

 NCPA

NOVEMBER 2023

ON Stage[®]

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Giants of Jazz

AT THE NCPA
INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

THILO WOLF BIG BAND

EMMET COHEN FT.
BENNY BENACK III

ALFREDO RODRIGUEZ TRIO

JANE MONHEIT

Arundhathi Subramaniam
On curating **GODDESS**

The Symphony Orchestra of India
Embarks on a tour of the UK

Connections India
Creating young thespians



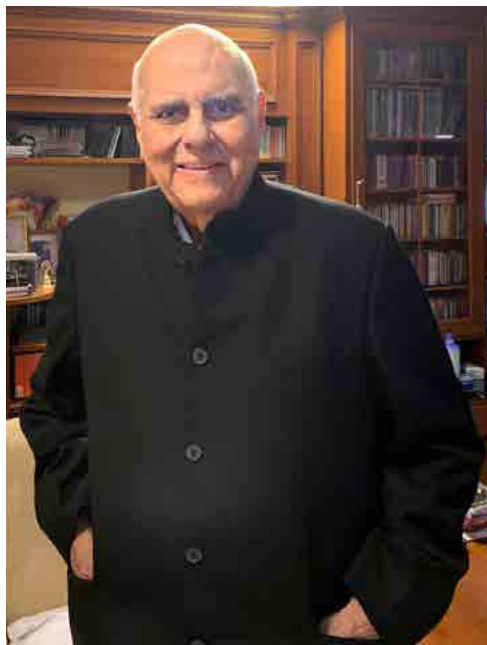
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Chairman's Note



November is a time to take stock. It is a period of understanding as to how one should follow a celebrity season, particularly with a prestigious U.K. tour of the SOI coming up.

The activity of our genres is increasing. The well-loved International Jazz Festival is here with giants of music performing for three days. Theatre is starting to make its presence felt. Indian Music and Dance are, as usual, producing superior performances month after month.

Whatever may be said about our lack of space and/or rehearsal facilities, the wonder of many of the genres is the consistently high standard of performance we offer to our members and the public.

We still have issues of better management of our events, lack of adequate publicity of our performances. However, our core is in safe and good hands. That is, our kitchen is turning out great fare but the serving needs further polishing and savoir faire.

The accompaniments to our performances need to match the quality that we offer onstage. This is not to say we are poor in this area, but we do have to move beyond standard responses. A little challenge everywhere wouldn't be a bad idea.

Exciting plans are ahead for the next few seasons, and it will raise the standard even further. I hesitate to announce them right now because they still need some areas of confirmation and finishing the quality of some of our future events.

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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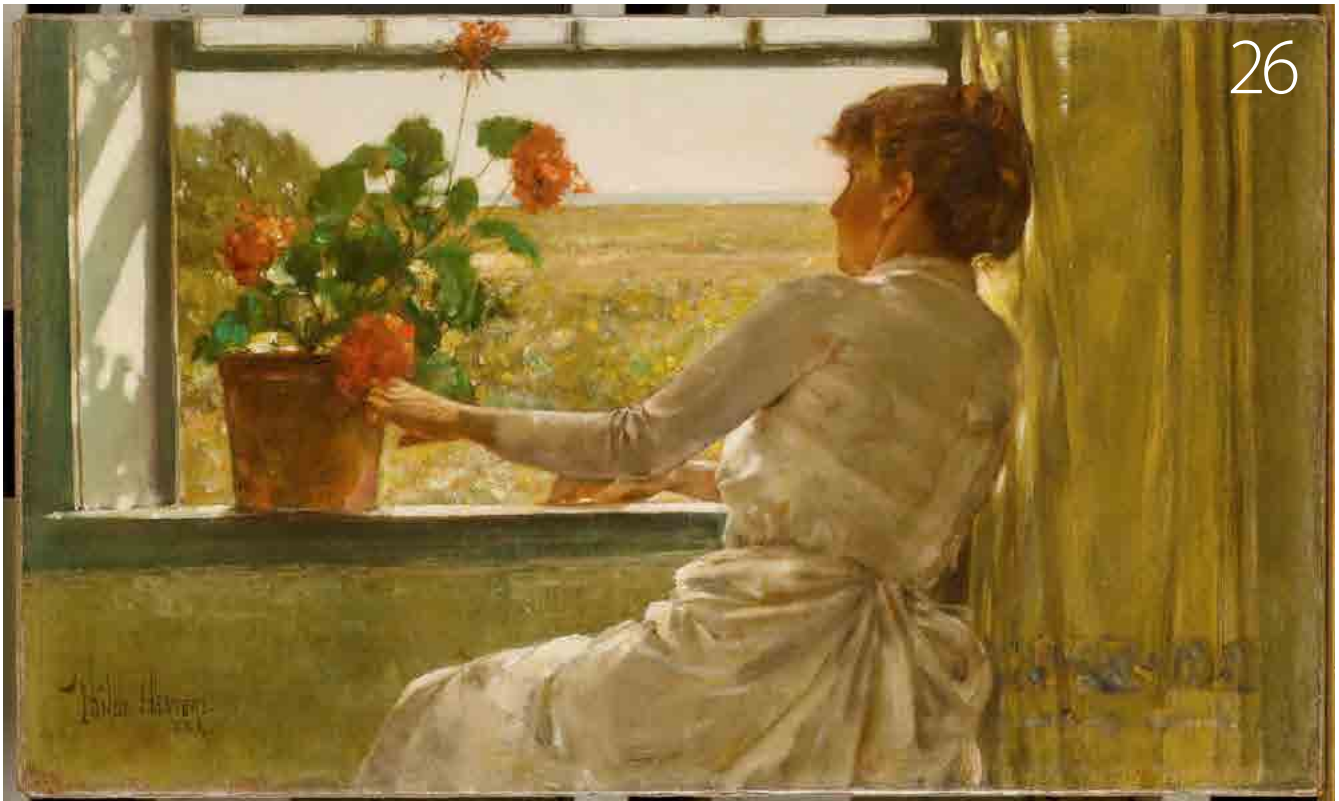
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Big Bands and Latin American BEATS



Lovers of jazz can expect fresh originals, much-loved standards, beautiful ballads and Brazilian music along with Cuban-inspired tunes at this year's edition of the NCPA International Jazz Festival.

By Narendra Kusnur

SASCHA P. ULL

The Thilo Wolf Big Band

At last year's edition of the NCPA International Jazz Festival, German pianist Thilo Wolf enthralled the audience at the Tata Theatre. He played on the final day of the festival, accompanied by his quartet and vocalist Johanna Iser. Besides the originals 'Tessa's Waltz' and 'Coke Masala Blues', the repertoire included compositions of George Gershwin, Benny Goodman and Duke Ellington.

Wolf and Iser are returning to open the festival this year, but this time they will be accompanied by a big band, comprising four saxophones, three trombones, three trumpets, piano, bass and drums, in addition to singer-guitarist Torsten Goods and vibraphonist Florian Bührich. Their show will flag off what promises to be a three-day jazz extravaganza. On the second evening, popular American pianist Emmet Cohen will be joined by trumpeter and vocalist Benny Benack III, bassist Philip Norris and drummer Kyle Poole. The final day has a double billing, beginning with Cuban pianist Alfredo Rodriguez and his trio, and culminating with a set by American vocalist Jane Monheit.

From the schedule, it is evident that there will be a wide variety. Wolf will focus on big-band grandeur, Cohen will play many originals, including some from his albums *Future Stride* and *Uptown in Orbit*. He will also play some recognisable tunes after he can "see the room, feel the audience and be like a live DJ". For his part, Rodriguez blends jazz piano styles with hints of his Cuban heritage. Monheit says the Mumbai set will "include tunes that span my career, lots of swinging, a few great ballads and plenty of beautiful Brazilian music."

Thinking big

Each musician has a different approach to live performance. Wolf, for instance, says, "Big bands have fascinated me since childhood. It's a very special sound, with a power and dynamic of its own. Count Basie once said the most beautiful instrument is the big band, and I can only agree." Naturally, Basie is one musician who created an impact on Wolf, the other being Glenn Miller. Inspired by his father's record collection, he decided to get deeper into jazz, especially big bands.

While Wolf's set is usually dominated by standards, he loves writing original music too. 'Tessa's Waltz' is for his daughter, though he wrote it much before her birth. 'Coke Masala Blues' was a completely spontaneous idea. He recalls, "The night before the concert, we tried the drink of the same name. We decided we would rather have Coke and the spicy masala separately, but Johanna spontaneously sang it in the concert."

The 56-year-old pianist and bandleader says that while Iser is excited about their second show, the presence of Torsten Goods is a bonus. "Both are exceptional singers, and moreover, Torsten is also a brilliant guitarist. Florian Bührich will continue in the tradition of great vibraphonists such as Lionel Hampton or Terry Gibbs," he says, adding, "What will not change from last time is the overall joy of playing."

Great influences

The other groups are making their debut at the festival.

Miami-born pianist Cohen will play here a year after the sensational performance of his idol, Jamaican pianist Monty Alexander. He recalls, "I saw Monty when I was 13 or 14. I loved the way he played and smiled, and wanted to be like him."

Now 33, Cohen started learning piano at the age of three. He says, "I was trained under the Suzuki Method and that's interesting because it teaches you to play by ear, which lends itself to becoming a jazz musician. In jazz, you have to be able to hear things, internalise them, be able to respond quickly and play back." Having become a fan of Alexander, Cohen naturally drifted towards Oscar Peterson. "I fell in love with the language of jazz, and the way musicians communicate with each other. I got to hear all styles, though bebop appealed to me the most. I got into big band music, old-school stride piano and even later-day players like Brad Mehldau, Keith Jarrett, Chick Corea and McCoy Tyner," says Cohen, who also plays the Hammond B-3 Organ.

In 2016, Cohen started producing a series of albums, live interviews and performances as part of the *Masters Legacy Series*. Here, he has played with drummers Jimmy Cobb and Albert 'Tootie' Heath, bassist Ron Carter and saxophonists Benny Golson

Thilo Wolf will focus on big-band grandeur, Emmet Cohen will play originals and standards, Alfredo Rodriguez will blend jazz piano styles with his Cuban heritage and Jane Monheit's set will include lots of swinging, great ballads and beautiful Brazilian music

and George Coleman. The latest volume features saxophonist Houston Person, who performed at the NCPA's Jamshed Bhabha Theatre in 2013. Cohen says, "The thought for the series came after I sat with Albert Heath when I was around 21 and he told us stories about the legends. I got a feeling for the music from his stories. So, the idea is to carry on the legacy and introduce it to the young generation."

Cuba meets Miami

Cuban-born pianist Rodriguez's latest album *Coral Way* is inspired by Miami, which is also Cohen's city of birth. Though the album embodies his Cuban roots, the sound is a result of his move from Los Angeles to Miami, where his family settled after the birth of his daughter. "I play what I live, and *Coral Way* is my new life. It is the name of the street I have been living in for

SASCHAP LTL (WOLF, B. BÜHRICH, GOODS)



Thilo Wolf



Johanna Iser



Torsten Goods



Florian Bührich



Emmet Cohen



Jane Monheit



Benny Benack III

At Alfredo Rodriguez's Mumbai show, one may expect tunes from his albums, including 'Guantanamera', which earned him a Grammy nomination in 2015 for best instrumental arrangement

the past three years," he says.

Born and raised in Havana, Cuba, 37-year-old Rodriguez's love for music blossomed early. His father was a singer, but since they did not have a piano at home, he painted piano keys on the dining table to practise scales. Though he studied percussion and piano, his passion for jazz was ignited when an uncle gifted him a record of pianist Keith Jarrett. In 2006, he was invited to represent Cuba at the Montreux Jazz Festival, where he impressed legendary producer Quincy Jones. He thus got invited to play in the U.S., and eventually relinquished his Cuban citizenship.

Rodriguez has released six albums under Mack Avenue Records. At the Mumbai show, one may expect tunes from these records, including 'Guantanamera', which earned him a Grammy nomination in 2015 for best instrumental arrangement.

Vocal verve

While the first three acts will be led by pianists, the

GABRIELA GABRIELAA (COHEN); KHAREN HILL (MONHEIT); ANNA WEBBER (RODRIGUEZ)



Alfredo Rodriguez

finale will feature some immortal standards by vocalist Monheit. "My special guest will be the legendary Joel Frahm, one of the greatest tenor players of all time. We've worked together for well over 20 years and this will be an extremely joyful reunion," she says about the saxophonist and fellow New Yorker.

The 45-year-old singer says jazz was her focus from early childhood. "I started singing professionally at 16 and was making records by 22. Ella Fitzgerald is my queen. She's been a massive influence on me, not only as a musician, but as a person. She spent her life spreading love with her music, and that's all I want to do," she points out.

One of Monheit's popular albums is the 2016 release *The Songbook Sessions: Ella Fitzgerald*. In 2021, she released *Come What May*, a collection of jazz standards including 'Lush Life', 'The Nearness of You' and 'My Funny Valentine'. She says, "I think it's really important to be sincere when you sing a standard. So I chose songs that reflected where I was at the time, newly in my 40s."

The singer's other love is Brazilian music, and she cites composer and performer Ivan Lins as her hero. She elaborates, "When I went on my first Brazilian tour, Ivan came to see me sing. I recorded the 'Love Dance' duet with him, and now write English lyrics for him. I'm prouder of my work with him than of anything else I've done."

Monheit's mix of standards and Brazilian music should act as a perfect summation of three days of musical magic. The stage is set for some sublime jazz. ■

The NCPA International Jazz Festival will be celebrated on 24th, 25th and 26th November at the Tata Theatre.

SUCH A LONG JOURNEY

Much has transpired between the SOI's maiden tour of the U.K. in 2019 and its upcoming one this November and December. Mr. Khushroo N. Suntook, Chairman, NCPA, reflects on the orchestra's growth in the intervening years.



Not too long after the Symphony Orchestra of India's tour of the U.K. in 2019, the dreaded Covid-19 pandemic was declared. It was fortunate that we were able complete the tour musically before it all came to a standstill.

Since then, after intense preparation by our musicians, a stronger and more mature set of players has emerged. Thereafter, a succession of concerts at a higher level than before kept emerging and in a way, unashamedly, more and more tried-and-true professionals were keen on joining our orchestra.

This is a common phenomenon when a group of musicians comes together to



During the SOI's U.K. tour of 2019, Mr. Khushroo Suntook was gifted an autographed baton of the great conductor Georg Solti by his wife Lady Valerie Solti

was so pleasantly surprised with the result that he has planned to re-visit us soon.

The Autumn 2023 Season was a great success assisted by the excitement around the NCPA's commissioning of a triple concerto for the tabla, sitar and bansuri played by the three great maestros—Zakir Hussain, also the composer, Niladri Kumar and Rakesh Chaurasia. The brilliant playing was enhanced by our virtuoso Marat Bisengaliev and lent lustre to the season. We can safely say that it was one of the most successful seasons of the SOI in living memory. The same forces are now preparing to go to the U.K. for an eight-city tour.

“Khushroo N Suntook, co-founder of the orchestra... recognises the need for the orchestra to have a signature piece that represents a meeting of the classical traditions of south Asia and the West”

— Simon Broughton, *Financial Times*, UK

A mention should be made of the progress of our academy of music where the standard of playing is improving at a rapid pace. Let us hope that soon many of the students will be in the main orchestra.

Chamber music played by our resident musicians is proving popular and their dedicated audience, particularly at the Prithvi Theatre, bears testimony to the power of music to draw people with all sorts of tastes and inclinations. We are proud of our association with Kunal Kapoor and his team.

The integration of music with other arts and sports is gaining ground and the recently planned 'Olympics in Reel Life' has found a fit place in the NCPA.

We are not all things for everybody, which is something we are criticised for, but we hope to be many things to many. ■



Simon Broughton, U.K.-based writer, filmmaker and Editor-in-Chief of the magazine *Songlines*, wrote an article on the Triple Concerto and the international reach of the SOI, which appeared in the weekend edition of the *Financial Times*, U.K.

develop their own style and, if sufficiently accomplished musicians may not be available locally, international players are gathered. And this is no shame because our own players, developed locally, start playing at a higher level. Needless to the say, the same applies to the young players who join us from the academy. Perhaps, we should lay that criticism to rest.

Examples of this sort exist even in that most British of games, football, where many of their top premier league teams have only a handful of Englishmen and are populated by champions from Europe, South America, etc.

The quality of our orchestra has often surprised musicians who come to either conduct or play with the SOI. A prime example was the visit of Zubin Mehta. He



The SOI's performance at the Usher Hall, Edinburgh



She, Who Has Always Been

The all-embracing and omnipresent goddess tradition offers wisdom and inspiration to believers and non-believers. Cultural curator, poet and author **Arundhati Subramaniam** gives a rundown of what to expect at GODDESS: A Celebration of the Divine Feminine, which will be presented at the NCPA this month.

SHUTTERSTOCK

A couple of decades ago, I might have dismissed the notion of the Divine Feminine as fluff. Of course, goddesses make for arresting iconography. And yes, they appeal to a feminist need for a less male-dominated theology. But that, I might have argued, is ideological window-dressing. It has taken time (and a deepening engagement with poetry and spirituality) to uncover the deeper mainsprings of the Goddess archetype.

The most significant thing about

goddesses is their ubiquity. Behind every successful male god, one might say, there is a woman. Dig just a little past the mythological topsoil of every culture, from the Mesopotamian, Egyptian, South Asian and African to the Middle Eastern, Norse, native American and aboriginal Australian, and a torrent of goddess names pours forth. Cultures everywhere have celebrated the life-sustaining aspects of creation as goddesses. But centuries of prejudice and accretions of patriarchy have

unfortunately obscured the radiance of these female wisdom traditions.

However, a subtle but unmistakable atmospheric shift seems underway. And this is not just New Age rhetoric. Or psychobabble. Or political sloganeering. And perhaps, this is not surprising. For the primal Mother figure seems to touch some elemental recess in the human psyche. We may forget her, trivialise her, reduce her to a mere handmaiden or consort to a male god. But she is not new to us. Once we encounter her, we realise we have always known her. No re-introductions are required.

She seems to return to remind us of what we have too long forgotten—that we need to awaken from adolescent games of territoriality and exclusion. From old agendas of domination and subjugation. From our old fascination with power games. She reminds us that we live on

The Goddess represents the muck and magic, the heartbreak and beauty of creation itself and in honouring her, this festival adds its voice to the rising chorus that seeks to reclaim a more balanced and less one-sided approach to our creative, cultural and spiritual inheritance

a shared planet. As we awaken to the imperative of collective ecological responsibility, her earth-nourished wisdom becomes more urgent than ever. The Goddess returns to remind us of our interdependence. Of our plurality. Our inherent equality.

For her devotees, she is divine creator and protector. For those who seek self-realisation, she is guide, mirror and key. For those who seek a more just, gender-balanced, environmentally sustainable world, she is inspiration and metaphor. For a humanity seeking to recover

from a brutalising history of skewed power equations, she is equaliser and balancer. For those seeking to repair psychic wounds and ancestral pain, she is healer and harmoniser. For dreamers, seekers, artists, she is a reminder of the ultimate mystery. For the lost, she is home. She is timeless *and* topical. She always has been.

And so, GODDESS—a tribute to the Divine Feminine by a gamut of creative practitioners.

* * *

When I envisioned this festival, I knew it had to be experiential. For the Goddess is always an invitation to turn thought into thinginess, idea into incarnation. She invites us not merely to think—but to feel, to trust the innate intelligence of body and heart. I did not want us to merely talk *about* Goddess-lore; I wanted us to participate, if possible, in some of her delirium.

And so, a tapestry of metre, melody and movement in multiple modes—encompassing performance, reading, lecture, discussion and workshop—began to unfold.

It was fitting to open the festival with a talk by Devdutt Pattanaik who has written extensively on gender in Indian mythology. He discusses the Goddess as metaphor in the cultural and mythic traditions of the subcontinent—a means of imbuing an idea with gender, infusing a philosophical concept with glorious particularity.

We move seamlessly from context to text. The tantric poem, the 'Saundarya Lahari', is both a panegyric to the supreme Goddess, Shakti, as well as a key to self-transformation. It represents an interesting weave of geometry and poetry, of yantra and mantra, as it were. Poet-translator Mani Rao introduces this poem to Shakti, the supreme Goddess, without whom Shiva is incomplete.

Recently, as I worked on an anthology around women in sacred poetry, I grew increasingly fascinated by goddess poems from various parts of the country. Poet-translators, Sampurna Chattarji and K. Srilata, graciously agreed to try their hand at translating these. In a

When I envisioned this festival, I knew it had to be experiential ... I did not want us to merely talk about Goddess-lore; I wanted us to participate, if possible, in some of her delirium

spirited panel discussion, they join Raoto discuss two fascinating poets, Ramprasad Sen and Subramania Bharati. The session traverses wide chronological, linguistic and sacred terrain, journeying from an eighth-century Sanskrit text to Shakti to 18th-century Bengali poetry to Kali and 20th-century Tamil poetry to Mother Parashakti and the little girl, Kannamma.

The session at the Experimental Theatre opens with a powerful invocation by Kathak dancer Aditi Bhagwat (choreographed by Sanjukta Wagh)—an exploration of the Goddess in and through the body. The focus then zooms from the archetypal to the local. After the earlier encounter with canonical figures, it is now time to meet a fiercely non-mainstream folk divinity. In a performance of storytelling and music, Shilpa Mudbi introduces audiences to a larger-than-life figure, Yellamma, who embraces all classes, castes and genders. Her ancient hilltop shrine in Saundatti still draws the faithful in hordes. The wildly inclusive deity of devadasis and transgenders is breathed into life by an electrifying performer.

Indian goddess traditions cannot be invoked without an acknowledgement of Tantra—a worldview that sees all physical reality as inherently sacred, an emanation of Shakti. On Day Two, actor and dancer Anitha Santhanam conducts a body-centred workshop of exploration and discovery. Inspired by an unusual contemporary book, *The Tantra Chronicles*, this unique workshop is rooted in her deepening engagement with the

body as a site of living wisdom.

American performance poet, Annie Finch, then steps in with her session, 'Metre, Magic, Mother', in which she introduces audiences to a gamut of global goddesses—from Inanna to Astarte, Demeter to Diana—reminding us of the many ways in which the art of poetry is linked to sacred female mystery.

The focus now draws closer home. Two wonderful stage actors, Shernaz Patel and Anahita Uberoi, join me in unleashing a hectic medley of poems, translated from languages as varied as Pali, Khasi, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Gujarati and Marathi. This is our homage to an avalanche of local and pan-Indian goddesses, some celebrities, others relatively unknown.

The finale is a grand double-bill concert. Hindustani vocalist Anol Chatterjee takes us into the diverse tones and musical flavours of the classic Bengali panegyricists of Kali—Ramprasad Sen, Kamalakanta Bhattacharya, Kazi Nazrul Islam, among others. This is followed by a joyous explosion of Gujarati *garba* music by Manasi Parikh, Parthiv Gohil and their ensemble.

* * *

She is auspiciousness and terror. Light and dark. Benevolence and fury. Youth and dotage. Beauty and horror. The beginning and the end.

The faces of the Goddess are many. Collectively, they anchor us in a less hierarchical, more plural, more inclusive experience of life itself. What the Goddess represents is not an aloof, dispassionate creator. She represents the muck and magic, the heartbreak and beauty of creation itself. In honouring her, this festival adds its voice to the rising chorus that seeks to reclaim a more balanced, less one-sided approach to our creative, cultural and spiritual inheritance.

Welcome to GODDESS—a celebration of she who can never be understood, but who is somehow, unfailingly, *recognised*. ■

GODDESS: A Celebration of the Divine Feminine will be presented on 3rd and 4th November at the Godrej Dance Theatre and the Experimental Theatre.

An NCPA & Mehli Mehta Music Foundation presentation,
supported by Austrian Cultural Forum, New Delhi and Goethe Institut, Max Mueller Bhavan, Pune

Amatis Trio

Mengjie Han piano
Lea Hausmann violin
Samuel Shepherd cello

Beethoven Piano Trio Op. 1 No. 3
Liszt "Tristia" from *Vallée d'Obermann*
Josef Suk Elegie
Arensky Piano Trio No. 1



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Sophomore Season

Rehearsals are in full swing for the second edition of Connections India, the NCPA's youth theatre programme in association with the National Theatre in London. We speak to the people working behind the scenes.

After a hugely successful first edition, Connections India, the annual youth theatre festival, returns with a grander vision. The six-month-long journey will culminate in a vibrant showcase in the clement month of January at the Experimental Theatre, beginning the year with a celebration of theatre, new writing and collaboration.

A rewarding outcome of its long-standing association with the National Theatre in London, the NCPA is part of an extensive network of 300 theatre companies that shine a spotlight on over 6,000 young people every year with Connections. Every effort of the initiative boils down to the simple yet lofty objective of unfettered education. The programme proudly proclaims its resolve to create a space for theatre catered to young people by young people.

Connections India includes 10 participant schools, a step up from the eight schools last year. Committed to making theatre inclusive and accessible to all, six of the ten schools are affiliated with NGOs, including Teach for India, Aseema Charitable Trust, Akanksha Foundation and Angel Xpress Foundation. This year, the festival also comprises engaging workshops, tours and field trips at the NCPA.

Scripts commissioned by the National Theatre, carefully developed with input from young people, will be directed by professional theatre directors from Mumbai, each of whom will work with one school. Additionally, two facilitators from the National Theatre have been providing their

expertise throughout the process, beginning with the workshop they conducted for the theatre directors at the NCPA in August this year.

We spoke to the people behind the scenes.

**Bruce Guthrie
(Head of Theatre and Film)**

Year two is always challenging because it's your difficult second album. Immediately after the euphoria of the first edition when everybody is exhausted, you've got to start thinking about next year and it takes immense planning. The idea is to build on the success of last year and hopefully expand it into a truly national project with future editions.

The learnings need to be actively translated into a better experience for everybody. We have done that by including workshops, trips and tours of the NCPA, to bring different schools in the same space together. The conversations that are then enabled form the crux of the festival. They are what makes it a festival.

Every single teacher that we worked with and a majority of the parents felt that their kids had been massively changed by the experience for the better and that is huge. When you look at enough training programmes, you recognise that it can be a real turning point for people—the moment they discover that they can think differently, that they have an undiscovered talent, that they have the courage to try. It's quite extraordinary.

One of the great questions facing us, particularly working with NGO schools, is how to continue

the opportunity. How can you show people a world like this and then take it away? All education is opportunity. It is nothing more and nothing less. It's about creating space to learn and grow. Successful education is about people who want to keep learning. And this is a keystone event for us in that sense. Our crown jewel, as it were, is the Connections Festival.

**Anahita Uberoi
(Creative Learning Director,
Connections)**

It is very exciting to build and develop a project like this from scratch. It's a joy to see teenagers own the process and bring to the audience a dynamic, powerful, hard-hitting piece of theatre. This is a platform that speaks the voice of teenagers.

Of the 10 schools on board this year, six are NGO schools and four of the IB board. The opportunity given to all is the same. It is their job to dive in, grapple with the material, understand teamwork, feel the spotlight on their faces and shine. They make friends for life. It is a far bigger process than just a play. It is an invaluable lesson in life.

**Ragini Khushwaha
(Creative Learning
Producer, Connections)**

Participating students get a chance to perform plays that are relevant and relatable to them. They help them express what young people want to talk about in the world today.

The students also have the opportunity to be directed by a professional director as well as to perform at the NCPA with a professional team supporting every aspect of their final performances. It is a robust, professional theatre experience bringing to the forefront all of the benefits theatre can have on a young person's life in the very best way possible.

Rasika Agashe (Director)

I am elated to be a part of the initiative. The name is very fitting. These are connections in the making. I have been working with kids for a long time now and I always say they are better than us. I'll be working with a school under the Aseema Charitable Trust. The students are so sensitive, their openness is beautiful. It is rewarding to see their opinions forming.

I run a small theatre company in Mumbai's Aram Nagar and often joke about being a hard-up theatre director. But one realises [one's privilege] and the elitist notions that could surround [the sanctity of] theatre spaces only after transformative experiences like these. When we are rehearsing at the school, there are never not disturbances, problems and friction present. Funnily enough, I'm the only one distracted. The kids embrace it and have fun.

If an initiative like Connections was around when I was younger, I would have had a much better understanding of theatre, but more importantly, I think I would be a better, kinder person. I am hoping that a lot of young audience members come and watch the plays.

Gurleen Judge (Director)

I remember what it was like when I first walked into the room at the first edition of Connections India. It was fantastic—the energy, the adrenaline, the playfulness of it all. As I return for the second edition as a director, I hope to make the process even more tailored for the kids. The luxury of hindsight helps one plan better. I want it to be intensive, rigorous and robust but I want to keep the kids at the centre. They have to enjoy it. I don't want it to become one more thing that they have to worry about and catch up on.

I also really look forward to the





brilliant scripts. The characters, their ideas, concerns and points of view are all written for them.

The festival is very effective in bringing young people to the theatre. Kids who may have never ventured into a theatre get to perform onstage. It is also a great way to engage with this generation because some of them will turn out to be theatre makers but all of them will be future audiences.

Bethany Pitts (NT Facilitator)

Connections is about so much

more than the performance itself. The rehearsal process develops transferable skills like teamwork, problem-solving, building confidence and developing an understanding of people through exploring character. The plays specifically written for young people also allow them to explore topics that might be affecting them—bullying, climate change or grief—in a safe space and to develop empathy and understanding for experiences outside of their own.

With the workshops, we wanted to create a sense of ensemble.

You don't often get to spend time in a room full of directors. It was an incredible resource for everyone involved to have all these other directors investigating their play together, like one huge director's brain.

Our experience in India was a bit of a whirlwind! It was brilliant to meet so many artistes and directors here and learn about the great work the NCPA is doing. We are looking forward to coming back to see what all the directors have created and to see a different season in Mumbai too. ■



Anahita Uberoi and Ragini Khushwaha



NT facilitators with directors

Pixel

A show by **KÄFIG COMPANY**

*Artistic Direction
& Choreography*

Mourad Merzouki

Date

Dec 16, 2023

Time

6:30 PM

Venue

*Jamshed Bhabha
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MAPPING THE INSIDE-OUT

Bharatanatyam exponent Lata Surendra explains the maelstrom that led her to conceptualise *Nyasam*, which will be presented at the NCPA this month, and will feature performances by Shovana Narayan, Geeta Chandran, A.B. Bala Kondala Rao and the curator herself.

It is said, “As within, so without”. We truly live in the landscape of our thoughts until they merge to become our reality. *Nyasam* is the transformation of the body into a temple, endorsing our connection with an infinite consciousness. The obstacle becomes the path, the journey shows the way as we awaken to a reality that reflects our inner world.

A cradle-to-grave journey is much more than merely dust to dust. For me, it is a journey in which communication transforms into communion. Fresh flowers keep blooming each day in individual patches of green, in balconies and landscaped gardens but what about the wildest of flowers that bloom around puddles, drains, and along highways, railway lines? What is it that has perfection etched in all creations? A perfection that transcends time and space, with meticulous detailing, humbling as ever.

I marvelled at the artistry of the Creator, whose hand awakened ‘my inner eye’. I experienced a new journey inside-out, urging me to seek as I saw, feel as I touched, listen as I heard. Every orchestration outside was being addressed as existing on the outside by me alone. The world that was truly large when seen

through my eyes was also a world that was small enough to shrink into my heart. A new journey began as the lens shifted from my eyes to my heart. I started mapping the world with my soul.

The flowers were yet blooming, but they were flowering within me. The birds were yet reaching out to the skies, but the sky was within me. The rivers were yet flowing but I had transformed into an ocean. Minus the boundaries, I journeyed as the timeless when the declaration of enlightenment dawned in me as ‘aham brahmasmi’—I am the divine, the absolute and the ultimate. All existence exists in me alone. They take their source in me and breathe through me alone.

I cannot carve up that which was elemental to life on earth, be it air, water, fire or sky. I looked at the arena of illusion, the causal world of labels and boundaries; brackets opening up everywhere with special boundaries highlighting the ‘young’ dancer in happening festivals. The flow was being stemmed with labels like ‘yesterday’, ‘today’ and ‘tomorrow’ according an expiry date to artistes. I thought it was time to reach out with a festival that had legendary artistes transcending time to transform dance into a visual prayer—artistes who could share timeless meanings through their individual interpretation of compositions.

Thus it was that I called on Shovana Narayan, Geeta Chandran and A.B. Bala Kondala Rao, dynamic artistes I have always admired for being vaults of creativity. I was touched by their enthusiasm, concern, their in-depth research and their vivid imagination. *Nyasam* started shaping up through words, chords, lyrics coming together in the mind’s eye of every artist endorsing dance as truly a bridging metaphor.

Shovanaji discussed how ‘nyasam’ or ‘in conclusion’ or as ‘renunciation’ of the Bhagavad Gita signified trust. “Lataji,” she said, “According to the rule of threes, one can survive three weeks without food, three days without drinkable water, three hours in extreme



Lata Surendra

temperatures but only three minutes without air. As trustees of air (*vayu*), our responsibilities are great. Besides mindlessly polluting the external breathable air around us, there also exists an abuse of the living being within us. I will be depicting the 19th-century sage Ramana Maharshi’s well-known encounter with death and the observation Yama, the god of death and justice, made to Meenakshi, the fish-eyed goddess, on how the world abuses their trusteeship of *prana vayu* by causing death but hoping to never die themselves.” The excerpt that Shovanaji will present from the dance play *Unmasking of Death* by Ramchandra Gandhi is bound to awaken *rasikas* to their responsibility as trustees of *prana vayu* or life-giving air.

I thought to myself how everything else relates as mere weather when we walked with that unpolluted open sky within because Providence had no body on earth but ours, no hands but ours, no feet but ours. Ours alone were the eyes through which he poured out as a celebration. I marvelled at how ours is the only country celebrating creation as God’s *leela*—a transformative experience highlighting cosmic opulence through the energy that is Radhamayi Krishna. I was just meditating along these lines and was amazed when Geetaji related

“*Nyasam* started shaping up through words, chords, lyrics coming together in the mind’s eye of every artiste endorsing dance as truly a bridging metaphor”

to her celebration of the Earth in *Nyasam* through the *raas leela* of Krishna.

“The culture of Sanatana celebrates earth and life on earth,” she said. “Our Gods live amongst us and follow human diurnal patterns of living. These daily patterns were enshrined in the temples of both north and south India. The *ashtayam sewa* in temples and havelis (homes where the Gods resided) specially celebrated both time and season, but celebrating the efflorescence of earth—its bounty and beauty—probably reaches its zenith in the *raas* of Krishna, in



Geeta Chandran



Shovana Narayan

//

The excerpt that Shovana Narayan will present from the dance play *Unmasking of Death* by Ramchandra Gandhi is bound to awaken *rasikas* to their responsibility as trustees of *prana vayu* or life-giving air

//

which he performs the circular dance with the *gopis* of Brindavan. The *raison d'être* of the Krishna avatar is to enjoy life on earth, even while correcting its anomalies. The *raas* is the epiphanic moment of perfect beauty, where nature conjoins human impulse to celebrate pristine beauty and joy." Geetaji will bring to life the writing of Hita Harivansh from the 'ashtachaap kavi sampradaya'. Such is her signature style and charisma that it will be a blissful experience to have her celebrate the earth, whilst yet having her dancing feet gather wings through the *raas* at *Nyasam*.

Sometimes I believe that everything has to be inscribed across the heavens so that we can find the one line already written inside us, a line that stirs our awareness. 'Deepam jyoti param brahmam'—her voice came across clearly amidst signaling taillights as I was caught on the Western express highway in a bumper-to-bumper traffic jam. It was Balakka, reaching out with her ideas. "Fire is *jyoti*. Parama Shiva is *jyoti swaroopa*. Fire cleanses, empties, restructures and restores. Awareness is the fire within, that burns, purifies and nullifies negativity. I am exploring these aspects through *ardhangini* of Shiva-Parvati and *agni puneetha* Sita." Thus, A.B. Balakondala Rao (Balakka) is all set to reach out with the fire of awareness through Kuchipudi. While we all are familiar with Sita's *agni pareeksha*, it would be interesting to witness awareness dawn on Parvati through the episode in the Shiva Purana, in which she closes the eyes of Shiva in a playful mood and finds that the entire universe has come to a standstill and is immersed in darkness until Shiva opens his third eye and bestows light on the universe and on Parvati's own awareness of him as light.

Such is the transporting nature of artistic relief that its euphoria can have us transcend all that suffocates and chokes. I surveyed the networks on wheels against the canvas of the ongoing Mumbai monsoon; water and cratered roads, a combination testing the equanimity of all.

I meditated on my own exploring of water as the elixir of immortality and the basis of human life. The journey of the river from sweetness to salt and salt to sweetness, awakening humanity to the fact that the life cycle and water cycle are not mutually exclusive of each



A. B. Bala Kondala Rao

other. I pondered over the quality of water believed to wash away sins that is bound together with the power of sanctity and the cosmological connotations in mythologies. I journeyed with thoughts that awakened me to the cleansing, nurturing, baptising aspect of water through Mother Ganga, the liquid axis, the pathway connecting all spheres of reality. Layers of her descent, through which I could highlight her saga, including her tears, rage and reluctance to leave the heavens. Her tears, in a way, highlighting the saga of all rivers. I resolved to direct attention to her misuse by humans with her entreaty for them to bestow upon her a heaven on Earth in lieu of the heavens she had left behind.

The sudden stillness awakened me to my surroundings. I had reached home. I smiled and thought of T. S. Eliot's words: "... and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time." At the end of all my exploration along the highway, I had found my self inside-out; I had journeyed with the source and found the map to my soul. ■

Nyasam - A map to our soul will be presented on 23rd November at the Experimental Theatre.

NYASAM

A MAP TO OUR SOUL

Concept, Curation & Bharatanatyam by

Kalashri Lata Surendra



Bharatanatyam by
Geeta Chandran



Kathak by
Shovana Narayan



Kuchipudi by
A .B .Bala Kondala Rao

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FOR THE LOVE OF LIGHT AND GARDENS

How American Impressionists carved a niche for themselves under the overarching influence of their French counterparts.

By Ornella D'Souza

American Impressionism developed in the United States after the American Civil War, when its artists began travelling to European countries and visiting artists' colonies that propagated the concept of outdoor painting and other aesthetics of the French Impressionist art movement in the second half of the 19th century. The term 'Impressionism' was derived from Claude Monet's iconic work, 'Impression, Sunrise' (1872), after critic Louis Leroy declared that "a preliminary drawing for a wallpaper pattern is more finished than this seascape" and wrote off the entire

show in his review as 'The Exhibition of the Impressionists'. The painting had debuted at the 1874 Salons des Refusés (French for 'Salon of the Refused'), which featured several artists, including Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Camille Pissarro, Alfred Sisley, Berthe Morisot and Edgar Degas. These artists were part of *Société Anonyme Coopérative des Artistes Peintres, Sculpteurs, Graveurs* ('Cooperative and Anonymous Association of Painters, Sculptors and Engravers'), which protested the lack of opportunities for artworks that did not conform to traditional academic-style painting of the state-run Salon.

American artists initially guffawed at the sketch-like paintings with haphazard brushstrokes and bright, unmixed colours by French Impressionists, but gradually became besotted with those very attributes that discarded elements of Realism, including its blind imitation of colour and outline. Their artworks merged the painterly aesthetics of European old masters with everyday life in American society. These Impressionist paintings also had a sociopolitical edge, capturing the transition from agrarian countryside to industrial landscapes. The initial lot of American Impressionists,

PHOTOS COURTESY: FLORENCE GRISWOLD MUSEUM

grouped under the moniker The Ten, comprised a brotherhood of non-conforming artists helmed by Childe Hassam, John Henry Twachtman and J. Alden Weir, and consisting of seven others, namely, Frank W. Benson, E. E. Simmons, Joseph De Camp, Thomas W. Dewing, Willard Leroy Metcalf, Robert Reid and Edmund Tarbell.

From the French, they adopted the practice of *en plein air* (French for 'painting outdoors'), a style mastered by American art movements such as the Hudson River School and the Tonalists. The invention of collapsible tin paint tubes in 1841, then synthetic paints, followed by the portable easel, became gamechangers. American Impressionists could now directly press colour from the tube onto the canvas to create impasto with thick, broken, hurried or flickering brushstrokes 'like a quick impression of a place'. A speedy production. Like a photograph. The pigments were loud, bright and resonated with what French Impressionist Renoir once allegedly remarked: "One morning one of us had run out of black; and that was the birth of Impressionism." The Impressionists demonstrated light as short, broken brushstrokes in different bright colours, positioned close to each other, which when viewed together from a distance, merged. According to them, their works were more 'realistic' than the Realists, as they had gone to some lengths to study their subject up close.

The influence of 19th-century Japanese prints—their tonalities, patterns and compositional elements—which made an appearance in French Impressionist works, was also evident in Twachtman's 'Winter Harmony' (1890-1900), Chase's 'Studio Interior' (1882) and Dewing's 'Venetian Brocade' (1904). Artists no longer painted in their studios or from memory. Due to the development of suburbs, urban parks and their connectivity to city centres via railroad, trams, etc., they could travel to the actual site, set up their portable tools, study their desired subject first-hand, understand how light

The term 'Impressionism' was derived from Claude Monet's iconic work, 'Impression, Sunrise', after critic Louis Leroy called it "a preliminary drawing for a wallpaper pattern is more finished than this seascape" and wrote off the entire show in his review as 'The Exhibition of the Impressionists'

enveloped this subject in relation to atmospheric qualities, time of day, colours in and around, and produce a copy of this imagery in their own Impressionistic ideals.

To truly comprehend the process behind *en plein air* masterpieces, American painters undertook extensive voyages to Europe, attended art exhibitions, visited museums and painted in artist colonies. Chase gained repute with paintings of New York public parks. He and Weir also taught at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia. John Singer Sargent, settled in Florence, found a mentor in Monet and, under his influence, painted urban landscapes. Hassam depicted the booming cultural energy of New York and Paris, while Sargent became attached to scenes in the village of Broadway in the Cotswolds in England. Still others found inspiration in their own quarters, like Twachtman, who painted scenes from his garden and farm in Greenwich, Connecticut.

Women artists struggled to carve a niche in the art world, like they did in other male-dominated fields in the 19th century. The most



pioneering female figure of the American Impressionists was Mary Cassatt. The Pennsylvania-born painter and printmaker moved to Paris in 1874, and after viewing her paintings, French Impressionist Degas invited her to exhibit with The Ten. She was brutally typecast as a 'painter of babies'; a tag that feminist art critic Griselda Pollock overturned in her book, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology*, calling Cassatt a 'painter of modern women' who carved an identity even in an arena dominated by the likes of Manet and Degas. She and other women artists such as Berthe Morisot, Eva Gonzales and Marie Bracquemond painted scenes showcasing tender and private moments of 19th-century women when their male counterparts depicted public spaces like cafés and scenic landscapes.

Public spaces, especially the inclusivity around gardens and growing interest in gardening, was a thematic favourite of French and American Impressionists. Georges Seurat used pointillism to depict people from diverse social classes relaxing in a park by the Seine, in 'A Sunday on La Grande Jatte' (1884) while Monet's humongous canvases of water lilies and his gardens at Giverny came to epitomise his oeuvre. In America, Hassam's 'Descending the Steps, Central Park' (1895) or Edmund Greacen's 'The Old Garden' (1912) show a similar



'Little Girl in a Blue Armchair' (1878) by Mary Cassatt

Artists could now travel to the actual site, set up their portable tools, study their desired subject first-hand, understand how light enveloped this subject in relation to atmospheric qualities, time of day, colours in and around, and produce a copy of this imagery in their own Impressionistic ideals

fascination for the garden. Anna Marley, in her book *The Artist's Garden: American Impressionism and the Garden Movement*, found a correlation between the

two spheres noted in her book's title. Landscape architect Beatrix Farrand in her 1907 essay titled, 'The Garden as a Picture', wrote: "The two arts of painting and garden design are closely related, except that the landscape gardener paints with actual colour, line and perspective to make a composition, as the maker of stained glass does, while the painter has but a flat surface on which to create his illusion."

By the late 19th-century, American Impressionists had the support of private art collectors and the moneyed class. While interest in the movement dried up by the end of the 1910s, the impact continued to be felt in artist colonies and art schools. ■

The Artist's Garden: American Impressionism by Exhibition on Screen will be screened on 8th November at the Godrej Dance Theatre.



'Clark Voorhees House' (1905) by Matilda Browne

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Three Recipes and a Feast

By Fareed Curmally

Running a symphony orchestra is a full-time job indeed. It goes without saying that a music director must know every bit of the tools needed to curate a season from scratch. It is impossible to predict how a season will turn out, even with advance knowledge of the forthcoming repertoire and chosen soloists and conductors.

It is scarcely believable that in three years' time, the Symphony Orchestra of India will celebrate its 20th birth anniversary. Roughly 17 years ago, I was probably in these very same seats at the iconic Jamshed Bhabha Theatre at the southern tip of the beautifully situated NCPA complex, enthralled by what was onstage in front of me. In the presence of the then ambassador of Kazakhstan in India, the late Dr. Jamshed Bhabha placed in the hands of Mr. Khushroo N. Suntook, the reins of a new entity, the formation of a symphony orchestra, a first of its kind. It is and has remained the only professional symphony orchestra in the country run astutely by a hands-on impresario that Mr. Suntook has turned out to be.

Why is running a symphony orchestra a difficult job? First of all, you require a core of approximately 40 musicians resident (with good quality instruments, I might add) in Mumbai. In time to prepare for each season, you need to double that number of musicians by amplifying the corpus duplicating strings as well as a set of winds. These musicians that amplify the resident SOI Chamber Orchestra are only brought together by choosing the best freelancers from across the globe. Couple this with the intimate choreography, so to speak, of bringing visiting conductors and soloists who already

have complicated work schedules decided many seasons in advance. It is left to the vagaries of fate, including sickness, complications with visas and even last-minute alterations in repertoire, to make things a veritable nightmare for even the most stoic of statesmen.

The programme of the Autumn 2023 Season was divided between two conductors, both relative newcomers to the SOI. English operatic exponent Richard Farnes appeared for the second time in Mumbai after performing with the SOI last year.

Farnes has garnered many an accolade, including the Royal Philharmonic Society's award for conducting in 2017. On the brink of a worldwide career, he made his Met debut with *Falstaff* while scheduled appearances at the Met in 2020 were held in abeyance. Yet he has lost no time in contributing widely to the local opera scene within the U.K. Like a latter-day Edward Downes, he has been able to bring high-quality opera to mainstream audiences in addition to touring opera productions within the home counties.

The second conductor during this season was also British. Alpesh Chauhan, born in Birmingham of Indian parents, initially pursued cello studies at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester before taking up conducting. His name spread rapidly within the U.K. as well as in non-English-speaking orchestras across Europe. The still young Chauhan received an OBE in January 2022.

The first concert took place on Sunday, 10th September. Opening the evening with Rossini's overture to the opera *Semiramide* was a masterstroke. This overture is right at the heart of Rossini's mature



operas written in the middle of his life and is a serious masterwork. Rossini's stock-in-trade crescendos, hairpin dynamics and luminous contrasts between melody and rhythm were fully captured.

The centrepiece of the evening was formed by an ecstatic performance spiralling and dancing its way through Khachaturian's violin concerto. Although Georgian by birth, Khachaturian, along with Prokofiev and Shostakovich, formed the triumvirate of Soviet composers writing at the time of Stalin. The concerto was dedicated to violinist David Oistrakh who gave its premiere in Russia in 1940.

Marat Bisengaliev turned in a remarkable performance. From the very start, he was fully in control of his instrument. The dynamics possibly over stressed, but never to the point of losing the flow of the music. The slow movement was tender and lyrical with some patterns of folklore and even semi-oriental Georgian melodic inspiration.

Tchaikovsky's sixth symphony remains an inspired choice. No matter how many times you hear it played, there is something fresh and new to discover. Farnes managed to keep the full attention of the audience right through this monumental masterpiece. One can only forgive audiences for applauding between movements.

The second programme did not necessarily wear off as successfully as the first one. On paper it looked splendid. But unfortunately, this critic turned out to be less impressed with the sum of its parts.

The opening fanfare from *Star Wars* by John Williams was neither musically functional nor imposing enough. Erring on

the side of brevity is the only comment I would make.

The centrepiece of the evening was Brahms's second piano concerto played by Pavel Kolesnikov. Unlike most other piano concertos Brahms's second is in four movements and all together lasts 45 minutes. It is a long but tightly written piece and full of technical and emotional demands. This was an effective and provocative performance though one has heard better during past SOI seasons. One may be fully equal to the work's demanding score but sometimes losing sight of the broader architecture with an overt emphasis on detail can be problematic. The concerto was premiered by the composer himself at the piano in Budapest in 1881. The imposingly grand and broad singable motif is given to first horn and immediately echoed with a similar depth of tone from the piano. This set the mood perfectly for the ritornello with the composer's autumnal late period style. Melody after enchanting melody, this composer was immediately and adequately given a genuine and recognisable voice. The intervening two movements were both admirably paced and the last movement, a genuine *grazioso* in its gentle glides and rondo-sonata structure. Only once or twice did the pianist attempt to force the tone.

Wagner, without words, will make his music more reachable to audiences unfamiliar with that master's





(From left) Maestros Alpesh Chauhan, Zakir Hussain, Niladri Kumar and Rakesh Chaurasia with Mr. Khushroo N. Suntook



Violin virtuoso Marat Bisengaliev



Cellist Steven Isserlis (left)



Conductor Alpesh Chauhan with musicians of the SOI

operas. For those of us who need the vocal lines, Andrew Gourlay's arrangement of excerpts from *Parsifal* were an average introduction to the great and last of his so-called music dramas. Gourlay is totally forgotten by the history books and for good reason. The arrangement is strictly composed of stand-alone segments, including *Préludes* and the Good Friday Music of Wagner's *Parsifal*. Though executed beautifully with each of the sections of the orchestra well balanced by Farnes, one would have liked more depth to the sound of the brass and lower strings. As I say, it was a worthy attempt to introduce a new audience to Wagner's music.

The last three concerts were conducted by Chauhan. The first of the two concerts opened with the Suite from Strauss's opera *Der Rosenkavalier*. Playing at very affable speeds, the endless melodic strains were redolent with Viennese charm. It made for an excellent curtain raiser, lasting 20 minutes or so.

For multiple reasons, the Schumann cello concerto that followed was not entirely successful. For a start, it was not the most beguiling of cello pieces. Played

in three movements but harmoniously blended into one movement, the nature of the melodies and rhythmic detail was difficult to convince. It would be great to hear Steven Isserlis play some more familiar music like Dvořák, Elgar or even Tchaikovsky.

The second half was entirely successful with the conductor choosing another suite, which consisted of mostly dance movements from the ballet *Petrushka* by Stravinsky (version 1947).

Having said all that, I am sure that the pièce de résistance of the season was the world premiere of Zakir Hussain's work, written for sitar, bansuri and tabla, commissioned by the SOI. With Hussain on the tabla, Niladri Kumar on sitar and Rakesh Chaurasia on bansuri, the concerto was a dialogue between sitar and flute with tabla making crisp arguments back and forth. On the second day, when the audience wanted more, the three illustrious virtuosos put in an impromptu encore unaccompanied by the orchestra. This was a date to cherish and all thanks to the NCPA for putting on another very successful season. ■



Pianist Pavel Kolesnikov



Conductor Richard Farnes



With Flying Colours

Students of the SOI Music Academy are on a winning streak with their performances in international competitions.



Uneysah Agboatwala



Aida Bisengalieva



Tarini Kheruka

All of 12 and 13, Tarini Kheruka and Uneysah Agboatwala have not known a life without music. They started playing the piano as toddlers and despite their young age, they are among the senior students of the SOI Music Academy. Launched in 2012, the academy was founded with the conviction that when immersed in music at the right age and under rigorous training by accomplished musicians, children can blossom into promising artistes. The recent success of the two young pianists at prestigious international competitions in Europe and the U.S. bears testimony to this.

In August 2023, Agboatwala played Robert Schumann's 'Widmung' in an unforgettable setting. At the Mozarthaus in Vienna, as part of the Golden Key of Vienna Music Festival, she was conferred a Diploma, Honoris Causa, for her excellent performance in recital. As the winner of the competition in her category, she was also awarded Laureate of the music festival at the Ehrbar Hall. Her proud teacher and noted pianist Aida Bisengalieva, who accompanied her to Vienna, speaks fondly of her qualities. "Uneysah is talented, dedicated and hard-working. She has a deep interest in the history of musicians and composers and is always hungry for more knowledge."

The budding musician has performed onstage on several occasions—a tribute concert for victims of the 26/11 attacks, in duos and trios with other students as well as with the SOI Chamber Orchestra.

Kheruka, who performs regularly as part the students' orchestra, did the academy proud earlier this year when she played Mozart Fantasy in D at the iconic Lincoln Center and won a Bronze at the Winner

Recitals as part of the Golden Key of Music Festival competition organised at the Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center. Bisengalieva looks back on her journey and recalls, "Tarini joined the academy when she was five and next year, she is all set to graduate. A very talented girl, Tarini has a great ear for music and can easily replicate the notes."

This ability to listen is what earned Tarini a spot at the academy. Her mother Priyanka Kheruka remembers the day like yesterday. They were at the NCPA for her elder daughter's audition when little Tarini wandered on to the stage. "She played 'Forgotten Dreams' by Leroy Anderson and could replicate the notes Miss Aida played. Though she was so young, they were very encouraging of her ability," she recalls, adding, "Music is joy to Tarini and she is fortunate to have a found a mother figure in Miss Aida who is so invested in her journey."

Maitreyee Agboatwala echoes the sentiment with regard to her daughter's experience. "It is absolutely invaluable that Miss Aida has nurtured Uneysah to grow musically and allowed her to develop her own style." Being born in a musically inclined family means that she has attended most classical music concerts at the NCPA and the journey from an audience member to a budding pianist has been organic. This, combined with the training at the academy and opportunities to perform and compete internationally, has made all the difference. Bisengalieva tells us that Agboatwala has expressed her desire to pursue playing the piano professionally. At 13, the world is indeed her oyster but the newest milestone on this path was the competition in Austria, says her mother. "It was in Vienna that Uneysah really turned a corner." ■

Islands of Fragility

The Dilip Piramal Art Gallery is set to showcase a remarkable collection of black-and-white fine art prints captured by Ian Lockwood, which are a testament to the beauty and the pressing need for conservation in the sky islands of South India.

Time spent at school can mould life in ways imaginable and unimaginable. For Ian Lockwood, an alumnus of the Kodaikanal International School nestled in the Palani Hills of Tamil Nadu, it was the years spent exploring these ancient mountains through the school's outdoor education programmes that nurtured his interest in ecology. He was exposed to fascinating ecosystems, communities that thrived in remote areas and individuals who made a life studying aspects of the larger Western Ghats area. Three decades ago, when Lockwood began his photographic journey, it was to record what was clearly a changing landscape.

Today, there is a special term to define the ecology of the hills Lockwood has lived and worked in, and *Sky Islands: An Endangered Indian Landscape*, an exhibition produced in association with the Kodaikanal International School and its Center for Environment and Humanity, brings to the fore

this fragility of the hills through Lockwood's lens.

The term "sky island"—a globally accepted concept—is helping us rethink the uniqueness of the tropical montane ecosystems. They are threatened ecosystems isolated from surrounding lowlands by their relatively high mountain habitat and are found in various parts of the world. In India, the upper regions of the Western Ghats are now recognised as key sky islands. These ranges are roughly 1,400 metres above sea level and host flora and fauna that are starkly different from the lower plains. Mountain areas, such as the Nilgiri and Palani Hills, are good examples of sky islands in southern India. Further north, the lofty hill areas of the Sahyadri range, including Mahabaleshwar, also meet these criteria. The sky islands in the region, known as the Shola Sky Islands, are a defining yet threatened region in the Western Ghats-Sri Lanka biodiversity hotspot.

People familiar with India's hill stations will understand the

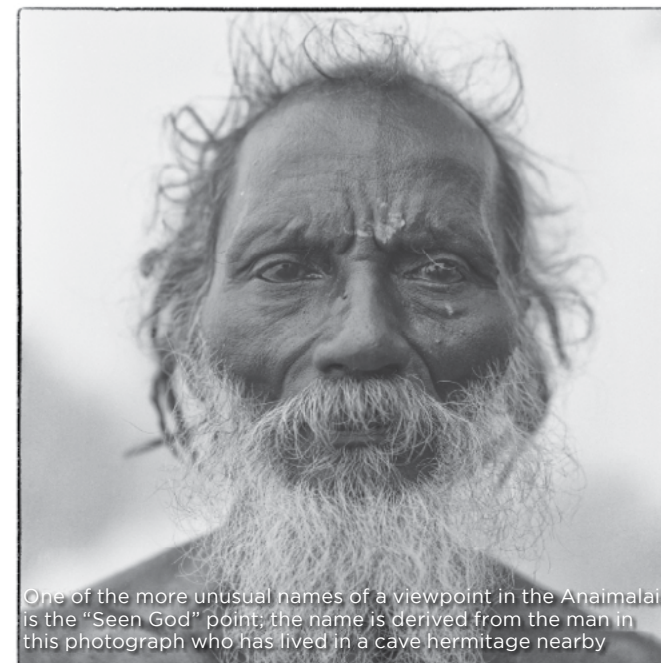
utility of the idea of sky islands. For places like the Palani Hills with summits and plateaus, lofty and cool, so far removed from the sweltering plains below, the term is most fitting. "The sky islands have been my source of inspiration, and this body of work is a testament to my enduring fascination with this remarkable landscape. Through these photographs, I aim to communicate the profound ecological changes and the importance of their preservation," says Lockwood.

This exhibition is more than just a visual experience; it's a call to action.

A legacy of conservation

Drawing inspiration from the great photographers of the American West like Ansel Adams and Edward Weston, Lockwood's collection intentionally blurs the line between photography and fine art. With meticulous attention to detail and a commitment to preserving the raw beauty of the landscape, the photographs have a stark quality to them.

PHOTOS AND CAPTIONS: IAN LOCKWOOD



One of the more unusual names of a viewpoint in the Anaimalais is the "Seen God" point; the name is derived from the man in this photograph who has lived in a cave hermitage nearby



Rhododendron arboreum is found in the southern Western Ghats and Sri Lanka

Adams, one of the pioneers of "straight photography", used his images to advocate for the conservation of the American West. Lockwood's work too serves a dual purpose—artistic expression and conservation advocacy.

The sky islands have witnessed significant changes over the years, from habitat loss to large-scale development and agriculture. Climate change, leading to unpredictable rainfall and biome shifts, poses a real threat to the people who depend on these hills for their livelihoods. These changes were not readily apparent in the past, but photographs, maps and other records now highlight the critical transformations that have

occurred. Lockwood's images capture the essence of this transformation, creating a visual timeline of environmental change.

Iti Maloney, Director of the school's Center for Environment and Humanity (CEH), emphasises, "Our mission is to protect the sky islands of the Palani Hills through education and community engagement. This exhibition visually represents the urgency behind the centre's mission and reinforces why healthy ecosystems matter—they influence everything from clean water and air, to food security and climate resilience. Through Ian's photographs, we aim to cultivate a deep understanding of the challenges these ecosystems face, and inspire change."

Call to action

The CEH has also designed workshops for students that delve deeper into the intricate relationship between urban life and the surrounding environment. Students will discover how they can contribute to conservation efforts that are crucial for cities like Mumbai.

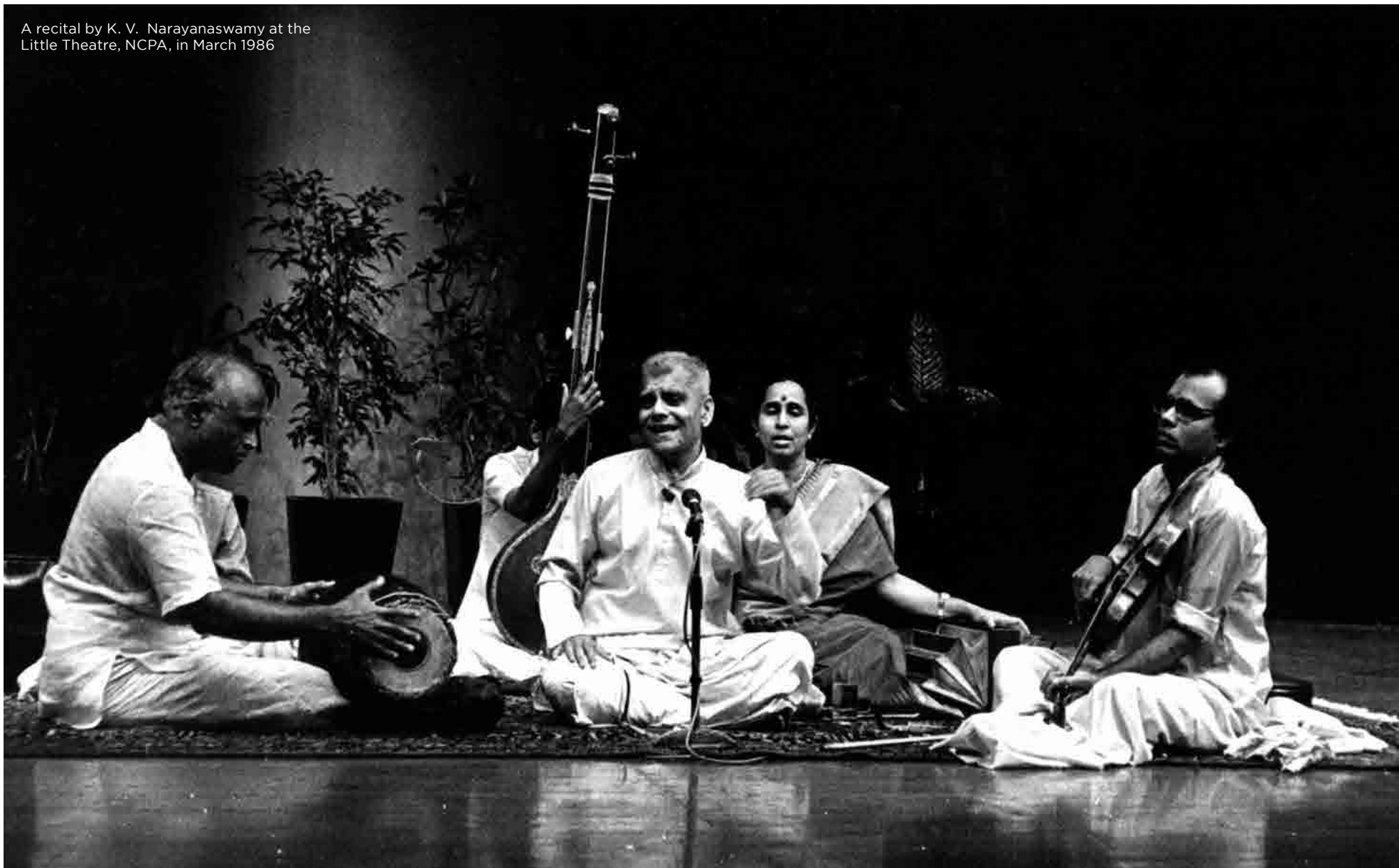
On 25th November, Lockwood will give an illustrated lecture which will expand on themes from the exhibition using maps, images and stories from his time exploring this unique landscape. ■

Sky Islands: An Endangered Indian Landscape will be held at the Dilip Piramal Art Gallery from 23rd November to 3rd December.



The southern escarpment of the Palani Hills, seen rising above winter haze

A recital by K. V. Narayanaswamy at the Little Theatre, NCPA, in March 1986



Pitch Perfect

This month marks the birth centenary of the legendary Carnatic vocalist, K. V. Narayanaswamy. A look at what made him a transcendent vocalist, a great teacher and an ingenious music-maker.

By Lakshmi Anand

The many awards Kollengode Viswanatha Narayanaswamy received, including the Padma Shri, the Sangeet Natak Akademi Puraskar and the Sangita Kalanidhi, served only to publicly highlight the talents of an artiste who was already acknowledged in his own lifetime as a consummate Carnatic musician. KVN's all-round expertise was enveloped in

complete ease and sweetness at all registers, perfect attunement to *sruti*—both in stationary notes and the most intricate of *gamakas*—and excellent grip on *laya*. KVN was also a master at gauging the audience and keeping its attention with the perfect mix of pieces, presented with an impeccable sense of proportion.

While KVN's music bore the

stamp of his guru Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, it reflected augmentations and improvements in line with his own musical sense and sensibilities. This went with his belief that one ought to take the best from gurus while staying true to one's own musical values and making the most of one's relative strengths. Indeed, KVN made the songs he sang his own,

refining and polishing them to a unique sheen.

Prior to beginning *gurukulavasa* with Iyengar in 1941, KVN learned from Palghat Mani Iyer (a mridangist), Papa Venkatramaiah (a violinist) and C. S. Krishna Iyer (a vocalist). Learning early from instrumental practitioners perhaps laid the keystone for his hallmark traits—uncommon sensitivity and adherence to *sruti* and *swarasthana* and an inbuilt sense of rhythm that enabled his mastery of *laya* aspects.

Those who interacted musically with KVN recollect his adoration of the tanpura and his expertise in tuning the instrument to minute perfection. Musician R. K. Shriramkumar (who accompanied KVN on the violin at many concerts)

says that besides tanpuras tuned by KVN being sheer pleasure to listen to, seeing him tune them was a sight in itself. He could sing in perfect tune for any *sruti*, not just his own, adds Shriramkumar.

In the 1960s, Maragatham Ramaswamy learned from KVN at the Central College of Carnatic Music, where she graduated with a gold medal. She says, "Even whilst teaching a group of students, he could instantly identify the faintest of departures from *sruti* and

"The first aspect that comes to mind when you mention KVN is the impeccable, immaculate, amazingly consistent *sruti suddham* he achieved and maintained throughout his long career—a stupendous achievement, almost without parallel in South India in the latter half of the 20th century"

which student had made them. It extended to insistence on perfect *swarasthana suddham*—even in the most intricate *gamakas*, every single micro note had to be exactly in place."

KVN's sound displayed clarity and crystal-clear enunciation. While melody reigned supreme, he took a lot of care to pronounce lyrics properly, with no vowel distortion and clear delineation of aspirated and unaspirated consonants. He sang with an open, non-nasal voice that showcased stability in notes, evenness of volume and seamless breath control. There was no quiver when sustaining a note and it was near impossible to discern where he took a breath either.

A KVN concert would generally mean a higher number

of Thyagaraja's compositions. Other commonly seen features were a *prati-madhyama kriti* (a composition with the *teevra madhyam* note; in Western music terminology, it would be called an augmented fourth) early on, followed by a *janya raga* (a raga whose tonal material is derived from a parent scale) of Raga Kharaharapriya. They featured contrasting tempos, moods, ragas and talas. He would move from composition to composition or part to part sans gaps. Whether short or long in duration, KVN's concerts provided fulfilment and a sense of completeness to listeners. Another distinguishing feature was his on-the-spot adaptation based on his mood and that of the audience, the strengths of his co-artistes and the condition of his voice. Hemmige Srivatsan, KVN's student who also accompanied him on the violin on many occasions, recollects his singing an entire *alapana* (exposition) of Raga Kambhoji in the *madhya sthayi* (middle octave)—uncommon, since Kambhoji is most frequently heard with a focus on *taara sthayi* (upper octave) phrases.

KVN's *manodharma* (a form of improvisation) was striking in how effortless and free flowing it sounded to the listeners. This belied the discipline he showcased within presentations. His *raga alapanas* would provide a wholesome picture of the raga, yet not exceed 10 minutes, even for the main pieces. One could identify the raga right away—there was no ambiguity in his phrases. No two *alapanas* of the same raga sounded the same.

Neraval, improvising on a line of the lyric, maintaining its syllable placement and conveying the essence of the raga, is considered the hardest aspect of Carnatic *manodharma*. This was undoubtedly KVN's forte. He would render it extensively, methodically and systematically in three speeds, sometimes even four. It occupied pride of place in his concerts. The encomium 'Neraval Narayanaswamy' was a justly earned one indeed.

The judiciousness he exercised



The concluding pieces at KVN's concerts were eagerly looked forward to—the feeling and emotion he conveyed was particularly palpable in these lilting compositions, which often reduced everyone to tears ... Shriramkumar recollects such an occasion when he was so overwhelmed with emotion that he had to lay his violin down

in *kalpanaswaras* (improvisation towards the end of a composition) was admirable. His sequences were crisp, brief and sweet. He avoided long, rehearsed mathematical endings, choosing to go for shorter, spontaneous ones with impromptu closings. He knew the residual count from any beat and point in the tala allowing him to come up with numerous such variations on the fly. By accenting and stressing the appropriate *swaras*, he portrayed the precise flavour and uniqueness of each raga as well.

The *Ragam Tanam Pallavi* is a capstone piece that features all aspects of Carnatic *manodharma* intertwined with *laya*. KVN preferred the traditional *gana* ragas here and presented both simple and complex *pallavis* in them. The concluding pieces at KVN's concerts were eagerly looked forward to—the feeling and emotion he conveyed was particularly palpable in these lilting compositions, which often

reduced not just listeners, but co-artists too, to tears. Shriramkumar recollects such an occasion when he was so overwhelmed with emotion that he had to lay his violin down.

That KVN was acutely cognisant of the listener's experience can be discerned from memories shared by some of his co-artists. Anantha Krishnan is a violinist who has shared the stage with numerous Carnatic stalwarts. In his youth, he spent much time at KVN's home, playing the violin, practising and accompanying him in concerts and recordings. He fondly recollects, "KVN *mama* would advise me to absorb and convey the essence of what was sung in a short and crisp manner—he believed the violinist did not have to compete with the vocalist in duration to make an impact."

Similarly, Trichur Narendran, a veteran mridangist who accompanied KVN in many concerts, mentions his comments

on calibrating percussion in accordance with the song—only some songs were made, and allowed, for vociferous drumming, with many others requiring nuanced, more caressed playing. Narendran further adds that despite being junior to KVN, he was treated just as respectfully as the seniors on the concert stage with expectations not being lowered either.

KVN showcased a variety of composers in the pieces he performed. Besides the Trinity (Tyagaraja, Muthuswami Dikshitar and Syama Sastri) and other popularly known and heard composers in the Carnatic tradition, he presented compositions of many others from Mirabai to Kabir to Vedanayakam Pillai to Iraiappan Tampi. He also tuned many lyrics that have since been in popular circulation.

What K. V. Narayanaswamy's legacy is, and why it endures, is best summarised by the articulate words of vocalist Alepey Venkatesan, a fellow student of Iyengar: "The first aspect that comes to mind when you mention KVN is the impeccable, immaculate, amazingly consistent *sruti suddham* he achieved and maintained throughout his long career. It was a stupendous achievement, almost without parallel in South India in the latter half of the 20th century. He was a peerless perfectionist who conquered and transcended all the usual limiting factors (such as speed, octave and syllable), as if to proclaim that consistent unison with *sruti* is not the exclusive prerogative of the Hindustani singer. For demonstrating that fact alone, every Carnatic musician is beholden to KVN." ■

Lakshmi Anand would like to convey sincere gratitude to violinist, vocalist and student of K. V. Narayanaswamy, Hemmige V. Srivatsan, the key resource for this article, including Alepey Venkatesan's quotation.

Anand has written for, among others, The Hindu, The Times of India, and the performing arts magazine, Sruti. She was awarded the Kalpalata Fellowship for Classical Music Writing in 2022. She blogs at lakshmiianand.com

Kaleidoscope

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



Process as destination

The Fall 2023 Season of Works & Process at the Guggenheim Museum is its largest yet. The performing arts series was launched in 1984 by the New York-based arts centre with the intention to bridge the accessibility gap between audiences and the artistic process. Since September, original commissions of street dance, ballet, opera, jazz, salsa and hip-hop have been presented at the Guggenheim and the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, in partnership with the Jerome Robbins Dance Division, and the series is currently touring across six U.S. states and the District of Columbia. The season began with the world premiere of a production by leading American choreographer Lar Lubovitch and a special Broadway preview and discussion of *Gutenberg! The Musical!* and will conclude with social dancing sessions and the beloved *Rotunda Holiday Concert* in the first week of December 2023. For more information, please visit www.guggenheim.org

Sound of metal

In *Black Sabbath—The Ballet*, the Birmingham Royal Ballet's dancers juxtapose the elegant moves of classical ballet with head-banging, moshing and stage dives, to reflect the loud distortions and aggressive guitar riffs of the heavy metal band, Black Sabbath. The second production from the ballet company's new artistic director, Carlos Acosta, is a tribute to Birmingham's musical legacy through one of its legendary acts. The pioneers of the heavy metal genre, who emerged from working-class backgrounds in Birmingham and shot to global stardom in the 1970s, have been celebrated in a theatrical performance featuring experimental choreography, original recordings and



orchestral versions of their iconic songs, and new compositions performed live by the Royal Ballet Sinfonia. The full-length, three-act, Ballet Now commission, which premiered in September, also brings together a host of international creatives including famed Swedish choreographer Pontus Lidberg, Tony Award-winning composer Christopher Austin and Olivier Award-winning writer and composer Richard Thomas, along with the involvement of Black Sabbath members themselves. For more information, please visit www.brb.org.uk

Art on the turf



From 16th to 19th November, Mumbai's Mahalaxmi Racecourse will play host to a new kind of spectacle. Around 50 exhibitions from renowned art galleries in India and around the world will be on display on the turf for *Art Mumbai*, a contemporary art fair. Mumbai's Chemould Prescott Road and Galerie Isa, New Delhi's Vadehra Art Gallery and DAG, Bengaluru's Gallery Sumukha, London's Grosvenor Gallery and New York's Aicon Gallery, among others, will present a compelling amalgam of modern art, folk art and crafts, sculptures and native antiquities with an overlay of technology and AI for the fair's inaugural edition. Dinesh and Minal Vazirani, the co-founders of the top Indian auction house SaffronArt, Conor Macklin, the director

of Grosvenor Gallery, and Nakul Dev Chawla, the founder of the online gallery Global Art Hub, are the organisers of this ambitious event. According to Dinesh Vazirani, the formation of *Art Mumbai* has been motivated by the post-pandemic boom in the city's arts landscape, as well as a need for an Indian-owned contemporary art fair. For more information, please visit www.artmumbai.com

In memoriam

Soumendu Roy, the pioneering cinematographer and enduring professional companion to the creative



genius of Satyajit Ray, took his last breath on 27th September 2023. Aged 90, he had been suffering from arthritis and other illnesses. Roy's prolific legacy—including the breathtaking visuals in *Teen Kanya*, *Sonar Kella*, *Ashani Sanket* and *Shatranj ke Khilari*—has left an impact on not only Bengali films, but the cinema of the world. He also worked with other iconic auteurs like Tapan Sinha, Buddhadeb Dasgupta, Tarun Majumdar and M.S. Sathyu. In his early days, Roy assisted the great cinematographer Subrata Mitra and was in charge of the famous Mitchell camera on the sets of the 1955 Ray classic, *Pather Panchali*. His interest led him to Technicians' Studio, a film atelier in Kolkata which became his alma mater. Roy has won many awards, including four National Awards and his work is studied around the world to this day. ■

- Neelakshi Singh

The Show That Went On

In *Halla Bol: The Death and Life of Safdar Hashmi*, Sudhanva Deshpande chronicles the rich and tragic journey of the artiste, poet, actor, activist and well-loved founder member of Jana Natya Manch, who took the gift of theatre to the streets where drama encountered the powers that be.

On New Year's Eve, 1988, we were laughing and singing, out in the open, perched on a giant rock amid lush greenery, caring a fig for the bone-chilling cold, and we didn't want the night to end.

On New Year's Day, 1989, we were huddled together, unable to feel rage or grief, in a government hospital corridor with its banal walls, numb to the bone-chilling cold, and we didn't want the morning to arrive.

In between, time stopped. One hand of its clock was an iron rod, the other the barrel of a gun. My heart was stone. I went through the first three days of January 1989 in a trance. I remember it as one remembers a movie one has watched a dozen times—the picture sharp, crystal clear; the colours vibrant; the soundtrack crisp. I can play the images in slow motion on my memory's player; but it's a movie, it's not life.

I came back to reality when we went back to Jhandapur to perform *Halla Bol* ('Raise Hell'), the play that was left unfinished when we were attacked three days ago, which had resulted in two deaths. An artiste's head deliberately clobbered by blunt instruments, a worker's life snuffed out casually by a bullet.

Theatre is make-believe; theatre is life. It is ephemeral, momentary, fleeting, transient, a wisp of smoke; it is palpable, organic, aromatic, acidic, a bean of coffee.

And it sometimes reeks of blood. The blood spilled on the brick-paved streets of a working-class neighbourhood on a perfect winter Sunday morning.

This is not a story of death. It is a story of life.

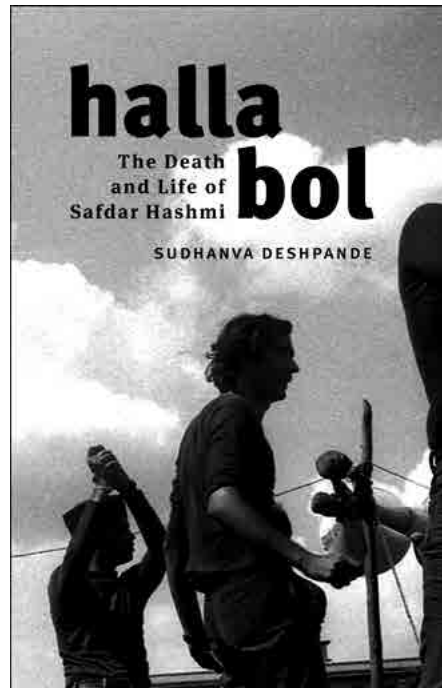
The luminous life of Safdar Hashmi, extraordinary in all its ordinariness.

* * *

4th January 1989. The Performance.

Less than 48 hours after Safdar's death, we performed the interrupted play at Jhandapur, at the same spot. It remains, to my mind, perhaps the single most important performance of a street play in Indian history.

We gathered at 6 Talkatora Road, where CITU [Centre of Indian Trade Unions] had its central office; we used to rehearse our street play on its lawns. The same cast that had been in the interrupted performance was to perform again. With one change. Vinod had a job interview that day. Since I knew his lines and moves, I was to be his replacement. I had been in Jhandapur on



1st January, quite by chance. Now I was to perform, again by chance.

We did a quick line rehearsal. It was all business-like. I was told I was to speak before the performance.

We got into a hired bus. When we reached Mandi House, I realised there were many more buses carrying people to Jhandapur. I counted 15; maybe there were more. Each bus was jam packed, without even any standing space. Hundreds of workers had gathered in Jhandapur. More than 5,000 people crammed the narrow streets. Many of them were artistes, writers, activists, professionals. There were so many familiar faces, but much of it was a blur for me.

The one person who wasn't there, though, was [Safdar's elder brother] Sohail. I learnt, decades later, that the reason was that he had been asked to stay back in the Party office, to take the many calls they

expected to receive from journalists. Someone senior and responsible was needed to take those—no mobile phones then, after all. It was a horrible miscalculation. All the journalists were at the site of the performance, and Sohail had to answer a total of zero calls.

We first went around the *basti* in a silent procession. We went past Ram Bahadur's house, paying our respects to him. He had been married a year or so before and had just had a child about a couple of months earlier. I later learnt that Mala spent some time with his young wife Pavitra and their infant, consoling and giving strength.

Parcham, the song squad led by Safdar's old friend Kajal Ghosh, sang two songs.

*Tu zinda hai, tu zindagi ki jeet mein yaqeen kar
Agar kahin hai swarg to utar la zamin par
(You are alive, so trust in the triumph of life
If there's a heaven somewhere, then bring it to earth)*

And

*Laal jhanda lekar, comrade, aage badhte jayenge
Tum nahin rahe, iska gham hai par, phir bhi ladte jayenge
(Onwards we march, comrade, holding the red flag
We mourn your loss, but pledge to fight on)*

I had no idea then that 'Laal Jhanda' had been translated from Bangla to Hindi by Safdar.

When they sang '*Hazaar bhes bhar ke aayi maut tere dwar par/
Magar tujhe na chhal saki, chali gayi woh haar kar*' ('Death came

to your door in a hundred guises / It could not deceive you, and retreated, defeated'), I choked.

There were people everywhere, in every nook and cranny, on rooftops and even on the garbage dump. I had never seen such an audience before. Many carried hastily made placards that said 'Safdar lives' and 'Safdar died, but not in vain'. There were red flags everywhere.

My mind was blank when I rose to speak. And then, I don't know how or from where, the words came.

'We are here to perform our interrupted play. We are here to fulfil our commitment to our audience. We are here to say that they can kill us, but they can't stop us. We are here to honour Comrade Ram Bahadur. We are here because Comrade Safdar Hashmi is not dead. He lives here, among us, and he lives among countless young women and men all over the country.'

The play began sombrely. The actors seemed to merely go through the motions. The first few minutes of the play are humorous, requiring us to laugh as well. But everybody was grim. There's a moment when, in response to the cop character trying to stop the play, the actors go into a huddle to decide what to do next. As we went into the huddle, I was right opposite Mala. She looked at everyone sharply.

'What's wrong with you all? Come on, laugh!'

As we broke the huddle, she twirled back, laughing. It was as if we'd been given a glucose shot. The play came to life, and in seconds, the audience was in splits too.

That performance, and photos of Mala performing, were on the front pages of newspapers all over the country the next day. In that simple act, of leading us in a performance at the spot where her comrade and friend, the love of her life, had been felled, she, more than anyone else, captured that incandescent moment. In the coming days, there were protest demonstrations all over the country, in small towns and large. Mala travelled to Bombay, Tripura and Kerala, and addressed large gatherings. In late January, she went to Calcutta, where we joined her a couple of days later to perform *Halla Bol*. At the first performance at Calcutta University, where Safdar was conferred a posthumous honorary doctorate, we were mobbed by students. It's the only time I've signed autograph books.

That tour culminated with a performance at the basketball court of Salt Lake Stadium, where some 25,000 people came to express solidarity. Poems, songs and plays were written about Safdar and Mala, artists made paintings and posters, intellectuals and activists gave speeches. Within a few days of the performance on 4th January, the Safdar Hashmi Memorial Committee came into being. It was the first step towards the formation of the Safdar Hashmi Memorial Trust (SAHMAT), which has played a stellar role in mobilising artistes and intellectuals against communalism and the rise of the Hindu Right.

From Satyajit Ray to Ravi Shankar, from Adoor Gopalakrishnan to Utpal Dutt, from Krishna Sobti to Rajendra Yadav, the list of artistes, big and small, known and unknown, who came out in public displays of solidarity and support, was virtually endless. In a stirring gesture, on 8th January, Shabana Azmi used the stage of the International Film Festival of India being held in Delhi to read out a protest note on Safdar's killing. Outside, on the overcast, breezy winter day, Dilip Kumar stood in protest with Safdar's photograph. The following day saw coordinated protests all over the country. Later, on 12th April, Safdar's birthday, which was celebrated spontaneously as National Street Theatre Day, over 30,000 street play performances took place.

Rajendra Prasad ('Rajen'), who's been the chief organiser of SAHMAT since its formation, told me years later that in his opinion the trust wouldn't even have come into being but for Mala's action that day. It is true. Mala was the picture of quiet defiance that day. I remember her eyes—determined, without a trace of the grief that ravaged her soul. Her slender body seemed to have a spine made of steel. She stood erect, ramrod straight. Her slight frame seemed incredibly tall. And that voice. Clear, resonant, ringing, sailing over the audience, and into their hearts. ■

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Sudhanva Deshpande is an actor, director and organiser with Jana Natya Manch, Delhi. He is Managing Editor, LeftWord Books. Halla Bol can be purchased on mayday.leftword.com Royalties from this publication will go towards running Studio Safdar, New Delhi.

For the Record

Jimmy Bilimoria discusses a work from the Stuart-Liff Collection he oversees at the NCPA. This month, he writes about Italian coloratura soprano Luisa Tetrazzini, who came to be known as the queen of staccato.

Luisa Tetrazzini was one of the most famous Italian sopranos of the 19th-20th centuries. She began singing at the age of three, which is perhaps why her father compared her to one of the great coloratura singers of the 19th century, Adelina Patti, who had also begun performing as a child. Tetrazzini first studied with her elder sister, Eva, who was a prima donna soprano and had made a name for herself internationally. Whilst helping at home, Tetrazzini was known to practise entire acts of operatic roles. She began actual studies at the age of 10 with Giuseppe Ceccherini.

In 1890, at the age of 19, Tetrazzini made a surprise debut at the Teatro Pagliano in Florence as



Ines in *L'Africaine*. Next, she sang in Rome and toured with much success throughout Italy, adding to her repertory all the famous roles for coloratura soprano. She also sang in St. Petersburg, Madrid, Buenos Aires and Mexico.

Tetrazzini first sang in *Lucia di Lammermoor* in Buenos Aires on 21st November 1892. It was her favourite opera. By the time of her fourth season in the Latin American city, she was engaged to receive 5,500 liras per month.

Tetrazzini made her Covent Garden debut on 2nd November 1907 as Violetta in *La traviata* and caused a sensation. "She came like a bolt from the blue and swept the musical world flat," a critic wrote. She received 20 curtain calls. She returned to London for every summer season from 1908 to 1912 singing Lucia, Gilda, Rosina, Amina, Lakmé, Leïla (*The Pearl Fishers*) and the Queen in *Les Huguenots*. Her success was welcome at a time when Nellie Melba had begun to relinquish her brilliant parts.

After her success in London, she was engaged by Oscar Hammerstein for the Manhattan Opera House where, on 15th January 1908, she repeated her London triumphs in the role of Violetta. She appeared in three consecutive seasons at the Manhattan Opera House, in 1911-12 at the Met and in 1911-12 and 1912-13 in Chicago. She also appeared in most of her London roles as well as others in which London would never hear her: Rossini's Mathilde (*William Tell*); Bellini's Elvira; Donizetti's Linda, Adina (*L'elisir d'amore*); Marie (*La fille du régiment*). These pre-war years were the climax of her career. Thereafter she made many concert tours, appearing for the last time in New York in 1931 and in London in 1934. In later years, Tetrazzini taught in Milan and had an excellent pupil in Lina Pagliughi. Unfortunately, at the time of her death on 28th April 1940, she had exhausted her resources and had to be buried at the expense of the state.

Between 1908 and 1914, the years she was in her prime, Tetrazzini recorded extensively. Her recordings of 'Una voce poco fa' (*The Barber of Seville*), 'Polonaise' (*Mignon*) and 'Ah! non giunge' (*Sonnambula*) rank among the most brilliant ever made. Tetrazzini possessed technical gifts of the highest order, a dazzling ease and agility in virtuoso passages and a tone of warm, clarinet-like beauty.

One of the best descriptions of her voice was penned by a rival coloratura, her friend, Frieda Hempel, "What a thrilling unforgettable voice. It was so powerful and so free. The tones were round and strong, not even losing their fullness when, after swelling a note, she diminished it in a pianissimo that had real body and quality all the way through. Her technique



was dazzling. Even the most difficult things she seemed to do without trying—her descending scale had to be heard to be believed! Above all, there was something in the way she sang that swept you off your feet. Tetrazzini was a natural musician with a remarkable gift for improving cadenzas which always sounded right, even though she might do them differently each time. And big though she was, there was a marvellous daintiness in her vocal style."

This voice is richly recorded in a set of five LPs, which are part of the collection. At the NCPA, readers can also peruse her autobiography, and biography, *Luisa Tetrazzini: The Florentine Nightingale*, by Charles Gattey. ■

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.

Recommended Volume

Sujata Jadhav, Head - Libraries & Documentation Centre at the NCPA, introduces a must-read book from the NCPA Reference Library. Here, she recommends a collection of essays that trace the evolution of cinema, delve into the process of filmmaking and celebrate those who enriched the cinematic landscape of India and the world.

Hours in the Dark: Essays on Cinema

By T. G. Vaidyanathan

Published by Oxford University Press (1996)

T. G. Vaidyanathan's *Hours in the Dark: Essays on Cinema* provides an overview of cinema from a global perspective. The essays in this book provide a starting point for exploring the rich world of cinema and depending on specific interests, one can dip into various aspects of filmmaking, including its history, culture, the technology involved and its social impact.

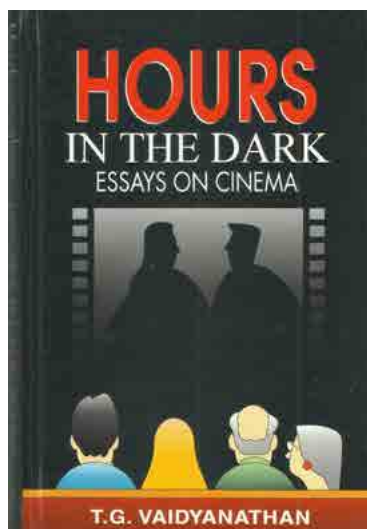
In 'Towards a Century of Cinema', the first essay in the book, Vaidyanathan provides a profound exploration of the growth, evolution and globalisation of cinema as an art form. The essay begins by tracing the roots of cinema, highlighting its humble beginnings as a novelty attraction and its gradual transformation into a powerful medium for storytelling and artistic expression. It is fascinating to see how cinema has evolved over the decades, from silent films to the advent of sound, and from black and white to the vibrant world of colour.

The Lumière brothers, Auguste and Louis, are often credited with the invention of cinema. They held the first commercial screening of a motion picture in 1895, marking the birth of the medium. Early films were short, silent and often depicted simple scenes from everyday life. In the silent era, films became a dominant form of entertainment. Iconic figures like Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton and Greta Garbo rose to fame during this period. The art of filmmaking, including techniques like editing and cinematography, began to develop.

'Denouement in the Modern Film' explores how the narrative element contributes to the overall impact of a film and ensures that the audience leaves the theatre with a sense of closure, emotional resonance and a deeper understanding of the story's complexities. 'The Welles Charisma' is dedicated to the captivating and magnetic presence and talent of Orson Welles, one of the most influential figures in the history of cinema and theatre. His charm extended beyond his acting abilities and had a profound impact on the entertainment industry.

Each of the essays in this section of the book delves into the unique contributions, styles and impact of certain prominent filmmakers—including Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Ingmar Bergman, Hugh Hudson, Francis Ford Coppola, Paolo and Vittorio Taviani, James Ivory and Steven Spielberg—and their works. The essays provide valuable insights into their artistic visions, cinematic techniques and the lasting effects of their contributions to the world of cinema.

The book also delves into the lives of personalities who



have made a significant contribution to India cinema. In addition to essays on Richard Attenborough, Aparna Sen and Shyam Benegal, an entire section consisting of six essays is dedicated to Satyajit Ray. Vaidyanathan has also explored Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam movies.

The second part of the book discusses aspects of modern Indian cinema, such as the problems of post-colonial cinema. Indian cinema continues to evolve and adapt to changing cultural and global dynamics. While it faces challenges related to its post-colonial legacy, it also has the opportunity to tell diverse and compelling stories that resonate with audiences around the world.

Balancing cultural authenticity with global

appeal is an ongoing challenge that Indian filmmakers navigate as they shape the future of the industry.

In 'Art and Commerce: Is There a Choice?', the author discusses the old conundrum. At one end, there is purely commercial art, created primarily for profit with little emphasis on artistic innovation or expression, and at the other end, there is avant-garde cinema, which prioritises artistic experimentation and innovation. Furthermore, many works fall somewhere in between, balancing artistic expression with the need for financial sustainability. These works may aim to be both artistically meaningful and commercially viable. The relationship between the two is complex and varies widely among artistes and creators. Ultimately, the decision often depends on individual priorities, goals and the specific context in which art is being created.

The concluding part of the book covers several significant moments and movements in the history of world cinema that brought about substantial changes, innovations and challenges to established norms and traditions. These revolutions often impacted filmmaking techniques, narrative styles, distribution and audience reception. While no single volume can provide a comprehensive history of cinema, this collection of insightful essays leaves the reader with an astute understanding of filmmaking and a delightfully long list of must-watch films. ■

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

The Performing Arts Dispatch

A series on houses of culture from around the world. In focus this month: the Usher Hall.

By Aishwarya Bodke



Every corner of the historic cityscape of Edinburgh—the cobbled streets, the tall medieval architecture and the green hills—has learned to breathe art and music. It is a small city, but the cultural wealth it nurtures is enormous. The Scottish Parliament Building that sits within the UNESCO World Heritage Site in central Edinburgh, too, is no less than a work of art. Not too far stands the iconic edifice of the Usher Hall in the West End of Edinburgh, facing the majestic Edinburgh Castle.

The Usher Hall has been at the heart of the city's musical life for over a century. At the turn of the 20th century, wealthy brewer Andrew Usher's dream of creating a hub for musical performers and a place where people could listen to good music

The Usher Hall knows how to revel in its history, its stunning Edwardian facade cradles the side of the original building ... Still owned and managed by the City of Edinburgh Council, the main auditorium can accommodate seating for 2,200 people, standing room for 2,900 people and cabaret-style seating for 1,970 people

took shape. His donation of £100,000 to the Scottish capital led to the building of this venue. Unfortunately, Usher never saw the hall that took his name. The doors of the Usher Hall officially opened in March 1914, 16 years after his demise. The grand opening concerts featured music from Handel, Bach and Beethoven—a bill that would have tested the venue's excellent acoustics.

"We've tried to stay true to that dream for the last 110 years," says Karl Chapman, Head of Heritage, Cultural Venues, Museums & Galleries at the City of Edinburgh Council. It is now the city's key venue for national and international visiting orchestras and has been the main venue for the Edinburgh International Festival since its inception in 1947. It has

STUART ARMITT

seen legends of the music and comedy world, including Oasis, Björk, Paul Weller, Billy Connolly, Status Quo, Michael Bublé and more. "Rachmaninoff played piano here. Not many concert halls can say *that*," adds Chapman.

The Usher Hall knows how to revel in its history. The stunning Edwardian facade cradles the side of the original building. Still owned and managed by the City of Edinburgh Council, the main auditorium can accommodate seating for 2,200 people, standing room for 2,900 people and cabaret-style seating for 1,970 people. With sensitively executed refurbishments, the hall, like its city, has a delicate charm; a harmony of nostalgia and modernity. Chapman tells us, "It is like the music has been ingrained into the walls and the seats over a century."

The relationship between the Usher Hall and the city council—the governing body—is a harmonious one too. It is telling of Edinburgh's deep interest and investment in its artistic capital. "Our actual operation is not too dissimilar from independent trusts. The city council is good at leaving us alone," Chapman explains. "But there is immense strength in it too. We work for the city as a part of the city that is so culturally aware. We feel very strongly as the citizens of Edinburgh and that drives quite a lot of our thinking and work," he elaborates.

It is not surprising then that the Usher Hall has been a significant presence in the history of the city. The extensive basement rooms of the hall made it an ideal air-raid shelter during the Second World War. Graffiti and painted signs from the time



The Sheldonian Theatre

The last stop on the U.K. tour of the SOI is the Sheldonian Theatre in Oxford. Established in 1669, the stately theatre was designed for the University of Oxford by a young Christopher Wren, who went on to earn great acclaim as an architect. The theatre was commissioned by Gilbert Sheldon, Archbishop of Canterbury and later chancellor of the university.



Originally built for ceremonies held by the university, the 1000-seater theatre now features regular concerts, recitals, theatre productions, lectures and more. Handel conducted a performance of his third oratorio *Athalia* here in 1733. The first drama, however, took as long as 2015 to arrive at the Sheldonian Theatre, when a production of *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller was staged.

Apart from being a performance space, it is also a popular destination for visitors due to the panoramic views of Oxford from its cupola. The resplendent ceiling, painted by Robert Streater during the reign of King Charles II, adorns the interiors.

In December, the SOI will perform works of Rossini, Khachaturian and Tchaikovsky conducted by Zane Dalal, with Marat Bisengaliev as the violin soloist.

are still present in the basement. In 1986, when the city hosted the Commonwealth Games, the hall provided a venue for the boxing tournaments. Over the years, culture, politics, sports and welfare have all converged at the hall stage. More recently, the hall set up a testing centre during the Covid-19 pandemic, sharing the weight with the city's administration.

The Usher Hall is the Edinburgh home of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, who play there regularly during

their season. Among other customary performers are the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Scottish Fiddle Orchestra, National Youth Orchestra of Scotland and local organisations, such as the Edinburgh Royal Choral Union.

The curation boasts striking themes and innovative ideas. That Lloyd Cole, Children's Classic Concerts: Myths & Monsters, Vampires Rock Day of the Dead Symphonic and the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine jostle for space on the October-November 2023 calendar hint at the range the Usher Hall presents.

Another feature of the programming is international collaborations. The Symphony Orchestra of India is set to perform at the Usher Hall next month as part of their U.K. tour. The concert in Edinburgh will mark the U.K. premiere of Zakir Hussain's Triple Concerto for tabla, sitar and bansuri, commissioned by the SOI. "We are really excited. Having Zakir Hussain perform is monumental for us," Chapman says. Classical music may often seem too Western, but by inviting orchestras from different parts of the world, the intention, he says, is to break down barriers and experience each other's music and unique cultures.

It all goes back to living by their founder's resolve of giving the city good music. ■

ALAMY (THE SHELDONIAN THEATRE)

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 first 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.

Willst du den Himmel, die Erde, mit Einem Namen begreifen; Nenn'ich, Sakuntala, Dich, und so ist Alles gesagt.

—Goethe

We claim, rightly or wrongly, to represent a superior civilisation, and because of the right given [to] us by virtue of this superiority, which we regularly affirm with such assurance as makes it seem incontestable to the natives, we have called in question all their native traditions... We must offer ourselves to these (Oriental) civilisations as we do our other products, that is, on the local exchange market.

—Sylvain Lévi, *Memorial Sylvain Lévi*, ed. Jacques Bacot

This article examines the phenomenon of interculturalism in the theatre by focusing on some Western interpretations of Indian theatre. More specifically, it analyses exemplary attitudes to Indian theatre demonstrated by artistes/scholars as varied as Gordon Craig, Jerzy Grotowski and Richard Schechner. These attitudes embody differing conceptions of Indian theatre, which correspond to differing interpretations of Indian culture and life. Implicit in these interpretations is an attitude to the East shaped by certain constructs and images of the Orient that prevail in the West.

I should emphasise that I have not attempted to provide a comprehensive history of Western perspectives on Indian theatre. Nor do I offer a synoptic view of how Indian theatre has been interpreted (and misinterpreted), used (and misused), mythologised (and demystified) in the West. I do not believe that there is an overriding Western view of Indian theatre that can be summarily categorised. Certainly, I do not discern any pervasive “orientalism” (as defined by Edward Said) in the attitudes of Western theatre practitioners and theorists towards Indian theatre, no systematised cultural imperialism that undermines the philosophical premises of Indian culture and life.



English theatre actor, director and designer, Gordon Craig was also an influential theorist

At the same time, it would be disingenuous on my part to state that *instances* of cultural imperialism do not exist. As I will clarify towards the end of this article, the increased accessibility and use of Indian theatre in the West have occasionally resulted in a subtle exploitation of its traditions and conventions. I substantiate this view by examining the hypocrisies of

“cultural tourism” and the ambivalent ethics of cross-cultural borrowings with particular reference to Schechner’s writings on interculturalism and the use of ritual in theatre.

Though Schechner is by no means the only Westerner who, to my mind, is irresponsible in his attitude to Eastern theatrical traditions, he is among the most prominent and influential of

performance theorists in the Western world today. I should stress, however, that my criticism of his views on theatre is not intended as an indictment of all Western theorists of Indian theatre. I am aware of the considerable differences between Schechner’s theories and the writings of scholars like A.C. Scott, Earle S. Ernst, Leonard Pronko and Farley Richmond. If I choose to focus on Schechner rather than on these more academic, less controversial, scholars, it is because I sense tensions and contradictions in his writings which illuminate (more sharply than other critical writing I have encountered) the innate intricacies of interculturalism in the theatre.

In contrast to the approach advocated by Schechner, I examine two diametrically opposed attitudes to Indian theatre represented by Craig and Grotowski. Craig was the first European (to the best of my knowledge) who theorised about interculturalism in the theatre in a systematic way. His predilection to mythologise Indian theatre (more rapturously than Théophile Gautier, Lugné-Poe and Alexander Tairov) contrasts sharply with Grotowski’s pragmatic use of the Indian theatrical tradition.

It is useful to contrast his pragmatism with the more utilitarian use of Eastern techniques, conventions and concepts of Schechner. I will demonstrate in the course of this article that Grotowski eventually realised that incorporating Indian techniques within his own performance tradition was futile, whereas Schechner continues to believe in the efficacy of cross-cultural borrowings and transferences...

Before examining Craig’s mythologies of the Indian theatre, it is necessary to recall one of the most inspired mythologisers of the “oriental theatre”—Antonin Artaud. Though Artaud did not write about Indian theatre per se, his writings on the Balinese and Cambodian dancers are among the most alluring fictions of “oriental theatre” that have ever been written. Fictions because Artaud’s essays are neither historical accounts nor systematic descriptions of what he saw. It is unlikely that he knew the differences between *kebyar*, *djanger*, *legong* and *baris*—they are his envisionings of an “impossible” theatre.

It is essential to keep in mind when discussing Artaud’s attitude to “oriental theatre” that “The stimulus (of the Balinese and Cambodian dances) could just as well have come from observing the theatre of a Dahomey tribe or the

shamanistic ceremonies of the Patagonian Indians”—one could add the traditional dance-theatres of India like Kathakali and *Chhau*—“what matters is that the other culture be genuinely other: that is non-Western and non-contemporary.” (Artaud 1976, xxxix) What concerned Artaud was not the Balinese theatre as such but “oriental theatre”—a term he created to evoke a magical storehouse of ancient rhythms and gestures shared by diverse theatres from the East.

Perhaps, the most unfortunate remnant of Artaud’s legacy is the very term “oriental theatre”. Like so many Western categories that ultimately simplify activities and modes of thought in the East, it evens out all the distinctive characteristics of varied and complex arts such as kabuki, Noh, *wayang kulit*, *baris*, Kathakali and *Chhau*. Divested of their individuality, these performance traditions of the East become

The increased accessibility and use of Indian theatre in the West have occasionally resulted in a subtle exploitation of its traditions and conventions

mere presences in an amorphous system.

Not only is Artaud’s use of the term unconsciously reductive, it is also mystifying. Though he often used “oriental theatre” synonymously with Balinese theatre, he more frequently used the term to express what Western theatre is not. The “otherness” he inextricably associated with “oriental theatre” was enhanced by his misreading of “cosmic”, “metaphysical” and “supernatural” elements in Balinese and Cambodian dances.

What attracted Artaud to these dances was not the minutiae of their techniques but their concrete embodiment of the unknown, their evocation of “the spectres of the Beyond”. (Artaud 1976, 215-227) Artaud could only view “mechanically rolling eyes”, “pouts” and “recurrent muscular contractions” as elements in “a kind of spiritual architecture”. Similarly, he envisioned in the taut movements of the dancers “a rigidity of body in trance stiffened by the surge of the cosmic forces invading it”. One needs only a rudimentary knowledge of Balinese theatre to realise that Artaud superimposed a cosmic signification on its signs and *mudras*.¹

Though this etherealisation of “oriental theatre” is yet another unfortunate aspect of Artaud’s legacy, one should not dismiss all of Artaud’s speculations on acting as “mystical” or “cosmic”. When he wrote in ‘An Emotional Athleticism’, for instance, of how an actor’s breathing is related “inversely” to the emphasis of the external movement, or when he speculated on the points of localisation in an actor’s body that can be used to project particular emotions, he could have been speaking of some of the essential principles underlying the training of a performer in classical Indian theatre (Artaud 1976, 259-267).

The problem stems from Artaud’s attempts to classify his instincts by speaking of “male and female beats”, the “six principal combinations of breaths”, and the “highest Guna, the state of Sattva, that joins the manifest to the non-manifest” (Artaud 1976, 263). Such classifications are visionary speculations and should be perceived as such. It is ludicrous to expect a system of acting from Artaud, a series of *exercices plastiques* outlining the development of an actor in the Theatre of Cruelty. It cannot be stressed enough that Artaud’s writings on the theatre cannot be applied. Nor were they intended to be used as manifestos of acting.

“Oriental theatre” was a construct for Artaud, not a practice. He never attempted to situate his hallucinatory experience of Balinese theatre within a historical context. Craig, on the other hand, could not avoid a confrontation of Indian theatre on a historical level. Though he initially located the first home of the ‘über-marionette’ on “the banks of the Ganges”—a magical landscape with gardens, flowers and fountains—this rhapsodic vision of India was shattered when Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy published a very informative article entitled ‘Notes on Indian Dramatic Technique’ in *The Mask* (1913). The Indian scholar challenged Craig’s assumption that the human body, undisciplined and susceptible to unpredictable emotions, was not suitable material for the theatre.

Had Mr. Craig studied the Indian actors, and not merely those of modern theatre, he might not have thought it so necessary to reject the bodies of men and women as the material of dramatic art... The movements of the Indian actor are not accidentally swayed by his personal emotion; he is too perfectly trained for that. His body is, if you will, an automaton; while he is acting, there is nothing natural... that is to say

accidental or inartistic. The movement of a single finger, the elevation of an eyebrow, the direction of a glance... all these are determined in the books of technical instruction... Many of these gestures called *mudras* have hieratic significance... they express the intentions of the soul in conventional language (Coomaraswamy 1913, 123).

Craig’s initial response to the codification of gestures in Indian theatre was sceptical; he felt that “it was wrong for human beings to submit to such severe discipline” (Coomaraswamy 1913, 127). The Indian art of acting was more rigorous than anything he had imagined. It embodied all the ideals that he had articulated in his theory of the über-marionette—an avoidance of personal emotions, a craving for perfection and absolute control, an attention to detail—but there was one crucial difference. Indian theatre accepted the body of the actor as the means of theatrical expression, but he rejected it. However, Coomaraswamy’s belief that an actor could function with as much precision and rigour as a marionette stimulated Craig to re-examine his theory of acting. The irony is that this re-examination did not in any way compel him to study Indian theatre seriously. On the contrary, it inspired him to mythologise Indian theatre with greater vehemence than before he had known anything about it.

In 1915, he wrote to Coomaraswamy: “I crave the instruction of the instructors of the East... You know how I revere and love with all my best the miracles of your land, but I dread for my men lest they go blind suddenly attempting to see God’s face” (Nandi 1936, Introduction). Craig used a religious vocabulary (“reverence”, “miracles”, “God’s face”) to evoke the art of Indian theatre. In his imagination, it became a sacrosanct territory, at once “holy” and “dangerous”.

Craig returns constantly to the idea of danger in Indian theatre. If you go close to it, he warned his colleagues, you may never return. At times, he intimidated them in a more formidable manner. “And do you dare to dream you can be in a moment all that India is and not be burnt to a cinder in the tick of a clock...” (Craig 1918, 31). Craig’s rhetoric is so florid that it conceals his very subtle and contradictory attitudes to Indian theatre. A particularly eloquent article, ‘Asia, America, Europe’ (Craig 1918), reveals some of Craig’s ambivalent responses to the “Holy East”.

To “feel” the East, Craig claimed, “we must be of it”. At the same time, he could

not restrict an appreciation of the East to “native” scholars like Coomaraswamy. Craig did not want to be excluded. So, he strongly asserted:

I know no separation such as “East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet”, for on the day that I choose to wander far afield, be it to the moon or into the beds of Ocean, I may do so ... and so also, I may go to the East and become of it any day I wish. (Craig 1918, 31)

The grandiloquence of this style barely conceals Craig’s peremptory attitude to the East. Nothing could stop him from immersing himself in the East if *he* wished to do so. *But*—this is where Craig recognised the dangers of rhapsodising—“even as there is no returning for a true lover, be the pains the pains of Hell itself, so is there no returning from India” (Craig 1918, 31). Craig designated himself as a true lover of the East, someone who was in a position to understand its secrets. And yet, it was this very affinity to the East that made him distrust it.

Gordon Craig designated himself as a true lover of the East, someone who was in a position to understand its secrets; and yet, it was this very affinity to the East that made him distrust it

Envisioning the hypnotic effect of India on the Western consciousness, Craig extemporised on the “exquisite fluting of the great and lovely Krishna”. He warned his followers that it was positively indulgent to listen to this “fluting” because “we dare not turn an ear or an eye away from our task” (Craig 1918, 31). Indian theatre, Craig hypothesised, could be a dreadful distraction. It could lure his colleagues to abandon their work in search of strange and esoteric mysteries.

Underlying this fear, however, there was an enormous humility, even a suggestion of cultural subservience on Craig’s part when he said:

There is nothing for us to listen to [;] nothing for us yet. We Europeans and Americans are in the utmost need for we know very little... we are like fools beside wise men, we Europeans and Americans standing by Asiatics... and we of the theatre hammering away like

slaves, we are the most ignorant of all. (Craig 1918, 31)

It appears from this statement, an apotheosis of self-depreciation, that the Western world is not in a position to listen to Krishna’s music. Even if it were, Craig added emphatically, and this is the twist in his argument, it would not be worth listening to. An imaginative sojourn in the East could be a waste of time. Worse still, it could lead to a disruption of progress in the Western tradition.

For all his flamboyance, Craig was, at heart, a traditionalist. He chided his disciples, “Will you waste the few good centuries in which your forefathers built up for you a beginning?” Using an apocalyptic vocabulary, Craig prophesied: A beginning is something; we are at that promising point. Must you prefer nothing to it? Do you prefer annihilation to the chance that is before you? If so, then annihilate yourself and the toil of your forefathers in your gratified desire to see the marvel for an instant and die. (Craig 1918, 32)

Indian theatre was at once a “marvel” and an “annihilation”: there could not be a more romantic juxtaposition. Shakuntala was Craig’s La Belle Dame sans Merci.

What makes his position in this article so fascinating is its ambivalence. While desperately attempting to suppress his innate romanticism, he luxuriated in romantic postures. He resisted the sweet music of Krishna’s flute as much as he would have liked to have been seduced by its sound. Craig seems to have been aware of these tensions in his attitude towards the East. Resolving them with the grace of a master tactician, he concluded:

Whenever you see an Indian work of art, tighten up the strings of your helmet. Admire it... venerate it... but for your own sake don’t absorb it... They over there are wonderful, and we can know it. Admit it, admire it, and goodnight. (Craig 1918, 32)

This point of view on Indian theatre does not indicate Craig’s indifference to the East. Rather, it reflects his acute awareness of the fundamental differences that exist between Eastern and Western cultures. Unlike some of our contemporary theatre scholars and anthropologists (who search too eagerly for universal structures in disparate cultural experiences), Craig respected the differences that exist between cultures. In this context it is interesting to note that even though he was obsessed with an image of himself—modesty was not one of Craig’s virtues—he could acknowledge

the “superiority” of artistes from other cultures. While advising his followers to “be themselves”, he urged them to “love all things of the East... but to really love them... remembering Goethe’s wise saying. ‘Against the superiority of another there is no defence but love.’” (Craig 1918, 32)

It may be argued that Craig’s assumption that the East was “superior” to the West often led him to speculate too bleakly on the state of Western culture. All the Oriental artiste in the West will find, he once mourned, is “the spirit of Commercialism, Industrialism, Debacle, Imperialism” (Craig 1913, 90)². In overstating such views, Craig tended to mystify the arts of the East and exaggerate that there was nothing to be learned in the West. He invariably viewed artistes from the East as the “Holy Ones”, the “conquerors”.

Despite this adulation of the East however, Craig was not entirely cynical about his own heritage. On the contrary, he was aware of what Western theatre was capable of doing. And he was convinced that it was not by borrowing rituals and theatrical conventions from the East (a phenomenon we are so familiar with today) that Western theatre could grow. Rather, it was by exploring its own tradition that it could develop its potential and unearth its own sources of poetry and magic. ■

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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).

Frames for Posterity

A veteran photojournalist’s family donates a striking selection of his framed prints to the NCPA Photo Archive.

For four long decades, Chandu Mhatre’s unforgiving lens captured major sociopolitical and cultural events in India. His photographs of the Asiad Games 1982, Operation Blue Star, the Bhopal gas tragedy and the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala after the Tibet uprising of 1989 appeared on the pages of leading news publications of the country and the world.

A denizen of this megapolis, he also chronicled the changing face of Bombay, now Mumbai. The city’s ever-evolving skyline, the sundry projects in the name of development, the frenetic pace of life were all duly captured. In his later years, documenting life in Mumbai, with all its diversity and disparity, and capturing what was being lost in the blinkered race towards urbanisation, became a labour of love. In 2013, Urban Reflections, a collection of Mhatre’s



realistic and surreal images of the city reflected on glass façades, mirror walls, doors and dressed up windows, came to be exhibited at the Piramal Art Gallery.

Mhatre wanted to do more for his beloved Mumbai but his sudden death in 2015 ended the ‘Vanishing Mumbai’ movement he had galvanised. His family, however, knew that photographs are for posterity and belong in a gallery.

The Mhatre family recently donated a selection of the veteran photographer’s framed prints to the Dilip Piramal Art Gallery, all of which will be carefully preserved in the NCPA’s Photo Archive.

It is acts of benevolence like these that have helped build archives the world over. If readers wish to donate photographs of historic and cultural value to the NCPA, please contact Mukesh Parpiani, Head, Photography and gallery, NCPA, on mukesh.ncpa@gmail.com. ■

NOTES:

1. Artaud’s “misreading” of the signs in the Balinese theatre is substantiated by Grotowski in his essay ‘He Wasn’t Entirely Himself’ (Grotowski 1968, 117-125). Characterising ‘On the Balinese Theatre’ as “one big misreading”—an ecstatic outpouring of perceptions that “slumbered in the depths” of Artaud—Grotowski claimed that the essay cannot be read as a manifesto for the theatre since Artaud explained “the unknown by the unknown, the magic by the magic”.
2. This short essay entitled ‘Japanese Artists in the West’ (Craig 1913) is one of the earliest critiques of interculturalism in the theatre. Focusing on the phenomenon of Japanese artistes coming to the West “to study and imitate Western arts”, Craig emphasised the political impulses underlying cross-cultural exchanges. A Japanese artiste in the West, he stated, is more likely to think under the influence of his “government” rather than his “masters”. In making his culture more accessible to the West he succeeds in trivialising it by producing “quaint” versions of traditional techniques and conventions. At a seminar held at the Japan Society (New York) in 1982, which focused on the theoretical principles and techniques of Suzuki Tadashi, I could not help reflecting on how much the manifestations of interculturalism in the theatre have changed since Craig wrote his essay. Unlike Japanese artistes in 1913, Suzuki was clearly not in America “to study and imitate Western arts”. He was there to propagate his own system of acting in the West.

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Programme Guide

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

November 2023

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

PHOTOGRAPHY



We are like that only!, 28th October to 5th November, Dilip Piramal Art Gallery

We are like that only!

Photo Exhibition by
Mr. Constantine Lykiard
Dilip Piramal Art Gallery
Saturday, 28th October to Sunday,
5th November – 12.00 noon to
8.00 pm

For more than a decade, **Mr. Constantine Lykiard** has roamed many Indian streets and markets. Unlike other Westerners, he fell in love with everything but the Taj, yoga retreats and majestic Rajasthan. He finds the beauty of India in the everydayness of city life. In its contradictions, he finds the harsh realities of daily toil, the kindness, the cruelty, the endeavour and the willingness to embrace tomorrow's unknowns as a motive for overcoming today's struggles. Nothing stops him from venturing into the orchestrated chaos of India's city streets because that is where life is.

Mr. Lykiard will give a talk on 28th October at 5.00 pm.

Entry free

INDIAN MUSIC

GODDESS: A Celebration of the Divine Feminine
Conceived and curated by

Arundhathi Subramaniam
Godrej Dance Theatre and
Experimental Theatre
Friday, 3rd – 4.00 pm onwards
Saturday, 4th – 3.00 pm onwards

An NCPA Presentation

For the devotee, She is mother and protector. For the spiritual seeker, She is guide and key to inner transformation. For those seeking a more just, gender-balanced and ecologically sustainable world, She is inspiration and emblem.

She looms over all the cultures of the world. Over the centuries, She has taken on innumerable names and forms. She also speaks to multiple orientations—yogic, tantric, devotional, and in recent times, global New Age and feminist. A planet awakening to the urgency of ecological awareness seems to need her more than ever before.

GODDESS is a unique and exuberant celebration of the Sacred Feminine. It weaves together a tapestry of Goddess poems from diverse lands and across the ages.

It yokes together poetry translated from diverse languages. It celebrates multiple goddesses—from Shakti to Mei Hukum, Aphrodite to Astarte, Demeter to Diana, Abhirami to Ambika, Kali to Saraswati. It brings together an assortment of musical styles—from the rousing Karnataka tradition that celebrates Yellamma, the goddess of transgenders, to the joyous Gujarati garba sung by women to multiple goddesses. It brings together a diversity of tones—from adoration and ecstasy to complaint and rage. It brings together a variety of practitioners and perspectives—poets, translators, musicians, theatre actors, scholars.

In honouring the Goddess, this



Arundhathi Subramaniam, 3rd & 4th, Godrej Dance Theatre and Experimental Theatre

festival hopes to add its voice to the rising chorus across the world that seeks to reclaim a more balanced, less lopsided, inclusive legacy of culture and spirituality.

Welcome to *GODDESS*: an explosive, multidisciplinary celebration of the Divine Feminine, her many forms and faces.

Curator **Arundhathi Subramaniam** is a leading Indian poet and spiritual traveller. She is the award-winning author of 13 books of poetry and prose, most recently, a volume on contemporary female sacred travellers, entitled *Women Who Wear Only Themselves*. Other works include the Penguin anthology of Bhakti poetry, *Eating God*, and the bestselling biography, *Sadhguru: More Than a Life*.

GODDESS: A Celebration of the Divine Feminine

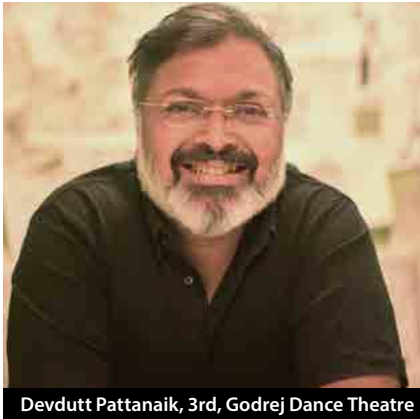
3rd November

Godrej Dance Theatre

4.00 pm to 4.05 pm: **Introduction**

Session 1

4.05 pm to 5.00 pm: **Goddess: A Metaphor Called Woman:**
Devdutt Pattanaik



Devdutt Pattanaik, 3rd, Godrej Dance Theatre

Distinguished mythologist, author, illustrator and columnist, **Devdutt Pattanaik**, will discuss how male and female forms, and their marriage, were used as tools to explain Vedic ideas—who we are and what we have. This was the fifth Veda, where non-gendered ideas were embodied with gender. The choices were not random, nor patriarchal or sexist. But our modern gaze certainly is.

Session 2

5.00 pm to 5.20 pm: **“This World That Was Created by Opening Your Eyes”: Mani Rao on the ‘Saundarya Lahari’**

The ‘Saundarya Lahari’ is a celebrated eighth-century Sanskrit poem of adoration dedicated to Shakti, the consort without whom Shiva is self-confessedly powerless. Who is Shakti? What makes her unique? Scholar, poet and translator of this iconic text, **Mani Rao** (author of *Saundarya Lahari: Wave of Beauty*, Harper Collins, 2022) will introduce audiences to its magic and its power.

Session 3

5.20 pm to 6.10 pm: **“I’ll Rub Kali on My Face”: Translating the Goddess**

Three noted poet-translators will discuss the rewards and challenges of translating some acclaimed Goddess poems in recent times. This will be interspersed with readings of their translations. **Sampurna Chattarji** will discuss her translations of the 18th-century Bengali mystic poet, Ramprasad Sen. **K Srilata** will discuss her translations of the 20th-century Tamil poet, Subramania Bharati. **Mani Rao** will unpack the nuances of the

‘Saundarya Lahari’, believed to have been authored by Adi Shankara.

Tickets (for Session 1, 2 & 3):

₹180/- (Members)

₹200/- (Public)

6.10 pm to 6.30 pm – break

Experimental Theatre

Session 4

6.30 pm to 6.45 pm: **“GODDESS” – Aditi Bhagwat**

Seasoned Kathak exponent and actor, **Aditi Bhagwat**, sets the stage with a powerful invocation, choreographed by acclaimed dancer, **Sanjukta Wagh**.

Session 5

6.45 pm to 8.00 pm: **“Yellamma and Other Stories”: Wild Goddess of the Margins: Musical Storytelling with Shilpa Mudbi Kothakota & Adithya Kothakota (60 mins)**, followed by a discussion.

Yellamma is a compelling figure, capable of embracing every polarity—the high and the low, man and woman, and every shade in between. In a lively session, interspersed with rousing folk music, **Shilpa Mudbi Kothakota** (filmmaker, theatre practitioner and singer), along with **Adithya Kothakota** (co-founder of the Urban Folk Project), will explore the myth of this fiery goddess. The blazing narrative of Yellamma, the deity of the *devadasis* and the *jogathis* (transgender disciples), is kept alive through folk songs that are over 1,500 years old. In a riveting presentation, the artistes unleash a torrent of questions around patriarchy, purity and power.

Tickets (for Session 4 & 5):

₹225 & 180/- (Members)

₹250 & 200/- (Public)

4th November

Godrej Dance Theatre

Session 1

3.00 pm to 4.30 pm: **“Weaving and Being Woven”: An Embodied**

Exploration: A Workshop by Anitha Santhanam

Goddess veneration is inextricably linked with the Indian wisdom of Tantra. The Tantric worldview sees all material reality as created and animated by Shakti. *The Tantra Chronicles* (2013), received and compiled by **Ruth Frankenberg** and **Lata Mani**, comprise a unique text of contemporary wisdom. These 43 original teachings remind us that the universe is alive, embodiment is sacred and the senses are a form of knowledge. Inspired by this text, actor and dancer **Anitha Santhanam** will lead participants through a series of body-centred explorations, rooted in an understanding of the body as a site of living wisdom. Therapeutic, exploratory and revelatory, this is a unique workshop.

Tickets (for Session 1):

₹90/- (Members)

₹100/- (Public)

Session 2

4.30 pm to 5.30 pm: **“Metre, Magic, Mother”: An Introduction to Goddess Poetry Around the World by Annie Finch**



Annie Finch, 4th, Godrej Dance Theatre

Well-known American poet and performer **Annie Finch** is known for her poetry performances and understanding of poetic craft. Her work has appeared in several anthologies on poetics, feminism and witchcraft. In this exciting session, she will take audiences on a whirlwind tour of the goddess traditions of the planet, reminding them that Metre, Magic and Mother arise from the same source in more ways than one.

Session 3

5.30 pm to 6.10 pm: **"The Kingdom of Kali is Within Us Deep": The Goddess Unplugged** by **Arundhati Subramaniam** with **Shernaz Patel** and **Anahita Uberoi**

Poet-curator **Arundhati Subramaniam** introduces audiences to a vibrant mosaic of goddess poems in translation from diverse parts of the Indian subcontinent. These draw from her forthcoming anthology, *Wild Women* (Penguin India, 2024). Stalwart theatre actors **Shernaz Patel** and **Anahita Uberoi** join her in this invocation of the Goddess' many names and moods.

Tickets (for Session 2 & 3):

₹180/- (Members)

₹200/- (Public)

6.10 pm to 6.30 pm – break

Experimental Theatre

Session 4

6.30 pm to 7.25 pm: **"My Mother Awaits Me in the Charnel Ground": Shyama Sangeet** and **Nazrul Geeti** by **Anol Chatterjee**



Anol Chatterjee, 4th, Experimental Theatre

Noted Hindustani vocalist, **Anol Chatterjee**, shares his passion for the Kali poems of the great poets of Bengal—Ramprasad Sen, Kamalakanta Bhattacharya, Kazi Nazrul Islam, among others. These poems offer a dazzling weave of praise, longing, complaint and mystic paradox.

Session 5

7.25 pm to 8.30 pm: **"Garba: The Womb of the Goddess"** by **Manasi Parikh, Parthiv Gohil & Troupe**

The festival reaches its climax with the garba of Gujarat. High-octane performers **Manasi Parikh** and **Parthiv Gohil** and their troupe take audiences on a rollercoaster ride through Goddess rhythms.

The performance will be followed by a discussion with the musicians.

Tickets (for Session 4 & 5):

₹360 & 315/- (Members)

₹400 & 350/- (Public)

Box Office for the Festival now open

THEATRE

The Relationship Agreement

English Play (90 mins)

Tata Theatre

Saturday, 4th – 7.00 pm

A set of rules, a list of likes, dislikes, things they approve, disapprove—does it make your relationship better? Or worse? This couple finds out the hard way. They get into a Relationship Agreement. A binding document drafted by them that every couple must follow—for better or worse?

Written & Directed by

Meherzad Patel

Cast: **Sumona Chakravarthi, Danesh Irani, Darius Shroff & Pheroza Mody**

Tickets:

₹1,080, 900, 720 & 450/- (Members)

₹1,200, 1,000, 800 & 500/- (Public)

(Inclusive of GST)

Box Office now open

WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC

Amatis Trio

Lea Hausmann, violin
Samuel Shepherd, cello
Mengjie Han, piano
Experimental Theatre
Tuesday, 7th – 7.00 pm

An NCPA & Mehli Mehta Music Foundation Presentation, supported by Austrian Cultural Forum, New Delhi and Goethe Institut, Max Mueller Bhavan, Pune



Amatis Trio, 7th, Experimental Theatre

The **Amatis Trio** was founded amidst the vibrant streets of Amsterdam in 2014 and has now found its heart and soul in Salzburg, Austria. Considered one of the leading piano trios of its generation, it appears in major concert halls. German violinist **Lea Hausmann**, British cellist **Samuel Shepherd** and Dutch pianist **Mengjie Han** form an electric fusion of energy and have been praised by the international press for their insight, creativity and unique communication onstage. As the ensemble approaches its 10th anniversary, its 2023/24 season will feature performances in India and Israel, as well as extensive tours across Europe. Highlights include concerts at Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Concertgebouw Amsterdam and Konzerthaus Vienna. Additionally, the trio is presenting their thought-provoking 'Humanity in War' programme, a collaboration with the esteemed Thomas Quasthoff. Recognised early on as BBC New Generation Artists and ECHO Rising Stars, the trio quickly emerged as one of the top chamber music ensembles of its kind.

Programme:

Beethoven: Piano Trio Op. 1 No. 3 in C minor

Liszt: "Tristia" from "Vallée d'Obermann"

Josef Suk: Elegie for Piano Trio

Arensky: Piano trio No. 1 in D minor Op. 32

Tickets:

₹720 & 450/- (Members)

₹800 & 500/- (Public)

(Inclusive of GST)

Box Office now open

SCREENING



The Artist's Garden, 8th, Godrej Dance Theatre

The Artist's Garden: American Impressionism

Exhibition on Screen

(Approx. 90 mins)

Godrej Dance Theatre

Wednesday, 8th – 6.30 pm

An NCPA-Seventh Art Productions (UK) Presentation

Taking its lead from French artists like Renoir and Monet, the American impressionist movement followed its own path which, over a 40-year period, reveals as much about America as a nation as it does about its art as a creative powerhouse. It is a story closely tied to a love of gardens and a desire to preserve nature in a rapidly urbanising nation. Travelling to studios, gardens and iconic locations throughout the U.S, the U.K. and France, this mesmerising film is a feast for the eyes.

In 1886, the French art dealer Paul Durand-Ruel brought a selection of his huge stock of impressionist paintings to New York, changing the course of art in America forever. American artists flocked to the French village of Giverny, home to the master impressionist Claude Monet, and cheered the French new wave: painting outdoors with a newfound brilliance and vitality. As Europe recoiled against the work of Monet, Degas and Renoir, Americans embraced it and created their own style of impressionism.

The timing of Durand-Ruel's transformative visit was perfect. As America steamed into the Industrial Age, urban reformers fought to create public parks and gardens: patches of beauty amid smokestacks and ash heaps. These gardens provided

unlimited inspiration for artists and a never-ending oasis for the growing middle class, made up of increasingly independent women, who relished the writings of English horticulturalists Gertrude Jekyll and William Robinson. Meanwhile, the rise of wide-circulation magazines cultivated the idea that gardening was a path to spiritual renewal amid industrial blight and the belief that artists should work in native landscapes.

As America made its epic move from a nation of farmers to a land of factories, the pioneering American Impressionists crafted a sumptuous visual language that told the story of an era.

The Artist's Garden: American Impressionism features the sell-out exhibition *The Artist's Garden: American Impressionism and the Garden Movement, 1887–1920* that began at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and ended at the Florence Griswold Museum, Old Lyme, Connecticut.

Produced by **Amanda Wilkie**

Directed by **Phil Grabsky**

Tickets:

₹360/- (Members)

₹400/- (Public)

Box Office now open

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC

The Jazz Masters

Listening Sessions conducted by **Sunil Sampat**

The Art of Jazz Saxophone

Little Theatre

Friday, 17th – 5.30 pm

An NCPA Presentation

Did you know that while the saxophone is closely associated with the sound of jazz, it became part of mainstream jazz by sheer accident? Or that the soprano saxophone, favoured by Sidney Bechet in the 1930s, vanished from the jazz scene until John Coltrane brought it back 30 years later? Relive these and other stories and experience rare jazz footage when Sunil Sampat speaks of the jazz saxophone.

Admission on a first-come-first-served basis. NCPA Members will get preferential seating till 5.20 pm.

INDIAN MUSIC

The Classic Sufi Concert with Ghazals

by **Shujaat Khan**

(120 mins)

Tata Theatre

Saturday, 18th – 7.29 pm

Shujaat Khan is a world-renowned sitarist who has taken Indian music to the globe. The Grammy-nominated sitarist is also globally loved as a skilled vocalist. His rendition is truly a treat for listeners.

Tickets:

₹3,150, 2,700, 2,250, 1,800, 1,350, 900 & 675/- (Members)

₹3,500, 3,000, 2,500, 2,000, 1,500, 1,000 & 750/- (Public)

(Plus GST)

Tickets are only available on

www.bookmyshow.com

THEATRE



Vanika Sangtani, 18th, Experimental Theatre

Kahaaniya Showcase

English/ Hindi (100 mins)

Experimental Theatre

Saturday, 18th – 7.30 pm

An NCPA Off-Stage Presentation in collaboration with **Tape A Tale**

Without stories, our lives would be a series of routine events that just pass us by. Stories make our otherwise mundane lives exciting and magical. Come join us for our signature storytelling show, *Kahaaniya Showcase*, which features some of the finest storytellers who are masters of the craft. The evening will entail a wide variety of storytelling forms on a single stage with a line-up you won't

want to miss. Our storytellers will share their personal stories that will touch your heart. Since its inception, Tape A Tale has done over 200 such shows across India and the Kahaaniya Showcase is our biggest celebration of the craft of storytelling. Tape A Tale is India's largest storytelling platform with a following of 2.5 million.

Performers: **Vanika Sangtani, Ishpreet Balbir, Pooja Sachdev & others**

Suggested age: 16+

Tickets:

₹450/- (Members)

₹500/- (Public)

Box Office now open

THEATRE

Babuji Dheere Chalna

Hindi Play (110 mins)

Experimental Theatre

Sunday, 19th – 5.00 pm & 7.30 pm

From the dawn of time, our species has been hooked to the thrill of love. Whether hearts are shattered or cherished like gold, we just can't get enough of it. No matter how many times we stumble or fall, we keep playing this irresistible game. Get ready for a rollercoaster ride of passion, heartache and all the twists and turns of love in this dazzling and captivating show.

Written & directed by **Om Katare**

Cast: **Om Katare, Kajal Sonkar, Chinica Madurkar & others**

Produced by

Yatri Theatre Association

Tickets:

₹630 & 450/- (Members)

₹700 & 500/- (Public)

(Plus GST)

Box Office now open

FILM

Short Film Corner

Short Film Screenings

Little Theatre

Wednesday, 22nd – 6.30 pm

An NCPA Presentation in collaboration with White Wall Screenings

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

Escort

Hindi Film with English Subtitles

(27 mins)



Escort is the story of a blind social worker living and working in a small town and his relationship with his replacement escort—an unemployed young farmer trying to find a life of dignity while his father battles a rising debt. The two find themselves dependent on each other for the fundamental aspect of their survival—dignity. But what happens when one's dignity comes at the cost of another's?

Directed by **Asmit Pathare**

Ghar

Hindi-English Film (10 mins)



A heartfelt story about Diya and Rehan, a couple embracing adoption. Diya defies stereotypes, forming her own views on adoption, while Rehan battles societal misconceptions. Through their conversation, they dismantle these biases and welcome a new family member and complete their home (*ghar*).

Directed by **Sreejone**



Two Way Street

Hindi Film with English Subtitles

(22 mins)

An ordinary taxi ride becomes a battleground when the taxi driver refuses to enter a particular lane. The passenger, in turn, decides to not alight the vehicle until he reaches his destination. What ensues is a projection of an inherent bias of the taxi driver against a particular community and the defiance of the passenger to end up as a victim of discrimination.

Directed by **Asmit Pathare**

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

PHOTOGRAPHY



Sky Islands: An Endangered Indian Landscape

By Ian Lockwood

Photo Exhibition

Dilip Piramal Art Gallery

Thursday, 23rd November to Sunday, 3rd December – 12.00 noon to 8.00 pm

Sky Islands: An Endangered Indian Landscape showcases a remarkable collection of black and white fine art prints by photographer **Ian Lockwood**. Chronicling a three-decade-long journey, these images encapsulate the beauty and transformation of the sky islands in the Western Ghats-Sri Lanka biodiversity

hotspot, which are witnessing environmental changes. Produced in collaboration with Kodaikanal International School (KIS) and the KIS Center for Environment and Humanity (CEH), the exhibition is more than a visual spectacle—it is a call for action.

Drawing parallels with iconic photographers like Ansel Adams, Lockwood's work is a testament to the synergy of art and conservation. The sky islands, as captured vividly by Lockwood, emphasise the dire need for conservation.

Lecture

Sky Islands Landscapes of the Southern Indian and Sri Lankan Biodiversity Hotspot

By Ian Lockwood

Saturday, 25th November - 11.00 am

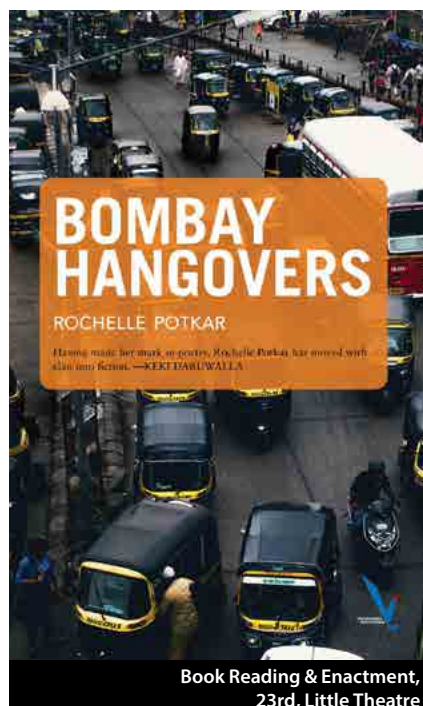
This illustrated lecture by Ian Lockwood will expand on themes and issues from the exhibition using maps, images and stories from his time exploring this unique landscape.

Entry free

MULTI ARTS & PRESENTATION

Book Reading & 'Story Enactments: 3 Tales from Mumbai'

The Dramatics Students of St. Xavier's College



Book Reading & Enactment,
23rd, Little Theatre

Little Theatre

Thursday, 23rd – 4.30 pm

The NCPA Library in collaboration with The Dramatics Students of St. Xavier's College

The Dramatics students of St. Xavier's College present readings and enactments of stories from Rochelle Potkar's collection *Bombay Hangovers* that weaves a multi-layered tale of, for and by Mumbaikars. Join the **Velvet Curtain - Jasmin Thakar, Suraj Divakaran, Ved Iyer, Melissa Mathew, Vineet Bhawe, Joanne Panicker and Chriselle Fernandes** as they follow the fussy *dhoban* (washerwoman) Purna knocking on doors, giving back not just fresh clothes but fresher tales, where each door opens into a household that carries secrets and unfurls the hidden lives of its inhabitants. Behind one door, we meet Sneha who wishes to undergo plastic surgery to change her face and identity to marry the man of her dreams. Will she succeed? Behind another door, we find a girl studying for her 10th-standard board exams while coping with her parents' domestic violence, relating these battles to World War I, II and III. And the third door reveals Nina Tivan—a workaholic, who battles the glass ceilings at home and in the family business against her father-in-law. When Nina befriends Muthu, the ingenious dosa maker, and Naeema, a pub bouncer, we know that the bustling, industrious city of Mumbai always manages to collapse class and religious differences towards a hand of friendship.

Come join us as we city-watch the lives of a few of its citizens.

Bombay Hangovers is a collection of 16 short stories by prize-winning poet, author and screenwriter **Rochelle Potkar**, an alumna of Iowa's International Writing Program (IWP), a Charles Wallace Writer's Fellow, University of Stirling, and a creative-writing teacher for IWP's summer programmes.

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

DANCE

Nyasam - A map to our soul

Artistes: Geeta Chandran (Earth-Prithvi; Bharatanatyam), Shovana Narayan (Air-Vayu; Kathak), Lata Surendra & Disciples (Water-Jala; Bharatanatyam), A .B .Bala Kondala Rao (Balakka) (Fire-Tejas; Kuchipudi), Aditya Anukula

Conceptualised by Lata Surendra
Experimental Theatre

Thursday, 23rd – 6.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation

Nyasam is a map to our soul. Life is a mirror reflecting our inner world. We do not see the world as it is, but we see it as we are. The earthy skies, the baptising fires and the flowing stillness are about an inside-out journey. Think of a time when we felt the most grounded and centred (earth), the most mentally clear (air), the most open-hearted (water) and the most creative (fire). That was most likely a time in our lives when we were most generous, open and willing to contribute to the well-being of other people.



Geeta Chandran, 23rd, Experimental Theatre

Geeta Chandran began learning Bharatanatyam under the tutelage of Swarna Saraswathy. In recognition of her vast and varied contribution to the form, she was awarded the Padma Shri in 2007. She is the Founder-President of Natya-Vriksha as well as the Artistic Director of the Natya Vriksha Dance Company. A 'Top' graded dancer at Doordarshan and at the ICCR, Chandran has been a recipient of both the Junior and Senior Research Fellowships from the Department of Culture, Government of India.



Lata Surendra has been a Bharatanatyam exponent, choreographer, curator and writer for over five decades and is a recipient of the Kalashree Puraskaram by the Kerala Sangeet Natak Academy. She is acclaimed for her creative choreographies that take dance beyond specific geographies. She is the Principal Trustee and Founder of Anjali Bharata Natyam Research Trust. She is a member of the International Dance Council (UNESCO) and a recipient of the Mahatma Gandhi Global Peace Ambassador Award by the Diplomatic mission.

Shovana Narayan is a Kathak exponent, performer, choreographer, researcher, organiser and author. She is one of the foremost disciples of Birju Maharaj and has been a recipient of the prestigious Padma Shri and the Sangeet Natak Akademi awards, among others. She has been a conceptualiser, creative director and choreographer of several



international events including the opening and closing ceremonies of the 6th International Abilympics 2003 and Commonwealth Games 2010. Narayan established the ASAVARI Centre for Kathak which is credited with many path-breaking works.

A.B. Bala Kondala Rao, fondly known as Balakka, is an exponent of Kuchipudi. She is the prime disciple of Vempati Chinna Satyam and was also a faculty member in his schools—Kuchipudi Art Academy in Chennai and Kuchipudi Kalakshetra in Visakhapatnam. She currently runs the Kuchipudi Kalaa Kendram in Visakhapatnam. She is an accomplished singer and has been awarded the prestigious Sangeet Natak Akademi award.

Tickets:
₹ 270 & 180/- (Members)
₹ 300 & 200/- (Public)
Box Office: 26th October for Members & 29th October for Public

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC

NCPA International Jazz Festival 2023

Tata Theatre
Friday, 24th & Saturday, 25th – 6.30 pm
Sunday, 26th – 6.00 pm

The NCPA International Jazz Festival is back and this time it is even bigger

with four international artistes performing over three nights. Thilo Wolf, who performed at the festival last year, is coming back with his big band. This edition of the NCPA International Jazz Festival features a spectacular line-up of Grammy and Emmy-nominated musicians from across the world coming together to create some fine jazz.

The line-up features:



• **24th November – Thilo Wolf Big Band featuring Johanna Iser, Torsten Goods and Florian Bührich** – The Thilo Wolf Big Band is a 16-member big band with an array of diverse and talented musicians. In 1992, pianist and composer Thilo Wolf, then just 24 years old, had a dream come true with the premiere of his own big band. Within a few years, the Thilo Wolf Big Band developed into one of the leading big bands in Germany. Numerous soloists of international stature such as the multiple Grammy award winners “New York Voices” worked with the band. The orchestra has performed at international jazz festivals in Europe and recorded numerous CDs, which have received critical acclaim in the press. In 2007, the Thilo Wolf Big Band also received the honour of being inducted into the “Big Band Hall of Fame” in the U.S.

• **25th November – Emmet Cohen featuring Benny Benack III** – Pianist Emmet Cohen brings his award-winning world-renowned band and trumpeter/vocalist Benny Benack III to Mumbai for a special performance at the NCPA International Jazz Festival. These musicians will be honouring “Jazz’s Greatest Showman” and virtuosic artistes who knew how to perform and engage with their

SASCHA PÖLT (THILO WOLF BIG BAND)



Emmet Cohen, 25th, Tata Theatre

audience at the highest level. Benack brings a fun, energetic flare to any musical proceeding and croons favourites by Frank Sinatra and Tony Bennett as well as trumpet repertoires plucked from the songbooks of Louis Armstrong, Miles Davis and Dizzy Gillespie. For his part, Cohen's repertoire spans the entirety of the history of jazz piano, from Fats Waller to Oscar Peterson and Thelonious Monk and everything in between.



Alfred Rodriguez, 26th, Tata Theatre

• **26th November – Alfredo Rodriguez Trio** – Come and enjoy the music of Grammy-nominated Cuban jazz pianist Alfredo Rodriguez as he is joined by Michael Olivera on drums and Jesus Bachiller on bass to celebrate the release of his newest album, *Coral Way*. It embodies the sound of Miami—a unique melding of Latin pop, salsa, bachata, tango, reggaeton and bolero—that permeates the city's diverse community of Latinos living together while sharing their music from distinct cultural backgrounds.

• **26th November – Jane Monheit** – One of the most successful contemporary jazz singers blessed with "a voice of phenomenal beauty" (*The New York Times*), Jane Monheit has had several milestone moments



Jane Monheit, 26th, Tata Theatre

in establishing herself as one of today's best and most important vocalist-musicians. An intoxicating jazz singer with a warm and supple voice with perfect pitch, Monheit has the talent to do just about anything she chooses. Sung with sultry seduction, *The Great American Songbook* breathes new life with fresh arrangements and an unmatched signature style of Monheit's jazz-tinged vocals. Audiences have long responded to the fearless honesty that marks her performances. She sings like she knows what the song is about and has lived its story.

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

Tickets:

For 24th & 25th November

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

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

For 26th November

₹2,250, 1,620, 1,350, 1,080, 720 & 450/- (Members)

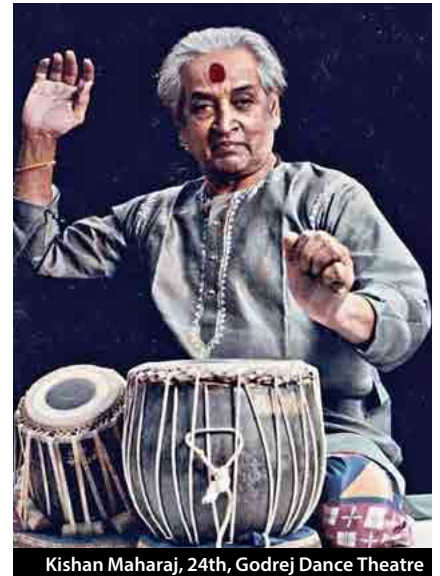
₹2,500, 1,800, 1,500, 1,200, 800 & 500/- (Public)
(Plus GST)

Box Office now open

INDIAN MUSIC

Nad Ninad: From Our Archives

Listening Session on the Artistry of Kishan Maharaj



Kishan Maharaj, 24th, Godrej Dance Theatre

Guided by Suresh Talwalkar with Arvind Kumar Azad & Pravin Uddhav
Godrej Dance Theatre
Friday, 24th – 6.30 pm

An NCPA Presentation in collaboration with Music Forum, Mumbai

This session is presented to commemorate the birth centenary of the legendary tabla maestro **Kishan Maharaj** (1923-2008) of the Benaras *gharana*.

Born into a family of professional musicians from Benaras, Maharaj was trained in the art of tabla by his father, Hari Maharaj, and uncle, Kanthe Maharaj. Starting his career at the young age of 11, besides presenting brilliant solo performances, Maharaj went on to accompany some iconic vocalists, instrumentalists as well as dancers of his time.

Besides his versatility, his extraordinary ability to play cross-rhythms and produce complex rhythmic motifs, particularly in *tihai* patterns, made him extremely popular with instrumentalists and dancers of diverse styles.

This audiovisual session will be guided by tabla maestro **Suresh Talwalkar** along with **Arvind Kumar Azad**, a senior disciple of Kishan Maharaj and **Pravin Uddhav** from the Banaras Hindu University.

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

THEATRE

Samay Raina, 25th,
Experimental Theatre



Big Show – All-Star Stand-up Comedy

English/ Hindi (105 mins)

Experimental Theatre

Saturday, 25th – 5.00 pm & 7.30 pm

An NCPA Off-Stage Presentation

In collaboration with The Habitat

Spend Saturday evening with the best in stand-up comedy, performing freshly baked material at The Big Show – All-Star Stand-up Comedy— The Habitat's premiere show which takes club comedy to a larger stage near you.

This edition will have a big line-up consisting of **Samay Raina, Raja Sekhar Mamidanna, Vaibhav Sethia, Shamik Chakrabarti, Sumit Sourav, Aman Jotwani, Mohammed Hussain and Piyush Sharma.**

Suggested age: 16+

Tickets:

₹450/- (Members)

₹500/- (Public)

Box Office now open

THEATRE

9 Parts of Desire

English Play (80 mins)

Godrej Dance Theatre

Saturday, 25th – 7.00 pm

An internationally acclaimed, off-

Broadway, one-woman hit that has received multiple awards around the world, *9 Parts of Desire* details the lives of nine Iraqi women: a painter, a radical communist, a doctor, an exile, wives, mothers and lovers. The play delves into the many conflicting aspects of what it means to be a woman in a country overshadowed by war.

Written by **Heather Raffo**

Directed by **Lillete Dubey**

Performed by **Ira Dubey**

Produced by

The Primetime Theatre Co.

Age: 18+

Tickets:

₹675/- (Members)

₹750/- (Public)

(Inclusive of GST)

Box Office now open

DANCE

Kathak by Dheerendra Tiwari Bharatanatyam by Chitra Dalvi

Experimental Theatre

Sunday, 26th – 11.00 am

An NCPA Presentation

Dheerendra Tiwari received his training under the tutelage of Rajendra Gangani, a renowned Kathak maestro of the Jaipur *gharana*. As a regular student of Kathak Kendra, Tiwari



Dheerendra Tiwari, 26th,
Experimental Theatre

topped his institute. He has worked under many great gurus and leading choreographers like Geetanjali Lal, Aditi Mangaldas, Leela Samson, Saroja Vaidyanathan and Kumudini Lakhia. Tiwari worked as a senior repertory member and rehearsal director for Drishtikon Dance Foundation - The Aditi Mangaldas Dance Company, apart from working as a rehearsal director for Aakash Odedra Dance Company (UK). He has given many remarkable solo performances in prestigious festivals in India and abroad, including the Khajuraho Festival, Kathak Mahotsav, Darbar Festival, and Edinburgh International Dance Festival, to name a few.

The presentation will begin with 'Vinayak', an invocation to the god of wisdom and auspicious beginnings, Lord Ganesha. Vinayak is composed from the essence of *dhruvad* and is based on Tala Dhamar. It is written and composed by Gangani and choreographed by Tiwari. This will be followed by 'Trieval', a vibrant composition based on the technical aspects of Kathak.

Chitra Dalvi has been training in the Thanjavur tradition of Bharatanatyam, for the last 26 years, under the able guidance of eminent Bharatanatyam exponent and scholar, Sandhya Purecha. She has participated both nationally and internationally in several group performances in leading festivals and events organised



Chitra Dalvi, 26th, Experimental Theatre

by the Indian embassy. Currently, Dalvi is an Assistant Professor at the Bharata College of Fine Arts & Culture and a Senior Instructor at Kala Paricchaya. She has completed her Master of Arts in Dance – Bharatanatyam and is also a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance – Kathak, and Bachelor of Arts - Sanskrit. She is the recipient of the National Scholarship for young dancers in the field of Bharatanatyam awarded by the Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India.

Tickets:

₹270 & 180/- (Members)

₹300 & 200/- (Public)

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

FILM



OMG 2, 28th, Godrej Dance Theatre

OMG 2

Hindi Film with English Subtitles
(150 min)

Godrej Dance Theatre

Tuesday, 28th – 6.30 pm

The Indian Express Film Club
screening in association with NCPA
& Viacom18

OMG 2 is a satirical comedy-drama film that tells the story of Kanti Sharan Mudgal, a devoted family man and Lord Shiva devotee. When his son, Vivek, is wrongly accused and expelled from school, Kanti embarks on a quest for justice, initially planning to leave town with his family. However, a divine intervention redirects him towards the truth, leading to a dramatic courtroom battle as Kanti seeks to hold those responsible accountable and enforce comprehensive education in schools.

Director: **Amit Rai**

Producers: **Vipul D. Shah, Aruna Bhatia, Ashwin Varde, Rajesh Behl, Swaroop Sampat, Ajit Andhare, Jyoti Deshpande & Hemal Thakkar**
Cast: **Akshay Kumar, Yami Gautam,**

Pankaj Tripathi, Arun Govil, Rofique Khan, Govind Namdev & others

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.

SCREENING



GOOD, 29th, Godrej Dance Theatre

GOOD

by C.P. Taylor

Theatre Screening

(Approx. 160 mins)

Godrej Dance Theatre

Wednesday, 29th – 6.00 pm

An NCPA-National Theatre Live
(London) Presentation

David Tennant (*Doctor Who*) makes a much-anticipated return to the West End in a blistering reimagining of one of Britain's most powerful, political plays.

As the world faces the Second World War, John Halder, a good, intelligent German professor, finds himself pulled into a movement with unthinkable consequences.

Olivier Award-winner **Dominic Cooke** (*Follies*) directs **C.P. Taylor's** timely tale, with a cast that also features **Elliot Levey** (*Coriolanus*) and **Sharon Small** (*The Bay*). Filmed live at the Harold Pinter Theatre in London.

Tickets:

₹450/- (Members)

₹500/- (Public)

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

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC



In a Lonely Place, 29th, Little Theatre

Movies Under the Stars

In a Lonely Place (1950)

Film Screening

(B&W - 94 mins)

Little Theatre

Wednesday, 29th – 6.30 pm

An NCPA & Film Heritage
Foundation Presentation

When a gifted but washed-up screenwriter with a hair-trigger temper—**Humphrey Bogart**, in a revelatory, vulnerable performance—becomes the prime suspect in a brutal Tinseltown murder, the only person who can supply an alibi for him is a seductive neighbour (**Gloria Grahame**) with her own troubled past. The emotionally charged *In a Lonely Place*, freely adapted from a **Dorothy B. Hughes** thriller, is a brilliant, turbulent mix of suspenseful noir and devastating melodrama, fuelled by powerhouse performances. An uncompromising tale of two people desperate to love yet struggling with their demons and each other, this is one of the greatest films of the 1950s and a benchmark in the career of the classic Hollywood auteur **Nicholas Ray**.

Directed by **Nicholas Ray**

Produced by **Robert Lord**

Written by **Andrew Solt, Edmund H.**

North, Dorothy B. Hughes

Screenplay by **Andrew Solt**

Cast: **Humphrey Bogart, Gloria Grahame, Frank Lovejoy, Carl Benton Reid & Art Smith**

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

FILM

Reality Check

Documentary Film Screenings

Little Theatre
Thursday, 30th – 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.

Bhuri Gatha **Hindi Film (28 mins)**



Bhuri Gatha, 30th, Little Theatre

Bhuri Bai is a famous painter from the Bhil tribe of Jhabua in Madhya Pradesh. This biographical sketch explores the Bhil tradition and the emergence of Bhuri Bai on the contemporary art scene and showcases her journey to become the pioneer of the Bhil painting tradition. The film also explores her struggles as an artist who later got acclaim and recognition with the prestigious civilian honour, the Padma Shri, and inspired a whole generation of her time.

Producer:
Madhya Pradesh Tribal Museum
Direction & Cinematography:
Rajendra Janglay
Screenplay, Narration & Associate
Director: **Sudeep Sohni**
Sound: **Mrinalini Tewari**

Bhajju Chitra Lok **Hindi Film (28 mins)**

Bhajju Singh Shyam is one of the most important Gond painters in the contemporary modern arts scenario of the world. He is among the few artists who combine tradition and modernity in their paintings. The biographical film explores his journey of becoming a celebrated painter in the tradition of Jangarh Singh Shyam

that not only places him as a fine artist but also as a disciple who carries forward a legacy while getting all the recognition during his journey from a small village to the wide world.

Producer:
Madhya Pradesh Tribal Museum
Direction & Cinematography:
Rajendra Janglay
Screenplay, Narration & Associate
Director: **Sudeep Sohni**
Sound: **Mrinalini Tewari**

Mandal Ke Bol **Hindi Film (29 mins)**



Mandal Ke Bol, 30th, Little Theatre

The film offers a keen look at one of the most primitive tribes of India, the Baiga, known for their tattoos and primal way of life. The Baigas have succeeded in retaining their cultural identity in spite of a changing social milieu. The film is a visual narrative of the culture, beliefs and lifestyle of this intriguing ancient tribal community.

Producer:
Madhya Pradesh Tribal Museum
Direction & Cinematography:
Rajendra Janglay
Assistant Director: **Nishant**
Screenplay & Narration: **Udeyen Vajpai**
Sound: **Hari Kumar M**

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

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

WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC

Duo Consonni-Baldo
Lorenza Baldo, cello
Martina Consonni, piano
Experimental Theatre
Thursday, 30th – 7.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation in



*Duo Consonni-Baldo, 30th,
Experimental Theatre*

**association with Istituto Italiano di
Cultura in Mumbai**

Lorenza Baldo is a young Italian cellist who has performed widely in Italy, Europe and Moscow. Her teachers include Rocco Filippini, David Geringas, Ralph Kirshbaum, Julia Hagen and Antonio Meneses. She is regularly invited to festivals across Europe and Italy and performs as a soloist with orchestras and chamber music ensembles. Baldo plays a French cello from 1900 by Charles Bruguère and is praised for her innate musicality and brilliance of sound.

Martina Consonni has established herself as one of the most promising young pianists of her generation. From an early age, her extraordinary musical talent allowed her to win more than 55 grand prizes in international competitions, including the Muzio Clementi Competition, Grand Prize Virtuoso in London, Casella Prize at the prestigious Premio Venezia at the Teatro La Fenice, amongst others. Consonni is in great demand as a soloist and chamber musician and performs at prestigious venues such as Wigmore Hall in London, Teatro La Fenice in Venice, Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa, Teatro alla Scala in Milan and Royal Albert Hall in London.

Programme:

Schumann: Fantasiestücke Op.73
Brahms: Sonata in E minor for Cello and Piano Op. 38
Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco: 'Figaro' fantasy on Rossini's *Barbiere di Siviglia*
Stravinsky: Suite Italienne

Tickets:

₹720 & 450/- (Members)
₹800 & 500/- (Public)
(Inclusive of GST)

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

What's Next

December 2023 & January 2024

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

DANCE

NCPA Pravaha Dance Festival 2023

6th to 8th December

'Antigone, Interrupted'

by Scottish Dance Theatre

Experimental Theatre

Wednesday, 6th December – 7.00 pm

Scottish Dance Theatre is one of the few full-time ensembles in the U.K. and is made up of a collective of versatile dancers from all over the world who work and create in their home at Dundee Rep. 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), and has built a strong international profile, performing extensively across four continents at venues like the Shanghai International Dance Center, National Theatre of Peru, Teatro Mayor Julio Mario Santo Domingo (Colombia), National Theater of Brittany (France), the Siri Fort Auditorium (India) and festivals including the American Dance Festival (the U.S.A.) and Sibiu International Theatre Festival (Romania), among others.

'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. The work re-imagines the multi-disciplinary character of ancient Greek theatre, which combined song, dance, ritual and performance, and interweaves Sophocles's original tragedy with newly written text and choreography.

Tickets:

₹360 & 270/- (Members)

₹400 & 300/- (Public)

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

Odissi

by Sharmila Biswas & Troupe and

Kuchipudi & Bharatanatyam

by Amrita Lahiri & Pavitra Bhat
Tata Theatre

Thursday, 7th December – 6.30 pm

Sharmila Biswas is a senior disciple of Kelucharan Mohapatra. One of the leading dancers and choreographers in India, Biswas is a recipient of the Sangeet Natak Akademi award for her contribution to Odissi dance. She is the Artistic Director at Odissi



Sharmila Biswas,
7th December, Tata Theatre

Vision and Movement Centre, an institution created for the promotion of Odissi through research into various dimensions of Odiya culture.

Amrita Lahiri is an Indian classical dancer specialising in Kuchipudi. She studied Kuchipudi under Anuradha Nehru, Swapnasundari and Seetha Nagajothy. She is an empanelled artiste with the Indian Council for Cultural Relations and has toured as a soloist in India and abroad, presenting Kuchipudi from its traditional origins to its contemporary forms. She presents the beauty and joy of dance, while maintaining the precision and soul of the classical Kuchipudi form.

Pavitra Bhat is a Bharatanatyam



Amrita Lahiri, 7th December, Tata Theatre



Pavitra Bhat,
7th December,
Tata Theatre

exponent who has trained at Kalanjali under Sikkil Vasanthakumari and later under the renowned exponent Deepak Mazumdar. To perpetuate and promote dance, Bhat established P.A.V.I. (Pavitra Art Visual Institute). The institute boasts almost 350 students with many of them being awarded with CCRT's Junior Scholarship. Bhat is an 'A' grade artiste of Doordarshan and has performed in India and abroad.

Tickets:

₹450, 270 & 180/- (Members)

₹500, 300 & 200/- (Public)

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

Bharatanatyam

by Mahati Kannan
and

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

Danseuse **Mahati Kannan** is the great 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.

Parvathy Menon and **Shijith Nambiar**, the Bharatanatyam duo, have established their presence in India and abroad, as young ambassadors of

the ancient form of Bharatanatyam. Nambiar is an ex-faculty member of Kalakshetra. Menon holds a post-diploma from Kalakshetra and is guest artiste with the institute. They have collaborated with various production companies and participated in festivals of dance around the world.

Tickets:

₹360 & 270/- (Members)

₹400 & 300/- (Public)

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

SCREENING



Dead Man Walking, 9th December,
Godrej Dance Theatre

Dead Man Walking

by Jake Heggie

Opera Screening (Approx. 180 mins)

Godrej Dance Theatre

Saturday, 9th December – 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: 9th November for Members & 12th November for Public

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)

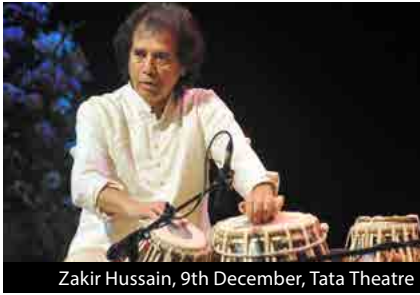
with Sabir Khan (sarangi)

and Debopriya Chatterjee (bansuri)

Tata Theatre

Saturday, 9th December – 6.30 pm

Despite the primacy accorded to the human voice and music emanating



Zakir Hussain, 9th December, Tata Theatre

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 renowned tabla maestro, is indeed phenomenal.

Sabir Khan and **Debopriya Chatterjee** have trained under legendary maestros whose names are inextricably associated with the respective instruments, Sultan Khan and Hariprasad Chaurasia respectively. 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



Sabir Khan, 9th December, Tata Theatre



Debopriya Chatterjee,
9th December, Tata Theatre

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)

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

Remembering the Divas

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



Kaushiki Chakraborty, 10th December,
Jamshed Bhabha Theatre

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

Gauhar Jan alias Angelina Yeoward (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.

The presentation will include interpretations of the archival compositions sung by these female artistes. The ensemble led by Chakraborty will also attempt to present some newly created compositions keeping in mind the style of these divas.

Tickets:

₹1,440, 1,080, 720 & 540/- (Members)

₹1,600, 1,200, 800 & 600/- (Public)

(Inclusive of GST)

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

Tapur Tupur: Bachche, Bachpan aur Bachpana

Children's poetry by Gurudev Tagore with Gulzar, Shantanu Moitra, Shaan, 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 indeed 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, 7th January, Jamshed Bhabha Theatre

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 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 the memory lanes of their childhood.

The poems are translated from Bangla to 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



Shantanu Moitra, 7th January, Jamshed Bhabha Theatre

by Moitra, and will be performed by talented artistes, including **Shaan**, **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: 9th December for Members & 12th December for Public

INDIAN MUSIC

HarmoniX

A fusion music concert (105 mins)

Jamshed Bhabha Theatre

Wednesday, 13th December – 6.30 pm

Presented by

Sahachari Foundation Events

Main Sponsors: DIA Rolex, 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: 9th November for Members & 12th November for Public

WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC

Somerville College Choir

Tata Theatre

Thursday, 14th December – 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 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: 9th November for Members & 12th November for Public

DANCE

NCPA Umang

Bharatanatyam by Neha Mondol Chakravarty

Experimental Theatre

Friday, 15th December – 6.30 pm

An NCPA Presentation

Neha Mondol 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.

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

Register now on

www.bookmyshow.com

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC

Pixel

Company Käfig

Contemporary Dance (70 mins)

Jamshed Bhabha Theatre

Saturday, 16th December – 6.30 pm

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



Pixel, 16th December, Jamshed Bhabha Theatre

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** (Compagnie Käfig) and digital arts company Adrien M & Claire B; with never-before-seen stagecraft, dancers achieve aerial and acrobatic feats in a 3-D digital landscape that changes with their every movement.

The French Institute in India (IFI) and the Alliance Française network have invited this production to India for the first time. A four-city tour of Bengaluru, New Delhi, Mumbai and Goa is planned. 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 with Indian dancers in order to have a more real and valuable cross-cultural exchange.

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, 16th December, Godrej Dance Theatre

Anuvab Pal – Homecoming

Live at the NCPA

Stand-up Comedy (75 mins)

Godrej Dance Theatre

Saturday, 16th December – 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, to his home stage where it all began in Mumbai. To tell you, he understands even less about the world than when 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: 26th October for Members & 29th October for Public

THEATRE

Under the Peepal Tree

Dad-Child Festival

Sunken Garden and Experimental Garden

Saturday, 23rd December - 4.00 pm to 7.00 pm

An NCPA & Grooming Babies Global Pvt. Ltd. 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 essence, 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



Under the Peepal Tree, 23rd December, Sunken Garden & Experimental Garden

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 Kachchi Ghodi Dance, a mesmerising performance of Rajasthan's rich heritage.

Join us for an enriching cultural experience.

Age Group: 4 to 13 years

Pricing Details:

All-Inclusive Ticket (One Parent & One Child): ₹1,200/- (Inclusive of GST), granting access to all performances and workshops, including material kit for the workshops.

Extra Child (below 4 years, without material kit) - Add-on: ₹300/-.

Extra Child (between 4 to 13 years, with material kit) – Add-on: ₹1,200/-

Extra Adult - Add-on: ₹300/-.

Tickets are available at the NCPA Box Office and on www.bookmyshow.com –

26th October for Members & 29th October for Public

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC

The Mastery

An International Vocal Masterclass Little Theatre

Sunday, 7th January – 4.00 pm to 7.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation

The Mastery is aimed to work on your vocal cords and will benefit anyone in the field of oration, corporates, musicians as well as those who want to improve their command over their vocal cords.

The masterclass will teach analysis of specific breathing types, breathing work, diaphragm support technique, vocal exercises and embodiment, stage training, posture training, focus alignment (being in the moment), space holding on stage, how to cope with stage fright, and more.

Registration Fee: ₹2,000/- (Plus GST)

Registration starts from

9th November on

www.bookmyshow.com.

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 entire 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 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

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 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
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

Events at a glance

November 2023

Day	Date	Time	Event	Venue
Sat to Sun	28th Oct to 5th Nov	12.00 noon to 8.00 pm	We are like that only! Photo Exhibition by Mr. Constantine Lykiard	
Fri	3rd	4.00 pm onwards	GODDESS: A Celebration of the Divine Feminine Conceived and curated by Arundhathi Subramaniam	Godrej dance theatre
Sat	4th	3.00 pm onwards		
Sat	4th	7.00 pm	<i>The Relationship Agreement</i> English Play	TATA THEATRE
Tue	7th	7.00 pm	Amatis Trio Lea Hausmann, violin Samuel Shepherd, cello Mengjie Han, piano	
Wed	8th	6.30 pm	<i>The Artist's Garden: American Impressionism</i> Exhibition on Screen	Godrej dance theatre
Fri	17th	5.30 pm	The Jazz Masters Listening Sessions conducted by Sunil Sampat The Art of Jazz Saxophone	
Sat	18th	7.29 pm	The Classic Sufi Concert with Ghazals by Shujaat Khan	TATA THEATRE
Sat	18th	7.30 pm	Kahaaniya Showcase English/Hindi	
Sun	19th	5.00 pm & 7.30 pm	<i>Babuji Dheere Chalna</i> Hindi Play	
Wed	22nd	6.30 pm	Short Film Corner Short Film Screenings	
Thu to Sun	23rd Nov to 3rd Dec	12.00 noon to 8.00 pm	Sky Islands: An Endangered Indian Landscape by Ian Lockwood Photo Exhibition	
Thu	23rd	4.30 pm	Book Reading & 'Story Enactments: 3 Tales from Mumbai' The Dramatics Students of St. Xavier's College	
Thu	23rd	6.00 pm	<i>Nyasam</i> - A map to our soul Artistes: Geeta Chandran (Earth-Prithvi; Bharatanatyam), Lata Surendra & Disciples (Water-Jala; Bharatanatyam), Shovana Narayan (Air-Vayu; Kathak), A. B. Bala Kondala Rao (Balakka) (Fire-Tejas; Kuchipudi), Aditya Anukula Conceptualised by Lata Surendra	

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

Day	Date	Time	Event	Venue
Fri	24th	6.30 pm	NCPA International Jazz Festival 2023 (24th to 26th November)	TATA THEATRE
			Thilo Wolf Big Band featuring Johanna Iser, Torsten Goods and Florian Bührich	
			Emmet Cohen featuring Benny Benack III	
Sat	25th	6.30 pm	Alfredo Rodriguez Trio	TATA THEATRE
Sun	26th	6.00 pm	Jane Monheit	TATA THEATRE
Fri	24th	6.30 pm	<i>Nad Ninad: From Our Archives</i> Listening Session on the Artistry of Kishan Maharaj Guided by Suresh Talwalkar with Arvind Kumar Azad & Pravin Uddhav	Godrej dance theatre
Sat	25th	5.00 pm & 7.30 pm	Big Show - All-Star Stand-up Comedy English/Hindi	EX THEATRE
Sat	25th	7.00 pm	<i>9 Parts of Desire</i> English Play	Godrej dance theatre
Sun	26th	11.00 am	Kathak by Dheerendra Tiwari Bharatanatyam by Chitra Dalvi	EX THEATRE
Tue	28th	6.30 pm	OMG 2 Hindi Film with English Subtitles	Godrej dance theatre
Wed	29th	6.00 pm	GOOD by C.P. Taylor Theatre Screening	Godrej dance theatre
Wed	29th	6.30 pm	Movies Under the Stars <i>In a Lonely Place</i> (1950) Film Screening	LT LITTLE THEATRE
Thu	30th	6.30 pm	Reality Check Documentary Film Screenings	LT LITTLE THEATRE
Thu	30th	7.00 pm	Duo Consonni-Baldo Lorenza Baldo, cello Martina Consonni, piano	EX THEATRE

THE NCPA INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL 2023

24TH NOV



**THILO WOLF
BIG BAND FEAT.
JOHANNA ISER,
TORSTEN GOODS
AND FLORIAN
BÜHRICH**

6:30 pm

25TH NOV



**EMMET
COHEN FEAT.
BENNY
BENACK III**

6:30 pm

26TH NOV



**ALFREDO
RODRIGUEZ
TRIO**

6:00 pm

26TH NOV



**JANE
MONHEIT**

8:00 pm

HOST - BRIAN TELLIS
TATA THEATRE, NCPA

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quality of such alloys that we cast them in our own foundry in Geneva. Which is also where we forge our discipline in refusing the easy contentment from what already exists, and always trying to surpass it instead. By harnessing certain physical and chemical properties, we managed to shape this alloy according to our standards, creating this deep aurora-coloured golden shade. One born to shimmer at your wrist.

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