



## Citi NCPA Aadi Anant

Breaking barriers

Pravaha  
Celebrating the  
new in dance

Somerville  
College Choir  
A welcome return

Anuvab Pal  
On staying sane in the  
world of slang

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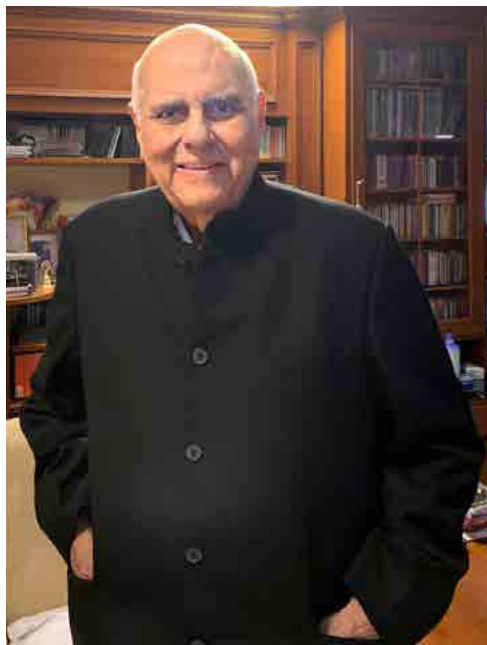
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# Chairman's Note



The NCPA was founded with the remit of being India's national centre for the performing arts. For more than half a century, we can say with a degree of certainty, it has lived up to its name. The best of India has been presented to national and international audiences, and the best from around the world has been brought to our theatres.

The Symphony Orchestra of India, in its 17<sup>th</sup> year, remains India's only professional symphony orchestra. Two mind-blowing concerts in August, including Mahler's First, under the baton of Maestro Zubin Mehta, have brought the world's attention to our oasis of Western classical music. The orchestra "is turning out to be India's global ambassador," said the maestro. "The SOI compares with any world-class ensemble." The *BBC Music Magazine* has quoted Maestro Mehta in its extensive coverage of the SOI's ongoing tour of the U.K.

We must have done something right.

The Citi NCPA *Aadi Anant* Festival takes our remit forward with three concerts in Mumbai and two in New Delhi. Stalwarts of Indian music have graced this festival since its inaugural edition, and it continues to grow in strength.

This cultural exchange is a particularly vibrant one this December with the Somerville College Choir's visit to the NCPA from Oxford. A contemporary dance production from France is on its way to the Jamshed Bhabha Theatre. Many international collaborations in jazz and blues will soon be presented on our stage. Connections India, our youth theatre programme in association with London's National Theatre, is now in its second year.

It is all happening here at the NCPA, and the momentum only gathers each day.

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

**Khushroo N. Suntook**

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Khushroo N. Suntook

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Zakir Hussain with Sabir Khan at the NCPA in 2018

# The Many Manifestations of a Mentor

The 13th edition of the Citi NCPA *Aadi Anant* Festival begins on a note which widens the realms of the idea of a guru and celebrates the lifelong pursuit of perfection that music is.

By Snigdha Hasan

For the many roles he plays in the world of music, Zakir Hussain was asked at a recent press conference how he would describe himself. The choice was between a tabla player and a composer. He chose neither. Like the split-second *thirkan* of his fingers on the tabla, his response was reflexive. “A student.”

We are all students, he said. “And we will be students from the day we step into this world till the day we leave ... Being a student is the safest place to be. Your responsibilities are not as many as when you decide that you are a maestro or an ustad because then you separate yourself from those with whom you are working. And therefore, the balance is disturbed.”

“In the world of Indian classical music, the senior artiste encourages the young artiste ... But once onstage, everyone is equal. We are there for *ibadat*, offering our music in the hope that it will be accepted”

This balance is something Hussain has been aware of all his life. A percussion protégé, he embraced the stage—or perhaps the stage embraced him—at an unthinkable young age. More unthinkable when you consider his fellow musicians. Ravi Shankar. Shiv Kumar Sharma. Hariprasad Chaurasia. He certainly had the countless hours of *riyaz* behind him that his father and guru, the legendary Ustad Allarakha, awakened him to dawn after dawn. But giving *sangat* to stalwarts in a concert was something else.

“Shivji and Hariji gave me the confidence to play on an equal level with my co-musician. In my race to become a success, these people [and my father, Ravi Shankarji and Ali Akbar Khan Sahib] have been my posts,” he told Dayanita Singh, when she travelled with Hussain and his peers about 40 years ago, photographing them for a graduation project that became her first book in 1986.

This sense of gratitude has been his accompanist since. In the more recent book, *Zakir Hussain: A Life in Music* (2018), his conversations with Nasreen Munni Kabir are replete with reminiscences of his mentors. “Shivji and Hariji were amazingly generous performers who were more than willing to let me try my wares on the stage and be my sounding board. It was my association with a number of these greats that has helped me create my tabla identity.”

For several years now, Hussain has been paying it forward by sharing the stage with younger, talented musicians. Not as a deliberate act, but because it is the only way great music lives on and thrives. The opening concert of the Citi NCPA *Aadi Anant* Festival will witness three students of music, albeit of different generations.

## Melodies meet rhythm

Much like musicians onstage who speak a language of their own, each completing another’s sentences, noted sarangi player Sabir Khan adds to Hussain’s idea of lifelong learning. “*Aadi Anant* is known to present something new every year. It is not an occasion to perform solo but an opportunity to learn something



new from your fellow musicians and I look forward to it,” he says.

Having performed with Hussain for the last 18 years, during several editions of the festival and otherwise in India and abroad, Khan addresses him as *chacha*, father’s younger brother. Hussain’s reverence for Khan’s father and guru, the celebrated sarangi player Sultan Khan, and their camaraderie bear testimony to the three decades of music they made together until the maestro of strings passed away.

Hussain was on the tabla the day Khan was launched by his father on a public platform and has remained a link between two generations of virtuosity. Khan is cognisant of the pressures of living up to his legacy and acknowledges it with a degree of humility that defies the accolades that have come his way. “A house of worship is perhaps the only place in the world where, if you are at the back, you are invited to the front to partake in the *pooja*. The world of classical music is like that where the senior artiste encourages the young artiste. For the senior, it is a form of meditation. For the young, it is an opportunity to learn, widen their horizons. But once onstage, everyone is equal. We are there for *ibadat*, offering our music in the hope that it will be accepted. Zakirji has done the same for us,” he says.

After having accompanied Chaurasia for decades, and regularly performing with his nephew Rakesh Chaurasia, the tabla’s *sangat* with the flute has added another generation to this story of continuity. Unlike Khan, it will be the first time that Debopriya Chatterjee, a gifted flute player and senior disciple of Chaurasia, will be playing alongside Hussain. “Performing with Ustadji that too for a stage like the

NCPA and a festival like *Aadi Anant*, these are things you don’t even dare to dream of. I suppose I have to trust him more than myself and I am looking forward to the huge learning experience that this is going to be,” she beams.

Nerves aside, Chatterjee takes a moment to dwell on Hussain’s curation. “His unique concepts for a concert and the type of musicians he brings together have a thought process to them. One of the reasons he put the sarangi and the flute together is because they are of the same scale. It often happens that when we perform with other musicians, we need to compromise on our scale and that makes a difference to our playing. Of course, the sarangi and the flute also sound beautiful together,” she says.

Chatterjee speaks of the way Hussain puts his fellow musicians at ease. “We had a sitting the other day and Ustadji could sense that something was bothering me. He sat me down and spoke fondly of the time when my guruji and Shiv Kumar Sharmaji supported him when he was young,” she says. “As a musician, he has achieved so much and won so many awards. What does he look forward to now? Giving a chance to younger musicians. A guru giving a chance to his own disciple is not uncommon but a tabla player giving a chance to a flute player is special. In the true sense, a guru is a universal guru.”

The Hussain-Khan-Chatterjee trio will also perform in the U.S. next year.

### Ode to the nightingales

On 11<sup>th</sup> November 1902, with Gauhar Jan’s rendition of what has been documented as a Raga Jogiya composition for the gramophone, the musical



**“My journey with my gurus brought me to a place where I started listening to artistes from different eras and understanding them as human beings through their music; this was the only connection I had with musicians I have never met but who have inspired me greatly”**

landscape of India changed forever. Music could now be heard, reheard—and learnt—even when it was not live. The voices and trills and notes of the great masters would no longer perish with them. They were etched on shellac for posterity. And so it is that among the voices that shaped Kaushiki Chakraborty’s musicality are doyennes of *khayal*, *thumri*, *dadra*, *ghazal* and *bhakti* music, some of whom performed in an era she was not born in.

A child prodigy, Chakraborty’s initiation into the world of Hindustani classical music was under her mother Chandana Chakraborty. She then became a *ganda bandh shishya* of the legendary guru Jnan Prakash Ghosh, before becoming a disciple of her father, the eminent exponent of Patiala *gharana*,

Ajoy Chakraborty. Her training in Carnatic classical music was under another legend, M. Balamurali Krishna. “My gurus made me a part of their legacy, which is a treasure for me and a responsibility that I remind myself of every day. And that journey brought me to a place where I started listening to artistes from different eras and understanding them as human beings through their music. This was the only connection I had with musicians I have never met but who have inspired me greatly,” says the noted singer who will pay tribute to Gauhar Jan, Begum Akhtar, M.S. Subbulakshmi, Shobha Gurtu, Noor Jahan and Kishori Amonkar in ‘Remembering the Divas’, the second concert of *Aadi Anant*. “This is not a *guru-shishya* tradition in the typical sense

# “We talk about women empowerment in different areas of life, but I don’t think we have spoken enough about how empowering it is to see a Begum Akhtar or a Gauhar Jan emerge as a diva in a time when women were not even acknowledged as equals”

of the term, but if you look at it from a different perspective, a guru is also a thought, a musical idea, a musical idiom. If that legacy is taken forward, that is also *guru-shishya parampara*. I consider myself blessed that I am getting an opportunity to translate the connection I have always felt with the music of these artistes, as a singer and a woman. It is a very personal tribute,” she adds.

It was not only through listening to their music but also reading about the time they were born in, their individual journeys, listening to their interviews and talking to people associated with their music that Chakraborty began to “internalise their life processes”.

“One can only imagine the kind of mastery and devotion it takes to become synonymous with a genre. When we say *thumri*, we say Begum Akhtar or Shobha Gurtu [in the same breath]. When we say *khayal*, we remember Kishori tai. It’s not just a name; it’s a musical presence,” shares Chakraborty. Of the legends she is celebrating, she has fond memories of seeing Amonkar at the Sangeet Research Academy in Kolkata and years later, performing on her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. “It felt like I was looking at a goddess,” Chakraborty recalls. “She may not have come across as someone who was very accessible, but when she sang, she would embrace you with her music and

take over your heart.”

After the birthday concert, she told Chakraborty something that has stayed with her. “She said, ‘Never sing to impress. Always sing to express.’ And to think of it, that’s how Kishori tai lived her life. She never cared for what would make others happy, be it an audience of two people or 2,000, she sang for herself. For a performer to reach that sense of security and devotion to her craft is a profound and empowering idea for me,” Chakraborty reflects. “We talk about women empowerment in different areas of life, but I don’t think we have spoken enough about how empowering it is to see a Begum Akhtar or a Gauhar Jan emerge as a diva in a time when women were not even acknowledged as equal lives as men.”

An ode to six giants of diverse styles of music on one stage is a daunting responsibility, Chakraborty does not hesitate to admit. She uses a mountaineering term called the perspective ratio—the closer you go to a mountain the bigger it appears. “All I can feel is humility. If I can be the medium to bring the music of these inspiring women to younger listeners and some of them go back from the concert and start listening to M.S. Subbulakshmi or Noor Jahan more, I would have served my purpose.” ■

## The Citi NCPA *Aadi Anant* Festival will be celebrated across Mumbai and Delhi with five concerts:

Zakir Hussain (tabla) with Sabir Khan (sarangi) and Debopriya Chatterjee (bansuri)	Saturday, 9 <sup>th</sup> December 2023, 6.30 pm	Tata Theatre, NCPA, Mumbai
Remembering the Divas Conceived, curated and presented by Kaushiki Chakraborty	Sunday, 10 <sup>th</sup> December 2023, 6.30 pm	Jamshed Bhabha Theatre, NCPA, Mumbai
Tapur Tupur: Bachche, Bachpan aur Bachpana Children’s poetry by Gurudev Tagore with Gulzar, Shantanu Moitra, Shaan, Mahalakshmi Iyer, Rekha Bhardwaj, a group of children and others	Sunday, 7 <sup>th</sup> January 2024, 6.30 pm	Jamshed Bhabha Theatre, NCPA, Mumbai
The Folk Orchestra of Rajasthan with Mame Khan and 47 folk artistes	Saturday, 27 <sup>th</sup> January 2024, 6.30 pm	Zorawar Auditorium, Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi
Triveni: Zakir Hussain (tabla) with Kala Ramnath (violin) and Jayanthi Kumares (Saraswati veena)	Sunday, 28 <sup>th</sup> January 2024, 6.30 pm	Zorawar Auditorium, Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi



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**Zakir Hussain** Tabla

**Debopriya Chatterjee** Bansuri

**Sabir Khan** Sarangi

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Tata Theatre, NCPA



Remembering the Divas:

**Gauhar Jaan, Begum Akhtar,  
M.S. Subbulakshmi, Shobha Gurtu,  
Noor Jahan, Kishori Amonkar**

Conceived, curated and presented by

**Kaushiki Chakraborty**  
& a group of musicians

Dec 10, 2023 | 6:30 pm  
Jamshed Bhabha Theatre, NCPA

Tapur Tupur:

**Bachche, Bachpan aur Bachpana**

Children's poetry by Gurudev Tagore with

**Gulzar, Shantanu Moitra, Shaan,  
Rekha Bhardwaj, Mahalakshmi Iyer,**  
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# Around the World in Eighty Beats

Since inception, the Symphony Orchestra of India has performed in iconic international venues, playing celebrated classical compositions and specially commissioned works that present the best of the East and the West. As the SOI embarks on its second tour of the U.K., some snapshots from its globetrotting.



↑ The orchestra, invited through the friendship of NCPA Chairman Mr. Khushroo N. Suntook with Dr. Issam El-Mallah and Jiatong Wu, performed at the renowned Royal Opera House in Muscat in February 2013. 'The Melody of Rhythm', a triple concerto featuring maestros Zakir Hussain on the tabla, Béla Fleck on the banjo and Edgar Meyer on the double bass, appealed greatly to the Omani audience.



↑ In January 2016, the SOI presented three sold-out concerts in Switzerland—at the Tonhalle, Zurich; Victoria Hall, Geneva; and the Tonhalle, St. Gallen—on invitation from the Migros Kulturprozent Classics series.



↑ The SOI performed at the Hall of Columns, Moscow, in June 2010.



↑ The SOI opened the 2015-16 Abu Dhabi Classics season at the Emirates Palace Auditorium, Abu Dhabi, in October 2015.



↑ For the SOI's concerts in Switzerland, *Le Temps* hailed "the commitment, the enthusiasm, and the discipline of this ensemble, which played with ferocious energy and appetite."



↑ In February 2019, the SOI embarked on a six-concert tour to the U.K., performing to delighted audiences in prestigious venues in London, Birmingham, Cardiff, Guildford and Edinburgh, and garnering rave reviews. Violin virtuoso and SOI Music Director Marat Bisengaliev's performance was hailed as "a gloriously assertive, chiselled account of Bruch's First Violin Concerto" by *The Scotsman*. The concerto was performed under the baton of noted British conductor Martyn Brabbins.





The choir members with Will Dawes, Director of Chapel Music of Somerville College

*Notable as the only auditioned choir in Oxford to sing at weekly services in the non-denominational format, the Somerville College Choir's repertoire is larger than other college choirs and at the heart of its vast repertoire are secular works and Anglican anthems*

Auditions welcome undergraduates and postgraduates from Somerville and other Oxford colleges, with choral scholarships awarded to deserving students on an annual basis. The chorale also takes organ scholars into its fold.

The choir, under the keen direction of Dawes for the last seven years, is the only auditioned college choir to sing as part of a non-denominational format in the weekly service. The repertoire dips into a diverse range of secular works and classics from the Anglican choral tradition with a significant output by female composers and poets. It is common knowledge that members of this choral group thrive in an atmosphere marked by mutual respect and inclusion.

On Sunday evenings, the College Chapel at Somerville is filled with a harmonious chorus of voices beautifully accompanied by a pipe organ. With no religious links, the 40-minute service offers a selection of secular readings, music and talks at this gathering that brings together the college and local community. In this immersive atmosphere, stressors seem to float away quite magically. The experience at the weekly service, aptly titled Choral

Contemplation, makes for a perfect start to the new week, says Dawes.

### All-embracing and inclusive

The Somerville College Choir's repertoire is known to be larger than those of other Oxford choirs. "Our usual repertoire is works of around five to ten minutes in length, both sacred and secular," Dawes explains, adding that the choir is just as proficient in large-scale works like Mozart's Requiem and Handel's *Messiah*. "As a college set up to include the excluded, we do our best to present music by composers who have had less exposure than the more mainstream Western composers. We recognise seasons such as Christmas, and present music related to that theme—particularly as Christmas is now more of a secular festival of friends and family," he says.

Interestingly, a production of Bach's *St John Passion* continues to be performed in the college biennially backed by the Instruments of Time & Truth, an exceptionally talented period instrument ensemble at Oxford. And, not long ago, the choir joined hands with swing band Basin Street Brawlers for a

# A Unifying Chorus

The choir of Somerville College, Oxford, is ready to make a return to the NCPA this month with a repertoire that lives up to the institution's founding principle of including the excluded.

By Beverly Pereira

In December 2018, the Tata Theatre resounded with a rich melody of voices that effectively set the tone for a joyful Christmas season. The choir of Somerville College, Oxford, had arrived in India to make their debut in Mumbai under the direction of Will Dawes, Director of Chapel Music of Somerville College. Accompanied by the NCPA's

historic Beckerath-made pipe organ, the evening's programme included choral classics by Bach and beyond, besides a host of Christmas favourites.

The Somerville College Choir was established in 2001 and is comprised of choral scholars who meet to rehearse and perform twice a week at the prestigious campus in Oxford, England. Later this

month, the choir will yet again light up the very same stage at the NCPA for what promises to be a delightful Christmas choral programme.

### A choir with a difference

The choir is made up of singers and organists from Somerville College and the wider Oxford community.







unique collaboration. Over the years, the choir has sung in services at St Paul's Cathedral in London and been involved in productions of Henry Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, among others. They have produced recordings and released two Christmas albums, too.

### The India connection

Housed in Somerville College, the Oxford India Centre for Sustainable Development (OICSD) is a unique Oxford-India partnership to advance research on the opportunities and challenges of sustainable development in India, with implications for the wider world.

Sara Kalim, Director of Development, Somerville College, University of Oxford, was also on tour with Dawes for the India debut in 2018. The choir had engaged in musical workshops for disadvantaged young people in Mumbai and Goa and in educational outreach with students keen on studying at Oxford. Kalim studied at Oxford several years ago, following in the footsteps of her Indian father and grandfather who remained dedicated to education and the betterment of society.

The Oxford India Centre was established in 2013 with a generous grant from the Government of India, matched by Somerville and the University of Oxford. This permanently endowed five graduate scholarships for Indian students. Thanks to generous benefactors, the number of scholarships keeps rising, including those instituted "to support Indian students from historically

*"You will hear music written for King's College, Cambridge, many Oxford colleges, and traditional arrangements heard up and down the U.K. during December each year," says Will Dawes, adding that it will be a great joy to hear the NCPA's prized organ again*

marginalised communities and first-generation learners," Kalim informs us.

### The synchronicities continue

The choir will fittingly arrive in Delhi before making its way to Panjim and Mumbai. "It will be particularly special to fly into an airport named after an alumna of the college," says Dawes referring to Indira Gandhi who had read Modern History at Somerville College. The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford, Irene Tracey, will make her first visit to India alongside the choir's tour to mark the Oxford India Centre's 10-year anniversary. An eminent neuroscientist, Tracey is committed to deepening and strengthening the institution's ties with India. She will also partake in the choral concert at the NCPA.

The ensemble will travel with 33 singers and two organists, and the programme will present a mix of traditional Christmas choral works with music by under-represented composers. This time around, like in 2018, the Somerville College Choir will be accompanied by the NCPA's pipe organ, the only movable pipe organ to exist in

Mumbai. "There will be sets of music that deal with several suitable subjects, including Advent, The Virgin Mary, The Three Kings, music with an Eastern link, and more light-hearted repertoire towards the end of the concert. You will hear music written for King's College, Cambridge, many Oxford colleges, and traditional arrangements heard up and down the U.K. during December each year," says Dawes, adding that it will be a great joy to hear the NCPA's prized organ again.

Ahead of their second India tour, the choir has been busy with year-end dinners, concerts and carol services for Oxmas (Oxford's celebration of Christmas, a month early). "It will be great to be back in India with the choir. We've not toured anywhere since 2018, so to have the choir members away together as a group will be very special. We're looking forward to revisiting Goa and Mumbai, visiting Delhi for the first time, and catching up with friends of the college and choir in all three cities," says Dawes. ■

*The Somerville College Choir will perform on 14<sup>th</sup> December at the Tata Theatre.*



KUNAAL ROY KAPUR | AAHANA KUMRA

TWO PEOPLE.  
ONE RELATIONSHIP.  
INFINITE POSSIBILITIES.

An NCPA Production

# CONSTELLATIONS

WRITTEN BY NICK PAYNE

DIRECTED BY BRUCE GUTHRIE

FEB 2024

EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE, NCPA







# THE FLOW OF INSPIRATION

Over five editions, the *Pravaha* Dance Festival has earned a reputation for being a space for artistes exploring new geometry while adhering to traditional grammar in dance. This year's three-day line-up features noted dancers in a dialectic with themselves, their art, their inherited legacy and society.

By Shayonnita Mallik



Shijith Nambiar and Parvathy Menon

*Pravaha*, or the flow of life, secures and symbolises newness. The course and the destination remain constant, but the gushing flow carves new paths and takes unknown detours, such that no two journeys are the same. The flow of inspiration that enables myriad possibilities within the grammar of dance encapsulates the spirit of *Pravaha*, the NCPA's festival of dance productions premiering in Mumbai. The 2023 edition features five new works across three days. A walk down the new paths and detours alongside the artistes:

## MAHATI KANNAN: My Guru and I

For Bharatanatyam artiste Mahati Kannan, the reflection in the mirror is never of hers alone. Always present is her guru, the incredible Padma Subrahmanyam. A dialogue between performer and student, Kannan's set at *Pravaha* consists of four pieces, which—much like her guru's vast knowledge of dance, sculpture and languages—are just short of a tour through Bharatanatyam and Tamil literature.

Kannan opens with a *Ganapati Kauthuvam*—a traditional invocatory piece in Bharatanatyam in

which *shollukattus*, or rhythmic syllables, to which dancers perform are intertwined with lyrics. Derived from an ancient palm leaf manuscript by her guru, this *Kauthuvam* is special because “of its percussion-like syllables, very unlike those in modern Bharatanatyam,” says Kannan.

Her second piece is a *jatiswaram* in Raga Hamsanandi, composed by celebrated dancer K.N. Dhandayuthapani Pillai. Usually a pure dance piece, the *jatiswaram* is an exploration of movement and music. Kannan's piece explores the mythical bird ‘hamsa’ (in Sanskrit, an aquatic bird like a swan or goose) and its use as a symbol of enlightenment, a *neera-ksheer vivek*, a being that can separate milk from water.

Her third piece, which calls out to the rain to come and bless the Earth with fertility, is a compilation of seventh-century Alwar saint poet Andal's *Tiruppavai* and ninth-century Tamil poet Manikkavacakar's *Thiruvembavai*. It was first performed in 2015 during a reception for the Head Priest of Thailand. “Somewhere in history,” she says, “The *Tiruppavai* and *Thiruvembavai* travelled to Thailand and became the *Triyampawāi-Trippawāi*, a 15-day festival of the royal court.” Due to

this shared lineage, “The Rajaguru was able to relate to the piece and appreciate it,” says Kannan.

To close her performance, Kannan will present the poet Jayadeva's *Dashavataram*, on the 10 incarnations of Vishnu, a piece she has seen her guru perform multiple times over the years. “Even before I performed it, I knew it by heart. But I was frightened to stand where she would stand and perform. I have witnessed people shedding tears once she is done.” But it is precisely for this that dance is as important as it is to Kannan—with each performance, she explores the dialectic between the old and the new, between being a student and a performer.

“

“It's easy for us to take sides, to decide that Antigone is just and Creon is evil, but that would be too easy ... our solo performer, Solène Weinachter commits to every character and every perspective of the story which doesn't allow the audience to settle too easily”

”

Mahati Kannan



Amrita Lahiri and Pavitra Bhat





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*Manodarpa*n marks a change in the style of choreography of Odissi veteran Sharmila Biswas. A series of stories on each of the seven *bhavas* or human emotions described in the *Natyashastra*, it is part pedagogic, part performance.

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### SCOTTISH DANCE THEATRE: The politics of the body

For Joan Clevillé, the Artistic Director of Scottish Dance Theatre, *Antigone, Interrupted* is a piece about the politics of the body. Choreographed by Clevillé for dancer Solène Weinachter, the piece is based on *Antigone*, the fifth-century Greek tragedy by Sophocles—the story of the titular character who goes against King Creon to give an honourable burial to her brother who has been deemed a traitor and denied the dignity of a burial by the state.

Clevillé was inspired to interpret *Antigone* because of what he had witnessed in 2017 in his home in Catalonia. “A peaceful independence referendum was violently suppressed by the Spanish government and police. My opinion on the referendum did not matter. The fact that a state can turn against its own citizens, in a democracy, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, was a shock for me. I realised this is a story repeating itself after thousands of years.”

Having decided to express these feelings through *Antigone*, Clevillé also chose to make this Greek tragedy with several characters a solo performance. “It’s easy for us to take sides, to decide that Antigone is just and Creon is evil, but that would be too easy. Here our solo performer, Weinachter commits to every character and every perspective of the story. It doesn’t allow the audience to settle too easily.” To convey the politics of the body, the piece is performed with the audience sitting around the performer in a circle so that the dancer’s body is constantly in the ‘literal centre’, exposed from everywhere. “We literally put our body on the line to defend what we think is right,” says Clevillé. “We see people putting themselves in front of the police, security forces, chained to spaces. In fights for gender, sexual or reproductive rights, the body is not just an instrument, but also at the very centre of the way we resist oppression.”

Choreographed to offer both narration, and commentary, with different dance paces for different



Sharmila Biswas



Solène Weinachter in *Antigone, Interrupted*

characters, *Antigone, Interrupted* has been performed in Scotland, the U.K., Brazil and Argentina, and always ends with a conversation with the audience. This has brought forth wonderful stories, including the experience of a political refugee in Buenos Aires, who fled her home country where she had been imprisoned for more than 20 years. “I am looking forward to being part of the conversations we will have in Mumbai,” Clevillé says.

### PAVITRA BHAT AND AMRITA LAHIRI: Similarly different

For Bharatanatyam artiste Pavitra Bhat, dance has been ingrained in his sense of being since he was four. “Every time there was any kind of music, I would dance,” he says. For a family of music lovers, this was a gift. A calm, collected speaker, Bhat reveals the passionate artiste within with the proclamation, “I have given the last 35 years to Bharatanatyam,” he says. “It has become part of my breath.”

And it is this breath, this grammar of life that Bhat is attempting to explore in *Converse*, a duet with Kuchipudi dancer Amrita Lahiri. “This is an attempt at bringing together two south Indian dances which are close to each other but have their own beauty, power, grace and vocabulary,” says Bhat, explaining that their duet is a dialogue between two ‘similarly different’ dance forms—an exploration of two systems of using one’s body that matured side by side, in neighbouring states. “We gave importance to each style so that it is

complete, and not like two different patches of dance styles, just joined together.” Born out of friendship, this piece expands in possibilities, a conversation on the same subject between two similar languages where all is understood and much is learned.

### SHIJITH NAMBIAR AND PARVATHY MENON: A manifestation of thoughts

The Bharatanatyam duo is known for taking their audience on a journey to experience the classical dance form through their exploration of its intricacies and inherent spirituality. Shijith Nambiar and Parvathy Menon’s performance at *Pravaha* is aptly called *Dhi*, a manifestation of our thoughts. Every thought born in one’s mind starts to slowly begin its journey to create a magical world, they explain.

### SHARMILA BISWAS: Transcreation and evolution

*Manodarpa*n, says Odissi veteran Sharmila Biswas, marks a change in her style of choreography. A series of stories on each of the seven *bhavas* or human emotions described in the *Natyashastra*, *Manodarpa*n is part pedagogic, part performance.

The kernel of the idea for the piece came to Biswas when she was teaching the *shringara rasa* to a group of students. During a break, a schoolteacher took Biswas aside and said, “I wish you could teach this to adolescents so that they can understand the beauty and compassion of physicality. They have classes on sex education, which are essentially classes on preventing accidental pregnancies. Crude, impersonal, demoralising.” This stayed with Biswas and took shape during the lockdown when she had the “opportunity to study texts, take various classes from scholars.”

“It is important to trans-create texts like the *Natyashastra* into entertaining and informative performances, so that the substance of the text can reach people easily,” she explains, adding that after her first performance of *Manodarpa*n in Kolkata last year, the audience found that they could access the meanings of *shlokas* and understand the layers of emotions with greater ease. “They found it uncluttered and aesthetically pleasing. The fact that the dancers spoke, sang, chanted and even merged with the audience was appreciated.”

But simplifying a dance form that bears the full weight of history is no mean feat. “I struggled because I did not want it to be bookish and abstract.” says Biswas. “Even now, each time I see a video of the last performance my mind is already making lists of changes.” *Manodarpa*n is, thus, a dialectic of a seasoned dancer, left alone to herself, conversing with her artistic tradition and its history, her many years of dance, asking with each choreography: what kind of form that her work takes does she want to leave behind? ■

*The NCPA Pravaha Dance Festival 2023 will be presented from 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> December at the Experimental Theatre and Tata Theatre.*





# Demystifying Generation Z

**In Homecoming, comedian Anuvab Pal brings back stories from his travels to the NCPA and dissects the lives of young people whom he admires but does not understand.**

**By Prachi Sibal**

Anuvab Pal, in a Zoom interview, tells us that he is listening to Taylor Swift and is making an attempt to talk about her onstage. He wants to be part of Gen Z, but sadly, they won't have him.

This forms the heart of his new show, titled *Homecoming*, which will premiere at the NCPA this month. Pal recently returned to the Indian stage after over two years of touring, and he is ready to share a bagful of observations from around the world. "It is like a homecoming show of sorts. I talk about what I have seen on my travels, India's relationship with other countries, the politics in India, and how it is seen by other countries. It is essentially about India's relationship with the world," he says. Quite like the show is expected to be, our conversation is a laugh riot. Pal is sharp and observant, charismatic and silly, all at the same time.

At 47, Pal admits he does not understand Instagram reels or why Gen Z-ers want to spend their life on their phones instead of going out. The show is his rumination on all this from the other side of the spectrum. "Even episodes of shows on Netflix and Amazon are often 40 minutes too long for them. Anything worth its salt has to be 30 seconds long. I hear from parents that mentally, their kids are abroad, in the world of OTT, but physically they live in India. I find that stuff amusing," he says, adding, "I am also frightened of them; of how much they know and the world they live in. *Homecoming* is a plea for help more than a show. It's therapeutic, it's looking for a certain communion with people our age".

The shock and awe, in equal measure, have already left me in splits. Pal keeps reminding me that he doesn't want to sound like an uncle and that he hangs out with 'cool people' like Jim Sarbh, though his young cousin of 25 did point out that Sarbh is 36 and does not qualify as a Gen Z-er.

For the sake of research, he went to a music show in BKC and returned with this: "They don't drink anymore, and they are kind people and want world peace. They gave each artiste about ten seconds after which they went back to their phones," he says, admitting that it's tough for an artiste to impress in a time that short. He chooses instead to do stand-up comedy for the minority older audience whom nobody seems to be catering to.

## Comedic styles

His comedy is clean, which is to say, he doesn't use profanity as a crutch when the house is devoid of laughs. "I think the central idea, story or situation should be inherently funny. Language to shock has never worked as a storytelling device for me. The cleverness of the observation has to be more important than throwing in a swear word," he says.

Having written for both screen and theatre, Pal finds stand-up comedy daunting, thanks to its performance

element, and rewarding, when a joke works. "When you write stand-up, you have performance anxiety as well. When writing for theatre, you can play around with a group of actors. I find the craft of it very challenging. Everything from set design to costume, to the knowledge of the world you are setting it in. It is like you are a puppet master. Eventually, I am hoping to direct," he says of his plans ahead, revealing that he is dying to get back to writing for theatre and is currently working on a 90-minute play with three central characters that he hopes to open next year. "It is about a Bollywood actor and his talent manager," he says.

Pal has spent the last year performing in Norway, Switzerland, South Africa and the U.S.A., telling his audiences Indian stories. "I love going to cultures where I have nothing in common and finding connections through comedy. That is a challenge. In India, you can say Rahul Gandhi and get a laugh," he says.

## The NCPA connection

The NCPA, especially the Tata Theatre, has been a home of sorts for Pal. It is where he did some of his early work including the comedy show *The Nation Wants to Know*, and the play *The President is Coming*. He strongly believes that his style of comedy

and his language are uniquely suited to the NCPA audience. "The NCPA has certain expectations about language. I find myself to be a performer who naturally drifts to it. The only downside is that I am not qualified to perform anywhere else. The NCPA audiences and I are in a time warp. We live in an amalgamated British world of the 1920s. If I could somehow live with the NCPA audiences, that would be lovely," he quips.

On a serious note, Pal believes that the NCPA, with its cosmopolitan audience, is where he can explore ideas that he may not be able to try elsewhere including comedy clubs in the city. "For example, India's relationship with Britain, and my experience with immigration in Slovenia," he explains.

His set is full of nuggets of comedic genius that shine through with clear ideas and classic elements of storytelling. They have a beginning, middle and end in addition to a punchline that sinks in sharply, but surely. While he is often taking a jibe at youngsters in the crowd, he elucidates his awe in some of the stories. "About a year ago, my parents were planning to go to Japan for a holiday. My father doesn't see very well. My cousin found a YouTube video that specifically guides a blind person through an airport in Japan. That video was more useful than if I had been physically present with them and holding their hands," he says. "I am also fascinated by how young people have entire romantic relationships on the phone. They may even have virtual children." ■

*Anuvab Pal's comedy special Homecoming will be presented on 16th December at the Godrej Dance Theatre.*



# PIXELATED POETRY

An atypical dance production, *Pixel* arrives in Mumbai this December. Presented by the NCPA, Alliance Française de Bombay and French Institute in India, it blurs the line between the real and virtual by blending choreography, technology and stagecraft.

By Aishwarya Bodke

**M**ovement makes meaning in an art form as abstract—yet tangible—as dance. The dancer is the instrument and the music. They colour into nothingness the most beautiful of paintings. The beating heart of the form, then, is the human body and its astounding capabilities. When this overwhelming form of expression meets innovation, the outcome holds tremendous promise.

An NCPA, Alliance Française de Bombay and French Institute in India presentation, *Pixel* takes shape at the interface between the strength and sentiment of dancing, and cutting-edge digital projections and light play. Seen now in about 30 countries around the world, the production emanates from a creative dialogue between choreographer Mourad Merzouki and digital arts company Adrien M & Claire B. The production

PATRICK BERGER



premieres in India with a four-city tour of Mumbai, Bengaluru, New Delhi and Goa.

It is liberating, the idea of *Pixel*. A playground where circus and acrobatics, hip-hop and contemporary, performers and stagecraft, all converge to make space for each other. It overturns, quite literally, what the framework of a dance performance onstage looks like. The refusal to submit to the typical is moored to Merzouki's creative impulse. It is only fitting then that the company he established in 1996 was christened Käfig, which means 'cage' in Arabic and German; an ironic symbol of his rejection of it.

A seven-year-old Merzouki took up circus and martial arts in Lyon's eastern suburbs. An undeniable pull towards hip-hop in the years that followed inspired him to create his first dance company Accrorap in 1989 with Kader Attou, Eric Mezino and Chaouki Saïd. It was instrumental in developing his unique brand of hip-hop movement while exploring other dance genres. He never lost sight of the social and geographical origins of hip-hop in doing so. The multidisciplinary thread that runs through his work weaves together new horizons but remains tied to the provenance. With Accrorap and Käfig, Merzouki has produced moving pieces, bringing hip-hop from the street to the stage. It was during a performance at a refugee camp in Croatia that he realised the power of dance to communicate and leave an impact.

Incorporating advanced technologies in art can be an irresistible choice. But Merzouki is cognisant of the fact that audiences primarily come for the dance. "You have to know how to use it wisely so that technology does not take over the body and reality," he says.

*Pixel* was commissioned for a digital arts festival in 2014. For Merzouki, this was a new stage for which he imagined the choreography in a three-dimensional video set. "It's a show that doesn't tell a story, it links the body to the machine, and that is what interested me in a world where technology is very present," he tells us.

The real world is not unlike the one the

**"IT'S A SHOW THAT DOESN'T TELL A STORY, IT LINKS THE BODY TO THE MACHINE, AND THAT IS WHAT INTERESTED ME IN A WORLD WHERE TECHNOLOGY IS VERY PRESENT"**

choreographer concocts. A digital realm coexists with us as we go about our lives. In *Pixel*'s dreamscape, the two become one. As dancers defy the laws of physics, their chemistry with light is what leaves the audience wonderstruck.

"It's a fine balancing act between the projections and the dancers. I wanted the pixels to be an extension of the choreography, moving in rhythm. It cannot be gimmicky or decorative. We ultimately

proposed a discrete video, consisting of points of light and multitudes of pixels. This minimalist aspect means that it doesn't take up too much space on the stage," explains Merzouki. One of the harshest challenges, he says, arises if the video glitches in the middle of the show. One then has to imagine a dancer in dialogue with emptiness. Although beautiful on its own, the source of the movement would be lost. It is a question of calculation, and over the years, *Pixel* has become synonymous with perfection.

Light runs, rains and rushes in this production. There are no rules. What binds together this world of infinite movement is Armand Amar's fervid, futuristic music. Merzouki believes that Amar's music creates a unique cinematic cosmos for *Pixel*. The aural and visual interplay are sure to invite collective gasps from the audience.

For Käfig, the coming year brings exciting projects with *La Danse des Jeux (The Dance of the Games)*, a choreography created to celebrate the Olympic Games. *Pixel*'s India run, too, will open new avenues as Merzouki and his team will be conducting auditions, masterclasses and workshops with Indian dancers in order to have a real and valuable cross-cultural exchange.

*Pixel* promises to be a visual spectacle but does not forget that dance is essentially human expression, delivering an emotional experience. It engulfs the audience in an immersive world. You don't witness poetry in motion; you are in the poem. ■

*Pixel will be presented at the Jamshed Bhabha Theatre on 16th December.*





# European History Through the Lens of Classical Music

A case study from the Autumn 2023 Season's opening concert by the Symphony Orchestra of India.

By Anjan Ray

The Symphony Orchestra of India, resident at the NCPA in Mumbai, is blessed with the harmony in diversity of many nationalities among its musicians. The unique sound of this young-in-years, musically maturing ensemble reflects

not only the virtuosity of the players but also their international cultural contexts and training pedigrees.

The opening concert of the Autumn 2023 Season, under the baton of Richard Farnes on 10th September, featured three works that span the evolution of

European classical music as well as European history from the first quarter of the 19th century to the turbulent wartime period of the 1940s.

## Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868): Overture to Semiramide

The concert opened with Italian composer Gioachino Rossini's overture to his exquisite bel canto opera, *Semiramide*. His music evolved in harmony with the shifting tides of European history during the 19th century and contributed significantly to the cultural tapestry of his time—initially through his music and later through his culinary exploits. After his relatively early

retirement from the musical world before he turned 40, he conjured up gourmet recipes like Tournedos Rossini, perhaps as much a labour of love in its preparation as his great operas.

While his early compositions resonated with the optimism and revolutionary spirit of post-Napoleonic Europe, Rossini's style adapted to the changing times of political turmoil and the rise of European nation-states with their individual cultural and musical voices. His later works, like *Guillaume Tell*, showed a more mature and introspective musical language, reflecting the introspection of the Romantic era. Rossini's contemporaries included poets Shelley, Keats

**Khachaturian's Violin Concerto masterfully intertwines the cultural richness of his homeland with the broader anxieties of a world on the brink of war**





Gioachino Rossini

and Byron. Shelley and Rossini were both born in 1792, but Shelley's epitaph had already been written around the time that *Semiramide* was premiered in 1823.

As nationalism and historical consciousness grew, Rossini's music began to incorporate elements from various European folk traditions, aligning itself with the broader trends of the 19th century. *Semiramide* mirrors the era's fascination with the exotic and oriental, which grew as European maritime powers began to extend colonial influences into distant lands.

Set in Babylon "somewhere in antiquity", the libretto by Gaetano Rossi based on Voltaire's 1748 tragedy recounts the story of the legendary Assyrian queen Semiramis. After having her husband Nino poisoned, she rules the Babylonian Empire, and fancies a stranger, Arsace, over her leading suitor, Assur. Arsace, however, discovers that he is in fact Ninias, the son, presumed dead, of Semiramis and Nino. Assur tries to eliminate his rival; Semiramis tries to save her son but is mortally wounded by him in a scuffle. Arsace thereby avenges his father's death.

*Semiramide* has its own overture, which was almost certainly composed last after all the arias and orchestral sections of the opera. Unlike many operatic overtures of the day, especially those of Antonio Salieri who wrote his opera overtures as sinfonias, it borrowed musical ideas from the opera itself, thus making it unsuitable for use with another score. A hushed, rhythmic opening suggestive of a build up to the events of the opera is followed by the *andantino* for four horns taken from a vocal quartet towards the end of the first act in the opera, 'Serena e vaghi rai', set in the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. The main (*allegro*) portion of the overture draws upon the opera's final scene.

Plenty of contrast between pianissimo and fortissimo phrases, pizzicato countermelodies in the strings and finally a lively *allegro* with martial overtones rising to

a "Rossini crescendo", the overture to *Semiramide* is a delight to perform, to watch and to listen. The overture is an enthralling representation of the time's musical tastes, combining intricate orchestration and bold harmonies.

### **Aram Khachaturian (1903-1978): Concerto for violin and orchestra in D Minor**

Having lived the entire span of his life in the 20th century, Aram Khachaturian's Armenian ancestry and Georgian upbringing blended well with his Soviet-era musical career, the USSR having taken over both Armenia and Georgia by 1922. In his own words, "I grew up in an atmosphere rich in folk music: popular festivities, rites, joyous and sad events in the life of the people always accompanied by music, vivid tunes of Armenian, Azerbaijani and Georgian songs and dances performed by *ashugs* (folk bards) ... became deeply engraved on my memory." Formally trained in cello and composition, he was also a sensitive pianist as reflected in his *Children's Album* compositions.

Khachaturian served as the Deputy Chairman of the Organization Committee of the Union of Composers from 1939 to 1948. It is during this period that he composed the violin concerto, and donated his 1941 Stalin Prize money to the State with a request to use it

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builds on Tchaikovsky's mastery  
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Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

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The Violin Concerto, originally composed in 1940 for Ukrainian violinist David Oistrakh, was performed at this concert by soloist Marat Bisengaliev, who carries the sterling musical tradition of Oistrakh through his teacher Valery Klimov who in turn studied with Oistrakh.

The first movement is curiously marked as *allegro con fermezza* (firmly cheerful)—a movement marking not seen before or since as far as I could ascertain. Khachaturian's original cadenza for the first movement is nearly six minutes long; Bisengaliev elected to play the shorter Oistrakh cadenza which nonetheless captures the Armenian folk melody spirit of the movement. But it is the slow movement, *andante sostenuto*, that many consider to be the heart and soul of the concerto. Deeply contemplative and almost funereal in its dark, brooding yet elegiac melodies and disquieting harmonies, it borrows one of its themes from a funeral song from the film *Zangezur* for which Khachaturian composed the score in 1938. Bisengaliev's final sustained A flat remained at odds with the orchestra's chillingly implacable A minor descent. Khachaturian, like many artistes of his generation, would have fallen under the shadow of the Second World War which eventually consumed much of Europe and the USSR, and the sense of tension, foreboding and grief in this movement can be thought of as an artistic response to turmoil. Yet there is hope; a brilliant fanfare opens the final *allegro vivace*. This folk-influenced movement is especially infused with elements of Armenian folk music, featuring distinctive rhythms, melodies and modes that evoke the rich cultural heritage of the region.

Khachaturian's Violin Concerto, therefore, masterfully intertwines the cultural richness of his homeland with the

broader anxieties of a world on the brink of war. It serves as a testament to the power of music to encapsulate complex emotions, telling a story that transcends borders and resonates with audiences worldwide.

### Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893): Symphony No. 6 in B Minor, "Pathétique"

The Russian composer's symphony is called "Pathétique" (French for 'arousing emotion') perhaps because he died just nine days after its premiere in the winter of 1893, and many feel that the largely dark, brooding, nature of the work reflected Tchaikovsky's own emotional state at the time. At least one theory—not necessarily the most credible one—suggests that he committed slow suicide by the deliberate act of drinking un-boiled water during the prevalent cholera epidemic.

Unarguably Tchaikovsky's most emotionally charged work, the symphony serves as a profound reflection of the composer's inner turmoil and the sociopolitical climate of its times. This was a period of great change and upheaval in Russia, characterised by political unrest and the push for social reforms. The growing discontent among the masses is echoed in the symphony's dark and brooding atmosphere that creates a sense of disillusionment and unease.

Musically, this is a towering composition of its time. It builds on Tchaikovsky's mastery of melody and layers it with complicated harmonies that we have come to associate with the emotional complexity—deeply yearning, richly textured—of the late Romantic period. Right from the slow *adagio* with a simple motif that builds up as the first theme of the opening movement into the exquisite second theme of the first movement. In the dance-like second movement, *allegro con grazia*, unique in its rarely used 5/4 meter—sort of like a waltz with a missed beat—the composer offers us a fleeting glimpse of happiness amidst tragedy, like the philosophical aphorism that there is no happiness; only moments of happiness.

The *allegro molto vivace* begins much like the early Romantic scherzo, a sense of strings and woodwinds chasing each other, periodically interrupted with a bold marching pattern that eventually takes over, almost in heroic mode, to a striking ending of the movement.

Inattentive listeners often think at this point that the symphony has ended and break into spontaneous applause. But the darkest part of the symphony—it's closing movement—is yet to come.

The intense, melancholic melodies of the final movement are possibly autobiographical, mirroring his personal battles with depression, self-doubt and questions of self-identity and sexuality.

Tchaikovsky's "Pathétique" Symphony is a remarkable fusion of personal and societal reflection. It stands as a testament to the composer's emotional struggles while also serving as a poignant musical embodiment of the tumultuous times in which it was created, making it a masterpiece that continues to move and resonate with audiences worldwide. ■

.....  
*Anjan Ray is a scientist, writer and music enthusiast.*



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The Amersfoort World Jazz Festival is a celebration of diverse styles of jazz in a modern city that retains the charms of a medieval European town. Notes from the heart of the Netherlands.

By Sunil Sampat

In our seven-decade-long experience with jazz, the only constant my wife and I have encountered is surprise. Jazz seems to spring surprises of the nicest, usually of a musical, type. But recently we were completely bowled over at the unfolding of events at a week-long jazz festival in the Netherlands.

The setting was the city of Amersfoort (population 1.6 lakh) in the dead centre of Holland. It was as if contemporary jazz had been transported to a charming ambience from the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Walking past canals, chapels and churches, perfectly preserved houses and canal gates which were the entry and exit points to this town, we reached the various locales in which the Amersfoort World Jazz Festival (AWJF) was set. It is a great blessing that neither of the World Wars were able to destroy this quaint city and that care has been taken to preserve its buildings and monuments exactly as they were several centuries ago.

The remarkable aspect of this festival, which was started in 1979, was its scope and inclusiveness. Artistes from more than 25 countries participated in this musical celebration. Most styles of jazz, with the exception of Dixieland, were on display at this multi-stage, multi-venue festival. We heard Gypsy jazz in the

style of Django Reinhardt, sounds from Brazil, Cuba, the Caribbean region, South Africa, Sicily, Hungary, Australia, Thailand, Poland, France, Canary Islands, Lithuania, Belgium, and flamenco jazz, swing bands, Indo-fusion and several jam sessions. The entire city seemed involved in the staging of this festival.

The main stage was in an open-air setting, elevated about five feet above the audience under a large canopy. It was a breathtaking sight, with the Onze Lieve Vrouwetoren, a medieval tower, almost hundred metres tall, just behind the massive stage and appearing as if it was an extension of it. Open-air cafés on both sides of the official seating area were beneficiaries of the entertainment.

While there were no 'big names' from the jazz world, the music and the curation of the festival were of a very high quality. Over 350 jazz artistes participated in what was called a Musician's Paradise, which indeed it was for the participating artistes. Each had multiple opportunities to perform during the week-long event. This main stage was the scene of several big bands that were a major attraction of the festival. The logistics of hosting a big band, usually involving about 18 musicians onstage at the same time for a concert, are challenging

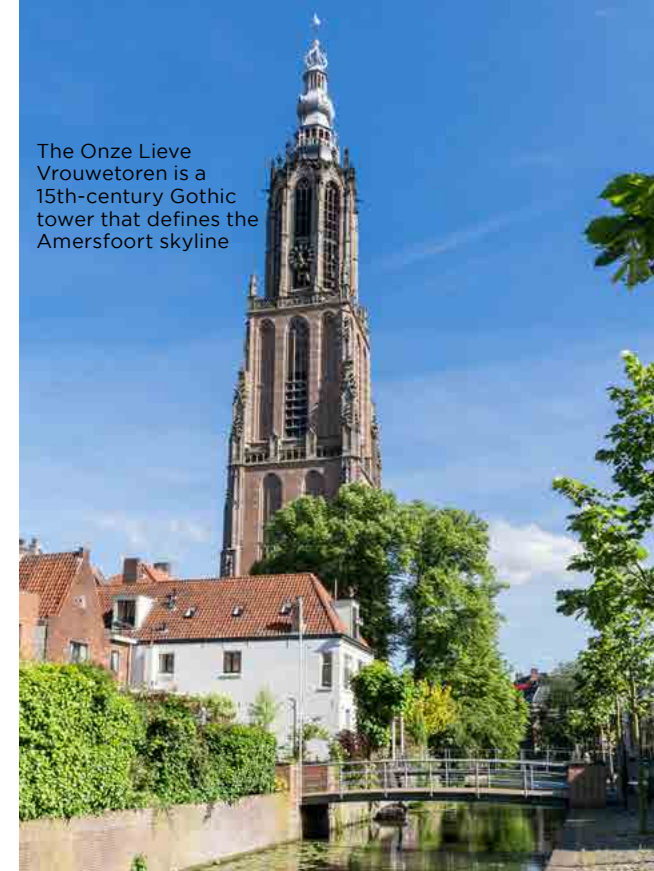
at the best of times. We counted seven different big bands in performance during the festival, a considerable feat by the organisers. These bands played jazz music from as diverse themes as Cuban, Caribbean, Flamenco jazz to standard swing, even a fusion of classical and jazz, and held improvised jam sessions.

The festival was spread over three square kilometres, which added to its charm. The exercise of attending performances took us on a delightful walking tour of Amersfoort, dotted with canals, gardens, Saturday farmer's market, churches, chapels, theatres, jazz dives, bars, restaurants and various shopping areas. A setting for the festival was the auditorium of Theater de Lieve Vrouw. To get to this theatre, one had to cut across the large town square via a couple of open-air restaurants and into the basement auditorium. Several performances were held every day in this sophisticated enclosure.

Another venue was a jazz club, aptly named Miles. It met all the criteria for an old-fashioned smoky jazz dive. To get there, one had to traverse a canal via a small bridge. At this club, a specially curated evening on Ladies in Jazz brought together women jazz artistes playing saxophone, trumpet, guitar, bass, drums and singing jazz. Vocalists from Ukraine, Suriname and across the Netherlands set an international tone for this evening.

“Walking past canals, chapels and churches, perfectly preserved houses and canal gates which were the entry and exit points to this town, we reached the various locales in which the Amersfoort World Jazz Festival was set”

The Onze Lieve Vrouwetoren is a 15th-century Gothic tower that defines the Amersfoort skyline



ALAMY

Beyond café Miles and across the square stood a magnificent church, St. Joriskerk. It houses a huge pipe organ which was put to good use at the festival. Accompanying this pipe organ were soloists playing jazz alto saxophone and trumpet to create a sound which was rich and reverberated throughout the high-ceilinged church. This, at a jazz festival.

Across from the main stage, at about a 10-minute walk, was De Observant. This bar/restaurant had a patio for a jazz recital, another space for a theatre style sit-down concert and a small stage with a piano for the nocturnal 'after-hours' jam sessions, of which there was one each night. A walk from De Observant led to the St. Aegtenkapel, a chapel where the mezzanine area was used for soft, introspective jazz recitals. We heard a brilliant saxophone with strings concert here, which was also a recording session.

Beyond this chapel was located Kunsthal KAdE, a centre for modern and contemporary art. The inaugural concert of the festival, by saxophone quartet Artvark, was held here against the backdrop of an exhibition on the extraordinary animals that roam the earth. They played some remarkable harmonies with two tenors, one baritone and one alto saxophone. The deputy mayor of Amersfoort, friendly and forthcoming in conversation, inaugurated the festival. Curious about the involvement of the town administration, we spoke to him in his capacity of being in charge of the development of culture and the arts at Amersfoort. We were staggered to hear that the city had an annual budget of 'several million euros' for supporting the arts. They were fully behind the AWJF each year. We learnt that the central government also supported such cultural events and, in fact, often subsidised the travel for their musicians and artistes performing abroad.

This is a wonderful example of watching one's taxes at work and put to such good use. If only it could be replicated here in India. ■



The main stage of the Amersfoort World Jazz Festival 2023

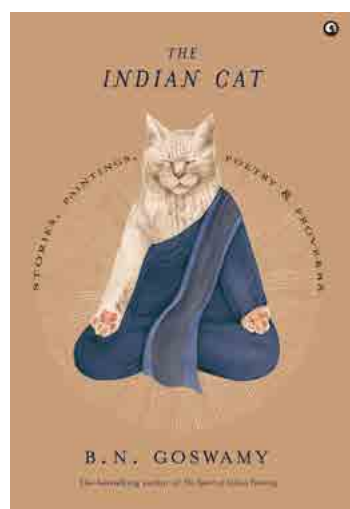
PETER PUTTERS



# The Feline Form

In his latest book, renowned art historian **B. N. Goswamy** offers the reader an unusual and delightful compendium that includes a clutch of stories, a catalogue of paintings, a selection of poetry and proverbs—all on the Indian cat. This excerpt from *The Indian Cat* explains how the feline has been viewed and represented in culture through the ages and asks some interesting questions. For instance, why did Mughal painters often add a cat when copying a European painting?

**Closer to home**, things never went out of hand as far as attitudes towards cats go. In Buddhism, in general, and the Buddhist countries in Southeast Asia, cats were viewed with respect, if not exactly loved in each second household. In Tibetan monasteries cats roam about freely; in Burma there always was a temple guarded by one hundred long-haired cats with yellow eyes, for into their bodies, according to belief, passed the souls of dead priests. A Thai legend maintains that Mara, Prince of Demons, sent a plague of rats to devour the Holy Buddhist scriptures, and at that moment the Buddha created the first cat in the world which chased the rats away and saved the scriptures. About the famous Siamese cats, it is said that these cats were kept, in earlier times, to serve as repositories in which to keep the transmigrating souls of Siamese royalty. They resided only in the Royal Palace in Bangkok—hence their earlier name, the Royal Palace Cats—and it is said that they were the product of a union between an albino domestic cat belonging to the king and an Egyptian or, some say, a black temple cat.



In Islam again, the affection bordering upon reverence for cats is all too well known and it comes for the most part from the view that the great Prophet personally took of the feline. The traditions preserved in the Hadith—a cat saving the sleeping Prophet from a snake that was slithering up to him: the Prophet chiding a woman who did not feed her cat properly allowing it nearly to starve; his cutting off a sleeve of his great robe so as not to disturb his cat that was sleeping on it; the Prophet's wife, Aisha, speaking with great affection of her cat; and so on—have been a lesson and a model to follow in the entire Islamic world.

This is the way then it has been in our own land seen as she is almost as a human, differences of approach, seemingly irreconcilable views of the feline, notwithstanding. So much of it is reflected in our texts and our stories, but there have been no purges, no great upheavals. For most people, a cat's a cat, and that's that.

A possible source to which one can turn for getting the 'Indian view' of cats is—apart from texts of course—paintings.



Interestingly—oddly perhaps—one does not even think, ordinarily, of cats as a subject for painters in India, very unlike the Western world where, the Renaissance onwards, one can be smothered by material: young girls playing with or having themselves portrayed hugging cats; cats roaming around in plush interiors, unconcerned; witnessing the *alltag* of life with curiosity; providing company to seniors; hiding, getting up on rooftops, climbing up and climbing down stairs, clambering onto shoulders. But, with effort, one can put together at least a small gallery of works in which they are there, virtually unnoticed but there. Very rarely do we see them 'in profound meditation' here, or 'engaged in rapt attention' as T. S. Eliot often thought he saw them. But they are seen, from time to time, in 'illustrations' of stories woven around their character, or in paintings in which they figure: planning, strategising, pretending, thieving; or, at other times, keeping watch, nestling against soft bosoms, reading their masters' expressions. Of great interest in this context, and not easily explicable, is the fact that we see them often in copies of European paintings, especially of Biblical themes, that Mughal masters made in numbers. The original of which a copy, or version, was made might not have even a trace of a cat and yet, when that copy, or version, was made, a cat comes in: soft-footedly sometimes, brashly at others. The Madonna might be feeding the child Christ at her breast and a cat would be looking; David and Bathsheba might be having a conversation under a tree, and a cat could be seen brushing one person's leg or another's; preparations might be in the process of being made for taking the infant Jesus on the fortieth day to the temple at Jerusalem, and a cat might come in, becoming with perfect ease a part of the group; and so on. This leaves one a trifle puzzled for if the painters were really interested in cats per se, why would they not paint them as subjects proper, much as a deer or a sheep, a hawk or a zebra were? At the same time if cats were not ordinarily parts of royal households for which the painters often worked, where might they have seen and studied them? It has been suggested that while copying, or producing a version, of a painting with a Biblical theme, they might have thought of changing things a bit, even 'stating' that cats roaming around exalted figures would make those scenes look more natural, as if what was happening was not up in the heavens somewhere but it happened here, around ourselves. Where—another question—might the painters have had the chance to observe domestic cats? Around priests in Christian monasteries—in Agra or Lahore or Goa—to which they might have secured access through their royal patrons for going and seeing original European works? It is hard to know.

In more recent times, there is some turning to cats for 'portraying' them. The painters of Kalighat—ever keen on capturing scenes



**This page:** 'Princess on a Chair with a Cat in her Lap' - Pahari, from a Guler or late Mandi workshop; ca. 1800 [Museum Rietberg, Zurich, acc. no. 2012.162]

**Facing page, left to right:** 'A Page Full of Animals' - Folio from the St. Petersburg Muraqqa; Mughal; ca. 1610 [The Oriental Institute, St. Petersburg; folio 72 recto]

'Cat in the Ayodhya Palace' - Folio from the Freer Ramayana; Mughal, ca. 1600 [Freer-Sackler Gallery, Washington, DC; 1907.272.102, vol. I, folio 102]

'Raga Kedara' - Folio from a Ragamala series; Pahari; by Nainsukh of Guler; ca. 1765-75 [Sarabhai Foundation, Ahmedabad; acc. no. SFPL-12]

## A CAT IS NOT A CAT

By S. Ganapathi

A cat is a fallen piece of cloud rolled up in wakeful sleep.

A mixed metaphor descending the stairs with a questioning tail.

from ordinary life—apparently found them rich material: very often rendering them as having stolen a fish or a prawn and then shown sitting boldly, wearing a sacred tilak mark on their forehead, in a veiled reference to holy men wearing pretence as a garment. Many others followed, of course. ■

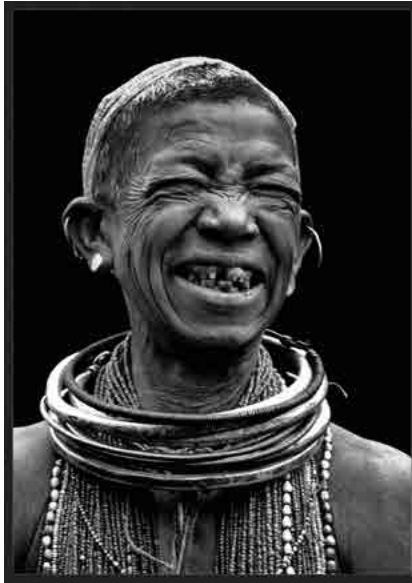
*This is an excerpt from The Indian Cat: Stories, Paintings, Poetry, and Proverbs by B. N. Goswamy. No part of this excerpt may be quoted or reproduced without prior written consent from its publisher, Aleph Book Company.*



# RARE INSIGHTS

A veteran photographer spent years visiting a remote region in Odisha to be able to document the way of life of one of the oldest tribes in India.

Tamma Srinivasa Reddy introduces himself as a student of photography, a telling choice for the 57-year-old Fellow of The Royal Photographic Society of the U.K. Born into an agrarian family of modest means in Andhra Pradesh, his early experience was deeply rooted in the culture of land-based livelihoods. As a young photojournalist, he contributed to various English, Hindi and Telugu publications including *The Indian Express* and *Dainik Bhaskar*. Over the years, he has experimented with form, themes and genres. His work has been exhibited at various national and international photo salons. He has received several awards and honours including the Kala Ratna (Hansa) from the Government of Andhra Pradesh, Grand Master from the Image Colleague Society, USA, and Master of Federation of Indian Photography, among others.



In tune with Reddy's interest in documenting rural and tribal communities, he travelled extensively in the Koraput district in Odisha where the Bonda people live. "The Bondas are one of the primitive tribes of the country. The men of the tribe are fiercely protective of their honour and do not entertain visitors from outside," he says. Reddy visited the region regularly for almost a decade before starting to take photographs. "It was only in 2008 that I was successful in capturing their lifestyle. Altogether, I had been to 54 small habitations of the Bonda tribe. But I had to face stiff resistance in many places that included mild threats to damage my equipment." Photography sessions were possible with the help of local friends and civil society workers. "The chief objective of my expeditions to tribal areas is to document their way of life and preserve it for posterity," he says.









# A FRAUGHT TERRAIN

On the complicated interplay of literary marriages.

By Kerrie Davies, UNSW Sydney, *The Conversation*

“It’s true to say that writers are selfish people,” the novelist Elizabeth Jane Howard once said. “But it’s not quite enough of an excuse.” Howard was married to British author Kingsley Amis. Novelist Martin Amis, Kingsley’s son, credited his stepmother, not his father, for encouraging his own writing career. But exhausted by the biggest child in the house—Kingsley—Howard often felt “too worn down by insecurity and fatigue to write”. “He got up and wrote,” Howard recalled. “Then he ate lunch, had a walk or sleep, and then he wrote again.”

Writes Carmela Ciuraru, in her book *Lives of the Wives: Five Literary Marriages*, “It was an idyllic existence—for him.” Howard, she notes, published three novels in the 18-year marriage; Amis published nearly 20.

Elsa Morante, the Italian author who inspired Elena Ferrante, once wrote, “literary couples are a plague”. Married to novelist Alberto Moravia, her partnership too is chronicled in Ciuraru’s book—along with Roald Dahl and actor Patricia Neal, sculptor and translator Una Troubridge and author Radclyffe Hall, and author Elaine Dundy, married to British theatre critic Kenneth Tynan.

When both people in a relationship are writers, creative space is a faultline. So are matters such as who looks after the kids, inspiration turf wars, and yes, jealousy about success. As Ciuraru shows, it’s

often the wives who ultimately choose writing over wedded bliss.

## Rooms of their own

The tension starts with writing space. Virginia Woolf famously observed that money and time is required for a room of one’s own. At Monk House, Woolf built a new writing lodge after she was irritated by her publisher husband Leonard and their dog. “The little noise upsets me; I can’t think what I was going to say.”

Most writing couples don’t have Monk House and its grounds to divide, especially in the early years. Instead, they scrap over who gets the dining room table, or share it—as Charmian Clift and George Johnston did while writing *The Sponge Divers* together on the Greek island of Kalymnos in the early 1950s. They later upgraded to a shared home studio on the island of Hydra. Clift’s biographer, Nadia Wheatley, writes:

The image of Charmian and George writing together is a potent one: two people bashing away at two typewriters on the one table. Stacks of typescript—his spilling over into hers; hers ending up in the middle of his—the air wreathed in cigarette smoke [...]

Novelist Kristin Williamson and her playwright husband David also started out sharing a table, less harmoniously. In her biography of David, *Behind the Scenes*, she remembers that compared to David’s typing, she felt like a “slug on tranquilisers”. They since always ensured each has a room of their own in later houses. But as Kristin quips, “David’s is larger. His rooms always have been.”

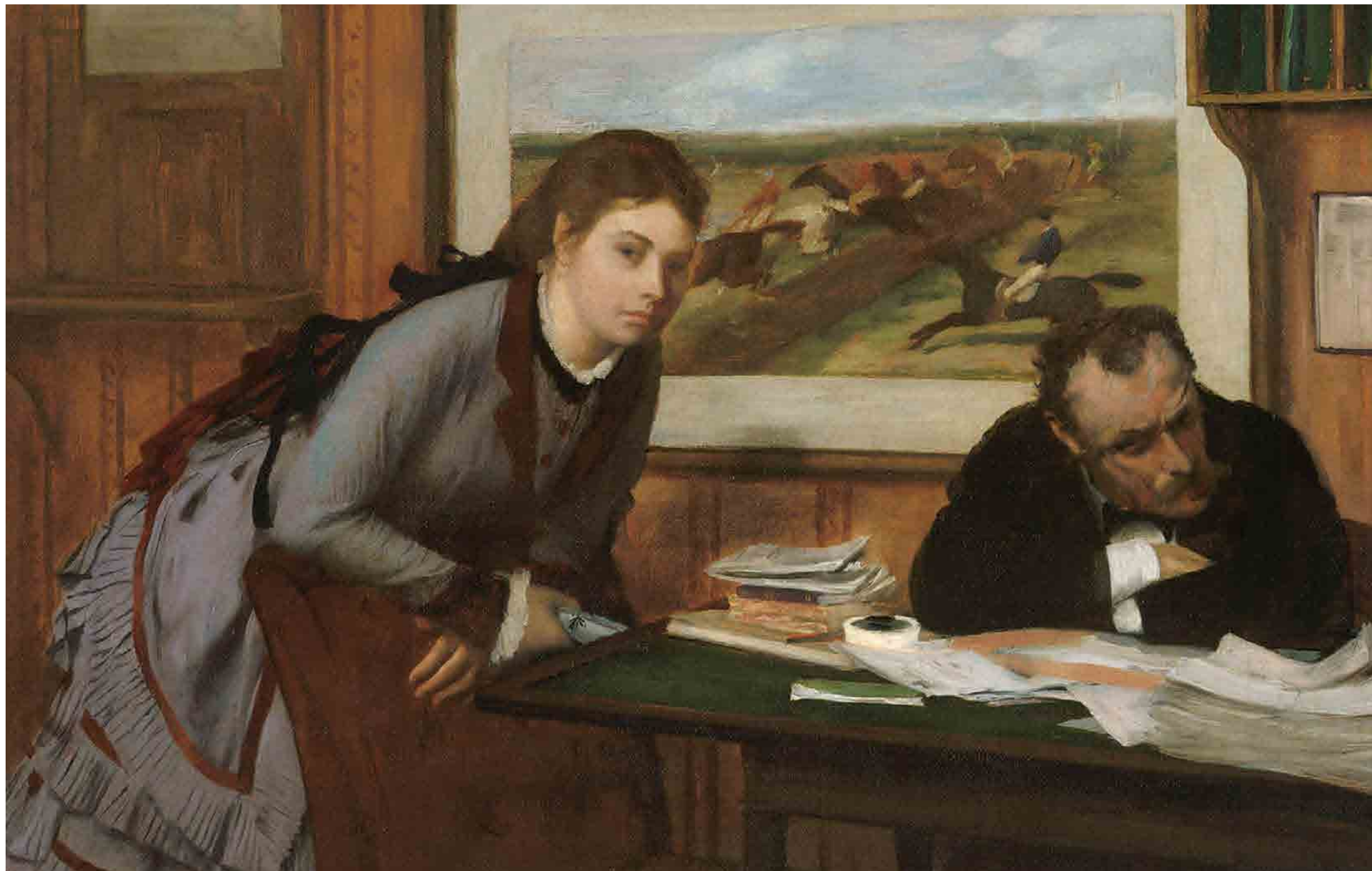
When Australian authors Ruth Park (originally a New Zealander) and D’Arcy Niland lived in a rented inner-city room in Sydney’s Surry Hills, the suburb that inspired her novel, *The Harp in the South* (1948), they wrote story ideas on each other’s palms in bed. Park recalls that when they finally moved into a flat that had more room, Niland:

made a beeline for the dining room table, excitedly opened the typewriter, and spread out his dictionaries, papers and reference books. “Look!” he cried. “I’ve a proper place to work at last.”

Park tried to share the table. But “gradually his papers encroached, files ostentatiously fell to the floor; the carriage of my typewriter constantly hit things [...]” She gave up. Park reflects in her second memoir, *Fishing in the Styx*, that she should have fought harder for space to write, but “the ironing board was a minuscule price to pay for all the good things in his character and our relationship”. They eventually moved into a large but decaying house.

Kenneth Tynan, by contrast, made his wife plain uncomfortable when she turned from acting to writing after they married in 1951. Observes Ciuraru,

Whereas he had his study as a refuge [...] Elaine (Dundy) wrote each day “slowly but steadily” on the living room sofa with a typewriter





propped up on her knees. Her back hurt.

Space causes friction between established writers too. Murray Bail demanded total solitude while writing *Eucalyptus* (1998). Helen Garner diarised her exile from their apartment that was his workspace in the third volume of her published diaries, *How to End a Story*. Garner felt forced to rent a bland office. Even on weekends, or with the flu, she felt unwelcome at home:

With a friend who is married to a painter, I compared notes about our respective husbands and their demands [...] Like me she is expected to run the house, do the shopping and cooking, and keep the home fires burning, all this without being permitted on the premises during work hours. I saw in her face my unhappiness. We did not know whether, or how, we could go on tolerating their regimes...

She fears she will “wither away with loneliness”. After the office lease ends, Garner moves out to a new apartment of her own.

Separate spaces, however, kept the Morante-Moravia union together. Morante, who died in 1985, published four Italian novels, including the acclaimed *House of Liars* and *Arturo’s Island*, and volumes of essays, short stories and poetry. Her husband said: “Writing was her life”; she called her characters “my people”. Morante preferred cats, who did not criticise her work or interrupt her. Moravia was an Italian literary lion after his 1929 debut, *The Time of Indifference*. She and Morante hid in a one-room hut in the mountains for nine months during World War II (which later inspired Moravia’s 1957 novel, *Two Women*.) Ciuraru quotes Moravia as recalling this time together as “their greatest intimacy”. After the war, Moravia bought Morante a small apartment to use as a writing studio, largely funded by his bestselling novel, *The Woman of Rome* (1947). “She says I am too noisy, too nervous, that she needs privacy,” he said. “I can write in a hotel lobby or with someone playing (the bass) in the chair near me.”

Morante admitted she was “a little ashamed” about insisting on solitude. But, “if I had to write near Alberto, I probably would not write at all. And I would be unhappy.” Moravia understood, and was happy and prolific amid his noise in their villa, publishing classics including *The Conformist* (1951), adapted into a film by Bernardo Bertolucci in 1970.

### Domestic tensions

If kids come along, things get more fraught. Pregnant again in 1948, with her first child only seven months old, Clift was frustrated. She and Johnston had just won a Sydney Morning Herald novel prize for their collaboration, *High Valley*. Clift recalled:

At this point I should have taken wings and

started to fly but [...] I was involved in having children [...] I think those are terribly difficult years for any young woman and for a young woman who wants to write or paint or anything else, even more so.

After they moved to Kalymnos in 1954, she gratefully paid a local woman to help. She did the same on Hydra, when their third child was born on the island. Later, back in Australia, Clift applied for a literary grant for “domestic help”. Something has to give—and it’s the housework or childcare, not writing, if they can afford it.

Others muddle through. As a single mother, Garner grabbed precious school hours at a library to write her debut novel, *Monkey Grip*.

It is telling that Ruth Park wrote *Harp in the South* while visiting her parents in New Zealand, so had family help. Soon after its release, back in Sydney, her husband left for a research trip for his novel, *The Shiralee*, and she was left with the three children and no mother to help—Park couldn’t afford childcare, despite her success. She then devised *The Muddle-Headed Wombat* series while her now

five children had chicken pox and D’Arcy was on another research trip. Park recalls, I again pondered bitterly the question of which one of us it was who carried the *Shiralee*, which I now understood meant burden.

Domestic tensions are not restricted to childcare. Elaine Dundy’s daughter, Tracy, had a nanny but Dundy still declined invitations to attend opening nights with her critic husband. Instead, she would stay home to write her novels. In response, Tynan was “embarrassed and angered” that his wife put her writing before appearances to support his work.

Garner writes that she was upset Bail did not welcome her now-adult daughter and fiancée at their home, seeing their presence as another imposition on his writing life. Nor did she feel free to “be messing around at home”.

Prior to meeting Kingsley Amis, Howard, an established novelist, had left her first husband and daughter, Nicola, as she was “selfishly determined to be a writer”. Nicola called her mother “a very beautiful stranger” in her childhood. Ironically, Amis’s own selfishness overwhelmed Howard’s. She managed his moods and meals. She was his secretary and chauffeur and regularly catered dinner parties for up to 12 people where Amis could hold court, as well being a stepmother to her two stepsons, who lived with them. Her complaints were met with Amis’s decree, “I’m older, heavier and earn more money”.

Morante did not have children, though Ciuraru suggests this was not by choice. While she adored children, Ciuraru wonders if the reality would have been challenging given that “daily life made her lose patience and become difficult”.

### Literary ambition

Fights over space and the kids set the scene for the most ferocious faultline: literary ambition. Ciuraru sums up the creative competition when describing Amis and Howard: “both were ambitious writers, only one could achieve success”.

Tynan’s toxic jealousy fully emerged after the successful release of Dundy’s debut novel, *The Dud Avocado*, in 1958. “He confronted Elaine, warning if she ever dared to write another book, he would divorce her.” She began writing a new novel the next morning. They divorced four years later in 1964.

Some literary couples share success—to a point. Though possessive of the table, Niland encouraged Park to write *Harp in the South*. Wheatley notes of Clift-Johnston: “one of the common misconceptions about the relationship was that Charmian was perennially jealous of George’s output and success.”

Similarly, Wheatley recounts that Johnston “recognised [his wife] as a fellow writer, and indeed for many years he even publicly acknowledged that by literary standards she was a better writer than he was.” According to Ciuraru, Moravia “spoke often and admiringly of Elsa’s genius, no matter the state of their marriage”, which he described as “a man and a woman in a very difficult, very personal relationship”.

But sharing in success has its limits. After collaborating on *The Sponge Divers*, Clift carved creative space of her own: “Actually of course, [*The Sponge Divers*] was a phoney [sic] collaboration because I was beyond the stage where I could collaborate any longer. I wanted to work in my own way. This was probably very egotistical, but most writers have this.” As well as her memoirs and essays, Clift later published a novel, *Honour’s Mimic*, under her own name.

Williamson, the author of *Tanglewood* and other novels, quotes David’s reaction to her turning to creative writing from journalism: “Hey, this is my patch. But after I saw the work she was doing I was very impressed.” She qualifies, “I was writing novels rather than plays—imagine if I had dared to write a play!”

But Kristin declares that she first thought of the idea for David’s play, *Siren*, borne out of his affair: she planned to write it as a novel. The couple fought over the idea, arguing it was both their “lived experience”.

Kristin capitulated, but “felt somewhat bitter about it for a while”. David later publicly gave her credit, and their marriage survived the literary explosion.

### Vacating the field

Not Garner and Bail. Her fifth work of fiction *Cosmo Cosmolino* was published the year she and Bail married (1992). But during the marriage she published her first book-length work of non-fiction, *The First Stone*, and the anthology, *True Stories*. As Bail wrote his novel, in her diary, Garner realises:

All this jabber I carry on with lately, about how I’m heading for non-fiction, leaving fiction behind [...] suddenly it strikes me that what I’m doing is vacating the field.

Garner adds:

He is generous as he can possibly be about my book and its success, but if I had success like that with a novel there’d be serious trouble [...] Maybe it is true then. A woman artist who wants to develop as far as she can needs to live alone [...] The problem is that my success seems to get in his way.

The marriage ended in 1998, after *Eucalyptus* was published. Garner returned to fiction in 2008 with *The Spare Room*.

After divorcing Tynan, Dundy wrote two novels, as well as biographies of Elvis Presley’s mother and Peter Finch. Howard’s literary output also rocketed after divorcing Amis in 1983. She was encouraged by her stepson, Martin Amis, to write *The Cazalet Chronicles*, a series of novels that drew on her family story, that were later adapted for television as *The Cazalets*.

With all these faultlines, it’s no wonder married authors keep their own names for continuous identity within and beyond a marriage. Morante “could not stand being called by her married

name” and could not fathom how other women “could tolerate this elision of their identity”. Asked once in an interview if Moravia had influenced her work, Morante stiffened. “No,” she said. “He has an identity and I have an identity. *Basta*.”

She stopped the interview. ■

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*This piece was originally published on* [The Conversation](#).  
*The author, Kerrie Davies, is a lecturer at the School of the Arts & Media, UNSW Sydney.*



# A Festive Bulletin

An overview of ongoing and upcoming arts festivals from around the country.

By Neelakshi Singh

## Serendipity Arts Festival

From theatrical performances and experimental installations to symposiums and workshops, the Serendipity Arts Festival will return to Panjim, Goa, from 15th to 23rd December 2023. Since its genesis in 2016 as the primary cultural initiative of the Serendipity Arts Foundation, the festival has grown to become one of the largest multidisciplinary arts initiatives in South Asia. It boasts a distinguished set of curators, spanning the spectrum of visual, performing and culinary arts, such as tabla exponent Bickram Ghosh, designer and entrepreneur Sandeep Sangaru, Bharatanatyam exponent Geeta Chandran, art curator Vidya Shivadas and chef Thomas Zacharias. Highlights of the 2023 edition include musical presentations by rock band Indus Creed and a classical music ensemble led by tabla maestro Zakir Hussain, showings of the religious art form of *Tholpavakoothu*, plays like *Jump*, *Daklakatha* *Devikavya*



A scene from Bards of the South

and *Paatigazhum Palamozhium*, and a collaboration between vocalist Chandana Bala Kalyan and Kuchipudi dancer Amrita Lahiri. The festival will also host film screenings from India and abroad, abstract theatrical and audiovisual presentations, workshops on poetry writing, gardening and storytelling, and discussions on topics like rural wildlife conservation and print culture in independent India. The events will be held across a variety of cultural centres and community spaces located on the waterfront by River Mandovi, promising accessibility to locals and visitors alike. For more information, please visit [www.serendipityartsfestival.com](http://www.serendipityartsfestival.com)



## Echoes of Earth

The Echoes of Earth festival, held in Papanahalli village of Karnataka, blends artistic spirit with environmental sustainability. Organised by the Bengaluru-based event agency Swordfish Events & Entertainment, the festival has promoted musical acts from around the world with sustainable methods at its core. Titled 'Ensemble of the Wild', the theme for this year

will celebrate the Western Ghats, India's rich biodiversity hotspot. With more than 40 artistes performing on four uniquely designed stages, the festival's sixth edition promises a memorable two-day experience from 2nd to 3rd December 2023. Fusion artistes like Sid Sriram and Roman Kyn, musical ensembles such as Thaikkudam Bridge and Tinariwen from the Saharan region of Mali, and producer and DJ Nabihah Iqbal will perform this year. The festival which bans the use of plastic on its grounds will also feature recycled art installations, workshops and panels discussing climate change and innovative solutions for conservation. For more information, please visit [echoesofearth.com](http://echoesofearth.com)

## Magnetic Fields Festival

The piercing winter in the arid town of Alsisar, Rajasthan, will be infused with the tunes of contemporary Indian and international music at the Magnetic Fields Festival. The ninth edition of the much-awaited arts and music festival will return to its famed location at the 17th-century Alsisar Mahal from 15th to 17th December 2023. This year's theme is centred around preservation as "a call to action to protect what is good, revive what is fading, and preserve what is essential for humanity." The eclectic line-up includes performances from genre-defying DJs and producers such as Hudson Mohawke, Mella Dee, Yu Su and Elle Shimada, Afrobeat musician Dele Sosimi, multi-instrumentalist Jitwam, jazz producer and trumpeter Kareem Ali and the dub and reggae sensation BFR Soundsystem. Some of the highlights include the premiere of composer and electronic music producer Sanaya Ardeshir's upcoming album, debut audiovisual sets by alternative producers Dualist Inquiry and Dolorblind, and debut live sets from Indian producers like Vridian and Angus 12. Fieldlines, the festival's immersive residency project in partnership with the Goethe-Institut's International Coproduction Fund, that pairs contemporary Indian and international artistes with traditional folk musicians from the region, will return for a third season. The 2023 edition will also witness the beginning of a fundraiser



organised by the festival, to improve the status of medical centres and increase healthcare awareness in support of the rural community of Alsisar. For more information, please visit [www.magneticfields.in](http://www.magneticfields.in)



WOLFMAN (MAGNETIC FIELDS FESTIVAL); ALAMY (HORNBILL FESTIVAL)

## Hornbill Music Festival

Organised by the Department of State Tourism and the Department of Art & Culture of Nagaland, the Hornbill Music Festival has been showcasing the state's rich tribal heritage and artistic potential for 23 years. The latest edition of the 'festival of festivals' will be held from 1st to 10th December 2023 in the Kisama Heritage Village of Kohima district. Named after the hornbill, venerated in several Naga traditions, the festival offers a chance to the state's

17 major tribes to demonstrate their culture with unique displays and activities. Some of these include song and dance medleys, the traditional Naga Morungs exhibition, indigenous archery and wrestling competitions, flower shows and even a chilli-eating contest. This year will also see the second instalment of the Autumn Festival in New Delhi, a prelude to the main festival with exhibitions displaying handmade crafts, textiles and cuisines of Nagaland. For more information, please visit [www.hornbillfestival.com](http://www.hornbillfestival.com)



## 16mm Film Festival

The use of 16mm film inhabits a special place in the history of motion pictures—it has presented economic yet experimental opportunities to filmmakers since it was invented a century ago. Mumbai-based boutique art studio Harkat's 16mm Film Festival is an effervescent ode to this art of analogue filmmaking. The seventh edition, from 15th to 17th December 2023, will exclusively screen celluloid-based work in all formats of analogue film such as 8mm, 16mm and 35mm, exploring narrative storytelling, found footage, music videos and travelogues made by international and Indian filmmakers. The festival will also host a short film script competition, Ek-Minute, as well as a special collaboration with Straight 8, the global super 8 cartridge no-editing film competition for the Cannes Film Festival. In its past iterations, the festival's collaboration with Straight 8 has led to two Indian film entries being screened at Cannes. Along



with workshops hosted at the festival, the Harkat Film Lab also provides participants and enthusiasts with the space, equipment and knowledge to work with the celluloid medium. For more information, please visit [16mm.harkat.in](http://16mm.harkat.in)

## Unboxing BLR Habba

Adding to the glory of Bengaluru becoming the first Indian city to be inducted into the World Cities Cultural Forum, an all-new festival will debut with a splash in the city from 1st to 11th December 2023. Unboxing BLR Habba (Kannada for festival) will be launched as part of Unboxing BLR, a collaborative and volunteer-driven project that aims to craft a new, culturally driven brand narrative for the Silicon Valley of India. Labelled as an “umbrella event”, the festival will consolidate the organisation's diverse initiatives to present a cohesive and dynamic celebration of the city's rich and vibrant cultural heritage. From art to literature, dance to design, food to films, music to theatre, handicraft fairs to technological conferences—visitors will have a lot to engage with across several public and community spaces. The city's numerous cultural events and festivals—including the Bangalore Literature Festival, Bengaluru Tech Summit, Under 25 Film Festival, Indian Music Experience and BLR Design Week—are a part of the itinerary. It will also be the launching pad of *Overshoot*, a solo exhibition by contemporary artist Arunkumar H.G., presented by Gallery Sumukha, and *Attakkalari Dance Odyssey*, a performing arts festival organised by the Attakkalari Centre of Movement Arts. For more information, please visit [habba.unboxingblr.com](http://habba.unboxingblr.com)



## Jashn-e-Rekhta

Basking in the success of its international debut in London, *Jashn-e-Rekhta* will return to its home city of New Delhi from 8th to 10th December 2023. Known to be the largest literary and cultural festival celebrating the Urdu language, *Jashn-e-Rekhta* has existed as a platform for the proponents and savants of the artistic heritage of the Ganga-Jamuni *tehzeeb* for the last eight years. Spread across three days, with more than 50 sessions and 100 artistes, the edition will see ghazals, Sufi music, *qawwalis*, *dastangoi*, theatre performances, panel discussions, mushairas and poetry recitations alongside bazaars for Hindi and Urdu books, and stalls catering to local businesses and cuisines. An evening concert celebrating Sufi music with renowned playback singer Javed Ali, and a masterclass on Urdu poetry by author Salman Akhtar and journalist Pervaiz Alam are some attractions in a stacked line-up of eminent poets, writers and performers. The festival will also feature a session of *Khuli Nashist*, an open mic for Urdu poetry. For more information, please visit [jashnerekhta.org](http://jashnerekhta.org)





# PRAVAHA

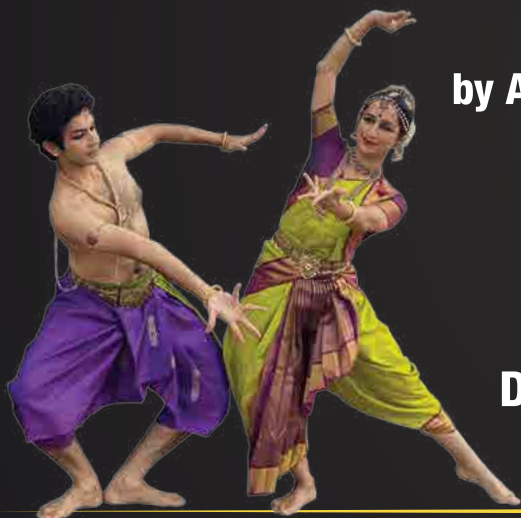
Dance Festival

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**'Antigone, Interrupted'**  
by Scottish Dance Theatre

**Dec 6, 2023 | 7:00 pm**  
**Experimental Theatre, NCPA**



**Kuchipudi & Bharatanatyam**  
by Amrita Lahiri & Pavitra Bhat  
and  
**Odissi**  
by Sharmila Biswas  
& Troupe

**Dec 7, 2023 | 6:30 pm**  
**Tata Theatre, NCPA**



**Bharatanatyam**  
by Mahati Kannan  
and  
**Parvathy Menon & Shijith Nambiar**

**Dec 8, 2023 | 6:30 pm**  
**Experimental Theatre, NCPA**







## Indian Ceramics Triennale

With an aim to highlight the growing significance and diversity of ceramics as an art form in the country, the much anticipated second iteration of the Indian Ceramics Triennale will be held from 19th January 2024 to 31st March 2024 at New Delhi's Arthshila. The triennale's principal curatorial prompt—Common Ground—asks participant ceramists to capture the universality and timelessness of the human experience through clay as a medium. Known to be one of the most recognisable and tangible elements in Indian artistic heritage, the origin of clay dates back to more than a thousand years. With the birth of the triennale

in 2018, the country's artisans made a concerted effort to embrace and revive this rich history. With the patronage of JSW Foundation, Arthshila and Sanskriti, the triennale will present commissioned works by Vinita Mungi, Parag Tandel, Dhruvi Acharya, Teja Gavankar, Shraddha Joshi and Ross Andrews. Curated by artists Madhvi Subrahmanian and Reyaz Badaruddin, the triennale is the flagship project of the Contemporary Clay Foundation, a not-for-profit company that seeks to support and elevate clay-based art practices as well as build informed audiences for ceramic art in the country. For more information, please visit [www.indianceramicstriennale.com](http://www.indianceramicstriennale.com)

## Should Art Festival

The G5A Foundation for Contemporary Culture will begin its annual cultural festivities with the Should Art Festival from 1st to 17th December at its atmospheric warehouse property in Mahalaxmi, Mumbai. This year, the festival will explore the concept of boundary in art through community experiences, experimental exhibits and multidisciplinary installations, performances, workshops, culinary arts and bazaars over the course of three weeks. Since its inception eight years ago, the festival has enjoyed the presence of illustrious personalities, such as Javed Akhtar, Naseeruddin Shah, Ramachandra Guha, Sabir Khan and Leela Samson. The festival was envisioned as a space for rejuvenation and artistic reflection at the tail-end of the year with a commitment to fostering sociocultural dialogue through diverse mediums of art. For more information, please visit [g5afoundation.org/should-art](http://g5afoundation.org/should-art)







THE NCPA

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# Performing Arts: Film & Theatre

A monthly column that explores any and every aspect of the performing arts. This month, actor and director **Ananth Mahadevan** writes about having found his calling in film and theatre of substance.

**My improvisations** every year on Parents’ Day at Don Bosco High School or putting together a motley group of kids to entertain neighbourhood families, barely foretold what was to come. A medical professional or a research scientist was what my parents had deemed right for me. But even as I pursued the sciences, I had no inkling that an affinity for the arts was germinating in my system. The job of a sub-editor in a technical journal like *Chemical Age of India*, to justify my degree in the sciences, wasn’t enough to douse the fire within me. And like water seeks its own level, I sought mine in theatre, to begin with.

An amateur production of *Hamlet* in which I played Polonius was my first exposure to a proscenium audience (the Tejpal Auditorium at Gowalia Tank). The tongue-twisting line, “The actors are here, my Lord, the best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-comical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral...”, brought the house down and that included an amused Dilip Kumar in the front row. The mayor in *Aala Afsar*, Mudrarakash’s *nautanki* adaptation of Nikolai Gogol’s *Inspector General*, that played to packed houses at the Prithvi and NCPA, was the rousing beginning to a still-going-strong 43 years “in the theatre”! to use Anton Chekhov’s words from *The Good Doctor*. From Shakespeare to Chekhov to Arthur Miller to Shankar Shesh, Badal Sircar, Vijay Tendulkar and even Ray Cooney, the journey was an exploration of the self, and a study in discipline and reading the psyche of audiences from the opening performance to the 100th. It is quite possible that you play to an audience of ten in a play like *Pagla Ghoda* or have them brimming to the rafters in a laugh riot like *Blame It on Yashraj*. But like the late Peter O’ Toole said, “you don’t cancel a performance



back with Mahesh Dattani’s *Dance Like a Man* or playing a 90-year-old property broker at the age of 26 in Arthur Miller’s *The Price*, adapted in Hindi as *Apne Apne*. On the one hand I bemoaned the fact that theatre was a part-time activity in India (weekends majorly) and on the other, rued the lack of interest in truly inspiring and elevating plays. The regret still exists that one does not get the opportunity to play, for instance, a memorable character like Quasimodo from *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* or perform a full season of six months to a year, daily, like at the National Theatre or on Broadway. The line that comes to mind under the circumstances is of course, “Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.” But our system does little to stem the rot. In fact, after the Covid pandemic, observers have expressed gratitude that

theatre is still alive. One must be thankful for small mercies.

The predicament continued to haunt me as I “graduated” to television and cinema. The “kick” of a live performance was sorely missing. But exploration of the potential of the visual medium excited me. While theatre relied on verbosity, I attempted brevity on the big screen. Apparently, understatement isn’t something that our audiences are comfortable with. The oft-explained, over-the-top products gained precedence over subtle nuances. I had schooled myself in the continental cinema of masters like Truffaut, Bergman, Fellini, Godard, Griffith, Wajda and others, along with Asian auteurs like Akira Kurosawa, Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen, Adoor Gopalakrishnan, Ritwik Ghatak, to name a few. Their cinema spoke a language that was distinctly cerebral and uplifting. I was clear that this was to be my approach to the big

because there is just one ticket sold. The loss, if any, is of those who didn’t turn up!”

The contrasting definitions of entertainment was what I was trying to analyse when I started working in television and eventually, cinema, where I performed and directed. Serious live theatre was restricted to spaces like the Experimental Theatre at the NCPA and Prithvi where a different breed of audience went for the innovative subtleties of classic drama. On the other hand was the escapism-seeking audience of French farces, be it in any Indian language. “Is it a comedy?” is a frequently asked question at box office windows. This kept a majority of theatre practitioners away from thought-provoking material, widening the cultural disparity in the performing arts.

It was on such a stage that I sought to retain my sanity. While I became the artful dodger between comedies like *Run for Your Wife* or *Bottoms Up!*, I pulled myself

screen, despite the severe opposition from mainstream producers and platforms. I looked for subjects that were far beyond my comfort zone in biopics like *Mee Sindhutai Sapkal*, *Gour Hari Dastaan: The Freedom File*, *Doctor Rakhmabai*. In *Bittersweet*, I explored the hysterectomy ritual amidst women sugarcane cutters. *Mai Ghat: Crime No 103/2005* was about a mother’s 13-year fight for justice for her son killed because of police brutality. *It’s Time to Go* is a film that delves into a soul-searching debate on active euthanasia. While audiences at international festivals applauded and reinstated my faith in

cinema of substance, the distribution section looked like they were lost in transit.

Today, though the dilemma persists, I no longer wish to be the artful dodger. I have found my calling. Cinema and theatre that speak a global language. I no longer want to return to the mainstream films I was forced to resort to for a foot in the door of show business. Today, I am more comfortable adapting one of Ray’s stories (*The Storyteller*) or filming an epic like *Phule* that is still relevant in our changing times. But the sword continues to hang over the artiste’s head. How much longer will my conviction hold? How many more

moons before I pay tribute to the Asghar Farhadis and Nuri Bilge Ceylans of the world who have lit the fire in me. When I posed this question to Iranian master Majid Majidi (*Children of Heaven*, *Song of the Sparrows*) his reply was, “You come from the land of Satyajit Ray. It was Ray’s cinema that inspired me to become a filmmaker. So, stand your ground and don’t lose heart.”

And so, it all comes full circle ... no longer the artful dodger but the Fagins of the world loom large. Like *Oliver Twist*, I meekly tell my funders, “Please sir, I want some more.” ■

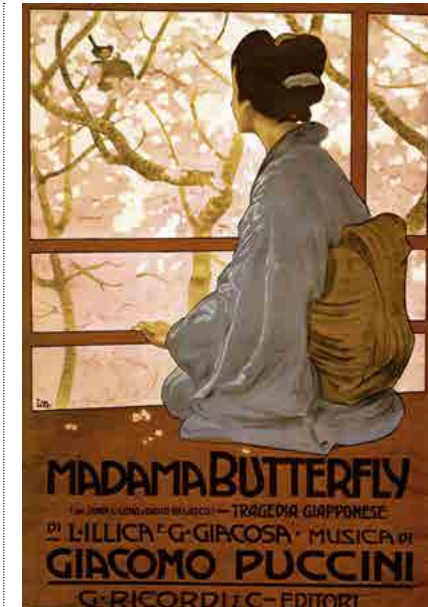
## For the Record

**Jimmy Bilimoria**, who oversees the NCPA’s Stuart-Liff Collection, writes about one of Puccini’s best-loved operas, *Madama Butterfly*.

**Madama Butterfly**, an opera in two acts by Giacomo Puccini to a libretto by Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica, after David Belasco’s play, was first performed at the Teatro alla Scala, Milan, on 17th February 1904. A revised version, comprising three acts, was presented at the Teatro Grande in Brescia shortly afterwards on 28th May.

The opera, described as ‘A Japanese Tragedy’, is Puccini’s most heart-rending composition. In none of his other works is his sense of pain and pity so morbidly acute. *Butterfly* herself is the most appealing of his heroines; and watching the succession of her disasters and humiliations is like watching the desperate helplessness of an imprisoned bird or a child under torture. *Butterfly*’s grief and the power of her love lend her a certain majesty; and when at the last she picks up the knife and reads its motto “Death with honour is better than life with dishonour”—it is felt that no fate less than death could fittingly end her love story.

It is astonishing to note that what has since become one of the world’s best-loved operas was, at its first performance at La Scala, a complete fiasco. Opposition started in the first act owing to a chance resemblance to something in *La bohème*. Puccini took one curtain call at the end of the first act and was hissed at. The opera ran for one night only. The next day, Puccini refunded the money the management had paid him and went away to revise the score. He cut a short episode from the first act which held up the action during the



wedding party; he divided the second act into two parts and wrote some more music for Pinkerton in the last scene. The revised work was produced three months later at Brescia and began its career of success.

*Madama Butterfly* is very much a one-character opera; after her first entrance, *Butterfly* is never off the stage except for a few seconds when she goes to bring the child to Sharpless and a few minutes in the last scene when she takes the child into the bedroom. The dissatisfaction of the audience may be due to the fact that the leading tenor part is unusually short and Pinkerton doesn’t have a single big aria all to himself.

In none of his other full-length operas did Puccini allow the work’s full weight to rest on one character’s shoulders. Pinkerton’s aria in the last act was an afterthought, added by the composer when he realised that without it, no leading singer would accept the part.

*Butterfly* personifies the conflict of two civilisations, the contrast between ancient tradition and the inevitable modernisation. Though Puccini went on to write other successful operas, the initial failure of *Madama Butterfly* clearly left its mark on him. Written during a period of domestic strife, which was to grow tragically worse, and partly during a painful convalescence, it is the most tragic of Puccini’s works.

A classic recording with Beniamino Gigli and Toti Dal Monte, which is a part of the Stuart-Liff Collection, offers a true interpretation of the roles in the opera. ■

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



# Kaleidoscope

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



## Theatre in the hills

Since it was founded in 2009, Mumbai-based Gillo Repertory Theatre has been making the performing arts inclusive and intriguing for children hailing from a wide range of cultural, economic and linguistic backgrounds. The children's theatre company concluded its second annual tour of the Kumaon region of Uttarakhand in November 2023, the latest stop in its outreach tour project known as Gillo On The Go, in which performers travel to remote areas to conduct theatre-based activities for children. In partnership with local theatre groups, educational institutions, NGOs, libraries and guest artistes Puja Sarup and Vaishali Bisht, the travelling theatre's programme included several Hindi-language plays, workshops, artistes-in-dialogue sessions and a mobile library of children's books for an audience of around 2,500 adults and children. The project has also toured across the interiors of Maharashtra and Karnataka. Functioning exclusively in the area of Theatre for Young Audiences, Gillo is represented by its artistic director, Shaili Sathya. *The Ghost of the Mountains*, a theatre adaptation of the children's book by Sujatha Padmanabhan, directed by Sathya, was performed at the NCPA as part of Summer Fiesta 2022. For more information, please visit [www.gillologilehri.blogspot.com](http://www.gillologilehri.blogspot.com)

## Cultural excursion

The second season of Perform Sharjah, from 19th October 2023 to 11th February 2024, blends artistic heritage with contemporary imagination to offer a unique perspective on the city of Sharjah, known as the cultural capital of the Arab world. Organised by the Sharjah Art Foundation, the programme consists of eight multidisciplinary



presentations that reflect on the city's extensive urban development project to rehabilitate its historical area with art and culture at the centre. Theatrical productions from the iconic mother-daughter duo of Tunisian and Arab modern theatre, Essia Jaïbi and Jalila Baccar, and Indian director Mohit Takalkar, an architectural installation from sculptor Rayyane Tabet, dance performances by choreographer Radouan Mriziga and the Beijing-based TAO Dance Theatre, and a multimedia exhibition by the theatre group BERLIN will be hosted across several of Sharjah's newly restored cultural houses and spaces. Visitors will also be privy to theatre workshops and talks led by participating artistes and cultural practitioners. For more information, please visit [www.sharjahart.org](http://www.sharjahart.org)

## An artistic feat

Kolkata-based art gallery Experimenter has been declared the winner of the Stand Prize at Frieze London 2023, one of the most prestigious contemporary art fairs in the world. The prize is awarded to participant art institutions that compete for best gallery presentation. Titled *Do You Know How to Start a Fire*, Experimenter's group exhibition featured diverse works from seven intergenerational women artists of South Asian descent: Bani Abidi, Bhasha Chakrabarti, Biraaj Dodiya, Reba Hore, Radhika Khimji, Afrah Shafiq and Ayesha Sultana. Each of them approached the theme of paradoxes through their own art practice. Since its establishment



in 2009 in Kolkata by Prateek and Priyanka Raja, the gallery has served as an incubator for ambitious and challenging contemporary art practice and has hosted a bevy of artists across various disciplines through exhibitions, talks, performances, workshops and its annual curatorial initiative, Experimenter Curators' Hub. In 2022, the gallery expanded to Mumbai with Experimenter Colaba. For more information, please visit [www.experimenter.in](http://www.experimenter.in)

## The final bow



On 20th October 2023, the famed mezzo-soprano Waltraud Meier concluded her 47-year-long opera journey with a final performance of her iconic role of Klytämnestra in Richard Strauss's one-act opera, *Elektra*. The singer began her career in 1976 in her hometown of Würzburg, Germany. She went on to charm critics and audiences alike with her distinctive voice, evocative acting and captivating stage presence for almost five decades at prestigious venues like the Royal Opera House of Covent Garden, the Metropolitan Opera in New York, La Scala in Milan, the Opéra National de Paris, the Vienna State Opera, and the Bavarian State Opera in Munich. A leading Wagnerian soprano, she starred in productions of *Parsifal*, *Lohengrin*, *Die Walküre*, and *Tristan und Isolde*. Meier has worked with directors like Jean-Pierre Ponnelle and Götz Friedrich, and has performed alongside conductors such as Claudio Abbado and Zubin Mehta. After taking the final bow, Meier proclaimed, "Now I have expressed everything—I have nothing more to say musically, and therefore, goodbye!" For more information, please visit [www.staatsoper-berlin.de/de/](http://www.staatsoper-berlin.de/de/) ■



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# A Collision of Cultures

*ON Stage* brings you edited excerpts from the *NCPA Quarterly Journal*, an unsurpassed literary archive that ran from 1972 to 1988 and featured authoritative and wide-ranging articles. In the second of a three-part series, writer and dramaturg **Rustom Bharucha** discusses certain Western interpretations of Indian theatre, demonstrated by artistes and scholars as varied as Gordon Craig, Jerzy Grotowski and Richard Schechner.

To juxtapose the attitudes of Gordon Craig and Jerzy Grotowski to Indian theatre inevitably raises the question of their differing experiences of Indian theatre. For Craig, the reality of Indian theatre was shaped entirely by texts and commentaries. To the best of my knowledge, he never saw performances of Kathakali or Bharatanatyam. India remained geographically and culturally distant from him. Grotowski, on the other hand, visited India as early as 1956. Subsequently, he studied Kathakali at the Kalamandalam in Kerala, and, like Eugenio Barba, he used some of the techniques of this South Indian dance-theatre tradition in his training programme for actors during the '60s. This direct exposure to the practice of Kathakali enabled him to demystify the sacrosanct associations of Indian theatre mythologised by Craig.

It is not entirely coincidental that Grotowski's production of *Shakuntala* (performed at the Theatre of 13 Rows in Opole, Poland, on 13<sup>th</sup> December 1960) was blatantly non-reverential in its attitude towards Indian theatre. Though Grotowski retained elements of Sanskrit classical drama in his production, such as the *nandi* (the traditional recitation of a prayer) and a variety of *mudras*, he was not interested in reconstructing Kalidasa's classic. On the contrary, he edited the text ruthlessly to two acts and added vignettes and references from *The Book of Manu* and the *Kamasutra*. These additions did not "Indianise" Grotowski's *Shakuntala* in an obtrusive way. On the contrary, what was exemplary about the production was its avoidance of stereotypes celebrating the exotic Orient.<sup>1</sup>

Certainly, there was nothing "Indian" about Grotowski's visualisation of the play. Jerzy Grotowski's geometrical stage constructions, a massive hemisphere with clearly marked seams attached to the base of a tall post slightly narrowing at the top, were startling in their austerity. Their Freudian implications (mentioned



Polish director Jerzy Grotowski was a pioneering exponent of experimental theatre

by Ludwik Flaszen in a programme note) clashed violently with the symbolism of the costumes which were designed by children. The vivid colours of the costumes and their rich diversity of shapes and textures were strategic choices for Grotowski's conception of the play. What the children provided were naïve and playful images of the Orient. There was nothing sacrosanct about their vision of India.

This lack of reverence appealed to Grotowski. At one point in his production, Lord Shiva was worshipped by an actress

and a manager, who uttered the sacred words standing on their heads. This playfulness was reinterpreted by the critic Jan Ciechowicz as "a parody of the traditional models of Ancient Indian theatre ... a parody of the (generally) prevailing image of India" (Ciechowicz 1976, 30). While parodies of foreign conventions often reveal cultural prejudice and a fundamental lack of respect for other cultures, it is likely that Grotowski intended to highlight the paradoxical nature of Hindu deities, who are divine

and intensely human at the same time. Not that Grotowski was interested in commenting on the intricate blending of the sacred and the secular in the Indian performance tradition. His *Shakuntala* was committed neither to Indian philosophy nor to the tenets of the *Natyashastra* but to new forms and gestures, sounds and rhythms inspired by Indian theatre.<sup>2</sup>

*Shakuntala* was the beginning of a period of research for the Theatre Laboratory, the institution established by Grotowski and Flaszen in Opole. Indian *mudras*, eye-movements and breathing exercises were rehearsed with rigour and precision. For a number of years, Kathakali and yoga provided the foundations of Grotowski's psycho-physical exercises. But the more the actors of the laboratory learned about hatha yoga and the facial exercises of Kathakali, the more Grotowski realised that it was futile to imitate the techniques of Indian theatre. The deeper he investigated his psycho-physical mode of acting, which required an actor to "sacrifice" himself to a role, the more he realised that his actors had to provide their own techniques.

Five years after his production of *Shakuntala*, he realised that the inflexible nature of the hieroglyphic signs in Indian theatre prevented Western actors from understanding them. If signs were to be used at all in Western theatre, Grotowski realised that they could never be codified like *mudras*. They had to articulate the "particular psycho-physiology" of the actor. (Grotowski 1968, 24). In addition, they had to emerge during an actor's confrontation with his role. They could not be preconceived.

Whereas a *mudra* is timeless, universally understood and accepted by Indian performers from performance to performance, a sign (as defined by Grotowski) relates very specifically to a moment in a particular performance which the actor had "scored".

Grotowski also stopped using yoga when he realised that it produced an "introverted concentration" that was harmful for his actors. The most advanced stage of yoga, it is well known, results in an equipoise of the mind and being when all expressions and feelings are obliterated. There is nothing theatrical about this state of tranquillity, which Grotowski accurately perceived as "an internal sleep, an inexpressive equilibrium: a great rest which ends all actions". (Grotowski 1968, 252) If "thought, breathing, ejaculation" cease as an actor masters this state of

concentration, how can he act? Why would he want to act? Quite logically, Grotowski concluded that yoga was "not for actors".

Such an attitude prevented Grotowski from using Indian theatre in an eclectic manner. There was nothing reverential about his understanding of its principles. If he felt that a particular convention had no resonance for his actors, he did not use it. At every point, he resisted the temptation to select the most decorative aspects of Indian theatre. Nor did he indulge in sensational techniques for their own sake. Grotowski believed that a concentration on the "purely physical" aspects of an Indian technique resulted in a kind of "emotive hypocrisy" (Grotowski 1968, 253). He felt that a knowledge of Kathakali required more than the ability to demonstrate eye movements and postures and hand gestures: it required faith in a particular way of life and perception of the universe. Part of the problem with some Western perceptions of Indian performing arts is an obsession with techniques.

There was nothing virtuosic about Grotowski's theatre. It is said that when his actors achieved technical excellence doing certain exercises, they stopped doing them for a period of time. Once their bodies developed new resistances to the old movements, they continued with the exercises. Grotowski was not interested in perfection and finished product—the ideals of bourgeois, as well as classical Indian, theatre. His theatre was a laboratory, not a conservatory. Consequently, when Indian techniques and conventions were borrowed, they were never simply performed as showpieces. On the contrary, they were used as material by his actors. Or, as Richard Schechner has observed, "The fixed structure of Kathakali became the fluid process of Grotowski training." (Schechner 1978, 94) ■

Courtesy: Asian Theatre Journal 1, no. 1 (Spring 1984), University of Hawaii, Hawaii. This article first appeared in its entirety in the *NCPA Quarterly Journal* in June 1985 (Volume 14, Issue 2).

## NOTES:

1. When considering Oriental stereotypes in Western productions of Indian plays, I am reminded of Lugné-Poe's symbolist interpretation of *Mrichchhakatika* (The little clay cart) at the Theatre de l'Oeuvre in 1895. In order to appear as "Indians", the actors painted their bodies with vivid streaks of red and yellow paint. During the intermission, a pseudo-Hindu clad in a turban and the briefest of loincloths stepped onto the stage and sat cross-legged with his back to the audience, his hands raised in prayer. This tableau crystallised some popular stereotypes of India in its depiction of the naked fakir.
2. Tairov's celebrated production of *Shakuntala* (produced at the Kamerny Theatre in 1914) was also a pretext, in a certain sense, for theatrical experimentation. Since the Indian theatrical tradition was almost entirely unknown in Russia, Tairov's actors were compelled to create original gestures, rhythms and voice patterns. In doing so, they were in a position to free themselves from all tradition. Tairov did not produce *Shakuntala* to discover the tradition of India. He turned to Kalidasa to abolish the very idea of tradition itself. Of course, the only tradition he understood was his own; anything outside its perimeters was fundamentally alien and unknown.

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# Programme Guide

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

December 2023

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

## INDIAN MUSIC



Annapurna Devi, 1st, Godrej Dance Theatre

### Music Mirror: A-6 AKASH GANGA

Documentary screening on Annapurna Devi

Produced by Annapurna Devi Foundation, Mumbai

Directed by Nirmal Chander (81 mins with English subtitles)

Godrej Dance Theatre  
Friday, 1st – 6.30 pm

#### An NCPA Presentation

**Annapurna Devi**, fondly called “Maa” by her disciples, was a legendary surbahar exponent and an unparalleled guru. Daughter and disciple of the celebrated Allauddin Khan who founded the Maihar-Senia *gharana*, she was destined to rule the world of music but in the 1950s, she shuttered her music in silence, refusing all recordings and concerts.

**Nityanand Haldipur**, her disciple, sets out on a journey to tell her story. Cutting through the myths that have surrounded her, he attempts to find an answer to the question—can a musician exist without an audience?

**Nirmal Chander** has worked in the field of non-fiction since 1996 as an editor, director and producer. A recipient of three National Film Awards, his documentary *Moti Bagh* was submitted for the Oscars in 2019.

The screening will be followed by a Q&A session with the director.

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

Register now on  
[www.bookmyshow.com](http://www.bookmyshow.com)

## THEATRE

### Saatvi Pass

Children’s Marathi Play (60 mins)  
Godrej Dance Theatre  
Saturday, 2nd – 3.00 pm & 5.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation in collaboration with Kalsootree production

The play revolves around Radha, a young girl who has just completed the seventh grade and aspires to continue her education but faces staunch opposition from her mother, who forbids her from attending school. Radha’s story highlights the critical issue of a girl’s right to education, a fundamental right that is often denied in many parts of India.

Radha finds solace in her daily interactions with her companions, Pinky and a scarecrow, which symbolises her inner voice and resilience. Her mother, a single parent, makes the difficult decision to arrange a marriage for Radha at an early age, a practice prevalent in parts of India due to social and economic factors.

Radha vehemently resists this and strives to persuade her mother to reconsider, challenging the deeply ingrained customs and traditions that often lead to child marriages. The central question remains—will Radha’s mother eventually see the importance of her education and relent?

The play unfolds a poignant

narrative that sheds light on these pressing issues and delves into the reasons behind them, portraying the struggle of a young girl to break free from societal norms and pave the way for her own future.

Playwright: **Prajakt Deshmukh**

Concept, Design & Direction:

**Meena Naik**

Music: **Kaushal Inamdar**

Actors: **Dipali Badekar, Trushnika Shinde, Varsha Jadhav, Deepak Joil, Mangesh Dalvi & Akash Dhage**

Suggested age: 8+

Tickets:

₹180/- (Members)

₹200/- (Public)

Box Office now open

## THEATRE

### The Devil Wears Bataa

English Play  
(120 mins)

Tata Theatre

Saturday, 2nd – 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, Varun Narayan, Danesh Khambata & others**

**A Silly Point Production**

**Tickets:**

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

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

**(Inclusive of GST)**

**Box Office now open**

## **THEATRE**

### **Yeh Raaste Hain Pyaar Ke**

**Hindi Play (130 mins)**

**Experimental Theatre**

**Saturday, 2nd – 7.30 pm**

During a raging pandemic, two elderly people, a man and a woman, attempt to break free from the isolation of their empty lives brought about by constant lockdowns and their inability to communicate with the outer world, except through phone calls once in a while. This has impacted their emotional and physical well-being. During the short periods of relaxation of lockdowns, they find an escape by going to a park in the early mornings and walking down a path named 'Yeh Raaste Hain Pyaar Ke'. During these walks, new dimensions of their lives unfold, exposing them to a world of unimagined possibilities.

Presentation by **Surnai Theatre** and **Folk Arts Foundation**

Originally Written by **Ila Arun**

Directed by **KK Raina**

Cast: **Ila Arun, KK Raina & Vikrant Mishra**

Produced by

**Antardhwani Production**

**Tickets:**

**₹450, 405, 360 & 315/- (Members)**

**₹500, 450, 400 & 350/- (Public)**

**Box Office now open**

## **THEATRE**

### **Stand up with D Girls**

**Hindi and English (85 mins)**

**Godrej Dance Theatre**

**Saturday, 2nd – 7.30 pm**

**An NCPA Off-Stage Presentation**



**in collaboration with Being Association**

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

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

Lights Design & Operation: **Rahul Rai**

Projector operation:

**Shubham Goswami**

Production Manager: **Rakhi Kashyap**

**Tickets:**

**₹450/- (Members)**

**₹500/- (Public)**

**Box Office now open**

## **THEATRE**

### **Jis Lahore Nahi Dekhya**

**Hindi Play (130 mins)**

**Experimental Theatre**

**Sunday, 3rd – 6.30 pm**

*Jis Lahore Nahi Dekhya*, Asghar Wajahat's powerful human saga, is a story of two communities that have suffered the horrors of the Partition first-hand and still have the strength and humanity to rise above petty hatred. This important message of brotherhood goes beyond the evil politician and the fanatic to make a difference to the common man. In the light of the world we live in

today, it has become imperative to drive home the message of tolerance and mutual respect. We need to continually remind ourselves that lines may divide countries, but they cannot divide human beings.

Written by **Asghar Wajahat**

Directed by **Dinesh Thakur**

Cast: **Priita Mathur Thakur, Aman Gupta, Atul Mathur, Brij Bhushan Sawhney, Ajay Chourey, Meena Vaibhav & others**

**An Ank Theatre Group Production**

**Tickets:**

**₹630, 450 & 360/- (Members)**

**₹700, 500 & 400/- (Public)**

**(Inclusive of GST)**

**Box Office now open**

## **FILM**

### **Short Film Corner**

**Short Film Screenings**

**Little Theatre**

**Wednesday, 6th – 6.30 pm**

**An NCPA Presentation in collaboration with White Wall Screenings**

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

### **Eggs**

**Silent Film (13 mins)**



*Eggs* follows the story of one man—emotionless, without identity or personality, the perfect test subject for government brainwashing—and his life in a fascist state over four



days and three nights. Every night, he has a dream, each encoded with a certain political message describing how his mental state and intelligence deteriorate as a result of the authoritarian government.

Directed by **Neel Menon**

## Mirag – The Celebration

Marathi Film with English Subtitles  
(16 mins)



Mirag, 6th, Little Theatre

Time moves forward, it does not stop for anyone.

The system has some set parameters of its own, but there are limits to its expansion. Although it is difficult to cross the boundaries carved by the system, it is certainly not impossible. If one can take an adamant stand against it, knowing the height of the towers and the limits of the fences, dreams of change can be fulfilled. Situations are never static. The situation walks with the steps of transformation. Communication with the changed situation is a must. Seeing and feeling the changes around you is called creativity.

*Mirag* is the identification with nature.

Directed by **Abhijeet Zunjarrao**

## Swarna

Telugu Film with English Subtitles  
(29 mins)



Swarna, 6th, Little Theatre

Based in a South Indian village, *Swarna* is about a convicted rapist Ramesh's

family that is ostracised by society while Covid isolates them further, forcing them to confront their shame and trauma.

The father is ashamed, the mother is in denial and the wife has despairingly accepted the evil side of her husband, who is sentenced to life imprisonment. The family receives an unexpected call informing them that Ramesh has been infected with Covid and has passed away. The story expands on the family's mourning as they were unable to visit him in his last moments. The helpless wife confesses to her in-laws that she was yet another victim who was raped by Ramesh in school and was later forced to marry him due to the shame her father faced. Will she find closure?

Directed by **Anusha Rao**

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

## DANCE

### NCPA Pravaha Dance Festival 2023

6th to 8th December

*Pravaha* is dedicated to new creations in dance. It is a chance for Mumbai audiences to experience the artistes' newest works born out of years of experience.



Antigone, Interrupted, 6th, Experimental Theatre

### 'Antigone, Interrupted'

by Scottish Dance Theatre  
Experimental Theatre  
Wednesday, 6th – 7.00 pm

Scottish Dance Theatre is one of the few full-time ensembles in the U.K. Working at the forefront of the art form, Scottish Dance Theatre collaborates with internationally acclaimed choreographers and artistes, supports the development

of emerging and homegrown talent and promotes a plurality of voices. For more than 30 years, the company has brought unique dance experiences to audiences and communities across the U.K. and abroad, producing high-quality dance that is thought-provoking and holds resonance in people's lives. Scottish Dance Theatre has received multiple awards (including The Critics' Circle National Dance Award for Outstanding Company Repertoire).

*Antigone, Interrupted* is a powerful solo reinterpretation of the classical Greek myth with contemporary references that have very strong resonances in India. Using a mixture of dance, theatre and storytelling, choreographer **Joan Clevillé** and performer **Solène Weinachter** have created an intimate work by exploring the strength and vulnerability of the body as a tool for resistance and civil disobedience. The piece follows the story of a young woman who disobeys the law and puts her body on the line to defend what she thinks is right. The work examines the value of dissent in contemporary democracy and how the body (and, in particular, the female body) can be the target of oppression but also a powerful tool for challenging social injustice.

**Age: 15+**

**Tickets:**

₹450/- (Members)

₹500/- (Public)

## Manodarpan

Odissi by Sharmila Biswas & Troupe and  
**Converse**  
Kuchipudi by Amrita Lahiri &  
Bharatanatyam by Pavitra Bhat  
Tata Theatre  
Thursday, 7th – 6.30 pm

Sharmila Biswas is a senior disciple of



Sharmila Biswas, 7th, Tata Theatre

Kelucharan Mohapatra and a recipient of the Sangeet Natak Akademi award for her contribution to Odissi. She is Artistic Director at Odissi Vision and Movement Centre, an institution created for the promotion of Odissi through research into various dimensions of Odiya culture. *Manodarpan* is a series of stories, with all the human weaknesses and strengths, each expressing a certain emotion and its intricacies. It elevates us to a spiritual level, without any reference to gods and goddesses or mythology.

**Amrita Lahiri** specialises in Kuchipudi having studied under Anuradha Nehru, Swapnasundari and Seetha Nagajothy. She is an empanelled artiste with the ICCR and has toured as a soloist in India and abroad, presenting Kuchipudi from its traditional origins to its contemporary forms.

**Pavitra Bhat** is a Bharatanatyam exponent who trained at Kalanjali



Amrita Lahiri, 7th, Tata Theatre

Pavitra Bhat, 7th, Tata Theatre



under Sikkil Vasanthakumari and Deepak Mazumdar. Bhat has performed in India and abroad and established P.A.V.I. (Pavitra Art Visual Institute) to promote dance.

Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi are perhaps closest to each other, however, they are also distinct dance languages. Lahiri and Bhat come together in a duet for the first time to 'converse' in their own dance languages.

**Tickets:**  
**₹450, 270 & 180/- (Members)**  
**₹500, 300 & 200/- (Public)**

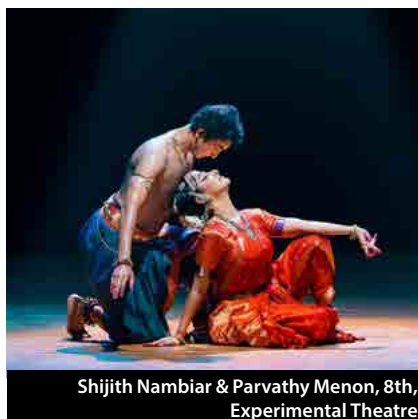
## Bharatanatyam

by Mahati Kannan  
and

Parvathy Menon & Shijith Nambiar  
Experimental Theatre  
Friday, 8th – 6.30 pm

Danseuse **Mahati Kannan** is the grand-niece of noted Bharatanatyam exponent Padma Subrahmanyam. Born into a family of musicians and dancers, Kannan is an excellent artiste in her own right. She has a master's in art history from the National Museum Institute, New Delhi, which has added to her perception and study of the subject which, in turn, has opened new possibilities to apply that knowledge to dance.

**Shijith Nambiar** is an ex-faculty member of Kalakshetra. **Parvathy Menon** holds a post-diploma from Kalakshetra and is a guest artiste with the institute. They have collaborated with various production companies and participated in festivals of dance around the world. *Dhi* is a manifestation of our thoughts. Every thought born in one's mind starts to slowly begin its journey to create a magical world.



Shijith Nambiar & Parvathy Menon, 8th, Experimental Theatre

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

## INDIAN MUSIC



M. S. Subbulakshmi, 7th, Little Theatre

## Nad Ninad: From Our Archives

Listening Session on the Artistry of  
Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi

Guided by Dr. R.K. Sriramkumar,  
supported by Amritha Murali and  
Sriaram Subbaraman  
Little Theatre

Thursday, 7th – 6.30 pm

## An NCPA Presentation

This programme makes available the NCPA's archival recordings to lovers of Indian classical music. We have planned a session based on the rarely heard recordings of the legendary vocalist, **Madurai Shanmukhavadiuvu Subbulakshmi** (1916–2004), some of which were specially recorded for our archives in 1978.

M.S. Amma, as she was popularly known, was a naturally gifted musician who grew up in an environment conducive to learning, at a very early age, nuances from the doyens of the Carnatic (South Indian) world. Starting her career at the young age of 13, she went on to become one of the most celebrated exponents of Carnatic music, besides acting in a few films. Eventually, she came to be recognised as the iconic voice of devotion in Independent India.

The event will be guided by the eminent violinist, **Dr. R. K. Sriramkumar**, who has had the privilege of accompanying the legendary vocalist in live concerts as well as for some commercial recordings. Based on this association,



he will share his valuable insights into the music of Subbulakshmi. His presentation will include recordings and live demonstrations.

Born in an illustrious family of violinists, Dr. Sriramkumar was trained by his grandfather, R. K. Venkarama Sastry. Besides performing solo concerts at home and overseas, he has had the honour of accompanying several doyens of Carnatic music. Marked by the *gayaki* style of violin playing, his music is recognised for its soul-stirring quality.

Furthermore, he is also renowned as a skilled composer for several music and dance productions featuring celebrated artistes. With his innate musicality and vast experience in the world of music, Dr. Sriramkumar is rightly regarded as a fine orator and an illustrious guru. The list of awards and accolades received is equally impressive.

In this presentation, he will be supported by his disciple, **Amritha Murali**, who is also a talented vocalist. **Sriraam Subbaraman** will lend rhythmic support on the mridangam.

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

**Register now on**  
**[www.bookmyshow.com](http://www.bookmyshow.com)**

## EXHIBITION

### The Sketch Party Annual 2023

**Group Painting Exhibition by**  
**The Thursday Sketch Party**  
**Dilip Piramal Art Gallery**  
**Friday, 8th to Sunday, 10th –**  
**12.00 noon to 8.00 pm**

The Thursday Sketch Party, an initiative by artist Radhika Bawa, was started in 2020 with three objectives—to keep up a consistent art practice, have a free



**The Sketch Party Annual 2023, 8th to 10th,**  
**Dilip Piramal Art Gallery**

and non-judgemental environment to experiment and to make a place for art in your life, irrespective of your proficiency, age or profession. The motto being 'anyone can draw'.

The group dedicates one hour every week to practising art and celebrating each other's efforts at creating artwork. The collective meets online every Thursday (hence the name) and has, over the last three years, explored innumerable subjects and many mediums like painting, pottery, figure drawings and outdoor sketch walks. The collective comprises senior artists, beginners, potters, architects, even accountants and entrepreneurs. The vitality of the group, the collaboration and the support allow for members to feed off or get inspired by others' ideas and styles, and widen their horizons.

The Sketch Party Annual is a culmination of these efforts and explorations. Twenty-five Sketch Party artists are displaying works at this maiden venture. The artworks comprise paintings in a variety of mediums and subjects, ceramic sculptures, portraits, mixed media works and more.

Everyone is cordially invited to join them in celebrating this labour of love.

**Entry free**

## INTERNATIONAL MUSIC



**Roman Holiday, 8th, Little Theatre**

### Movies Under the Stars

**Roman Holiday (1953)**  
**Film Screening**  
**(B&W – 118 mins)**  
**Little Theatre**  
**Friday, 8th – 6.30 pm**

**An NCPA & Film Heritage Foundation**  
**Presentation**

"It is a contrived fable but a bittersweet legend with laughs that leaves the spirits soaring," wrote A.H. Weiler in

*The New York Times* in 1953. Director **William Wyler** and star **Gregory Peck** were better known for earnest drama than for comedy, but the casting of **Audrey Hepburn** in her first American role and what was then a daring decision to shoot a big Hollywood production on the bustling streets of Rome helped make this romcom a breath of fresh air. With her elfin looks and winsome charm, Hepburn is perfectly cast as Anne, the visiting princess who escapes her restrictive schedule of state duties to fall in with foreign correspondent Joe (Peck), who shows her the sights and the time of her life.

Directed & produced by

**William Wyler**

Written by **Ian McLellan Hunter &**

**John Dighton**

Cast: **Gregory Peck, Audrey Hepburn, Eddie Albert & others**

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

## THEATRE



**Jo Dooba So Paar, 8th, Tata Theatre**

### Jo Dooba So Paar

**Hindi, Urdu, Persian (100 mins)**  
**Tata Theatre**  
**Friday, 8th – 7.30 pm**

**An NCPA Presentation in**  
**collaboration with aRANYA**  
**Production**

A musical daastaangoi on the life and times of Amir Khusrau

*Jo Dooba So Paar* throws light on the human that Khusrau was, his relationship with his guru Nizamuddin Auliya and the advent of *qawwali* through them.

The interesting anecdotes and tales woven in a *daastan* accompanied by live *qawwali* singing give insight

into the essence of Sufism and the importance of the eternally relevant message of love among humankind.

Produced by **Manav Kaul**

Writer: **Ajitesh Gupta**

Music: **Mohit Agarwal**

Directors: **Ajitesh Gupta & Mohit Agarwal**

Harmonium: **Mohit Agarwal & Ashish Mishra**

Performers: **Rattan Deep, Ashish Mishra, Jitendra Singh Rajput, Shalaka Redkar, Manasi Bhawalkar, Sonakshi Singh, Shimli Basu, Rigved Singh Maurya, Mohit Agarwal & Ajitesh Gupta**

Dholak: **Mrunmay Chavan**

Tabla: **Naynesh Pimpale**

Production: **Sumit Chandel & Kamran Khan**

#### Tickets:

**₹1,080, 900, 675, 450 & 270/- (Members)**

**₹1,200, 1,000, 750, 500 & 300/- (Public) (Plus GST)**

**Box Office now open**

#### SCREENING

*Dead Man Walking*, 9th, Godrej Dance Theatre



### Dead Man Walking

by **Jake Heggie**

**Opera Screening (Approx. 180 mins)**

**Godrej Dance Theatre**

**Saturday, 9th – 4.00 pm**

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

The most widely performed new opera of the last two decades, *Dead Man Walking*, is adapted from the groundbreaking memoir of the same name by Sister Helen Prejean, in which she describes her experience with convicted murderers on death row to whom she offered spiritual advice. In bringing this powerful story to the operatic stage, composer **Jake Heggie** created a score that

recalls Sister Helen's prose and her advocacy style: direct, unaffected and unflinchingly honest—but not without a deep understanding of the heart and humanity inside each one of us.

While based on real-life events from the late 1970s and early 1980s, Heggie's opera is more generally set in contemporary times, as questions about the value and morality of the death penalty remain relevant. Nonetheless, the locations evoke actual places from Prejean's life: a mission in a very poor neighbourhood of New Orleans, the long road out to Louisiana State Penitentiary and predominantly, the prison itself.

In depicting this quintessentially American story, Heggie composed a score immersed in an American musical vernacular built around the characters and their inner conflicts, rather than an overt debate about capital punishment. Both lead roles require classic operatic vocalism, and the important role of Mrs. De Rocher, Joseph's mother, must convey deep pathos in her tone as well as being able to express both the text and subtext in her music. Ambient music also plays a large role, including songs on a car radio, rock 'n' roll in the style of Elvis Presley, and a traditional sounding hymn whose impact changes when heard in different treatments.

Conductor: **Yannick Nézet Séguin**

Cast: **Latonia Moore, Joyce DiDonato, Ryan McKinny & Susan Graham**

**Content Advisory:** *Dead Man Walking* contains a depiction of rape and murder, as well as other adult themes and strong language.

#### Tickets:

**₹450/- (Members)**

**₹500/- (Public)**

**Box Office now open**

#### INDIAN MUSIC

### Citi NCPA Aadi Anant: From Here to Eternity

**Festival of Indian Music 2023-24**

**The 13th edition of the Citi NCPA**

**Aadi Anant Festival seeks to celebrate the vitality of the guru-shishya tradition.**

**Zakir Hussain (tabla)**

**with Sabir Khan (sarangi)**

**and Debopriya Chatterjee (bansuri)**

**Tata Theatre**

**Saturday, 9th – 6.30 pm**

Despite the primacy accorded to the human voice and music emanating from it, the Indian subcontinent abounds with a variety of musical instruments, which are made from various natural materials and use diverse techniques for sound production. It is interesting to know that since the last quarter of the 20th century, Indian instrumental music in particular, seems to have claimed a prominent position, not only at home but also around the world.

This ensemble features three varied instruments. The tabla is a pair of drums made of wood and metal, and covered with animal hide, while the sarangi is a fretless string instrument that is bowed and the bansuri, unlike the Western flute, is the simplest instrument having just a tube of bamboo without any reed blown from the side.

Both the sarangi and the bansuri can have a timbre closer to the human voice. While these instruments are primarily expected to create melody, conventionally, the tabla is expected to provide a rhythmic component. However, in recent times, tabla players, having had scope to play a more active and creative role, have lent a new dimension to the aesthetics of the overall presentation. As a result, today, the tabla player is recognised as an integral part of a performance.

In this regard, the contribution made by **Zakir Hussain**, the internationally



**Zakir Hussain, 9th, Tata Theatre**





renowned tabla maestro, is indeed phenomenal.

**Sabir Khan** and **Debopriya Chatterjee** have trained under legendary maestros, Sultan Khan and Hariprasad Chaurasia respectively, whose names are inextricably associated with the sarangi and flute. Today, these talented artistes have claimed their own space in the world of instrumental music.

In this presentation, Hussain will showcase the versatility of the tabla by performing solo pieces as well as exploring the sonic space together with the other two instrumentalists, leaving aside the conventional hierarchy of either one of the instruments. The spontaneous improvisations are bound to lead up to a musical dialogue that will take the listeners on a journey moving from classical to lighter genres, showcasing the capability of Indian instruments to express myriad shades of sound and emotion.

#### Tickets:

₹2,250, 1,800, 1,350, 900 & 720/-  
(Members)  
₹2,500, 2,000, 1,500, 1,000 & 800/-  
(Public)  
(Inclusive of GST)

## Remembering the Divas

Conceived, curated and presented  
by Kaushiki Chakraborty  
Jamshed Bhabha Theatre  
Sunday, 10th – 6.30 pm

Indian art (classical) and semi-classical music as we know it today, has been shaped by many stalwarts over the years. Their lives, creativity and musical genius have set significant milestones in the history of Indian music which will always be remembered, treasured and followed as guiding principles for generations to come. Among these were some talented female musicians whose lives and music, despite oppressive norms of society, paved the path for female singers of the subsequent generations.

Naturally endowed with tuneful and delicate voices, coupled with systematic training and arduous practice, these women became custodians of an unusually large repertoire ranging from *khayal*, *thumri*, *dadra*, *tappa* and *hori* to *ghazal*. With a unique combination of beauty, brains and musical talent, they ruled the world of classical and semi-classical Indian music in the early 20th century. It is also equally laudable that these songstresses overcame the challenges of the newly emerging technology of recording; thus, contributing immensely to the documentation and propagation of traditional repertoire.

**Kaushiki Chakraborty** is the daughter and disciple of Ajoy Chakraborty, the eminent exponent of Patiala *gharana*. She is known for having an extraordinary command over the voice and her effortless exposition in diverse genres.

Empathising with the female singers of yesteryears, this is her attempt at celebrating the works of six female exponents of a semi-classical genre



whose life and music have paved the path for others. Studying the music of these legendary singers also provides a window into their lives, the socio-economic conditions of the country and notable events that have found expression in their music.

The six prominent female exponents of Indian classical music whose works will be remembered and reiterated in these musical presentations are:

Angelina Yeoward, alias **Gauhar Jan** (1873-1930), was the first musician to record music on 78 RPM records in British India, which were later released by the Gramophone Company of India. She was quite aptly referred to as the 'Gramophone Girl'.

Akhtari Bai Faizabadi, alias **Begum Akhtar** (1914-1974), was one of the most prominent and dazzling divas whose voice, expression and graceful presentations brought her the recognition of being referred to as the *Malika-e-ghazal* (the queen of ghazal).

**M. S. Subbulakshmi** (1916-2004) hailed from the *devadasi* tradition associated with south Indian temples. Starting her career at the young age of 13, she went on to become one of the most celebrated exponents of Carnatic (South Indian) music, besides acting in a few films. Eventually, she came to be recognised as the iconic voice of devotion in independent India.

**Shobha Gurtu** (1925-2004) inherited music from her mother, who was an accomplished vocalist as well as an expert dancer. Although trained in the Jaipur-Atrauli tradition, she chose to specialise in semi-classical forms of *thumri*, *dadra*, *chaiti*, *hori*, etc., besides singing for Marathi and Hindi films.

Having started her stage career at the tender age of six, Alla Wasai alias **Noor Jahan** (1926-2000) reigned supreme over the Hindi cinema as a singing actress of the 1940s. After the partition in 1947, she migrated to Pakistan, where she continued to hold an iconic position, rendering hit film songs in Punjabi and Urdu.

Trained by her legendary mother, **Kishori Amonkar** (1932-2017) was considered to be one of the foremost exponents of the Jaipur *gharana*. She also had the privilege of learning *khayal* from stalwarts of other *gharanas*. In addition to the classical form of *khayal*, she excelled in lighter forms such

as *thumri* and *bhajan*. Spiritual and emotional aspects were integral to her performance, the reflection of which could be seen in several poignant compositions that she created.

Besides presenting some memorable compositions associated with these six divas, the ensemble led by Chakraborty, will also attempt to present some new compositions, keeping in mind the individual style of these divas.

#### Tickets:

₹1,440, 1,080, 720 & 540/- (Members)

₹1,600, 1,200, 800 & 600/- (Public)

(Inclusive of GST)

### Tapur Tupur: Bachche, Bachpan aur Bachpana

Children's poetry by Gurudev Tagore with Gulzar, Shantanu Moitra, Shaan, Rekha Bhardwaj, Mahalakshmi Iyer, a group of children and others

Jamshed Bhabha Theatre

Sunday, 7th January 2024 – 6.30 pm

**Rabindranath Tagore** (1861–1941), the Nobel laureate, poet, novelist, painter and composer, has had far-reaching impact not only on Indian literature but on music as well. A leading figure in the renaissance of Bangla literature, his contribution to children's literature is colossal. Although a large body of his work meant for children consists of poems, short stories, novels and songs, poetry seems to be central to his vision of childhood. Starting with his very first poem 'Jol Pore, Pata Nore' (raindrops fall, leaves rustle) that he wrote when he was barely eight years old, his works, including the Indian national anthem, truly transcend the barriers of nationality, culture, race and religion, expressing the pure spirit of love, freedom and joy.

**Gulzar**, one of India's finest filmmakers and lyricists, was influenced at an early age by the literary works of Tagore. The Oscar-winning poet seems to share a special bond with the "Bard of Bengal". In a career spanning over 50 years, he has written poems in Urdu, Hindi and Punjabi, and often translates from Bangla, the most recent being two volumes of translations of Gurudev's poems.

Starting with advertisement



Gulzar, 7th January, Jamshed Bhabha Theatre



Shantanu Moitra, 7th January, Jamshed Bhabha Theatre

jingles, **Shantanu Moitra** went on to compose music for some landmark films and independent albums: *Ab Ke Sawan*, *Gulzar translates Tagore*, and such others. He has also to his credit a National Film Award for best music direction (2014). Furthermore, he has uniquely married his sense of adventure with music to create memorable events such as *Song of the Himalayas*, *Chandrayan* and *Songs of the River*.

This event will feature a compilation of Tagore's poems specially written for children, on various subjects like the beauty of nature, simple joys and innocence of childhood, etc. using elements of fantasy, fable, fairy tale and myth. Such is the beauty of Tagore's words that even adults listening to his poems are bound to revisit memory lanes of their childhood.

The poems are translated from Bangla into Hindi by Gulzar and will be presented in his deep sonorous voice. The song versions of the poems are woven into the magic of music by Moitra, and will be performed by talented artistes, including **Shaan**, **Rekha Bhardwaj**, **Mahalakshmi Iyer** and others with a group of children.

#### Tickets:

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

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

(Inclusive of GST)

Box Office now open

### THEATRE

*Sakharam Binder*, 10th, Experimental Theatre



### Sakharam Binder

English Play (120 mins)

Experimental Theatre

Sunday, 10th – 4.00 pm

#### An NCPA Presentation

*Sakharam Binder*, the protagonist, thinks he has the system by the tail, and he can disregard the culture and societal values as long as he is truthful. That system is the de facto enslavement of women in post-colonial India, despite the promises of democracy and modernity. *Sakharam*, a bookbinder, picks up other men's discarded women—cast-off wives who would otherwise be homeless, destitute, or murdered with impunity—and takes them in as domestic servants and sex partners. He rules his home like a tinpot tyrant, yet each woman is told that she is free to leave whenever she likes. He will even give her a sari, 50 rupees and a ticket to wherever she wants to go. Everything good and proper, where *Sakharam Binder* is concerned, he says. He's no husband to forget common decency. What he does not anticipate are the moral and emotional complications of the arrangement, which prove heartbreakingly ruinous to everyone involved.

Directed by **Farley Richmond** (University of Georgia, Atlanta)

Written by **Vijay Tendulkar**

Translation: **Kumud Mehta** & **Shanta Gokhale**

Cast: **Sajal Mukherjee**, **Madhuwanti**



**Bhat, Seema Sahane, Mandar Gadre  
& Prasun Sarkar**

**Tickets:**

**₹450/- (Members)**

**₹500/- (Public)**

**Box Office now open**

**THEATRE**



*Hunkaro, 10th, Experimental Theatre*

**Hunkaro**

**Marwari, Hindi, Haryanvi, Awadhi  
Play (100 mins)**

**Experimental Theatre**

**Sunday, 10th – 7.30 pm**

**An NCPA Presentation in  
collaboration with Ujaagar  
Dramatic Association**

An intriguing weave of three stories talks about what strength, hope can instil and how life without hope is impossible to sustain. Out of these three narratives, two are from young contemporary Rajasthani writers **Arvind Charan** and **Chirag Khandelwal**. The one that basically lays the foundation for the performance is by renowned Rajasthani writer **Vijaydan Detha**.

In Detha's story, a Marwari farmer, facing adversity after losing his wife and being left with two children and barren land, contemplates a plan to abandon the kids in the face of drought, while both husband and wife hold onto different hopes.

Khandelwal's narrative follows Amar during the Covid-19 mass migration, where he walks home with no resources, encountering a unique companion, a half-vulture-half-crow, highlighting the dual aspects of survival and death.

Charan's *Maai* tells the tale of two brothers, Birju and Mandu, who leave their physically challenged mother in Mumbai during lockdown, returning a year later with a blend of guilt and relentless hope.

Based on stories by **Vijaydan Detha, Chirag Khandelwal, Arvind Charan**  
Design and Direction: **Mohit Takalkar**  
Assistant Director:

**Chirag Khandelwal**

Cast: **Ipshita Chakraborty, Puneet Mishra, Mahesh Saini, Bharati Perwani, Bhaskar Sharma & Ajeet Singh Palawat**

Music: **Hakam Khan Kesumbla**

Lights: **Vikrant Thakar**

Costumes: **Devika Kale**

**Tickets:**

**Rs.540 & 450/- (Members)**

**Rs.600 & 500/- (Public)**

**(Plus GST)**

**Box Office now open**

**THEATRE**

**Old World**

**English Play (110 mins)**

**Experimental Theatre**

**Tuesday, 12th to Sunday, 17th –  
6.30 pm**

At a health resort, an eccentric woman and a taciturn doctor meet. Battle lines are immediately drawn. But as the encounters continue, an extraordinary friendship develops—a meditation on life, love, loss and laughter.

Written by **Aleksei Arbuzov**

Translated by **Ariadne Nicolaëff**

Directed by **Arghya Lahiri**

Cast: **Naseeruddin Shah and Ratna Pathak Shah**

Produced by **Motley**

**Tickets:**

**₹1,350, 900 & 720/- (Members)**

**₹1,500, 1,000 & 800/- (Public)**

**(Inclusive of GST)**

**Box Office now open**

**FILM**

**Goldfish**

**English Film with English Subtitles  
(113 mins)**

**Godrej Dance Theatre**

**Tuesday, 12th – 6.30 pm**

**The Indian Express Film Club  
screening in association with the  
National Centre for the Performing  
Arts & Splendid Films**



*Goldfish, 12th, Godrej Dance Theatre*

*Goldfish* is a drama movie that tells the story of a dementia-suffering mother, Sadhana Tripathi, and her daughter, Anamika Fields. The film explores themes of loss, resentment, childhood trauma, and the complexities of a mother-daughter dynamic. This is a story of two different women, from different generations, owning their individuality.

Director: **Pushan Kripalani**

Producer: **Amit Saxena**

Cast: **Kalki Koechlin, Deepti Naval, Rajit Kapur, Gordon Warnecke, Bharti Patel, Harry Attwell, Noa Bodner, Shanaya Rafaat, Ravin J. Ganatra, Komal Amin, Ashraf Ejibair, Omar Khan & Simon Anthony**

**The film screening will be followed  
by a discussion with Shubhra Gupta,  
Film Critic, *The Indian Express*.**

**Admission on a first-come-first-  
served basis. NCPA Members do not  
have to register and will be given  
entry on display of membership  
card.**

**INDIAN MUSIC**



*HarmoniX, 13th, Jamshed Bhabha Theatre*

**HarmoniX**

**A fusion music concert (105 mins)**

**Jamshed Bhabha Theatre**

**Wednesday, 13th – 6.30 pm**

**Presented by**

**Sahachari Foundation Events**

**Main Sponsors: DIA**

**Julius Baer**

Flute maestro **Rakesh Chaurasia** leads an ensemble featuring jazz legend **Louiz Banks** and percussion maestro **Selva Ganesh**, along with **Gino Banks**, **Sheldon D'Silva**, **Sangeet Haldipur**, **Satyajit Talwalkar** and **Sanjoy Das**. The presentation effectively blends diverse styles of classical Indian music with world music and jazz to create harmonious renditions.

#### Tickets:

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

**₹2,000, 1,600, 1,200, 800 & 500/- (Public)**

**(Inclusive of GST)**

**Box Office now open**

#### FILM



*Prabhat Pheri, 14th, Little Theatre*

### Reality Check

**Documentary Film Screening**

**Little Theatre**

**Thursday, 14th – 6.30 pm**

**An NCPA Presentation in collaboration with Cinema Collective**

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

#### Prabhat Pheri

**Hindi, Marathi and English Film with subtitles (89 mins)**

After more than two decades of producing some of the masterpieces of the early talkie era, the Prabhat Film Company (1929-1953) was liquidated and shut down. It was auctioned and exchanged various hands of private ownership in the following years. In 1959, the Government of India

acquired the campus and two years later, set up the Film Institute of India as an institution of training students in film practice.

*Prabhat Pheri* literally means the rounds made on foot by mendicants between daybreak and morning. During these 'rounds', they sing songs praising the divine, as they ask for alms. It is symbolic of a journey, and the intent of the film was to take a journey into the long tradition of the campus where film practice has flourished since the silent era in its various forms: as a film company, a studio for shooting Bombay films and a film school.

It was the 'ghosts' of the campus: the studios, the equipment; anecdotes, memories and tales heard from those to whom the space has been familiar for decades, dear and sacrosanct. And, lastly, the images themselves, of films and photographs, the 'ghosts' of past years, that we attempted to document.

Directed by **Jessica Sadana & Samarth Dixit**

Cinematography: **Jessica Sadana**

Editing: **Samarth Dixit**

Sound: **Gautam Nair**

Producer and Commissioning Editor: **Rajiv Mehrotra**

Executive Producers: **Tulika Srivastava & Ridhima Mehra**

**The film screening will be followed by a discussion.**

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

#### WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC



*Somerville College Choir, 14th, Tata Theatre*

### Somerville College Choir

**Tata Theatre**

**Thursday, 14th – 7.00 pm**

**An NCPA Presentation**

**Somerville College Choir** is young by Oxford standards but has achieved great success since its foundation. Professionally directed, the choir has released several albums, undertaken international tours and performed live on national radio in the U.K. However, the real strength of the choir is its freedom from convention and performing a diverse repertoire. For the concert in Mumbai, the Somerville College Choir will be performing a programme for choir and organ, conducted by **Will Dawes**.

#### Tickets:

**₹1,080, 720 & 450/- (Members)**

**₹1,200, 800 & 500/- (Public)**

**(Inclusive of GST)**

**Box Office now open**

#### DANCE



*Neha Mondal Chakravarty, 15th, Little Theatre*

### NCPA Umang

**Bharatanatyam by Neha Mondal Chakravarty**

**and**

**Kuchipudi by Vasanth Kiran**

**Little Theatre**

**Friday, 15th – 6.30 pm**

**An NCPA Presentation**

**Neha Mondal Chakravarty** is a Singapore-based Bharatanatyam danseuse. She studied the dance form at Kalakshetra where she secured a first class in her post-graduate studies. Her experience with Kalakshetra's repertory company, under the guidance of Leela Samson, transformed her into a subtle and thinking dancer. She is an empanelled "A" grade artiste with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, New Delhi. She has performed extensively in Southeast Asia, the U.S.A., the U.K. and Europe.

A versatile dancer, an exceptional





Vasanth Kiran, 15th, Little Theatre

Nattuvanar and a unique choreographer, **Dr. Vasanth Kiran** received Kuchipudi training from Vempatti Chinna Satyam, Vempatti Ravi Shankar and Guru Manju Barggavee. He is the Director of Nattyanidhi Institute of Performing Arts. Dr. Kiran has performed at various festivals in India and abroad, including the Hampi Utsav, Mysore Dasara, Konark Dance Festival and Khajuraho Dance Festival.

*Pandurangam Bhaje* is a multilingual solo dance drama in Kuchipudi, categorised as *eka patra kelika*, meaning solo performance by a female artiste. It is the journey of an ardent devotee of Lord Vithala beginning from South India to Pandharpur, where he realises that in all the states of South India, there exists a culture of praying to Vithala. As he reaches Pandharpur, his joy and ecstasy see no bounds with the *darshan* of Panduranga Vithala and Rukmini. The presentation concludes with an *abhanga*.

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

**Register now on**  
[www.bookmyshow.com](http://www.bookmyshow.com)

#### INTERNATIONAL MUSIC



Pixel, 16th, Jamshed Bhabha Theatre

### Pixel

**Company Käfig**  
**Contemporary Dance (70 mins)**  
**Jamshed Bhabha Theatre**  
**Saturday, 16th – 6.30 pm**

### An NCPA, Alliance Française de Bombay and French Institute in India Presentation

Seen now in about 30 countries around the world, *Pixel* is a roaring success and a mind-blowing mix of virtuoso hip-hop dance with cutting-edge digital projection. This production is a direct result of the creative dialogue between choreographer **Mourad Merzouki** (Company Käfig) and digital arts company Adrien M & Claire B. With stagecraft that has never been seen before, the result of this production is breathtaking choreography and imagery, offering a glimpse into the exciting possibilities at the border of the virtual world.

The French Institute in India (IFI) and the network of French Alliances have invited this production to India for the first time in New Delhi, Mumbai and Goa. During their time in India, the choreographer and the dancers will also be conducting auditions as well as masterclasses and workshops in all the cities (including Bengaluru), with Indian dancers in order to have a more real and valuable cross-cultural exchange. Further information can be found on the IFI's social media channels.

#### Tickets:

**₹2,700, 2,250, 1,800, 1,350, 900 & 450/- (Members)**

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

**(Inclusive of GST)**

**Box Office now open**

#### THEATRE

### Anuvab Pal – Homecoming

**Live at the NCPA**

**Stand-up Comedy (75 mins)**

**Godrej Dance Theatre**

**Saturday, 16th – 6.30 pm & 8.30 pm**

#### An NCPA Off-Stage Presentation

After three years and 300 shows in the U.K. and around the world, stand-up comedian **Anuvab Pal** returns, for two shows exclusively at the NCPA, his home stage where it all began in Mumbai. To tell you, he understands even less about the world than when



Anuvab Pal, 16th, Godrej Dance Theatre

he began. This is clean English stand-up comedy, not filled with social media slang, juvenile jokes, bad language or teenage nonsense. This is for you, whoever you are. Hopefully, above 35. A sane adult. Confused by everything in young digital India.

#### Tickets:

**₹450/- (Members)**

**₹500/- (Public)**

**Box Office now open**

#### INTERNATIONAL MUSIC

### A Festival of Festive Music, 2023

**Choral Music Concert**

**Tata Theatre**

**Saturday, 16th – 7.00 pm**

**Sunday, 17th – 6.30 pm**

#### The Stop-Gaps Cultural Academy

presents its 40th Festival of Festive Music, the longest-running celebration at the NCPA ushering in the Christmas season with song. Traditional and contemporary carols and Christmas songs will be rendered, beginning with a heart-warming overture and culminating in a grand finale. The two-day extravaganza features choirs and ensembles from all over India. The shows will be hosted by the inimitable **Karla Singh**.

**16th December: Faith and Harmony, The Harmonics (Chennai), The Paranjoti Academy Chorus, The Salvation Singers, The Santacruz Ensemble, Symphony Voices, The Stop-Gaps Junior Choral Ensemble and The Stop-Gaps Choral Ensemble.**

**17th December: The Bai Avabai F. Petit Girls' High School Choral Ensemble, Choral Riffs, Coimbatore Chamber Chorale, Happy Home Choral Singers, Santacruz Mar**

Thoma Syrian Church Choir, Singspirators, The Victory Chorus Line, The Stop-Gaps Junior Choral Ensemble and The Stop-Gaps Choral Ensemble.

#### Tickets:

₹1,350, 1,080, 900 & 765/- (Members)

₹1,500, 1,200, 1,000 & 850/- (Public)

(Inclusive of GST)

Box Office now open

### MULTI ARTS & PRESENTATION

## Kavya-Chitra Live Concert – an amalgamation of poetry and paintings in Marathi

Design and Direction: Deva Zinjad

Artists: Poet Deva Zinjad & Painter Sagarnath Gaikwad

Moderator: Sujata Jadhav

Little Theatre

Wednesday, 20th – 4.30 pm

### An NCPA Library Presentation

Kavya-Chitra Live Concert is an exquisite stage show that seamlessly blends the worlds of live poetry presentation and live painting. Designed and directed by the illustrious **Deva Zinjad**, this event will be presented by the dynamic duo



Deva Zinjad, 20th, Little Theatre



Sagarnath Gaikwad, 20th, Little Theatre

of Zinjad, the poet, and **Sagarnath Gaikwad**, the painter. It promises to be a one-of-a-kind experience for art and poetry enthusiasts that will take them on an emotional and visual journey.

An interview with Zinjad by Sujata Jadhav (Head-Libraries & Documentation Centre, NCPA) will delve into the world of poetry to gain insights from the poet.

With 23 years of experience in the world of poetry, Zinjad is a masterful presenter of the spoken word. He is a recipient of both state and national awards for his outstanding contributions to the field of poetry. Hailing from a humble background in the rural area of Garkhindi, Zinjad's life story is an inspiration. He is also a prominent columnist, writer, anchor and participant of *Hasya Samrat*, a popular comedy show on Zee Marathi. His book *Sagale Ulthvun Takale Pahije* has received prestigious state-level awards, including the Namdev Dhasal Sahitya Puraskar, Vishakha Sahitya Puraskar, G. DI. MA. Sahitya Puraskar, Kusumagraj Sahitya Puraskar, Balakavi Sahitya Puraskar and many more.

**Sagarnath Gaikwad**, with 25 years of experience as an artist, is celebrated for his impressive artworks. His artistic creations have graced the covers of numerous bestselling books, contributing a visual dimension to literary works. Hailing from the city of seven hills, Satara, Gaikwad draws inspiration from his cultural heritage. He has received multiple national- and state-level awards for his paintings. His art exhibitions have been hosted in prestigious venues like the Jehangir Art Gallery, Nehru Centre and the State Gallery of Fine Art in Hyderabad. He has organised art camps across India, contributing to the promotion of art as a medium of expression.

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

### SCREENING

## Life of Pi

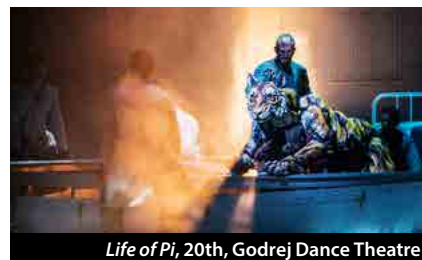
by Yann Martel

Theatre Screening

(Approx. 180 mins)

Godrej Dance Theatre

Wednesday, 20th – 6.00 pm



Life of Pi, 20th, Godrej Dance Theatre

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

Puppetry, magic and storytelling come together in this unique, Olivier Award-winning stage adaptation of Yann Martel's best-selling novel of the same name. After a cargo ship sinks in the middle of the vast Pacific Ocean, a 16-year-old boy named Pi is stranded on a lifeboat with four other survivors—a hyena, a zebra, an orangutan and a Royal Bengal tiger. Time is against them, and nature is harsh. The question is: who will survive?

Filmed live in London's West End and featuring state-of-the-art visuals, the epic journey of endurance and hope is brought to life in a breathtaking new way for cinema screens.

Adapted by **Lolita Chakrabarti**

Directed by **Max Webster**

#### Tickets:

₹450/- (Members)

₹500/- (Public)

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

### THEATRE



Under the Peepal Tree - Father-child, 23rd, Sunken Garden & Experimental Garden

## Under the Peepal Tree

Dad-Child Festival

Sunken Garden and Experimental Garden

Saturday, 23rd – 4.00 pm to 7.00 pm



## An NCPA & Grooming Babies Presentation

### Memories with Dad: Celebrating Connections at "Under the Peepal Tree" Dad-Child Festival

Join us in a one-of-a-kind festival celebrating the invaluable bond between fathers and their children, set amidst nature's grandeur. Evidence suggests that strong father-child connections pave the way for enduring relationships in adulthood. "Under the Peepal Tree" encapsulates this, offering fathers a golden opportunity to create lasting memories with their children.

Each year, the festival immerses participants in the rich tapestry of a chosen Indian state, igniting a sense of ethnic pride and cultural exploration. This year, we are taking you on a mesmerising journey to the heart of royal Rajasthan. Dive deep into Rajasthan's resplendent folk and literary culture with workshops, hands-on activities and captivating performances.

Whether you are yearning for a meaningful bonding experience, eager to uncover Rajasthan's treasures, or both, "Under the Peepal Tree" promises unforgettable moments. Come, revel in this unique cultural festivity.

Mark your calendars and bring your little ones for a heartwarming celebration.

#### Engagement Details:

##### Rajasthan Crafted Together

Dive into the artistic world of Rajasthan with your child and mould memories in our handicraft workshops.

##### Royal Gallop Adventures

Embrace the thrill of Rajasthan's royal pastimes, hobby-horsing your way through history and tradition.

##### Kaavad Chronicles

Journey through the enchanting tales of Rajasthan, narrated through the mesmerising Kaavad box.

##### Raga Rendezvous

Experience the melodic fusion of classical ragas and art, a symphony of

sound and colour crafted together.

##### Ghodi Grooves

Tap your feet to the pulsating rhythms of the Kachchhi Ghodi dance, a mesmerising performance.

Join us for an enriching cultural experience.

#### Age Group: 4 to 10 years

##### Pricing Details:

- 1) Child (Age 4 years - 10 years): ₹1,200/-  
- Includes all necessary workshop materials.  
- Grants access to all performances and games.  
- One parent can accompany at no extra cost.

- 2) Additional Adult: ₹500/-

- 3) Additional Child (Age below 4 years): ₹500/-

Tickets are now available at the NCPA Box Office and on [www.bookmyshow.com](http://www.bookmyshow.com)

## THEATRE



Aditi Mittal, 24th, Experimental Theatre

### Comedy For Comedy's Sake

Christmas Eve Special  
Stand-up Comedy  
English/ Hindi (100 mins)  
Experimental Theatre  
Sunday, 24th – 7.00 pm

An NCPA Off-Stage Presentation  
In collaboration with Comedy Ladder

Comedy Ladder and NCPA Off-Stage present Comedy for Comedy's Sake, a Christmas Eve special comedy show. With some of the best comics on the scene, this show is guaranteed

to leave you in splits. Whether you are naughty or nice, this show is for you because Santa Claus is coming to town.

Artistes include **Jeeya Sethi, Raunaq Rajani, Shreeja Chaturvedi, Prakhar Pramod, Pavitra Shetty, Mohd Suhel** & more

Host: **Aditi Mittal**

**Suggested age: 16+**

#### Tickets:

₹450/- (Members)

₹500/- (Public)

Box Office now open

## SCREENING



### Fleabag

Theatre Screening  
(Approx. 100 mins)  
Godrej Dance Theatre  
Wednesday, 27th – 6.00 pm

An NCPA-National Theatre Live (London) Presentation

*Fleabag* is a rip-roaring look at a woman living her sort of life. Fleabag may seem oversexed, emotionally unfiltered and self-obsessed, but that is just the tip of the iceberg. With family and friendships under strain and a guinea pig café struggling to keep afloat, Fleabag suddenly finds that she has nothing to lose.

Written and performed by  
**Phoebe Waller-Bridge**  
Directed by **Vicky Jones**

**Age: 15+**

#### Tickets:

₹450/- (Members)

₹500/- (Public)

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

# What's Next

January & February 2024

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

## WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC



Kunal Lahiry, 4th January, Experimental Theatre

### Piano Recital by Kunal Lahiry

Experimental Theatre

Thursday, 4th January – 7.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation

Indian-American pianist **Kunal Lahiry** is a current BBC New Generation Artist and recipient of the 2021 Carl Bechstein Foundation scholarship. Lahiry has performed at the Wigmore Hall, Kennedy Center, Pierre Boulez Saal, Festival d'Aix-en-Provence and Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, among others. His work has been broadcast on BBC Radio 3, Icelandic radio station Rás 1, Austrian radio station Ö1 and German radio station rbbKultur, and he has been featured on ARTE's *Hope@Home* and *Europe@Home* series hosted by violinist Daniel Hope. For Lahiry, this season includes appearances at the Philharmonie de Paris, Elbphilharmonie, Konzerthaus Berlin, Oxford Lieder Festival, BBC Philharmonic, Wigmore Hall and more.

Lahiry's programme at the NCPA will include works by Rachmaninoff, Ravel, Albéniz, Granados and more.

#### Tickets:

₹720 & 450/- (Members)

₹800 & 500/- (Public)

(Inclusive of GST)

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

## INTERNATIONAL MUSIC



Johanna Maria Iser, 7th January, Little Theatre

### The Mastery (Embodied vocal sovereignty)

An International Vocal Masterclass

Little Theatre

Sunday, 7th January – 4.00 pm to  
7.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation

In this unique workshop, international singer and speaker **Johanna Maria Iser** will be teaching her special breathing and vocal technique—The Embodied Voice Technique—to the audience for the very first time internationally.

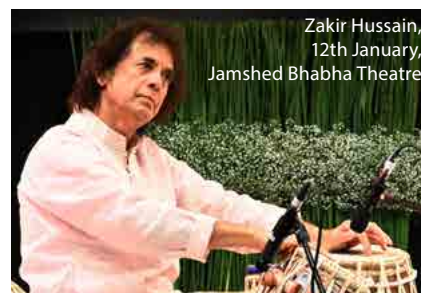
She will share her experience as a performer and vocal facilitator to improve the level of vocal skill and stage presence. Participants will analyse their individual breathing style and learn how they can improve the sound, density, presence, volume and control of their natural instrument. In the second part, they will be introduced to the art of stage training, which includes posture, movement, mindset and charisma on any kind of stage.

This workshop is for anyone who wants to work professionally with their voices (either speaking or singing) and has a desire for a deeper understanding and skillset regarding their voice.

Registration Fee: ₹2,000/-  
(Plus GST)

Registration starts from 9th November  
on [www.bookmyshow.com](http://www.bookmyshow.com).

## INDIAN MUSIC



### POWER PLAY

Zakir Hussain (tabla)

with

Niladri Kumar (sitar)

Jamshed Bhabha Theatre

Friday, 12th January – 6.30 pm

An NCPA Presentation in  
collaboration with Sahachari  
Foundation Events

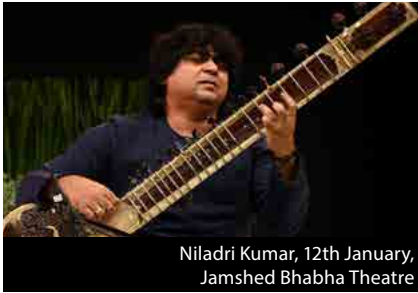
Main sponsors: HSBC, DIA Rolex

In recent times, tabla players have lent new dimensions to the aesthetics of an overall musical presentation. As a result, the tabla player is recognised as an integral part of a performance, and not a mere accompanist.

In this regard, the contribution made by **Zakir Hussain**, the internationally renowned tabla maestro, is indeed invaluable. He has introduced elements of jazz, fusion and world music into the tabla repertoire, thus widening its creative gamut. In this performance, the inimitable master will showcase the versatility of tabla by playing solo as well as providing rhythmic accompaniment to sitar.

A fifth-generation sitar player, **Niladri Kumar** has trained with his father, Kartick Kumar and other great masters, including the legendary maestro, Ravi Shankar. Kumar has had exposure to world music, and today, he is a prominent instrumentalist representing the younger generation of musicians.





Niladri Kumar, 12th January,  
Jamshed Bhabha Theatre

In this recital, the artistes will explore sonic space with each other, leaving aside the conventional hierarchy of either one of the instruments.

#### Tickets:

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

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

(Inclusive of GST)

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

#### INDIAN MUSIC



Alam Khan, 13th January, Tata Theatre

### A sarod recital by Alam Khan with Yogesh Samsi (tabla)

Tata Theatre

Saturday, 13th January - 6.30 pm

An NCPA Presentation in association  
with Kilachand Foundation

**Alam Khan**, son of the legendary sarod maestro, Ali Akbar Khan, is a sarod player, composer and producer based in the U.S.A. From the age of seven, he has trained in the *guru-shishya* tradition under his father's careful guidance. He had the privilege of accompanying his father from 1996 to 2006 and has now established himself as the face of a new generation of sarod players of the Maihar Senia *gharana*. His collaborations with both traditional and contemporary artistes of varying genres set him apart as a progressive artiste. For the last 13 years, Khan has also assumed the role of senior teacher at the Ali Akbar College

of Music in San Rafael, California, and has dedicated his life to preserving, performing and teaching this music to the world.

In his first performance at the NCPA, Khan will present traditional repertoire of the Maihar Senia *gharana*.

Accompanying him on the tabla is **Yogesh Samsi**, the illustrious disciple of tabla maestro Allarakha.

#### Tickets:

₹450, 360 & 270/- (Members)

₹500, 400 & 300/- (Public)

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

#### DANCE

### NCPA Mumbai Dance Season 2024

Experimental Theatre & Tata Theatre  
18th January to 4th February –  
5.00 pm onwards

The NCPA Mumbai Dance Season is a community-engagement initiative started by the NCPA in association with the classical dance community in the city. The initiative was launched in 2018 and is a celebration of dance. The opening event will be at the Experimental Theatre on 18th January 2024 and the season finale will be presented at the Tata Theatre on 4th February 2024.

Box Office for the Mumbai Dance  
Season: 9th December for Members  
& 12th December for Public

#### SCREENING

### X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X

by Anthony Davis

Opera Screening (Approx. 200 mins)

Godrej Dance Theatre

Saturday, 20th January – 4.00 pm

An NCPA-The Metropolitan Opera  
(New York) Presentation

**Anthony Davis's** groundbreaking and influential opera, which premiered in 1986, now arrives at the Met. Theatre luminary and Tony-nominated director of *Slave Play*, **Robert O'Hara** oversees a potent new staging that imagines Malcolm as an everyman whose story transcends time and space. An



X - The Life and Times of Malcolm X,  
20th January, Godrej Dance Theatre

exceptional cast of breakout artistes and young Met stars enliven the operatic retelling of the civil rights leader's life. Baritone **Will Liverman**, who triumphed in the Met premiere of *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*, is Malcolm, alongside soprano **Leah Hawkins** as his mother, Louise; mezzo-soprano **Raehann Bryce-Davis** as his sister Ella; bass-baritone **Michael Sumuel** as his brother Reginald; and tenor **Victor Ryan Robertson** as Nation of Islam leader Elijah Muhammad. **Kazem Abdullah** conducts the newly revised score, which provides a layered, jazz-inflected setting for the esteemed writer **Thulani Davis's** libretto.

Conductor: **Kazem Abdullah**

Cast: **Leah Hawkins, Raehann Bryce-Davis, Victor Ryan Robertson, Will Liverman & Michael Sumuel**

#### Tickets:

₹450/- (Members)

₹500/- (Public)

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

#### THEATRE



Main Pal Do Pal Ka Shayar Hoon,  
20th January, Tata Theatre

### Main Pal Do Pal Ka Shayar Hoon

Hindustani Play (120 mins)

Tata Theatre

Saturday, 20th January – 7.00 pm

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

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

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

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

Writers: **Mir Ali Husain & Himanshu Bajpai**

Director: **Danish Husain**

Creative Producer: **Amita Talwar**

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

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

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

**Tickets:**

**₹1,800, 1,350, 1,080, 900, 450 & 270/- (Members)**

**₹2,000, 1,500, 1,200, 1,000, 500 & 300/- (Public)**

**(Plus GST)**

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

## DANCE



*Lok Gatha (Women Speak), 25th January, Experimental Theatre*

## Lok Gatha

**Folk Dance by Shila Mehta and Maya Sapera**

**Experimental Theatre**

**Thursday, 25th January – 6.30 pm**

**An NCPA Presentation**

*Lok Gatha* is a platform provided by the NCPA to help promote and preserve tribal and folk traditions and rituals as well as provide livelihood opportunities to rural and tribal communities that are rich in performing arts. Renowned artistes Shila Mehta and Maya Sapera

will showcase an evening of Indian folk dances—inspired by a legendary figure and popular folklores.

**Maya Sapera** is the Founder and Artistic Director of the Maya Sapera Dance Company, a Belgium-based production company that collaborates with different dance and music groups. Sapera endeavours to bring Indian and Asian arts to Belgian audiences through unique productions combining different cultures in a creative and authentic way. The company has been promoting Kathak and Indian folk dances in Belgium and other countries. Sapera has also tied up with Shila Mehta's Nupur Zankar Academy to provide dance students with a certified degree in Kathak from India.



*Shila Mehta, 25th January, Experimental Theatre*

**Shila Mehta** is the Artistic Director and Founder of Nupur Zankar Academy of Performing Arts & Research Centre, Mumbai. Mehta has trained as a Kathak artiste under eminent gurus including Prahalad Das, Vijai Shankar and Birju Maharaj, to name a few. Mehta is renowned for her versatility and novel choreographies. She regularly performs and teaches abroad, including at the Maya Sapera Dance Company, Belgium, as a Resident Guru.

*Lok Gatha* will feature:

- **'Women Speak, Inspired by Mahasati'** – A legendary character from Indian literature who with her positive attitude overcame the challenges that life threw her way. Mehta and Sapera embark on a journey that melds Kathak with folk dance in a rare combination to present a brave, inspiring and compelling story.
- **Kalbeliya** – Performed as a celebration, it is an integral part of the 'Kalbelia' (snake charmer community) culture. Their dances and songs are a matter of pride and a marker of identity for the Kalbelias. The dance represents the creative adaptation of this community, its changing socio-

economic conditions and its role in Rajasthani rural society.

- **Terataali** – Performed by the 'Kamada' tribe of Rajasthan, it refers to the 13 manjiras (or cymbals) attached to different parts of the dancers' bodies and includes the balancing of earthen pots on the dancers' heads. A folk form, the dance is supported by music on the ektara (single-string instrument) while the rhythm is created by the manjiras.

**Tickets:**

**₹270 & 180/- (Members)**

**₹300 & 200/- (Public)**

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

## WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC

## Trio Amici

**Veronika Botos, viola**

**Péter Csongár, clarinet**

**Mónika Ruth Vida, piano**

**Experimental Theatre**

**Monday, 29th January – 7.00 pm**

**An NCPA Presentation**

**Supported by Liszt Institute, New Delhi**

**Péter Csongár** and **Veronika Botos**, musicians of the Hungarian State Opera, have been friends for 20 years, and were looking for a good pianist to play with them. After meeting **Mónika Ruth Vida** at a concert in 2018, Botos felt that she had found the right musical partner. Together, the three have built a repertoire with music from Frescobaldi and Couperin to classical, Romantic and contemporary music. The trio has played several concerts across Hungary and marks their India debut as a trio with this concert.

**Programme:**

Mozart: Kegelstatt Trio K. 498

György Orbán: Sonata for viola and piano

Kamilló Lendvay: *Best regards Mr. Goodman* for solo clarinet

Max Bruch: 8 Pieces for clarinet, viola and piano

**Tickets:**

**₹720, 450 & 270/- (Members)**

**₹800, 500 & 300/- (Public)**

**(Inclusive of GST)**

**Box Office: 26th December for**



Members & 29th December for Public

## INTERNATIONAL MUSIC

### Valentine's Day with Ilya Serov

Tata Theatre

Wednesday, 14th February – 7.00 pm

#### An NCPA Presentation

Award-winning trumpeter, singer, bandleader **Ilya Serov** will be bringing his smooth trumpet sounds and velvety vocals to the NCPA on 14th February. His passion for jazz knows no bounds. A talented young musician with an old soul, Serov will bring an infusion of imagination, vision and energy to the many shades of America's original musical art form. Possessing chops and charisma, his live performance will leave you spellbound. Serov expands his creative interests to take audiences in a new direction that blends smooth jazz with elements of soul and R&B and shows a connection between several generations of romance and jazz. Serov will perform for the audience a romantic rhapsody by presenting classic love songs.

#### Tickets:

₹1,350, 900, 765 & 450/- (Members)

₹1,500, 1,000, 850 & 500/- (Public)

(Plus GST)

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

## SCREENING

### Florencia en el Amazonas

by Daniel Catán

Opera Screening

(Approx. 135 mins)

Godrej Dance Theatre

Saturday, 24th February – 4.00 pm

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

Inspired by the magical realism of Gabriel García Márquez, Mexican composer **Daniel Catán's** 1996 opera tells the enchanting story of a Brazilian opera diva who returns to her homeland to perform at the legendary opera house of Manaus. She is also on a mission to search for her lost lover who has vanished into the jungle. The Met premiere stars

soprano **Ailyn Pérez** as Florencia Grimaldi, with Music Director **Yannick Nézet-Séguin** on the podium to lead a spellbinding new production by **Mary Zimmerman** that brings the mysterious and magical realm of the Amazon to the Met stage. A distinguished ensemble of artistes portrays the diva's fellow travellers on the riverboat to Manaus, including soprano **Gabriella Reyes** as the journalist Rosalba, bass-baritone **Greer Grimsley** as the ship's captain, baritone **Mattia Olivieri** as his enigmatic first mate, tenor **Mario Chang** as the captain's nephew Arcadio, and mezzo-soprano **Nancy Fabiola Herrera** and baritone **Michael Chioldi** as the feuding couple Paula and Álvaro.

Conductor: **Yannick Nézet Séguin**

Cast: **Ailyn Pérez, Gabriella Reyes, Nancy Fabiola, Mario Chang, Michael Chioldi, Mattia Olivieri & Greer Grimsley**

#### Tickets:

₹450/- (Members)

₹500/- (Public)

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

**SOI** symphony orchestra of india

### Spring 2024 Season

Patron: Citi India

### Orchestral Concerts

Friday, 2nd February – 7.00 pm  
Jamshed Bhabha Theatre

**Gergely Madaras**, conductor  
**Barry Douglas**, piano

Mendelssohn: Nocturne from  
*A Midsummer Night's Dream*  
Brahms: Piano Concerto No. 1  
Mendelssohn: Symphony No. 4 "Italian"

Tuesday, 6th February – 7.00 pm  
Jamshed Bhabha Theatre

**Gergely Madaras**, conductor

Brahms: *Academic Festival Overture*  
Kodály: *Dances of Galánta*  
Brahms: Symphony No. 2

Sunday, 11th February – 5.00 pm  
Jamshed Bhabha Theatre

**Martyn Brabbins**, conductor  
**Sasha Cooke**, soprano

Berlioz: Overture, Royal Hunt & Storm from *The Trojans*  
Berlioz: *Les nuits d'été (Summer Nights)*  
Saint-Saëns: Symphony No. 3 "Organ Symphony"

Friday, 16th February – 7.00 pm  
Jamshed Bhabha Theatre

**Martyn Brabbins**, conductor  
**Bryan Cheng**, cello

Wagner: Overture to *The Flying Dutchman*  
Elgar: Cello Concerto  
Beethoven: Symphony No. 6 "Pastorale"

#### Tickets:

₹3,600, 2,880, 2,520, 2,160, 1,800,  
1,440, 900 & 450/- (Members)

₹4,000, 3,200, 2,800, 2,400, 2,000,  
1,600, 1,000 & 500/- (Public)  
(Inclusive of GST)

### Recital

Saturday, 3rd February – 7.00 pm  
Jamshed Bhabha Theatre

**Barry Douglas**, piano

Schubert: Four Impromptus, Op. 90  
Tchaikovsky: Six Pieces, Op. 51, No. 5 & 6  
Tchaikovsky: Two Pieces, Op. 10, No. 1  
Tchaikovsky: Eighteen Pieces, Op. 72, No. 4  
Schubert: Piano Sonata in A minor, D. 845

#### Tickets:

₹1,350, 900 & 450/- (Members)

₹1,500, 1,000 & 500/- (Public)

(Inclusive of GST)

Box Office: 6th December for Benefactors/Friends of the SOI, 9th December for NCPA Members & 12th December for the Public

## Become a Member

### Dear Supporter of the Arts,

As part of our commitment to preserving and promoting India's rich and vibrant artistic heritage, as well as presenting new and innovative work by Indian and international artistes from a range of genres including Indian, International and Western Classical Music, Theatre & Films, Dance and Photography, we continue to give our audiences experiences that keep bringing them back to our theatres.

Be it taking the NCPA to parks across the city as part of our community outreach initiative, hosting our first youth-theatre festival, helping artistes grow with specialised training programmes, or investing in the country's cultural future by providing underprivileged children with access to the arts; it has been a fulfilling year. The return of audiences in record numbers—as is evident in our sold-out shows—further strengthens our commitment to Mumbai's cultural life. With a promise of excellence, the NCPA continues to produce, collaborate with and curate the best in the performing arts.

The latest addition to these achievements is the reopening of the Dilip Piramal Art Gallery after an extensive refurbishment. The state-of-the-art venue provides a holistic space for diverse exhibitions, workshops and other events.

In the Symphony Orchestra of India, the country has its first and only professional orchestra. The orchestra not only performs in India but has also undertaken several international tours in the UK, Switzerland, Oman, UAE and Russia. The NCPA and SOI have also presented large-scale productions including fully-staged operas. Apart from this, the SOI brings a professional level of teaching to gifted young musicians at the SOI Music Academy, with the aim of growing the number of Indian musicians in the SOI in the future.

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

Join us on this exciting journey by becoming a Friend of the SOI or a Silver member of the NCPA today! Be a part of a thriving community of art aficionados and avail of a range of special discounts and perks detailed in the panels on the back. You'll also be first in line for tickets and be invited to exclusive Members-only events throughout the year. Don't miss out on the joy of live performing arts at the NCPA!

Please turn over for the Membership form.





# Membership Application Form

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

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

☐ Silver member of the NCPA

☐ Friend of the SOI

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

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

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

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

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

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

## NCPA Silver Membership (inclusive of GST):

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

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

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

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

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

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









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











# Events at a glance

December 2023

Day	Date	Time	Event	Venue
Fri	1st	6.30 pm	Music Mirror: A-6 AKASH GANGA Documentary screening on Annapurna Devi Produced by Annapurna Devi Foundation, Mumbai Directed by Nirmal Chander	Godrej dance theatre
Sat	2nd	3.00 pm & 5.00 pm	Saatvi Pass Children's Marathi Play	Godrej dance theatre
Sat	2nd	7.00 pm	The Devil Wears Bataa English Play	TATA THEATRE
Sat	2nd	7.30 pm	Yeh Raaste Hain Pyaar Ke Hindi Play	EX THEATRE
Sat	2nd	7.30 pm	Stand up with D Girls Hindi and English	Godrej dance theatre
Sun	3rd	6.30 pm	Jis Lahore Nahi Dekhya Hindi Play	EX THEATRE
Wed	6th	6.30 pm	Short Film Corner Short Film Screenings	LITTLE THEATRE
Wed	6th	7.00 pm	NCPA Pravaha Dance Festival 2023 (6th to 8th December) 'Antigone, Interrupted' by Scottish Dance Theatre	EX THEATRE
Thu	7th	6.30 pm	Manodharpan Odissi by Sharmila Biswas & Troupe and Converse Kuchipudi by Amrita Lahiri & Bharatanatyam by Pavitra Bhat	TATA THEATRE
Fri	8th	6.30 pm	Bharatanatyam by Mahati Kannan and Parvathy Menon & Shijith Nambiar	EX THEATRE
Thu	7th	6.30 pm	Nad Ninad: From Our Archives Listening Session on the Artistry of Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi Guided by Dr. R.K. Sriramkumar Supported by Amritha Murali and Sriraam Subbaraman	LITTLE THEATRE
Fri to Sun	8th to 10th	12.00 noon to 8.00 pm	The Sketch Party Annual 2023 Group Painting Exhibition by The Thursday Sketch Party	FRANK GALLERY
Fri	8th	6.30 pm	Movies Under the Stars Roman Holiday (1953) Film Screening	LITTLE THEATRE
Fri	8th	7.30 pm	Jo Dooba So Paar Hindi, Urdu, Persian	TATA THEATRE
Sat	9th	4.00 pm	Dead Man Walking by Jake Heggie Opera Screening	Godrej dance theatre
Sat	9th	6.30 pm	Citi NCPA Aadi Anant: From Here to Eternity (9th & 10th December 2023 and 7th January 2024) Zakir Hussain (tabla) with Sabir Khan (sarangi) and Debopriya Chatterjee (bansuri)	TATA THEATRE
Sun	10th	6.30 pm	Remembering the Divas Conceived, curated and presented by Kaushiki Chakraborty	jb



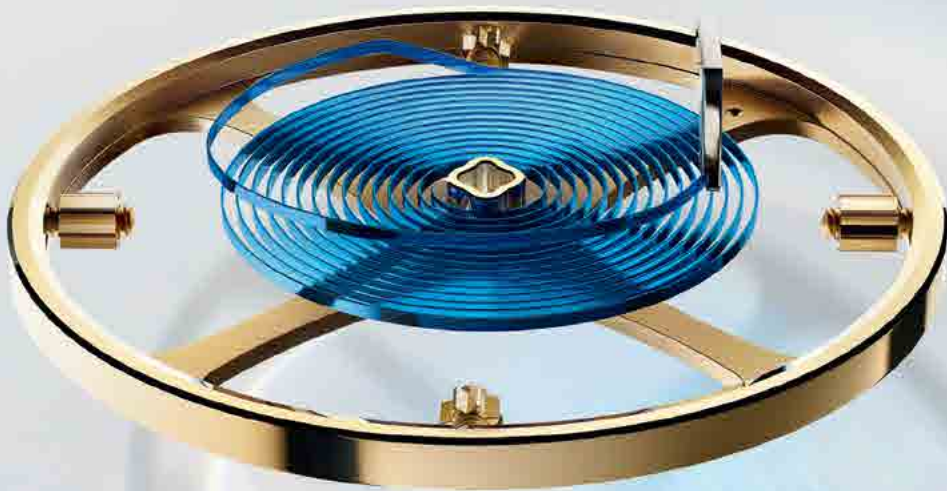
 THEATRE	 DANCE
 INDIAN MUSIC	 MULTI ARTS & PRESENTATIONS
 INTERNATIONAL MUSIC	 FILMS / SCREENINGS
 WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC	 PHOTOGRAPHY & EXHIBITION

Day	Date	Time	Event	Venue
Sun	7th Jan 2024	6.30 pm	<i>Tapur Tupur: Bachche, Bachpan aur Bachpana</i> Children's poetry by Gurudev Tagore with Gulzar, Shantanu Moitra, Shaan, Rekha Bhardwaj, Mahalakshmi Iyer, a group of children and others	
Sun	10th	4.00 pm	<i>Sakharam Binder</i> English Play	
Sun	10th	7.30 pm	<i>Hunkaro</i> Marwari, Hindi, Haryanvi, Awadhi Play	
Tue to Sun	12th to 17th	6.30 pm	<i>Old World</i> English Play	
Tue	12th	6.30 pm	<i>Goldfish</i> English Film with English Subtitles	Godrej dance theatre
Wed	13th	6.30 pm	HarmoniX A fusion music concert	
Thu	14th	6.30 pm	Reality Check Documentary Film Screening	
Thu	14th	7.00 pm	Somerville College Choir	TATA THEATRE
Fri	15th	6.30 pm	NCPA <i>Umang</i> Bharatanatyam by Neha Mondal Chakravarty and Kuchipudi by Vasanth Kiran	
Sat	16th	6.30 pm	<i>Pixel</i> Company Käfig Contemporary Dance	
Sat	16th	6.30 pm & 8.30 pm	Anuvab Pal - Homecoming Live at the NCPA Stand-up Comedy	Godrej dance theatre
Sat Sun	16th 17th	7.00 pm 6.30 pm	A Festival of Festive Music, 2023 Choral Music Concert	TATA THEATRE
Wed	20th	4.30 pm	Kavya-Chitra Live Concert – an amalgamation of poetry and paintings in Marathi Design and Direction: Deva Zinjad Artists: Poet Deva Zinjad & Painter Sagarnath Gaikwad Moderator: Sujata Jadhav	
Wed	20th	6.00 pm	<i>Life of Pi</i> by Yann Martel Theatre Screening	Godrej dance theatre
Sat	23rd	4.00 pm to 7.00 pm	Under the Peepal Tree Dad-Child Festival	Sunken Garden & Experimental Garden
Sun	24th	7.00 pm	Comedy for Comedy's Sake Christmas Eve Special Stand-up Comedy English/Hindi	
Wed	27th	6.00 pm	<i>Fleabag</i> Theatre Screening	Godrej dance theatre



**National Centre for the Performing Arts**  
NCPA Marg, Nariman Point, Mumbai - 400 021, India.  
T: +91 22 6622 3737 | [www.ncpamumbai.com](http://www.ncpamumbai.com) | [www.soimumbai.com](http://www.soimumbai.com)





## WHY BLUE?

**This is what our Parachrom hairspring looks like.** It is an essential guardian of the watch's chronometric precision. Unveiled in 2005, entirely designed and manufactured in-house, it nears the apex of what metal alloy hairsprings can offer. The scale of the image might throw you off, though. Its edge is thinner than a single strand of hair and its weight is merely a fraction of a pearl's. Moreover, once coiled, its diameter does not exceed a few millimetres. It is shielded from outside aggressions by a case so hermetic it was aptly named "Oyster". Needless to say, it is a rare occurrence for any eyes to be laid on the Parachrom. So why

would we be concerned by its colour? Because this hue of blue is true to our tradition of watchmaking excellence. It is the exact colour taken by our unique alloy of niobium, zirconium and oxygen when it has been anodized to stop the process of oxidation. This blue is essential to us, because it symbolizes the long-lasting performances which we hold ourselves to. This hairspring is insensitive to magnetic fields, unwavering in the face of temperature variations, and resistant to shocks as to corrosion. Therefore, each Rolex equipped with a Parachrom hairspring will tick at a most regular and perpetual beat.

*#Perpetual*

**SVPL**

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ROLEX BOUTIQUE



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