

ON Stage[®]

SEPTEMBER 2022

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The Hungarian State Opera's **DIE FLEDERMAUS WITH THE SOI IN THE AUTUMN 2022 SEASON**

Tribute to
Peter Brook

Tom Stoppard's Every
Good Boy Deserves Favour

The many forms
of Devi



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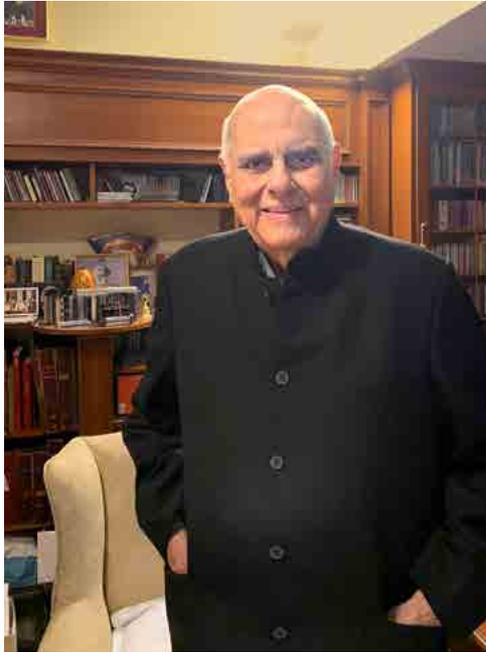
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Chairman's Note



I am delighted that performances at our theatres are now emerging even stronger than before the pandemic struck us down for more than two years.

In the next few months, the SOI and other major performances by various genres would reach heights the NCPA could only dream about 12 months ago.

In September, we have probably the most ambitious and yet musically satisfying season the SOI has ever embarked on. Apart from several renowned artistes during the season, the great Hungarian State Opera will arrive at the NCPA with their stars, conductor, costumes and sets, and give performances using our orchestra. We are indeed honoured since this is a major European company.

Many popular shows will bring our NCPA back to being a favourite haunt. I have to draw all our patrons' and members' attention to the enormous support offered to the revival of the performing arts in many of the great culture centres throughout the world where funds in millions, often billions, of dollars are sanctioned by governments and enlightened corporations to give an impetus to a vital part of the nation's cultural life. Many of these unsolicited donations are a major source of funding for these cultural organisations.

We do appeal to our patrons and various authorities to freshly support the revival that we are planning for sake of the cultural life of India.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K. N. Suntook". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Khushroo N. Suntook

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Khushroo N. Suntook

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 **NCPA**

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Leading with Trust, Living by Values

Integrity



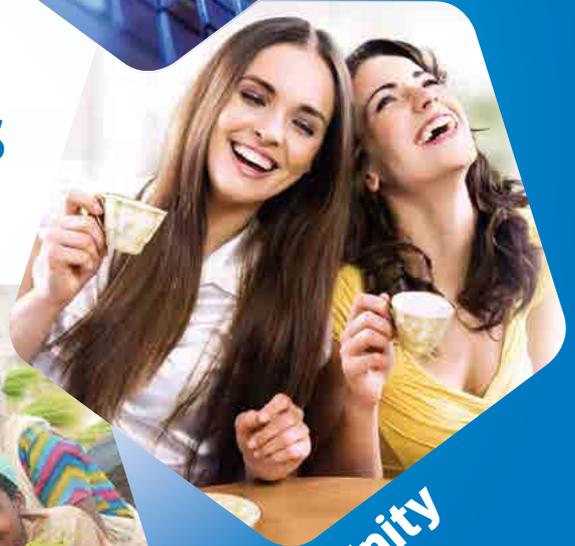
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**OUR
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Excellence



Unity



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JASHN-E-ISHQ

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**An evening of music and poetry by
Sourendro – Soumyojit**

**Featuring
Shabana Azmi**



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Tata Theatre, NCPA**

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SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OF INDIA



16TH SEPT 2022 AT 7 PM

ALPESH CHAUHAN CONDUCTOR
BENJAMIN GROSVENOR PIANO
HUMPERDINCK: OVERTURE TO *HANSEL & GRETEL*
MENDELSSOHN: PIANO CONCERTO NO. 1
PROKOFIEV: *ROMEO & JULIET* (EXCERPTS)

21ST SEPT 2022 AT 7 PM

ALPESH CHAUHAN CONDUCTOR
BEN GOLDSCHIEDER HORN
TCHAIKOVSKY: *ROMEO & JULIET*
MOZART: HORN CONCERTO NO. 3
STRAUSS: HORN CONCERTO NO. 1
BERNSTEIN: SYMPHONIC DANCES FROM *WEST SIDE STORY*

25TH SEPT 2022 AT 5 PM

SAYAKA SHOJI VIOLIN
HENRI DEMARQUETTE CELLO
JEAN-FRÉDÉRIC NEUBURGER PIANO/CONDUCTOR
MENDELSSOHN: *THE HEBRIDES*
BRAHMS: DOUBLE CONCERTO
BEETHOVEN: TRIPLE CONCERTO

30TH SEPT 2022 AT 7 PM

RICHARD FARNES CONDUCTOR
PAVEL KOLESNIKOV PIANO
VERDI: OVERTURE TO *NABUCCO*
RACHMANINOFF: PIANO CONCERTO NO. 3
BEETHOVEN: SYMPHONY NO. 7

Long Live the Operetta!

Operetta, a precursor of the modern musical, is often considered less serious than opera. We delve into the history of the 'lighter' side of opera to understand why the form continues to thrive in musical theatre of the 21st century.

By Beverly Pereira



In *Die Fledermaus*, Johann Strauss II, renowned for his Viennese waltzes, included an ample dose of waltz and polka



Operetta emerged in the second half of the 19th century as an offshoot of the French opéra-comique, German Singspiel and even Italy's commedia dell'arte. While opéra-comique is akin to a full-length stage work with serious subject matter (think *Carmen*) and Singspiel more of a light-hearted music drama, the operetta can be thought of as a shorter, lighter version that tackled topics ranging from the satirical to the romantic

and from the comic to the absurd. Falling somewhere between an opera and a musical, and differing in scale and complexity from opera as we know it, operetta is a form of musical theatre that blends song with orchestral music, spoken dialogue and dance.

Some of the most notable operetta composers include Jacques Offenbach, Johann Strauss II, Franz Lehár and the duo Gilbert and Sullivan. From *The Merry Widow* to *Die Fledermaus* right

up to *The Mikado* and the nautical-themed *H.M.S. Pinafore*, operettas continue to enthral, albeit as sparkling new productions in a world far removed from the 19th century.

Origins of operetta

French composer, conductor and librettist Louis Auguste Florimond Ronger, better known as Hervé, might have written the first operetta (*L'Ours et le Pacha*) back in 1842, but it was the German-born French composer Offenbach who is widely regarded as the father of the form. Offenbach wrote over 100 operettas between the 1850s and 1870s, successfully taking the art form to new heights and stages beyond Paris. In 1850s France, the genre gained recognition as a light-hearted alternative to operas and mainly to satisfy the need for shorter works at a time when state-funded stage works were given a preference. Theatrical composers were up against the French government, which forced them to limit the number of speaking and singing characters to just two artistes. Still, Offenbach is said to have flourished at the time. Robert Planquette and Charles Lecocq were also notable; the French composers wrote popular operettas like *La Fille de Madame Angot* and *Les Cloches de Corneville*.

Orphée aux enfers (Orpheus in the Underworld), Offenbach's first full-length operetta, premiered in 1858, was considered a true hit not only in Paris but also far beyond. The composer took the genre all the way to the U.S., Austria-Hungary and England. His influence reached England by the 1860s, when Gilbert and Sullivan composed *Cox and Box* (1866) in response to Offenbach's *Les deux aveugles* (1855).

Even as Offenbach staged some of his works in Vienna in 1861, his popularity was short-lived as the entertainment-hungry public had begun to turn their attention to Viennese composers who had begun to write operettas of their own. Austrian composer Johann Strauss II, also known as the "Waltz King", remains one of the most famous composers of operettas in the German language. His 1874 work *Die Fledermaus* would go on to become one of the most performed operettas in the world. Strauss the Younger, of "The Blue Danube" fame, wrote 16 operettas in his lifetime, all of which enjoyed successful premieres. His works were marked with a signature Viennese style of waltzes, marches and polkas.

A play on plots

Operettas can be described as the 'lighter' sibling of the grand opera, both in terms of music and dialogue. But it also has much to do with the fact that operettas are based on more frivolous and sentimental plots, oftentimes tinged with parody, satire and wit. The orchestration, however, was just as imaginative and the librettos, always supreme. Offenbach's *Ba-ta-clan* (1855) was a hit one-act operetta that told the story of Che-i-noor, or China, being ruled by three Chinese who turn out to be a Parisian trio in disguise. Not only was it a satirical take on contemporary politics, but it also challenged the conventions associated with grand opera.

Gilbert and Sullivan's *H.M.S. Pinafore* parodied English party politics and the Royal Navy through the operetta's comic plot that focusses on romantic liaisons between members of different social classes. In *Die Fledermaus* by Strauss II, we are treated to a rather ludicrous plot that involves mistaken identities, a masked ball, a character dressed as a bat and elaborate schemes with a few white lies thrown in for good measure.

Of the 16 operettas written by Johann Strauss II, *Die Fledermaus* would go on to become one of the most performed operettas in the world

Operettas can well be considered the forerunner of the modern-day musical, even as both forms of musical theatre simultaneously existed in the early part of the 20th century. The operetta had now reached far and wide, including Mexico, Cuba and the U.S. even as it thrived in the countries of its origin. Fresh adaptations of classics by Strauss II, Gilbert and Sullivan and Offenbach laid

the groundwork for a new genre that would soon take over. *Oklahoma!*, for example, took America by storm with its commentary on social issues expressed as the perfect amalgam of song, dance and spoken dialogue. It is safe to say then that the operetta had given birth to the musical as we know it; the musical had become a new genre in itself.

Next month, a fully staged production of *Die Fledermaus* directed by Hungarian film director and screenwriter Szinetár Miklós is set to arrive at the NCPA. A production of the Hungarian State Opera, the beloved operatic masterpiece has been a part of the Hungarian opera's repertoire for over 100 years. The fresh rendition of Strauss II's comedic tale, still among the most successful musical dramas of our time, is one that is not to be missed. ■

A fully staged version of Die Fledermaus by Johann Strauss II will be presented by Hungarian State Opera on 12th, 14th and 16th October at the Jamshed Bhabha Theatre.

According to Experts

Inviting specialists with diverse expertise to advise the NCPA in various areas of operation has been a part of the organisation's credo since its inception. Recently, four international consultants were in the city to work closely with the NCPA's leadership in planning the way forward.

An arts organisation par excellence does not exist in seclusion. It does what it does best like a well-oiled machine, but not without making a conscious effort to keep abreast of the latest in the world of culture, not only for what it presents onstage but also for how it functions offstage.

The practice of involving top international experts to advise the NCPA started with Dr. Jamshed Bhabha. The organisation's first Board of Advisors boasted such renowned personalities as Yehudi Menuhin, Jean-Louis Barrault and Karl Böhm along with luminaries from India including M.S. Subbulakshmi, Satyajit Ray and Vilayat Khan. When Dr. Bhabha envisaged the Tata Theatre, he visited many concert halls and architectural firms in the West before commissioning one of the world's great architects, Philip Johnson, to design the auditorium. A similar search for acoustic excellence led him to the renowned acoustic consultant, Cyril Harris.

From then on, a paucity of funds saw a pause on this practice until 2002, when Mr. Khushroo N. Suntook joined as Vice Chairman. He brought in a crack team from IMG. It included specialists such as Ian Smallbone and Mindy Coppin who suggested the course of action for professionalising the management which again was limited by inadequate financial resources. It was

“The opportunity that the SOI now offers to musicians to perform in symphonic repertoire, in chamber ensemble, in a quartet and in the opera pit with equal confidence is a tribute to all involved”

only after the legacy of Dr. Bhabha became available that serious strides were made towards reaching the full potential of the NCPA as it is seen today.

Indian music has blossomed into a centre of excellence, making the NCPA one of the most coveted organisations for artistes. Western classical music has taken on a fresh avatar with programming that includes operas, symphonic and chamber music concerts, recitals, etc., and the creation of an academy where young talent is spotted and honed in methods previously unavailable in India. The recognition of the Symphony Orchestra of India's achievements over the years by soprano Charlotte de Rothschild of the famous banking dynasty of England known for its vast musical connections, and Lady Valerie Solti, wife of renowned Hungarian-born conductor Sir Georg Solti, are a testimony to the prestigious stature of the NCPA. The association of the National Theatre, London, with the NCPA through screenings and other collaborations is another step in the direction.

More recently, the corridors of the organisation have been abuzz with discussions about planning the way forward in an array of areas from technical upgrade to reimagining visitor experience, making its premises more welcoming, its programming world-class, and garnering the financial support it needs to bring these plans to fruition. To achieve this, the NCPA has been working closely with internationally renowned experts who make valuable recommendations for upcoming seasons, adopting best practices in their respective areas and how challenges unique to arts organisations the world over are being met—all geared towards strengthening the role of the NCPA as a leading performing arts centre with a blend of offerings across genres that arguably have no parallel.

Four such experts were here in June—John Rodgers, former Director of Development for the National Theatre, London, and now, the NT's Consultant Director for North America; Edward Smith, Consultant to the SOI and former Chief Executive of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra; Gian Galeazzo Ganzarolli, Consultant to the NCPA for opera, who has worked as Producer and Impresario with Teatro alla Scala, Teatro La Fenice, Royal Albert Hall and Wigmore Hall among other venues; and Richard Nowell, sound engineer and technical consultant to the NCPA. His sound services company is resident at the Southbank Centre, London.

“Our senior consultants, with



(From left) John Rodgers, Nikhil Sardana, Richard Nowell, Gian Ganzarolli, Khushroo N. Suntook, Xerxes Unvala, Edward Smith

whom we have years of association, are among the best in the world. Their soundness in their area of operation is based on several years of practical knowledge and it is worth listening to these great voices of experience. We may not necessarily agree with everything but we can certainly adapt the thought process to Indian conditions. A burgeoning arts centre would only do well to emulate some of these models followed by iconic houses of culture,” says Mr. Suntook, Chairman, NCPA, who has helped bring these minds to Mumbai through his wide connections in the world of the performing arts.

Their first visit since the pandemic, the experts were here for weeklong discussions with Mr. Suntook, heads of genres and senior management, where they weighed in with insights critical to the overall vision for the NCPA in the near future as well as the years to come.

Bricks, mortar and more

“The Chairman's vision for the NCPA is for it to go into the next two decades and beyond with confidence and a campus that matches the standard of the art that is presented within it. In order to do that, we have been examining the things that have worked and those that have been not so successful. The consensus is that we need an NCPA-wide grand plan designed to celebrate the differences between

our buildings in the same way as we celebrate the difference between our art forms but that ties them together in a coherent whole,” says Nowell.

The plan includes refurbishing silent contributors to the experience of watching a performance—the lighting, staging and seating systems—as well as an overhaul of the visitor experience, even when, as Nowell puts it, you don't have a ticket. From better utilisation of open spaces to greater accessibility and vastly improved facilities for members, there is much thought that has gone into how the NCPA can be a welcoming place for art lovers as well as first-time visitors.

Future seasons

The NCPA is all set for the SOI Autumn 2022 Season but the agenda for the meetings while the experts were here was the future seasons. In order to consistently bring celebrated conductors and soloists with a chock-full calendar to perform with the orchestra, they must be contacted well in advance.

Curating a season is a constant endeavour to strike a balance between quality, experience and cost. “Inviting well-known conductors is important not only for the public but also for the orchestra to grow,” says Ganzarolli. At the same time, associating with young talent goes a long way. “Helping artistes at the beginning of their career because you trust they will

The NCPA has been working closely with internationally renowned experts who make valuable recommendations for upcoming seasons, adopting best practices in their respective areas and how challenges unique to arts organisations the world over are being met

be great means they will be with you forever. A few years later, when they are extremely busy and their schedule allows little room for manoeuvre, they will honour your invitation to perform,” he explains.

This holds true not only for guest conductors and soloists but also freelance artistes who make up a symphony orchestra. “I must compliment Khushroo Suntook, Marat Bisengaliev and Onay Zhumabayeva who have managed to have the same artistes come back season after season, so you can build on what you have achieved before,” Ganzarolli adds.

Smith, who has also been associated with the NCPA since the initial phase of the SOI’s formation, reflects on the orchestra’s evolution, “Work goes on all year with the SOI players and the music academy striving for development and improvement which continue to bear fruit in the ever-rising quality of performances in their various groupings—whether in the form of chamber orchestra, symphony orchestra, small ensembles or, as will be demonstrated next month, as an opera orchestra when the Hungarian State Opera visit with *Die Fledermaus*.” This, he believes, is just one example of how the musicians have grown in versatility and ability to serve a wider audience.

“Orchestral players thrive on variety of repertoire and environment and the opportunity that the SOI now offers to musicians to perform as one of 85 plus in symphonic repertoire, 25 plus in chamber ensemble, four in a quartet and in the opera pit with equal confidence is a tribute to all involved. This can only get better as seasons get longer and audience curiosity is stimulated. Expanding repertoire and exploring new genres such as films with live orchestra accompaniment will hopefully grow audiences even further in the future,” Smith adds.

With chamber music performances now a regular feature at the NCPA, Ganzarolli informs that the prospect of inviting specialist Italian singers for repertoire such as Verdi arias—so they can perform not just to the accompaniment of the piano but the richer sound of a chamber orchestra—is also being discussed.

The road to realisation

The realisation of these plans—infrastructural and curatorial—entails will, expertise and equally

importantly, the availability of funds. Rodgers, who brings two decades of experience in fundraising at London’s National Theatre sees many similarities between the two organisations. “Both the NCPA and NT have fabulous reputations for putting out the finest artistic performances that are also varied,” he says while pointing out that preserving this reputation necessitates keeping everything up to date. Rodgers also finds that the infrastructural and technological needs of both the organisations are identical. “We are now living in a very different world from when these buildings were constructed.”

There is, however, one fundamental difference. The U.K. government sees culture as an integral part of life. It sets aside funds for arts organisations in the country through a body called the Arts Council. Most cultural organisations in India fight a lonely battle for existence. During the lockdown, when several arts centres in the U.K. were on the brink of permanent closure, Rodgers speaks of how a senior member of NT went to see the government and made a case on behalf of all such organisations. “They responded with making a very large sum, £1.57 billion, available to the arts in the U.K. It was enough to stop organisations from closing down even though it was not enough for them to relax.”

The NCPA, Rodgers believes, deserves a loving support base. “People over time have come to enjoy everything that goes on here and we want to invite them to help secure the future of this institution.” As the plan for the renovation is firmed up and estimates received, corporates, trusts and individuals will be approached with specifics, so they are aware of how their contribution—big or small—will be ploughed into strengthening the cultural fabric of the country through the organisation they have loved and admired over five decades.

Back in the U.K., the NT is open again. “There’s a big appetite to get back to the theatre in person. It takes time for people’s confidence to come back, but we’re beginning to see that,” Rodgers observes, adding, “I’m very impressed with what I see and hear at the NCPA and the quality of people and thinking. And I just hope I can continue to make a contribution, with my experience of doing the same thing in a different country.” ■



BENJAMIN GROSVENOR

piano

BACH/BUSONI Chaconne

LISZT Sonata in B minor

RAVEL *Le tombeau de Couperin*

RAVEL *La valse*

18 SEPTEMBER 2022 | 5:00 PM

BEN GOLDSCHIEDER

horn

RICHARD UTTLEY

piano

BEETHOVEN Horn Sonata in F major, Op. 17

SCHUBERT Klavierstücke No. 1 in E-flat minor, D. 946

SCHUMANN Adagio and Allegro in A flat, Op. 70

And works by Widmann, Simpson, Kirchner and Bowen

23 SEPTEMBER 2022 | 7:00 PM



SAYAKA SHOJI

violin

HENRI DEMARQUETTE

cello

JEAN-FRÉDÉRIC NEUBURGER

piano

SCHUBERT Notturmo in E-flat major, Op. 148

BRAHMS Trio No. 3 in C minor, Op. 101

SCHUBERT Trio No. 1 in B-flat major, D. 898

26 SEPTEMBER 2022 | 7:00 PM



PAVEL KOLESNIKOV

piano

SCHUBERT Four Impromptus D. 899

CHOPIN Fantaisie-Impromptu

CHOPIN "Raindrop" Prelude

CHOPIN Valse in E minor

SCHUMANN *Kreisleriana*

28 SEPTEMBER 2022 | 7:00 PM



Divine Notes

The potent concept of *shakti* is unique to Hindu philosophy. *Devi*, synonymous with *shakti*, is venerated across her diverse incarnations. In her upcoming musical presentation, Devaki Pandit takes a deeper look at its essence in a contemporary context.

By Sunayana Mohanty

Ancient belief systems across the origins of human civilisation venerated female divinity as Mother Goddess, the supreme creator of life. But the rise of monolithic religions eventually pushed Goddess worship in the West into obscurity. On the Indian subcontinent, however, the divine feminine, ubiquitous to creation, remains sacred and uniquely celebrated. Even rivers in India, meandering through millennia as cradles of civilisation, are exalted in ancient texts as Goddess and Mother. The concept of *shakti*, as propagated in Hindu philosophy, offers a radically different approach to the issue of power, otherwise equated with the masculine. Shakti is considered the supreme creative power, the ultimate dynamic cosmic energy, the primordial essence. As the female aspect of the divine, *Devi* is synonymous with Shakti and is regarded as the creator of life, symbol of opulence and epitome of knowledge and wisdom. These manifestations include Parvati, Lakshmi and Saraswati. However, Shakti can also embrace an aggressive force form as Durga and Kali, ultimately to protect life and restore righteousness.

All-permeating, the divine is intrinsically woven into India's sociocultural and spiritual fabric, including our arts, where the association is almost inextricable. Indian literature and visual and performing arts are replete with incarnations of *Devi* across the spectrum of female divinity, embodying the serene to the fierce. The basic tenets of melody in Indian music—*ragas* and *raginis*, understood as masculine and feminine—are also considered eternal and divine, many being namesakes of

The concert intends to envelop the essence of the creative force and supreme energy through Shakti's different manifestations and unpack their attributes within a contemporary connotation

Hindu deities. Exploring an amalgam of these elements across Hindu philosophy in her upcoming musical presentation on *Devi* is renowned Hindustani classical vocalist Devaki Pandit. Ahead of her performance at the NCPA, especially scheduled around Navratri—the festival dedicated to goddesses—Pandit shares more about her vision behind *Devi: Celebrating the Divine*.

Initiated into music by her mother Usha Pandit, Pandit has trained under stalwarts of Hindustani music. Alongside popular music in Hindi and Marathi, Pandit is noted for soulful renditions of devotional gems. But exploring this theme of *Devi* goes beyond her earlier performances—it treads a new approach to her work with its premise at the intersection of a simple observation.

Fitting the times

Over the past couple of years, Pandit has been reassessing many aspects of the compositions she has been singing. "When I read the lyrics, I feel, sometimes they are not relevant to today's times," she says, reflecting on some of the antiquated references within these, especially for a younger audience. Further, gathering from her interactions with audiences not initiated into classical music, she discerned a growing disconnect with the form. Their constant struggle to comprehend the lyrics and references in *bandishes* forced her to question the context.

Exploring this gap prompted Pandit to consider how she could recontextualise the content to provide relevant references for a broader audience. And so, *Devi* became the first of four interesting thematic projects in the pipeline inspired by this thought to connect with an audience in her own way.

(Re)phrasing Devi

The concert intends to envelop the essence of the creative force and supreme energy through Shakti's different manifestations and unpack their attributes within a contemporary connotation. For instance, Saraswati symbolises knowledge. And knowledge is timeless. Similarly, "Durga can be interpreted as the destruction of negative thoughts or evil as we see today," Pandit elaborates.

Her interpretation of *Devi* entails slightly shifting the lens of mythology and religion to include the ecological and philosophical realm as well. Ancient texts extol Ganga as divine. *Ganga Maa*, as she is often called, is revered and considered the archetype of sacred waters. But Pandit wants to highlight Ganga in the present-day context. "I think we have forgotten what a river really means," she says, referring to Ganga encompassing a complete ecosystem and to its environmental issues that are largely disregarded.

Another attribute that the concert spotlights is forgiveness. For Pandit, Sita stands for forgiveness, a virtue she believes is true female quality. "Forgiving doesn't come easy to men because most are full of ego," she quips. But the surrendering and unconditional love as creators of life make forgiving natural to women.

Finding form

An initial thematic challenge Pandit faced concerned



bandishes for Ganga and Sita. Unable to find these anywhere, she eventually got them specially written for this concept, adding to her repertoire. Pandit has collaborated with lyricist Rahul Deshpande, who penned a couple of songs for the project.

As our conversation takes place almost two months

before the concert, Pandit stresses that it's too early to confirm details, but is certain of including some *ragas*, or *raginis*, such as Raga Saraswati, Raga Durga, Raga Bhairavi and Raga Narayani. She outlines how almost every *bandish* exalting a *Devi* has been composed in her namesake *raga*. But the concluding piece, usually

Raga Bhairavi, will bring together all Devis in one *bandish*. Having composed some of the pieces herself, Pandit shares that all compositions, especially the new lot, are primarily composed in Indian classical *ragas*. Still, she leaves some room for variation. In a nutshell, the 75-minute performance will weave in storytelling, combining mythological references peppered with insightful anecdotes set in the present context.

In quest

While Pandit hopes the audience enjoys what *Devi* shapes into, at its core is an earnest wish—that it leaves them with something thought-provoking. “It’s essential that we realise and acknowledge that

all the energies that we’re talking about are playing through our everyday lives,” she says.

Devi, the divine feminine, symbolising wealth, knowledge and power is a prevalent notion. But *Devi*, the performance that reframes this context, enveloping the preservation of life-sustaining nature and embracing a liberating quality, also holds manifold possibilities. And as it invokes the many manifestations in their eponymous divine *ragas*, one can only imagine what the transcendental potential of this energy evoked in a shared space will be. ■

Devi: Celebrating the Divine *will be presented by Devaki Pandit on 24th September at the Experimental Theatre.*

Recommended Volume

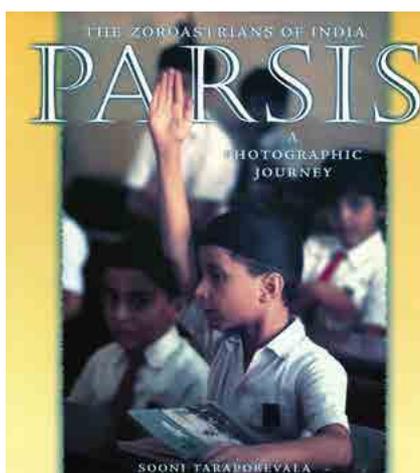
Every month, **Sujata Jadhav**, Head - Libraries & Documentation Centre at the NCPA, introduces a must-read book from the NCPA Reference Library. This month, she recommends an engrossing chronicle of one of the most interesting communities in the country.

**Parsis, the Zoroastrians of India:
A Photographic Journey, 1980-2000
By Sooni Taraporevala
Publisher: Good Books, 2000**

The NCPA Reference Library collection features an exclusive coffee table book filled with fascinating information, photographs, private moments and sacred spaces of India’s vibrant Parsi community. In the wake of Navroz celebrations last month, I invite members to come and explore this work to get a sense of the world of the Parsis.

The book is authored by the very talented Sooni Taraporevala, who has trained as a filmmaker in the U.S. and written screenplays of award-winning movies like *Salaam Bombay!*, *Mississippi Masala*, *Such a Long Journey* and many more. With this book, she becomes the reader’s guide, using her photographs and words to capture the essence and idiosyncrasies of the Parsi community in India in the period between 1980 and 2000. The stunning 175 photographs are accompanied by descriptions of Zoroastrian people as a whole or as individuals giving us an insight into a world that is not often discussed.

Iconic conductor Zubin Mehta, Music Director Emeritus of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, has called this book “the finest documentation of the life and achievement of our community in 20th-century India.” While perusing it, one can understand how the Parsis have nurtured Indian culture through their art,



music, literature and business with a global perspective and unique outlook.

While Zoroastrian communities are scattered throughout Central Asia, Mumbai is home to the largest group of practising Zoroastrians in the world. Taraporevala has captured the joys, sorrows, achievements, fears, accomplishments, the highs and the lows, the beliefs and the values of an entire community within the pages of her book. The text accompanying the photographs is just as enticing. It is the tale of a people who arrived in India with nothing but their faith. Followers of the ancient religion Zoroastrianism, the Parsis migrated to India from what is now Iran over a millennium ago. Based on the teachings of the religious reformer and prophet Zarathustra, Zoroastrianism asserts that Ahura Mazda is the one God,

and advocates a three-fold path of good thoughts, good words and good deeds.

In the introduction to her book, published in 2000, Taraporevala writes: “There are only 140,000 Parsis in the world today, mostly in India, particularly in Bombay.’ Though the Parsi population is small compared to other Indian communities, many members of the community have played pivotal roles in shaping modern India. Apart from Mehta, who has often been called one of the greatest conductors to have ever lived, Dadabhai Naoroji, Pherozeshah Mehta, Dr. Homi Bhabha, Sam Manekshaw and our very own Dr. Jamsheer Bhabha are some of the names that have changed India for the better.

The book is a result of 20 years of documentation. With Taraporevala’s keen eye focused on her own community and the enriching stories she has captured in word and on lens, this book is not for the table, but for the soul. ■

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

IN RETROSPECT

***Divalicious featuring The Retro Vinyls* takes a trip down memory lane, paying tribute to the greatest female voices that have shaped the music of their time and today.**

By Aishwarya Bodke

Music is a language of the heart, one we all understand. It is a great equaliser bringing people together despite differences in languages, time and borders. The upcoming show at the Tata Theatre, *Divalicious featuring The Retro Vinyls*, embodies all this and more. Presenting an interesting blend of musicians, the evening is devoted to legendary female voices of the good old days. The greatest icons of rock, blues, jazz and pop will come alive as The Retro Vinyls take Mumbai on a journey of nostalgia.

The show offers a cracking assemblage of hits from different genres of culture-defining music by Ella Fitzgerald, Peggy Lee, Nina Simone, Aretha Franklin, Nancy Sinatra, Janis Joplin, Tina Turner, Cher, Donna Summer and Whitney Houston. With the hope of painting a fitting tribute to these all-time greats, *The Retro Vinyls* will showcase three powerful vocalists, each covering different styles and genres. What remains consistent is the spirit of womanhood expressed through music. The phenomenal Fitzgerald shaped the sound of jazz while dismantling racial barriers. Lee's unapologetic expression of female desire was extraordinarily radical. Simone's unflinching fight for social change employing her art heralded the way for artistes after her. Turner's robust voice and indomitable energy broke through a male-dominated industry and made her rock 'n' roll royalty. Cher challenged the degree of autonomy and control that women in music held. The contributions of these luminaries have left an impact on the world of music that can be felt even today. That their music stays alive in all its glory and charm in our hearts tells its own timeless tale.

The Retro Vinyls is a refreshing collective that



Whitney Houston



Ella Fitzgerald

found its footing in Pune. All eight members that form the band come from different walks of life with unique strengths and perspectives. Vocalist Lisa Mary Swu hails from Nagaland and dons many hats of a



Aretha Franklin



Peggy Lee

songwriter, YouTuber, choir conductor and vocal trainer. Eighteen-year-old vocalist Khushi Dange will be joining her father, Randhir Dange, who will be on the drums. An engineer by day, he has played around 500 shows with various bands in the last two decades. Saxophone, accordion and flute player, Mahendra Kumar, is a dynamic member of the band and works in the Hindi, Marathi and Tamil film industries. Apart from being an exceptional artiste, lead guitarist Christopher Fonseca finds time to be a dedicated schoolteacher. Brought up on Geeta Dutt classics, vocalist Charoo Bakshi is also a beautician. Bass player Jacob Panicker is a leadership coach, and keyboard player Darrel Joseph is studying to be an engineer. What brings different ages, interests, cultures and

ethnicities together is an abiding love for music. The common thread pulling them together and putting them onstage is their avid appetite for retro music. The electric chemistry among the band members aspires to move the audience, figuratively and literally.

To bridge the gap between the old and the new, to reintroduce a timeless sound, is the essence of the show. Coupled with the collective joy of listening and grooving to live music, it promises to be an unparalleled experience packed with a punch of nostalgia. ■

Divalicious featuring The Retro Vinyls will be presented on 10th September at the Tata Theatre.

THE PEOPLE IN THE PICTURE

A rarely performed play, audacious in scale and intention, Tom Stoppard's *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour*, produced by the NCPA, will be staged later this year with an exceptional cast that will be supported by the Symphony Orchestra of India. We talk to the actors and the director about madness, control and what it means to work on a lesser-known Stoppard.

By Akshaya Pillai

André Previn, Principal Conductor of London Symphony Orchestra from 1968 to 1979, envisioned a play where the orchestra played a character. Tom Stoppard is said to have missed many a deadline and discarded several one-liners trying to breathe life into this vision. Among the discarded ideas was that of a millionaire who owned his own orchestra. Twists, turns and a two-year gap later, Stoppard struck gold. First came the character; a lunatic who had an orchestra in his head. Then came the setting; a Soviet mental institution, where two men, both named Alexander Ivanov, shared a cell. One, a patient who believed he owned an orchestra, the other, a political prisoner.

Scale and spectacle

Every Good Boy Deserves Favour was first performed in July 1977 to Previn's music for the silver jubilee celebration of Queen Elizabeth II. Even today, the play has not exhausted all it has to say to its audience. Forty-five years later, in technology that was not dreamt of in the 1970s, Bruce Guthrie, Head of Theatre & Films at the NCPA, assembles his cast for a quick chat over a Zoom call. "I am a big Stoppard fan. For me, he is the greatest living English playwright. I think he deals with things with intellect, a lightness of touch, always with humour and there are several layers to his plays," says the director who wanted to make the most of the in-house orchestra and was spurred by the huge challenge of recreating a classic of such scale and spectacle.

The beauty of *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour* is that each reading offers the same sense of discovery as the first. So when Neil Bhoopalam—stage and film

Crazily ambitious and gloriously preposterous are the terms that the critics used in the 1970s to describe the unusual collaboration of music, theatre and politics in *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour*

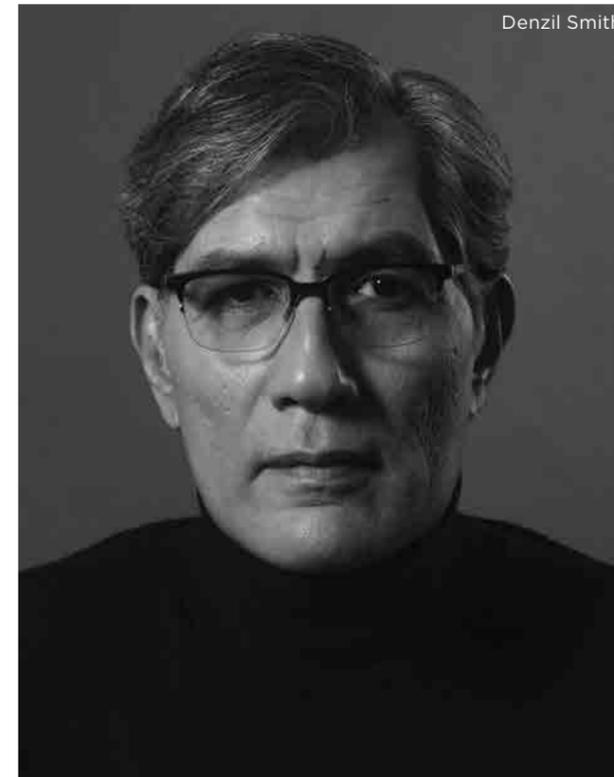
actor known for his roles in films such as *No One Killed Jessica*, *Shaitan* and *NH10* and plays including *Noises Off*, *Clogged Arteries* and *Hamlet: The Clown Prince*—first read the play, his focus was on guessing which of the two cellmates was the real loony. "I am a bit of a slow first reader so most of the good stuff flew by me. By the second read, I was in it and thought, wow, this is so clever," he says. "I love this sort of comedy which can tell you how grim something is but in a haha kind of manner," adds the actor who will be playing one of the Alexander Ivanovs.

Stoppard's play is dedicated to Viktor Fainberg and Vladimir Bukovsky, two Soviet dissidents expelled to the West whose incarcerations in mental hospitals had him gripped. The Soviet policy of hiding away nonconformists and treating political dissidence as a form of mental illness is largely a thing of the past, but the play, like every classic, has staying power across time and space. So much of what is happening in our country and around the globe warns us of the dangers of stripping people of their basic rights. This is why the play remains relevant, a critical collaboration between the past and the present.

Sohrab Ardeshir, who has performed extensively in the U.S. and in India and whose film credits include *Bullets Over Broadway*, *The Letters* and *In the Spider's Web*, and productions such as *Private Lives*, *Class of '84* and *I'm Not Bajirao* in theatre, believes that the play is a statement on the world today and not about Russia at all. He recalls what he learnt at the Lee Strasberg Theatre & Film Institute—the first time one reads a play, it should be read like a novel. "The second time you read it from your character's perspective and the third time you read it like a detective where you look for clues that the author is intending but are not given. So I did that, and it was a wow for me. Like Neil, the first time, a lot passed me by. The second and third time, I started reading into it things that Stoppard had intended which were not visible right away," adds Ardeshir who will be portraying the doctor immortalised by Patrick Stewart in the original production.

Powerful notes

For students of music, the title of the play is a classic



Denzil Smith

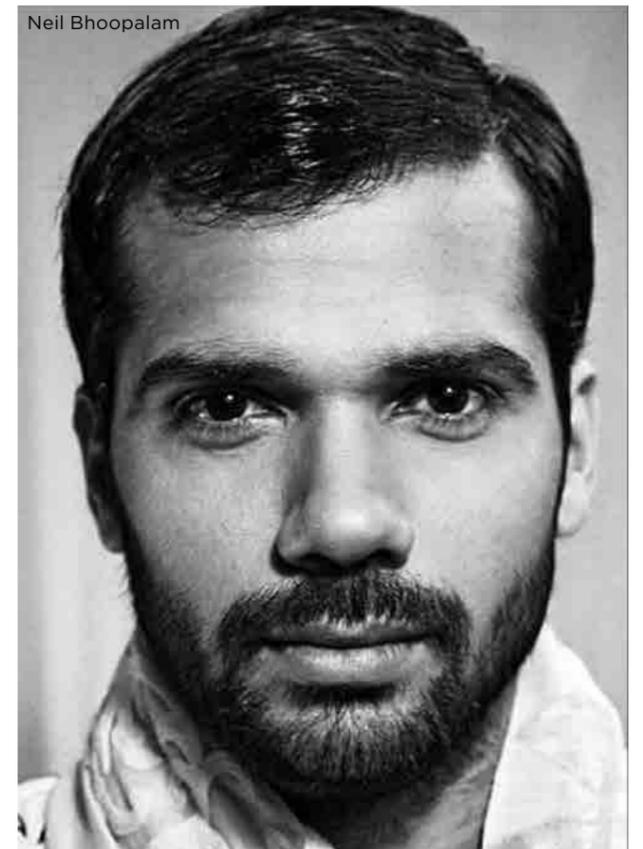


Sohrab Ardeshir

mnemonic for remembering notes on the treble clef—EGBDF—a subtle nod to the importance of music in the work. The orchestra and its conductor are not only musicians, but form a central character, and for this reason, it rarely gets staged. Crazily ambitious and gloriously preposterous are the terms that the critics used in the 1970s to describe the unusual collaboration of music, theatre and politics.

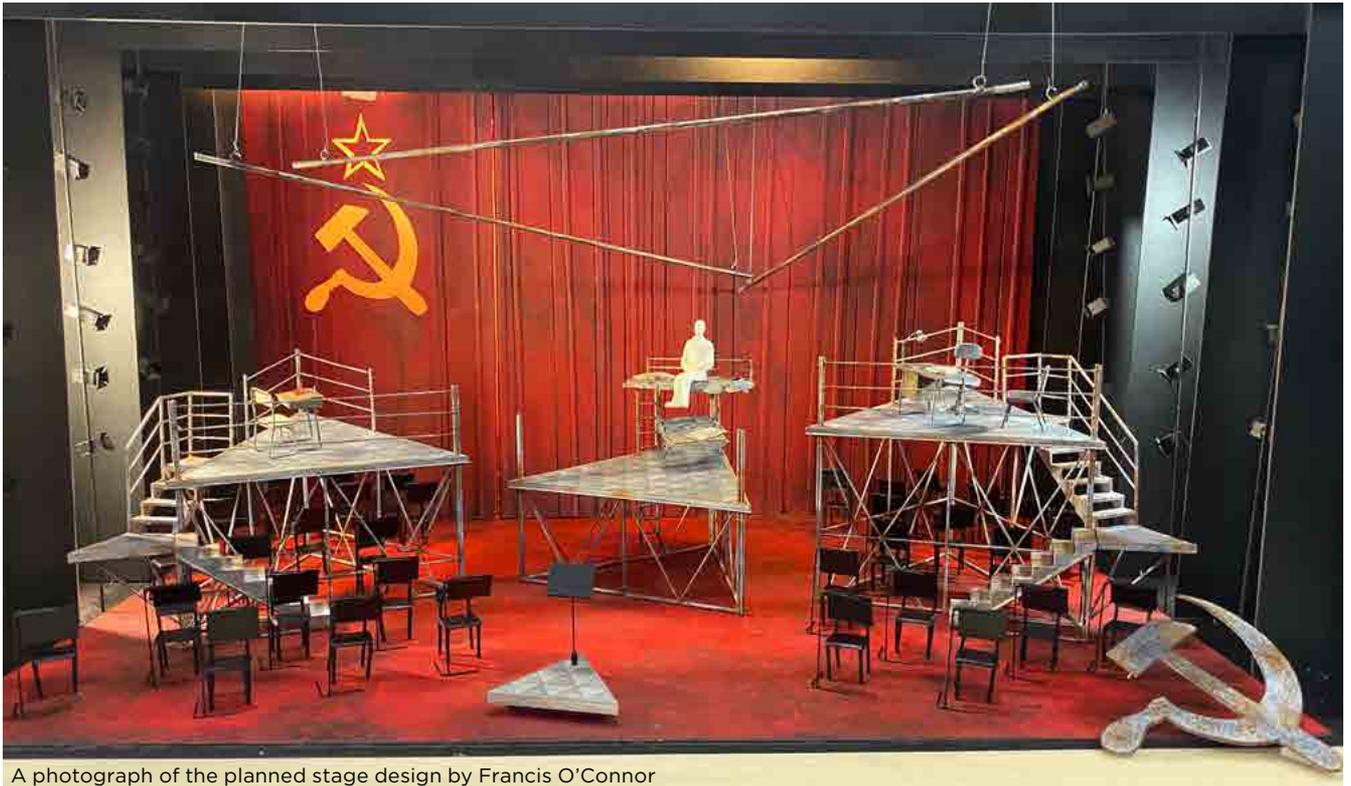
Guthrie feels the orchestra is the voice of the people, the society. "You get that wonderful line in the second scene where Sacha says: *I don't want to be in the orchestra*. Which is kind of like saying: I don't want to be one of the many in society. So it's that idea of systems being designed that are supposed to be for our benefit, but actually they constrain us. And then putting that into a kind of metaphorical sense with an orchestra onstage," he says. Did that speak to the actors? To Ardeshir, who interprets the orchestra as the voices in our head, it certainly did. "They are sometimes in complete harmony, sometimes completely out of sync. Hopefully, this concept of the orchestra onstage will make the audience wonder why it is there and what it represents," he adds.

Despite the abundance of plays dealing with mistaken identities on the stage, *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour* stands out because it makes a powerful argument that speaking truth to power is indeed a fundamental human right. It does so with Stoppard's classic candour. The narrative is layered and examines timeless moral conundrums. Stoppard draws from Fainberg's memoirs, combines wit and anger, to reveal one of the most powerful characteristics of oppression: its ability to rearrange reality.



Neil Bhoopalam

Denzil Smith, a versatile actor, famous for his roles in *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*, *Viceroy's House*, *Endgame*, *Hedda Gabler* and *The Mirror Crack'd*, has a lot to add to this. "I think it was Samuel Beckett who



A photograph of the planned stage design by Francis O'Connor

Tom Stoppard draws from Fainberg’s memoirs, combines wit and anger, to reveal one of the most powerful characteristics of oppression: its ability to rearrange reality

said in *Waiting for Godot*, ‘We are all born mad. Some remain so.’ Those that remain so are the sane people. There is an attempt by the world to condition you, to influence you. There is a lot of media that feeds you and tries to mould you according to what your society or country wants you to be. This is constantly being done since we are born and this happens on a micro and macro level. People are always trying to control you and your thoughts, so we create our own realities to escape some of that,” he says. Smith, who will be playing the second Alexander Ivanov, encountered shades of *Godot* in this play and breaks into Lucky’s speech from memory, much to the amusement of the other cast members.

The stage is set

The cast is eager to explore humour in a subject that is not funny at all. Ardeshir has a few tricks to play the edgy and disturbing doctor who tells his patients, ‘Your opinions are your symptoms; and your disease is dissent.’ His method is simple: while playing an evil character, one has to find his justification and his absolute truth, and in the same way when playing someone disturbed, one has to find what his truth is. To

him, the fun of playing this character lies in the blurred boundaries between the doctor and the patient. “Who is the real patient?” he wonders. “The doctor is in a position of authority—and sometimes knowing too much is just as dangerous—and is a victim of his own mind,” he says.

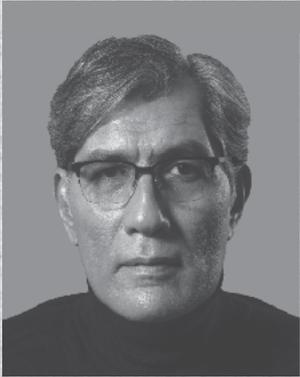
While Ardeshir is excited to play a character who is at once humorous and extremely dangerous, what draws Bhoopalam to his character is the sense of being trapped. Guthrie points out the moral crusade Bhoopalam’s character is entrenched in: should he choose his son, who will be left an orphan otherwise, or should he stick up for what’s morally correct? Bhoopalam, whose own child is almost five, says, “Look, you’re either going to shrivel up and die or you’re going to keep trying to adapt and dodge stuff to survive and become this weak, insignificant individual. And what is your child going to learn from that?”

Art transcends time and a classic like *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour* needs repeated study in order to unlock its deepest secrets and greatest wisdom. As the call draws to an end, Guthrie unveils a few photographs of the set designed by renowned set and costume designer, Francis O'Connor. Painted in the bright red of revolution, the entire stage is a flag. The orchestra is right underneath, interspersed among the school room, doctor’s office and the cell with its angular bunk beds. On the screen, the stage beams in its own potential. If you are not already a Stoppard fan, Bhoopalam, Smith and Ardeshir are here to remind you of the playwright’s towering and prescient genius. ■

.....
Every Good Boy Deserves Favour will be presented on 4th, 5th and 6th November at the Jamshed Bhabha Theatre.

COMING SOON

EVERY GOOD BOY DESERVES FAVOUR



Denzil
Smith



Deepika
Amin



Neil
Bhoopalam



Sohrab
Ardeshir



Mihaail
Karachiwala

An NCPA Production
in collaboration with the Symphony Orchestra of India

An English Play for Actors and Orchestra

Written by **Tom Stoppard**

Music by **André Previn**

Directed by **Bruce Guthrie**

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



The Making of a Season

Onay Zhumabayeva, cellist and Orchestra Manager, looks back on the SOI's journey from the first-ever season in 2006 to the 29th, beginning this month.

The thrill and challenge of moving in uncharted waters are inseparable. The pioneers of the Symphony Orchestra of India, in creating the country's first professional symphony orchestra, added a new, largely unexplored facet to its rich cultural landscape. This mammoth undertaking came with problems inconceivable to those associated with established orchestras in other parts of the world.

While co-founder and then Vice Chairman, NCPA, Mr. Khushroo N. Suntook looked into several critical areas of creating a conducive environment for a new orchestra to thrive, Music Director and violin virtuoso Marat Bisengaliev ensured that the musicians were of the high standard he had set for the SOI. Now, they needed a person of experience, patience and determination to run an orchestra whose players were working together as an ensemble for the first time. And this was only one of the many firsts.

The search ended soon enough with Onay

Zhumabayeva, who was invited to India by Bisengaliev in the capacity of both cellist and orchestra manager. Having completed her Master's in music from the Kazakh National Conservatory, she had played in the Symphony Orchestra of Kazakhstan as a lead cellist for many years before taking up the position of General Manager of the concert department at the Kazakh State Philharmonic.

Sixteen years ago, she made Mumbai her home, leaving behind family, friends and the warmth of familiarity, and has been here since. Zhumabayeva still remembers her first meeting with Mr. Suntook vividly. "A tall, well-built personality, his whole appearance exuded strength, kindness, warmth and nobility. Thanks to Khushroo, I was lucky to have meetings with Dr. Jamshed Bhabha. Over dinner in the old conference room, we talked about music, art and of course, establishing the first symphony orchestra in India—what Dr. Bhabha dreamed about all his life."

The orchestra's schedule which runs like clockwork today is a far cry from the teething troubles that



Glimpses of the first season of the SOI in September 2006

put its founding members to the test. "The first few seasons of the SOI were not easy. It was necessary to recruit musicians for the orchestra—invite strong professionals from abroad, teach and share experience with local musicians—organise rehearsals, provide instruments, a music library, etc.," she recalls.

The first season of the SOI in September 2006 opened with Tchaikovsky's classic ballet *The Nutcracker*. It was a roaring success with three days of performances and a newly formed orchestra in the pit—a spectacle many in the city hadn't witnessed before. What went on behind the scenes was a different story, though. "The task was not only to recruit the 70 plus musicians of the symphony orchestra, but the entire ballet troupe with soloists and a corps de ballet," she says. "That year, just before the arrival of the ballet dancers from America, there was a terrorist attack in the local trains of Mumbai and they refused to come!"

Zhumabayeva made an urgent call to the director of the Kazakhstan Opera and Ballet Theatre and requested him to send experienced ballet dancers to Mumbai, but with its own concerts coming up, the theatre administration could not promise to do much. With just two days to go for the performance, however, 12 ballet soloists flew down to Mumbai from Almaty and New Jersey and with the able support of local dancers from The School of Classical Ballet and Western Dance, and Shiamak Davar's Institute for Performing Arts, it was a full troupe onstage.

Around the same time, the orchestra was facing its own logistical challenges. And yet again, friendships old and new saved the day. "We lacked instruments that were not found in India at that time, such as timpani, bass drum, tam-tam and the harp," remembers Zhumabayeva. "My friend and fellow musician Blossom Mendonca and I made an appointment with a senior Navy official as they have their own military band. In their warehouse, which the



official generously granted us access to, we found double basses, a tuba and percussion instruments. The set of timpani was lent by the Bombay Chamber Orchestra's Jini Dinshaw. The harp, which is among the most important instruments in ballet (*The Nutcracker* includes a big solo in the adagio), was procured from the residence of the Austrian ambassador in Delhi. I will always be grateful to them."

The first season under the baton of renowned conductor Fuat Mansurov set in motion the tradition of celebrated names from the conducting world

Sixteen years ago, Onay Zhumabayeva made Mumbai her home, leaving behind family, friends and the warmth of familiarity, and has been here since

helping the orchestra during its spring and autumn seasons. The orchestra manager's work was cut out. In addition to drawing up schedules, ensuring discipline and coordinating the rehearsal plan with the conductor, Zhumabayeva never lost sight of the larger picture of adding highly professional and experienced musicians to

the pool of artistes who would play the programme for the season from just two or three rehearsals—something she and Bisengaliev constantly work towards with the support of Mr. Suntook. "Such musicians are usually very busy and you need to be able to convince and interest them. Sleepless nights are spent looking for strong players and then waiting for their consent to come to India. And those who come to play in our orchestra once look forward to the next season," she elaborates.

Twenty-eight seasons later, how does she view the journey of the orchestra over the last one and a half decades? "The SOI has gone through significant development from a small team to a full-fledged professional orchestra. I am happy that the number of young Indian musicians is increasing every year and I hope in the near future, the SOI will be recognised and invited to world festivals, international competitions and more concert tours," says Zhumabayeva with her unflinching honesty. ■

Evocatively Engraved

At the confluence of Annamacharya's devotional poetry, Indian classical music and a line-up of exceptional dance artistes from around the world stands *Tamrapatra*, an all-inclusive project that provided those interested not only an education but also much-needed inspiration.

By Ananda Shankar Jayant

The classical dance traditions of India have always drawn their insight and inspiration from the rich and varied musical heritage that has been bequeathed to us. These musical gems span generations and genres, and continue to inform and enrich the aural and visual firmament of dance. The brilliant imagery, music and poetry of the many *vaggeyakaras* have enthused and inspired me to translate their exquisite music into the visual realm of Bharatanatyam. I have, over the years, conceived and presented solo features and ensemble productions mounted only on the compositions of any one *vaggeyakara*. My first such solo feature was *Thyagaraja Ramayanam*, using Thyagaraja *krithis*, while Jayadeva's *Gitagovindam* formed the basis of *Krishnam Vande Jagadgurum*. Oothukada Venkata Kavi inspired me to present *Mohana... Krsna Beckons*, while *Sri Rama Namam-Entha Ruchi Ra* was spun with Bhakta Ramadas *krithis*.

A powerful musicality

The lyrical beauty and the musical genius of Annamacharya beckoned me often. In the sylvan and holy seven hills of Tirumala, Annamacharya lived a deeply devoted life, translating his immense love for Lord Venkateswara into innumerable gems of poetry and music. Spanning the narrative and the evocative, the temporal and the philosophical, the social and the moral, Annamacharya *sankeerthanas*, with the felicity of his poetry and the genius of his musicality, are at once, incredibly simple, yet immensely powerful.

Annamacharya was born in 1408 and is said to have composed as many as 32,000 *sankeerthanas* in praise of his beloved Lord Venkateswara; compositions, said to have been written on *talapatra* or palm leaves, and later engraved on to *tamrapatra* or copper plates. Of these, around 12,000 un-notated *sankeerthanas*, etched on copper plates, were discovered at Tirumala in 1922, which are now available as *Taallapaka Pada Sahityamu*, a 29-volume set of *shringara* and *adhyatmika sankeerthanas* published by Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD). Around 1500 of these *sankeerthanas* have been set to music by maestro composers such as Nedunuri Krishnamurthy, Mangalampalli Balamuralikrishna, Srirangam Gopalaratnam, Garimella Balakrishna Prasad and others.

In 2010, Sathiraju Venumadhav, a bright and rising star on the firmament of Carnatic music, composed 108 Annamacharya *sankeerthanas* in 108 *ragams*. Released

as a book and CD named *Annamayya Padamandakini* that was produced by Sujanaranjani, Venumadhav's musical compositions—which laid great emphasis on the *bhava* of the poetry—were soon performed by musicians and adapted for dance by senior dancers and gurus. I too had choreographed two features—*Talapatra* and *Shringara Darpanam*, based on his compositions. Unfortunately, Venumadhav, passed on in April 2019, leaving behind a young family, and, for all of us, a treasure of his beautiful compositions that we at Natyarambha thought must be a part of every dancer's repertoire.

Natyarambha, the Bharatanatyam practice app and digital platform, was active from the very first day of the lockdown in March 2020 and remained so throughout the pandemic, with several artistic digital initiatives, with the aim of inspiring young artistes across the world, by engaging the artistic community—both young and senior—in interesting online programmes, of which a video series was also telecast on DD Bharati.

It was July 2021. We were already more than a year into the pandemic, and it was obvious that live performances and even classes were some months away, as Covid continued to rage. I returned to my artistic oeuvre to see what I could share with classical dancers across the world. This is how *Tamrapatra* was born—a year-long series of learning rare Annamacharya *sankeerthanas*, composed by Venumadhav, with *abhinaya* and choreography envisioned and taught by India's leading classical dancers including Anita Ratnam, Anupama Kylash, Bragha Bessel, Deepika Reddy, Geeta Chandran, Gopika Varma, Methil Devika, Rama Vaidyanathan, Sharmila Biswas, Sathyanarayana Raju, Vaibhav Arekar and myself, across the dance styles of Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, Odissi, Mohiniattam and *Neo Bharatam*.

An invaluable initiative

I invited Kylash, renowned dance practitioner and scholar, to be my collaborator in this journey. An Annamacharya scholar, her in-depth analysis of the literature of the songs, the transliteration and transcreation embellished with myriad cross references from the vast literary wealth of India was a precious and invaluable experience that crystallised into 12 intensive and immersive learning sessions. Kylash says, "*Tamrapatra* was the perfect combination of talent, scholarship, artistry, enterprise and vision. Twelve

Ananda Shankar Jayant



Gopika Varma



take away treasured inputs and ideas that they could then bring to their own performances or teaching later.

Participants at the end of the two-day learning sessions experienced a unique opportunity to learn from some of the dance legends of India. Session takeaways also included lyrics of the song transliterated and transcreated, with word to word meanings, audio files, access to the music composed by Venumadhav, music as reworked by the guru to suit the choreography, Zoom session recordings and practice videos (if any) of the *abhinaya* choreography. Over one year, more than 1000 participants had one or more rare gems of Annamacharya *sankeerthanas* added to their dance repertoire. The sessions were also preceded by insightful *Tamrapatra* Conversations with Kylash and the choreographer of the month, anchored and moderated by Ratnam, that gave a sneak peak into the many aspects of the upcoming session.

A rich platform

Ratnam says, "The phone call I received in July 2021 seems like yesterday. I listened to the enthusiastic voice of Ananda Shankar and felt that she was birthing a long-held wish. A love of composer Annamacharya's poetic brilliance, a deep and long-standing friendship with musician Venumadhav...she wanted to digitally merge these elements with scholarship for a wider demographic. With her finger on the pulse of what young dancers want, Ananda went about the entire project meticulously. The attention to detail with dancer-scholar Kylash bringing alive each word to a young dance student was a brilliant choice. When she approached me with the charming composition, twinning Annamacharya's setting of my favourite mystic poet Andal with the Lord of Tirumala, I was hooked. I was also roped in—no, commandeered—into a monthly dialogue with the chosen choreographer. *Tamrapatra* Conversations, the carefully prepared preludes to each weekend of teaching, were also placed to tease the appetites of the students. The range, styles,

Spanning the narrative and the evocative, the temporal and the philosophical, the social and the moral, Annamacharya *sankeerthanas*, with the felicity of his poetry and the genius of his musicality, are at once, incredibly simple, yet immensely powerful

Anita Ratnam



Anupama Kylash



***Tamrapatra* was a year-long series of learning rare Annamacharya sankeerthanas, composed by Venumadhav, with *abhinaya* and choreography envisioned and taught by India’s leading classical dancers across various dance styles**

genres and variety of moods and characters that played out across 12 months has been a mammoth effort. Back-end tech support, the systematic teamwork of the Natyarambha team, and Ananda’s unflagging energy and a mind bristling with ideas kept the project alive through the vicissitudes of the raging pandemic. I was as much a student as I was a choreographer, performer, interviewer and audience member. *Tamrapatra* is a significant contribution to the Indic knowledge and sacred literature of India’s poetic landscape. The monthly performance capsules along with the transliteration of text and elaboration of metaphor is worthy of multiple revisits and reviews for the quality of content, Ananda’s commitment as well as the unparalleled brilliance of Telugu literature and a colossus called Annamacharya. As the digital partner via my e-portal *narthaki.com*, I feel grateful and honoured to mark this year-long venture as a significant collaboration.”

Narthaki also featured reports by young dancers who were invited to observe the sessions and write about their takeaways for each session. Swapnokalpa Dasgupta, Head of Dance Programming, NCPA, one of our invited writers, had this to say, “Sitting far away in Mumbai and getting to learn from stalwarts across India was an exceptional opportunity. The experience of being a part of the 9th session of *Tamrapatra*, skilfully crafted by Dr. Ananda Shankar Jayant, her collaborator Dr. Anupama Kylash, was inspiring. As I glanced through the numerous eager faces that shone through their windows on the screen, I was happy and proud of being a part of this community of serious learners and devotees of the art.”

Senior gurus Chitra Visweswaran, V.P. and Shanta Dhananjayan and Ramaa Bharadvaj from India, Hema Rajagopalan, Rathna Kumar and Ramya Harishankar from the U.S., Chitra Sundaram from the U.K.,

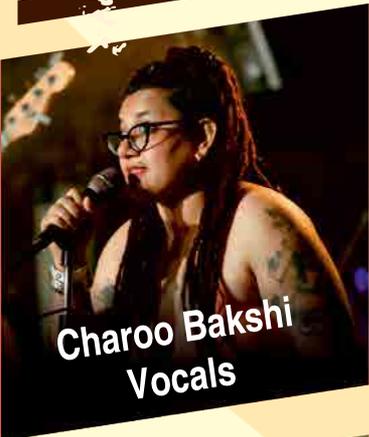
renowned art critics Leela Venkataraman, Manjari Sinha and Kaladharan shared valuable insights after their respective sessions. Art presenters Usha RK from Moscow and Aravinth Kumarasamy from Singapore were our invited Guests of Honour. Bharadvaj says, “Ananda Shankar Jayant is an alchemist. Through her project *Tamrapatra*, she has forever enriched the repertory coffers of Indian classical dance practitioners with treasures of gold. I attended all 12 sessions. Each session went beyond mere teaching of an item and expanded into a choreographic discussion that introduced nuanced poetic explorations of dance creation. I can confidently say that through *Tamrapatra*, Ananda has conclusively set the standard for how a dance workshop ought to be designed—generous in its offerings, deeply researched in its content, inclusive and far reaching in its execution, thought provoking and informative in its educational value and practical in its performance application.”

With continuing interest in the *Tamrapatra* series, access to the archives is now possible by registering on *tamrapatra.mystrikingly.com*. Six of the 12 *sankeerthanas*—each an exquisite gem of *sahitya*, *sangeeta* and *natya*—are coming to the NCPA stage this month with a promise to bring alive all things Annamcharya. ■

Tamrapatra will be presented on 16th September at the Tata Theatre. Ananda Shankar Jayant is a renowned Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi, dancer, choreographer, scholar, guru, writer and speaker. She is a recipient of the Padma Shri and Sangeet Natak Akademi awards. She is the founder of Natyarambha, a first-of-its-kind Bharatanatyam practice app that is now followed across the globe. For more information, visit www.natyarambha.com

Divalicious

FEATURING THE RETRO VINYLs



Charoo Bakshi
Vocals



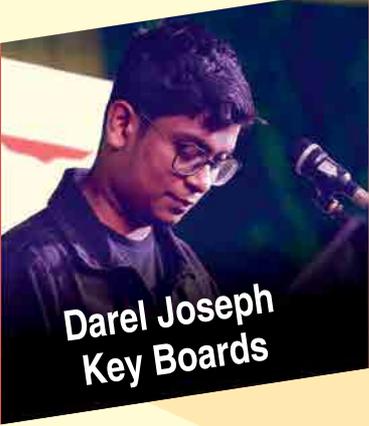
Lisa Mary Swu
Vocals



Khushi Dange
Vocals



Mahendra Kumar
Saxophone



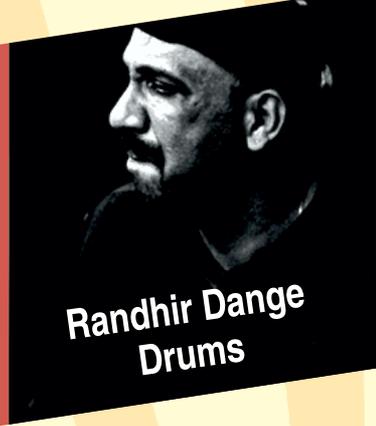
Darel Joseph
Key Boards



Christopher Fonseca
Lead Guitar



Jacob Panicker
Bass



Randhir Dange
Drums

10th September 2022 | 6:30 pm
Tata Theatre, NCPA

Collections and Recollections

For more than 50 years, Prakash Joshi has amassed Hindi film memorabilia. His collection of posters, photographs and records is as riveting as his recollection of being a young boy in old Bombay who grew up loving black and white Hindi films.

By Arwa Mamaji

His demeanour is calm and quiet yet he can recite the lyrics of a film song to explain any thought or idea. His knowledge of cinema is comprehensive and his passion comes through when he begins naming songs, film directors, musicians and singers by looking at film stills. Riding his two-wheeler, he may come across as an unassuming man but for Prakash Joshi, a homoeopath by profession, it is music that stirs the inner recesses of his soul. “My blood group is ‘L,’” he says, confirming that he is an ardent Lata Mangeshkar fan.

Joshi is a serious collector of Bollywood paraphernalia. From early childhood, he has been attracted to Bollywood music, especially from the black and white era. “We used to have a 78-rpm gramophone in our house and a few records that I listened to all the time but, in those days, no one gave us money to watch films or buy records. There was no concept of pocket money,” he says. “The children could watch mythological films but no action films were allowed.” So, the urge to discover more music led him to Chor Bazaar where he could buy cheap records with whatever money he had managed to save.

Extraordinary times

A conversation with Joshi reminds you of the child in the film *Cinema Paradiso* whose world changes when he watches a moving picture. Growing up, he watched a lot of movies during the Ganpati festival, when projectors would be set up on the streets to showcase films for free. These were 16 mm films and the screens were placed in the middle of the street. People who sat on the right side of the screen saw the film straight but the ones who were watching it from the other side saw the film in reverse. Nevertheless, it did not affect the comprehension of the story. One can only imagine how these screenings must

have taken place in the crowded and noisy gulleys of the city. They happened simultaneously on multiple streets. As soon as the 45-minute film reel was over, a man would carry the reel on his cycle and transfer it six lanes ahead to the next screening where audiences were waiting patiently for the story it contained. Joshi distinctly remembers watching the film *Seema*, which had an indelible impact on his life, on the streets.

Not only were the films stellar in content and context, but the film posters were also interesting works of art. Though not much is known about the artists behind these posters, it is well known that M.F. Husain started his career as a painter of film hoardings. Joshi knew the artist who created the posters for V Shantaram’s films. He reminisces, “I was in Wilson High School and I would take a double-decker bus home to Walkeshwar. We would sit on the upper deck by the windows. At Opera House, there was a huge billboard and, since the road curves there, we would get an amazing view of the film artwork. I remember posters of *Hatim Tai*, *Jhanak Jhanak Payal Baahe*, *Dahej* and *Barsaat* even today. Some of them were three-dimensional. As a child I was in awe of the artistry in these tremendous posters.”

Music led the way

As Joshi grew up, this love of cinema morphed into a love of collecting. Every Friday, after he closed his clinic at Girgaum around noon, he would make his weekly pilgrimage to dealers—at Chor Bazaar and those that set up shops outside Novelty, Naaz and Imperial cinemas—to find treasures to add to his collection. “Most doctors have social groups and they meet on Saturdays but, for me, when I shut my clinic on Friday, I always want to spend time scouting for film material. My practice continued and so did my quest,” he says.



Kamini Kaushal in *Ek Phool Ek Patthar* (1968)



Mala Sinha on the poster of *Pooja ke Phool* (1964)

Film screenings during the Ganpati festival happened simultaneously on multiple streets...as soon one film reel was over, a man would carry it on his cycle and transfer it six lanes ahead to the next screening, where audiences were waiting patiently for the story it contained

During these excursions he would not only find music records but also posters, photographs and lobby cards. At one time, song booklets were published and handed over to the audience when they entered the cinema. Being interested in the music, he would collect these booklets and organically, the collection grew. “For example, if I was looking for the song ‘Kahan Le Chale Ho Bata Do Musafir’ from the film *Durgesh Nandini* and I found the record, I would notice the poster kept haphazardly next to it and I would pick it up. That is how my collection started.”

Joshi’s collection, like his interest, is based primarily on films from the black and white era. In the films made between 1930 and 1970, songs were usually an integral part of the whole. According to him, after the ‘70s, the scope of songs in movies diminished. “Films like *Sholay* hardly have any scope for music. If a hero and heroine go to a garden, a song can be conceived,

Nargis in a still from
Adhi Raat (1950)



“At Opera House, there was a huge billboard and, since the road curves there, we would get an amazing view of the film artwork from the upper deck of the double-decker bus; I still vividly remember posters of *Hatim Tai, Jhanak Jhanak Payal Baaje, Dahej* and *Barsaat*”

but if Amitabh Bachchan fights throughout the film, there is no room for a song in there,” he quips.

Joshi's home is a museum of sorts. He stores his collection in three Godrej cupboards. He also has a trunk for posters. “I had kept the three by four feet posters under the bed. But when my wife started getting nightmares, I decided to remove them from there,” he says, with a laugh. Preserving and restoring the collection is tricky as paper disintegrates easily. Each picture is kept in a plastic folder or laminated. Joshi mentions that he had an entire collection of VHS tapes, which fought a losing battle against Mumbai's humidity and had to be ultimately discarded.

The Piramal Art Gallery at the NCPA will showcase a snippet of Joshi's mammoth collection. Mukesh Parpiani, Head of Photography and the art gallery, worked with Joshi to shortlist 75 photographs of 50 heroines including Noor Jehan, Shanta Apte,

Nadira, Helen, Mala Sinha, Vyjayanthimala, Nutan, Madhubala, Meena Kumari, Kamini Kaushal, Waheeda Rehman and many more. Some iconic film posters will also be displayed.

The magic of the cinema has altered the lives of many people. It has shaped and nurtured ways of thinking, it has uplifted, sometimes changed destinies of people. In the case of 75-year-old Prakash Joshi, it has given him a lifelong passion of collecting memorabilia, which has become a historical archive worthy of safeguarding, sharing and enjoying. ■

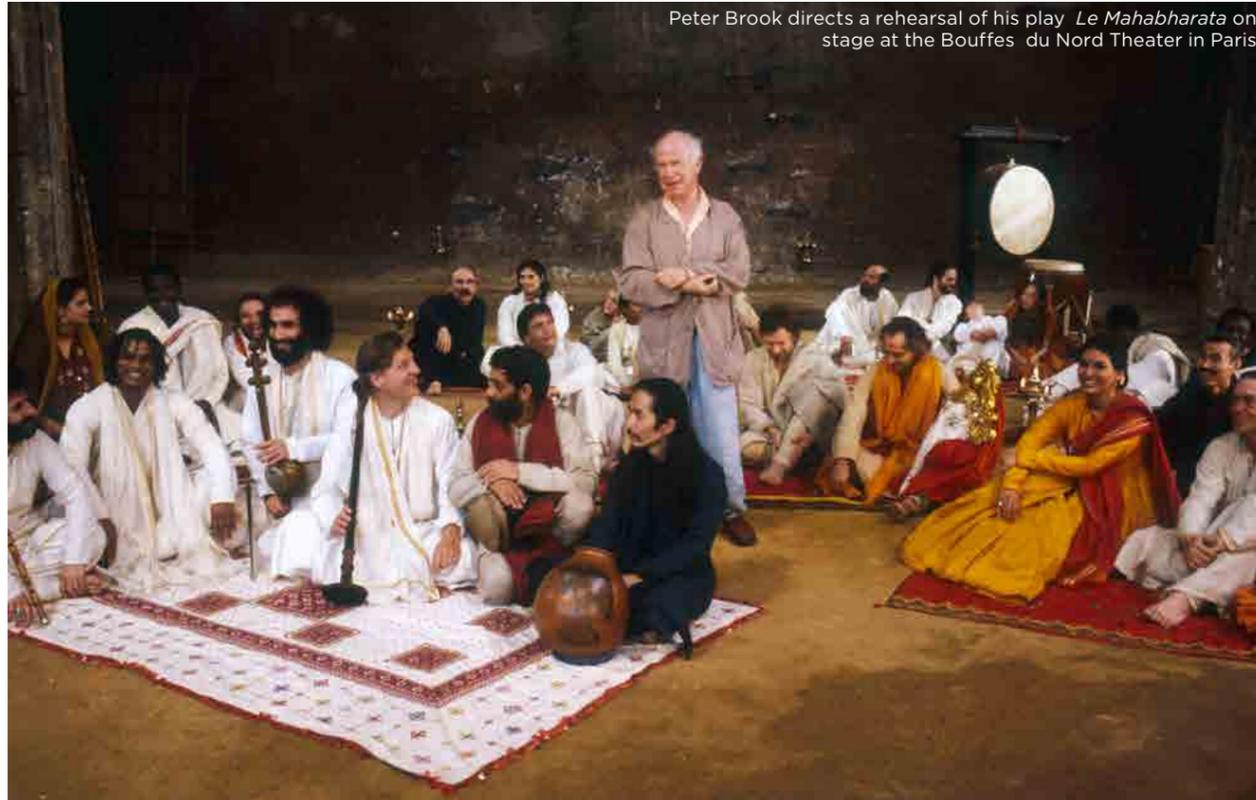
Disclaimer: The photographs and artwork published in this article are not for commercial use. They are a salute to film photographers and artists as well as the kerbside shops of India that stocked film memorabilia, and collectors who procured the artwork, preserving it for posterity.

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Peter Brook directs a rehearsal of his play *Le Mahabharata* on stage at the Bouffes du Nord Theater in Paris

INTREPID INNOVATOR

Thoroughly original and fearless, British theatre director Peter Brook found boundless inspiration in the Mahabharata.

By Shanta Gokhale

When Peter Brook died on 2nd July 2022, a mere three years short of 100, tributes written by theatre practitioners of a certain age poured in from across the country. They all reminisced about the time over three decades ago, when Brook had visited India with a five-hour screen adaptation of his nine-hour long French play, *Le Mahabharata*, and conducted workshops for actors. Few, if any, of the writers had seen Brook's work (see page 48); but they all granted him the status of guru because they had read and been influenced by his books, chiefly *The Empty Space*.

In this book, Brook has analysed the state of contemporary theatre in Europe (although it could

be theatre anywhere, anytime), giving each kind memorable names like 'Deadly Theatre', 'Rough Theatre' and 'Holy Theatre'. Along the way, he has also revealed the theatre he believes in and hopes to practise. His other book, *There Are No Secrets*, describes in minute detail, the methods and processes of his work. While the book's title holds true so far as actor training goes, it does not, indeed cannot, reveal the alchemy by which his plays bounce off that training to acquire their final shape. However transparent and lucid his writing, that must remain a secret. To reveal it would have involved attempting to note at what exact point an improvisation turned into a scene, and how and why a word said here,

In December 1989, Mumbai had the opportunity to experience Peter Brook's work directly, through his film, screened at the NCPA's Tata Theatre, and later through the two-day workshop he held at the Experimental Theatre

a movement made there created those magical moments that only theatre is capable of producing. To catch such elusive moments in words would have been like trying to trap the light of a glow-worm's tail in the palms of your hands.

It was in December 1989 that we, in Mumbai, had the opportunity to experience Brook's work directly, through his film *The Mahabharata*, screened at the NCPA's Tata Theatre, and later through the two-day workshop he held at the Experimental Theatre. The screening was attended by a regular audience whose responses could be felt first in the vibes that charged the packed auditorium, and then through the snatches of conversation one overheard as they streamed out. The film had been a culture shock to them, accustomed as they had become to the elaborate costumes, chariots, flying arrows and thundering speeches of B. R. Chopra's series that had kept them glued to their television screens for the past year.

'How could Krishna be dressed in those common clothes?'

'I didn't like the acting.'

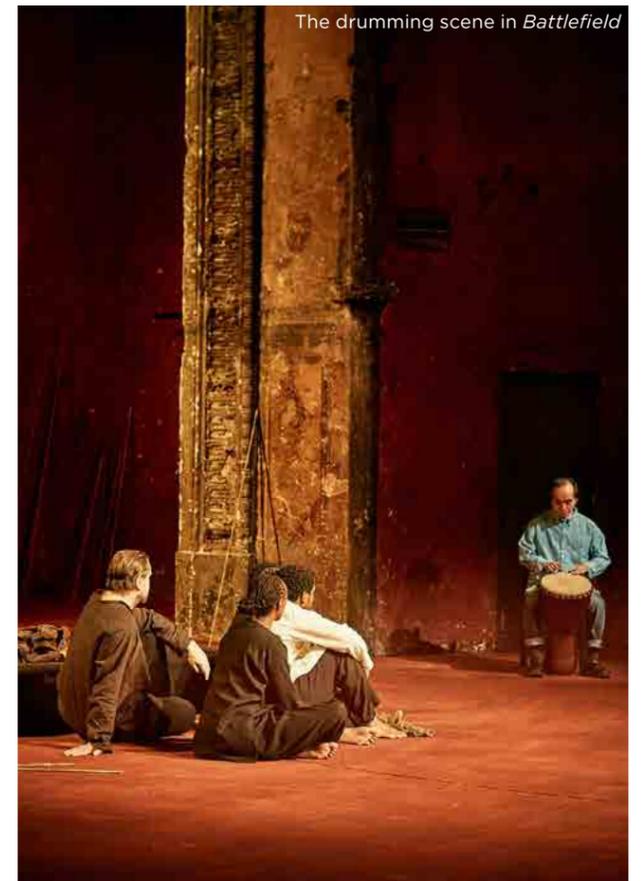
'Excuse me, there was no acting.'

'And how dare they make a black man Bhisma?'

These were the commonest remarks people made. Oddly enough, shorn of the angry tone in which the opinions were pronounced, they were perfectly true of Brook's theatre. In fact, they formed the very basis of his idea of theatre—sparseness of setting, economy of words and gesture, emphasis on the unadorned human body as the chief vehicle of theatrical expression and an international vision which brought together black, brown, yellow and white actors from the diverse theatre cultures of the world.

The workshop was attended by theatre actors, directors and a few observers like me. Two events from those enriching days are permanently etched in my memory. The first was an exercise in which Brook called upon actors to walk from point A to point B while the rest of us watched. 'Just walk,' he instructed. Perhaps he wished to demonstrate what he had meant by the famous opening lines of *The Empty Space*: 'I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged.'

'Just walk' sounded like a simple enough action.



The drumming scene in *Battlefield*

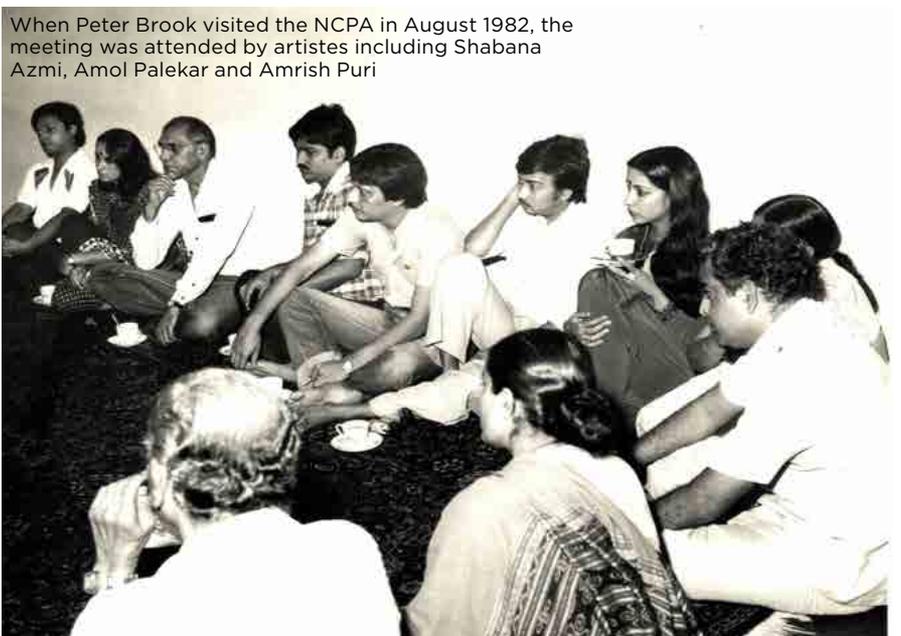
But actor after actor discovered how difficult it was to execute. Psychological motivation was vital to the actors, all of whom had been trained in realistic acting where every word and movement had to be in character. In the absence of any guidelines from Brook, the actors invented their own characters. So, one actor strolled, another swaggered, the third slouched. All three were sent back to try again. 'Just walk,' Brook repeated. His writings told us what that meant. It meant be totally present within yourself, in thought, emotion and body. If you manage to do that, you will hold the audience's attention and an act of theatre will be engaged. This did not happen that day; but a lesson had been learnt.

The second event I remember vividly was when Brook called upon the Malian actor Sotigui Kouyaté, to describe how he had found Bhisma, the role he had played in *The Mahabharata*. Kouyaté related with

Brook's idea of theatre was based on sparseness of setting, economy of words and gesture, emphasis on the unadorned human body as the chief vehicle of theatrical expression and an international vision which brought together black, brown, yellow and white actors from the diverse theatre cultures of the world



(From right to left) Peter Brook, Dr. Narayana Menon, Vijaya Mehta during Brook's visit to the NCPA in August 1982; Dr. Kumud Mehta can be seen on the extreme left



When Peter Brook visited the NCPA in August 1982, the meeting was attended by artistes including Shabana Azmi, Amol Palekar and Amrish Puri

a smile that he had asked Brook how he should play the demigod and Brook had answered, 'Find him in yourself.' Kouyaté then knelt down before us and spoke Bhishma's lines. And lo and behold, he was Bhishma.

Brook returned to Mumbai in March 2016, not in person but through a reprise of the Mahabharata in the 65-minute play, *Battlefield*. This was a Young Vic production which he had created in collaboration with his long-time associates, Jean-Claude Carrière and the French playwright and screenwriter Marie-Hélène Estienne. Brook was now 90. An interminable war had been raging in Syria. Millions of people had been rendered homeless and had no other recourse but to flee the country. Paris, Brook's own city, had been attacked twice in one year, leaving 142 innocent people dead. Preoccupied as he had been for years with the Mahabharata, a depressed Brook felt compelled to return to it now. With Kurukshetra as his focus, he asked, what is the meaning of human life in the context of war?

Battlefield was a small, still, evenly-paced play, devoid of action. The stage was stark, its ochre hues suggesting an arid earth. The actors spoke their

lines in emotionless tones. Bhishma lay on his bed of arrows narrating fables. We wondered whether an answer to the question Brook had raised would be forthcoming at all. When it came, it was with a despondent message. The last fable that was narrated seemed to assert that war, death and destruction were the ultimate destiny of the human race and nobody, but nobody, could do anything about it. Those of us who refused to accept this fatalistic prediction were fortunate to be given a second ending. When human speech had done its bit on the stage, the Japanese master Toshiyuki Tsuchitori began to drum. He drummed with a kind of primal power. The drumming rose gradually to a defiant crescendo before fading away, leaving the auditorium echoing with its reverberations. This I took to be Brook's answer. Art would save the human race. ■

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Pt. Budhaditya Mukherjee (sitar)

Soumen Nandy (tabla)

Enjoy the splendour of the rains with
Miya Malhar, Gaud Malhar & Ramdasi Malhar

22nd September 2022 | 6:30 pm

Tata Theatre, NCPA

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A Festive Bulletin

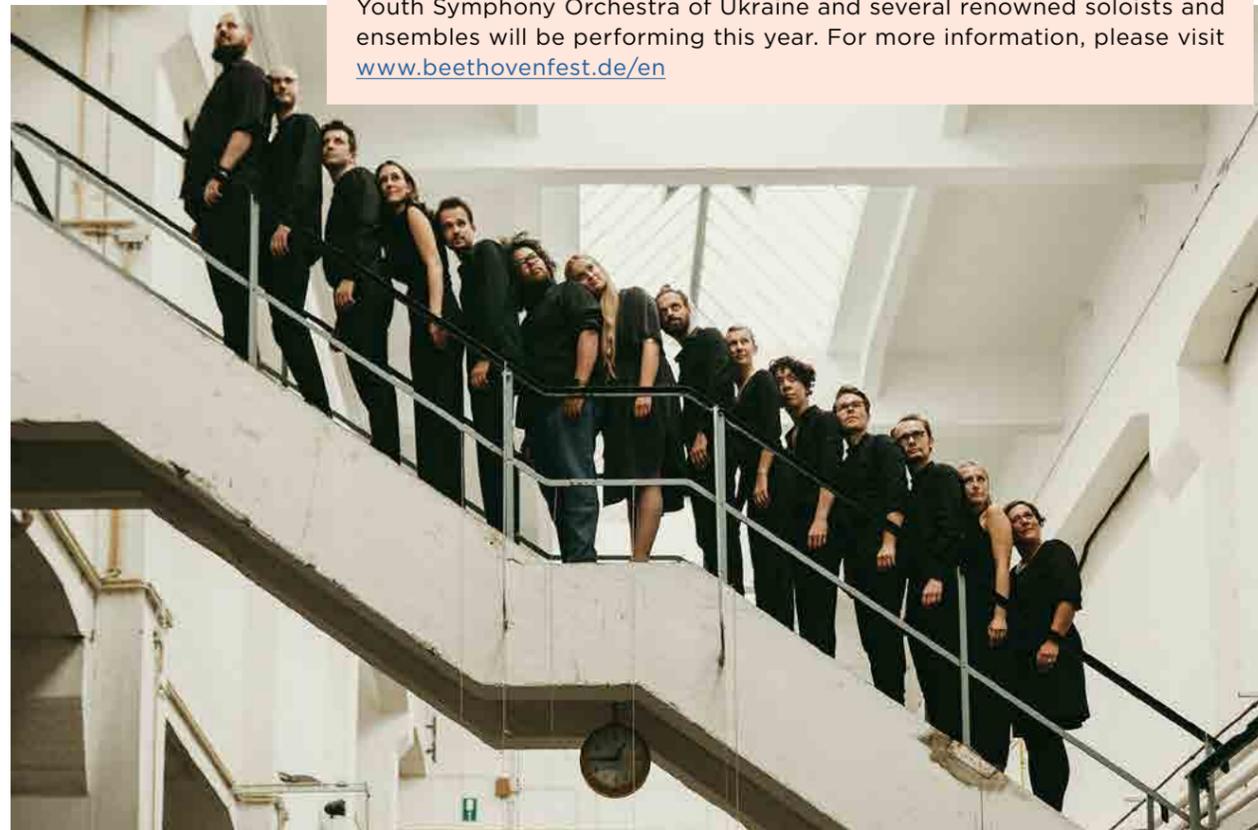
As venues around the world are filling up again with music and cheer, we present an overview of eight festivals that are gearing up to welcome audiences.

By Aishwarya Bodke

Beethovenfest

Founded by Franz Liszt in 1845 at Beethoven's birthplace, Bonn, the Beethovenfest is one of the oldest and most revered music festivals not only in Germany but across the globe. With artistic director Steven Walter at the helm, the curatorial direction takes a turn towards being "a festival of musical diversity; a coming together of the most diverse origins and identities in the common." The festival intends to be a platform where Beethoven's musical genius meets the 21st century and along with his sonatas, string quartets and symphonies, emphasis on contemporary music shines through in the programme. This year, between 25th August and 17th September, the festival will feature nearly 80 concerts across 25 venues, including historic stages, castles and churches. The most notable venue remains Beethoven-Haus, where the legendary composer was born. A statue of Beethoven that has been on the Münsterplatz since the year of the festival's founding has been restored just in time for the 2022 edition. The Budapest Festival Orchestra, Beethoven Orchestra Bonn, Youth Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine and several renowned soloists and ensembles will be performing this year. For more information, please visit www.beethovenfest.de/en

The Orchester im Treppenhaus (orchestra in the stairwell), a 20-piece ensemble, is a leading representative of the innovative classical music scene in Germany



HANNAH GODDE



A still from *Kacchey Limbu*

Toronto International Film Festival

The Toronto International Film Festival is scheduled to take place from 8th to 18th September this year. A prominent film festival, it will offer 11 days of spellbinding cinema and engaging perspectives on the art and the business of movies. Darren Aronofsky's *The Whale*, Ruben Östlund's Palme d'Or-winning *Triangle*

of *Sadness* and Park Chan-wook's *Decision to Leave* are among the most anticipated screenings. The festival will also feature a series of exceptionally interesting world premieres, including Mary Nighy's *Alice, Darling*, Rodrigo García's *Raymond & Ray*, Hong Sangsoo's *Walk Up* and many more. The most awaited premiere remains Steven Spielberg's autobiographical film *The Fabelmans*. Several Indian films will be marking their presence. National Award-winning filmmaker Rima Das's Assamese language feature, *Tora's Husband*, will be the

first Indian title to be showcased in the Platform section of the TIFF. Indrani Chakraborty's *Chhaad - The Terrace* will be screened as well. Shekhar Kapur's *What's Love Got to Do with It?* and Shubham Yogi's *Kacchey Limbu* will premiere in the Gala Presentations selection. TIFF's Industry Conference will host various talks, including keynotes with Tyler Perry, S.S. Rajamouli, Academy CEO Bill Kramer and newly elected president Janet Yang. For more information, please visit www.tiff.net

Dublin Theatre Festival

Running from 29th September to 16th October, the Dublin Theatre Festival showcases the best of Irish theatre while bringing world-class productions to the historical city. With a return to live performances, the 2022 edition boasts a compelling line-up that will appeal to a diverse demographic. With 17 world premieres and several brand new productions, it promises to be a worthwhile ride across multiple genres. Highlights include the world premiere of *The Blackwater Lightship*, which is based on Colm Tóibín's novel of the same name. Tom

Murphy's classic, *A Whistle in the Dark*, will see a 'fiercely intense' production at the Abbey Theatre. Italian artist Romeo Castellucci and celebrated choreographer Jean Butler will make a return with their respective shows *BROS* and *What We Hold*. The festival is making strides with new initiatives such as 10 for 10, which will offer 10 per cent of tickets for select shows for just €10 to those under 30, who are unwaged or freelance art workers. A comprehensive initiative to create a programme that caters to children has also been put in place. For more information, please visit dublintheatrefestival.ie

Milano Off Fringe Festival

A theatre and performing arts festival, the Milano Off Fringe Festival is in its fourth year and aspires to merge national and international art arenas while simultaneously creating a platform for independent artistes and productions. The festival works effectively towards expanding the Italian Fringe circuit. The 2022 edition is categorised into four sections and will take place from 18th September to 2nd October. Milano In will be the opening, providing a window to Milanese art and culture. Milano Off Fringe will see professional productions cutting across artistic genres and performance spaces. Village Off is touted as the heart of the festival serving as a rendezvous for all artistes, organisers and audience with panel discussions, exhibitions and more. Off-Off Milano will be about participatory events through various locations in Milan. For more information, please visit milanooff.com/en

Borderlands

Chamber Music New Zealand is an organisation dedicated to delivering the best chamber music experience throughout New Zealand with concerts, tours, workshops, immersive events and more. Borderlands is a unique concert tour slated to take place between 2nd and 15th September. Abiding by the theme of overcoming geographical borders that divide us, the tour will feature outstanding musicians from Tasmania, playing works of composers whose music has permeated through the border separating them. Programme highlights include Dietrich Becker's Sonata a 5 in F major, Albinoni's *Sinfonia a cinque*. op 2, Samuel Scheidt's *Galliarda Battaglia*, along with new works. The concerts will take place across multiple locations including Invercargill, Dunedin, Christchurch, Nelson, Wellington, Palmerston North, New Plymouth, Hamilton, Auckland and Napier. For more information, please visit chambermusic.co.nz/borderlands

PHOTO COURTESY: TIFF

Paris+ par Art Basel

Art Basel connects art patrons and galleries across continents, bringing the global art world together. This year, Paris+ par Art Basel will take place at the Grand Palais Éphémère from 20th to 23rd October, with a preview day on 19th October. The first Paris edition will host 156 premier galleries from 30



countries, which includes 61 exhibitors with spaces in France. The fair will extend to the iconic sites of Jardin des Tuileries—Domaine national du Louvre, Place Vendôme, Musée national Eugène-Delacroix and Chapelle des Petits-Augustins des Beaux-Arts de Paris. Director Clément Delépine has said that the curation seeks to reflect a strong Parisian personality as well as have global resonance. The main section of the fair will feature 140 leading galleries of the world with presentations ranging from painting, sculpture, drawings, installation, photography, video and digital works. The section *Galleries Émergentes* is dedicated to emerging artists with 16 solo presentations. The Conversations programme in the fair, taking place at the bewitching Bal de la Marine opposite the Tour Eiffel, aims to create a space for a dynamic exchange among the people of the art world. For more information, please visit parisplus.artbasel.com



Jazz at Lincoln Center

The Lincoln Center has announced the 35th season of Jazz at Lincoln Center (JALC), running from 30th September to 10th June next year, with 22 concerts in venues across New York City presenting jazz from around the world. Bringing some of the world's finest artistes together, the season will offer classic American premieres and exciting collaborations by guest artistes from Africa, the Middle East, East Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and North America. JALC stays true to the principle of delving into the genre as an instrument of cultural exchange and dialogue. Highlights include Artistic Director Wynton Marsalis's *The Shanghai Suite*, performed with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, a tribute to composer Django Reinhardt by guitarist Stéphane Wrembel, and the highly anticipated performance of the orchestra with Marsalis featuring acclaimed Iraqi oud virtuoso Naseer Shamma. Several other world premiere commissions and performances by Rosa Passos, Kenny Barron and Ron Carter, Dee Dee Bridgewater and Kurt Elling are not to be missed. For more information, please visit 2022.jazz.org

Jodhpur RIFF

Taking place every October around the occasion of *Sharad Poonima*, against the picturesque setting of Mehrangarh Fort, the Rajasthan International Folk Festival—also known as Jodhpur RIFF—has been a haven for music enthusiasts since its inception in 2007. Featuring more than 350 artistes from all over the world, Jodhpur RIFF is an interesting blend of concerts held from dawn to dawn. Various genres from folk to Indian classical, jazz, reggae and world music find their audience at the festival. Luminaries like Lakha Khan, Vikku Vinayakram, Shubha Mudgal, Manu Chao, Wouter Kellerman and Jeff Lang have enthralled the audience at the previous editions. The 2022 edition is scheduled to run between 6th and 10th October and will invite local and international artistes to foster innovative collaborations. Rajasthani folk musicians are the heart of the festival. Audiences will also get a chance to witness performances by Jayateerth Mevundi and international bands like Asia Manga, Söndörg and Bixiga 70. Folk dances of the state such as *Ghoomar*, *Kalbeliya* and *Bhavai* are an important part of the festival as well. For more information, please visit www.jodhpurriff.org



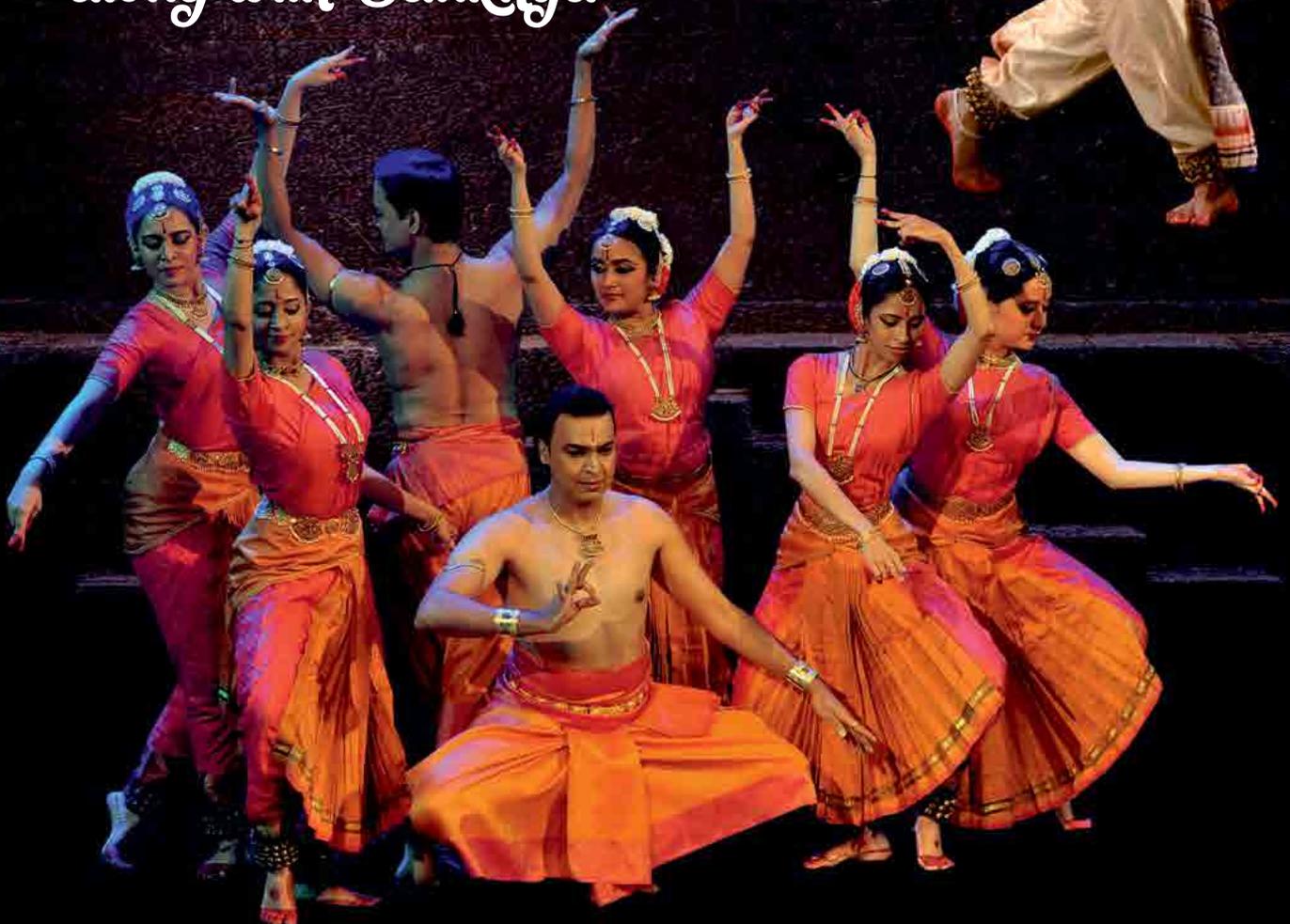
Odissi by

Sujata Mohapatra

Bharatanatyam by

Vaibhav Arekar

along with Sankhya



25th September | 5:00 pm
Tata Theatre, NCPA

Performing Arts: Theatre

A monthly column that explores any and every aspect of the performing and visual arts. This month, film and theatre actor **Sonali Kulkarni** looks back on an incident onstage that taught her to go with the flow, especially when things do not go according to plan.

It was a full house at the Prithvi Theatre with many friends and dignitaries in attendance. A friend opened the show with a poetry performance, a trend set by Pandit Satyadev Dubey, whom everyone used to call Dubeyji. It was called the fourth bell and was for those unfortunate audience members who were stuck in traffic or running late for some reason. The play we were presenting was an adaptation of Croatian writer Miro Gavran's 1995 play *Death of an Actor*. Irawati Karnik was Dubeyji's right hand, Hidayat Sami was on lights and the prompt and caring Neville Tuli was the producer.

I had never done a full-length English play till then. We rehearsed for more than one and a half months. In fact, this play was the outcome of an ongoing workshop Dubeyji was conducting for my English. I studied in a vernacular-medium school and my mother tongue is Marathi. Over the years, I have worked very hard on improving my vocabulary.

But my pronunciation has had its faults. Dubeyji would always patiently correct me. This workshop was a big learning experience and made it possible for me to focus on fluency.

Back to that evening. The show started. As an actor I used to feel both proud and anxious when I was cast opposite Dubeyji. However, once you are onstage you tend to forget your insecurities. That day, the show seemed to be flowing naturally. The audience was with us. I was confident. I portrayed a talented film heroine who is out of work and agrees to work with this wizard-like but pseudo director. In one scene, while challenging



the director, I twirled and smirked, then threw my arms in the air. As my hands came down, I was shocked to see that my bracelet broke and the pearls started falling on the stage, one by one, almost in slow motion.

I forgot my lines and tried to push a couple of pearls with my boots so that they would not poke Dubeyji, but the bracelet seemed determined to play the villain. I fumbled, missed one of my cues, and to avoid further disaster, quickly decided to ignore the pearls that would not stop falling. At one point, when I turned to look at Dubeyji, he was not to be found. My stomach churned.

I had seen Dubeyji lose his temper when actors made lazy mistakes, so I was sure he had simply walked off the stage, upset over my accident. Imagine my surprise when, though I couldn't see him, his cue landed right on the mark. I leaned over the stage and found him hunched over collecting the pearls.

He played the entire scene with a mischievous smile on his face while picking up the pearls one by one and placing them on the table, in my hands and even in his pocket. I was mesmerised. It is the most magical show I have ever been a part of. Dubeyji became a saviour, improvising without making anyone in the audience realise that it was unplanned. I will never forget that reassuring smile on his face that day. It also encouraged me to accept the challenge and be a sport about it all.

The other day I was at Shabana Azmi's Mijwan Fashion Show by Manish Malhotra. It was spectacular, like a dream sequence. At

one point, one of the models left a trail of gorgeous pearls behind her. In spite of that, she walked past gracefully in a long veil. I was seated in the first row and was tempted to carefully pick those pearls up. But Dubeyji came to mind and I imagined him saying: it can't be so obvious. Your act has to be effortless.

The fashion show went smoothly. Kudos to the models who did not let the pearls on the ramp get in the way of their confident gait—literally and otherwise. Onstage, effortless almost always begins with being aware and not showing it—this is one of the many things I learnt from Dubeyji. ■

Catalyst

An evening celebrating choreographies born during lockdown

Mohiniattam by
Saji Menon

Kathak by
Diksha Rawat & Vinita Venugopal



Desi Marga presentation by
Nirupama Rajendra & Abhinava Dance Company

11th September 2022 | 5:00 pm

Experimental Theatre, NCPA

Box office: 66223724/54 | www.ncpamumbai.com

Kaleidoscope

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



Dance for change

Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, a distinguished choreographer and teacher, was awarded the 29th Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize this year. One of the most prestigious awards in the American arts, the Gish Prize was instituted in 1994 and is given annually to individuals who have “made an outstanding contribution to the beauty of the world and to mankind’s enjoyment and understanding of life.” Zollar will receive a cash award of \$250,000 for her trailblazing work and ardent contribution to enabling social change through her art. She is the founder of the dance collective Urban Bush Women, one of the first to have an all-female African-American workforce. Her work embodies a marriage of activism and art to further the purpose of community engagement. The collective has succeeded in putting forth experiences exploring black identity, institutionalised racism and systemic oppression time and again. For more information, please visit gishprize.org

A grand opening

The Museum of Art and Photography (MAP) in Bengaluru will open its doors to the public in December this year after a year-long delay due to the pandemic. MAP is the first major private art museum to open in India in a decade. Founded by industrialist and art collector Abhishek Poddar, MAP’s first Director is Kamini Sawhney, former head of the Jehangir



Nicholson Art Foundation in Mumbai. With a sprawling 44,000-square-foot campus in the heart of Bengaluru, the museum houses four galleries, a café, a rooftop restaurant, a 130-seat auditorium, a conservation library, a research library open to academics and more than 60,000 artworks. It also recently launched an online encyclopaedia of South Asian art called MAP Academy. The museum collection is divided into six categories—textiles and design, photography, popular art including film memorabilia, paintings, sculptures and objects, and modern and contemporary art. Masterpieces of Indian art by Raja Ravi Varma and Jamini Roy are part of the collection as well. The inaugural exhibitions include *Visible/Invisible* featuring over 130 works by Indian women, a retrospective of photographs by celebrated painter Jyoti Bhatt called *Time and Time Again* and the first-ever solo show by renowned visual artist LN Tallur. For more information, please visit map-india.org

A welcome change

The Choir of St. John’s College in Cambridge welcomed a refreshing change after 350 years of firm tradition by becoming the latest English choir to admit its first female choristers. This makes it the only Oxbridge choir to have both male and female members among the children and the students. The girls—



between the ages of nine and ten—will first complete their probation while attending choir rehearsals. British choral music has remained a male-dominated space. Some speculators are not too pleased with the decision and argue that it would result in fewer opportunities for boys, as they can only sing high vocal parts for a limited number of years before their voices change. However, Andrew Netsingha, Director of the Choir, who spearheaded the move, believes that providing this opportunity to girls and women is an exciting and important development for the choral tradition. For more information, please visit www.joh.cam.ac.uk

For the artistes

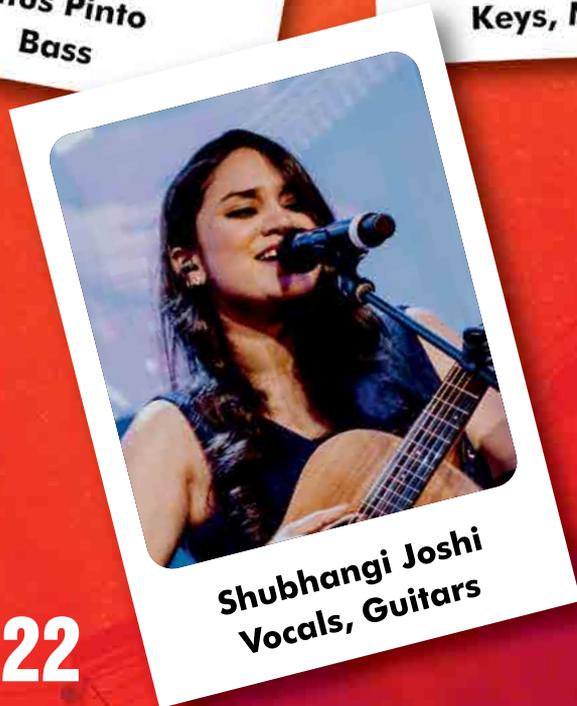
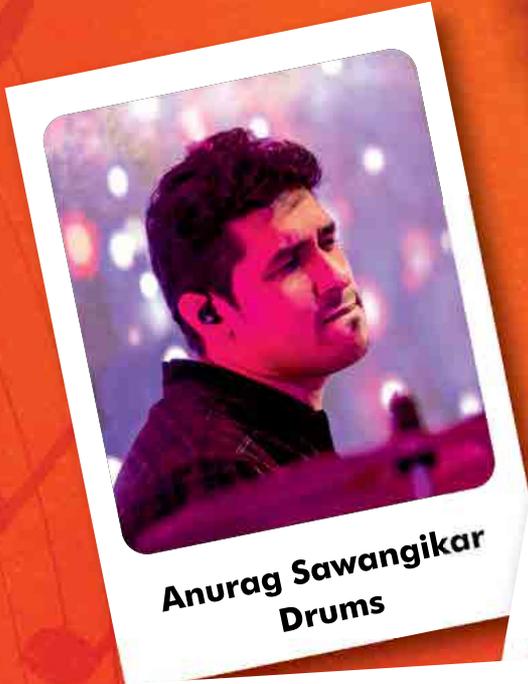
Toto Funds the Arts—a non-profit trust committed to nurturing and encouraging young artistes through awards, workshops and events—recently opened up entries for the annual Toto Awards. The body was set up in 2004 after the passing of Angirus ‘Toto’ Vellani, a passionate art lover. This year,



a new category has been added to the roster to recognise the flourishing field of digital art in India. The Toto Award for Digital Art has been instituted in memory of Mehlli Gobhai (in pic), one of India’s foremost illustrators and painters, who passed away in 2018. The 19th edition of the annual series will also see an additional award for music. The two winners of the Toto Music Award will each receive ₹60,000 to support their work. Other categories include awards for photography, short film and creative writing in English and Kannada. Applicants aged between 18 and 29 can send in their submissions until 15th September. For more information, please visit totofundsthearts.blogspot.com ■

- Aishwarya Bodke

CLASSICS WITH A TWIST



3rd September 2022

7:00 pm

Experimental Theatre, NCPA

Epic Impressions

ON Stage brings you edited excerpts from the *NCPA Quarterly Journal*, an unsurpassed literary archive that ran from 1972 to 1988 and featured authoritative and wide-ranging articles. In an evocative essay, **Vijaya Mehta** discusses in vivid detail a week-long immersion in Peter Brook's *Le Mahabharata*.

Avignon, on the banks of the River Rhône, was the Pope's residence around the 14th century and still breathes the same air of medieval history. Narrow cobbled streets and alleys lead through the imposing city walls to the Pope's great palace and its picturesque courtyards. The 20th century has in no way scarred its landscape and atmosphere except that the 'Pope' in residence has been replaced by 'Performing Arts'.

The city never sleeps during the annual festival month of July. The courtyards are flooded with people lazing around, sipping coffee or wine in the cafés, surrounded by bursts of varied street-theatre events. There are jugglers, clowns, young mime artistes—each doing his own act. Processions on horseback, painters doing portraits and decorating human bodies, children in colourful outfits, marching to the accompaniment of music, three different church bells chiming every hour, bugles announcing performances of *Macbeth* in the Pope's palace, even the Hare Krishna clan dancing away—they are all there in 32°C of sun, which sets at 10 pm and rises by 4 am. The whole atmosphere seemed alive with a frenzy of freedom.

I attended three consecutive performances of *Le Mahabharata* on the 7th, 8th and 9th of July and the full cycle on the 13th. During the day and after the shows, I met Peter Brook, Jean-Claude Carrière and those actors who could speak English. My week in Avignon was entirely dedicated to *Le Mahabharata*.

Journey into *Le Mahabharata*

The car took us through the beautiful city of Avignon and across the River Rhône. The landscape became barren as we reached the quarry hills; the sound of crickets chirping in broad daylight (at 9 pm) seemed odd. There was a strong and fresh smell of thyme and basil. Hundreds of people were trekking in the direction of the quarry. Our car was stopped at half a dozen posts, to check

tickets—a necessary measure to control gate-crashers.

We arrived at the quarry where a stadium of steel pipes and wooden platforms had been erected to accommodate 1,000 seats. The performing space was created by removing rocks (which still lay piled up on either side) from the square quarry bed. A fabricated, narrow stream of water ran at the back, right across the area. In front, near the audience, was a small pool of muddy water. The outdoor space was closed in on three sides by jagged, quarry walls, with two or three shrub-like trees near the top, adding the only touch of colour. The whole environment was imposing in its barrenness. From the hilltop, the sound of the nadaswaram echoed through the quarry at intervals, announcing the approaching showtime.

Sitting amidst the French and European audiences, getting ready to watch the Mahabharata performed by an international cast gave me a very peculiar and exciting feeling. I did not understand French so it was to be a dumb show for me as far as Carrière's poetry was concerned. As I sat there waiting for the performance to start, images of the Mahabharata as I knew it, kept flooding my mind, images that had become a part of me over the years—through mother's storytelling sessions, the Puranic fables I had read during my school days, the songs I had heard and sung and later on through the reading of various original commentaries for my own theatre projects.

I had total faith in Brook and was aware of the reverence with which he and Carrière had turned to the Mahabharata. Perhaps, that may have been the reason I was making a marathon effort to drain my mind of any preconceived images and getting ready to receive a sincere probe by non-Indian sensitivities into our cultural heritage. I had to warn myself repeatedly that what was to be presented in a few moments would be the 'essence' of the Mahabharata as the

world saw it and that though it might not bear resemblance to what I felt as an Indian, it was my responsibility to let it grow on me and allow its own truth to seep through to my feelings. I had to react with my Indian identity to the meaning of universal culture.

The magic of theatre is unfathomable. In it, 'truth' can be arrived at in many fascinating ways—sometimes by being honest to the minutest detail of ethnicity; at times by an austere yet generalised feel and smell of authenticity; on occasions by simplified direct communication. In fact, whatever is done with conviction and respect becomes 'true'. 'Who' does it, more than the 'how', determines the quality of the truth. How was Brook going to present his own 'truth'? How was I going to receive it?

The performance began without any preamble. Musicians came and sat in a corner. A bearded man arrived, clad in an Indian-looking outfit (maybe Rajasthani), lit a fire near the stream at the back. Then he sat silently, as if meditating, while the flames were reflected in the water. There was a silence—a stretched silence. Then, a child appeared from behind the pile of rocks and went to the pool to wash his face. The bearded man called out to him. With their conversation in French, the play began. Despite my ignorance of the language, I realised that the man was Vyasa. He proclaimed that he was about to write the greatest epic in the world—"Anybody who reads it will not remain the same person."

"Will you be my scribe?" he asked the child. The child couldn't write so they decided to call Ganesha, who arrived, led by the child, making his way through the rocky path, in ordinary clothes and an enormous writing pad (still used in villages for account-keeping) tucked under his arm. Soft Indian folk music accompanied his arrival—played by musicians from Japan and the Middle East.

It was less than five minutes since the play had commenced. The fire with its

reflection in the stream, the sprawling stretch of sand, the barren rocks and on this landscape, an ordinary human being arriving as Ganesha, led by a child, calmed my inner turmoil. The barrenness of the environment was converted into a stark reality. Within minutes, the actors with their own convictions and concentration made me feel in tune with what was to unfold. During the 12 hours that followed they successfully led me to share their excitement and discoveries. It did not hinder me that the characters from the Mahabharata, in their costumes, did not historically belong to any period or locally to any region in India. The Rajasthan desert—with its off-white sand and flowing garments, with its dramatic bursts of colour in women's attire—kept surfacing in my mind, but only with its visual impact and not with its ethnic connotations. Constantly, I encountered vivid images that substituted my very own earlier ones of the Mahabharata, stripping them of their ornamentations, frills and Puranic romanticism. And in doing so, they penetrated my sensitivities with their ultimate meaning. For me, those 12 hours were not only theatre but an exposure to the unknown territories of my own mind and emotions.

On the one hand, I was spellbound and moved with a growing conviction that what I saw unfolding in front of me was the only way, in the given environment, that an epic could trace the history of human civilisation. And, on the other, I felt tremendous frustration because of my inability to understand the language.

I shall try to capture the magic of some moments (amongst hundreds) from those 12 hours. Mine is not a chronological account, nor an attempt to recall the use of the various dance and music traditions of India. Instead, it is more in the nature of jottings of my own impressions on 'new dimensions and meaning of theatre' and the questions that were raised in my mind.

The entire Mahabharata was presented in three parts. The first part began with the birth of Satyavati and ended with the Pandavas losing everything in the dice game and leaving for the forest. The second part commenced with the Pandavas' exile in the forest, with Duryodhana, Duhshasana and Karna keeping constant vigil. It included

Hidimba's meeting with Bhima, Arjuna getting his weapons from the *shami vriksha* and ended with the stay of the Pandavas in Virata's palace. The third part basically dealt with the battle of Kurukshetra, Krishna's death and the annihilation of the race and ended with a perplexed Yudhishtira on his way to *moksha*.

The music

Toshi, the Japanese composer, is a great friend of India and an ardent admirer of Kishori Amonkar. It was fascinating to hear him sing Rabindra Sangeet, play the tabla and ghatam and use an Australian aboriginal flute. His group of musicians played many wind, string and percussion instruments from all over the east, including our nadaswaram and shehnai. When asked about his concept of music for theatre, he replied: "Music

*In Avignon, I attended
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could speak English*

in theatre depends on the quality of silence. This silence has its own sound which determines and creates the sound of music." I have always maintained that in theatre, music and dance have to shed their grammar and take over a new identity. Toshi spelt it out as "the identity of understanding and reacting to silences."

The sets

Most of the time it was the rocks, sand, water, mud and fire. All kinds of fire: burning twigs, enormous brass lamps, small diyas floating in the stream, torches creating patterns in the darkness, Balinese fire circles on the sand (resembling fire lines in the forests and on hilltops), even inflammable powder thrown at the torches to create explosions of light.

A few thatched bamboo sections,

which the actors carried in and out as required, were used sparingly. They became Virata's palace or trenches in the battlefield or the forest hut in which the Pandavas lived.

At times, an enormous white sheet covered the sand on which were scattered white bolsters and colourful Rajasthani carpets. Occasionally, masses of *chatais* were unrolled, creating the image and sound of tiny sea waves washing the shore.

The child

The Mahabharata is a narration of events. It is always *uvacha* (spoken). In Carrière's Mahabharata, Vyasa narrates to a child. It is the child that raises questions and Ganesha who writes down Vyasa's explanations. The wisdom of childhood in raising simple yet pertinent questions and accepting answers creates a structure of purity and naivety in which the audience participates.

Ganesha and Krishna

Maurice Bénichou played Ganesha, Vyasa's scribe, who also answered many of the child's queries. During the first part, in the silence, while Kunti, Draupadi and the Pandavas slept, the soft sounds of a flute enveloped them.

"Who is playing the flute?" the child asked. "Krishna," replied Ganesha.

"Can I see him?"

"Of course, you can. He is everywhere. He is within you and me."

"Can I see him in you?"

"Yes, you can," replied Ganesha and hid himself behind a yellow saree-curtain held by Vyasa and the child. As the yellow curtain was removed, Bénichou was seen in the reclining *Sheshashayi* pose of Vishnu. His whole demeanour had changed. He was no more Ganesha, the next-door friend, but Krishna, the mystic. Throughout the Krishna-episodes that he played later, he displayed a tremendous inner glow. He was a counsellor, philosopher, politician, an emissary for peace, his outward calm erupting into wrath as he killed Shishupala. At Kurukshetra, he became a force that read, analysed and shaped inevitable destiny. His *virat darshana* (cosmic trance) was breathtaking in its simplicity.

Krishna, in the presence of the Kauravas, goes into a cosmic trance. Bénichou stood with his back to the

audience. A pale-blue drape was held behind him, in front of the acting space, which created an image of the skies descending on the earth. Dhritarashtra saw this cosmic image despite his blindness and knelt in front of Krishna. So did Bhishma. Duhshasana and Duryodhana remained untouched, almost bewildered at their father's reaction. Brook's capacity for capturing epic moments with utter simplicity and discovering extraordinary images in ordinary happenings continually surprised me.

Krishna's death was yet another unforgettable image. We had already travelled through 11 hours of the Mahabharata. It was six in the morning. The first rays of the sun had reached the quarry. Birds had started chirping and flying above us. A cool, soft breeze created ripples in the pools of water. Vyasa and the child spread a green saree on the sand. Krishna reclined on it. A *vyadha* (hunter) came, mimed the shooting of an arrow and with his own hands put a stick representing an arrow between Krishna's toes. He looked at Krishna and, realising who he had killed, ran away in anguish and shock. The child asked:

"Vyasa, what is happening to Krishna?"

"He is leaving us."

"But I wanted to ask him a question."

Vyasa said he could. The child approached Krishna. "Can I ask you something?"

Krishna nodded and said: "Be quick, though. My time is running out."

Child: "What did you whisper in Arjuna's ears during the war?"

Krishna smiled, thought for a moment and said, "I can tell things only once." And he died. The death of Krishna, as a new day was about to begin, symbolised for me the cycle of continuity. If theatre can achieve this, what else does one need to have faith in?

Gandhari and the Kauravas

I had read Iravati Karve's *Yuganta* and her commentary on Gandhari. Carrière's Gandhari bore a striking resemblance to her interpretation. Gandhari, a princess from a faraway land, arrives atop an elephant—radiant and excited about her forthcoming marriage. (A group of actors and musicians created the movement of the elephant, others held

aloft a bamboo structure, in which sat Gandhari—to complete the picture of the grand procession). Her frustration on learning about her husband's blindness, her blindfolding herself as a mark of protest, her agony and her love for her children—especially Duryodhana, the first-born—created many memorable moments. The greatest of them was the birth of Duryodhana.

The Mahabharata narrates that Gandhari gave birth to an enormous ball of steel (*pinda*) which was cut up into 100 pieces, out of which were born the 100 Kauravas. *Le Mahabharata's* Gandhari was pregnant for two years without any signs of delivering the child. In sheer desperation, she summons her maid to hit her stomach with an iron rod. The maid does so and Gandhari stands with outstretched hands bearing the agony. Near her appears the ball of steel containing the hundred embryos of the Kauravas. As the first Kaurava (Duryodhana) is about to emerge, ill omens flood in—the howl of the wind, calls of the jackal. From behind the rocks, emerges a coiled-up body bound in red cloth. It tumbles about 20 yards forward through the sand and into the muddy pool where Gandhari and Dhritarashtra stand waiting eagerly. The draped body, still looking like a bundle, clings on to Gandhari's knees, water dripping from the red covering—making it look like a blood-covered embryo. An evil wail emanates from the bundle as it uncoils, still clutching Gandhari. A head appears—an evil, bearded face—wailing like a new-born babe. As Duryodhana, Andrzej Seweryn, the Polish actor, infused a tremendous voltage of electrifying energy in whatever he did—including the birth. A medium-sized man, as an actor he seemed gigantic, filling up the quarry with his presence and inner power.

On the other hand, Duhshasana—played by Georges Corraface, a handsome Greek actor with a delicate face—created a fascinating, almost tender relationship with his brother Duryodhana. He shared his passions, his thoughts, had eyes only for him even while rolling mats or removing bamboo-structures (a routine that all actors followed for scene changes). In fact, the Kauravas emerged as a complete family, with Dhritarashtra and Gandhari as loving parents of problem children.

Kunti and the Pandavas

As against the dramatic images of the Kaurava family, Kunti and her relationship with the five Pandavas was dealt with in a very human, day-to-day manner. Kunti, in her outfit, resembled a matriarchal, strong-willed Rajasthani woman. She sat in a small group sharing food with her sons and slept near them on the sands without any bedding. Together, the images they created were very similar to those one encounters on the pavements of Bombay. I realised that relationships and qualities of mind that one almost revered as part of an epic, could be discovered anywhere, any time—if only one has the perception. There can be a Kunti amongst the construction workers of Bombay, or an Arjuna in the hutments. It is not necessary to indulge in gloss and romanticism to capture an epic quality or a historical moment in theatre.

Kunti, when first introduced, keeps on staring fixedly at the sun.

"Why is she staring at the sun?" the child asks.

"It is a special secret," says Vyasa.

Throughout the sequence of events—her marriage to Pandu, Pandu's death, Kunti's verdict that Draupadi be shared by the five sons—the mystery of her fascination for the Sun lurks in the background. It is only when Arjuna and Karna are about to enter into fierce combat in Dhritarashtra's palace, that Kunti swoons.

"What has happened to her?" the child asks.

"I will tell you," says Vyasa and a flashback begins.

A Black actor, in a flowing red garment, appears at the top of the stadium and runs down to greet Kunti. The scene that followed was hilarious—the young Kunti, unaware of the fact that if you invoked a god like the Sun and he blessed you with his appearance, you had to sleep with him.

The Pandavas somehow failed to impress me as a total family. Individually, they were good, but the bond between them did not seem to emerge. The narcissistic Arjuna, the confused Yudhishtira, the child-like Bhima, the strong-willed Draupadi (played by Mallika Sarabhai) had somehow found no time for each other.

Amba

To trace the whole journey of the Mahabharata—starting with the birth of Satyawati and her son Vyasa till the death of Krishna and the annihilation of the race—and to make French audiences follow the confusing relationships and family tree was a marathon task. I admired Carrière's innovative ways of introducing a character and weaving his or her storyline through the fast-developing narration. Amba was one such character. The frustrated and angry Amba appears in the early part of the Mahabharata, when Bhishma refuses to marry her and she vows to avenge her humiliation by killing him. She returns again towards the end during the Kurukshetra battle, as Shikhandi, and helps Arjuna kill Bhishma. Carrière's Amba roams around the forests dishevelled, frustrated, aimless—in eternal search of the moment for revenge. She meets the Pandavas and talks to Draupadi. When she returns as Shikhandi, the audience is familiar with her anguish, having seen her a couple of times during the unfolding of the epic.

Ganga

Brook's Ganga appears wading her way through the stream, with thin, flowing, white silk covering her head. She meets and marries Shantanu and, as narrated in the Mahabharata, drowns her newborn infants. The use of the white silk and simple gestures captured the poetry of the myth. Ganga clutched her white scarf and it became her baby. She kissed it and then flung it into the pool of water. The scarf unwound and floated in mid-air for a while, creating an image of drifting water taking the baby away. It was delightful to watch a simple, silk drape with its fluid lines create an abstract moment of beauty.

The African actors

Bhishma, Parashurama, Bhima, Ghatotkacha and Shakuni were all Africans and remained Africans. In fact, their Africanness was their greatest asset. Bhishma did not look the Indian image of Bhishma, but his African face, body and mind showed the wisdom and calmness that is Bhishma. Parashurama arrived banging his staff in a tribal African manner, but brought with him Parashurama's wrath and power. Bhima's simple mind, strong

body and affectionate soul was evident in the African physique. One could not visualise a better Shakuni—he sat playing the dice game, with his thin arms and legs, jaw protruding, bulging eyes staring. He held the dice in his palms and flicked his wrists in a way that convinced you of his mumbo-jumbo power. Watching these African actors, one felt convinced that it is not ethnic familiarity or behaviour patterns that define characters, but something beyond these apparent barriers—a deeper meaning and intention which gives them their identity.

Humour

Traditionally, Indian folk theatre deals with the epics in a very special way. For instance, Kirtana or Pandavani give them a local colour. All characters display commonly known behaviour patterns and the treatment is generally humorous, though with philosophical connotations.

I had fallen in love with Duryodhana, as indeed had all who saw him; his agonised chanting as he lay huddled up in a cave, his animal passion as he engaged in his battle with Bhima, his effort to hold on to life as he lay crippled...how one wished he would die soon and be saved the suffering

In the absence of such a tradition in the West, Brook and Carrière have discovered humour in the naivety of situations—for instance, the Kunti-Sun meeting, the Bhima-Hidimba-Ghatotkacha episode, Ashwatthama-the-elephant-is-dead sequence and the palace of Virata.

All these episodes were highly amusing and created innovatively almost always by African and Balinese actors. Is it because, culturally, they are more capable than European actors of throwing themselves into a naive situation and enjoying it?

Kurukshetra

Kurukshetra was annihilation. The

whole environment erupted: trumpets, war cries, trampling feet sending the sand flying, mud-soaked bodies, faces covered in blood, the anguish of the women as they moved through the pile of dead bodies identifying their sons and husbands and, during all this turmoil, Krishna explaining to Arjuna the inevitability of destruction.

Karna's death

A wheel rolling in the sand, pushed by one hand, a horsewhip lashing in the other—these were Krishna and Shalya, the two charioteers, followed by Arjuna and Karna. They circled, confronting each other in the sandpit, rode through water, disappeared behind rocks, chasing one another, emerged from the gangways of the stadium—caught in a frenzy to kill. Karna's chariot wheel got stuck in the pool of muddy water and Arjuna, advised by Krishna, killed him. In principle, it was similar to war games that children normally play and, while playing, believe in. Imagine the conviction and dedication with which the actors must have played their game to involve a thousand spectators to share their belief and feeling of truth.

Bhishma's death

Bhishma's death was equally simple and stark. He rode on top of a bamboo structure held up by the Kaurava soldiers and climbed down at the sight of Shikhandi, aware that his final moment had arrived. Hiding behind Shikhandi, Arjuna aimed his arrow. Krishna held it with his thumb and forefinger and gradually walked towards Bhishma who stood gazing fixedly at Krishna and the approaching arrow. The music played a steady siren-like note. The moment seemed to continue for hours as everybody stood still—only the arrow travelled in Krishna's hand. Krishna stuck the arrow in Bhishma's arm. Bhishma recoiled under its impact and, with a thud, the bamboo structure held by the soldiers fell to the ground. Bhishma staggered on it and lay prostrate. The actors around him stuck hundreds of bamboo sticks in the structure creating an impression of arrows invading Bhishma's body. Two of the sticks, crossing each other, made a headrest and he was carried in, on his bed of arrows. Bhishma receiving and welcoming the call of death is an image

that registered deeply in my mind.

Duryodhana's death

I had fallen in love with Duryodhana, as indeed had all who saw him. He was every inch evil with a very human cause-and-effect syndrome written all over him. His agonised chanting as he lay huddled up in a cave (created by a cloth held over him), his animal passion as he engaged in his battle with Bhima, his bewilderment and frustration as he heard Krishna advise Bhima to hit him in the thigh, his effort to hold on to life as he lay crippled and mud-soaked near the pool of water, his limbs and senses gradually fading while his energies slowly subsided. How one wished he would die soon and be saved the suffering.

The other deaths

Drona's death, on the other hand, was ritualistic in an Indo-Japanese manner. On learning of his son's death, he sat cross-legged on the sand and emptied an earthen jar full of coloured water on himself, getting ready for human sacrifice or *hara-kiri*. Dhrishtadyumna, his face painted like a blood-red mask, approached and beheaded him.

Abhimanyu's death in the maze was, likewise, in the tradition of the stick dance. Duhshasana's death was presented in the Kathakali manner, with Bhima pulling his entrails out. Both these deaths failed to register any impact since the forms used were far too obvious. The image that haunts me still is when Draupadi (Sarabhai) came towards Duhshasana's dead body and spread her hair on the open wound and Bhima with his blood-covered hands smeared her hair. All this happened while Gandhari stood watching a few yards away, holding on to a distraught Duryodhana, wailing, "My only living son". This is a vivid picture of the animal in man that war unleashes. The war, at last, was over with dead bodies scattered all over the sandpit. The women came, covered their own dead with colourful sheets. The sand, and on it the scattered colours, was all that remained of a race that had lived, loved, fought and disappeared.

Theatre through images

How surprising it is to find one's own mind being trained. After being in tune

with the stark simplicity of Brook's treatment of the Mahabharata, my mind seemed to react adversely to anything that represented obvious acceptable norms. For instance, the Balinese tradition of fire I saw being used for the first time. It resembles the patterns which fire-lines create in India in the forests and on hilltops during the winter months. It was fascinating on account of its sheer dramatic novelty, but did not move me. It was too grand to create a lasting image in my mind.

As against this, a simple device to create a moment disturbed me deeply—for instance, the bee attacking Karna's thigh. Karna sat with Parashurama's hand on his lap. Musicians came in the arena blowing softly on long Australian aboriginal weed instruments. One of them circled Karna and touched his thigh with the instrument. Karna winced with pain. The musician went away still playing and sounding like a departing bee. Karna touched his thigh and then looked at it. It was covered with blood. A weed instrument generated an undefined yet unforgettable magical moment in the theatre.

Draupadi's disrobing was an equally vivid moment. The Pandavas looked like ordinary human beings in their off-white clothes. A shrieking Draupadi was dragged by her hair. Duryodhana bared his thigh for her to sit on and Duhshasana sneered and chuckled, while the Pandavas looked on helplessly. Dignified Bhishma, compassionate Gandhari, King Dhritrashtra and Karna, the righteous man, decided it was not their responsibility to interfere. A morbid situation of a woman being raped in broad daylight. Draupadi cried out to Krishna as Duhshasana pulled at her saree. Krishna came holding yards of cloth in his hands, handed over one end to Duhshasana and, standing near Draupadi, kept on unrolling it as Duhshasana pulled. Duhshasana got entangled in the cloth and eventually collapsed. The whole sequence convinced me once again that the make-believe world of theatre generated its own reality and sense of truth—perhaps better, if untouched by theatrical conventions and trappings. We have ample evidence of this in our folk and tribal cultures. It is the urban, analytical faculty of our minds that has led us to a false and pretentious idea

of theatre which attempts to recreate reality and thereby bypasses the 'truth'.

In conclusion

The whole week of the Mahabharata at Avignon was a greatly rewarding and penetrating experience. Of course, unavoidably, my ethnic feelings surfaced at times with some complaints. For instance, I missed the episodes of Draupadi's wedding to Arjuna, the house of lac, the stories of Kacha-Devayani, Dushyanta-Shakuntala, etc. (Carrière mentioned that he had written many of them and that they would be presented separately). I also missed in the characterisations the generosity of Karna—Bruce Myers played him as too much of an introvert, in constant battle with the world. Kunti, played by Joséphine Derenne, had an earthy quality but could not convey sufficiently her wisdom and tenacity. Draupadi, played by Sarabhai, I found to be still in the process of discovering the Shakti that she symbolises. Matthias Habich's Yudhishtira, the confused dreamer, came across on many occasions as a weak *kshatriya*. Vittorio Mezzogiorno's Arjuna conveyed self-centered, narcissistic qualities rather than his all-pervading charm. Two excerpts from a note I had written to Brook I find relevant:

"Something could be done about Krishna's physical image. Indians—many of them—are against the 'Satya Shri Sai Baba' cult and physically Bénichou looks like him."

"The women at times disturbed me in the way they sat, especially in Virata's palace. There is something very distinct in the way an oriental woman sits. There is a certain fluidity even when she stretches her legs and rests her arms on a bolster."

The costumes looked too stitched for the Mahabharata characters. ("There was no option as the actors had to run around so much," said Chloé Obolensky, the designer). However, I do not attach much value to these reactions of mine. What I experienced during the eight days totally wipes out these minor distractions. *Le Mahabharata* will always remain a part of me. ■

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This article first appeared in the NCPA Quarterly Journal in September 1985 (Vol 14, Issue 3).



COMING SOON

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Programme Guide

September 2022

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



SOI symphony orchestra of india

Autumn 2022 Season

Patron: Citi India

Orchestral Concerts

• Friday, 16th September – 7.00 pm
Jamshed Bhabha Theatre

Alpesh Chauhan, conductor

Benjamin Grosvenor, piano

Humperdinck: Overture to *Hansel & Gretel*

Mendelssohn: Piano Concerto No. 1

Prokofiev: *Romeo and Juliet* (excerpts)

Conductor **Alpesh Chauhan**, Associate Conductor of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and Music Director of Birmingham Opera Company, will open the SOI Autumn 2022 Season with the Symphony Orchestra of India sharing the stage with British piano virtuoso of widespread international acclaim, **Benjamin Grosvenor**. The programme will include excerpts from Sergei Prokofiev's ballet *Romeo and Juliet*, based on Shakespeare's play.

• Wednesday, 21st September – 7.00 pm
Jamshed Bhabha Theatre

Alpesh Chauhan, conductor

Ben Goldscheider, horn

Tchaikovsky: *Romeo and Juliet*

Mozart: Horn Concerto No. 3

Strauss: Horn Concerto No. 1

Bernstein: Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story*

Alpesh Chauhan will lead a concert featuring Barbican ECHO Rising Star **Ben Goldscheider** as the soloist on the French horn, performing concerti by both Mozart and Richard Strauss.

Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* Fantasy Overture opens the programme, and the concert will conclude with the dynamic, powerful and energetic Symphonic Dances from Leonard Bernstein's beloved musical *West Side Story*.

• Sunday, 25th September – 5.00 pm
Jamshed Bhabha Theatre

Sayaka Shoji, violin

Henri Demarquette, cello

Jean-Frédéric Neuburger, piano/
conductor

Mendelssohn: *The Hebrides*

Brahms: Double Concerto

Beethoven: Triple Concerto

Brahms's final work for orchestra, the Double Concerto, and Beethoven's Triple Concerto are amongst the most beloved works in Western classical repertoire, and will both be featured in this concert performed by the versatile and prolific violinist **Sayaka Shoji** and the enthusiastic and passionate cellist **Henri Demarquette**. The concert will be led by **Jean-Frédéric Neuburger**, hailed as one of the most gifted musicians of his generation, who will also be featured as the piano soloist in the Triple Concerto.

• Friday, 30th September – 7.00 pm
Jamshed Bhabha Theatre

Richard Farnes, conductor

Pavel Kolesnikov, piano

Verdi: Overture to *Nabucco*

Rachmaninoff: Piano Concerto No. 3

Beethoven: Symphony No. 7

Acclaimed British conductor **Richard Farnes** will be joined by the engrossing and musical-storytelling pianist **Pavel Kolesnikov** to perform the mesmerising and technically challenging Piano Concerto No. 3 by Rachmaninoff. The programme also features Beethoven's Symphony No. 7 beloved for its lively rhythms that led Richard

Wagner to describe it as the "apotheosis of the dance."

Tickets:

₹3,600, 2,880, 2,250, 1,575, 900 & 450/- (Members)

₹4,000, 3,200, 2,500, 1,750, 1,000 & 500/- (Public)
(Inclusive of GST)

Recitals

• Sunday, 18th September – 5.00 pm
Experimental Theatre

Benjamin Grosvenor, piano

Bach/Busoni: Chaconne

Liszt: Sonata in B minor

Ravel: *Le tombeau de Couperin*

Ravel: *La valse*

British pianist **Benjamin Grosvenor** has been heralded as one of the most important pianists to emerge from the U.K. in several decades. The programme will open with Busoni's 1893 piano transcription of the famous Bach Chaconne for violin solo moving along to Piano Sonata in B minor which Liszt dedicated to Schumann in 1854. The programme concludes with two pieces by Ravel, *Le tombeau de Couperin* and *La valse*.

• Friday, 23rd September – 7.00 pm
Experimental Theatre

Ben Goldscheider, horn

Richard Uttley, piano

Beethoven: Horn Sonata in F major, Op. 17

Schubert: Klavierstücke No.1 in E-flat minor, D.946

Schumann: Adagio and Allegro in A flat, Op.70

And works by Widmann, Simpson, Kirchner and Bowen

Nominated by the Barbican as an ECHO Rising Star, **Ben Goldscheider** comes together with pianist **Richard Uttley** to perform a programme featuring works

by Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann and more. The programme includes Mark Simpson's *Nachtstück*, commissioned specifically for Goldscheider for his Rising Star concerts at major European venues including the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Köln Philharmonie in Cologne and Musikverein in Vienna.

• **Monday, 26th September – 7.00 pm**
Experimental Theatre

Sayaka Shoji, violin

Henri Demarquette, cello

Jean-Frédéric Neuburger, piano

Shubert: Notturmo, Op. 148

Brahms: Trio No. 3 in C minor, Op. 101

Shubert: Trio No. 1, D. 898

Known for her unique artistic versatility and extensive repertoire, violinist **Sayaka Shoji** will share the stage with multifaceted cellist **Henri Demarquette** and acclaimed pianist and composer **Jean-Frédéric Neuburger** in an intimate evening of chamber music. The programme includes Schubert's large-scale, yet intimate, Trio No. 1 of which Schumann said: "One glance at Schubert's Trio and the troubles of our human existence disappear and all the world is fresh and bright again."

• **Wednesday, 28th September – 7.00 pm**
Experimental Theatre

Pavel Kolesnikov, piano

Shubert: Four Impromptus D. 899

Chopin: Fantaisie-Impromptu

Chopin: "Raindrop" Prelude

Chopin: Valse in E minor

Schumann: *Kreisleriana*

Pavel Kolesnikov became a sensation at the 2012 Honens International Piano Competition when he took home what was then the world's largest piano prize. He is celebrated for his imaginative, thought-provoking programming which offers the listener a fresh, often unexpected, perspective on familiar pieces. Following his Wigmore Hall debut in 2014, *The Telegraph* gave his recital a rare five-star review and called it "one of the most memorable of such occasions London has witnessed for a while".

Tickets:

₹1,350, 900 & 450/- (Members)

₹1,500, 1,000 & 500/- (Public)

(Inclusive of GST)

Opera

• **Wednesday, 12th October – 7.00 pm**

Friday, 14th October – 7.00 pm

Sunday, 16th October – 5.00 pm

Jamshed Bhabha Theatre

Die Fledermaus

Music by **Johann Strauss II**

A fully-staged opera

The plot begins on New Year's Eve when Eisenstein is sentenced to jail for punching a police officer. He decides to evade jail for one night so that he can go to Prince Orlofsky's lavish party with his friend, Falke, but without telling his wife, Rosalinde. Tipped off about her husband's plan, Rosalinde follows him to the ball, disguised as a Hungarian countess. Adele, their maid, also feigns an excuse to be released from work that night so that she can also go to the ball disguised as a Russian actress named Olga. Much fun and frivolity ensues in what remains one of Strauss's most beloved works and a favourite with audiences around the globe.

Sung in German with English surtitles.

An NCPA Presentation in association with the Hungarian State Opera

Tickets:

₹6,750, 5,400, 4,320, 2,970, 2,250 & 1,350/- (Members)

₹7,500, 6,000, 4,800, 3,300, 2,500 & 1,500/- (Public)

(Inclusive of GST)

• **Saturday, 15th October – 7.00 pm**

Jamshed Bhabha Theatre

Bánk Bán

Music by **Ferenc Erkel**

Concert performance

Ferenc Erkel was a Hungarian composer, conductor and pianist. He was the father of the Hungarian grand opera, written mainly on historical themes, which are still often performed in Hungary. *Bánk Bán – The Viceroy Bánk* is an opera in three acts by composer Erkel. The work uses a Hungarian-language libretto by Béni Egressy which is based on a stage play of the same name by József Katona. The main storyline is based on the assassination of Queen Gertrude, wife of Andrew II in 1213. The opera was first performed at the Hungarian Theatre in Pest in 1861.

Sung in Hungarian with English surtitles.

An NCPA Presentation in association with the Hungarian State Opera

Free Concert for Members

Box Office now open

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC



Shubhangi Joshi, 3rd, Experimental Theatre

Classics with a Twist

Experimental Theatre

Saturday, 3rd – 6.30 pm

An NCPA Presentation

Anurag Sawangikar – drums

Titus Pinto – bass

Nishant Nair – keys/melodica

Bhushan Chitnis – guitars

Shubhangi Joshi – vocals/guitars

Enjoy an evening of the most iconic retro, pop and R&B melodies reimagined in the style of Postmodern Jukebox and Scary Pockets, along with refreshing indie-pop originals from the collective's debut album *Babelfish*. Expect to time-travel with reimagined renditions of the greatest hits by the likes of Aretha Franklin, Louis Armstrong, Stevie Wonder, Jamiroquai, Vulfpeck and Tom Misch.

Delving deeper into the collective's own music, each song presented will tell a different story—from odes to strange friendships, frequent oddities of daily life, fighting cynicism, regaining hope, and eventually, coming into one's own. To share the full spectrum of who we are as artistes, we are bringing a mix of the old and the new for our audience.

Tickets:

₹675 & 450/- (Members)

₹750 & 500/- (Public)

(Plus GST)

Box Office now open

THEATRE

Hamari Neeta Ki Shaadi

Hindi Play (90 mins)

Godrej Dance Theatre

Sunday, 4th – 5.30 pm & 7.30 pm

In its 85th production, Dinesh Thakur's Ank presents a laughter-filled play, written and directed by National Award-winning filmmaker Veena Bakshi, that takes a look at the Indian obsession with weddings.

Kaveri and Dashrath are upwardly mobile Mumbaikars who are determined to have a beautiful wedding for their daughter Neeta. Kaveri strives to host the perfect party, with the best food and décor, which she hopes will be talked about in her social set for years to come. The entire household, friends, assorted domestic helpers and an ever-interfering uncle have been deployed by Kaveri to have a perfect, traditional, by-the-book wedding. Neeta, born and brought up in Mumbai, is totally flummoxed by these newfound rituals and the long list of dos and don'ts. However, Kaveri will brook no interference in what she now regards as the major project in her life—her daughter's perfect wedding. Neeta's solution is to find a novel way of boycotting the wedding. Will it take place at all? Will the two generations find a middle path to sanity?

Written & directed by **Veena Bakshi**

Cast: **Preeta Mathur Thakur, Aman Gupta, Sangam Rai, Sapna, Bhavya Sharma, Burhan Topiwala, Vivek, Jawed, Rajat Yadav & Vipin**

Produced by **Ank, Mumbai**

Tickets:

₹450/- (Members)

₹500/- (Public)

Box Office now open

PHOTOGRAPHY

Black & White Beauties of the Indian Screen

Photo Exhibition by **Dr. Prakash Joshi**
Piramal Art Gallery

Saturday, 10th to Tuesday, 13th –
12.00 pm to 8.00 pm

Prakash Joshi, a homoeopath by profession, has been archiving rare photographs of Bollywood actresses. He will exhibit his collection—which



**Black & White Beauties of the Indian Screen,
10th to 13th, Piramal Art Gallery**

includes nearly 75 photographs of over 50 heroines including Noor Jehan, Shanta Apte, Nadira, Helen, Mala Sinha, Vyjayanthimala, Nutan, Madhubala, Meena Kumari, Kamini Kaushal, Waheeda Rehman and many more—at the NCPA this month. The inauguration will take place on 10th September at 5.00 pm. in the Piramal Gallery and will be hosted by renowned singer Dr. Rahul Joshi.

Entry free

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC

Divalicious with The Retro Vinyls

Tata Theatre

Saturday, 10th – 6.30 pm

An NCPA Presentation

Charoo Bakshi – vocals

Lisa Mary Swu – vocals

Khushi Dange – vocals

Mahendra Kumar – saxophone

Darel Joseph – keyboards

Christopher Fonseca – lead guitar

Jacob Panicker – bass

Randhir Dange – drums

The Retro Vinyls comprises some well-known musicians who have played across India and have toured abroad as well. Their repertoire spreads across genres, from jazz to blues and from rock to pop. This time they are taking the audience on a musical journey that will showcase the crooning styles of divas like Ella Fitzgerald and Diana Ross to powerhouse singers like Tina Turner, Cher and Whitney Houston.

Tickets:

₹900, 720 & 450/- (Members)

₹1,000, 800 & 500/- (Public)

(Plus GST)

Box Office now open

THEATRE

Chinta Chhod Chintamani

Hindi Play (120 mins)

Experimental Theatre

Saturday, 10th – 7.00 pm

This is the story of a family where the father thinks his progeny are standing on the threshold of total ruination. They are wallowing in self-indulgence and their destiny is leading them to an inevitable fall. On the other hand, the children think this is part of the travails of a generation gap and the old man is unable to understand the situation. Is the family not getting along because of a generation gap or a case of miscommunication? And if it is the former then who will bridge the gap?

Written by **Vasant Kanitkar**

Directed by **Om Katare**

Cast: **Om Katare, Mukesh Yadav, Sahil Ravi, Jaya Ojha, Mukund Bhatt, Ashok Sharma, Vidyagouri Honavar, Prashant Upadhyay, Aditi, Sailee Gaikwad, Harshal Singh & Aditya Choudhary**

Produced by **Yatri Theatre Association**

Tickets:

₹630 & 450/- (Members)

₹700 & 500/- (Public)

(Plus GST)

Box Office now open

DANCE

Catalyst

An evening celebrating choreographies born during lockdown

Mohiniattam by Saji Menon, Kathak by Diksha Rawat & Vinita Venugopal and Desi Marga presentation by Nirupama Rajendra & Abhinava Dance Company

(approx. 90 mins)

Experimental Theatre

Sunday, 11th – 5.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation

The national lockdown may have taken away a lot of privileges from us but it has also been a good teacher, a catalyst that has sown seeds of new knowledge and forced artistes to start thinking out of



Saji Menon, 11th, Experimental Theatre



Diksha Rawat, 11th, Experimental Theatre



Vinita Venugopal, 11th, Experimental Theatre



Nirupama Rajendra, 11th, Experimental Theatre

the box to create work never thought of before.

This evening will feature choreographies that have been born during the lockdown, some of

which have been presented online in a limited space to suit the mobile camera screen and will now be remodelled to be featured on a live performance stage. There will be presentations by group members who have redesigned a choreography that was originally created by merging videos shot in their individual spaces. The NCPA brings them all together, not online but physically.

Tickets:
₹360 & 270/- (Members)
₹400 & 300/- (Public)
Box Office now open

THEATRE

The Devil Wears Bataa

English Play
(120 mins)
Tata Theatre
Sunday, 11th – 7.00 pm

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

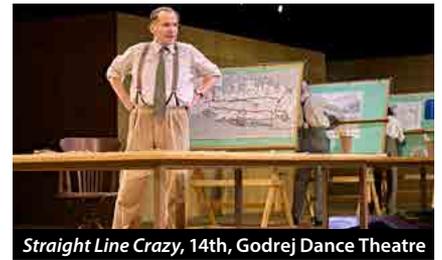
Written & directed by **Meherzad Patel**
 Cast: **Danesh Irani, Dilnaz Irani, Jigar Mehta, Darius Shroff, Sajeel Parakh, Danesh Khambata & others**

A Silly Point Production

Tickets:
₹1,800, 1,350, 900, 630 & 450/- (Members)
₹2,000, 1,500, 1,000, 700 & 500/- (Public)
(Inclusive of GST)
Box Office now open

SCREENING

Straight Line Crazy
Theatre Screening (Approx. 174 mins)
Godrej Dance Theatre
Wednesday, 14th – 6.00 pm



Straight Line Crazy, 14th, Godrej Dance Theatre

An NCPA-National Theatre Live (London) Presentation.

Ralph Fiennes (*Antony & Cleopatra*) leads the cast in a new play by **David Hare** (*Skylight*) which is a blazing account of the most powerful man in New York, a master manipulator whose legacy changed the city forever.

For 40 uninterrupted years, Robert Moses exploited those in office through a mix of charm and intimidation. Motivated at first by a determination to improve the lives of New York City's workers, he created parks, bridges and 627 miles of expressway to connect the people to the great outdoors. Faced with resistance by protest groups campaigning for a very different idea of what the city should become, will his charismatic conviction be enough to hide the weakness of democracy?

Nicholas Hytner directs this exhilarating new play.

Age: 15+

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

PHOTOGRAPHY

Clairvoyance '22

Annual Photo Exhibition by Students of the National Institute of Photography
Piramal Art Gallery
Thursday, 15th to Sunday, 18th – 12.00 pm to 8.00 pm

The National Institute of Photography (NIP) has been conducting photography courses since 1983. It was established by Manohar Desai. Every year they hold an exhibition of photographs shot by their students. This exhibition is being presented by Amogh Desai, Director of NIP.

Entry free

FILM

Reality Check

Documentary Film Screening
Little Theatre
Thursday, 15th – 6.30 pm

An NCPA Presentation in collaboration with Cinema Collective

The NCPA has revived the Reality Check film series, which was started in 2014 to promote and encourage documentary filmmakers in India whose work reflects the current life and culture in the country through a lens of creativity and integrity.

Sindhustan

English, Hindi, & Sindhi Film with English Subtitles (64 mins)



Sindhustan, 15th, Little Theatre

Sindhustan is a uniquely intimate first-person documentary on the scattered culture and historic migration of the Sindhi people, most of whom relocated, en masse, to India from Pakistan, during the Partition of British India in 1947. Director **Sapna Bhavnani** retraces the little-known history of her own Sindhi roots, inking this fresh map of knowledge onto her skin in the form of tattoos.

Written & directed by **Sapna Bhavnani**

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.

THEATRE

Spill Poetry's Back to Stage Showcase

Poetry
English/ Hindi
(90 mins)
Experimental Theatre
Thursday, 15th – 8.00 pm



Spill Poetry's Back to Stage Showcase, 15th, Experimental Theatre

An NCPA Off-Stage Presentation In collaboration with Spill Poetry

Spill Poetry is back with its long-awaited feature showcase. The Back to Stage Showcase features some of your favourite spoken word artistes coming together for a night of soul-stirring poetry.

Host: **Daaniyal & Foram Shah**

Performers: **Sid Warriar, Priya Malik, Swastika Rajput, Jidnya Sujata, Ishpreet Balbir & more.**

Suggested age: 16+

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

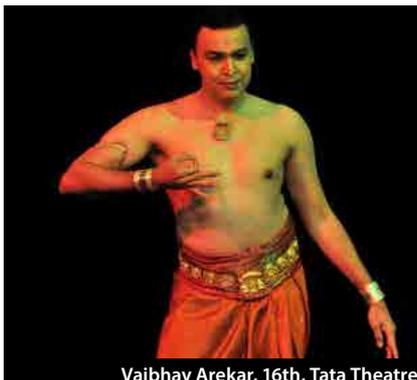
DANCE

Tamrapatra

(Approx. 90 mins)
Tata Theatre
Friday, 16th – 6.30 pm

An NCPA Presentation in association with **Ananda Shankar Jayant's Natyarambha**

The evening will showcase presentations and performances from *Tamrapatra* series by Ananda Shankar Jayant's Bharatanatyam app Natyarambha



Vaibhav Arekar, 16th, Tata Theatre



Sathyannarayana Raju, 16th, Tata Theatre



Sharmila Biswas, 16th, Tata Theatre



Gopika Varma, 16th, Tata Theatre

featuring eminent scholars and dancers like **Vaibhav Arekar, Sathyannarayana Raju, Sharmila Biswas, Anupama Kylash, Gopika Varma** and **Ananda Shankar Jayant** on rare creations of the saint poet Annamacharya, who wrote around 32,000 *sankeertanas* or songs in praise of Lord Venkateshwara.

Tickets:
₹450, 270 & 90/- (Members)
₹500, 300 & 100/- (Public)
(Inclusive of GST)
Box Office: 26th August for Members & 29th August for Public

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC

Charu Suri Live in Concert

Experimental Theatre
Friday, 16th – 7.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation



Charu Suri, 16th, Experimental Theatre

Charu Suri – piano
Shreya Bhattacharya – vocals
Srinjoy Ghatak – guitar
Avishek Dey – bass
Arjun Chakraborty – drums

Charu Suri is an award-winning pianist and composer who currently resides in New Jersey. She will make her NCPA debut in Mumbai and perform original songbook and jazz standards with some of the country's finest jazz talent to bring you timeless tunes. Suri became the first female Indian-born jazz artiste to premiere work at the Carnegie Hall in 2019.

Tickets:
₹675 & 450/- (Members)
₹750 & 500/- (Public)
(Plus GST)
Box Office now open

INDIAN MUSIC

NCPA-HSBC Music Workshop

Understanding the voice and its working

A free online workshop by Dr. Shyamala Vinod

(Duration 60 mins followed by Q&A session)

Saturday, 17th – 11.30 am

Supported by HSBC

The voice is an important medium of expression in most living beings. In the domain of music, vocalists solely rely on their voice to articulate music with maximum effect. Therefore, it is of paramount importance for vocalists to groom and culture their voice with a desirable quality. It also becomes equally significant for the vocalist to understand how to avoid misuse as well as abuse of the voice, which may not only affect the voice quality but also lead to the loss of voice itself.



Dr. Shyamala Vinod, 17th, Online

In the context of Indian music, while the major part of the training is focused on what to sing (matter or the content), there is hardly any thought given to the manner of singing or how to sing in a healthy and efficient way.

Dr. Shyamala Vinod is a trained vocalist, and a renowned voxologist and voice culture therapist with over 35 years of experience. Her clients include reputed names from the Carnatic music industry.

This workshop is aimed at helping vocalists understand their own voice and create awareness about voice culture and voice therapy as an essential and fundamental building block in cultivating a healthy, sustainable and enabling vocal facility and technique.

Entry free

Registration starts on 22nd August 2022

To register:

Write to indianmusicworkshops@ncpamumbai.com

Or visit the NCPA website (www.ncpamumbai.com) or NCPA Facebook page

INDIAN MUSIC

Jashn-e-Ishq: Celebrating Love

An evening of music and poetry by Sourendro – Soumyojit featuring Shabana Azmi (Approx. 90 mins)

Tata Theatre

Saturday, 17th – 6.30 pm

In association with Sahachari Foundation Events

There is perhaps no facet of human life that is explored so exhaustively through the arts as the feeling of 'love'. The theme has inspired many poets, both in the East and the West, resulting in some exquisite works of poetry in myriad



Shabana Azmi, 17th, Tata Theatre



Sourendro & Soumyojit, 17th, Tata Theatre

languages, some of which are set to music and transformed into haunting melodies.

Shabana Azmi, a veteran actress known for her brilliant work in cinema and theatre, will recite some evergreen love poems penned by Tagore, Shakespeare, Rosetti, Browning, Agha Shahid Ali and other classical as well as modern poets. Juxtaposing poetry with song will be musical renditions by the duo, **Sourendro** (piano) and **Soumyojit** (vocal music). The selection of songs, exploring various hues of love, will span across many genres: *ghazal*, *thumri*, *geet* and film songs.

Tickets:

₹1,260, 990, 720 & 450/- (Members)

₹1,400, 1,100, 800 & 500/- (Public)

(Inclusive of GST)

Box Office: 26th August for Members & 29th August for Public

THEATRE

Adrak

Hindi Play (75 mins)

Experimental Theatre

Saturday, 17th – 7.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation in collaboration with Now Productions

The plot revolves around a few telephonic conversations, and draws from the liveliness and immediacy of it,



Adrak, 17th, Experimental Theatre

just like a normal phone call. Meanwhile, the essence of the plot can be likened to the flash of introspection that hits one soon after the conversation ends. This is the story of three characters: Nischay, Vikrant and Anokhi. All of them, with little hope for their present, try and dig out the nostalgia of their shared past.

Directed by **Niketan Sharma**

Co-directed by **Trinetra Tiwari**

Written by **Niketan Sharma**

Co-written by **Abhisek Kumar**

Cast: **Srishti Shrivastava, Dheer Hira & Niketan Sharma**

Sound: **Ritesh Malaney**

Tickets:

₹540 & 450/- (Members)

₹600 & 500/- (Public)

(Plus GST)

Box Office now open

THEATRE



Comedy for Comedy's Sake, 17th, Godrej Dance Theatre

Comedy For Comedy's Sake

Stand-up Comedy

English/Hindi

(90 mins)

Godrej Dance Theatre

Saturday, 17th – 7.00 pm

An NCPA Off-Stage Presentation
In collaboration with Comedy Ladder

The world has opened up and all we need now is some laughter. Here is a 90-minute comedy show that everyone can enjoy.

Host: **Jeeya Sethi**

Performers: **Aditi Mittal, Shridhar Venkataramana, Raunaq Rajani,**

Shamik Chakrabarti & Seema Golchha

Suggested age: 16+

Tickets:

₹450/- (Members)

₹500/- (Public)

Box Office now open

THEATRE

Maari E Maari Taari E Maari

Gujarati Play (150 mins)

Tata Theatre

Sunday, 18th – 4.30 pm & 7.30 pm

The play revolves around Raja, who is smart, witty and charming which is why girls like him. He is a celebrity gym trainer and his favourite pastime is to 'date women'. Gaja is Raja's best friend. He is softspoken and smart too, but very shy and because of that he gets very awkward around girls. Where Raja is having multiple affairs, Gaja, at the age of 35, is still single and unmarried.

Vithu, the butler, who has been with Raja-Gaja for several years, plots a plan to help Gaja find a girl. But Raja, foresees the plan and counters it with his own and traps Gaja and Vithu. After a series of twists and turns, things get so escalated that the best friends take a stand against each other. Even the police gets involved in the drama, but is helpless against Raja's wittiness.

Does Raja find true love? Does Gaja get his girl? Do they both get married as per Vithu's plan? This rollercoaster ride of a comedy is a must-watch.

Written & directed by **Devendra Pandurang Pem**

Cast: **Sharman Joshi, Hetal A. Puniwala, Reeve Rachh, Tarika Tripathi, Pradeep Vengurlekar, Snehal Borkar, Sharvari Gaikwad & Nikhil Modak**

Produced by **Sharman Joshi Productions LLP**

Tickets:

₹900, 720, 540, 450, 360 & 270/- (Members)

₹1,000, 800, 600, 500, 400 & 300/- (Public)

(Inclusive of GST)

Box Office now open

INDIAN MUSIC

A Sitar Recital by Budhaditya Mukherjee

(Approx. 90 mins)

Tata Theatre

Thursday, 22nd – 6.30 pm



Budhaditya Mukherjee, 22nd, Tata Theatre

In association with **Saroj Jhaveri Foundation**

An internationally acclaimed sitarist, **Budhaditya Mukherjee** has received his training in sitar and surbahar from his illustrious father, the late Bimalendu Mukherjee, doyen of the Imdadkhani *gharana*. His performance is a judicious blend of *alap*, *jod-jhala* and *gat*. His music reflects a conventional and systematic presentation of the *raga* with emotive expression in *gayaki ang* (vocalised idiom), technical virtuosity and a winsome command of the instrument. Accompanying Mukherjee on tabla is **Soumen Nandy**, a student of Pankaj Chatterjee and Arun Chatterjee of the Farukhabad *gharana*.

The evening's fare includes three varieties of the charming seasonal *raga* Malhar: Miya Malhar, Gaud Malhar and Ramdasi Malhar.

Tickets:

₹450, 360 & 270/- (Members)

₹500, 400 & 300/- (Public)

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

MULTI ARTS & PRESENTATION

New Book Discussion:

Mumbai Traps: collected plays

by **Anju Makhija**

Stuart-Liff Collection Library, NCPA

Friday, 23rd – 4.30 pm to 5.30 pm

An NCPA Presentation

This volume includes six plays with Mumbai as the central character, cast in manifold shades. We experience social and surreal situations, mysterious

and mystical happenings with an artistic playfulness. These plays serve as a depiction of city life in a state of perpetual restlessness.

Anju Makhija is a Sahitya Akademi Award-winning poet, playwright and translator. She has published three poetry collections, co-translated *Seeking the Beloved*, the mystical verse of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai, co-edited a three-volume series of Indo-English plays and anthologies related to partition, women and young readers.

The panel discussion by **Dolly Thakore, Denzil Smith, Uma Narain, Rochelle Potkar, Sonu Anand** and others will be followed by audience participation.

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

INDIAN MUSIC

Devi: Celebrating the Divine

By **Devaki Pandit**
(Approx. 75 mins)

Experimental Theatre
Saturday, 24th – 6.30 pm

An NCPA Presentation
Supported by **Rukmani & Kishan Daiya Foundation**

The concept of female divinity is indeed unique to the culture of the Indian subcontinent with the exception of a few tribes in Africa where it is attached to the aspect of fertility. The concept of *Shakti* as propagated in Hindu philosophy and culture offers an interesting and radically different approach to the issue of power and the feminine, which is otherwise equated with masculine.

As the female aspect of the divine, Devi is synonymous with Shakti, who is regarded as not only the creator of life but also the keeper and epitome of wisdom. Her incarnations include Saraswati who is a symbol of prosperity, Lakshmi who is a symbol of wealth and so on. Indian literature is replete with songs in praise of several manifestations of the divinity as Devi, Durga, Kali, Lakshmi, Parvati and Saraswati.

Having been initiated into music by her mother, Usha Pandit, **Devaki Pandit** has trained under distinguished gurus: Vasantrao Kulkarni, Kishori Amonkar



Devaki Pandit, 24th, Experimental Theatre

and Jitendra Abhisheki. Coupled with musicality, her creativity has led to some interesting thematic projects.

Scheduled especially during the festival of Navratri, this musical presentation by Pandit is a celebration of the feminine aspect of the divine. Compositions that are primarily based on Indian *raga* music will be woven with relevant mythological stories.

Tickets:

₹360 & 270/- (Members)

₹400 & 300/- (Public)

Box Office: 26th August for Members & 29th August for Public

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC

Mumbai Piano Day

Tata Theatre
Saturday, 24th – 7.00 pm



Louiz Banks, 24th, Tata Theatre

An NCPA Presentation

Mumbai Piano Day is back for its seventh edition, featuring some of the finest pianists and keyboard players in the country and from around the world. Curated by the NCPA and Louiz Banks, and covering all genres from jazz, funk to classical, this is an evening not to be missed.

Tickets:

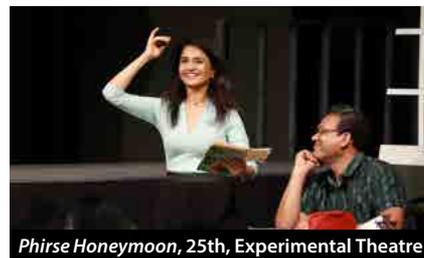
₹900, 720, 450 & 270/- (Members)

₹1,000, 800, 500 & 300/- (Public)

(Plus GST)

Box Office now open

THEATRE



Phirse Honeymoon, 25th, Experimental Theatre

Phirse Honeymoon

Hindi Play (110 mins)
Experimental Theatre

Sunday, 25th – 4.00 pm & 7.30 pm

An NCPA Presentation in
collaboration with **ScriptTease Creations**

A couple revisits their honeymoon destination to add some freshness to their stagnant relationship. As they reach Hotel Dreamland, the past starts merging with the present. The space-time continuum falls apart and dreamlike events start unfolding in a humorous, edgy and breathtaking manner. They must deal with the past before they can dream of the future.

Written & directed by **Sandesh Kulkarni**

Hindi translation: **Amruta Subhash**

Cast: **Amruta Subhash, Sandesh Kulkarni, Amit Phalke & Kaushal Jobanputra**

Music: **Narendra Bhide**

Sound Operation: **Pritish Khandagale**

Lights: **Ashutosh Parandkar**

Tickets:

₹540 & 450/- (Members)

₹600 & 500 /- (Public)

(Plus GST)

Box Office now open

DANCE

Odissi by Sujata Mohapatra and Bharatanatyam by Vaibhav Arekar along with Sankhya

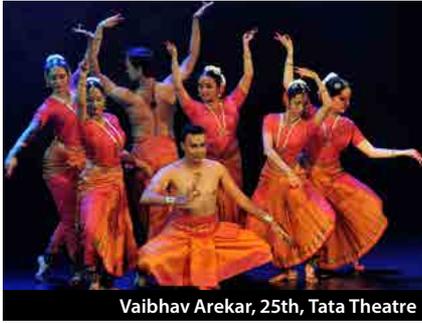
(Approx. 120 mins)

Tata Theatre
Sunday, 25th – 5.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation



Sujata Mohapatra, 25th, Tata Theatre



Vaibhav Arekar, 25th, Tata Theatre

Sujata Mohapatra is considered a benchmark of excellence in Odissi today. Her performances and panache have catapulted the art form to the global stage. Mohapatra spent 20 years under the tutelage of Kelucharan Mohapatra. In recognition of her perseverance, vast body of work and the profound impact she has had on the Indian dance community, the Indian Government conferred on her the 2017 Sangeet Natak Akademi Puraskar. The temple dance form of yore is now a certified behemoth of Odisha's heritage. Her emphasis on discipline and a transparent approach towards all tasks set her apart as a dancer.

Vaibhav Arekar, one of India's leading male Bharatanatyam soloists, is trained under virtuoso teachers Saroja Srinath, Tangamani Nagarajan and his mentor Kanak Rele. Arekar has a B.F.A. and M.F.A. from Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya. His collaborative work in the genre of theatre-dance has created milestone productions like *Haravale! Pratibimba*, *Mata Hidimba*, *Dwandwa*, *Shreemant Yogi*, *Naama Mhane – An Awakening* and *Trayaanta*, which have received critical acclaim and are regarded as model thematic works in Bharatanatyam. His solo work includes *Debotar Grash* (based on Tagore's poem) and *Narmade Har Hara* (in praise of river Narmada), among others. As a soloist, he has performed at prestigious dance festivals around the country. He has also founded the Sankhya Dance Company, which has performed in Japan, Brazil, Canada, the U.S., Poland, Russia, Germany, France and Australia.

Tickets:
 ₹540, 360 & 270/- (Members)
 ₹600, 400 & 300/- (Public)
 (Inclusive of GST)
Box Office: 26th August for Members & 29th August for Public

FILM

Short Film Corner

Short Film Screenings

Little Theatre

Wednesday, 28th – 6.30 pm

An NCPA Presentation in collaboration with White Wall Screenings

There are so many wonderful short films being made in India, with auteurs at work in their own regions, and bold, new voices who are experimenting with form and technique. Short Film Corner hopes to connect movie lovers with these films and open 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 continues to conduct workshops, masterclasses and conversations around filmmaking and films.

Rabbithole

Hindi Film with English Subtitles
 (10 mins)



Rabbithole, 28th, Little Theatre

An evening in the life of Vivek, a 30-something aspiring photographer, in quarantine. In the space of helplessness, he makes a connection with another being, a rabbit. Through a moment of tenderness, touch and love, Vivek feels a moment of release and freedom. And in that comes to recognise how caged they both really are.

Directed by **Tushar Singhal**



9+1=1, 28th, Little Theatre

9+1=1

Hindi Film with English Subtitles
 (16 mins)

A film on deadly carbon monoxide poisoning, a little explored topic in cinema. Carbon monoxide, also known as a silent killer, is one of the deadliest gases that can kill people within minutes without showing any physical symptoms. When we talk about air pollution, this gas remains least talked about but causes the highest number of deaths as compared to other gases. As per data from various sources, most of the deaths happen when household fumes are generated either while cooking or to warm houses in winters. The film *9+1=1* is a story of a landlord who keeps nine paying guests in his house to earn extra income. One day, he leaves for some work and when he comes back, he discovers that all the paying guests have died by inhaling carbon monoxide. The gas was formed from a makeshift coal tandoor they improvised to party in their landlord's absence without even thinking of the repercussions they could face.

Directed by **Rahul Yadav**

Bridge

Hindi Film with English Subtitles
 (18 mins)



Bridge, 28th, Little Theatre

As the dark deep night enveloped the cityscape, Vinod the taxi driver-cum-pimp was driving across the streets of Mumbai, when he found a young girl. Meanwhile Rajjo, a prostitute in her early 30s, is irked by the presence of the girl as it is eating into her nightly earnings. After a feisty conversation, Vinod and Rajjo decide to find the young girl's

family. An evil acquaintance of Vinod, Pawan, tries to take the girl from them and has a dreadful intention. The scuffle that ensues leads to loss and disappointment but eventually, Vinod has an unexpected revelation.

Directed by **Bikramjit Gupta**

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

NrityAvani

Raas-Garba Nritya by Avani Shah
Tata Theatre
Thursday, 29th – 6.30 pm

An NCPA Presentation

Avani Shah is a renowned Bharatanatyam and Kathak dancer, choreographer and a folk artiste. She will present her journey from the stage of *varnam* to *svarnam* (1984 to 2018) to illustrate her *bhakti* to Maa Durga in the traditional form of *raas-garba* nritya. She is all set to bring the NCPA stage alive with her own troupe, on an auspicious day of Navratri.

Tickets:

₹1,080, 900, 720 & 450/- (Members)

₹1,200, 1,000, 800 & 500/- (Public)

(Inclusive of GST)

Box Office: 26th August for Members & 29th August for Public

INDIAN MUSIC

Nad Ninad: From Our Archives

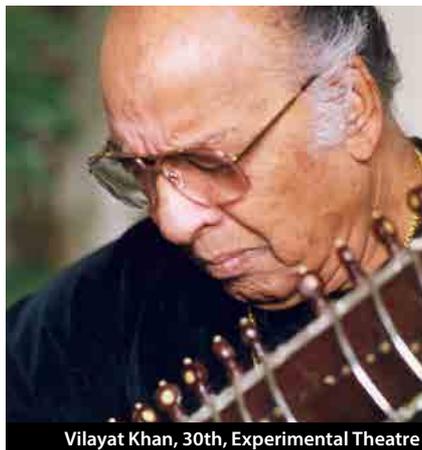
Listening Session (no. 6) on the Artistry of Vilayat Khan (Approx. 120 mins)

Experimental Theatre
Friday, 30th – 6.30 pm

An NCPA Presentation

This programme makes available the NCPA's archival recordings to lovers of Hindustani classical music.

We have been conducting a series of sessions based on rarely heard recordings of sitar maestro, **Vilayat Khan** (1924–2004), which were specially



Vilayat Khan, 30th, Experimental Theatre

recorded for our archives during 1976. **Arvind Parikh**, his most senior disciple, and **Shujaat Khan**, his elder son, had engaged the maestro in conversation, recording a wealth of information about his forefathers and their style. Vilayat Khan has also chronicled his own musical journey with ample demonstrations.

Khan was born in Gauripur (now in Bangladesh) in a family of outstanding musicians: his grandfather Imdad Khan and father Inayat Khan were the most celebrated surbahar and sitar players of their time. A child prodigy, Khan went on to become one of the most influential instrumentalists of the 20th century. His distinctive *gayaki ang* (vocalised style) made his sitar "sing", and is probably the most widely followed sitar style today.

The first five sessions in this series covered the contributions of his legendary forefathers. The sixth session starts with details of the disciples of Inayat Khan, especially Dhruvatar Joshi and Bimalakanta Roychaudhuri. The session continues with a vital topic of why and how Khan developed the *gayaki ang* on the sitar. The session includes performance of *raga* Sindhu Kafi and demonstration of *raga* Darbari on sitar, and *raga* Jog (*alap* and *jod*) on surbahar by Khan.

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

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC

Movies Under the Stars

Some Like It Hot (1959)

Film Screening
(B&W – 121 mins)

Little Theatre
Friday, 30th – 6.30 pm

An NCPA & Film Heritage Foundation Presentation

The *Variety* review in 1959 read: "Some Like It Hot, directed in masterly style by Billy Wilder, is probably the funniest picture of recent memory. It's a whacky, clever, farcical comedy that starts off like a firecracker and keeps on throwing off lively sparks till the very end." After witnessing a mob hit, Chicago musicians Joe and Jerry, played by Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon respectively in landmark performances, disguise themselves as women and leave town, joining an all-woman band en route to Miami. The band's singer, Sugar Kane, played by Marilyn Monroe at her bombshell best, dreams of marrying a millionaire. Joe attempts to woo Sugar by taking on a second disguise as a millionaire, while Jerry in his female avatar as "Daphne" gets engaged to a real tycoon. While romance blossoms in Miami, the gangsters reappear, and the film unspools in a stream of farcical, slapstick situations. The film won three Golden Globe Awards including Best Picture and one each for Marilyn Monroe and Jack Lemmon for their performances. It was nominated for six Oscars, winning for Best Costume Design.

Director & Producer: **Billy Wilder**

Screenplay: **Billy Wilder & I.A.L. Diamond**

Cinematographer: **Charles Lang, Jr.**

Costumes: **Orry-Kelly**

Cast: **Marilyn Monroe, Tony Curtis, Jack Lemmon, George Raft, Pat O'Brien & Joe E. Brown**

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



Some Like it Hot, 30th, Little Theatre

What's Next

October & November 2022

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

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC

The Klaus Graf Special Quartet

Experimental Theatre
Thursday, 6th October – 7.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation

Klaus Graf – alto saxophone
Thilo Wagner – piano
Veit Hübner – upright bass
Meinhard Obi Jenne – drums

After having played as a sideman with different national and international jazz formations, alto saxophone player Klaus Graf founded his first own quartet in 2001. His music consists of bandleader's compositions which were written to

serve the quartet's concept of jazz with a dash of melody-based, groove-driven soul. The quartet, whose debut album *Changes in Life* was recorded in 2002, comprises internationally recognised jazz soloists. In October 2007, their second album *Moving On*, with arrangements and self-composed songs was produced. The quartet has travelled to India as part of successful concert tours in 2017 and 2020. The third album of the Klaus Graf Quartet, *Live in India*, a live recording from the India concert tour in 2020, was released in March 2021.

Tickets:
₹675 & 450/- (Members)
₹750 & 500 /- (Public)
(Plus GST)

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

INDIAN MUSIC

One World Many Musics: Celebrating Artistic Plurality

7th & 8th October

An NCPA Presentation

The world that we live in is buzzing with myriad traditions and musical forms across various indigenous cultures. Music from around the world exerts wide cross-cultural influence as styles influence one another.

This festival, showcasing varied musical forms, reaffirms the peaceful co-existence of cultural and artistic plurality in the world. With this event, we celebrate the power of music as a healing force that promotes cross-cultural understanding, and reminds people of all cultures and religions that we share a common humanity.

Sitar Rhapsody with Chirag and Friends

Experimental Theatre
Friday, 7th October – 7.00 pm

With sitarist **Chirag Katti** as its lead, **Sitar Rhapsody** is a fusion ensemble which endeavours to blend compositions based on Indian art music to create a contemporary sound



The Klaus Graf Special Quartet, 6th October, Experimental Theatre



Chirag Katti, 7th October, Experimental Theatre

NCPA Silver Membership (inclusive of GST):

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

Special Membership Packages

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

Membership Benefits:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Email:
membership@ncpamumbai.com
Tel.: 66223719

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

*For more information on these and other membership packages, please refer to the upcoming issues of **ON Stage** and log on to www.ncpamumbai.com



Membership Application form

**Dear Supporter of the Arts,**

As we emerge from the pandemic, it is a pleasure to see you in our theatres and join us in celebrating the return of live performances after what has been a long and trying pause.

The arts and the artistic community need you now more than ever. After what they have been through, the very fact that theatres and performing spaces have reopened, supporters are returning and cheering them on means so much to them. The community that makes a live experience what it is, is many times more than what you see on stage and interact with at venues. There is an unseen army that supports the magic of every live performance that brings you to our theatres.

As an organisation committed to preserving and promoting India's rich and vibrant artistic heritage in the fields of music, dance, theatre, film and photography, we are pleased to let you know that during the two years that have been the toughest for a performing arts centre, like ours, we stood by each of those precious people that give you the experience that keeps bringing you back to the NCPA.

Today, we turn to you, dear friend and supporter of the arts, and request you to do your bit in supporting the larger cause of keeping the performing arts—live and alive!

By becoming a member of the National Centre for the Performing Arts, you will make a commitment to this cause and your support will go a long way, not only in the area of live performance, but will also help in our various educational and outreach initiatives which ensure that the gift of the arts enriches all sections of society.

As India's role on the international stage expands, the NCPA has been investing in the country's cultural future. In developing the Symphony Orchestra of India (SOI), the NCPA has given the country its first and only professional orchestra. In addition to this, the NCPA produces, collaborates and curates with the best to bring you a wide range of world-class experiences across theatre, music, dance and film.

We invite you to join us on this exciting journey by being a Friend of the SOI or a Silver member of the NCPA. Kindly refer to the details in the panel on the left. We request you to fill in the form below and submit it along with recent passport-sized photograph/s to the Membership Department. You can now apply for membership/become a Friend of the SOI online. Please log on to www.ncpamumbai.com for details. For any queries, please contact the Membership Department.

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

Silver member of the NCPA

Friend of the SOI

Name:

Joint Member Name (in case of couple membership):

Address:

.....

Pin Code:

Telephone: Mobile:

Email: Date of Birth:

Occupation: Company:

Cheque No.: Date:

Drawn On:

Date: Signature:

that is not only high-energy but also highly appealing to the audience. The ensemble includes some talented young musicians: **Dharmesh Maru** (keyboards), **Hansel Dias** (bass guitar), **Siddharth Nagarajan** (drums), **Rupak Dhamankar** (tabla) and occasionally, saxophonist **I. D. Rao**.

The ensemble strives to maintain its exclusivity by consciously blending conventional *raga*-based melodies with elements of blues as well as adopting fusion versions of some familiar mainstream songs from Bollywood to The Beatles, and more.

Tickets:

₹360 & 270/- (Members)

₹400 & 300/- (Public)

Agnee

Tata Theatre

Saturday, 8th October – 7.00 pm



Agnee, 8th October, Tata Theatre

Led by singer, lyricist, artiste and music director **K. Mohan**, who has a strong art music background, **Agnee** is a rock band known for its deep-rooted Indian sound, hummable tunes and live-wire performances with songs inspired by Kabir's poetry as well as Vedic and Carnatic music. The band also includes **Koco**, a lead guitarist well known in the rock music industry, **Hrishikesh** (drums), **Varun** (percussions) and **Chirayu** (bass).

Having released a series of super hits including 'Sadho Re', 'Kabira', 'Shaam Tanha', the Splitsvilla Theme Song and the Roadies Theme Song, the band has won several music awards and has a distinction of having over 10 million views on YouTube for songs in various languages.

Tickets:

₹1,800, 1,440, 1,080, 720 & 450/- (Members)

₹2,000, 1,600, 1,200, 800 & 500/- (Public) (Inclusive of GST)

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

SCREENING



Jack Absolute Flies Again, 12th October, Godrej Dance Theatre

Jack Absolute Flies Again

Theatre Screening

Godrej Dance Theatre

Wednesday, 12th October – 6.00 pm

An NCPA-National Theatre Live (London) Presentation.

A rollicking new comedy by **Richard Bean** (*One Man, Two Guvnors*) and **Oliver Chris** (*Twelfth Night*).

After an aerial dog fight, Pilot Officer Jack Absolute flies home to win the heart of his old flame, Lydia Languish. Back on British soil, Jack's advances soon turn to anarchy when the young heiress demands to be loved on her own, very particular, terms. **Emily Burns** directs this spectacularly entertaining new version of **Sheridan's** *The Rivals*. This production features a cast that includes **Caroline Quentin**, **Laurie Davidson**, **Natalie Simpson** and **Kelvin Fletcher**. *The Sunday Times* has called it an "enormously loveable show" while Daily Mail has called it "a rare blast of sunshine."

By **Richard Bean** and **Oliver Chris**

Based on **Richard Brinsley Sheridan's** *The Rivals*

Tickets

₹360/ (Members)

₹400/ (Public)

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

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC

Conversing Streams

Best of World Music

Surya by **Taufiq Qureshi**

Tata Theatre

Saturday, 15th October – 6.30 pm

An NCPA Presentation

Taufiq Qureshi: percussion kit, djembe & vocal rhythms

Sarang Kulkarni: sarod & Z rod (electric sarod)

Shikhar Naad Qureshi: djembe & additional percussions

Kaushiki Joglekar: keyboard & harmonium

Surya is a collaborative fusion of ethnic Indian classical and world music.

Taufiq Qureshi, the ace percussionist of India, is referred to as a game-changer and is also an acclaimed composer. He is the pioneer of the African djembe in the context of Indian rhythms. This indeed is one of the truest quests for fusion music; that is, to define 'Indianness' on an African instrument.

Qureshi has always perceived fusion music as an entity by itself and not as an extension or altered version of another form of music. In a fusion ensemble, the collaborating artistes have to blend their individual styles into a whole. He refrains from calling Surya a band because the music is free-flowing, improvised and spontaneous with only bits of it being pre-fixed. This spontaneity is the hallmark of Indian music. Though all the performing artistes are torchbearers of Indian music, they are influenced by musical ideas from all over.

Surya explores world music, taking inspiration primarily from Indian classical music, and also from other genres like jazz, folk music and other cultural elements of Afro, Latin and contemporary music.

Tickets:

₹1,080, 900, 720 & 450/- (Members)

₹1,200, 1,000, 800 & 500/- (Public)

(Plus GST)

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

DANCE

NCPA Nakshatra Dance Festival 2022

27th, 29th & 30th October

The NCPA *Nakshatra* Dance Festival is back with some of the iconic productions presented over the past decade as well as some new works by masters of the form. The festival aims to feature innovative group choreographies. This year brings stellar performances by eminent choreographers and performers with their respective dance institutions.

Odissi by Ratikant Mohapatra and Srjan

(Approx. 90 mins)

Experimental Theatre

Thursday, 27th October - 6.30 pm

A 40-year-long association with Odissi, including years of training and experience with his father and guru, Kelucharan Mohapatra, has left its unique imprint on **Ratikant Mohapatra**. Having grown up surrounded by music and dance, he has carved an enviable niche for himself as a dancer, percussionist, teacher, choreographer and archivist. As Director of Srjan (Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra Odissi Nrityabasa), he has single-handedly created a world-class dance institute, attracting students from all over the globe for a comprehensive and dedicated learning methodology of Odissi.

Over the years, Mohapatra has won several awards including the

Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for his contribution to Odissi. In his role as a choreographer, he has conceived more than 67 original works, characterised by neoclassical choreographic innovations, attractive musical arrangements, experimental lighting and stagecraft, all within the boundaries of the idiom of Odissi. His uncompromising attention to detail, demand for perfection and high level of professionalism have established him as a leading force in the art form as he effortlessly carries forward the timeless legacy of his father and guru.

Tickets:

₹360 & 270/- (Members)

₹400 & 300/- (Public)

Kathak by Kumudini Lakhia's Kadamb and Bharatanatyam by Leela Samson & Spanda

(Approx. 90 mins)

Jamshed Bhabha Theatre

Saturday, 29th October - 5.00 pm

Kumudini Lakhia, one of Kathak's living luminaries, is known for her unparalleled technical expertise and artistry. A lifetime dedicated to learning, exploring, teaching and creating has ensured her a place in the history of dance. After a distinguished profession as a solo dancer, Lakhia established the Kadamb Centre for Dance in Ahmedabad in 1964. Here, she focused her energy and vision on the development of the technique, vocabulary and repertoire of Kathak. Starting with a small group of



Leela Samson, 29th October, Jamshed Bhabha Theatre

students whom she trained rigorously, she started choreographing in 1973. Her endeavour was to transform the presentation of Kathak using innovative ways for contemporary expression. Kadamb has toured extensively around the world where it has received critical acclaim and connoisseurs' appreciation. Apart from numerous awards, she has also been conferred with the Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan. Lakhia has been honoured by numerous cultural institutions for her unique contribution to the world of Indian dance.

Leela Samson received the impetus for her growth as a dancer from Kalakshetra, Chennai, where she was a student, while also studying at Besant Theosophical High School. In 1995, she launched the Spanda Dance Company with a performance in Delhi that was hailed as 'path-breaking'. Spanda performs in India and around the world 'doing performances of the abstract and symbolic, of the traditional and contemporary, without forsaking the vocabulary of Bharatanatyam.' Samson was also the Director of Kalakshetra from 2005 to 2012, during which she brought back integrity and dynamism in teaching and performance and a widening of the academic scope of the dancer graduating from its portals, besides initiating several publications, films and documentation of Kalakshetra founder Rukmini Devi Arundale's dance-dramas. She has won several awards including the Padma Shri in 1990 and the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 2000.



Srjan, 27th October, Experimental Theatre

Tickets:

₹900, 684 & 450/- (Members)

₹1,000, 760 & 500/- (Public)

(Inclusive of GST)

'Ramayana' by Kalakshetra Foundation

An iconic production choreographed by Rukmini Devi Arundale (Approx. 90 mins)

Jamshed Bhabha Theatre

Sunday, 30th October – 5.00 pm

In the 1930s, there was much discussion regarding the revival of *Sadir*, as Bharatanatyam was then known due to its association with the devadasis, hereditary temple dancers. The art form was to be abolished, along with the artistes, when activists E. Krishna Iyer and Rukmini Devi Arundale stepped in to rescue it through the Madras Music Academy and Kalakshetra respectively. Arundale chose to 'sanitise' *Sadir* of any vulgarity, and emphasise *bhakti* (devotion), thereby creating a Bharatanatyam style characterised by strict angularities and understated expressions.

Besides the Bharatanatyam *margam* that laid the foundation for the dancers, she also created a new genre of dance-dramas that were distinct from Kathakali, Yakshaganas or any other existing dance-theatre form. Of all her dance-dramas, the six-part *Ramayana* series choreographed during 1955-1970 is perhaps her most enduring contribution. With stalwarts such as Venkatachala Shastri, Chinta Adinarayana Sarma and Peria Sarada choosing the Sanskrit lyrics from Valmiki's *Ramayana*, Arundale set about creating the right ambience for the drama of Rama avatar to transcend the stage.

Tickets:

₹900, 684 & 450/- (Members)

₹1,000, 760 & 500/- (Public)

(Inclusive of GST)

Box Office for the Festival: 26th September for Members & 29th September for Public

THEATRE**Every Good Boy Deserves Favour**

An English Play for Actors and

Orchestra (60 mins)

Jamshed Bhabha Theatre

Friday, 4th November – 7.30 pm

Saturday, 5th & Sunday, 6th November – 5.00 pm & 7.30 pm

An NCPA Production in collaboration with the Symphony Orchestra of India

A dissident is locked up in an asylum. If he accepts that he was ill and has been cured, he will be released. He refuses. Sharing his cell is a real lunatic who believes himself to be surrounded by an orchestra. As the dissident's son begs his father to free himself with a lie, **Tom Stoppard's** darkly funny and provocative play asks if denying the truth is a price worth paying for liberty. The play premiered in 1977 as a part of Queen Elizabeth II's Silver Jubilee celebrations. This rarely performed masterpiece features a 40-piece orchestra playing live on stage.

Written by **Tom Stoppard**Music by **André Previn**Directed by **Bruce Guthrie**

Cast includes: **Deepika Amin, Sohrab Ardeshir, Neil Bhoopalam, Mihaail Karachiwala & Denzil Smith**

Box Office: 26th August for Members & 29th August for Public

SCREENING**The Seagull**

Theatre Screening

Godrej Dance Theatre

Wednesday, 16th November – 6.00 pm

An NCPA-National Theatre Live (London) Presentation

Emilia Clarke (*Game of Thrones*) makes her West End debut in this 21st-century retelling of **Anton Chekhov's** tale of love and loneliness.

A young woman is desperate for fame and a way out. A young man is pining after the woman of his dreams. A successful writer longs for a sense of achievement. An actress wants to fight the changing of the times. In an isolated home in the countryside,

dreams lie in tatters, hopes are dashed, and hearts broken. With nowhere left to turn, the only option is to turn on each other.

Following his critically acclaimed five-star production of *Cyrano de Bergerac*, **Jamie Lloyd** brings **Anya Reiss's** adaptation of **Anton Chekhov's** classic play to stage. Filmed live in London's West End with a cast including **Tom Rhys Harries** (*White Lines*), **Daniel Monks** (*The Normal Heart*), **Sophie Wu** (*Fresh Meat*) and **Indira Varma** (*Game of Thrones*).

By **Anton Chekhov**, in a version by **Anya Reiss**

Directed by **Jamie Lloyd****Tickets**

₹360/- (Members)

₹400/- (Public)

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

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC**NCPA International Jazz Festival 2022**

Tata Theatre

Friday, 25th to Sunday, 27th November – 6.30 pm

After a long wait, the NCPA brings jazz lovers the most awaited three days of live music. This edition of the NCPA International Jazz Festival features a spectacular line-up of Grammy-nominated musicians from across the world coming together to create some fine jazz. The line-up features:

- 25th November – The Mingus Big Band
- 26th November – Monty Alexander
- 27th November – The Thilo Wolf Jazz Quartet featuring Johanna Iser.

Expect some stellar musicians and the highest standard of jazz heard in the city that craves for more—Mumbai.

Tickets:

₹1,080, 900, 720 & 450/- (Members)

₹1,200, 1,000, 800 & 500/- (Public)

(Plus GST)

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

Events at a glance

September 2022

Day	Date	Time	Event	Venue
Sat	3rd	6.30 pm	Classics with a Twist	
Sun	4th	5.30 pm & 7.30 pm	<i>Hamari Neeta Ki Shaadi</i> Hindi Play	Godrej dance theatre
Sat to Tue	10th to 13th	12.00 pm to 8.00 pm	Black & White Beauties of the Indian Screen Photo Exhibition by Dr. Prakash Joshi	gnal art gallery
Sat	10th	6.30 pm	Divalicious with The Retro Vinyls	TATA THEATRE
Sat	10th	7.00 pm	<i>Chinta Chhod Chintamani</i> Hindi Play	
Sun	11th	5.00 pm	Catalyst An evening celebrating choreographies born during lockdown Mohiniattam by Saji Menon, Kathak by Diksha Rawat & Vinita Venugopal and Desi Marga presentation by Nirupama Rajendra & Abhinava Dance Company	
Sun	11th	7.00 pm	<i>The Devil Wears Bataa</i> English Play	TATA THEATRE
Wed	14th	6.00 pm	<i>Straight Line Crazy</i> Theatre Screening	Godrej dance theatre
Thu to Sun	15th to 18th	12.00 pm to 8.00 pm	Clairvoyance '22 Annual Photo Exhibition by Students of the National Institute of Photography	gnal art gallery
Thu	15th	6.30 pm	Reality Check Documentary Film Screening	
Thu	15th	8.00 pm	Spill Poetry's Back to Stage Showcase Poetry English/Hindi	
Fri	16th	6.30 pm	<i>Tamrapatra</i>	TATA THEATRE
Fri	16th	7.00 pm	Symphony Orchestra of India Humperdinck, Mendelssohn & Prokofiev Alpesh Chauhan, conductor Benjamin Grosvenor, piano	
Fri	16th	7.00 pm	Charu Suri Live in Concert	
Sat	17th	11.30 am	NCPA-HSBC Music Workshop Understanding the voice and its working A free online workshop by Dr. Shyamala Vinod	Online
Sat	17th	6.30 pm	<i>Jashn-e-Ishq: Celebrating Love</i> An evening of music and poetry by Sourendro - Soumyojit featuring Shabana Azmi	TATA THEATRE
Sat	17th	7.00 pm	<i>Adrak</i> Hindi Play	
Sat	17th	7.00 pm	Comedy For Comedy's Sake Stand-up Comedy English/Hindi	Godrej dance theatre
Sun	18th	4.30 pm & 7.30 pm	<i>Maari E Maari Taari E Maari</i> Gujarati Play	TATA THEATRE

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



Day	Date	Time	Event	Venue
Sun	18th	5.00 pm	Benjamin Grosvenor, piano	
Wed	21st	7.00 pm	Symphony Orchestra of India Tchaikovsky, Mozart, Strauss & Bernstein Alpesh Chauhan, conductor Ben Goldscheider, horn	
Thu	22nd	6.30 pm	A Sitar Recital by Budhaditya Mukherjee	TATA THEATRE
Fri	23rd	4.30 pm to 5.30 pm	New Book Discussion <i>Mumbai Traps: collected plays</i> by Anju Makhija	Stuart-Liff Collection Library, NCPA
Fri	23rd	7.00 pm	Ben Goldscheider, horn Richard Uttley, piano	
Sat	24th	6.30 pm	<i>Devi: Celebrating the Divine</i> by Devaki Pandit	
Sat	24th	7.00 pm	Mumbai Piano Day	TATA THEATRE
Sun	25th	4.00 pm & 7.30 pm	<i>Phirse Honeymoon</i> Hindi Play	
Sun	25th	5.00 pm	Symphony Orchestra of India Mendelssohn, Brahms & Beethoven Sayaka Shoji, violin Henri Demarquette, cello Jean-Frédéric Neuburger, piano/conductor	
Sun	25th	5.00 pm	Odissi by Sujata Mohapatra and Bharatanatyam by Vaibhav Arekar along with Sankhya	TATA THEATRE
Mon	26th	7.00 pm	Sayaka Shoji, violin Henri Demarquette, cello Jean-Frédéric Neuburger, piano	
Wed	28th	6.30 pm	Short Film Corner Short Film Screenings	
Wed	28th	7.00 pm	Pavel Kolesnikov, piano	
Thu	29th	6.30 pm	<i>NrityAvani</i> <i>Raas-Garba Nritya</i> by Avani Shah	TATA THEATRE
Fri	30th	6.30 pm	<i>Nad Ninad: From Our Archives</i> Listening Session (no. 6) on the Artistry of Vilayat Khan	
Fri	30th	6.30 pm	Movies Under the Stars <i>Some Like it Hot</i> (1959) Film Screening	
Fri	30th	7.00 pm	Symphony Orchestra of India Verdi, Rachmaninoff & Beethoven Richard Farnes, conductor Pavel Kolesnikov, piano	

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