how the bard, whom, as students, we spent years interpreting, was here but a young playwright looking for inspiration himself and struggling to find his voice.

One of Stoppard's most memorable contributions is in making Shakespeare accessible and appealing to the modern audience. *Shakespeare in Love* was a landmark movie in how cleverly biographical and historical elements were reinterpreted, but it also explored the bond between tumultuous love and creativity. Before he wrote this multiple Academy-award winner—he shared the Best Screenplay - Written Directly for the Screen Award with co-writer Marc Norman—Stoppard wrote *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, a dramatic masterpiece that brings to the fore

two minor characters from *Hamlet*. The play, which would become his ticket to fame, was first produced at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in 1966, then by the National Theatre and finally adapted into a film. If *Shakespeare in Love* reimagines the origin of a masterpiece, the latter starts with characters who were historically not in focus.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are outsiders, equally baffled and amused at the goings-on in the state of Denmark. Their fates are ensnared in the plans of the powerful. What emerges is an involuntary critique of the original, a plot that explores the conflict between individual freedom and entrapment, something Stoppard has returned to time and again in several plays, including *A Walk on the Water*, *Professional Foul*, *Jumpers*, *Dirty Linen* and *New-Found-Land*. His writing is awash with intellectual and philosophical themes. He delves into the meaning of art through

*Artist Descending a Staircase* where he employs a continuous loop of recording facilitating the audience to eavesdrop and engage with three artists.

Several of his protagonists share a sense of alienation from the ways of the English. *Jumpers*, *The Real Thing*, *Arcadia*, *The Invention of Love* and a lot of his other work drags the spotlight onto an outsider on the fringes of the English establishment, perhaps drawing on some deeper sense of estrangement that he himself experienced from the ways of this land.

**A lot of his love for the time he spent in India, which was replete with dak bungalows, toy trains and summer palaces of maharajas, finds its way to his radio play *In the Native State* which was later adapted for the stage and called *Indian Ink***

## An Indian connection

Stoppard calls himself a 'bounced Czech' owing to his peripatetic childhood. His connection with India dates back to a time when children from Czechoslovakia were being sprinkled across the world—to India, Kenya, Canada, Argentina, the United States, England. Hermoine Lee writes in his biography *Tom Stoppard: A Life*, "Their lives would be shaped out of random acts of fate. Language, family, home, histories would survive, or be lost and erased, and sometimes eventually re-found, on the throw of a coin." Born Tomáš Stráussler on 3rd July 1937, Stoppard left Czechoslovakia with his family to move to Singapore during the Second World War. The family would eventually make the sprawling tea town of Darjeeling home. Stoppard's fondness for the hill station is evident in these lines from 1991, "Very often a belt of mist lifts the mountains off the earth. They float in the sky, infinitely far off and yet

## Writing *Leopoldstadt* was perhaps a way for Stoppard to own his identity and explore what it meant to be a Jew in the 20th century

sharply detailed, massive yet ethereal, lit like theatre, so ageless and permanent as to make history trivial. It is perhaps the most mesmerising view of the earth from anywhere on the earth."

A lot of his love for the time he spent in India, which was replete with dak bungalows, toy trains, summer palaces of maharajas, colonial sanatoriums, finds its way to his radio play *In the Native State*, which was later adapted for the stage and called *Indian Ink*. Set in 1930, it is about Flora Crewe, a British poet visiting India and her coquetry with Nirad, an artist who is working on her portrait. The story unravels through letters written to Flora's sister, and weaves in parallel narratives to portray the elasticity of memory. The play also examines imperialism and colonialism. Flora wishes Nirad would be culturally independent, just as she thinks India should be independent. "If you don't start learning to *take* you'll never be shot of us...It's your country, and we've got it. Everything else is bosh," she tells him.

## Unfinished business

Stoppard spent a large chunk of his life believing he had a happy childhood when the reality was far from it. Like he explores in his plays, a fact can



A scene from *Leopoldstadt* in which Stoppard confronts, for the first time as a playwright, his Jewish identity and Czech roots

MARC BRENNER

simultaneously be true and a lie. His childhood was safe and spent in a realm of peace and happiness, but the fact is before memory had started taking shape, he was a baby in a war-torn country, his father and grandparents were killed and many a family member, he discovered much later in life, breathed their last in Nazi concentration camps. Mothers are often allowed to decide what is best for their children, and Stoppard's mother wished to shield hers from this painful history. She wished for them a new life and a fresh start which she made possible by adopting a new country and culture. When Stoppard learnt about his Jewish roots, he was 56 years old, and at 57, he saw his family album for the first time. Apart from writing an essay in 1999, titled 'On Turning out to be Jewish', Stoppard led the life his mother had envisioned for him; one that was away from his family's past. Personal history builds your identity but when you learn of it in your midlife, how does it affect your narrative? For Stoppard, it took another work to nudge him into exploring all that he had

left behind but was, nevertheless, a part of him. The novel *Trieste* by Daša Drndić made him confront a compelling question: what about the less fortunate who couldn't escape the worst of history?

Writing *Leopoldstadt* was perhaps a way for Stoppard to own his identity and explore what it meant to be a Jew in the 20th century. The play spans six decades and chronicles the rise and fall of Vienna's Jewish community through the Merz family. Its members have converted and intermarried. They are Jewish and Protestant and Catholic. Their children are baptised and circumcised. They celebrate Christmas and Seder. Then the irreversible happens—the Nazi expropriation of Jews tears down their family tree. In a poignant scene, a family album is flipped through by different members of the family at different times. A grandmother who is unable to identify a couple says, "Here's a couple waving goodbye from the train, but who are they? No idea! That's why they're waving goodbye. It's like a second death, to lose your name in a family album."

Soon to be screened at the NCPA, *Leopoldstadt* had its preview in 2020 during the week of the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. Epic in scope, the play is a personal comeuppance for Stoppard. Towards the end, when Leo—who lives the life of an Englishman and coincidentally is a writer, a funny one, who has not witnessed the agonies of his family—enquires, "What have I done wrong?" he is told: "Nothing. You're an accident of history." You can see Stoppard's guilt glimmer in the lines: "His family is your family. But you live as if without history, as if you throw no shadow behind you. You wanted to know why Jacob killed himself. It was because he didn't think he deserved to be saved when so many died." *Leopoldstadt* extends a poignant reminder that the geographies we drift onto must not erase the shadows of our personal histories. For Stoppard, who has said the play has 'an element of unfinished business', the work grapples with a history that is as personal as it is pertinent. ■

# WHO CARES ABOUT THE BEATLES?

BY ANURAG TAGAT

WE TRY TO UNDERSTAND THE TIMELESSNESS OF BEATLEMANIA AND WHY, EVEN TODAY, WE ARE STILL TALKING ABOUT A BAND THAT BROKE UP MORE THAN 50 YEARS AGO.

It was around 2010 and upon meeting my brother in New York—he was studying computer engineering—I found out that he had gone from worshipping Iron Maiden and Pink Floyd to having his own personal Beatlemania phase. The Beatles were so prolific in the span of less than a decade in the 1960s that they released over 200 songs, all of which were deeply loved by a fan base across the world and subsequently, across generations as well. My brother had as many songs to pick from, from 'I Am the Walrus' to 'Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds' to 'Eleanor Rigby'. At the time, it was oddly amusing to dive deep into the Fab Four's catalogue in a way I had never done before, for no

other reason than the fact that I was hanging out with my family.

## ORIGINAL INFLUENCERS

A discovery from that time—apart from the obvious songwriting marvel of Paul, Ringo, George and John—was how the band's music from half a century ago was still gaining new fans. There is a certain allure to The Beatles' discography that can draw anyone—young or old, despite preset inclinations towards other genres—to their style of weird and wondrous pop music. Whether it is someone who has just picked up the guitar to learn 'Yesterday' or a pianist hoping to rock the house with their version of 'Hey Jude',

**THERE IS A CERTAIN ALLURE TO THE BEATLES' DISCOGRAPHY THAT CAN DRAW ANYONE TO THEIR STYLE OF WEIRD AND WONDROUS POP MUSIC**



The Beatles have had an undoubtable influence as songwriters who often made simple songs alongside avant-garde excursions, spurred on by psychedelics. The cadence and melodies of so many Beatles songs are instant earworms—'Help!', 'Here Comes the Sun', 'Let It Be' and 'In My Life' are just some examples of outstanding tunes which could light up any face during a listen.

It is a slightly different matter that the personalities behind this gigantic body of work were quite colourful in and of themselves. Paul McCartney, George Harrison, Ringo Starr and John Lennon were incredible together but as history has shown us, they also went on to write some superlative music as solo artistes. Towards the end of their time together as a band—when *Let It Be* released in May 1970, they had already broken up—none of the members were even 30 years old. Lennon was 29 as was Starr, while McCartney was 27 and Harrison, the youngest, was just 25.

When a documentary released at the time of *Let It Be* (directed by Michael Lindsay-Hogg and given the same name as the album) showed a sombre, anti-climactic end to the band, there was probably a narrative at play there. After all, Lindsay-Hogg was working with reportedly 80 hours of video footage of The Beatles as they prepped to create an album, perform the songs off it and play their iconic rooftop show.

## SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

About 50 years later, there seems to be a different spin on the final phase of The Beatles, put together by director Peter Jackson (from *The Lord of the Rings* film franchise) called *Get Back*. Unlike Lindsay-Hogg's telling of the end of the Fab Four, *Get Back* offers close to eight hours of footage from their final sessions together as a band. It shows a historic moment in crisp, colourful action as the band creates some of their most divisive yet loved songs, from 'I Me Mine' to 'Across the Universe' and 'I've Got a Feeling', among others.

Available to stream via OTT in India and across the world, *Get Back* does not paint the rosier picture

of the band—because certainly there was trouble brewing—but it does offer a very real, intimate perspective on the world's greatest band (then and probably, even now). And it does so without delving too much into their past. They experimented with hallucinogenic substances, studied under Maharishi Mahesh Yogi in Rishikesh, went from a small room in Hamburg to screaming thousands around the world and had a whole phenomenon named after them. On *Get Back*, we witness them expressing themselves in ways not seen before and this is particularly engrossing because of the four, two of them are no longer with us and yet, we gain new insights about them.

## WITH FRESH EYES

Arguably, The Beatles stirred a cultural revolution as musicians. Their footprint is evident today not just because of documentaries like *Get Back* and certainly not just because of older fans who vow to carry forward their legacy. It is more so because the music, prolific as it was, has always spoken for itself. They released more than a dozen core albums in a span of eight years, with very few misses and big chunks of hits. For *Let It Be*, The Beatles set themselves up to write 14 songs in a span of three weeks. Not an entirely unheard-of music assignment for artistes, but given their stature and catalogue at the time, they had a level to match up to in the midst of frayed nerves, members not showing up and more.

This was the first time in a while that they had decided to regroup and be in the same room to write and record their songs, unlike the previous records that were made with advancing music and recording technology. While there was drama, no doubt, there was also camaraderie. "It's silly not to be near each other," McCartney says at one point. Lennon and McCartney—the songwriting backbone of the band—share jokes and even dance with each other, as *Get Back* shows us. When Harrison walks off, they find a way to bring him back into the fold. Yoko Ono is there, as are Linda McCartney (Linda Eastman at the time) and Starr's first wife Maureen Starkey. Often, instead of a band at the end of their glorious career, they come



## THE BEATLES RELEASED MORE THAN A DOZEN CORE ALBUMS IN A SPAN OF EIGHT YEARS, WITH VERY FEW MISSES AND BIG CHUNKS OF HITS

across as four friends brought together by music.

One thing is for certain, they were not, as is infamously claimed, driven apart by Yoko Ono. This is something McCartney commented on at the time, not realising he had said something prescient. Seated with Starr and waiting for Lennon, he remarks, "It's gonna be such an incredible sort of comical thing, like, in 50 years' time, you know. 'They broke up 'cause Yoko sat on an amp'."

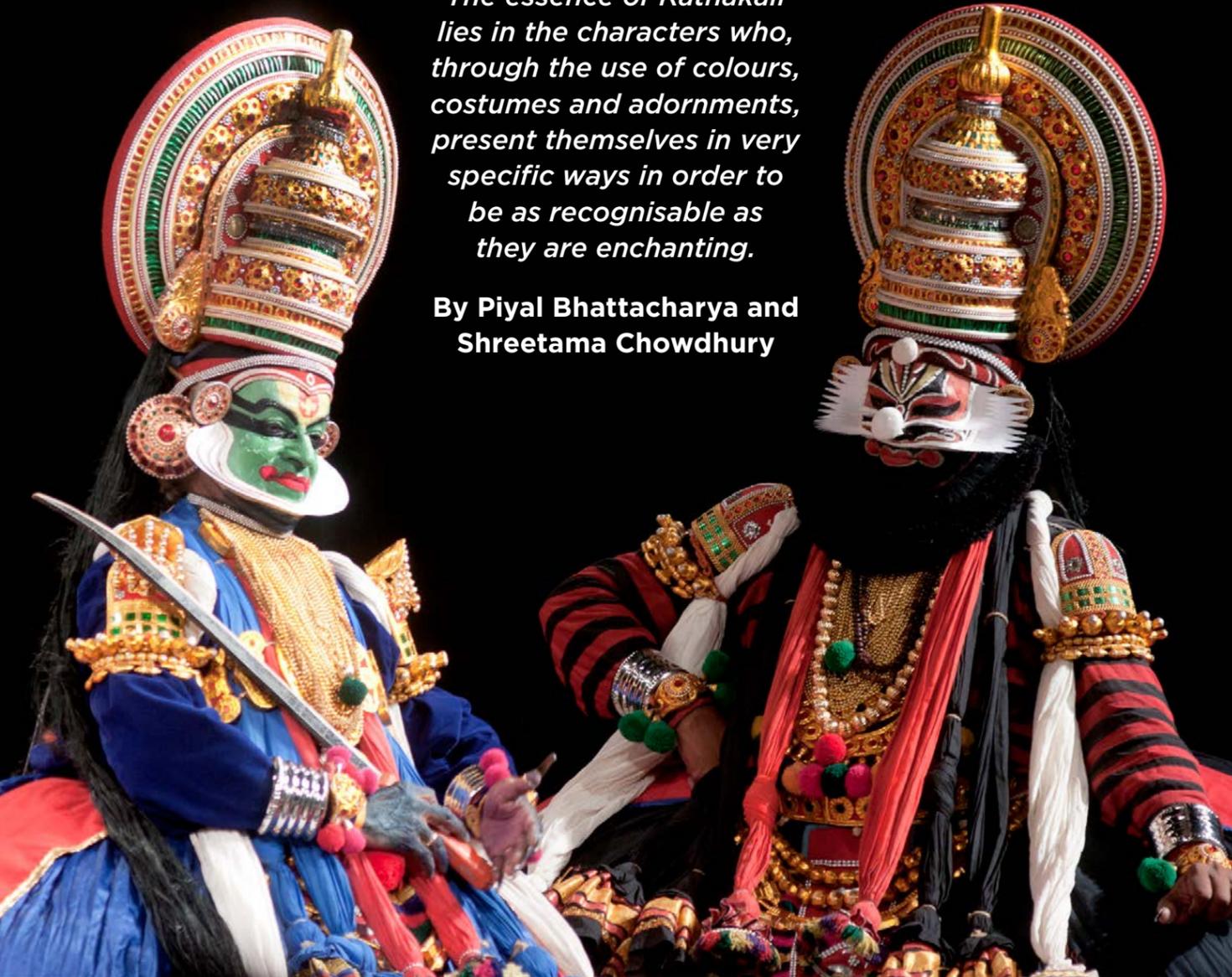
With songs for so many emotions—especially

the 'important' ones like love, friendship and togetherness—and a deep sense of introspection all packaged into the friendliest (and at times deliberately obtuse) styles, The Beatles remain relevant because there is simply no one quite like them. They wrote like few artistes before them, and certainly like no one at the time. Also, they made music at a pace that covered so much ground so quickly that everyone who followed seemed to be doing a poor imitation. In a way, this continues to be true even today. ■

# Strength of Character

The essence of Kathakali lies in the characters who, through the use of colours, costumes and adornments, present themselves in very specific ways in order to be as recognisable as they are enchanting.

By Piyal Bhattacharya and Shreetama Chowdhury



**A**harya is a significant component of the performing arts in India, where it is a part of the complete visual language of any form: an exterior extension of the form that culminates into a unique identity. Aharya is a tool that accentuates *abhinaya* as a support to augment *rasa* (aesthetic delight). The extent

of its importance can be understood from the *Natyashastra*, in which Bharata dedicated an entire chapter (Chapter 21) to *aharyabhinaya*. He has laid out a detailed guide and the fundamental philosophy governing this practice to convey its significance within the structure of the performance system.

The *Natyashastra* states:

यथाजन्तुः स्वाभावं स्वं परित्यज्यान्त्यदैहिकिम् ।  
तत्स्वभावं हिभजते देहान्तरमुपाश्रितः॥  
वेपेण वणकैश्चैवच्छादितः पुरुषस्तथा  
परभावं प्रकुरुते यस्य वेपंसमाश्रितः।

“Thus, how universal consciousness intakes the form of a limited body and mind and acts according to that curtailed consciousness, mind and nature of the body, the Nata/Nati shall behave likewise, according to the nature of one character, after putting on the costume and ornaments of a character.”

Here, Bharata elucidates the importance of adorning the performer with a costume that transforms them into a character with the help of *aharya*. Supporting this statement, philosopher Abhinavagupta comments on the utility of *aharyabhinaya* as the assistance to help the performer and carve the shape of the character out of the performer's physical plane.

Kathakali *aharya* is known for its elaborate costume stylisation and colourful make-up. From the land of Malabar, it has emerged as a unique art form that has been handed down systematically over generations within an established tradition. It is an integral part of the cultural geography of Kerala, including ritualistic and tribal living traditions. This traditional landscape comprises elaborate festivals with elephants, colourful umbrellas and intricately designed temple architecture, which contribute to the embellishment style, mood and the notion of Kathakali as an art form with vibrant costume and make-up. Another important aspect of this form is the category of characters that are depicted, largely consisting of mythical characters from the Ramayana, Mahabharata and Bhagavad Gita. These characters, with dramatic personalities and magical powers, are far removed from ordinary human characters. They are defined as *aloukika* or transmundane beings that are incomprehensible to the human mind. Hence, to communicate this, detailed and expansive costume and make-up have been developed as one of the limbs of this art form.

## Major classification of aharya

For *aharya* in the *Natyashastra*, Bharata uses the term *nepathya* and divides it into four major parts. These are the tools to create unworldly characters out of a human body that will bring the spectators closer to the imagination of such characters.



The *Natyashastra* categorised the mala (garland) in the following order:

वेष्टिमं विततं चैव संघाल्यं ग्रन्थिमं तथा  
प्रालम्बितं तथा चैव माल्यं पञ्चविधं स्मृतम् ॥<sup>3</sup>

*Veshtimam* is a garland that is wrapped around the body; *vitatam* is made out of twisting two or more garlands together. *Snghatyam* is a fascicle or a cluster of flowers strung together, whereas *granthimam* is a knotted garland and *pralambitam* is a kind of garland which hangs till the navel.

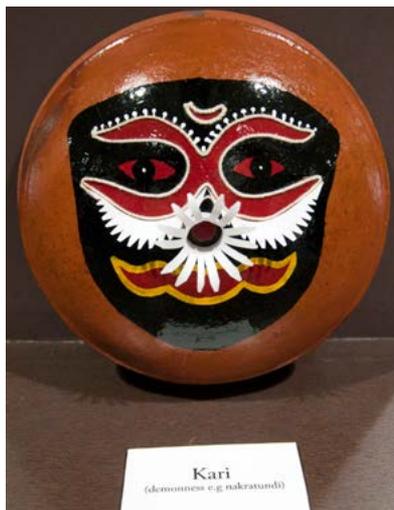
## Aharya in Kathakali

Sivandakaran Pillai and C.K. Sivarama Pillai while explaining *aharyabhinaya* said that all *abhinaya* should establish 'tanmayibhava' of the character. Once this is established by the costumes, the *angika*, *vachika* becomes an easier task. Like the soul leaving a body at death and possessing another body, the character embraces its new body. The *vesham* helps the performer to take on the *swabhava* of the character.

Kathakali is a *desi kala* (traditional regional art form), hence it has incorporated many region-specific attributes into the costume and make-up. Bharata opines: *Aharyabhinaya* should be in accordance with the regional character, mood and flavour. This is what is precisely followed by Kathakali.

## Colours to Demarcate Characters

The significance of colours has also been explained in the *Natyashastra*. White and yellow colours denote noble and pious characters and blue



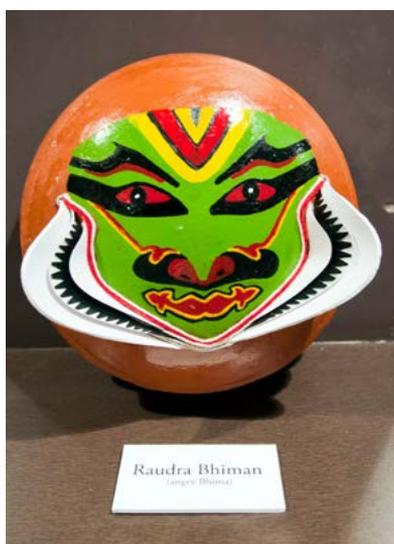
Kari  
(demons e.g. rakasundi)



Bali



Sugriva



Raudra Bhiman  
(angry Bhima)



Paccha vesham  
(e.g. Arjuna)



Balabhadran

and white is for arrogant heroes. Similarly, Kathakali uses other qualifiers to distinguish among various types of characters. Generally, the characters are divided into *satva*, *rajasa* and *tamasa*.

Kathakali is a form that is replete with distinctive peculiarities and the fundamentals of *Natyashastra*

that lends a singular characteristic to its *aharyabhinaya*. This, in turn, makes the art form richer aesthetically as well as culturally. ■

**Reference:** *Natyashastra, Volume IV, Parasnath Dwivedi, Sampurnananda Vishwavidyalaya, Varanasi*

## DIVISION OF CHARACTERS IN KATHAKALI

### Paccha

- **Muti:** Krishna, Ram, Lakshmana or incarnations of Vishnu
- **Kiritam:** Heroes and noble characters like Pancha Pandavas
- **Pazhuppu:** Noble characters like Shiva, Balabhadran, and others

### Kathi

- **Kurum Kathi:** Duryodhana, Ravana and other aggressive characters
- **Netum Kathi:** Ghatotkacha, Marich and others

### Thadi

- **Chuvanna Thadi:** Dusasana, Bali, Sugriva and others

- **Vella Thadi:** Hanuman, Nandikeswara and others

- **Karutta Thadi:** Kattalan, (Kirat)

### Kari

- Female versions of Thadi characters: Surpanakha, Simhika

### Minukku

- Rishi
- Muni
- Brahman
- Female Characters
- Carpenter
- Valalan

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# All the World Was His Stage

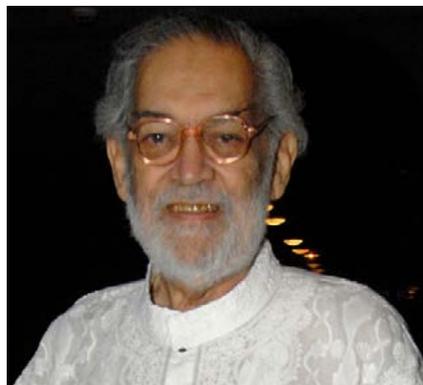
In the first week of the new year, the worlds of advertising, theatre, film and social work lost a colossus, and the city, a beloved son. Gerson da Cunha was a thespian par excellence, a thorough gentleman and above all, a conscientious citizen. As we mourn his passing, we must not forget to celebrate a life lived to the fullest. **By Roger C. B. Pereira**

**Actor. Adman. Activist.** What was Gerson da Cunha primarily? That is a difficult question to answer. One could not—and should not—separate one side of his personality from the other. He was an actor. And, as dear Raell [Padamsee] reminded us through the memory cards she generously distributed at his Memorial Service, all the world was his stage.

He was also a great adman, because he was a great communicator even before he joined advertising. Maybe that's what led him to it. What about his being an activist? Some have suggested that this surfaced on his completing his contract with UNICEF and the UN. I think not. It was the activist in him that inspired him to give up his plum position at Lintas and his star status on the Bombay stage, way back in 1978. And what about Gerson the Poet? And music aficionado? He loved Western classical music. Never ever missed a single performance at the NCPA. I can still picture him sitting right at the back in his wheelchair last December at the Tata Theatre. He was a great jazz enthusiast too. And he had a great love for cinema. He was, by all means, truly multifaceted.

In 1964, when he was “downloading”, at my behest, the global case study of Lux Toilet Soap advertising, he suddenly said to me: “Rog, do you think public service advertising would work in India?” He cited the example of public service advertising advocating the use of seat belts when driving. Nowhere in the world has it worked, he explained, but levying fines has. One could sense the direction of his thinking. What was surfacing was the activist mind of this very atypical adman.

Cut to 1971. India was hosting the Asian Advertising Conference in New Delhi for the first time. The crème de la crème of advertising and marketing was there. Each country showcased what they believed was their most outstanding advertising case study. Japan presented the Sony story, covering the era of the transistor radio of the '60s to the emergence of the walkman. For India, it was the Lintas team, led by Gerson and his colleague, contemporary and collaborator in every which way, the



maestro Alyque Padamsee. Theirs was a presentation that made all of us Indians in attendance proud. An outstanding case was made for public service advertising. That was the very first time that the attention of every one of us, from the Prime Minister and the President to the common man, was jolted by the realisation that ‘Bombay is dying’. For the first time, the social activist in Gerson went public with the dire needs of the city of Mumbai (then Bombay). Was it not appropriate then that Gerson was appointed the first CEO of Bombay First (now Mumbai First)?

I first met Gerson in 1952. I was 12, and he, 22. Until I met him, his was a name often mentioned over dinner by my three older siblings who were his contemporaries at St. Xavier's College. For a 22-year-old, he exuded remarkable confidence and had the personality of someone twice or thrice his age. I was acting in a Bandra talent contest in which he was one of the judges. I instinctively adopted him as my role model. When speaking on behalf of all three judges—although he was the youngest, and the other two were Adi Marzban and Ebrahim Alkazi—he displayed an impressive presence, personality and wisdom, and a rich baritone to boot. Since then, I have watched almost every play he acted in.

In 1961, Marzban directed *The Man Who Came to Dinner* starring Gerson as the impossible, wheelchair-using Sheridan Whiteside. This was the first time I was on the Bombay stage. I still vividly remember at one show, he suddenly drew a blank. Yes, he just forgot his lines. A major catastrophe

for most of us. Not for Gerson. He just walked nonchalantly to the prompter, grabbed the script, glanced at it, handed it back with aplomb and continued like there was no problem. Of course, the audience noticed it, but loved the way he had handled it. They clapped and clapped. That was so characteristic of Gerson—he could get away with anything.

What drew Gerson to theatre? Momentous things, he has said, can begin accidentally. “Theatre, which would be the God particle in my life, began with a dash down a corridor to a chemistry lecture (what if I had been in the Arts)? I collided with the exalted Theophilus Aguiar, Professor of English.” Aguiar would, in that conversation, offer him membership to the drama club in college and a role in an upcoming talent contest.

The rest, as they say, is history. Gerson's repertoire included *Antigone* (Alkazi). *The Little Hut* (Marzban). He has portrayed Othello in *Othello* (Zul Vellani) and the Shakespeare teacher in *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* (Pearl Padamsee). He was Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Duncan in *Macbeth*, Sheikh Imam-ud-din in *Tughlaq*, Claudius in *Hamlet*, Brutus in *Julius Caesar*, Pontius Pilate in *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and many more. His work in films like Deepa Mehta's *Water*, Pradip Krishen's *Electric Moon*, Santosh Sivan's *Asoka* and Vishal Bhardwaj's *Rangoon* remain particularly memorable.

Finally, an illustrious career such as Gerson's cannot go unrecognised. He was awarded the Thespo Lifetime Achievement Award, the ISA Gold Medal from the Indian Society of Advertisers (ISA), the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Advertising Agencies Association of India (AAAI), the Citizen of Mumbai Award by the Rotary Club of Bombay, and most recently, a medal of ‘Order of Rio Branco’ by the Government of Brazil for his services to the country.

Take a break, my friend. You've earned it. We'll miss you and the Gerson durbars. Thank you, Raell, for hosting our last dinner together: Gerson, Uma, Sabira, Farrokh, yours truly. ■

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Date: ..... Signature: .....

## Setting the Tone

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. This month, the second instalment of a piece by **A. Ranganathan** discusses how physicist C.V. Raman proved Indian musical instruments, like the mridanga, tabla and veena, are able to achieve what was considered impossible in the area of harmonics.

**Raman's ear for music** detected musical overtones in the sound of the mridanga which accounts for the fact that the acoustic properties of Indian percussion instruments, like the mridanga and the tabla, are different from those of the instruments of percussion known to European science. "Times without number," wrote Raman, "we have heard the best singers or performers on the flute or violin accompanied by the well-known indigenous musical drums, and the effect with a good instrument is always excellent. It was this, in fact, that conveyed to me the hint that the Indian instruments of percussion possess interesting acoustic properties, and stimulated the research." Indeed, Raman had demonstrated that the mridanga could produce harmonics as a result of the heterogenous loading of its membranes. Moreover, since "the success of the arrangement depends entirely on the extent and distribution of the loading adopted and upon the arrangement provided by which the tensions of the membrane in eight different octants may be exactly equalised," Raman concluded that the acoustic properties of the mridanga are not derived from mere chance but bring into play the distinctive signature of the Indian musical tradition. And more importantly, Raman had also demonstrated that a maestro like Palghat Mani lyer could make the mridanga yield the near-equivalent to the sound of a stringed instrument.

### Drumming it up

In a well-known paper, 'The Indian Musical Drums', Raman pointed out that the mridanga and the tabla contained "the solution, in a practical form, to the acoustical problem of transforming a circular drumhead giving inharmonic overtones into a harmonic musical instrument." As he remarked, "the drum has the special property of vibrating freely in different forms but with identical

frequencies which can be superposed on each other. Some of the superposition forms have a striking simplicity, and indicate an analogy between the musical drums and the harmonic vibrations of a stretched string."

Here, an attempt will be made to give an extremely simplified account of this paper. In this instrument, the drumhead is stretched over the open end of a heavy metal or wooden cylinder and carries a symmetric load distributed in five successive layers over a part of its surface whose superficial density decreases from the centre onwards. The load consists of a pliable and sticky mixture which contains finely powdered iron. This produces an increase in the surface density of the membrane which is proportional to the thickness of the

*Raman concluded that the acoustic properties of the mridanga are not derived from mere chance but bring into play the distinctive signature of the Indian musical tradition*

layer where the mixture is applied. There is, furthermore, a second membrane which is mounted in the form of a ring along the edge of the drumhead. A system of 16 tightening cords permits the drumhead to be stretched in all directions. This is very important for the correct adjustment of the pitch. The inhomogeneous membrane so constructed has remarkable acoustic properties. The lowest tone and the first overtone of the drum arise from the vibrations without an inner nodal line and with a nodal diameter respectively. Both these tones are more or less in the ratio of a fundamental to its octave. The

vibration with two nodal diameters has the same pitch as the vibration with one nodal circle, and is, indeed, exactly, the quinte of the first overtone.

The pitches of both the next higher modes of vibration with three nodal diameters, and one nodal diameter and a nodal circle respectively are again identical and lie an octave higher than the first overtone. Similarly, three higher modes of vibration combine to yield the fifth harmonic overtone. These results have been achieved as a result of the careful arrangement of the load in the wake of the construction of the drumhead. As already mentioned, since some of the different modes of vibration have the same pitch, they can occur together as natural vibrations in any proportion and give rise to superposition figures. The inner lines arising from the superposition can assume the most varied geometric forms depending upon the ratios of the amplitudes. To cite an example, the nodal lines of the third harmonic overtone can have the following shapes: a circle, an ellipse, two parallel straight lines, two hyperbolic arcs or two diameters at right angles to one another. The fourth and fifth harmonic overtones can similarly give rise to other superposition figures, which can be experimentally detected from the equality of the pitch of the different modes of vibration. Among them are the interesting superposition figures for the fourth overtone consisting of three parallel lines and, for the fifth, four parallel lines. When the membrane as a whole vibrates, the fundamental originates; if it vibrates in two sections, the octave; in three sections (divided by parallel nodal lines) the third harmonic overtone; in four sections, the fourth and in five sections, the fifth tone of the harmonic series. Thus, some of these superposition figures present a remarkable analogy to the law of vibration of the homogenous string.



### Good vibrations

Viewed in historical perspective, Raman's work relating to the mridanga and tabla is significant for us because it highlights a fundamental point—that the aesthetic meaning of an Indian concert must lie in some way in the relationship of the percussion instruments to the rest of the instruments (part to part, in actual terms) within a musically unified whole. For, this perception not only lends an aesthetic significance to the nature of the mridanga and the tabla in an Indian musical setting, but is also relevant to a study of the contemporary varieties of 'fusion music'. And just as the mridanga and the tabla are fused into the system of Carnatic-Hindustani Fusion Music (*jugalbandhi*), so are they equally naturally fused into such varieties of East-West Fusion Music as the Sarod-String Quartet.

When a string vibrates, it produces a fundamental 'vibration' for which the length of the string corresponds to half the wavelength of the sound. The string also produces other vibrations for which the length of the string corresponds to  $1, 3/2, 5/2$  wavelengths. The frequencies of these vibrations are 2, 3, 4...times the frequency of the fundamental vibration. If one could observe the vibrating string, these vibrations have respectively 1,

2, 3, 4 stationary points or nodes. It may be noted that these vibrations, which are called harmonics, overtones or upper partials, are related to the fundamental frequency simply as the natural numbers. Obviously, the more harmonics there are, the more musical or pleasant the sound.

In the case of a plucked string, there cannot exist an overtone which has a node at the plucked point as this point must necessarily move. Therefore, a series

*Raman's ear for music detected the presence of overtones which normally should not exist in the case of plucked stringed instruments*

of harmonics is absent. Furthermore, the overtones of a plucked string fade out faster than the fundamental. Hence, the timbre is dull and hollow. This is especially so when the string is plucked with the soft part of the hand instead of with a plectrum. The latter gives rise to an entire series of overtones while in the former, higher partial tones start dying off rapidly from the very beginning.

Of all the stringed instruments, the veena has the pleasantest tone. Raman's ear for music detected the presence of overtones which normally should not exist in the case of plucked stringed instruments. Raman discovered that the bridge of the veena has been so designed by the ancient Indians that both of the deficiencies mentioned above are overcome. The upper surface of the bridge is arched and the strings pass over it tangentially and do not make sharp angles with it. Actually, in this form of the bridge, the overtones do not die away faster than the fundamental, but, on the contrary, steadily increase in volume relative to it. Moreover, even the overtones which have nodes at the plucked point (which cannot exist according to Helmholtz's law), can be heard loudly in a veena. These interesting effects were explained by Raman as due to the fact that, between the curved surface of the bridge and the string, the contact is periodic. This enhances the overtones at the cost of the fundamental through the regular series of impulses transmitted thereby. ■

*This article first appeared in its entirety in the NCPA Quarterly Journal in June & September 1983 (Vol XII-2 & 3; Part One)*

# Kaleidoscope

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

## A rich domain

On 1st January 2022, the public domain welcomed some enduring works of literature (A. A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh*, Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*), cinema (Buster Keaton's *Battling Butler*, Greta Garbo's *The Temptress*) and musical compositions (Gershwin's *Someone to Watch Over Me* and Puccini's 'Nessun Dorma' from *Turandot*). But most significant of all, thanks to the Music Modernization Act passed by



the U.S. Congress in 2018, every sound recording published in the U.S. through

1922 entered the public domain for the first time in history. According to the Internet Archive, this means Edison reels and 78 rpms, which include definitive records by Mamie Smith, Ethel Waters and Scott Joplin. A treasure trove of the earliest pop, classical, blues and spoken word recordings are now available to listen to, modify and disseminate for free. For more information, visit [www.archive.org/details/georgeblood](http://www.archive.org/details/georgeblood) or [www.loc.gov/collections/national-jukebox](http://www.loc.gov/collections/national-jukebox).

## In Memoriam

The year began on a sombre note for the performing arts. The first half of January claimed luminaries from the world of dance, theatre and music, leaving the stage a poorer place. Birju Maharaj, the doyen of Kathak and an icon who also excelled in the art of singing, *abhinaya* and poetry, breathed his last in Delhi. He graced the NCPA's venues over the decades, and a tribute worthy of an illustrious career such as his is in the works as you read this.

In June 2020, these pages reported the passing of veteran actress Ruby Patel, who strode the worlds of English and Parsi theatre with equal elan. A year and a half later, her inseparable half, and theatre and ad personality, Burjor Patel, made his graceful exit, marking the end of an era. The thespian couple was a regular presence at the NCPA before they left for Dubai, and 20 years on, their return to the city was entwined with a return to the stage—a second innings that theatre aficionados will always cherish. More in our upcoming issue.

## A chorus of memories

In a state where music is known to waft from practically every home and wind its way through its verdant valleys was born a piano prodigy who mastered his art in the West, only to return to his beloved Meghalaya and put it on the world map. Neil Nongkynrih, or Uncle Neil as he was known to the young choristers of his labour of love, the Shillong Chamber Choir, died last month. By the age of 51, Nongkynrih had nurtured a group of

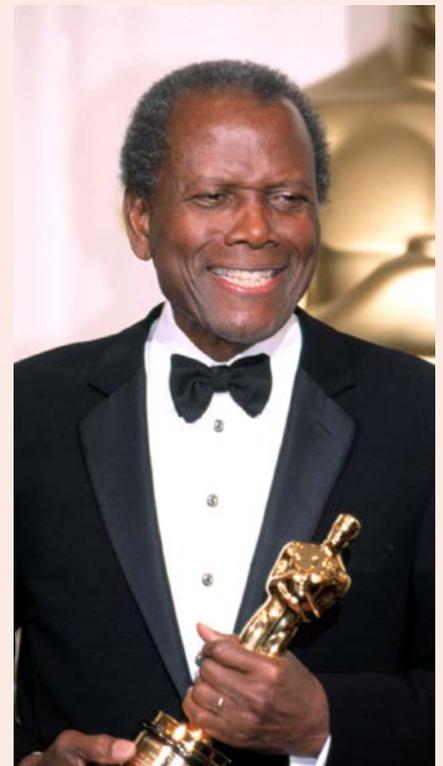


singers who serenaded diplomats, made a mark in reality shows and international competitions, and whose rendition of 'Vande Mataram' was played during the telecast of Chandrayaan II's launch. In 2018, his choir performed Schubert's *Shakuntala* alongside the Austrian Chamber Orchestra at the NCPA. However, it is Nongkynrih's warmth of spirit for which he would perhaps be remembered the most. "I teach two hours of singing and eight hours how to be humble," he had once said in an interview. "Good music has to come from a heart that is soft and forgives."

## An extraordinary life

Until he was about 18 years old, Sidney Poitier could barely read English and spoke with a heavy Bahamian accent. A rejection at a theatre audition in Harlem led him to a self-education so intense that he would come out of it a changed man—polished and suave, with the diction of a true-blue American son. Tall, handsome and eloquent, Poitier

would go on to rule Hollywood in the 1960s in a way no Black man had ever done before. By the time *To Sir, with Love* and *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* were released, he had already won an Oscar, a Golden Globe and a BAFTA. Beyond the critical acclaim



and commercial success, though, is the story of a trailblazer who achieved his dreams against all odds, and did so with a grace and powerful dignity that inspired many. Sidney Poitier passed away on 6th January 2022. He was 94 years old. ■

# Programme Guide

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

February-May 2022



## FEBRUARY 2022 THEATRE

### Readings in the Shed

Chapter XXIII – Letters of Love  
English (75 mins)

Experimental Theatre

Sunday, 13th February – 7.00 pm

#### An NCPA Off-Stage Presentation

Tragic, comic, sardonic, toxic... each love story has its own tic. A quirk that makes it unique. It creates a secret language that exists only between the lovers. At times it pours out in notes, letters and odes which give glimpses of their intimate world. Join us as we decipher the love stories of the famous (and, the infamous).

Readings in the Shed presents the fourth edition of Letters of Love.

Cast: **Michaela Talwar** and **Asmit Pathare**

Sound Design: **Varun Gupta**

Light Design: **Vikrant Thakar**

Creative Editor: **Himali Kothari**

Directed by **Nikhil Katara**

Suggested age: 16+

#### Tickets:

₹360/- (Members)

₹400/- (Public)

Box Office: 1st February for Members & 3rd February for Public

## SCREENING

### Eurydice

by **Matthew Aucoin**

Opera Screening (165 mins)

Sung in English with English Subtitles

Godrej Dance Theatre

Thursday, 17th February – 6.00 pm

An NCPA – The Metropolitan Opera (New York) Presentation

*Eurydice* is a reform opera in which

the composer aimed at a noble classical simplicity, avoiding what Glück described in his preface as the abuses of excessive ornamentation and other elements that pandered to the vanity of singers. Instrumental excerpts from the opera, which have appeared over the years in a variety of other arrangements, must include the famous *Dance of the Blessed Spirits*, which is preceded in the opera by the contrasting *Dance of the Furies*. Most moving is the lament of Orpheus when Eurydice has died a second time, *Che farò senza Euridice* (What am I to do without Eurydice).

Conductor: **Yannick Nézet-Séguin**

Production: **Mary Zimmerman**

Cast: **Erin Morley, Jakub Józef Orliński, Barry Banks, Joshua Hopkins & Nathan Berg**

#### Tickets:

₹450/- (Members)

₹500/- (Public)

Box Office: 1st February for Members & 3rd February for Public

## INDIAN MUSIC

### NCPA-CITI Music Workshop

Understanding Intricacies of the *Nadsadhana*

An online workshop for vocalists by **Uday Bhawalkar**

(Duration 60 mins followed by Q&A session)

Saturday, 19th February – 11.30 am

In humans as well as animals, the voice is the basic means of communication. Speaking of music as a sonic art-form, the voice assumes further significance as the prime vehicle to convey emotional and aesthetic nuances. Possessing a healthy voice, therefore, seems to be a prerequisite for a good singer.

In India, since ancient times,

attention has been paid to the aspect of *nadsadhana* or grooming of the voice. Several practices and remedies were recommended in order to nurture the desired voice quality. The voice-training method as practised in the tradition of *dhrupad*, which is a medieval genre that survives even today, reveals several techniques and practices which are of utmost significance in nurturing a strong voice. Therefore, an in-depth study of these aspects is of immense value to not only the practitioners of *dhrupad*, but also to performers of other vocal genres of Hindustani music, like *khayal*, *thumri*, etc.

The session will specially focus on techniques and exercises used to develop breath control, and the range, resonance and strength of voice. The speaker will also delve into demonstrating the important aspects of enunciation of *svara* (musical note) in various contexts, and how to develop the required concentration to remain focused on the creative aspect of music.

**Uday Bhawalkar** is an internationally acclaimed exponent of *dhrupad*. Having contributed significantly to the revival of *dhrupad*, he is also a renowned guru, imparting training to several young artistes in the Dagar style of *dhrupad*.

Entry Free

Registration open

For registration: Please visit the NCPA website ([www.ncpamumbai.com](http://www.ncpamumbai.com)) or NCPA Facebook page

For more information, please write to [indianmusicworkshops@ncpamumbai.com](mailto:indianmusicworkshops@ncpamumbai.com)

## SCREENING

### Swan Lake

Ballet Screening (155 mins)

Godrej Dance Theatre

Tuesday, 22nd February – 6.00 pm

An NCPA-Pathé Live (Paris) Presentation

Lured to the banks of a mysterious lake by his alter-ego, the Evil Genius, Prince Siegfried encounters the most beautiful swan, Odette, and swears his love to her. At the castle, prospective brides try to entertain the distracted prince, but it is the ravishing swan Odile who threatens the promise Siegfried made to Odette. The legend of the enigmatic swan-woman set to Tchaikovsky's masterpiece of a score is ballet's most beloved production in the classical canon. The Bolshoi Ballet's *Swan Lake* exemplifies the dramatic tension and heart-stopping beauty of motion with prima ballerina Olga Smirnova leading the cast, as sensational as the black swan as she is poignant as white swan.

Music by **Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky**

Choreography by **Yuri Grigorovich**

Libretto by **Yuri Grigorovich**

Cast: **Olga Smirnova, Jacopo Tissi, Egor Gerashchenko, Alexei Putinsev and the Bolshoi Corps de Ballet**

#### Tickets:

₹450/- (Members)

₹500/- (Public)

Box Office: 1st February for Members & 3rd February for Public

## SCREENING

### Skylight

Theatre Screening

(Approx. 165 mins)

Godrej Dance Theatre

Wednesday, 23rd February - 6.00 pm

An NCPA-National Theatre Live (London) Presentation

**Bill Nighy** (*Love Actually*, *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*) and **Carey Mulligan** (*Inside Llewyn Davis*, *The Great Gatsby*) feature in the highly anticipated production of **David Hare's Skylight**, directed by **Stephen Daldry** (*The Audience*), broadcast from the West End by National Theatre Live.

On a bitterly cold London evening, schoolteacher **Kyra Hollis** receives an unexpected visit from her former

lover, **Tom Sergeant**, a successful and charismatic restaurateur whose wife has recently died. As the evening progresses, the two attempt to rekindle their once passionate relationship only to find themselves locked in a dangerous battle of opposing ideologies and mutual desires.

#### Tickets:

₹360/- (Members)

₹400/- (Public)

Box Office: 1st February for Members & 3rd February for Public

## WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC

### SOI Chamber Orchestra

Tata Theatre

Friday, 25th February – 7.00 pm

#### An NCPA Presentation

The SOI Chamber Orchestra performs a programme featuring one of Mozart's most popular works, *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*, or "A Little Night Music", the opening of which is one of the most recognisable themes in Western classical repertoire. The programme will also include works by Schubert, Bach, Paganini, Shostakovich, and more.

#### Tickets:

₹900, 600 & 375/- (Members)

₹1,200, 800 & 500/- (Public)

(Inclusive of GST)

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

## INTERNATIONAL MUSIC

### Hollywood Jazz Night

Featuring **KK Collective**

Experimental Theatre

Friday, 25th February – 7.00 pm

#### An NCPA Presentation

The **KK Collective** brings to the NCPA a rare experience that is not to be missed. The undeniable sounds of jazz, soul, funk and R&B will dominate the evening of this much awaited show, as the band brings to you a night of Hollywood jazz hits through the decades. **Komal Kuwadekar**, along with her eminent jazz band, will take you on a journey with her soulful voice through an exciting set list

from Hollywood movies, James Bond theme songs to Disney classics and some spectacular originals. Here is an opportunity to catch this fantastic band on the music scene.

#### Tickets:

₹675 & 450/- (Members)

₹750 & 500/- (Public)

(Plus GST)

Box Office: 1st February for Members & 3rd February for Public

## THEATRE

### Jeene Bhi Do Yaaro

Hindi Play

Experimental Theatre

Saturday, 26th February – 5.00 pm & 8.00 pm

The promise of a sweet future together, walking hand in hand into the sunset for ever. This is what romantic dreams are made of. The husband to be, to impress his sweetheart, will go out of his way to do everything she demands. The list is endless, from buying chocolates, flowers, movie and dinner dates to extravagant shopping. But what happens after marriage? The same sweetheart becomes a nag. The man knowing well that the end has been achieved becomes lax and takes his wife for granted. Watch the dynamics of this post-marriage situation in *Jeene Bhi Do Yaaro*.

Written & Directed by **Om Katare**

Cast: **Om Katare, Prashant Upadhyay, Sailee Gaikwad, Nysha Bijlani & Anup**

A Yatri Theatre Production

Age: 18+

#### Tickets:

₹450/- (Members)

₹500/- (Public)

Box Office: 1st February for Members & 3rd February for Public

## INDIAN MUSIC

### CITI-NCPA Aadi Anant: From Here to Eternity

**T. M. Krishna** (vocal)

Supported by **Akkarai Subhalakshmi** (violin), **Praveen Sparsh** (mridangam), **Anirudh Athreya** (kanjira) (Approx. 90 mins)

## Tata Theatre

**Saturday, 26th February – 6.30 pm**

The two main branches of Indian art (classical) music—Hindustani and Carnatic—are similar in their fundamental approach to melodic and rhythmic organisation (*raga* and *tala*), and yet, they are distinct traditions; distinguishable on the basis of some concepts, styles and forms, poetry and song repertoires, intonation, ornamentation and instrumentation. The Carnatic tradition is predominantly practised in the five southern Indian states.

Trained under B. S. Sharma, C. Ranganathan and Semmengudi Srinivasier, **T. M. Krishna** is an eminent Carnatic vocalist, author and public intellectual. Gifted with a robust and dynamic voice, Krishna's music eludes standard analysis; traditional yet stunningly innovative with his original interpretation of it. Having an egalitarian approach to diverse musical traditions, he is known to include in his concert unusual repertoire of unsung composers.

A highly acclaimed orator, he has several path-breaking initiatives, awards and award-winning publications to his credit.

Unhinged from the conventional performative obligations, this recital will mainly focus on the aspect of improvisation, which is at the heart of Indian art music traditions. Based on instinctive responses to each other's musical ideas, the recital is expected to be a free-flowing exchange among the artistes.

### Tickets:

**₹375, 300 & 240/- (Members)**

**₹500, 400 & 320/- (Public)**

**Box Office: 1st February for Members & 3rd February for Public**

## THEATRE

### Jaa Jee Le Apni Zindagi

**Hindi Play**

**Experimental Theatre**

**Sunday, 27th February – 5.00 pm & 8.00 pm**

The show is a family comedy about a happy family whose son-in-law stays with his wife's family. The family pressurises the couple to grow their

family as it has been quite a while since they have been married. The son-in-law keeps asking for time, but the daughter has plans that are beyond comprehension. She gradually reveals the plan to her family and her husband and that's when the madness starts. What happens next?

Written & Directed by **Om Katare**

Cast: **Om Katare, Harshal Singh, Nysha Bijlani, Shail Ravi/Naman Mukherji, Preeti Shah, Hema Kanai, Aarja Banerjee/Aditi & Arun Kumar**

**A Yatri Theatre Production**

**Age: 18+**

### Tickets:

**₹450/- (Members)**

**₹500/- (Public)**

**Box Office: 1st February for Members & 3rd February for Public**

## INDIAN MUSIC

### CITI-NCPA Aadi Anant: From Here to Eternity

**Song of the Himalayas**

**Conceptualised & Composed by Shantanu Moitra**

**Featuring Kaushiki Chakraborty, Ani Choying, Ashwin Srinivasan, Ambi Subramaniam and others**

**Jamshed Bhabha Theatre**

**Sunday, 27th February– 5.30 pm**

The event is conceptualised and led by **Shantanu Moitra**, the renowned music composer known for his many landmark Bollywood films including *Parineeta*, *3 Idiots*, and *Madras Cafe*. With a conviction that undertaking a journey is all you need to do in order to learn more about the world and yourself, Moitra strives to "see" a country by experiencing its music and also the reverse, i.e., having experienced the grandeur of the land, create more music.

Thus, the *Song of the Himalayas* springs from Moitra's 100-day journey across the Himalayas and compositions that are created on the way, triggered by his interaction with the mighty mountains all above 14,000 feet through Bhutan, Nepal, Sikkim, Tibet and Arunachal Pradesh.

Moitra will intersperse the musical presentation with riveting stories and

breathtaking visuals of the mountains. His group includes **Ani Choying**, a celebrated Buddhist nun from the Nago Gompa nunnery in Nepal, and **Kaushiki Chakraborty**, a classically trained vocalist, renowned for having an amazing command over the voice as well as diverse genres. The ensemble also includes two young, brilliant instrumentalists: flautist, **Ashwin Srinivasan** and violinist, **Ambi Subramaniam**.

### Tickets:

**₹1,125, 900, 600 & 375/- (Members)**

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

**(Inclusive of GST)**

**Box Office: 1st February for Members & 3rd February for Public**

## MARCH 2022

## SCREENING

### Leopoldstadt

**by Tom Stoppard**

**Theatre Screening**

**(Approx. 140 mins)**

**Godrej Dance Theatre**

**Wednesday, 2nd & Wednesday, 9th March - 6.00 pm**

**An NCPA-National Theatre Live (London) Presentation**

Tom Stoppard's Olivier Award-winning new play *Leopoldstadt* is a passionate drama of love, family and endurance. It is directed by Patrick Marber. At the beginning of the 20th century, Leopoldstadt was the old, crowded Jewish quarter of Vienna, Austria. But Hermann Merz, a factory owner and baptised Jew now married to Catholic Gretl, has moved up in the world. We follow his family's story across half a century, passing through the convulsions of war, revolution, impoverishment, annexation by Nazi Germany and the Holocaust. A company of 40 actors represent each generation of the family in this epic but intimate play. Filmed live on stage in London's West End, *Leopoldstadt*, called 'magnificent' by *The Independent*, should not be missed.

### Tickets:

**₹360/- (Members)**

**₹400/- (Public)**

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

## SCREENING

### Cinderella

**by Jules Massenet**

**Opera Screening (95 mins)**

**Sung in English with English Subtitles**

**Godrej Dance Theatre**

**Thursday, 3rd March – 6.00 pm**

**An NCPA – The Metropolitan Opera (New York) Presentation**

Inspired by the fairy tale, Cendrillon, *Cinderella* follows the story of a young woman who is forced to act as a servant to her mean stepfather and ungrateful stepsisters. Presented with an all-new English translation in an abridged 90 minutes, with mezzo-soprano Isabel Leonard as its rags-to-riches princess, Laurent Pelly's storybook staging of the famous fairy tale is not to be missed.

Conductor: **Emmanuel Villaume**

Production: **Laurent Pelly**

Cast: **Jessica Pratt, Isabel Leonard, Emily D'Angelo, Stephanie Blythe & Laurent Naouri**

### Tickets:

**₹450/- (Members)**

**₹500/- (Public)**

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

## INDIAN MUSIC

### O Gaanewali: Celebrating the Works of Women Performers of North India

**Featuring Avanti Patel, Rutuja Lad, Akshay Jadhav, Vanraj Shastri & Dnyaneshwar Sonawane**

**(Approx. 120 mins)**

**Experimental Theatre**

**Friday, 4th March – 6.30 pm**

**An NCPA Presentation**

The story of *tawaifs* or women entertainers is indeed heartrending. Though highly skilled at their art, they have often been regarded as prostitutes and sex workers. Unfortunately, even history does not credit them enough for their immense contribution towards preserving and nurturing India's diverse musical repertoire of genres ranging from *khayal*, *thumri* and *dadra*, to *hori*, *jhoola*, *chaiti*, *ghazal*, and many more.

Presented around International

Women's Day, this musical presentation seeks to highlight the consummate musicality of songstresses of yesteryears, while also bringing to the fore their history, including some readings of anecdotes shared by them.

Conceptualised and led by **Avanti Patel**, a multifaceted vocalist, the inspired group of young artistes will pay a fitting tribute to a significant aspect of our cultural legacy.

### Tickets:

**₹180/- (Members)**

**₹200/- (Public)**

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

## INTERNATIONAL MUSIC

### Fierce, Free & Fabulous

**(Approx. 135 mins)**

**Tata Theatre**

**Saturday, 5th March - 6.30 pm**

**An NCPA Presentation**

**Samantha Noella** - vocals

**Shazneen Arethna** - vocals

**Suzanne D'mello** - vocals

**Eden Alexander** - vocals

**Faustin Missier** - keys

**Glyston Gracias** - drums

**Vivian D'souza** - bass

**Manasquam Mahanta** - lead guitar

**Alastair Quardros** - percussion

**James Miranda** - trumpet

Women rule. And these divas rule the music scene; from musicals and original soundtracks to some of the most iconic ad jingles, you have heard them and know them. Watch **Samantha Noella**, **Shazneen Arethna**, **Suzanne D'mello** and **Eden Alexander** pay a grand tribute to the fierce, free and fabulous women of music. With hits from Aretha Franklin, Madonna, Rihanna, The Bangles, Chaka Khan, Alicia Keys, Beyoncé to Gloria Gaynor, Eurythmics, Cyndi Lauper, Alannah Myles, Christina Aguilera, Pink, Amy Winehouse and more, there is no better way to celebrate this Women's Day.

### Tickets:

**₹750, 600 & 375/- (Members)**

**₹1,000, 800 & 500/- (Public)**

**(Plus GST)**

**Box Office: 1st February for Members & 3rd February for Public**

## THEATRE

### Dr. Anandibai - Like, Comment, Share

**English/Marathi/Gujarati Play (90 mins)**

**Experimental Theatre**

**Saturday, 5th March - 7.00 pm**

**An NCPA Presentation in collaboration with Ideas Unlimited Productions**

Anandibai Joshi, India's first female physician, was a trailblazer. Despite being married to a man 20 years elder to her, who was also a hypocrite showing off his liberal attitude, Anandibai defied the prevailing patriarchal conventions and set sail to America to become the first Indian female MD physician in the year 1886. Hers was no ordinary feat. Her achievement paved the way for Indian women to see themselves beyond the household. It freed them from the shackles of restrictions and compulsions. It proved that women could have an identity other than that of a mother, wife and daughter. Over 150 years later, have things really changed? Are Indian women free from the drudgery of household chores? Are they free to think of their own desires, wishes and needs? *Dr. Anandibai - Like, Comment, Share* tries to answer these questions.

Written by **Gita Manek**

Directed by **Manoj Shah**

Performed by **Manasi Joshi**

### Tickets:

**₹450/- (Members)**

**₹500/- (Public)**

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

## THEATRE

### Adbhut

**Gujarati Play (90 mins)**

**Experimental Theatre**

**Sunday, 6th March – 4.30 pm & 7.00 pm**

**An NCPA Presentation in collaboration with Ideas Unlimited Productions**

*Adbhut*, literally meaning 'incredible', is about all the so-called little things that somehow become mundane as we grow up. All it needs is a game format of active audience participation for the community to come together

over a list of highly personal memories that have a universal resonance. Some of these memories may not always be uplifting and motivating, but the eternal magic of live performance and looking into the eyes of each other in the community makes not just the act worth watching but also life worth living.

Written by **Satchit Puranik**  
Directed by **Manoj Shah**  
Performed by **Devaki**

**Suggested age: 15+**

**Tickets:**  
**₹450/- (Members)**  
**₹500/- (Public)**  
**Box Office: 9th February for Members & 12th February for Public**

## THEATRE

### UnErase's Women's Day Special!

English/ Hindi (100 mins)  
Experimental Theatre  
Tuesday, 8th March – 7.30 pm

#### An NCPA Off-Stage Presentation

This year, celebrate International Women's Day with some heart-warming poetry and stories by UnErase Poetry. As they turn five, UnErase Poetry are back with their flagship event, the UnErase Women's Day Special, celebrating women and breaking gender norms. From stories of gender to tales of sexuality, from poetry that brings us closer together to words that inspire and empower, this presentation is about the journey.

Performers: **Helly Shah, Taranjit Kaur** and **Aranya Johar**  
Music by **Samuel Pandya**  
Host: **Simar Singh**

**Suggested age: 16+**

**Tickets:**  
**₹360/- (Members)**  
**₹400/- (Public)**  
**Box Office: 9th February for Members & 12th February for Public**

## FILM

### Short Film Corner Short Film Screenings

#### Little Theatre Wednesday, 9th March – 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 that are experimenting with form and technique. Short Film Corner hopes to connect movie lovers with these films and also open up dialogue with filmmakers, who in turn, get a chance to connect with their audiences. White Wall Screenings (WWS) was founded in 2017 as a community to facilitate a conversation between short filmmakers and film connoisseurs. WWS has successfully showcased more than 300 short films and also continues to conduct workshops, masterclasses and conversations around filmmaking and films.

#### Katran Hindi Film (15 mins)

*Katran* is a story of an elderly couple who decide to part ways after 30 years of their marriage but in the end realise that in some obscure corners of their house, still resides a little tug of love that brings them together.

#### Transistor Hindi Film (25 mins)

Set in 1975 in rural India, *Transistor* is a love story of two teenagers and how proclamation of the national emergency, and a transistor made all the difference to their relationship.

Written & Directed by **Prem Singh**

#### Storm in a Teacup English Film (9 mins)

The film is about a newly married couple's drama-filled argument which starts with an innocuous request of making tea. The tea-making process acts as a window to the wife's changing forms of anger which morphs from the silent treatment, passive aggression, simmering anger to the eventual fit of fury.

Written & Directed by **Shreyas Govindarajan**

The film screenings will be followed by a discussion.

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

## DANCE

### Workshop on Rasa & its application by Mandakini Trivedi

Experimental Theatre  
Thursday, 10th March – 11.00 am to 3.00 pm

The *rasa* theory & practice workshop will look at the practical aspect of the *rasa sutra* and its relevance to performance training with a choreography of Kalidasa's *Vasanta Ritu*.

Open to all styles

**Age: 18+**

**Registration Fees: ₹1,200/- (Inclusive of GST)**  
**For registration, write to [sdasgupta@ncpamumbai.com](mailto:sdasgupta@ncpamumbai.com) / [dance@ncpamumbai.com](mailto:dance@ncpamumbai.com) Or call/ WhatsApp on 8879114939/9619455593**

## INDIAN MUSIC

### NCPA-CITI Music Workshop

**Understanding the intricacies of exploring *Bandish***  
**An online workshop for vocalists by Ajoy Chakrabarty (Duration 60 mins followed by Q&A session)**  
**Saturday, 12th March – 11.30 am**

In the context of Indian art (classical) music performance, the main objective is to portray the personality of a *raga* in an unambiguous manner, and a good composition, often referred to as a *bandish*, helps achieve this.

The session will focus on details of techniques and modalities such as *alap*, *bolalap*, *tan*, *boltan*, *sargam*, etc. that are conventionally adopted to develop a *bandish* in Hindustani (North Indian) vocal music. Special attention will be paid to the finer aspects such as projection of *rasabhav* (aesthetic emotion), which is essential for an effective portrayal of a *raga*.

**Ajoy Chakrabarty** is one of the most celebrated vocalists today. As a renowned guru, he has contributed significantly to the pedagogy of Indian music.

**Entry Free**  
**Registration starts on 12th February 2022**  
**For registration: Please visit the NCPA website ([www.ncpamumbai.com](http://www.ncpamumbai.com)) or NCPA Facebook page**  
**For more information, please write to [indianmusicworkshops@ncpamumbai.com](mailto:indianmusicworkshops@ncpamumbai.com)**

## PHOTOGRAPHY

### Magic Moments

By **Dr. Mukesh Batra**  
Photo Exhibition  
Piramal Art Gallery  
Saturday, 12th to Thursday, 17th March – 12.00 pm to 8.00 pm

Dr. Batra's Foundation unveils the 16th edition of 'Magic Moments'—a photography exhibition by eminent homeopath and photography enthusiast Dr. Mukesh Batra. His photographic work has been displayed in over 50 art galleries in India and Dubai. This charitable photo exhibition is supported by NikonMENA. It features a series of photographs by Dr. Batra that showcases the cultural melting pot that Dubai, a crown jewel of the U.A.E. is. The exhibition will encourage you to visit Dubai and enjoy its sights and sounds.

**Entry free**

## INDIAN MUSIC

### NCPA Bandish

**A Tribute to Legendary Indian Composers**  
**Tata Theatre**  
**Saturday, 12th & Sunday, 13th March – 6.30 pm**

**Supported by HSBC India**

Indian music centres around well-structured melodic and rhythmic compositions known as *bandishes*. It represents a central idea or base upon which the edifice of a performance is sculpted and realised. Initially planned during August 2020 amid the Mumbai

rains, we are now presenting this festival during the winter of 2022. The two-day event will showcase some of the most treasured works of the great composers of Indian music, presented by eminent artistes.

#### 12th March Ghulam Husnain Khan (Raja Miya) Ashwini Bhide Deshpande

Agra *gharana* is known for its storehouse of compositions; some of which have also been adopted by practitioners of other *gharanas*.

**Ghulam Husnain Khan** (Raja Miya) had the privilege of being trained with his eminent uncle, Khadim Hussain Khan, and the doyen of Agra *gharana*, Yunus Hussain Khan.

He will present some notable *khayal* compositions of the two doyens of Agra *gharana*: Vilayat Hussain Khan (Pran Piya, 1892-1962) and Mehboob Khan (Daras Piya).

The Jaipur *gharana* is well known for its repertoire of unusual and mixed (*jod*) *ragas*. Besides the legendary vocalist-composer-guru, Alladiya Khan, there are also others from his lineage, who have contributed to the treasure of compositions that are widely performed today.

Initially trained by Narayanrao Datar, **Ashwini Bhide Deshpande** was groomed in the Jaipur-Atrauli style by her mother, Manik Bhide, and by Ratnakar Pai. With a style that reflects a harmonious blend of tonal quality and emotiveness, the vocalist will present some evergreen works of three iconic figures from the Jaipur-Atrauli *gharana*: Alladiya Khan, Mogubai Kurdikar and Kishori Amonkar.

**Tickets:**  
**₹525, 450, 375 & 300/- (Members)**  
**₹700, 600, 500 & 400/- (Public)**  
**(Plus GST)**

**13th March**  
**Gulzar**  
**Ajoy Chakrabarty**

Kazi Nazrul Islam (1899-1976) and Laloo Fakir (1774-1890) are two iconic Bangla poet-philosophers who have had a far-reaching impact on the socio-cultural fabric of Bengal.

Nazrul has left behind a huge repository of poetry, and songs referred as *Nazrul Geeti*, comprising nearly 4,000

works cutting across diverse genres. Fakir's works embody a beautiful blend of *bhakti* and Sufism. He firmly believed in the power of music to alter the intellectual and emotional state in order to be able to understand and appreciate life itself.

**Gulzar** is a celebrated poet, writer, lyricist and film director whose works have also been influenced by Bangla poetry and literature. He will recite his Hindi translations of select works of both these "rebel" poets.

**Ajoy Chakrabarty** has had the privilege of training with several teachers including the legendary maestro Jnan Prakash Ghosh and Munawar Ali Khan, son and disciple of Bade Ghulam Ali Khan. Today, he is regarded as a multidimensional vocalist, composer and guru, representing Patiala *gharana*. In his inimitable style, he will showcase select compositions of Nazrul as well as Fakir in varied styles: *dhrupad*, *dhamar*, *khayal*, *thumri*, *ghazal*, *tappa*, *geet* and *baul*.

**Tickets:**  
**₹750, 600, 480 & 375/- (Members)**  
**₹1,000, 800, 640 & 500/- (Public)**  
**(Plus GST)**

**Box Office for the Festival: 9th February for Members & 12th February for Public**

## SCREENING

### Rigoletto

by **Giuseppe Verdi**  
Opera Screening (160 mins)  
Sung in Italian with English Subtitles  
Godrej Dance Theatre  
Saturday, 12th March – 4.00 pm

**An NCPA – The Metropolitan Opera (New York) Presentation**

It all begins with the womanising Duke of Mantua who hosts a magnificent party in his apartments. Still fearful and anxious, Rigoletto returns home to check on his daughter Gilda. Sneaking in, he tells her that he is a poor student and that he loves her. Gilda pleads for his mercy on the man she still loves. Rigoletto heads back to collect the sack in which he hopes to find the dead body of the Duke, but when he opens it, he finds instead his own daughter. She dies in his arms, and he realises that the curse has been fulfilled.

Conductor: **Daniele Rustioni**  
Production: **Barlett Sher**  
Cast: **Rosa Feola, Varduhi Abrahamyan, Piotr Beczala, Quinn Kelsey & Andrea Mastroni**

**Tickets:**  
**₹450/- (Members)**  
**₹500/- (Public)**  
**Box Office: 9th February for Members & 12th February for Public**

## DANCE

### **Anubandh – Relationships by Malavika Sarukkai** (Approx. 90 mins)

**Jamshed Bhabha Theatre**  
**Saturday, 12th March – 6.30 pm**

An NCPA Presentation

**Principal Sponsor: Titan Company Ltd**  
**Associate Sponsors: CRISIL Ltd**  
**DSP Mutual Fund**

*Anubandh - Relationships* is an artiste's response to the pandemic. The concept evolved in the face of the unprecedented turn of events that affected the world. We learnt that for planet Earth to survive, we were urgently required to build sustainable relationships both personal and collective. *Anubandh* is a call for hope in this environment of uncertainty.

This production seeks to reclaim our relationships with the Sun and the Moon, primary forces that nurture life. The narrative moves from the individual to the collective, linking the emotional journey of the human being with each of the five basic elements, the *panchamahabhutas*—*prithvi* (earth), *ap* (water), *vayu* (wind), *agni* (fire), and *akasa* (space) and through this journey takes us from the known to the unknown. *Anubandh - Relationships* looks at the complex web of the human condition and is a contemporary comment on our lives.

Concept and Choreography: **Malavika Sarukkai**  
Creative Collaborator: **Sumantra Ghosal**  
Light Design: **Niranjan Gokhale**  
Music Production & Sound Design: **Sai Shrivani**

**Tickets:**  
**₹600, 375 & 225/- (Members)**  
**₹800, 500 & 300/- (Public)**

(Inclusive of GST)  
**Box Office: 9th February for Members & 12th February for Public**

## FILM

### **Reality Check**

**Documentary film screening**  
**Little Theatre**  
**Thursday, 17th March – 6.30 pm**

An NCPA Presentation in collaboration with Cinema Collective

This year, the NCPA revives the Reality Check film series, which was started in 2014, to promote and encourage documentary filmmakers in India, whose work reflects life and culture in the country today in a provocative blend of creativity and integrity.

**Rubaru Roshni**  
**Hindi, English, Punjabi, Malayalam, Marathi film with English subtitles**  
**(110 mins)**

*Rubaru Roshni* is a documentary that comprises three tales of violent loss woven together by personal testimony, set in the backdrop of cataclysmic socio-political events that shook India. As survivors and perpetrators of violence delve into traumatic events that changed their lives forever, what emerges is an honest, intimate and deeply personal exploration of hatred, retribution, redemption, love and forgiveness.

Produced by **Kiran Rao** and **Aamir Khan**  
Directed by **Svati Chakravarty Bhatkal**  
Music by **Aditya Nayantara**  
Narrated by **Aamir Khan**

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.**

## WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC

### **SOI Chamber Orchestra**

**Tata Theatre**  
**Friday, 18th March- 7.00 pm**

An NCPA Presentation

Programme details to be announced shortly. Please check on the NCPA

website [www.ncpamumbai.com](http://www.ncpamumbai.com) or at the box office.

**Tickets:**  
**₹900, 600 & 375/- (Members)**  
**₹1,200, 800 & 500/- (Public)**  
(Inclusive of GST)  
**Box Office: 25th February for Members & 28th February for Public**

## THEATRE

### **Sherlock Homi**

**Gujarati/English Play**  
**(100 mins)**  
**Tata Theatre**  
**Monday, 21st March – 5.00 pm & 8.00 pm**

An NCPA Presentation for the **Adi Marzban Endowment Fund**  
**(5.00 pm Show)**

Parsis are few in number—this statement is a myth. There are Parsis all over. You just don't realise it. One such Parsi is none other than the world's most infamous detective—Sherlock Homi. To the world, he is suave and dashing, but he is actually a typical happy-go-lucky Parsi man, who migrated from Bharucha Baug in Bombay and now lives in London's 221B Baker Street with his partner in crime Dr. Jamshed Wadia. He uses his Parsi sense (the equivalent of a sixth sense, just crazier), to solve crimes in a way only a Parsi can—with a cup of tea, two eggs every morning and using a lot of swear words...or as we Parsis call it...punctuation.

Written & Directed by **Meherzad Patel**  
Cast: **Danesh Irani, Danesh Khambata, Roshan Tirandaz** & others

A Silly Point Production

**Tickets:**  
**₹900, 750, 600, & 375/- (Members)**  
**₹1,200, 1,000, 800, & 500/- (Public)**  
(Inclusive of GST)  
**Box Office: 1st February for Members & 3rd February for Public**

## SCREENING

### **Cyrano de Bergerac**

**by Edmond Rostand**  
**Theatre Screening (Approx. 180 mins)**  
**Godrej Dance Theatre**  
**Wednesday, 23rd March– 6.00 pm**

An NCPA-National Theatre Live (London) Presentation

In a new version by **Martin Crimp**, directed by **Jamie Lloyd**, charismatic swordsman and brilliant poet, Cyrano de Bergerac is in love with his beautiful cousin Roxane, who is unaware of his feelings. His one curse in life, he feels, is his large nose and although it may have been a forming influence in his razor-sharp wit, he believes that Roxane will reject him because of it. When the handsome but unpoetic Christian falls for Roxane, he asks Cyrano to help him win her heart. *Cyrano de Bergerac* can be delivered as an allegory of inner and outer beauty.

**Tickets:**  
**₹360/- (Members)**  
**₹400/- (Public)**  
**Box Office: 9th February for Members & 12th February for Public**

## INTERNATIONAL MUSIC

### **One Night Only - A Diva Special**

**Featuring Keshia B**  
**Experimental Theatre**  
**Friday, 25th March – 7.00 pm**

An NCPA Presentation

'One Night Only' – A Diva Special presented by **Keshia B** will showcase the music that has inspired her over the years. The highlight of the evening is the dynamic and unique voices of the strong female artistes in the Western music world. The beauty of these women and their brilliant storytelling through their songs fill us with the pain of the past, the joy of today and the hope for a better tomorrow.

Come travel down memory lane as Keshia B takes a deep dive into genres like R&B, pop, jazz and funk, culminating in neo soul music that took birth during the late 80s and early 90s. The powerhouse Keshia B with her warm voice, onstage persona and her band will make this concert a night to remember.

**Tickets:**  
**₹675 & 450/- (Members)**  
**₹750 & 500/- (Public)**  
(Plus GST)  
**Box Office: 1st February for Members & 3rd February for Public**

## APRIL 2022 WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC

### **SOI Chamber Orchestra**

**Marat Bisengaliev, conductor**  
**Tata Theatre**  
**Saturday, 2nd April – 7.00 pm**

An NCPA Presentation

Programme details to be announced shortly. Please check on the NCPA website [www.ncpamumbai.com](http://www.ncpamumbai.com) or at the box office.

**Tickets:**  
**₹900, 600 & 375/- (Members)**  
**₹1,200, 800 & 500/- (Public)**  
(Inclusive of GST)  
**Box Office: 9th March for Members & 12th March for Public**

## INDIAN MUSIC

### **Saz-e-Bahar**

**Festival of Indian Instrumental Music**  
**Godrej Dance Theatre**  
**Friday, 8th & Saturday, 9th April - 6.30 pm**

An NCPA Presentation

The tenth edition of this two-day festival will showcase four internationally renowned instrumentalists, wielding instruments of different categories—string-plucked (rudraveena), string-bowed (sarangi), wind-blown (bansuri) and drums-percussion (tabla).

**On each day at 6 pm, Dr. Suvarnalata Rao will give a pre-event talk on specific instruments presented on the respective days.**

**8th April**  
**Akram Khan (tabla)**  
**Ronu Majumdar (bansuri)**  
**(Approx. 120 mins)**

**Akram Khan** had the privilege of learning tabla from stalwarts like Niazu Khan, and his own illustrious father, Hashmat Ali Khan of the Ajrada *gharana*. **Ronu Majumdar** was mentored by eminent musicians such as Vijay Raghav Rao, Laxmanprasad Jaipurwale and Ravi Shankar.

**9th April**  
**Dilshad Khan (sarangi)**

**Mohi Baha'ud-din Dagar (rudraveena)**  
**(Approx. 105 mins)**

**Dilshad Khan** was mentored by his uncle, the eminent sarangi maestro Sultan Khan, and today, represents the younger generation of instrumentalists. Having trained with maestros like his father Zia Mohiuddin and uncle, Zia Fariddudin Dagar, **Mohi Baha'uddin Dagar** is one of the very few exponents of rudraveena, a rare instrument today.

**Daily Tickets:**  
**₹135/- (Members)**  
**₹150/- (Public)**  
**Box Office: 9th March for Members & 12th March for Public**

## WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC

### **Students of the SOI Music Academy**

**with the SOI Chamber Orchestra**  
**Marat Bisengaliev, conductor**  
**Tata Theatre**  
**Saturday, 9th April – 6.00 pm**  
**Sunday, 10th April – 5.00 pm**

An NCPA Presentation

The 2020, 2021 and 2022 graduating students of the SOI Music Academy are featured as soloists with the SOI Chamber Orchestra in a concert conducted by music director **Marat Bisengaliev**. The performance will also feature the SOI Academy Orchestra, comprising students of the SOI Music Academy.

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

## SCREENING

### **Follies**

**Theatre Screening**  
**(Approx. 155 mins)**  
**Godrej Dance Theatre**  
**Wednesday, 13th April – 6.00 pm**

An NCPA-National Theatre Live (London) Presentation

**Stephen Sondheim's** legendary musical is staged for the first time at the National Theatre and broadcast live to cinemas. New York, 1971. There is a party on the stage of the Weismann Theatre. Tomorrow, the iconic building will be

demolished. Thirty years after their final performance, the Follies girls gather to have a few drinks, sing a few songs and lie about themselves. **Tracie Bennett, Janie Dee** and **Imelda Staunton** play the magnificent Follies in this dazzling new production. Featuring a cast of 37 and an orchestra of 21, it is directed by **Dominic Cooke** (*The Comedy of Errors*). Winner of Academy, Tony, Grammy and Olivier awards. Sondheim's previous work includes *A Little Night Music*, *Sweeney Todd* and *Sunday in the Park with George*.

**Tickets:**  
₹360/- (Members)  
₹400/- (Public)  
**Box Office: 9th March for Members and 12th March for Public**

## SCREENING

### Jewels

**Ballet Screening (140 mins)**  
**Godrej Dance Theatre**  
**Thursday, 14th April – 6.00 pm**

**An NCPA-Pathé Live (Paris) Presentation**

*Emeralds* for the elegance and sophistication of Paris, *Rubies* for the speed and modernity of New York, and *Diamonds* for an imperial St. Petersburg. Three sparkling scenes accompanied by the music of three essential composers, feature the styles of the three dance schools that have contributed to making George Balanchine a legend of modern ballet. This glamorous triptych was inspired by Balanchine's visit to the famous jeweller Van Cleef & Arpels on New York's Fifth Avenue and created as an homage to the cities and dance schools of Paris, New York and St. Petersburg that made a vital impact on the revered choreographer's career.

Music: **Gabriel Fauré, Igor Stravinsky & Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky**  
Choreography: **George Balanchine**  
Cast: **The Bolshoi Principals, Soloists & Corps de Ballet**

**Tickets:**  
₹450/- (Members)  
₹500/- (Public)  
**Box Office: 9th March for Members & 12th March for Public**

## WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC

**Piano Recital by Fali Pavri**  
**Experimental Theatre**  
**Tuesday, 19th April – 7.00 pm**

**An NCPA Presentation**

International soloist, chamber musician and much sought-after teacher, **Fali Pavri**, who is currently Associate Head of Keyboard and Professor of Piano at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, returns to Mumbai to perform a solo recital featuring the last piano sonatas of two giants in the Western classical canon.

**Programme:**  
Beethoven: Piano Sonata No. 32 in C minor, Op. 111  
Schubert: Piano Sonata in B-flat major, D. 960

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

## WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC

**Musicians of the Symphony Orchestra of India**

**Marat Bisengaliev, violin**  
**Ralph de Souza, violin & viola**  
**Fali Pavri, piano**  
**Tata Theatre**  
**Thursday, 21st April – 7.00 pm**  
**Sunday, 24th April – 5.00 pm**

**An NCPA Presentation**

Musicians of the Symphony Orchestra of India perform some of the most beloved masterworks of chamber music repertoire. They will be joined by **Ralph de Souza**, former violinist of the Endellion Quartet, pianist **Fali Pavri**, and SOI Music Director and violinist **Marat Bisengaliev**.

**Programme:**  
**21st April**  
Dvořák: String Quartet No. 12 in F major, Op. 96, "American"  
Schubert: Piano Quintet in A major, D.667, "Trout"

**24th April**  
Beethoven: String Quartet No. 9, Op. 59 No. 3 "Rasumovsky"  
Mendelssohn: Octet in E-flat major, Op. 20

**Tickets:**  
₹900, 600 & 375/- (Members)  
₹1,200, 800 & 500/- (Public)  
(Inclusive of GST)  
**Box Office: 26th March for Members & 29th March for Public**

## DANCE

**NCPA Mudra Dance Festival 2022**

**22nd, 24th & 30th April**  
**Tata Theatre, Experimental Theatre & Godrej Dance Theatre**

*Mudra* is the only thematic dance festival of the NCPA which is presented around International Dance Day every year. Previously, *Mudra* has been curated on themes like motherhood, colours, bhakti poetry, animal movements, etc. This year, it explores a very unique theme—Churning Within and Around. History has witnessed many churnings—The Partition, natural disasters and pandemics. In 2022, we look back and ask ourselves pertinent questions. What is poison? What is *amrit*? And what have we gained in pursuit of it? This festival looks at dance presentations featuring these learnings that over time have just made us stronger and wiser. Performances, lecture-demonstrations and more on *samudra manthan* as well as more recent churnings.

**Kathak by Shama Bhate & Nadroop and Bharatanatyam by Rama Vaidyanathan & Troupe**

(Approx. 90 mins)  
**Tata Theatre**  
**Friday, 22nd April - 6.30 pm**

**Shama Bhate's** work spans over 35 years as a performer, teacher, choreographer, artistic director and thinker. Her personal idiom, evolved over the years, is a blend of virtuosity (*tayyari*) and sensitive expressions (*abhinaya*), revealing a high degree of classicism. She is the Director of Nadroop, a unique institute based in Pune. Bhate herself is a principal disciple of Rohini Bhate, the doyen of Kathak. She was also blessed with special insights from Kathak Samrat Birju

Maharaj and Mohan Rao Kallianpurkar. She has created her own idiom of Kathak, blending it with special inputs in *tala* and *laya* from Suresh Talwalkar.

**Rama Vaidyanathan** is one of the topmost stars of Bharatanatyam, well known the world over. She has been fortunate to have trained intensively under the legendary dancer Yamini Krishnamurthy. Vaidyanathan has also been under the guidance of the eminent Saroja Vaidyanathan. Connoisseurs are struck by her unique thought process and fresh approach to dance. While deeply rooted in tradition, she has evolved her own individual style without forsaking the core principles of Bharatanatyam. Vaidyanathan has been teaching at Ganesa Natyalaya in Delhi for the past 25 years and has also been conducting intensive masterclasses in other parts of the country and abroad. She is an A top artiste with Doordarshan and is in the outstanding category with the ICCR. She has been invited to perform for prestigious organisations like the Sangeet Natak Akademi, Sahitya Kala Parishad and IGNCA in Delhi, NCPA in Mumbai, Shanti Niketan in Kolkata, among others.

**Tickets:**  
₹750, 375 & 225/- (Members)  
₹1,000, 500 & 300/- (Public)  
(Inclusive of GST)

**Transformations in Your Form since Independence**  
**Lecture Demonstration by Darshana Jhaveri, Shama Bhate, Sandhya Purecha & Mandakini Trivedi**

**Godrej Dance Theatre**  
**Sunday, 24th April – 11.00 am to 3.00 pm**

**Presentation curated by Shama Bhate**

A morning presenting senior artistes, sharing with the audience the prospect of any specific change in the presentation, teaching method and approach towards their form because of the pandemic situation.

**Tickets:**  
₹270/- (Members)  
₹300/- (Public)

**Bharatanatyam by Sucheta Bhide Chapekar & Troupe and Chaya**

**Mukhi by Gopika Varma**  
(Approx.90 mins)  
**Experimental Theatre**  
**Sunday, 24th April - 5.00 pm**

**Sucheta Bhide Chapekar** is an Indian classical dancer and choreographer. She is an exponent of Bharatanatyam. She is the founder of Kalavardhini Nrityapeeth, a trust supporting the teaching and propagation activities in classical dance, where she also teaches Bharatanatyam. She has been a recipient of the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (2007). She was trained under Parvati Kumar and K. P. Kittappa Pillai. In subsequent years, she performed at many local concerts, and toured in London, Paris and Rotterdam. She came up with the idea of mixing Marathi and Hindi songs in her concerts which eventually led to the formation of *Nritya Ganga*, a Bharatanatyam concert comprising about 80 compositions, all based on Hindustani classical music.

**Gopika Varma** has been regarded as a leading exponent of Mohiniattam, who has trained under eminent dancers Girija and Chandrika Kurup. Her gurus are both senior students of the renowned Kalyani Kutty Amma. Varma spent many years of her life in researching literary, sculptural and musical sources and meeting conventional gurus to study the origins of this lyrical dance art. Under the proficient guidance of the well-known dancer of Kathakali, Kalamandalam Krishnan Nair, she has learnt to elaborate Mohiniattam's range of skills and tried to impart the knowledge of *abhinaya* within it. Varma has performed at various art festivals, *sabhas* and temples all over India.

**Tickets:**  
₹360 & 270/- (Members)  
₹400 & 300/- (Public)

**Footprints in Blood by Bimbavati Devi & Kuchipudi by Amrita Lahiri**

(Approx. 90 Mins)  
**Experimental Theatre**  
**Saturday, 30th April - 6.30 pm**

**Bimbavati Devi**, the daughter of renowned classical Manipuri dancers, Bipin Singh and Kalavati Devi, was initiated into performance at a tender age. As a solo artiste of Manipuri Nartanalaya, one of the pioneer institutions founded by her parents and

the well-known Jhaveri sisters, she has performed in various prestigious dance festivals of India and abroad. She has additional training in Poong (Manipuri mridang) playing and *Thang-Ta* (Manipuri martial art). Bimbavati is an empanelled artiste (Established Category) of the ICCR and an 'A' Grade artiste of Doordarshan. She has received, among other awards, the Sanskriti Award (Sanskriti Foundation, New Delhi 2004), Aditya Birla Kala Kiran Puraskar (Sangeet Kala Kendra, Mumbai 2007) and Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar (Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi 2008). She experiments with new idioms in choreography based on Manipuri dance and is a guest lecturer in Rabindra Bharati University.

**Amrita Lahiri** is widely recognised as one of the foremost young performers of Kuchipudi today. Critics describe her as 'gifted with a radiant stage presence', and her dance performances and choreographies have been acclaimed for their elegance and dynamism. Lahiri began dancing at age seven in Washington, D.C. under Anuradha Nehru until she shifted to New Delhi at age 15. After her solo debut at the India International Centre in New Delhi in 1996, she continued to perform Kuchipudi, and also started learning Bharatanatyam under Leela Samson. Lahiri toured extensively with Samson's group Spanda and also studied under Swapna Sundari and Seetha Nagajothy. In Chennai, she studied under Jaikishore Mosalikanti. Her dance reflects the influences of all of these outstanding gurus, and the experience of many performances.

**Tickets:**  
₹360 & 270/- (Members)  
₹400 & 300/- (Public)  
**Box Office for Festival: 26th March for Members & 29th March for Public**

## SCREENING

**Ariadne auf Naxos**  
**by Richard Strauss**  
**Opera Screening (170 mins)**  
**Sung in German with English Subtitles**  
**Godrej Dance Theatre**  
**Saturday, 23rd April – 4.00 pm**

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

Ariadne, who has been abandoned

by Theseus, laments her lost love and yearns for death. Zerbinetta and her four companions from the commedia dell'arte troupe attempt to cheer Ariadne by singing and dancing, but without success. Zerbinetta insists that the best way to cure a broken heart is to find another love. Naiad, Dryad and Echo announce the arrival of a stranger. Ariadne assumes it is the messenger of death, but in fact it is Bacchus, who instantly falls in love with Ariadne. As Ariadne and Bacchus celebrate their love, Zerbinetta claims that she was right all along.

Conductor: **Marek Janowski**

Production: **Elijah Moshinsky**

Cast: **Lise Davidsen, Brenda Rae, Isabel Leonard, Brandon Jovanovich, Sean Michael Plumb, Johannes Martin Kränzle & Thomas Allen**

Tickets:

₹450/- (Members)

₹500/- (Public)

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

## INTERNATIONAL MUSIC

### Funktronica

Experimental Theatre

Saturday, 23rd April – 6.30 pm

#### An NCPA Presentation

Come join us, as the collective takes you through the genre of funk with **Samantha Noella** on vocals, **Rahul Wadhvani** on keys, **Adil Manuel** on guitar, **Gino Banks** on drums and **Sheldon D'Silva** on bass. The concert explores the musical styles of the early 2000s, covering music by Jamiroquai, Earth, Wind & Fire, Prince, Scary Pockets and many more.

Tickets:

₹750 & 500/- (Members)

₹675 & 450/- (Public)

(Plus GST)

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

## SCREENING

### Romeo & Juliet

by William Shakespeare

Theatre Screening

(Approx 100 mins)

Godrej Dance Theatre

Wednesday, 27th April – 6.00 pm

### An NCPA-National Theatre Live (London) Presentation

Romeo and Juliet risk everything to be together. In defiance of their feuding families, they chase a future of joy and passion as violence erupts around them.

This bold new film brings to life the remarkable backstage spaces of the National Theatre in which desire, dreams and destiny collide to make Shakespeare's romantic tragedy sing in an entirely new way.

**Jessie Buckley** (*Wild Rose, Judy*) and **Josh O'Connor** (*The Crown, God's Own Country*) play Juliet and Romeo. The award-winning cast includes **Tamsin Greig, Fisayo Akinade, Adrian Lester, Lucian Msamati & Deborah Findlay**.

Tickets:

₹360/- (Members)

₹400/- (Public)

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

## INTERNATIONAL MUSIC

### International Jazz Day

Tata Theatre

Saturday, 30th April – 6.30 pm

#### An NCPA Presentation

In Mumbai, International Jazz Day has been celebrated for the last ten years. The 11th edition, curated by the **NCPA & Louiz Banks**, will feature a huge array 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 Louiz Banks celebrates this iconic day live at the Tata Theatre, Mumbai, in association with UNESCO and The Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz.

Tickets:

₹750, 600, 375 & 225/-

₹1,000, 800, 500 & 300/-

(Plus GST)

Box Offices: 9th March for Members & 12th March for Public

## MAY 2022

## INTERNATIONAL MUSIC

### Beatles Tribute

English Musical (90 mins)

Tata Theatre

Sunday, 1st May – 7.00 pm

### An NCPA & Silly Point Presentation

Come together as it is time to Twist and Shout on a Yellow Submarine while we Hold Your Hand on a journey where you Imagine the greatest for Eight Days a Week. The songs of the Beatles are being brought to life on stage in a way you have never seen before.

Cast: **Sarosh Nanavaty, Naquita Dsouza, Danesh Irani, Danesh Khambata, Hormuz Ragina, Dwayne Gamree, Brent Tauro, Karan Parikh & Adil Kurva**

Tickets:

₹1,500, 1,125, 900, 750, 600 & 375/- (Members)

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

(Inclusive of GST)

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

## SCREENING

### The Book of Dust - La Belle Sauvage

Theatre Screening

(Approx. 180 mins)

Godrej Dance Theatre

Wednesday, 11th & Wednesday, 25th May – 6.00 pm

### An NCPA-National Theatre Live (London) Presentation

Elevator pitch: Set twelve years before the epic *His Dark Materials* trilogy, this gripping adaptation revisits Phillip Pullman's fantastical world in which the waters are rising and storms are brewing. Two young people and their dæmons, with everything at stake, find themselves at the centre of a terrifying manhunt. In their care is a tiny child called Lyra Belacqua, and in that child lies the fate of the future.

Directed by **Nicholas Hytner**

Adapted by **Bryony Lavery**

Broadcast from the Bridge Theatre in London

Tickets:

₹360/- (Members)

₹400/- (Public)

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



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