

NCPA

ON Stage[®]

MARCH 2024

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The NCPA Soulful Blues

FEAT. TERRIE ODABI & DEMETRIA TAYLOR



The Folk Arts of Jharkhand at
**Living Traditions
2024**

Coming to the NCPA
**Plácido Domingo's
Operalia**

Manav Kaul & Kumud Mishra on
**Shakkar Ke Paanch
Daane**

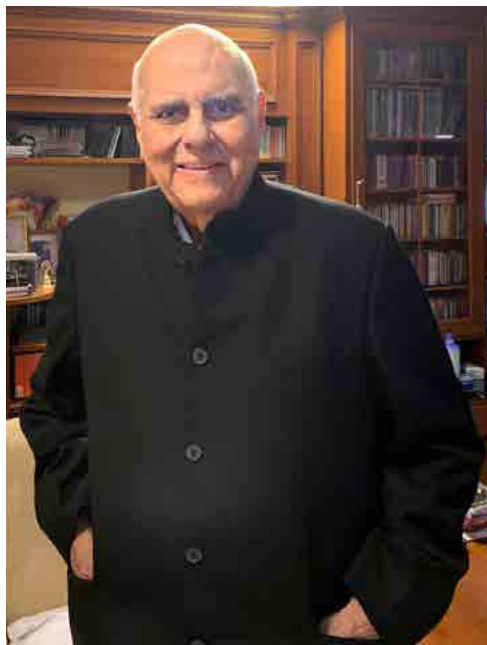
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Chairman's Note



Since inception, the NCPA has been a pioneer in the performing arts while never losing sight of its responsibility towards their holistic preservation and propagation. Great artistic traditions of the world, from the Noh theatre of Japan to Rodin's sculptures from France, have been presented at the NCPA alongside its work in meticulously archiving the music, dance and theatre of India. And this was done within the first 15 years of its establishment. This remains our remit and another such great tradition will make its way to our culturally rich and receptive country in September when Plácido Domingo's Operalia comes to Mumbai.

Our editor and I have been discussing this degree of diversity of programmes that the NCPA presents. We keep hearing about the difficulty in achieving such a range of curation but we have succeeded and it is of some satisfaction. I believe our members will agree that our standards have never been subpar. Of course, there remain several areas in which we can improve but that is the nature of the beast.

In these five decades, the NCPA has had a strong association with artistes who have been flag bearers for excellence in their art forms and pioneers in fostering dialogue across traditions. The Grammy winners from India this year, including our great maestro and council member Zakir Hussain, have rendered tremendous service in bringing our music into the international sphere. These wonderful accolades are a testament to that.

Our congratulations and salutes to them.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "K. N. Suntook".

Khushroo N. Suntook

From the Editor



Somewhere around the 12th of every month when the tentative pagination for the *ON Stage* arrives, the editorial plan, which, until this point is a series of individual articles, columns and regular sections, begins to metamorphose into a complete magazine. With those 70-plus pages lined up on an Excel sheet, the bigger picture emerges. Themes and patterns become apparent among disparate subjects and though each issue is different from the other—that certainly is the endeavour—there is something that remains constant: the sheer diversity in what the NCPA presents.

A glance at the Contents pages of the March issue affirms this. From a festival of the folk arts of Jharkhand to a festival of blues featuring an international line-up, from a dance season that reaches the length and breadth of Mumbai to an opera competition that brings contestants from all corners of the world to the NCPA, where else would one find the cultural spectrum that this centre embraces and this magazine chronicles?

“Venerable institutions the world over present more than one art form. At the Bolshoi Theatre, for instance, classical music is the first cousin of ballet. However, we have a unique diversity at the NCPA since many of these art forms are not related to the others,” Chairman Mr. Khushroo N. Suntook mentioned during our discussion about the editorial plan for this month. He added that such programming makes it a challenging combination. “Therefore, it is necessary that we have specialists concentrating on each area. We have managed this with some success without compromising on the excellence that is the badge of the NCPA.”

Mr. Suntook congratulates the heads of genres who ensure that our performances are consistently of a high standard. It is these specialists who also lend their expertise to the articles you read in the *ON Stage*. “This diversity can be construed as a weakness but it is to the NCPA’s credit that we have turned it into our strength.”

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Snigdha Hasan'.

Snigdha Hasan

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Congratulations to our esteemed council member Zakir Hussain and cherished musicians of the NCPA community Rakesh Chaurasia, Shankar Mahadevan, Ganesh Rajagopalan and Selvaganesh Vinayakram on their Grammy wins.

Their performances at the NCPA have always left our audiences spellbound, and this recognition is a testament to their supreme talent, artistry and dedication to the art of music. From Zakir Hussain's performance on the day the NCPA was inaugurated to Rakesh Chaurasia's latest concert on our biggest stage, we are proud to have witnessed their journeys. May their music continue to touch countless lives!

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We look forward to your feedback and suggestions. Please do drop us an email at onstage@ncpamumbai.com.

The Blues ARE Back

A power-packed second edition of the NCPA Soulful Blues will feature Oakland blues singer and songwriter Terrie Odabi and Chicago blues singer and songwriter Demetria Taylor.

By Anurag Tagat



As much as we can spend endless hours debating the scope of the term ‘soul’, it is fair to say that the blues are inextricably tied to soul. Yes, the blues have got soul and one doesn’t have to look very far to experience this. On 16th and 17th March, the NCPA Soulful Blues festival returns for its second edition, bringing two roaring examples of blues and soul powerhouse voices—Demetria Taylor and Terrie Odabi.

Following the inaugural 2023 edition of the NCPA Soulful Blues with host Brian Tellis, the upcoming concerts will feature these award-winning artistes for their first shows in India. Taylor, who is the daughter of

the late blues legend Eddie Taylor, is the 2022 winner of the prestigious “KoKo Taylor Queen of the Blues” award from the Jus’ Blues Foundation. San Francisco-raised Odabi, for her part, is a seven-time Blues Music Award nominee with albums like *My Blue Soul* from 2016 that keeps the Bay Area blues lore going strong.

Having had wholly different journeys, Odabi and Taylor are part of the NCPA Soulful Blues because of their extraordinary ability to sing the blues in a way that soars and shines. When asked what’s in store for her performance, especially since it’s the first for an Indian audience, Odabi says, “I am what you would call a soul blues artiste. My songs are stories mostly from my

Following the inaugural 2023 edition of the NCPA Soulful Blues with host Brian Tellis, the upcoming concerts will feature award winning artistes Demetria Taylor and Terrie Odabi for their first shows in India

personal life and experiences or songs I strongly relate to and am passionate about. I love delivering a good message in a song, but I also love songs where the music

just makes you feel good. So, when I’m performing, I’m really sharing my soul. I would say expect a heartfelt performance.”

In terms of her knowledge about the blues in India, she name-checks her U.S.-based Indian-origin musician friend Aki Kumar, a blues artiste from Mumbai. “He’s a harmonica player and singer who refers to his music as Bollywood Blues. But to be quite honest, India is not a place where I expected blues music to be popular or appreciated. I was very delighted and pleasantly surprised to be invited to come perform in India,” she adds.

Having performed in Europe, Odabi is now heading



Demetria Taylor

onwards to Brazil and Morocco, and is looking forward to her first show in Portugal in 2024. In her experience, the blues transcend geographical boundaries, languages and cultures. “You can feel the music and vocals even if you don’t understand the lyrics,” she says. The blues audience is, in fact, what keeps Odabi going and finding new meaning in the music over the years. She counts the audience she has performed for as loving and passionate. “Performing is cathartic for me. When onstage I’m purging, I’m emoting, I’m releasing and most of all I am having the best time ever. I feel people are drawn to blues because the music is therapeutic, it’s music you can feel. I think it’s so cool that for a brief moment in time during a performance, the audience and the artiste are all in one accord, musically taking the same journey,” she says.

There’s a rawness that Odabi brings to her recordings and live performances that immediately catches your attention in her rendition of songs like ‘Ball and Chain’ and ‘Gentrification Blues’. She feels that a great blues singer doesn’t need to have “the most beautiful voice” to thrive. She explains, “[It] is their ability to draw the audience in and to make them feel whatever is being conveyed in the song they are singing.”

Demetria Taylor, hailing from the Chicago blues scene,

has previously said about performing the blues, “I feel that singing is something I was born to do. Sometimes on the stage my eyes tear up as I feel the music I’m singing. I love to listen to all types of music, but the blues caught my ear. I will never give up my dream.”

Born to Eddie and Vera Taylor, both blues musicians, Taylor grew up surrounded by the style. Originally a drummer at the age of 14, she recalled to *Blues Blast Magazine* that she was often just singing around the house, much like her mom. “So it was only natural that I pursued vocalising as a craft,” she said. She counts her entire family as mentors (uncles, aunts and musicians from the Chicago blues community) and while her father was an important figure in American blues history, Taylor

“I feel people are drawn to blues because the music is therapeutic, it’s music you can feel ... I think it’s so cool that for a brief moment in time during a performance, the audience and the artiste are all in one accord, musically taking the same journey”

makes it a point to credit her mother as well. She said in the same interview, “She was a singer-songwriter with a huge impact on my dad’s and on our family’s music. She’d often write the music to my dad’s songs. She inspired me to sing and, upon her passing in 1999, I dedicated myself to making it happen for me in her and my dad’s memory.”

In 2011, she arguably had her first big break as a vocalist with the album *Bad Girl* which featured

songs like ‘I’m a Woman/Hoochie Coochie Woman’, ‘All Your Love’ and ‘Big Boss Man’. Her 2022 album, *Doin’ What I’m Supposed to Do*, featuring Mike Wheeler and Deitra Farr, features songs like ‘83 Highway’ and ‘Blues Early This Morning’. The latter was written by her mother Vera and features veteran vocalist Farr, whom Taylor calls a big sister and major influence.

With the release of her recent album, she also received multiple Living Blues Awards nominations, including Artist of the Year and Best Blues Album. Taylor is more than happy to go international and play in India. In a Q&A with *Blues.gr*, she said, “I want people and other cultures to love my music. I’ve put in a lot of work over the years, and I hope to reach all cultures.”

All things considered, the performers coming for the 2024 NCPA Soulful Blues are seasoned artistes who stay as passionate as ever about their craft and plan to bring that to the country. Odabi says as she signs off, “I am extremely excited to lay foot in India for the first time. My eyes and my heart will be wide open to the different sights, sounds and beauty of Mumbai. Even if it will be for a brief time.” ■

The NCPA Soulful Blues will be presented on 16th and 17th March at the Tata Theatre.

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Soulful Blues

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Plácido Domingo's Operalia Comes to Mumbai

As the NCPA prepares for the grand welcome of the 31st edition of Operalia and the celebrated tenor himself, *ON Stage* goes behind the scenes of the world's most prestigious opera competition to be held this September for the first time in India.

By Beverly Pereira



Plácido Domingo

ALAMY (DOMINGO; GARIFULLINA)



Since it was founded in 1993, Operalia has been instrumental in recognising, discovering and accelerating the careers of promising young opera singers of all operatic voice types from every corner of the world

For participants of television talent shows of today, gaining a fan following and press attention has become somewhat of a given. Even then, success can be fleeting for winners who are crowned the best only until the 'next' best performer arrives. This is especially true for shows presented solely for the sake of entertainment, more so in these fast-paced times. For the young artiste of a specific style or genre like classical or operatic music, going through the generic talent machine can be both unproductive and unfulfilling whereas competitions focused on the art form can provide a much-needed fillip to their career. For the opera singer, Operalia is undoubtedly the world's most prestigious competition of our times—one that was conceptualised three decades ago by the great Spanish tenor and conductor Plácido Domingo.

Since it was founded in 1993, the annual competition, presented by Rolex, has been instrumental in

recognising, discovering and accelerating the careers of promising young singers of all operatic voice types between the ages of 20 and 32 from every corner of the world. Participants go through rigorous rounds of auditions before they are selected by a panel of distinguished international personalities to compete for the final round presented as a gala concert accompanied by a professional orchestra in the host city. The city of Mumbai will host the 31st edition of Operalia, and the Symphony Orchestra of India will accompany the finalists as they compete for top honours at the Jashied Bhabha Theatre this September. This is the first time the competition is coming to India and the occasion owes itself in no small measure to the growing international stature of the SOI and the consistent efforts of the NCPA, helmed by Chairman Mr. Khushroo N. Suntook, to bring world-class events to India.



Russian soprano Aida Garifullina, seen here at the Opening Ceremony of the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Moscow, won the first prize at Operalia in 2013

Last month, Alvaro Domingo, Vice President, Operalia, was in Mumbai to represent his father's association with the NCPA. "It is a pleasure for us to be in India. While Mumbai may not have the strongest tradition of opera, what's most valuable is the invitation, the interest from our host. That is something we always take into account very seriously—the possibilities of the venue and those of the orchestra linked to the venue. To be able to add Mumbai to the list of all the wonderful cities around the world that we have been to was very attractive to us. I thank Chairman Khushroo Suntook for this warm invitation and hospitality," he said at a press conference.

Commenting on hosting Operalia 2024, Mr. Suntook said, "I have had the

“It is a privilege to be able to work with the Symphony Orchestra of India that will accompany our singers on the final of the competition. I thank all of you who have done such a fantastic job since 2006 in founding the orchestra and bringing it to where it is now.”



(From left) Gian Galeazzo Ganzarolli, Khushroo N. Suntook, Alvaro Domingo and Marat Bisengaliev at the NCPA in February

great pleasure and honour of hearing Mr. Plácido Domingo over the last 30 or 40 years and he is, without doubt, one of the century’s greatest singers. Not many tenors want to give back to music, what they have earned in a hugely successful career. Mr. Domingo is an exception. And so, it is a double honour for the NCPA to associate with the great maestro and host his wonderful competition in September. Operalia 2024 will not only be a milestone for the NCPA but the music community of the country. The event will certainly inspire young singers and musicians to pursue Western classical music. It will be a privilege for the musicians of the SOI and Music Director Marat Bisengaliev to be a part of this event.”

Alvaro, who was at the NCPA for a three-day visit, also attended the opening concert of the SOI Spring 2024 Season. “We had a chance to tour the NCPA and identify all the right spaces that we will need in order to host the competition. You have a beautiful place here that will permit us to present our upcoming edition in a very satisfying way. It is also a privilege to be able to work with the Symphony Orchestra of India that will accompany and support our singers on the magical night of the final of the competition. I want to thank all of you who have done such a fantastic job since 2006 in founding the orchestra and bringing it to where it is now.”

Art imitates life

Aside from sharing the finer details of this seven-

day competition, Alvaro shed light on Operalia’s beginnings, describing it as a “tremendous idea” that struck his father and mother, the soprano Marta Ornelas, during their days of learning the repertoire as they performed relentlessly in Tel Aviv. At the time, the twenty-something tenor imagined that it would be beneficial for young

singers to experience the realities of the opera world, just like they had very early on in their career.

The first edition took place at the historic 1,979-seat opera house Palais Garnier in Paris in 1993. Later, Domingo would also go on to launch several resident training programmes for aspiring young singers and conductors through his Young Artist Program in Washington, Los Angeles and Valencia. “My father really established how much he cares for the future of this industry, this art form and the talents of tomorrow,” shared Alvaro.

Every edition since then has seen the competition travel with the Operalia contingent in tow—30 to 40 finalists, jury members and Domingo himself—to some of the finest cities of the world including Budapest, Bordeaux, Lisbon and Madrid, right up to Cape Town, Guadalajara and Quebec. With its high level of operatic talent, the competition has floored audiences at London’s Royal Opera House, Moscow’s Bolshoi Theatre and Teatro alla Scala in Milan, among other venerable concert halls. The 31st edition of Operalia in Mumbai this year will be the first for a South Asian city and the fourth for an Asian city after Tokyo, Beijing and Astana.

Producer of greats

A browse through Operalia’s winners over the years indicates the level of talent that rightly finds its way into the competition. Nina Stemme, regarded as the greatest Wagnerian soprano of today, won top prize



The Grammy-winning soprano Angel Blue, who won the second prize at Operalia 2009, performed at the NCPA in 2015

at the inaugural edition 30 years ago. Other notable winners of the 1990s include multiple Grammy Award-winning mezzo-soprano, Joyce DiDonato and Argentine tenor José Cura. Even those who aren’t up to date with the world of opera will hardly fail to recognise the virtuosity of sopranos Angel Blue (winner of the second prize in 2009) and Pretty Yende (winner of the audience prize in 2011). The Grammy-winning Blue performed at the Opera Gala at the NCPA in 2015.

Indeed, Operalia has proved to be a launch pad for some of the greatest voices in opera. Interestingly, for prizewinners, the window to secure coveted contracts with some of the most prestigious opera houses in Vienna, London and New York could be as short as three to six months. “Operalia has always intended to offer a three-pronged benefit to the singers. Not only are they heard by a panel of very important and influential people including opera casting directors who might consider them for upcoming opera seasons, but they also receive monetary support through the money prizes they receive. They also receive advice from the Operalia team and from my father and other people involved with the competition,” Alvaro explained during his Mumbai visit.

The process

Each year, the pre-selection jury listens to hundreds of applications received via Operalia’s application portal Embark. These applications, received as video recordings of opera arias, will soon be narrowed down to 30 or 40 top contenders who will arrive in Mumbai come September. Participation in the zarzuela category is also permitted. Domingo, who has for decades been promoting the genre across the world, grew up surrounded by Spanish opera and had even started his career singing it.

The 2024 edition of Operalia in Mumbai will be judged by a panel of distinguished representatives from London’s Royal Opera House, the Metropolitan Opera in New York, the Staatsoper in Vienna and Salzburg Festival, among others. The jury presided by Domingo

will listen to the top contenders over two days of quarterfinals, following which 20 participants will be selected to enter the semifinals; both these rounds are carried out in audition form.

Finally, 10 singers will move on to the finals that will be presented as a gala concert at the NCPA accompanied by its resident orchestra, the Symphony Orchestra of India, slated to take place on 21st September. The orchestra will be made aware of the finalists’ pieces only a day before

the finals and sight-reading may be their only option. “We will need to be at the top of our game. But we are excited about the possibility of Maestro Domingo conducting the orchestra,” said Bisengaliev, adding that the Mumbai Operalia will be a great opportunity for the orchestra to present themselves not only on stage but also on Medici.tv, every classical music aficionado’s go-to streaming platform.

Staging an opera in Mumbai is no easy task, owing to the lack of infrastructure for productions of its scale. At the NCPA, thanks to an international panel of experts—including Gian Galeazzo Ganzarolli, son of the distinguished baritone Wladimiro Ganzarolli—productions like *La bohème Revisited*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, *Madama Butterfly* among others have been staged with aplomb. “I’m sure there are wonderful voices in India, but they need training and encouragement. We are in the beginning of a renaissance. We are hoping to stage a production of *Aida* conducted by Maestro Zubin Mehta next year,” said Mr. Suntook who believes that initiatives like Operalia in the city could be a stepping stone in this direction. “Great voices will emerge from this most prestigious competition. One of the advantages—a selfish advantage, if you will—is they may remember that they won a competition in this hall in Mumbai and they will come back as stars. What’s important is creating creators of art—directors, costume makers, wig makers—and expanding the horizon of employment in the arts,” he added.

“To be able to come to India is very special for my father who remembers dearly when he made his India debut in 2008 in a concert he did with Maestro Zubin Mehta to commemorate the centennial of his father Mehli Mehta,” said Alvaro. “He hasn’t been to India since, and it’s a pleasure for him to be able to return with this competition that presents the new voices of today.” ■

The 2024 edition of Operalia will be held from 15th to 21st September at the NCPA.

A Sweet Aftertaste

Shakkar Ke Paanch Daane, written and directed by Manav Kaul, is a poetic play enacted onstage by the exceptional Kumud Mishra. An inspiring theatrical experiment, it holds appeal for a wide range of audiences.

By Vidhi Salla

A work of art sometimes charts a path not only for itself but for its creator as well. *Shakkar Ke Paanch Daane* is writer, theatre director and actor Manav Kaul's debut play that is now in its 20th year, but as he admitted in my interview, if the play had not worked, he would have had an entirely different career path. A key catalyst in the play's genesis is Kumud Mishra, an actor par excellence, for whom this marks his only solo stage performance. A monologue of an ordinary man, the play features Rajkumar who talks about his unremarkable life and the five grains of sugar, which is how he refers to the five people that make his life somewhat remarkable: his movie-buff mother, her poet brother Pundaleek, the school stud Raghu, a Gandhi-obsessed old man Radhey and an anonymous 'Truckwala dost'.

The writing sets up Rajkumar's existence as banal and not worthy of any attention, yet as the performance progresses, you eagerly follow the trail of his storytelling just like ants follow grains of sugar. The only interesting event in his life, or *samasya* (problem) as he calls it, is a request from a publisher to submit a poem written by him. The entire monologue is Rajkumar explaining to the audience the absurdity of this request because of the kind of person he is. He introduces every

important character in his life with simplicity and an unpretentious flair. "Rajkumar's entire life is a poem, and in this poem, he is trying to find another poem. It is like our body is a peaceful structure, which is why we are surviving. The moment we start looking for peace in this structure, we are disrupting the peace itself," says Kaul.

Kaul is prolific and has published about a dozen books, several short stories and poems. He has, on principle, made available all his writing for

performance in the non-profit or experimental space. *Shakkar Ke Paanch Daane* has been staged and directed by different artistes all over India in various languages including Bangla, Marathi and English. However, the Hindi production of the play by Kaul's theatre group aRANYA has been performed only by Kumud Mishra since the play's inception in 2004. "This is not my play anymore, it is Kumud's because he is the one who has been carrying it. The interpretation of this play is actually Kumud's interpretation and his way

of saying everything. He is such an amazing actor, he always sticks to the words and lines as they are written, and it is because of Kumud Mishra that this play is running. He is aRANYA." *Shakkar Ke Paanch Daane* marked the beginning of Kaul's career as a playwright and director, and it also birthed his theatre group, but more importantly, it was a prelude

Kumud Mishra, now perhaps more popular for his work in Hindi films, has been an acclaimed theatre actor for several years

VIRGINIA RODRIGUES





Manav Kaul, actor, writer and director, has published several books, short stories and works of poetry

To this day, Manav Kaul is surprised at the reception of the premiere of the play... “It was a surreal experience. I remember Swanand Kirkire came to meet me, shook my hand and didn’t let go for a long time. I was so young, I couldn’t grasp it, I thought they were all just being very nice to a first-time effort.”

A poetic beginning

Around 2003, Kaul and Mishra were acting in different plays and, as the former candidly expressed, they were bored with the kind of work they were doing. For Kaul, the antidote turned out to be a complete break from acting. “I needed to understand what I wanted to do rather than crib about it. I hate the idea of doing that. It’s like criticising the food that you are eating ... I remember all of 2003 I sat at home doing nothing. Mostly I read good literature, wrote terrible poetry and my audience were my friends, among whom was Kumud Mishra. I wrote a bigger, three-page poem and Kumud’s reaction was that it was almost like a performance piece. He suggested that I develop it further. And that’s when I realised that this is what I really want to see onstage. Some good poetry and good language. One Sunday afternoon, I started writing *Shakkar ke Paanch Daane* and wrote almost 75 per cent of it in one go and within the next two to three days, I finished writing the entire play.” His friend and producer Tushar Raut was instrumental in getting the first show on the stage of Prithvi Theatre the following year.

The rehearsal journey for the debut show, despite everyone’s earnest attempts, was leading the play nowhere. It was Kaul’s first show as a playwright and director, Mishra’s first solo performance and throughout the rehearsals, the play was not working as the team had envisaged. Mishra vividly remembers the uncertainty of the final rehearsal night: “For the zero show, we called some close friends. As soon as I began saying my lines,

I could sense that nobody was able to understand what was happening. So, I paced up my delivery like an insecure actor and whatever little the audience could understand also became out of reach. When it ended, everyone’s reaction was awful, and their feedback was that it didn’t feel like a play at all. There was no structure, beginning, middle or end. To them it felt more like a reading than a performance. As an actor, I was completely disheartened.” Subsequently, Kaul’s only brief to Mishra for the final show was to say the lines really slowly for the first 10 to 15 minutes and then take a call based on the audience response. The debut show was sold out owing to Mishra’s popularity, which heightened the nervousness of everyone involved. Mishra believed in the director’s word as final and performed as he had been instructed. “When I first began talking, the response from the audience was incredible! Suddenly a few minutes into the play, I was blank. That was the first performance where I was so stunned onstage. Because my mouth was shut my mind started racing but I also felt confident in the moment that the play was being received well”.

To this day, Kaul is surprised at the reception and fondly recalls how he thought people were being complimentary out of courtesy. “It was a surreal experience. I remember Swanand Kirkire came to meet me, shook my hand and didn’t let go for a long time. I was so young, I couldn’t grasp it, I thought they were all just being very nice to a first-time effort.” Since then, *Shakkar ke Paanch Daane* has travelled all over the country and has been described as an important new-wave drama.

Director’s actor

Fifteen years ago, when I watched *Shakkar Ke Paanch Daane*, I observed how Mishra carried the weight of this solo act lightly onstage, drawing the audience in with every word, every gesture and enacting other characters without disturbing the lyrical flow of the play. Performing solo is no mean feat, he admits. The biggest challenge is to remain fully present, which Mishra has achieved with the perseverance of an ascetic. “When you are performing solo and there are no other actors onstage, you don’t have the liberty, even for a moment, to wander outside of the play. The moment you do that, even if you remember your lines, the words you speak lose their meaning because your mind is elsewhere. This also creates a disconnect with the audience. The fear of going blank in that first show has become so ingrained that I carry a copy of the script in my *jhola* at all times. The superlative writing also makes for enjoyable reading during travels.”

Mishra’s most memorable audience interaction was with a gentleman for whom *Shakkar Ke Paanch Daane* was the only play he had ever watched. Four years after that experience, when he encountered Mishra at an airport, all he spoke about was the actor’s performance in the play, which for the gentleman eclipsed all of Mishra’s other work. This is testament to everything the play was conceived for: great writing, fabulous performance and a lingering theatrical experience. ■

Shakkar Ke Paanch Daane will be staged on 17th March at the Experimental Theatre.



i killed my mother it wasn't my fault

... a seriously frivolous play

English play

written and directed by

Mallika Shah

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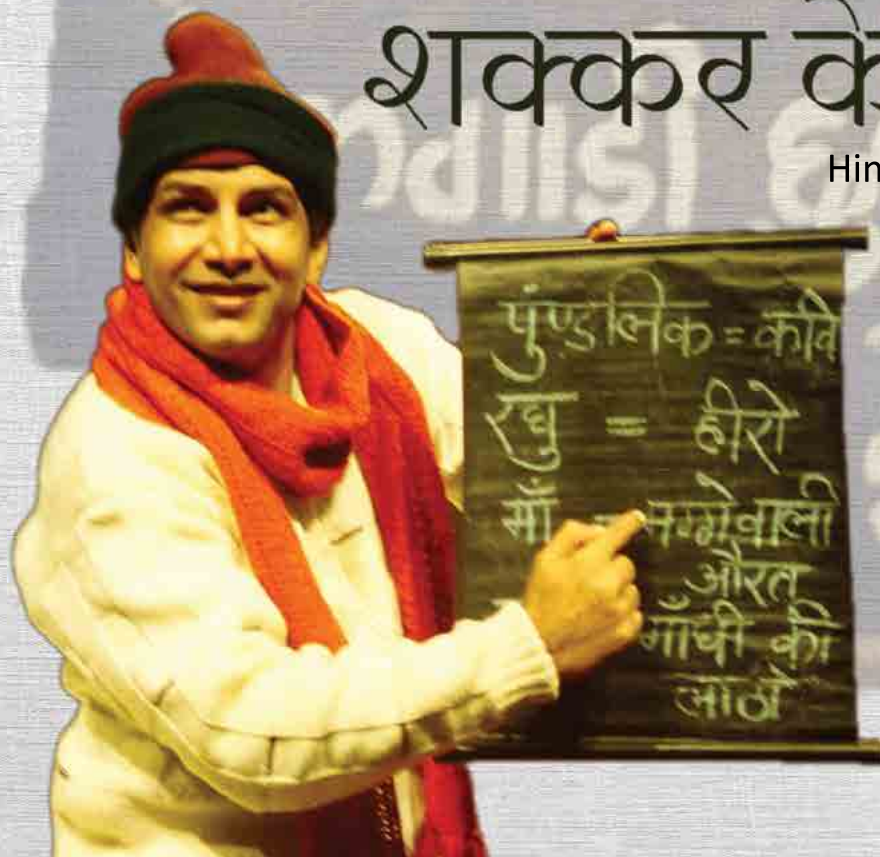
Mar 16, 2024 | 5:00 pm & 7:00 pm

Godrej Dance Theatre, NCPA

An NCPA Presentation
in collaboration with aRANYA Production

शक्कर के पाँच दाने

Hindi play



Written & directed by

Manav Kaul

Performed by

Kumud Mishra

Mar 17, 2024 | 5:00 pm & 7:00 pm

Experimental Theatre, NCPA

The Legacy of Folk Forms

At Living Traditions 2024, the folk arts of Jharkhand will illuminate enduring indigenous cultures that preserve the essence of community living.

By Aishwarya Sahasrabudhe

Folk arts in India, replete with distinct vocabularies and flavours, are seldom mere entertainment. The cultural practice of folk performances is of far greater import and constitutes a language of reform and revolution that often acts as a medium for building solidarity among the regional populace. Protecting folk cultures means preserving these centuries-old traditions whose role in the everyday lives of indigenous peoples is as much about marking festive and religious occasions as conserving communal heritage and affinity. The beauty of folk art forms is that the repertoires are constantly evolving, often around contemporary regional issues and practices. These repertoires are also community-specific.

At the 2024 edition of Living Traditions, the NCPA will cast its lens on the folk forms of Jharkhand in an endeavour to dive into the sociocultural and political imperatives of the arts thriving in this state. Living Traditions is curated annually to focus on a specific region and revel in its cultural practices. This month, the NCPA stage will host over 100 artistes from six troupes in Jharkhand for a showcase of the state's folk traditions encompassing performing arts such as dance,



idiom that narrativises the conundrums faced by those who call Jharkhand home.

Diverse folk legacies

Undertaking the mammoth task of curating the line-up of this two-day festival is Rakesh Tiwari, who elaborates that as the state shares its borders with Chhattisgarh and Odisha, its folk cultures brim with a melange of artistic practices. "As the region changes, the culture also differs, and I wanted to bring that to the festival," he says. This is evident in a presentation that features a musical in Nagpuri—a derivative of Bhojpuri predominantly spoken

music and theatre. Significant in these presentations is the sheer cultural diversity of this relatively new state, with artistes performing in multiple local languages like Nagpuri and Kudmali to the tune of distinct musical instruments in a folk

by the ethnolinguistic Sadan community—by the well-known folk artiste Prithviraj Shindeo's troupe. On the second day, audiences will witness a musical performance in Kudmali, another language of the Chhota Nagpur region. Jharkhand's folk repository would be incomplete without the inclusion of Kudmali literature whose *jhumar geet* (songs) are an expression of everyday rural lives.

Such diversity is just as prominent in Jharkhand's *lok nritya* or folk dances. For over 35 years, Tiwari has been studying folk forms in Jharkhand's neighbouring regions and opines that the only way to promote them is to preserve the artistic integrity of these performance styles. The Sangeet Natak Akademi Award-winning folk exponent says, "Making the dance choreographic by arranging dancers and lights to suit the stage means losing the essence of the folk art." Evidently, he brings Uma Kumari's troupe dressed in resplendent red and yellow hues to perform *Ho nritya*, in which artistes sway to the melodies of a bansuri in a classic courtship number, just as it is practised by the Ho Munda tribe back home.

Chhau, a folk dance performed in three eastern Indian regions, is also part of the line-up, showcasing the performance style prevalent in Jharkhand. In keeping with the idea of folk arts depicting local concerns, Dildar Ansari's *Chhau* troupe delves into the issue of ecological balance against the backdrop of a story about hunters whose wives dissuade them from killing animals.

These dances are performed to a range of *lok sangeet*, each strand complete with its own musical instruments and rhythms, notes Tiwari, so no two dance forms are similar. Where cymbals and drums like mandar figure prominently in the rhythms of *Chhau*, percussion instruments like dama and rutu are used widely by *Ho* dancers.

In such a culturally enriched region, each art form then explores the legacy of its respective tribe. Subtle changes occur in performance practice too, according to changing seasons and

Ho dance is a traditional dance of the Ho Munda tribe of the Singhbhum district of Jharkhand



Living Traditions is curated annually to focus on a specific region and revel in its cultural practices; this month, the NCPA stage will host over 100 artistes from six troupes in Jharkhand for a showcase of the state's folk traditions encompassing performing arts such as dance, music and theatre

occasions so much so that the *Ho nritya* performed during the festival of Mage Porob slightly varies from its practice in weddings and during the harvest season.

Sociocultural resonances

"Khag jaane khag hi ki bhasha," remarks Tiwari. A bird recognises only a birdsong. Describing the significance of folk arts for regional tribes, he notes that studying *lok kala* means realising that this is a language of its own, which resonates profoundly with the locals. For centuries, folk arts have been deployed to reach out to rural communities who in turn have been instrumental in organising rebellions against oppressive regimes. The sociopolitical function of folk arts in Jharkhand is felt in narratives describing the peasant rebellion of the Santhals who

fought valiantly against colonising forces.

A *lok natya* titled *Phurgal Dishom Rin Bir Ko* depicts the saga of iconic leaders like the Santhal freedom fighter, Tilka Manjhi, who led an uprising against the British Empire in as early as the 18th century. This sparked a revolutionary zeal of such magnitude that thousands of *adivasi* men and women from the Santhal region united in the fight for freedom. "So, our ancestors have fought in the freedom struggle against the British and when this is told to the tribes in their own language, they understand it better," says Tiwari.

Yet, along with history and mythology, folk arts are equally important for narrativising the present. In Deepak Lohar's *Gohaeer Jatra*, artistes highlight contemporary issues like the peril



Chhau is an Indian dance form with martial and folk traditions

The rhythm of a folk tune, says Rakesh Tiwari, is so etched on the minds of the locals that even if they are watching a film on TV, they are likely to switch it off and gravitate towards the village *chaupaal* if they hear the musical notes of a performance underway

of young girls caught in human trafficking rackets and the menacing effect of rural poverty which thrusts youngsters into dangerous situations as they venture into towns looking for work.

Tiwari highlights that the *nacha* or musical theatre depicting these tales is deeply woven into the fabric of the region. These folk arts enable indigenous communities to connect better with their own histories and traditions. The rhythm of a folk tune, he says, is so etched on their minds that even if they are watching a film on TV, they are likely to switch it off and gravitate

towards the village *chaupaal* or square if they hear the musical notes of a performance underway.

This overbearing influence draws village residents instinctively to the “sound, voice, rhythm and soil” of their ancestors. “We call it *vachik parampara*,” or oral tradition, explains Tiwari and it lies at the core of folk arts, so that despite a limited knowledge of letters, local tribes have been able to keep multiple languages and their artistic symbolism alive simply by passing on age-old histories from one generation to the next.

At the upcoming edition of Living

Traditions at the NCPA, artistes from Jharkhand will travel to Mumbai, some for the first time in their lives, to give a glimpse of their everyday lives immersed in the arts to residents of a megapolis who often need to carve out time to engage with music, dance or theatre. This becomes significant at a time when recital durations have plummeted and stage shows are a matter of a quick showcase. Folk artistes hark back to a time when performances would go on for hours. To this day, Tiwari notes, this tradition remains intact in many villages—on many an evening, the strains of a string instrument signal local communities to assemble for a *nacha* that draws to a close only with the first rays of the rising sun. ■

Living Traditions: Festival of Jharkhand will be presented on 8th and 9th March at the Experimental Theatre.

Living Traditions: Festival of Jharkhand		
Day & date	Time	Presentation
Friday, 8th March	6.30 pm	Nagpuri songs by Prithviraj Sinhdeo & group
		Ho dance by Uma Kumari & group
		Gohaeer Jatra: folk play written and directed by Deepak Lohar
Saturday, 9th March	6.30 pm	Kudmali Jhumar songs by Kamal Mahato & group
		Chhau dance by Dildar Ansari & group
		Phurgal Dishom Rin Bir Ko, folk play by Jeet Rai Hansda & group



An NCPA presentation

LIVING TRADITIONS

Festival of Jharkhand

Mar 8, 2024

Nagpuri songs by Prithviraj Sinhdeo & group

Ho dance by Uma Kumari & group

Gohaeer Jatra: Folk play written and directed by Deepak Lohar

Mar 9, 2024

Kudmali Jhumar songs by Kamal Mahato & group

Chhau dance by Dildar Ansari & group

Phurgal Dishom Rin Bir Ko: Folk play by Jeet Rai Hansda & group



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Re-imagining Spaces for Indian Dance

On the innovation and exploration that transpired at this year's edition of the Mumbai Dance Season.

By Aanchal Shetty

Come January, the dance fraternity of the city is abuzz with preparations for the NCPA Mumbai Dance Season, one of the most awaited events for the community across the length and breadth of Mumbai. A flurry of activities follows soon after Dr. Swapnokalpa Dasgupta, Head - Dance department, NCPA, sets the tone for the season in the introductory meeting. From sharing themes for their presentations, inviting peers to perform at their events, to collaborating on shared spaces and accompanists, the interest and enthusiasm that the season generates can be felt across Mumbai, Greater Mumbai and Navi Mumbai. The focus of the event being 'local', the dance community comes together as one to put their best foot forward in their respective localities.

The fifth edition of the Mumbai Dance Season saw over 500 dancers perform in over 27 events in an 18-day extravaganza from 18th January to 4th February 2024. Along with multi-artiste and multi-disciplinary performances, the audience was also treated to a variety of events that complement the world of dance.

Right from the opening ceremony that saw a mélange of Indian folk dances curated by exponents Jayashree Nair (Bharatanatyam, Mohiniattam and Kathakali) and Lata Rajesh (Bharatanatyam) to the finale evening featuring classical Indian dances on the theme of 'Bhakti Rasa' curated by stalwarts Darshana Jhaveri (Manipuri) and Dr. Tushar Guha (Kathak), the Mumbai Dance Season did not cease to enthrall.

The season saw audiences gather in auditoriums, community halls, amphitheatres, dance studios and even a shopping mall to experience the magic of Indian classical and folk dances. 'Prayag 2024' by Shubhada Varadkar and 'Lakshita' by Namita Bodaji offered a platform for seasoned as well as young and up-and-coming dancers in the suburb of Vile Parle. At Dadar, the heart of Mumbai, audiences were taken on a spiritual journey through various episodes of the Ramayana with 'Ramchandra Vedh Se' by Manisha Jeet, while 'Kavitta Chanda' by Rupali Desai saw veteran artiste Dr. Manjiri Deo teach unique compositions to young and senior students. Radhika Phanse's 'Dev-Devata'



The opening of
Mumbai Dance Season
at the NCPA

at Wadala showcased, in Kathak and Odissi styles, the deities who have shaped the very essence of classical dance. Rehana Patel-Rane attempted to simplify the intricate terminology of the Kathak repertoire with 'Aayaam Kathak Ke' at Malad. The NCPA hosted 'Lok Gatha' where Shila Mehta and Maya Sapera (from Belgium) put up an enthralling performance combining Kathak and Rajasthani folk dances. Watching international artistes perform Indian classical and folk dances testifies to the fact that our artistic heritage transcends languages, cultures and geographies.

The Mumbai Dance Season also uniquely brought to the fore an important aspect of dance—space—and its creative use. How does one reach out to the masses and make dance accessible to all while putting together a memorable event? The answer lies in oft-used corporate jargon: think outside the box. And this was something that all participating artistes did. Breaking away from closed spaces and bringing alive dance in non-traditional set-ups has been a defining feature of this season.

Bharatanatyam exponent Lata Surendra chose to set the stage in the modern hub of social interaction—a mall. With over 30 artistes and their disciples performing at the Culture Hub at the Inorbit Mall in Malad, both time and shoppers stood still. The spellbound audience watched the artistes pay obeisance to the imagery of devotion and emblems of a deity's power in 'Ode to Sacred Symbols'. In other quarters of the city, rather than rue the fact that the younger generation does not take to classical Indian and folk dances the way they do to Western and Bollywood dances, artistes decided that if the mountain won't come to Muhammad, then Muhammad must go to the mountain. And so, they collaborated with colleges that offered them space and a captive audience. Nagindas Khandwala College in Malad, Somaiya Vidyavihar University and Ramniranjan Jhunjhunwala College in Ghatkopar saw performances

by artistes and their disciples including Latasana Devi (Manipuri), Dr. Sarmishtha Chattopadhyay (Mohiniattam), Prateesha Suresh (*Sattriya*), Tina Tambe (Kathak) and Dr. Swapnokalpa Dasgupta and Nivedita Mukherjee (Odissi). Sessions on 'De-mystifying Classical Indian Dance' provided a platform for an engaging discussion with students, many of whom evinced interest in learning Indian classical and folk dances. It also allowed the young students of Dashrath Arjun Bata Madhyamik Vidyalaya, Vikhroli, who have been learning Odissi under Mukherjee as part of the NCPA's CSR programme, *Nrityaparichay*, to display their skills to a senior audience. At KC College in Churchgate, a national seminar was organised by Dr. Paullami Mukherjee, who, along with a panel of dancers and educationists, deliberated on the role of the performing arts in higher education and the effective implementation of the NEP 2020, while at IIT, Powai, Ranjana Phadke's symposium 'Srujan' had stalwarts like Vaibhav Arekar (Bharatanatyam), Sushant Jadhav (Bharatanatyam)

and Jhelum Paranjape (Odissi) familiarise the audience with various aspects of dance including choreography, costume, light and backdrop. With inter-collegiate events dotting the calendar, there were many takeaways for aspiring dancers.

Carrying forward the ethos of reclaiming spaces were Dr. Chattopadhyay's 'Chetonar Rong Season 4' and Dr. Nandhini Ashok's 'Bandra Cultural Utsav' at Nerul Gymkhana's amphitheatre and the promenade at Carter Road in Bandra respectively. Blurring conventional lines, these artistes welcomed everyone in their fold—dancers, students, the discerning, the connoisseurs and the average *rasik*. The splashes of colours, costumes and the strains of melody enveloped the onlookers in the warmth of classical dance forms on a wintry evening. At Bandra, the audience also witnessed students of a municipal school showcase their talent in classical dance.

When the artistes ran out of available public spaces, they turned to each other for support. Those who have their own dance studios opened their doors for fellow dancers. Kathak artiste Dr. Piyush Raj's Natanam Studio in Goregaon saw events held by dance exponents through the season. 'Sanchari' by Keka Sinha spoke of expressions travelling from the dancers to the *rasikas*, while Sunil Sunkara's 'Chaar Samagam' had acclaimed scholar Dr. Ambadan Rohadia, along with Sanket Sadhu and Akshobhya Bharadwaj, introduce the audience to the community of storytellers from Gujarat and Rajasthan. Raj himself organised 'Baithak', an evening of classical music and dance showcasing Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Odissi and other dance forms. Gauri Sharma Tripathi's ANKH Cube provided a space for learning and sharing of experiences among those on the path of learning, with a workshop by Nandita Puri



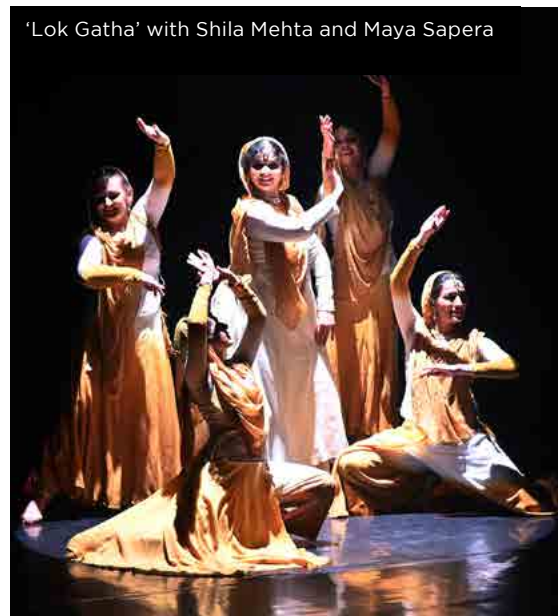
unveiling the legacy of the Jaipur gharana and a Sunday Sit-down encouraging young performers to look at the holistic aspect of dance.

As in every dance season, the NCPA team travelled to cover the events at every location and it was gratifying to see the sheer reach of this initiative. Vasai saw a classical Indian dance event organised by Dr. Chitra Vishwanathan as she took centrestage in 'Glory of *Tamizh - Eyal Esai Naadakam*' to highlight the richness of Tamil literature. In Badlapur, Kathak danseuse Gayatri Bhat's 'Janani Festival' celebrated the collaboration of artiste mothers with their equally talented daughters and included her daughter, Suhani Bhat. The event also had the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law duo of Odissi exponents Debi Basu and Archana Basu. Dombivli saw two distinct events—a tribute to Birju Maharaj at the 'Dombivlikar Kathak festival' organised by Dr. Vaishali Dudhe, while 'Shabdamanthan' by Sheetal Kapole encouraged students to delve into the significance of theoretical aspects of dance art. With exponents performing in these places to packed audiences, the Mumbai Dance Season enabled both artistes and audiences to bridge several gaps—geographical and perceived.

Drawing the curtains on the fifth edition of the Mumbai Dance Season, Dr. Dasgupta says, "This is an engagement started by the NCPA in association with the entire dance community in Mumbai and beyond. It provides an opportunity for established and up-and-coming dancers to connect under the NCPA banner, fosters creativity in choreography, encourages co-creation by collaborating with fellow artistes and enables a range of events related to dance. And along the way, we also

help audiences develop an appreciation for Indian classical and folk dances and ensure that its conscious promotion and preservation continues for generations to come." ■

The fifth edition of the Mumbai Dance Season saw over 500 dancers perform in 27 events in an 18-day extravaganza from 18th January to 4th February 2024



SPRING FEVER

From promising debuts to anticipated returns, the SOI Spring 2024 Season was a memorable one for the choice of music, line-up and extraordinary playing by the Symphony Orchestra of India. We bring you snapshots from the concerts, recitals, talks and interactions that music aficionados were treated to.



A highlight of the season was Saint-Saëns's Symphony No. 3, the 'Organ Symphony'

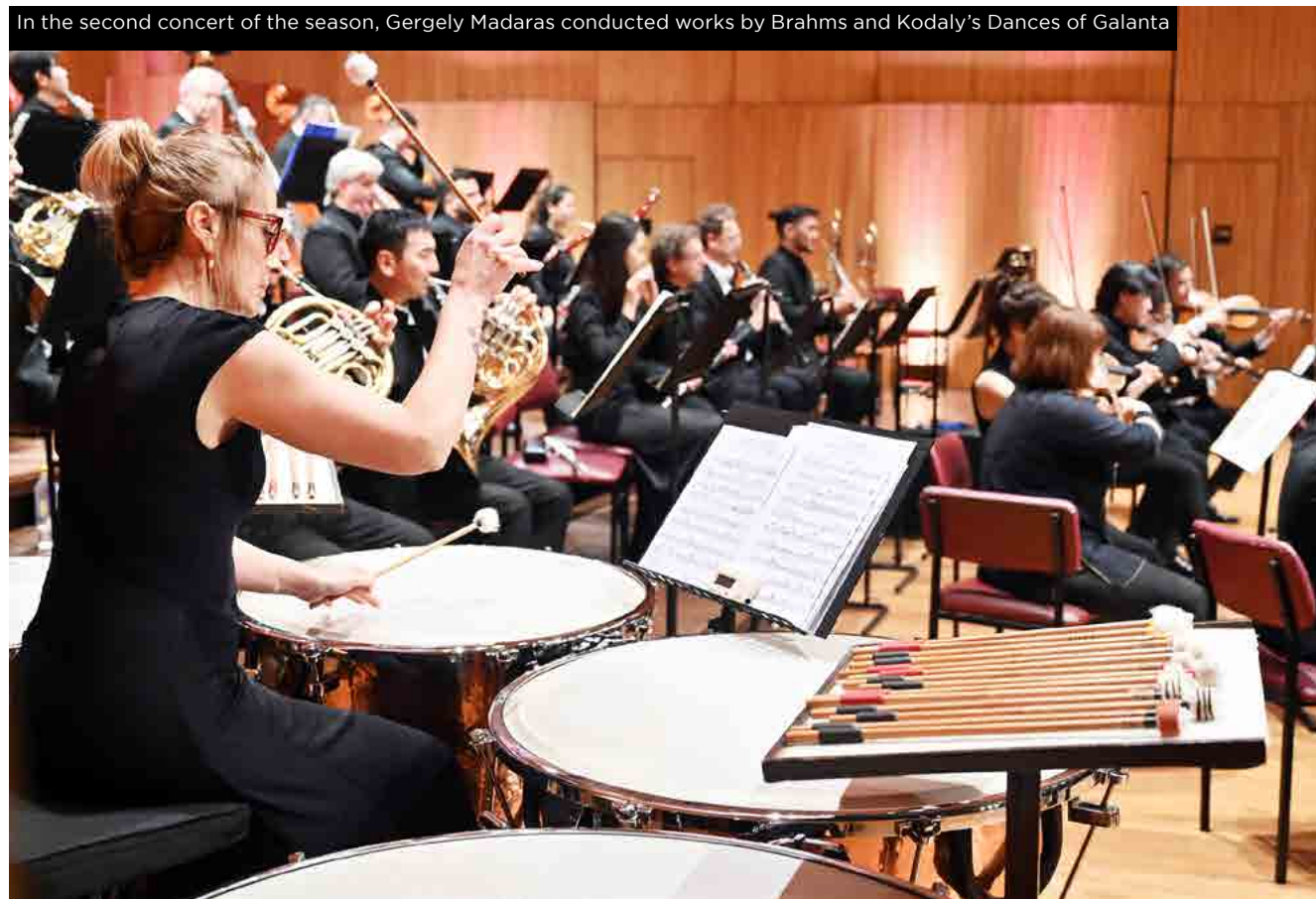


Gergely Madaras made his India debut with the season



Conductor Martyn Brabbins received a standing ovation for an outstanding concert of works by Berlioz and Saint-Saëns

In the second concert of the season, Gergely Madaras conducted works by Brahms and Kodaly's Dances of Galanta



Martyn Brabbins addressed the students of the Bombay International School



Dr. Anjan Ray led an engaging pre-concert talk



Renowned mezzo-soprano Sasha Cooke



Barry Douglas's spectacular piano recital



As part of the season, Dr. Anjan Ray engaged in a conversation with Jimmy Bilimoria on the treasures of the Stuart-Liff Collection



Audiences engaged in an informative pre-concert talk by Dr. Cavas Bilimoria



The SOI Spring 2024 Season opened with the Nocturne from Mendelssohn's A Midsummer Night's Dream



The Cheng² Duo, comprising siblings Bryan and Silvie Cheng, played works of Debussy, Chopin, Piazzolla and specially commissioned compositions



Cellist Bryan Cheng gave a moving rendition of Elgar's cello concerto



Noted pianist Barry Douglas played Brahms's Piano Concerto No. 1 with the SOI under the baton of Gergely Madaras

The SOI Spring 2024 Season welcomed a packed house at the Jamshed Bhabha Theatre



Beethoven's Symphony No. 6 under the baton of Martyn Brabbins was a fitting finale to the season

THE BEST OF THREE WORLDS

Three diverse musicians, with a combined performing experience of over 100 years among them, will come together to improvise and harmonise on the stage of the Tata Theatre this month.

By Narendra Kusnur

BOTH trumpeter Paolo Fresu and pianist Rita Marcotulli have been part of the Italian jazz scene since the mid-1980s. Though they have known each other for a long time, it was only a couple of years ago that they began performing together. What they also have in common is that they have played in India before, and have also played separately with Mumbai-born, Hamburg-based percussionist Trilok Gurtu back in Europe.

Fresu, Marcotulli and Gurtu will get together for the first time onstage as a trio in a unique concert presented by the NCPA and the Istituto Italiano di Cultura di Mumbai at the Tata Theatre this month. Each of them has written a few original compositions for the performance and shared them over WhatsApp so that they can familiarise themselves with the programme before the rehearsals. The idea is to blend both traditional and modern styles

with jazz and music that is rooted in Mediterranean and Indian traditions.

The show comes just over a year after Gurtu, now 72, performed at the same venue with Israel's Castle in Time Orchestra, conducted by Matan Daskal. "That event was very special for me, and it was great to play in my hometown after a long time. I don't know whether everyone liked it, but the overall reaction spoke for itself. The coming show will obviously be a completely different experience," he says.

Fresu had played with Gurtu for the first time in the early 1990s. He recalls, "I had invited him to my jazz festival in Sardinia, Italy. Later he invited me to perform in his 1997 album *The Glimpse*." Adds Gurtu, "We adjusted well and formed a very special trio with Cuban pianist Omar Sosa and played in various cities across the world."

Italian jazz trumpet player Paolo Fresu



Trumpeter Paolo Fresu, pianist Rita Marcotulli and percussionist Trilok Gurtu will get together for the first time as a trio in a unique concert presented by the NCPA and the Istituto Italiano di Cultura di Mumbai

Indian percussionist Trilok Gurtu



The two musicians have played with Marcotulli in the studio and are looking forward to the forthcoming show. The pianist too has been familiar with Gurtu's work since the early 1990s. She says, "I was a huge fan of the jazz fusion band Weather Report, and I first saw Trilok play with the band's keyboardist Joe Zawinul. That was when I first got exposed to Indian music, especially rhythms. Many years later, I got a chance to play with him once as a duo in northern Italy."

Now 64, Marcotulli grew up in a musical environment, as her father was a sound engineer who worked with legendary film composers Nino Rota, whose scores for *The Godfather* and *La Dolce Vita* remain timeless, and Ennio Morricone, who worked as music director for classics like *Cinema Paradiso* and *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*. She recalls, "I remember Rota first came home when I was five or six. I had begun learning piano by then, and every time he came, he wanted to hear me. I would get very nervous, but he was very gentle. I met Ennio Morricone more often, and I was in the studio when they were recording pan flutes for the film *Once Upon a Time in America*. Once he hosted a dinner in my honour and made me play with a double bass player."

Though Marcotulli's early exposure was to classical music, she soon became interested in film soundtracks

and popular songs. She says, "Jazz came later and the first pianist I discovered was Thelonious Monk. Others followed. There was Horace Silver, Oscar Peterson, Bill Evans, Keith Jarrett and Herbie Hancock. As I started travelling, I got into other styles like Brazilian, African and Indian music. A Brazilian musician who lived in Rome heard me play and invited me to join his band. That widened my perspective."

Among her collaborations, Marcotulli treasures her partnership with American saxophonist Dewey Redman. "I met Dewey for the first time in Paris, where I often played with bassist Michel Benita and drummer Aldo Romano. Michel wanted to form a quartet and invited Dewey, who liked my playing and invited me to play with his band. I collaborated with him for 15 years, touring with him regularly. He was the funniest, most profound, visionary and brilliant player I met, and I learnt a lot from him."

For his part, 62-year-old trumpeter Fresu talks in a similar vein about his collaboration with pianist Carla Bley. He elaborates, "She told me she first heard me at an airport on her bandmate and saxophonist Andy Sheppard's headphones. She liked the music so much that she located me through my agent Vic Albani. This was around 2005. She and Sheppard had released the album *The Lost Chords* with bassist Steve Swallow and

Italian jazz pianist and composer Rita Marcotulli



at developing his own style. He also wanted to diversify from concerts and albums, and soon began composing for theatre, dance, radio, television and films. “I basically write music, and don’t differentiate between one medium and another,” he explains.

Last year, Fresu appeared on the song ‘Live and Let Live’ on rock star Peter Gabriel’s latest album *i/o*. “I had earlier asked for permission to use his unreleased song in my album *Eros* with Omar Sosa. He agreed. When we met in Sardinia last year, he asked me to record with him. It has been a great honour to work with such a respected artiste,” he says.

All three musicians are looking forward to playing together in Mumbai. Interestingly, Fresu performed at the Jazz Yatra when he was just starting out in 1984 and returned in 2012. Marcotulli has come before as part of an Italian jazz group, and later with a Pink Floyd tribute band comprising musicians from different European countries. Gurtu says this collaboration will give him a chance to do newer things. He points out,

“I was a huge fan of the jazz fusion band Weather Report, and I first saw Trilok play with the band’s keyboardist Joe Zawinul; that was when I first got exposed to Indian music, especially rhythms”

drummer Billy Drummond. She decided to add me, and we recorded the follow-up album *The Lost Chords Find Paolo Fresu*.”

Born in Berchidda on the Italian island of Sardinia, Fresu picked up the trumpet at the age of 11. He says, “I didn’t choose the trumpet. The trumpet chose me as there was one at home and my dream was to touch it and play it. Soon I wanted to become part of the local band and as luck would have it, I started playing for them as a young boy.” Though he was heavily inspired by the trumpet-playing of Miles Davis and Chet Baker, Fresu decided not to copy anyone but work

“My basic approach will be the same as what I do with other musicians. I use my Indian education and let the music play for itself. There won’t be too much planning or thinking or analysing.” Marcotulli sums it up succinctly. “The beauty of this music is that we don’t know what exactly will happen next. As Picasso said, ‘If you know what exactly you’re going to do, what’s the point of doing it?’” ■

.....
Paolo Fresu & Rita Marcotulli, featuring special guest Trilok Gurtu, will be presented on 2nd March at the Tata Theatre.

Jazz Odyssey

CLASSIC TO MODERN BRILLIANCE

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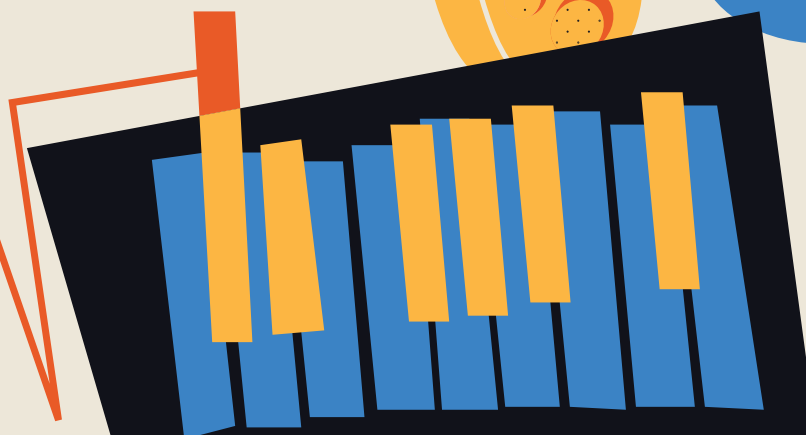
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MUSIC IN MUGHAL INDIA AND BEYOND

A dispatch from two riveting sessions at the 2024 Jaipur Literature Festival.

By Ornella D'Souza

The 2024 edition of the Jaipur Literature Festival (JLF) was, as always, bustling in the literary throes of book launches, author signings and receptive bibliophiles as audiences. Playing a subsidiary role to the literary gleanings was music, as each day began with a 'Morning Music' session on the front lawns of Hotel Clarks Amer Jaipur, featuring the likes of the Indian classical vocalist Kalapini Komkali, daughter of Kumar Gandharva, to jazz saxophonist Phil Scarff, whose repertoire includes Indian classical music. Evening acts were headlined by indie stars such as The Tapi Project, The Revisit Project, Alif, Prabh Deep, among others.

Two JLF sessions, both book unveilings, stood out because the books in question—*Music and Musicians in Late Mughal India: Histories of the Ephemeral, 1748–1858* by Katherine Schofield and *Sahela Re: A Novel* by Mrinal Pande—are centred on musicians and singers of the Mughal period in India and beyond. At the JLF, Schofield described the period her book delves into as one “before recorded sound, and so we can no longer hear these worlds.” Schofield is Head of Department, Music, at King's College, London, while veteran journalist and author Pande took after her mother, the noted Hindi writer Shivani, and chose fiction over reportage for this literary undertaking. Schofield's book unearths accounts of nine mostly forgotten Mughal court musicians of note from the reigns of Muhammad Shah 'Rangeela' and the last Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar. Pande's book is based on the lives of four *tawaifs*. Schofield moderated the session with Pande and noted Hindi poet and cinema scholar Yatindra Mishra. Historian Rana Safvi moderated Schofield's session, while singer Vidya Shah rendered a few couplets of 'Lagta Nahin Dil Mera', sung by Mohammed Rafi for the film *Lal Quila* (1960), originally penned by none other than Bahadur Shah Zafar.

Safvi addressed the pertinent question first, and asked Schofield, “How does one write histories of the

ephemeral of emotional and sensitive experiences, of ecstatic states and aesthetic journeys, of the live performances of music and dance, on the tangible and transient texture of the experiential moment? How do we write histories of these moments when they have been long passed into silence?” While Schofield conceded that we are not as fortunate to hear the exact compositions and throw of voice as the audiences at the Mughal courts of Lucknow, Hyderabad, Jaipur and Delhi, “the journey has been worthwhile to find out what motivated people in this incredibly tumultuous period, a period when Indian classical music acquired the form [in which] we know it today,” replied Schofield. She cited the pietra dura inlay of the Greek musician Orpheus on the wall behind Shah Jahan's Diwan-i-aam in the Red

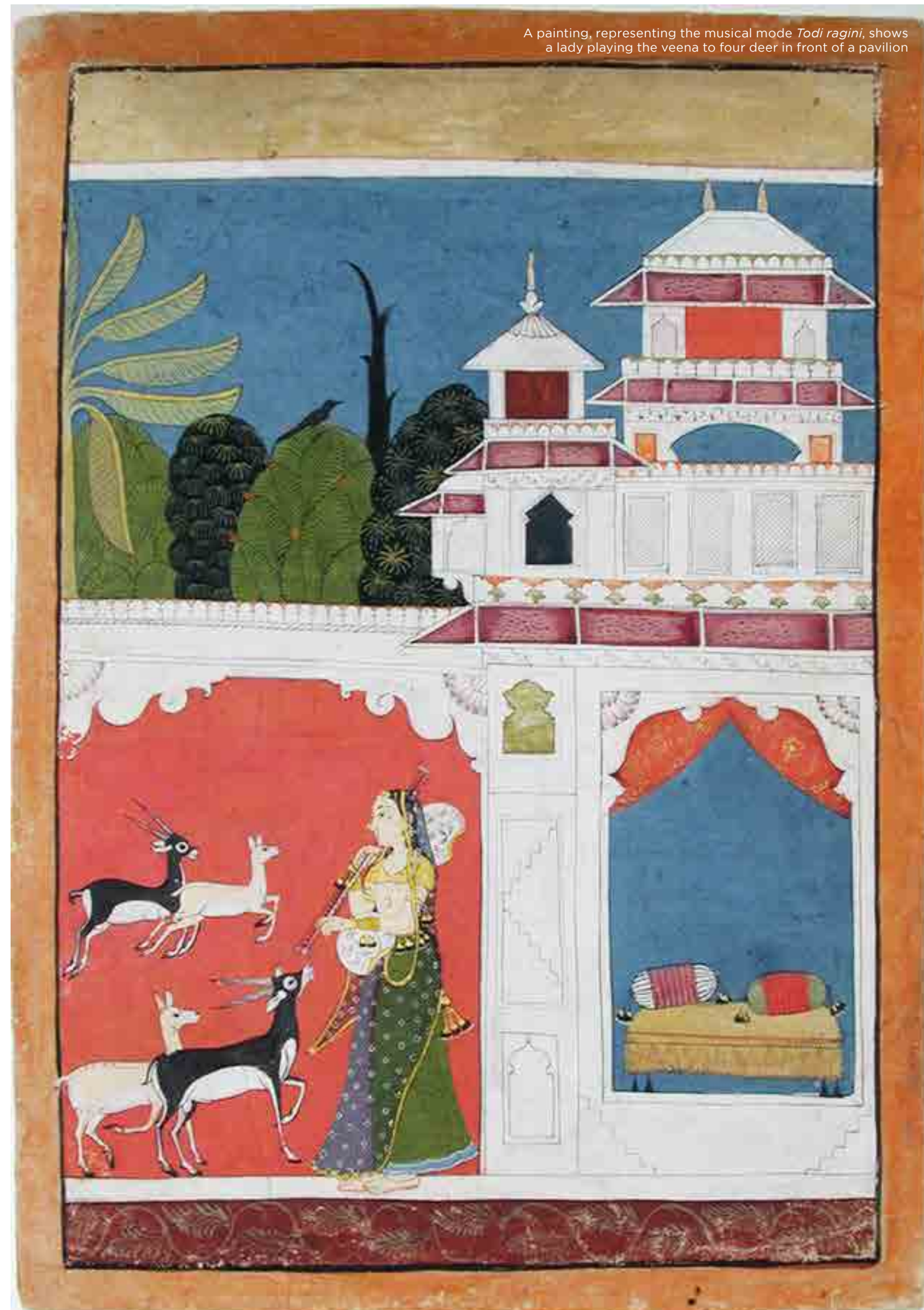
Fort at Shahjahanabad, saying that Orpheus could not bring his wife Eurydice from the dead despite playing his lyre and charming the attendants of Hades, the God of the underworld, but listening to his tragic story fascinates, even though there is no access to the music he played.

This period, Schofield added, being fairly understudied also produced a widespread belief that the *ustads* from the lineage-based *gharanas* were illiterate, and thus there would be no written records. “My job as a historian has been to find those writings, and there are huge numbers of them! In fact, hundreds of writings by patrons and by hereditary musicians that tell us some of that story, and I have been uncovering that story,” she said.

From material unearthed from India Office Records, local libraries and *ragamala* paintings, Schofield discovered biographical collections of musicians called *tazkiras*. She also came across instances when Mughal court musicians played a role in politics. Khushhal Khan 'Gunasamudra', the great grandson of Tansen, was used in the plot to seal the fate of heir-apparent Dara Shikoh, son of Shah Jahan, in whose court Gunasamudra was the chief musician. Legend has it that his mellifluous

Two book unveilings at the JLF stood out because the books in question—*Music and Musicians in Late Mughal India: Histories of the Ephemeral, 1748–1858* by Katherine Schofield and *Sahela Re: A Novel* by Mrinal Pande—are centred on musicians and singers of the Mughal period in India and beyond

A painting, representing the musical mode *Todi ragini*, shows a lady playing the veena to four deer in front of a pavilion



performance of Ragini Todi in the court on Navroz, produced Todi in human form, playing the rudra veena with enchanted deer at her feet. Gunasamudra's performance enraptured Shah Jahan so much that he signed the petition to move the wise revenue officer Murshid Quli Khan to the retinue of Aurangzeb, who later usurped the throne by assassinating his elder brother Dara Shikoh.

The book features other amusing incidents. There is courtesan Mayali, whose name appears only once in history, on the margins of an East India Company account book. She demanded payment in salt instead of cash from the British, who had sequestered the Sambhar Salt Lake from Jaipur and Jodhpur, the two areas that refused pay 'protection money' to the Raj. There is a petty episode involving Anjha Baras Khan—a descendant of Tansen and chief musician at the court of Rangeela—who, on getting a chance to teach one of his rival Ni'amat Khan Sadarang's nephews, made him sign a letter saying that his ancestors were inferior to those of Anjha Baras Khan. There is also the story of an English memsahib, Sophia Plowden, who was fascinated with the tunes sung by Khanum Jaan, the celebrated courtesan at the court of Nawab Asafuddaula in Lucknow and had them written down in European notation. They were then turned into harmonised arrangements for the harpsichord and published in Calcutta in 1789.

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While courtesans and nautch music were mentioned towards the tapering end of Schofield's session, the subject was the central focus of the session featuring Pande. She found "a great diaspora of talent" after artistes from Mughal courts started to relocate to other parts of the country. This led to women from the Rampur-Sahaswan *gharana* marrying into the Gwalior and Atrauli *gharanas*, and women from the Atrauli *gharana* into the Jaipur *gharana*, with the music from their maternal home becoming their 'dowry'. "It felt like entering a laboratory that had been bombed. In trying to recreate this world, I found a petri dish somewhere, some shards, chemicals which I could not name, torn photographs and lots of gossip. I decided to model the central character in the book on an eccentric like me, a loner who is seeking out priceless information and contacting various interesting people. With my family being

half feudal and half conservative Brahmin, the mixed heritage allowed me to be both an outsider and insider to this world of music," said Pande. Now 78, she calls *Sahela Re* her "last hurrah", adding that the theme had been building up in her mind over the last decade.

Pande discussed Bhoja, an 11th-century king of the Malwa region, who in his noted text, *Shringara Manjari Katha*, added a fifth *varna* to the *varna* order by Manu, that of a 'swatantra stree', a free woman who seeks and gives pleasure, cannot marry, but is above the law



From left, Katherine Schofield, Mrinal Pande and Yatindra Mishra



From left, Rana Safvi, Katherine Schofield and Vidya Shah

when it comes to living with any man she chooses. Pande further cited instances when the famous royal courtesan Amrapali (around 500 BC) claimed that the entire Magadha kingdom could not pay her what she could earn spending one day in Kashi. "Again, this resonated in [the context of] Gauhar Jaan (1873-1930), who told the Viceroy of India: my *mujra* fee is bigger than the monthly fee paid to you by the government of India."

Interestingly, Mishra added to Pande's point on the class system. The British Gazetteer had divided Indian women into three categories: *maal jaati* (liberated women/*tawaifs* whose earnings were equivalent to a rich merchant and paid their taxes), *raees jaati* (a rich man's daughter) and *sharif jaati* (a commoner).

A slideshow of black-and-white images of prominent *tawaifs*, performances by nautch girls, the audiences' gaze, etc. accompanied the session. When a photograph showed Gauhar Jaan, sporting a unibrow, confidently sitting cross-legged between male musicians, Pande contrasted it with the everyday life of *sharif jaati* women who "were always huddled, behind the purdah, watching the dances going on in the courtyard." Gauhar Jaan was an icon in her own right. Pande's grandmother, for instance, got frilly blouses stitched from the best fashion designers in Lahore, copying Gauhar Jaan's sartorial style. Yet, the famous Urdu poet Akbar Allahabadi had commented that God had given Gauhar Jaan everything, except a husband. "My grandmother would say, wrestlers and *tawaifs* earn in lakhs, but always die weak, lonely and eaten up by relatives. You see this replicated in the

Historian Rana Safvi moderated Schofield's session, while singer Vidya Shah rendered a few couplets of 'Lagta Nahin Dil Mera', from the film *Lal Quila* (1960), originally penned by none other than Bahadur Shah Zafar

Mumbai film world with Meena Kumari, Madhubala. These women had colourful lives, but their tragic end makes you think how the judiciary, administration and family were and are still controlled by men in India, because of which these women are praised outside the house for their craft, but inside, they are still looked down upon."

While heroines working in Hindi cinema in the early 1930s and '40s, originally from Benaras, Ratlam, Chilibila, Aligarh, Agra, Jaipur, etc., hid behind Anglo-Indian pseudonyms such as Ms Paul, Ms Rose, Ms Lotus or Ms Lobo, to protect their family name, others

like *thumri* singer and *tawaif* Husanabai, openly took a stance, even if it meant going against the Father of the Nation. It is said Gandhiji had requested Husanabai to perform in Kashi to collect funds for the cause of Indian independence. She agreed on one condition—that Gandhiji must attend. He agreed but did not show up for the performance. "She raised ₹90,000... we're talking early '40s," noted Pande. After the concert, freedom fighter Shaikat Ali was sent to get the *mujra* money. She gave him only ₹45,000, citing Gandhi's absence as the reason.

However, despite the difficulties they faced, these women lived life on their own terms. Mishra concluded, "Today, we talk about liberalisation. Women are equipped with human rights, the Constitution, and even social media. At that time, Begum Akhtar had bouncers at her *kotha* (house). Visitors were screened and entertained (or not) only after a week or more of leaving their visiting cards at the entrance. This is the kind of power these women had." ■

A Musical Maverick

In *Singing Emptiness*, scholar and translator Linda Hess presents a searching and comprehensive exploration of Hindustani classical vocalist Kumar Gandharva's encounters with the songs of Kabir. In addition to contributions by renowned Indian writers, U. R. Ananthamurthy and Ashok Vajpeyi, the book contains bilingual texts, translated by Hess, of 30 *nirgun* songs. The excerpt below is from a compelling essay written by noted poet and cultural essayist, Vajpeyi, who had a personal relationship with Gandharva, and was instrumental in the creation of this book.

Truly to sing takes another kind of breath.
A breath in the void. A shudder in God. A wind.¹
Rainer Maria Rilke

What to say about death—it's not our world.
Kumar Gandharva

In the middle of the sky-circle, that enlightened guru certainly heard his voice.² But we, here on this dusty earth, enmeshed in the business of our lives, have been listening to his voice for years. Despite disease and old age, he kept bringing forth that song of flourishing trees, spreading vines.³ Sitting on Shiva's platform he sang, and, as Madhu Limaye had said years before on his 60th birthday, 'It seemed to us that we were touching the mystery of this world.' This time he had a premonition of his end. A week earlier, without any warning, he turned up in Indore to meet his friends. He had been telling his wife and daughter that the distress this time was beyond anything he had experienced. *This time I won't stay. Every time, I marshal all my forces to fight. Then something new comes along.*

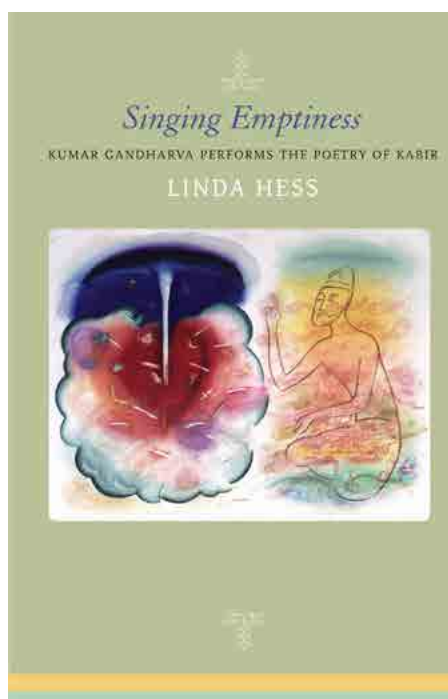
He even spoke of the direction in which he wished his dead body to lie. He had said that his last rites should be in the same place as everyone else's, not any special place. He had asked his tabla accompanist to go to the cremation ground and see how it felt. He added that the place shouldn't feel bad. A person going there should feel, 'I have come to a nice place.' When the funeral procession, after passing through the streets of Dewas with full state honours, reached the public cremation ground, surrounded by lush green fields, it really did feel like a park. Many intimate friends of Kumarji were there, along with the public from Dewas and Bhopal, many artists from Bhopal, Indore, Ujjain, Dewas and so on. The fire was lit by his son, the singer Mukul Shivputra, who had arrived from a temple in Nemavar just in time for the funeral procession. In that cremation ground encircled by green grasses, the pyre burned. But whose passing away was it? Kumar Gandharva's, or Shivputra Siddharamaiya Komkali's?

Kumar Gandharva had made his wager with death and sustained himself

with untiring courage for nearly half a century. He had spent most of his musical life singing with only one lung. With his irrepressible will to live, he had held death back for almost 50 years. For him, singing became synonymous with living. The will to live and the will to create could not be separated. More: for him, to live was not merely to be alive but to live questioning and inquiring, meeting every unexpected and unpredictable turn of events with courage and dignity. Kumar Gandharva considered himself a practitioner of the most perishable art. 'Every day I die singing,' he said. We are all perishable in the same way, even though, in the entanglements and perplexities of our lives, we tend to forget it. Kumarji always remembered his mortality; he was an artist who was assaulted not by death but by the fullness of life, its innumerable sensations. Since his initial illness had brought him very close to death, in a sense he always remained close to it without falling victim to it. His music is a daring counter-image, without any self-pity, for this perishing condition.

Throughout his life, with ebullient curiosity, Kumar Gandharva seemed to be searching for the life-giving meaning of this inescapable mortality. His music had an astounding fearlessness. Such a vast canvas of emotion that it contained everything: truly another kind of 'breath', 'void', 'shudder', 'wind'; a boundless, never-ending artistic passion. From passionate desire

to carefree nonchalance to imperturbable detachment—all this in the music of one musician. There are great singers who are incontrovertible masters of a particular style or artistic emotion. But Kumar Gandharva sang everything with equal command and involvement—*khayal*, *thumri*, *tarana*, *bhajan*, *tappa*. He could bring forth countless artistic emotions with equal depth. He was the supreme singer of *nirgun*, yet he was also a powerful exponent of the *sagun* presence of words and poetry. In his singing, from beginning to end, he sustained a kind of peaceful tension. Everything flowed, emotion-charged, in that singing: passion and dispassion, joy and grief, nature exquisite and restless, solitude and community, awesome power and impenetrable silence, loquaciousness and calm, duality and oneness. Musical imagination had rarely bestowed such experience, such abundance and fullness



of rich feeling, on any one musician.

In demolishing the myth of *gharana* membership, Kumar Gandharva radically redefined our tradition and our times. Not by repetition and duplication, but by experimentation, he brought forth the creative ambiguity of traditional truth. To experiment and find something new, he emphasised, we don't need to go outside of tradition but to grapple with it and delve deep into it. He was not ready to believe that repetition, shunned in other artistic media, was desirable in music, the art of all arts. He was one of the very few musicians who believed, and participated in, a far-reaching community of artists. He took a deep interest in poetry, painting, theatre, architecture. Although, following custom, he had had little schooling, he was a great reader. In his house, 'Bhanukul', he had a collection of about 2,000 books, which he kept in careful order and read constantly. When you met him, he would ask—have you read this prose-piece by Vinda Karandikar, or such-and-such a book by Iravati Karve?

It was no coincidence that he attempted to make music a matter of reflection and dialogue. Raga, composition, beat, tempo, emotional expression—he was a constant, alert, eager questioner of all. This questioning showed itself both within and beyond music. Conservatives shied away from such abundant questioning. They had no answer to the question of why Kumarji, while he had all the musical notes and skills at hand, still produced ragas in such strange and unexpected forms. *Dhrupad* singer Ramakant Gundecha said that after setting forth all the notes of Yaman, Kumarji would go searching for Raga Yaman. It is not that he lacked respect, but that he refused to see thinking and questioning as destroying or opposing that respect.

Just as he put an end to the conservative hostility between tradition and experimentation, he also startlingly reduced the distance between classical and folk. Apart from him, no musician has ever had the temerity to present a two-and-a-half-hour performance consisting only of folk music, as he did in his 'Malwa Folk Melodies' concert. For the first time in the 20th century, and the last, the stability of classical and the dynamism of folk, the dignity of classical and the energy of folk, found a graceful balance. He placed classical consciousness in the stream of folk culture, recognised the aristocratic in a refined version of the ordinary. From the folk to the classical, he brought passion, fragrance, the sense of touch. With regard to everything—whether god, saint, the given world, any structure or pattern of the status quo—he spontaneously raised his finger, questioning. Perhaps no other musician has posed such a continuous challenge to the classical status quo and, in his particular way, left behind the indelible stamp of his thought and perception. In a sense, Kumar Gandharva throughout his life was the 'opposition' in classical music. His music was in many ways a counter-music. At the same time, he was alert to the danger of being turned into an establishment himself. He had no desire to start his own tradition, but insisted on keeping his thought independent.

Kumar Gandharva changed at one go the foundation of prevailing musical aesthetics. In making change central to music, he made it entirely modern. Though he may not have written a conventional essay on classical music, whenever he expressed his ideas, and most of all whenever he assimilated those ideas in his music, he created by

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example a new aesthetic that only needs to be gathered together in order to be understood.

Kumar Gandharva gave words and poetry a new prestige in classical music. It is widely agreed that his singing deepened our understanding of Kabir, Sur, Mira and so on. But it is important to remember that, in doing so, he did not devalue the sovereignty of the voice (*sur*). Words had their place, even their greatness; but the medium of meaning in music is the voice. On this he always insisted, in both thought and action.

Kumarji, with his genius for waging battles, viewed opposition to the status quo as a necessary duty, and he fought on several fronts at once. He composed new *bandishes* under the pseudonym 'Shok' [sorrow]; he created new ragas; he collected in writing lost compositions of Kabir, Gorakhnath and others. He did this without ostentation or theatricality. If he created a new raga, he placed it before music-lovers for their enjoyment and reflection, with humility; he did not call a press

conference and make a proclamation.

In his ordinary conversation, poetic expressions came forth effortlessly. He was at once the Kabir (who burns his own house) of Indian music and the *rasik-grihasth* (connoisseur householder) of its tradition. While he was intellectual and often argumentative, his singing had an irrepressible sensuality. In the growing disconnection of this age, he was at once the poet of affection and the passionate architect of a vast detachment. His first book, *Anūp Rāgvilās* (Bombay: Marg Prakashan, 1965), was published long ago. He had been thinking for several years about publishing a new book called *Sagun Nirgun*. He creatively brought forth the wholeness of that pair, *sagun* and *nirgun*. Through him a new taste developed for classical music—not only among many young people, but also among poets, writers, painters, dancers, architects and so on. He played a decisive role in bringing the classical together with the modern, on his own terms. ■

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This is an excerpt from Singing Emptiness: Kumar Gandharva performs the poetry of Kabir by Linda Hess. No part of this excerpt may be quoted or reproduced without prior written consent from its publisher, Seagull Books.

The year 2023-24 is being observed as the birth centenary year of Kumar Gandharva, celebrations for which began at the NCPA in April 2023 with a two-day festival organised in association with the Kumar Gandharva Pratishthan.

FOOTNOTES:

1. My Berkeley friend, Rilke translator Anita Barrows, kindly provided me with the German lines and reference for this epigraph, so that I would not get lost trying to translate a Hindi version of the German. It is from the third sonnet to Orpheus. The original German: *In Wahrheit singen, ist ein andrer Hauch. Ein Hauch am nichts. Ein Wehn im Gott. Ein Wind.*
2. Vajpeyi refers to the *bhajan* 'Sunta hai guru gyani'.
3. Vajpeyi (1999) writes that Kumarji still sings of 'drum drum lata lata', literally, 'tree-tree, vine-vine', the repetition signalling a profusion of these green and growing things. These are words from one of the *bandishes* that Kumarji sang.

Performing Arts: Music

A monthly column exploring diverse aspects of the performing arts. This month, vocalist **Suman Sridhar** writes about method, inspiration and fulfilment in the process of finding her voice across genres.

In lieu of the clichéd “search for oneself” in the east through a spiritual journey inward, I travelled elsewhere and between the spaces of art forms, wherein migration replaced a place of worship and art became religion. Art in the most archaic sense of the term in which the performing, visual and written forms take equal and effervescent precedence. How did then my transit from Mumbai to New Jersey carry the code of what was to become an embodied multidisciplinary practice?

Growing up with the traditional Indian performing arts—Bharatanatyam, Hindustani, Carnatic and devotional forms of music alongside painting and drawing—infected me with a sweeping love for the arts. As a brown teenager and a fresh immigrant, my appearance did not sit right in the racially tense hallways of late-nineties American high school. And so, I decided to focus my energies away from the stage, taking to painting, drawing and all the myriad mediums of visual art. By the time I reached college, I got tired of the over-emphasis on craft in the arts—was it just enough to make a pretty picture, or was it equally important what the picture said? The latter question drove me towards the humanities, and I gorged on everything from Philosophy to Psychology, History and Women’s & Gender Studies. This background is critical, as I watch, even today, hordes of graduates from music school deft at playing chords but in the dark when it comes to critical thinking. My tryst with cultural studies and post-colonial theory is invaluable as that is what informs my art practice in a growingly globalised and collapsing world.

I began painting again during the pandemic, my first love that few people know of. My paintings featured as part of the 11th Berlin Biennale in a project that integrated film, music, performance and visual art. Speculative historical fiction and feminist theory merged in the work.



The contemporary art world is one where the undeniable meaning of the renaissance (wo)man is supported in an otherwise stifling capitalistic world of specialisation. Having worked as a session musician, analogous to an assembly line, towards the fulfilment of another’s vision, it is indeed empowering and exhilarating to envision one’s own project. Here is where poetry became the glue between the various art forms in my practice—if effect and metaphor were the circulating blood and tissue, the visual and performing arts became the vital organs. The spoken and written word collided with painting and music. After all, to pull strands between art forms feels growingly contrived in a world taken by virtual and immersive experiences.

Having traversed the joys of a multidisciplinary artistic approach, I will land us back to what I made my mark in when I moved back to Mumbai—voice. Voice as an improvisatory and compositional tool. This is something I include in my teaching practice, as the ability of the human voice to communicate an emotion or a narrative is vast. In my studies of Veenapani Chawla’s teaching methodology that fuses the *Natyashastra* with contemporary methods, the actor does not need to experience *rasa* (emotion) in order to communicate *bhava* (state of mind); the audience merely receives the *rasa*. This philosophy is freeing as it explains how performers can hit the stage repeatedly and successively without fatigue as technique enables the

body to communicate the desired narrative without the accompanying emotional weight of it. And so, I can laugh and cry through a scene or a song without experiencing the burden of those emotions. This harks back to my operatic practice wherein the rigour and kindness with which I treat my body gets expressed to my audience—the body as instrument is prime philosophy.

It is not a coincidence that the idiom “finding one’s voice” is simultaneously a metaphorical and literal reference to the creative process and the human voice. My concern with finding my artistic voice has led me to two albums thus far wherein genre-defying songwriting and collaboration with artistes from divergent traditions has come to define my signature approach. *The Black Mamba* explores love, time-space reflections on impermanence, consumerism and gender, traversing disparate genres such as jazz, soul, hip-hop, opera and Indian classical music, to forge a new genre that is worldbeat. I would urge young songwriters to look beyond themes of heartbreak and romantic love to larger themes. If your work is conceptually driven alongside being melodically, harmonically and rhythmically driven, then you have pushed the limits of artistic exploration, and there cannot be greater fulfilment than that. After all, what you have to say is just as important as how you say it. ■

Suman Sridhar is a musician, composer, actor and visual artist from Mumbai / New Jersey. She has sung chart-topping Bollywood film songs and is recognised by Rolling Stone magazine for redefining indie music in India. She has presented her work at DOCUMENTA (13) (Germany), Berlin Biennale (Germany), Southbank Centre (U.K.), Coke Studio MTV India, NH7 Weekender (India), BBC World Service (U.K.). Her latest album The Black Mamba had a world preview at Tate Modern in London.

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A Festive Bulletin

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

By Aishwarya Bodke

The Hippodrome Silent Film Festival

The Hippodrome in Bo'ness is the oldest surviving 'purpose-built' cinema hall in Scotland. For over a century, it has occupied a salient place in the film history of the nation. Now in its 14th edition, the Hippodrome Silent Film Festival is Scotland's only annual festival dedicated to the vast possibilities of silent cinema and will be running from 20th to 24th March. All feature films are accompanied by live music performed onstage by fine musicians. The sparkling debut of Billie Burke, *Peggy* (1916), will kick things off, leading to the opening night featuring *The Rugged Island: A Shetland Lyric* (1933) with the world premiere of a new music commission by composer Inge Thomson with Catriona MacDonald. The exciting line-up includes titles such as *The Racket* (1928), *The Flying Scotsman* (1929), *Our Dancing Daughters* (1928), a Laurel and Hardy double bill and Buster Keaton's 1928 comedy *Steamboat Bill, Jr.* The audiences will have to get their flappers and hats out for Friday Night Gala's 'Roaring 20s' dress code, featuring a screening of Victor Fleming's *Mantrap* (1926). In addition to workshops, panel discussions and livestreams, the festival includes a behind-the-scenes tour and *Pen to Picture Exhibition*, themed on how cinema helped bring literature to the masses. For more information, please visit www.hippodromecinema.co.uk/silent-film-festival/



Dubai Opera's 2023/2024 Season

Beginning last year with the Hungarian National Ballet's stunning *Swan Lake*, the ongoing season of Dubai Opera reaches a crescendo with the return of *The Phantom of the Opera* to the emirate. Andrew Lloyd Webber's masterpiece will be running until 10th March. The

venue invites dedicated audiences every year, creating a thriving centre in the Opera District in Downtown Dubai. A promising line-up of concerts awaits in April, including British band Incognito's melange of jazz, funk and soul, and a highly anticipated celebration of International Jazz Day featuring the renowned saxophonist Ravi Coltrane. May brings thematic concerts such as *Star Wars: A New Hope in Concert*, with the complete score by composer John Williams, performed live to the film. The Armenian Symphony Orchestra will bring Charlie Chaplin's silent classic *The Kid* to life with a live soundtrack. Another highlight features popular instrumentalist Stjepan Hauser of 2Cellos. For more information, please visit www.dubaiopera.com

ALAMY (HIPPODROME, DUBAI OPERA)



Mahindra Excellence in Theatre Awards

One of the most coveted theatre events of the year, the Mahindra Excellence in Theatre Awards (META) and Festival will take place between 14th and 28th March at Kamani Auditorium and Shri Ram Centre in New Delhi. Ten shortlisted plays from a sea of applications will be performed for an eminent jury panel. Instituted by the Mahindra Group, it serves as one of the most definitive theatre award series in India that not only recognises performance but also playwriting, direction, choreography, set, costume, light and sound design. Over two decades, META has provided a platform for theatre from diverse regions and dialects and brave themes. Productions like *Hunkaro*, *Daklakatha Devikavya*, *For the Record* and *Ghoom Nei* have found a fitting stage at META in recent years. The year 2024 marks the 19th edition, inviting over 400 applications. The stage performances will be followed by a red carpet gala and awards ceremony. For more information, please visit metawards.com



Barbican Spring and Summer 2024 Season

The spring and summer season at the Barbican—home to four world-class orchestras and ensembles—welcomes renowned guest soloists, conductors, singers and marks the return of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. A highlight of the 2024 season is an all-American concert in which Conductor Emeritus Simon Rattle will lead the London Symphony Orchestra in the world premiere of *Frenzy* by John Adams this month. As per the norm, focus on new work guides the concerts in April. The U.K. premiere of Wynton Marsalis's Trumpet Concerto awaits. Acclaimed singers Allan Clayton,

Alice Zawadski and Héloïse Werner will be joined by pianist Kit Downes and cellist Colin Alexander in a semi-improvised programme of new works by each of them, heightened with unique stage design. The Barbican's efforts to enhance the Western classical music experience have frequently resulted in compelling and imaginative concerts. In May, the BBC Symphony Orchestra will deliver an odyssey into the works of composers who redefined a nation post-World War II: Maderna, Nono, Berio and Dallapiccola. The concert will be led by Martyn Brabbins, who recently conducted the Symphony Orchestra of India at the NCPA. For more information, please visit www.barbican.org.uk/

JOHN DAVIS (THE BARBICAN)



Melbourne International Comedy Festival

The streets, galleries, theatres and bars of Melbourne are ready for their annual laughter riot. Taking place from 27th March to 21st April, the *Opening Night Comedy Allstars Supershow* will launch the Melbourne International Comedy Festival with a line-up featuring

comedy royalty. Among the headliners are Atsuko Okatsuka, Fern Brady, David O'Doherty and crowd favourites like Dr. Jason Leong, Arj Barker and Lloyd Langford. The festival's most popular events, the *Annual Great Debate* and *Upfront*, are back and promise an evening of powerful comedy by female and non-binary artistes. Indian comics have always found an adoring audience in Melbourne. This year, Kanan Gill will bring the world premiere of his show *What Is this?* to the festival, while Anirban Dasgupta will return, this time for his solo debut. Hot on the heels of

winning Best Newcomer at the Edinburgh Comedy Awards last year, Urooj Ashfaq will perform her show *Oh No!*. Other recurring events include the *Festival Club*, which features a heady mix of stand-up, cabaret, burlesque, lip sync and drag, along with *Class Clowns National Grand Finals*. For more information, please visit www.comedyfestival.com.au/2024

New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival

The birthplace of jazz is decked up for 10 days every year for the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival. In the late 19th century, it was here that the genre emerged among African-American communities. At the festival, jazz is not just music but cultural heritage. A wide array of traditional big bands and contemporary pop acts adorn the star-studded line-up of the festival, which is scheduled to take place between 25th April and 5th May. English rock band The Rolling Stones will headline the upcoming edition as part of their North American tour. Other big acts include Hozier, Bonnie Raitt, Fantasia Barrino, Béla Fleck and Jon Batiste as well as the beloved bands Foo Fighters, Earth, Wind & Fire, Widespread Panic and The Beach Boys, among many others. This year's Cultural Exchange Pavilion will highlight the music and culture of Colombia, with 17 bands performing regional genres, including Colombian



salsa, *cumbia* and *champeta*. The festival brings in parades, traditional regional cuisine, local artists constructing Mardi Gras sculptures at the Louisiana Folklife Village and much more. For more information, please visit www.nojazzfest.com

ALAMY (MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL COMEDY FESTIVAL)



Pinta PARC

In its 11th year, Pinta PARC Perú Arte Contemporáneo has carved its identity as a relevant platform for contemporary Latin American art. Running between 24th and 28th April in Lima, it is curated by leading figures from the visual arts. The main section in the 2024 edition comprises 40 galleries presenting more than 200 artists. These include the Museum of Art of Lima, Mas Arte (Ecuador), Now Gallery (Peru), Ponce+Robles (Spain), Revólver (Peru/Argentina), Sammer Gallery (USA), Subsuelo (Argentina), Klaus Steinmetz (Costa Rica), among others. The 'Radar' section allows visitors

to engage with the works of a selected artist by a gallery, while the 'Next' section—curated by Florencia Portocarrero—allows them to discover the most recent experimental art from the region. An immersive 'Video Project' section, a sculpture garden and a section with the Amano Textile Museum, dedicated to pre-Columbian textile art, add diverse value to the fair. In addition, 'Forum', curated by Miguel A. López, will act as a platform for meeting and debate on the changing dynamics of production, art history, research and collecting in Latin America in recent decades. For more information, please visit en.parc.pinta.art

New National Theatre, Tokyo, Ballet Season

Since the inauguration of the New National Theatre in Tokyo in 1997, the National Ballet of Japan has been an integral part of the establishment, presenting impressive productions, including renditions of timeless classics as well as contemporary works. Upcoming performances of the 2024 ballet season feature *La Bayadère*, with choreography by Marius Petipa and the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra playing the score. Scheduled for April and May, it tells an ill-fated tale of the love and retribution of a temple dancer in 19th-century India. Also on the programme is a full-length ballet production of *Aladdin*, choreographed by the former Artistic Director David Bintley of the National Ballet of Japan.



SHIKAMA TAKASHI (NEW NATIONAL THEATRE, TOKYO)

Revival of the dreamy tunes of 'A Whole New World' on the flying carpet and the appearance of the genie promise to be a feast for the senses. The opera *Tristan und Isolde* will also return for the season. For more information, please visit www.nntt.jac.go.jp/english

For the Record

Every month, **Jimmy Bilimoria** delves into the musical treasures of the NCPA's Stuart-Liff Collection. Here, he writes about one of the great sopranos of the 20th century, Frances Alda.

Frances Alda was born as Fanny Jane Davis on 31st May 1879 in Christchurch, New Zealand. It was her famous teacher Mathilde Marchesi who evolved "Alda" as the soprano's last name. Her mother, Leonora Simonsen, was a professional singer.

As a child, Alda was taken to Australia to live with her maternal grandparents in a suburb of Melbourne. "I cannot remember a time when I couldn't beat my boy-playmates at tennis, or swim as fast and as far as they could. All through the long Australian summers we ran on the beach," recalls the prima donna in her memoir *Men, Women and Tenors*.

In 1901, a young Alda went to London where she was turned down when she applied for work at the Gaiety Theatre. She then decided to go to Paris, where she met the great teacher Marchesi and studied with her for almost a year. Marchesi arranged for Alda to debut in Jules Massenet's *Manon* at the Opéra-Comique in 1904, which was highly successful. That very night Marchesi had one of her very successful pupils, Nellie Melba, sharing her box.

Over the next two seasons, Alda gained experience as a leading soprano at the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels. Her career took off with operatic debuts at London's Covent Garden in 1906; Parma in 1907; La Scala, Milan and Warsaw in 1908. Alda's London debut was as an unexpected replacement for Melba in *Faust*; next was *Rigoletto* with Enrico Caruso. The remaining performances were then suddenly cancelled. Perhaps Alda's presence in London was too much for Melba, who reigned supreme at Covent Garden.

Later that year, Alda went to Parma for the Verdi Festival singing in *Rigoletto* with Alessandro Bonci and Mattia Battistini. Giulio Gatti-Casazza, General Manager of La Scala, was present, and the historic opera house became the next venue in her rising career. It was at La Scala that Alda met Arturo Toscanini who became a staunch friend for the rest of her life. At La Scala, she created the heroine of Gustave Charpentier's *Louise* and essayed the role of Margherita with Feodor Chaliapin in Arrigo Boito's *Mefistofele*.

The following autumn, Alda began her long career at the Metropolitan Opera in New York. Her debut, on 7th December 1908, was as Gilda in *Rigoletto*, with Caruso, Amato and Homer. She sang the roles of Mimi, Manon, Desdemona, Nanetta, Martha, Margherita, Violetta, Juliette and the Queen in *Les Huguenots*. Later she sang the purely lyric roles for 21 more seasons at the Met.

At the Met, she sang more than 20 roles in over 250 performances. Mimi in *La bohème* was her favourite role, and she sang it on 57 occasions—some featuring Caruso, Bonci, Giovanni



Martinelli and Beniamino Gigli. Her closest competitor at the time was soprano Lucrezia Bori.

Alda created quite a few roles at the Met, including Francesca in Riccardo Zandonai's *Francesca da Rimini*, Édouard Lalo's *Le Roi d'Ys*, Ginevra in Umberto Giordano's *La Cena delle Beffe*, Anna in Giacomo Puccini's *Le Villi* and Yaroslavna in Alexander Borodin's *Prince Igor*.

In 1910, she married Gatti-Casazza, the then manager of the Met. By 1929, she retired from the operatic stage and, on the personal front, ended her marriage. When she announced her retirement, those who originally accorded Alda a lukewarm reception, were now reluctant to bid farewell, especially after a performance of *Manon Lescaut* in December 1929.

Gigli and Giuseppe De Luca were her partners for her farewell. Fifteen curtain calls, lots of flowers and an illuminated scroll presented by Antonio Scotti. It was rather an evening of regret that she had made the decision to retire at the age of 45. Several broadcasts from The Waldorf-Astoria hotel, a concert tour of the United States and a visit to New Zealand and Australia brought her career to a close.

On 14th April 1941, she married a New York advertising executive, Ray Vir Den, at Charleston, South Carolina. She spent an affluent retirement, entertaining lavishly at her Long Island home and she showed a lot of passion for travel. Frances Alda died while on vacation in Venice on 18th September 1952. She was 73 years old.

Alda's voice is beautiful, pure and clear. She had complete technical command over her vocal resources. Of the great women singers at the Met in 1926, the eminent critic W. J. Henderson wrote: "Frances Alda has a lyric soprano of excellent quality with especially pleasing head tones. She has a fairly even scale and a placement generally admirable. Her singing is often delightful in tone and is marked by great self-possession."

Alda's operatic arias from *Manon Lescaut*, *Loreley*, *Gianni Schicchi* among others, under the labels Court Opera and Club 99, are part of the Stuart-Liff Collection. ■

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

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Artistes Assemble

A new musical theatre writing residency in Scotland partners with the NCPA and art centres in the U.K. and U.S.A. to enable artistes to collaborate to produce new work.

By Aishwarya Bodke

This March, Scotland's picturesque West Coast will transform into an artistes' playground. Dundee Rep Theatre and Cove Park's Musical Theatre Writing Residency is a pioneering new international exchange programme for emerging as well as established writers,

composers and lyricists from the U.K., India and the United States. An immersive programme, it enables creators in musical theatre to collaborate to produce new work, free from the limitations of commissions or deadlines. It will take place between 4th and 17th March on the sprawling campus of Cove Park overlooking Loch Long.

The residency has been developed in partnership with the National Centre for the Performing Arts, Mumbai, Capital Theatres, Citizens Theatre, Macrobert Arts Centre, Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh and National Theatre of Scotland in the UK, and Octopus Theatricals from New York. Associate partners include A Play, A Pie and a Pint, Pitlochry Festival Theatre, Playwrights' Studio Scotland and Tron Theatre.

The programme recently unveiled an impressive list of resident artistes selected from scores of applications. These include Debbie Hannan and Andy McGregor; Linda McLean and David Paul Jones; Samir Bhamra, Devesh Sodha and Robby Khela; Jonathan O'Neill and Issac Savage; Nikki Lynette and Lili-Anne Brown; and Sushma Soma and Neel Chaudhuri. Working in teams, they will be developing their ideas with projects and themes, including a punk rock musical based on Scotland's militant suffragettes, a sci-fi romp set around Bonnybridge, interestingly known as the Scottish UFO hotspot, and a horror musical that blends dark rock, urban grime, pop and cinematic scores with Hindu mythology.

Soma and Chaudhuri will be teaming up to infuse Indian sensibilities into the musical theatre arena. Soma is an award-winning Carnatic vocalist and has performed at some of the most reputed international stages and festivals. Her recent work focuses on ecological crisis and sustainability and expresses these



stories through Carnatic music. Chaudhuri, too, fosters a keen interest in sound art and spoken word. He is a playwright and theatre director based in New Delhi and a founder-member of the Tadpole Repertory, where he was formerly the Artistic Director. Bruce Guthrie, Head of Theatre & Film at the NCPA, was instrumental in getting the two artistes on board.

Designed by Andrew Panton, Artistic Director of Dundee Rep Theatre, the programme is markedly built on the principle of collaboration within the creative industry and includes facilitated sessions with dramaturg Jeanie O'Hare, music supervisor James McKeon, Artistic Director of Goodspeed Musicals Donna Lynn Hilton and David Greig, Artistic Director of Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh.

"We will be creating a safe space for the artistes to experiment with their work and the form. We know that there is a huge audience for musical theatre and this is an opportunity for our participants to learn from industry-leading experts and each other. I believe that this is a huge investment in the talent that we need to create the next decade of great musicals," Panton said in a statement.

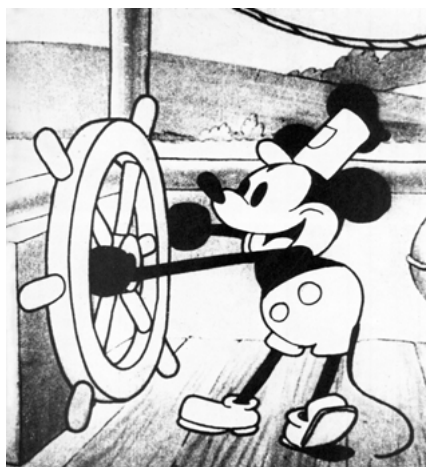
In-person and digital workshops with noted theatre professionals of the calibre of award-winning director John Doyle and Broadway producers Mara Isaacs and Rashad V. Chambers will also benefit the residents.

Liberating residencies for writers are a valuable asset in enhancing the quality of theatre produced, especially when it comes to the musical theatre landscape where several forms collide. It equips the field for the future.

The pilot residency is majority-funded as part of the British Council and Creative Scotland Partnership: Connect & Collaborate. ■

Kaleidoscope

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



Treasure trove

On the first day of each year, thousands of works of art emerge out of copyright protection to officially enter the public domain. Public Domain Day marks an annual celebration of creative access to reproduce and reinterpret cultural work. This year, Walt Disney's Mickey Mouse and Minnie Mouse entered the public domain after the expiration of the 95-year-old copyright period since the release of the 1928 short film *Steamboat Willie*, the earliest rendition of the iconic characters. The newer versions, however, remain under the mice's noted overlords. Buster Keaton's *The Cameraman* and Laurel and Hardy's *Should Married Men Go Home?* also join the list. Literary gold, including *Lady Chatterley's Lover* by D.H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* and J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* are copyright-free too. These works, though, were already in the public domain in India due to our copyright policy, which frees an author's work 60 years after their passing. For New Zealand and most of Africa, it is 50 years, while the U.K., Russia and most of South America have a copyright term of 70 years after the creator's demise. Several classic films have entered the public domain in India, including *Mere Mehboob*, *Taj Mahal* and *Bandini*, and Tamil cinema titles such as *Annai Illam* and *Anandha Jodhi*. For more information, please visit web.law.duke.edu/cspd

Theatre for Peace

The Indian People's Theatre Association, Progressive Writers' Association, All India Trade Union Congress, Jana Natya



Manch and many others came together to organise Dhai Akhar Prem: National Cultural Jatha—an annual walk for peace and harmony across 22 states—beginning from Rajasthan in September last year and ending in Delhi on Martyr's Day, remembering Mahatma Gandhi. Its penultimate leg in Mumbai started at the August Kranti Maidan and as songs of Sahir Ludhianvi and Kaifi Azmi stirred the spirit, it concluded at Dr B.R. Ambedkar's residence in Parel. The mural of Mirza Ghalib at the Nagpada junction and the Awami Idara Library, where Azmi was a regular, were other stops along the way. The march aimed to touch different nooks and corners of the country with music, poetry, dance and theatre, appealing to the ethos of fraternity and rejecting hate and intolerance. For more information, please visit dhaiakharprem.in



In high spirits

Studio Ghibli's Oscar-winning anime *Spirited Away* is making its way to the West End's London Coliseum this April, following a premiere in Tokyo in 2022. Reimagined for the stage by Olivier and Tony award-winning director John Caird, the fantastical world of Hayao Miyazaki is brought to life with imaginative sets, costumes, puppetry and a live orchestra playing Joe Hisaishi's original film score. The 2001 film won in the Best Animated

Feature category at the 75th Academy Awards and remains the only hand-drawn feature to do so. It follows the story of Chihiro, a ten-year-old girl who inadvertently wanders off to a mysterious spirit world. The stage adaptation will be presented in Japanese with English surtitles and will have the Japanese cast reprising their roles. For more information, please visit www.spiritedawayuk.com

Crowning glory

Jyotsna Srikanth recently became the first Carnatic musician to receive the title of Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE), conferred by the King



of the United Kingdom Charles III. The third-highest civilian award in the U.K., it acknowledges her excellence in and contribution to music globally. An acclaimed Carnatic violinist, Srikanth is also trained in Western classical music and seamlessly blends genres like jazz and pop. Her diverse body of work includes composing for and performing with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and many prominent string quartets and ensembles, playing for the background scores in several South Indian, Italian, French and English films. After moving to London, she founded Dhruv Arts to promote Carnatic music in the U.K., and later the London International Arts Festival in 2012 to bring mainstream exposure to the genre. For more information, please visit www.dhruvarts.org

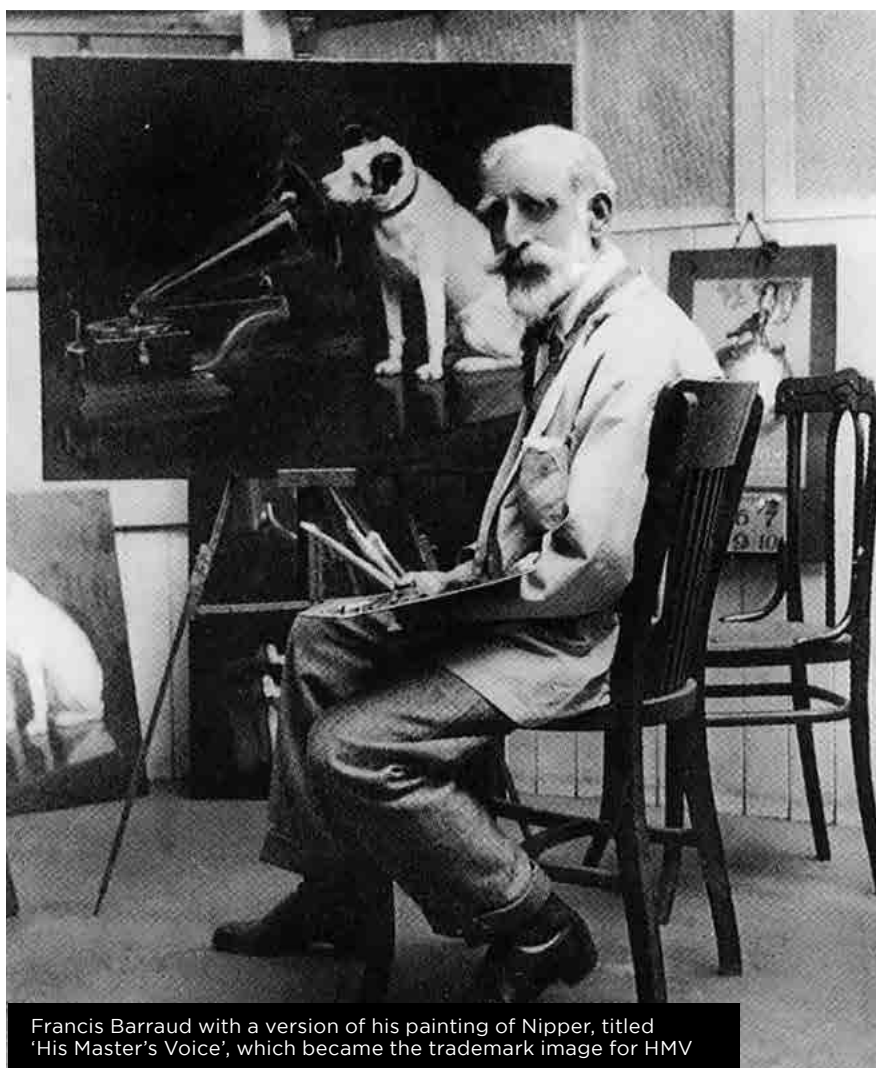
- Aishwarya Bodke

Company Matters

ON Stage brings you edited excerpts from the *NCPA Quarterly Journal*, an unsurpassed literary archive that ran from 1972 to 1988 and featured authoritative and wide-ranging articles. In the second of a three-part series that traces the history of the phonograph in India, singer and composer **G.N. Joshi** discusses the record companies that were part of the sound recording revolution.

During the early years, HMV marketed imported records under different labels—such as Pathé, RCC, Decca, Pye—but soon afterwards it obtained exclusive rights to use in India the trademark ‘His Master’s Voice’. Undoubtedly, the image of the dog and the phonograph is now among the most famous trademarks in the world and although millions of listeners are fascinated by the picture of Nipper, the dog, and the machine, very few people know the real story behind the picture.

An artist named Francis Barraud observed that a dog belonging to his deceased brother Mark Barraud would cock one ear to the sound emitted by an old Edison phonograph. It used to listen with rapt attention and the expression on its face suggested that it seemed to be waiting to hear its late master’s voice. Barraud was quick to grasp the value of the scene and he painted it as he saw it. He took the picture to the Edison company, but they did not evince any interest in it. A friend suggested to him that he change the ugly black machine and substitute it with a more modern horn. In 1899, while he was tramping the streets of London in the hope of finding such a horn from one of the various companies engaged in the rapidly growing record business, he happened to call at the small office of the Gramophone Company. He showed his oil painting to the manager, B. Owen, who immediately grasped the potential it held as a trademark for his company. He gave a hundred pounds to the artist and obtained it for the company. The company had, till then, another trademark depicting an angel writing while sitting on a disc. But when records with the dog and the sound horn appeared with the caption ‘His Master’s Voice’, the trademark won fame and popularity of a kind unparalleled in the history of the industry. It was found printed on millions of records and machines in several countries of the world. In India, it first appeared on a portable



Francis Barraud with a version of his painting of Nipper, titled ‘His Master’s Voice’, which became the trademark image for HMV

machine in 1920. Later, it was printed on the first electric records produced by the company. The abbreviated letters HMV for His Master’s Voice became synonymous with the Gramophone Company.

The records with this new trademark were meeting with increasing popularity and market support. The period from the early 1920s coincided with the political awakening in the country and the nation-wide movement of Swadeshi. As a result, businessmen inspired by patriotic sentiments decided to market records of songs supporting the Swadeshi movement. These songs invoked listeners to boycott foreign goods and purchase

things made exclusively in the country. T. S. Ramchunder & Bros., a firm in Bombay, recorded a number of such songs by local artistes and had them processed in Germany. These were issued under the Ramagraph label.

About the same time (1920-25), musical dramas began to stage a comeback on the Marathi stage. Actor-singers like Bal Gandharva, Keshavrao Bhosle, Krishnarao Phulambrikar, Dinanath Mangeshkar, Bapurao Pendharkar, Vinayakrao Patwardhan, Sawai Gandharva, Chhota Gandharva, Hirabai Barodekar, performed practically every evening on stages in larger cities. The actor-singers were gifted with

enchancing voices; they had also trained under exacting masters in classical music. Each one of these actor-singers succeeded in developing a distinctive individual style of presentation. Vocalists like Bhaskarbuwa Bakhale, Ramkrishnabuwa Vaze, Abdul Karim Khan had been groomed by great ustads and they, in turn, passed on the great tradition to these young and gifted actor-singers. These dramas drew packed houses since the audiences were charmed by the music they presented. The Gramophone Company seized the opportunity to record the more popular songs and thus began an era of stage-music on gramophone discs.

Scores of songs recorded by these actor-singers were the rage of the day and even today, after nearly three decades, listeners are overwhelmed by nostalgia when they listen to these songs of yesteryear. The Bengali and Gujarati stage also boasted rich musical talent and songs from plays thus gave a strong impetus to the record business. The phonograph gained rapidly in popularity. The Gramophone Company was faced with the challenge of satisfying musical needs of diverse people who spoke different languages and were spread over a vast subcontinent. But to record the musical lore that was part of their tradition was well-nigh impossible. The recording capacity of the factory at Dum Dum in Calcutta and facilities for absorbing the discs in the market were limited. The Gramophone Company could not by itself accept all the talent and material available.

Two companies, Columbia and Odeon, with established labels in the world market, were trying to gain access to the Indian market. Columbia started its operations in India in 1930 through S. Rose & Company in Bombay and P. Orr & Sons in Madras, while Odeon was introduced by Carl Lindström, a German. These companies started recording in their own studios and had the discs processed and pressed in the U.K. and Germany respectively. Popular artistes like Goharbai Karnataki, Amirbai Karnataki, Omkarnath Thakur and Saraswati Phatarphekar appeared on the Columbia label while Odeon presented such names as Bai Sundarabai, Hirabai Barodekar, Abdul Karim Khan, Sureshbabu Mane, Azambai and Arun Shankarrao Sarnaik. Omkarnath Thakur, Abdul Karim Khan and Hirabai Barodekar were exponents of classical music. Sundarabai and Azambai presented *lavani*—a regional form of music with strong romantic content. Columbia later took over Odeon but by 1939, it amalgamated with the Ruby Record

Company. Started in Bombay in 1933, the Ruby Record Company introduced listeners to the music of Bal Gandharva, Master Krishnarao, Ramkrishnabuwa Vaze and other vocalists. The Gramophone Company, however, took over Ruby Record Company in 1943 and thus also obtained the repertoires of Columbia and Odeon. The vast repertoire of the three companies was subsequently divided between HMV and Columbia, when the latter was revived again as a separate entity in 1945. It had a separate office alongside HMV, but the recordings done in the HMV studios were common and intended to feed both the companies.

An artist named Francis Barraud observed that a dog belonging to his deceased brother Mark Barraud would cock one ear to the sound emitted by an old Edison phonograph and listen with rapt attention as if waiting to hear its late master’s voice; Barraud was quick to grasp the value of the scene and he painted it as he saw it

Yet another attempt at forming an independent recording company was made as early as 1934 under the name Broadcast Record Company. Backed and financed by a city firm of jewellers, it won over for its label top-ranking artistes like Kesarbai Kerkar, Master Krishnarao, Siddheshwari Devi, Mallikarjun Mansur, Rasoolan Bai, Jaddanbai (mother of Nargis Dutt) by paying them fabulous fees. But the company soon foundered on the rocks of economic losses.

The Gramophone Company thus succeeded in allowing a few small companies to function under its own wing. In Calcutta alone there appeared three such units. Hindusthan Record (1932), the Megaphone Company (1932) and Senola Musical Products Company (1935). Senola concentrated on talent in the Bengali language. Hindusthan Record became immensely popular with the records of songs by K. L. Saigal. Megaphone was associated with the

bewitching voice of Akhtari Bai Faizabadi (Begum Akhtar). These companies did their recording and pressing with HMV but distributed the records through their own channels. Their success led to the creation of other units, and soon, other labels like Bharat, Pioneer, Victoria Phone, Manmohan, Shahenshahi, Filmophone flooded the market.

The Gramophone Company had its head office and factory at Dum Dum. But it had by now opened branch offices and depots in Bombay, Delhi, Madras, Kanpur and Guwahati. Many smaller companies were soon ushered in by these branches, all of which were reared and fostered by the Gramophone Company.

In the span of over 70 years of its existence, there have been hardly five or six serious attempts at breaking the monopoly enjoyed by the Gramophone Company. As early as 1920, a Gujarati businessman named Vallabhdas floated, with German collaboration, a company called Vialophone. This Bombay-based venture proved to be very short-lived. Later, taking advantage of the nationalist movement, another businessman promoted a company called The National Gramophone Record Manufacturing Company. ‘Young India’ and the emblem of the national flag, accepted by the Indian National Congress, was its trademark. The entire manufacturing plant, machinery and the technical personnel were imported from Japan. This was about the year 1938, when film music had just begun to exercise influence on the record trade. The earliest records of film music were brought here in 1934 from Germany by V. Shantaram along with the coloured copy of his film *Sairandhri*. The release in the market of records of this film unleashed a wave of mass popularity for film music. From 1933 to 1938 the Prabhat Film Company in Poona and the New Theatres Limited in Calcutta produced a galaxy of films with music that had a strong popular appeal. The melodies were mainly based on classical modes but were presented to audiences through the visual medium in an attractive setting. *Amrit Manthan*, *Aadmi*, *Padosi*, *Sant Tukaram*, *Gopal-Krishna*, *Maya Machhindra*, *Dharmatma*, *Duniya Na Mane*, etc. were released under the Prabhat banner while New Theatres Limited earned fame with *Devdas*, *President*, *Chandidas*, *Vidyapati*, *Dhoop Chhaon*, *Jawab*, *Zindagi*, *Dushman* and *Street Singer*. Singers like Shanta Apte, Govindrao Tembe, Shanta Hublikar,

Ratnaprabha, Vasanti and Shahu Modak were projected through the Prabhat Productions. New Theatres Limited regaled viewers with songs rendered by K. L. Saigal, Pankaj Mullick, Kananbala, Pahan Sanyal, K. C. Dey and others.

The newly formed National Gramophone Record Manufacturing Company did give a jolt to the Gramophone Company by causing the defection of V. Shantaram from the HMV family. He was one of the directors of the new company and 'Young India' could thus count on the record business of the Prabhat Film Company in that climate of patriotic resurgence and the call to boycott the British company. Its records received a ready response. The company thus made an excellent start and in the political conditions which were then prevalent in the country, it stood a very good chance

of capturing the record business. But the Gramophone Company had as its main assets the quality of the recording and of the processed record. The finished product of the 'Young India' label could hardly compete with the sophisticated quality of the records with the HMV label. A disillusioned V. Shantaram returned to the fold of the Gramophone Company. With their mainstay gone, the National Gramophone Record Manufacturing Company could not survive for long and had to close down.

The appearance of records under the Polydor label is a recent occurrence. Polydor enjoys a big reputation in Europe for high-quality production and in the last 10 years it has also made a headway here. The Gramophone Company is now known as The Gramophone Company of India Limited. This is because, in accordance

with government policy, equity shareholding by Indian investors has been affected. Yet another company under the trade name Indian Record Company has, it is learnt, recently made a debut in the gramophone world in Calcutta.

Till about 1920, all phonograph machines used to be imported and a phonograph in the drawing room was, in those days, a status symbol very much like the telephone, refrigerator, motor car or television set of today. Around 1928-29, cheap machines manufactured in Japan invaded the market. They were so low-priced (each costing about ₹10 to 15) that even a person of average means could afford to purchase a machine. ■

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

Festive Notes in Delhi



True to its role as India's national centre for diverse art forms, and its mission to preserve, promote and propagate the cultural heritage of the country, the NCPA has always looked beyond curating events for its theatres at Nariman Point in Mumbai. Since inception, the Citi-NCPA Aadi Anant Festival of Indian music, which celebrates the *guru-shishya* tradition, has travelled to Chennai, Bengaluru, Delhi, Ahmedabad and Pune. After three stellar concerts in Mumbai in December 2023 and January



2024, the 13th edition of the festival, which has become a highlight of the country's cultural calendar over the years, travelled to Delhi for two performances in late January.

On day one, the Zorawar Auditorium in the beautiful setting of the Manekshaw Centre in the capital came alive with the music of award-winning folk singer from the Manganiyar community, Mame Khan, and his Folk Orchestra of Rajasthan featuring 47 musicians from the vibrant state. The concert brought together a variety of instruments like the sarangi, khartal and morchang played by musicians from the Manganiyar community alongside the tunes of the Thar desert, as handed down through the oral tradition of the region over hundreds of years. Khan was joined by singer Razia Sultan who rendered folk tunes from Punjab, adding a unique flavour to the evening that left the audience mesmerised.

Rightly regarded as one of the architects of the contemporary world music movement, Zakir Hussain's trend-setting work with artistes from diverse traditions has resulted in many historic collaborations including brilliant musical dialogues between Hindustani (North Indian) and Carnatic (South Indian) music. The inimitable master collaborated with Kala Ramnath and Jayanthi Kumaresh, two world-renowned instrumentalists known for their prowess in playing the violin and Saraswati veena respectively. The second concert of the festival, aptly called Triveni, was a rare treat for the audience that witnessed a *jugalbanti* among the trio which went beyond the conventional and highlighted the unity underlying the diversity of musical traditions.

With support from Citi, the festival could be offered to music lovers at accessible pricing, thus furthering the NCPA's vision of inclusivity in the arts. ■



Programme Guide

March 2024

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

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

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC



Paolo Fresu, 2nd, Tata Theatre



Rita Marcotulli, 2nd, Tata Theatre



Trilok Gurtu, 2nd, Tata Theatre

Paolo Fresu & Rita Marcotulli

Live in Concert

Featuring special guest Trilok Gurtu

Tata Theatre

Saturday, 2nd – 7.00 pm

An NCPA and Istituto Italiano di Cultura di Mumbai Presentation

Three distinct musical personalities unite for a special project, blending formal elegance with elements from both traditional and modern music rooted in Mediterranean and Indian traditions. They intricately weave the

rich jazz tradition with the allure of world music. These three maestros boast decorated careers as undisputed virtuosos, dedicated to pushing musical boundaries and delving into diverse cultures. As extraordinary performers, they draw inspiration from challenging one another to convey and share this unparalleled experience with the audience.

Tickets:

₹1,350, 1,080, 720 & 450/- (Members)

₹1,500, 1,200, 800 & 500/- (Public)

(Plus GST)

Box Office now open

THEATRE

Hai Mera Dil

Hindi Play (120 mins)

Godrej Dance Theatre

Saturday, 2nd – 7.00 pm

Ranbir Singh's *Hai Mera Dil* is among the longest-running plays in the history of Hindi theatre, having completed 1,171 shows. It provides a hilarious look into the life of a well-meaning hypochondriac who turns his life upside down because of his irrational fears. Believing that he is about to die, he starts to put his affairs in order and the first thing to be done is to plan his beloved wife's marriage but his noble thought boomerangs and now the husband is running for his wife and life.

Written by **Ranbir Singh**

Directed by **Dinesh Thakur**

Cast: **Priita Mathur Thakur, Aman Gupta, Atul Mathur, Shankar Iyer, Sangam Rai, Jawed Rehman** & others

Produced by **Ank Theatre Group**

Tickets:

₹540/- (Members)

₹600/- (Public)

(Inclusive of GST)

Box Office now open

DANCE



NCPA Nrityaparichay 2024, 5th to 14th

NCPA Nrityaparichay 2024

Classical Dance Training for Schoolchildren

Annual Performances by Students
Experimental Theatre

Tuesday, 5th & Thursday, 7th –

2.00 pm

Tata Theatre

Wednesday, 13th & Thursday, 14th
– 2.00 pm

NCPA *Nrityaparichay* is a CSR initiative, supported by corporate organisations, which seeks to impart classical dance training to children from underprivileged backgrounds. Apart from dance training, students are also provided with a rich understanding of the traditions and customs of the place of origin of each dance form. The programme encompasses visits to the NCPA to watch dance performances by renowned artistes and provides necessary exposure in terms of technicality in relation to dance. Students learn a particular classical form which culminates in a stage performance by them at the NCPA. Having conducted successful programmes for the last seven years, the NCPA currently has projects running across 14 schools in Mumbai. Students of *Nrityaparichay* perform on a regular basis with their teachers in recognised dance competitions and festivals.

Schools supported by L&T present Manipuri & Bharatanatyam.

Schools supported by Godrej Agrovet present Odissi & Kathak.

Schools supported by Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd. present Kathak, Manipuri, Odissi & Bharatanatyam.

Admission on a first-come-first-served basis. NCPA Members will get preferential seating till 1.50 pm.

WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC

Talks on Western Classical Music

Little Theatre

Tuesday, 5th – 6.00 pm

and

Stuart-Liff Collection Library

Wednesday, 6th – 4.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation

Mahler: Symphony No. 5

In this series of talks on Western classical music, **Dr. Cavas Bilimoria** takes listeners through musical concepts, the lives of composers and their famous works, sprinkled with examples of recorded music. The first talk of the month is about Mahler, the extraordinary composer who infused his symphonies with the drama and musical variety of an opera. He used the medium of the symphony to explore ideas written in prose. Composed at a pivotal time in Mahler's life when death seemed near, Symphony No. 5 explores many manifestations of vast emotional scope.

Entry free

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

FILM

Short Film Corner

Short Film Screenings

Little Theatre

Wednesday, 6th – 6.30 pm

An NCPA Presentation in collaboration with White Wall Screenings

There are so many wonderful short films being made in India, with auteurs

at work in their own regions, and bold, new voices 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.

Marigold

Hindi Film (12 mins)



Marigold, 6th, Little Theatre

As the summer holidays approach, Geeta decides to lie about her last day at work to meet Shashi. A conversation between the two women unfolds their sexuality and desires which they long to share, till the last boat arrives.

Directed by **Abhinav Dubey**

Director of Photography:

Mangeshi Dronkar

Written by **Abhinav Dubey & Mangeshi Dronkar**

Kameez

Hindi Film (19 mins)



Kameez, 6th, Little Theatre

This story revolves around a 60-year-old father who is a tailor by profession. His son, who left home seven years ago, has not yet returned. Before his son left, the father had sewn a shirt for him which he had left behind. The old tailor, having lost hope of his son's return, keeps talking to this shirt. This story is not about a father-son relationship, but about the difference in ideologies between generations.

Directed by **Dhrubajit Baishya**

Haklu

Hindi, English Film with Subtitles in English (19 mins)



Haklu, 6th, Little Theatre

Haklu, a South Asian domestic worker, travels to the U.K. on an Overseas Domestic Worker visa with his employer and lives in slave-like conditions that are commonly accepted in the global south. Haklu's interactions with a British South Asian girl (who is unaware of his class and caste context) leave him grappling with the ideas of equality and kindness but also give him the courage to dream of his escape.

Directed by **Aanchal Kapoor**

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

INDIAN MUSIC

Living Traditions: Festival of Jharkhand

Experimental Theatre

Friday, 8th & Saturday, 9th – 6.30 pm

An NCPA Presentation

India is perhaps the most musical and musically diverse region in the world. This diversity is evident in the folk traditions associated with different regions. Through this festival, we try to showcase these folk traditions.

In the 13th edition, the focus will be on **Jharkhand**.

Formed in 2000, Jharkhand is one of the newest states located in the north-eastern part of India. Literally meaning 'the land of forests and bushes', the region has a great diversity of flora and fauna, beautiful natural resources including hills and waterfalls, and is rich in a variety of minerals. The state

is equally rich in its cultural heritage. Be it *chhau*, *mundari*, *kathi mage*, *dasai* or *nagpuri* and *jhoomar*, these performing art forms are not only means of entertainment for the different tribes indigenous to the region, but they also have a place in rituals of worship.

During the two days of this year's edition of Living Traditions, over 100 artistes comprising six well-known troupes from various parts of Jharkhand will present varied forms of music, dance and folk theatre. Each presentation will be introduced in an appropriate sociocultural and aesthetic context. Additionally, on both days, artisans will demonstrate mask-making and bamboo artwork in the Experimental Theatre foyer.

Friday, 8th March - 6.30 pm

**Nagpuri songs
by Prithviraj Sinhdeo & group**

Regarded as a derivative of Bhojpuri, Nagpuri is the main language of Sadan, an ethno-linguistic group of the Chhota Nagpur region, which covers some areas of Jharkhand and neighbouring states of Bihar, Chhattisgarh and Odisha. It is also the main language of several tribal groups such as Kharia, Munda, Bhumij, Kurukh and others. Couched in Nagpuri language, the musical renditions are based on diverse melodies, reflecting the typical folk flavour of the region. Until recently, only locally made instruments were used for accompaniment.

Ho dance by Uma Kumari & group

Ho Munda are the scheduled tribe of the Singbhum district of Jharkhand. Performed together by men and women, the Ho dance is essentially regarded as a courtship dance. But often, it is also performed during the harvest season and wedding celebrations. White, red and yellow colours dominate attires of both men and women. Holding each other, they



**Ho dance by Uma Kumari & group,
8th, Experimental Theatre**

move with the melody of the bansuri (bamboo flute) in a semi-circular fashion with graceful footsteps and waist movements, matching with the beat of drums and percussion instruments such as dama, dumeng and rutu, to name a few. The songs vary with the change of season and occasion; as a result, there are several variations of this dance form. Mage Porob, organised in the month of Magh, is a well-known dance festival of the Ho Munda community.

**Gohaer Jatra: folk play written and
directed by Deepak Lohar
A Presentation by Birsa Kala Kendra**



Gohaer Jatra, 8th, Experimental Theatre

The title of the play depicts loud communication amidst the pandemonium of the countryside fair. This is a story of a village girl Roopa, caught in human trafficking. The play unfolds the heartrending plight of the victim along with that of her brother, Kanhu, who also has his own share of life struggles. The play has a tragic end, highlighting the menacing effects of rural poverty that is rampant in most Indian villages.

Saturday, 9th March - 6.30 pm

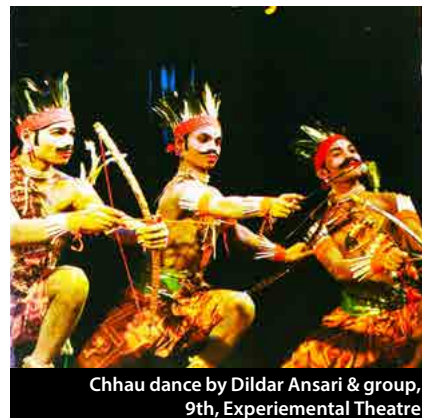
**Kudmali Jhumar songs
by Kamal Mahato & group**

Regarded as an Indo-Aryan language, Kudmali is one of the several languages spoken in Bihar. While mainly prevalent in the Chhota Nagpur region of Jharkhand, it is also widespread in the border regions of Odisha and West Bengal. Though mainly written in the Bangla script, Kudmali literature is also available in other scripts such as Devnagri and Odia.

Closely linked with the lives of common people, Kudmali folk songs are simple, yet appealing. There is no

aspect of life in this region that can be considered complete without the inclusion of these extremely popular songs, known as *Kudmali jhumar geet*.

**Chhau dance
by Dildar Ansari & group**



**Chhau dance by Dildar Ansari & group,
9th, Experimental Theatre**

Recognised by the UNESCO as intangible cultural heritage of humanity, *chhau* is a popular dance form prevalent in the three states of eastern India: Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal. Although there are regional variations, topics generally range from the great epics and mythology to nature and folklore, which are presented using combinations of hand, neck and eye movements. Some varieties also deploy martial art techniques. The instruments used are bamboo flute, cymbals and varieties of native drums. Within the state of Jharkhand, there are three prevalent styles of *chhau*: Saraikela, Kharsawa and Manbhum.

This *chhau* dance presentation revolves around the hunting tradition of this region replete with lush green hills, forests, animals and tribals, in which hunters kill animals for their flesh. When persuaded by their wives to abandon the age-old practice against nature, hunters understand the importance of maintaining an ecological balance by protecting all kinds of flora and fauna, which would in turn protect the human species.

**Phurgal Dishom Rin Bir Ko, folk play
by Jeet Rai Hansda & group**

The play portrays the saga of several *adivasi* men who fought relentlessly against the rulers of the British Empire in pursuit of freedom. Starting in 1784, Baba Tilka Manjhi led an uprising

against British landlords at Bhagalpur. His brutal execution gave impetus to further rebellion by other young men including four brothers—Siddhu, Kaku, Chand and Bhairav—who, around 1855, dared to fight the British along with thousands of *adivasis* from the Santhal region. Legend has it that their sisters as well as lovers also joined the freedom struggle. Later, Birsa Munda led the struggle from the Chhota Nagpur region. The sacrifices made by these iconic leaders along with thousands of men, women and children are depicted in a style replete with song, dance and action.

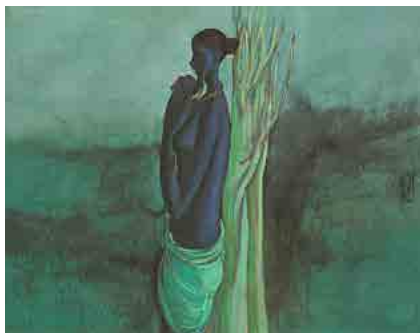
Daily Tickets:

₹180 & 135/- (Members)

₹200 & 150/- (Public)

Box Office now open

EXHIBITION



Tradition, Transition, Modernity, 9th to 15th, Dilip Piramal Art Gallery

Tradition, Transition, Modernity

By The Art of India

Dilip Piramal Art Gallery,
Experimental Garden & Sunken Garden

Saturday, 9th to Friday, 15th –
12.00 noon to 8.00 pm

A Times of India Presentation

The Art of India is returning with its third edition to Mumbai following its success in Delhi. This edition of the prolific art platform, curated by Dr. Alka Pande, will showcase works by distinguished artists such as Raja Ravi Verma, B. Prabha, Anjolie Ela Menon, M. F. Husain, Ganesh Haloi, Manu Parekh and Jayasri Burman.

The Art of India invites art collectors to explore and express interest in upcoming blue-chip contemporary

artworks under the theme 'Tradition, Transition, Modernity'. The exhibition is a testament to India's creative legacy, showcasing a variety of artistic mediums including painting, drawing, printmaking, sculpture, ceramics, photography, video, digital and mixed-media works.

Entry free

THEATRE

Perfect Family

Hindi Play (110 mins)

Experimental Theatre

Sunday, 10th – 5.00 pm & 7.45 pm

What Anil Arun Kumar (AAK) received in legacy from his forefathers was the idea of perfection. His father had drilled into his head that if any work has to be done, it must be done perfectly. An imperfect person, according to his father, is living the life of a rotten vegetable. AAK looks at his family through this lens of perfection and finds that everything that is happening is wrong. Neither his wife nor his children are perfect as per his understanding, which is why he feels disconnected from them. Will his family ever be able to understand his point of view? Will the dream of a perfect family handed down by his forefathers ever come true? Or will it continue to remain unfulfilled? Will AAK be able to achieve this feat in this lifetime or will he have to come back in another?

Written & directed by Om Katare

Cast: Om Katare, Aishwarya Sakhuja,
Additti A Narkar/Divyani Rattanpal,
Sahil Ravi, Harshal Singh & Naman Mukherjee

Produced by Yatri Theatre
Association

Tickets:

₹630 & 450/- (Members)

₹700 & 500/- (Public)

(Plus GST)

Box Office now open

THEATRE

All Stars Comedy

Stand-up Comedy (90 mins)

English/Hindi

Godrej Dance Theatre



Aaditya Kulshreshtha, 10th,
Godrej Dance Theatre

Sunday, 10th – 5.00 pm & 7.30 pm

An NCPA Off-Stage Presentation in
collaboration with The Habitat

A star-studded comedy line-up from The Habitat's daily All Star Stand-up Comedy show is now at an auditorium near you. Here is the perfect opportunity to experience laughter like never before.

Performers:

5.00 pm show -

Pranit More, Jeeya Sethi, Shreeja Chaturvedi, Siddhartha Shetty & Aaditya Kulshreshtha

7.30 pm show -

Anand Reghu, Sumaira Sheikh,
Shridhar Venkataramana, Sonali Thakker & Rajat Sood

Suggested age: 18+

Tickets:

₹450/- (Members)

₹500/- (Public)

Box Office now open

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC

Turkish Delight!

By The Bombay Chamber Orchestra
Tata Theatre

Sunday, 10th – 6.30 pm

The Bombay Chamber Orchestra Society will feature Mozart's popular Violin Concerto No. 5 (Turkish) at its opening concert of 2024. Also included in the programme are Beethoven's Symphony No. 7 and *The Hebrides Overture* by Mendelssohn. The performance will be conducted by Joe Yamaji.

Joe Yamaji has conducted many professional orchestras and

participated in international festivals in 25 countries throughout Europe and Asia. He also works extensively with youth orchestras and community orchestras. He is currently the music director of Taoyuan City Jungli Youth Orchestra Association in Taiwan. This is Yamaji's fifth appearance with the BCO, following earlier appearances in 2008, 2009, 2018 and 2022.

Deborah Gonsalves, originally from Mumbai, began her musical journey in India before refining her skills at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna. Gonsalves co-founded the ensemble Orphelion, with whom she has recorded a wide range of music. She has performed, both as a soloist and as part of various chamber music groups, across Europe, India, Japan and South America. Gonsalves is an esteemed member of the Symphony Orchestra of Galicia/Spain and a dedicated pedagogue.

Tickets:

₹810, 630 & 450/- (Members)

₹900, 700 & 500/- (Public)

(Inclusive of GST)

Box Office now open

INDIAN MUSIC

Guru in Residence

Masterclass on Bandish in Hindustani music conducted by Ajoy Chakrabarty

West Room 1

Tuesday, 12th to Thursday, 14th – 10.30 am to 5.30 pm

An NCPA Presentation
Supported by HSBC India

Under this educational initiative, a senior guru is invited to impart advanced training to a select



Ajoy Chakrabarty, 12th to 14th, West Room 1

group of music practitioners. **Ajoy Chakrabarty**, doyen of the Patiala *gharana*, will conduct a workshop on 'bandish' in classical and semi-classical music.

An eminent vocalist who has had the privilege of training with great masters like Gyan Prakash Ghosh and Munawar Ali Khan, Chakrabarty has been a guru to several students at the ITC-SRA and Shrutinandan, Kolkata.

Applications are invited from vocalists of Hindustani music (*khayal* and/or *thumri*). Preference will be given to those with at least a 'B' grade of the AIR.

A limited number of students will be admitted as participants in the workshop.

A limited number of students will also be enrolled as observers.

Registration starts on

12th February 2024

Registration fees: ₹1,500/- for 3 days

Observers: ₹300/- per day

For more details:

Please call 8928001896 or write to indianmusicworkshops@ncpamumbai.com

WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC

Talks on Western Classical Music

Stuart-Liff Collection Library

Wednesday, 13th – 4.00 pm

and

Little Theatre

Tuesday, 19th – 6.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation

Vivaldi: *The Four Seasons*

In the second set of talks this month, **Dr. Cavas Bilimoria** dives into Vivaldi's best-known work, *The Four Seasons*. The composition comprises four violin concertos—accompanied by a string orchestra and a harpsichord—each a musical expression of a season of the year. The birdsong of spring makes way for a harsh winter in this work of great elegance.

Entry free

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

DANCE

NCPA Umang

Bharatanatyam by Samrat Dutta & Santanu Roy and

Kathakali by Renjish Nair

Godrej Dance Theatre

Wednesday, 13th – 6.30 pm

An NCPA Presentation

Umang is a platform for promising artistes. This month, we present Samrat Dutta & Santanu Roy and Renjish Nair.



Samrat Dutta & Santanu Roy, 13th, Godrej Dance Theatre

Samrat Dutta is an eminent Bharatanatyam performer, teacher and choreographer based in Kolkata. A disciple of C. V. Chandrasekhar, he initially started his training with Thankamani Kutty. He has also been trained in *Marga Natya* under Piyal Bhattacharya. Being an empanelled artiste of the ICCR, a top-grade artiste of Doordarshan and a Junior Fellowship holder of CCRT (Ministry of Culture, Government of India), Dutta has performed in many prestigious festivals across the nation. Presently running his institution Angamantra in Kolkata, Dutta has undertaken the creation of researched choreographic works that have the qualities of both traditional and experimental aspects of the art form.

Santanu Roy is a promising young Bharatanatyam performer and teacher from Kolkata. He is a disciple of Samrat Dutta and has attended regular classes of C. V. Chandrasekhar. Roy completed his Master's in Bharatanatyam from Tamil University, Thanjavur. He has been awarded the West Bengal State Music Academy Award and Sanjukta Panigrahi Memorial Academy Award from Sri Arambinda Institute of Culture. He is an "A+" grade Bharatanatyam artiste of Eastern Zonal Cultural Center (Ministry of Culture), and a graded

artist from Doordarshan Kendra, Delhi. Roy has performed in many prestigious festivals in India and abroad. He is the co-director and organiser of Bandish Arts, started with Samrat Dutta, to provide a platform to artistes who were affected by the pandemic.



Renjish Nair, 13th, Godrej Dance Theatre

Kathakali artiste, **Renjish Nair**, is a disciple of C. Gopalakrishnan. He has studied Kathakali at the basic, advanced and research levels under the guidance of Kalakshethram, Dombivli. He has been accredited as an “A” grade artiste by Doordarshan, Mumbai and has performed at prestigious events all over India. These include the Khajuraho Festival, Kala Ghoda Arts Festival, Upvan Arts Festival, to name a few. He has also won many national competitions and received awards, including the Natvar Gopikrishna National Award, Saptarang Kala Bhushan Award, Nrityashiromani Award, Narthaka Puraskar, and many more. Additionally, he is a Chenda artiste and a Carnatic music trainer.

Admission on a first-come-first-served basis.
Register now on
www.bookmyshow.com.

THEATRE

Janine Harouni:
Man’oushe

Stand-up Comedy
English (60 mins)
Experimental Theatre
Friday, 15th – 8.00 pm

An NCPA Off-Stage Presentation in collaboration with Soho Theatre



Janine Harouni, 15th, Experimental Theatre

The double Edinburgh Comedy Award nominee makes her debut in India.
Janine Harouni thought she knew her family. Then she took a DNA test and things got messy. One of the most critically-acclaimed stand-up shows this year that explores Janine’s Arab roots, pregnancy and what happens when your mail-order DNA test does not go to plan.
Star of her own special on Amazon Prime Video and ITV2’s *Buffering*. Seen and heard on *The Russell Howard Hour*, *The John Bishop Show*, *Comedians Giving Lectures*, *Question Team*, *The Stand Up Sketch Show* and *The Now Show*.

Performer: **Janine Harouni**

Suggested age: 18+

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

THEATRE



I Killed my Mother, 16th, Godrej Dance Theatre

I Killed My Mother / It Wasn’t My Fault
English and Hindi Play (60 mins)
Godrej Dance Theatre
Saturday, 16th – 5.00 pm & 7.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation in collaboration with tafreehwale

For this girl of 25, life with herself is

continually turbulent. This morning is particularly overwhelming. She is assaulted by self-doubt, unemployment, too much social media and her mother. Still, she must brave the mundane frivolity of urban girlhood, all the while looking for someone to blame. This is the story of an ordinary day in her life.

Writer & Director: **Mallika Shah**
Cast: **Shreya Sharma, Anoushka Zaveri, Astha Gulati, Dusha, Shumaila Shaikh & Vaibhav Kapatia**
Executive Producer: **Meghana AT**
Light designer and operator: **Shantanu Salvi**
Visual Designer: **Malvika Dwivedi**
Sound Designer: **Manish Khushalani**

Supported by Bhasha Centre & PayTM Insider

Suggested age: 16+

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

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC

The NCPA Soulful Blues
Tata Theatre
Saturday, 16th & Sunday, 17th – 6.30 pm

An NCPA Presentation



Demetria Taylor, 16th, Tata Theatre



Terrie Odabi, 17th, Tata Theatre

After a successful first edition, the NCPA Soulful Blues festival is back with a power-packed line-up of two of the leading women of blues, promising to make it a soul-warming, heart-stopping two days of blues and soul, with host **Brian Tellis**.

The line-up includes Best Female Blues Artist of the Year, Most Outstanding Blues Singer of the Year and Best Blues Album of 2022 artiste **Demetria Taylor** and seven-time Blues Music Award nominee **Terrie Odabi**.

16th March: Demetria Taylor
17th March: Terrie Odabi

Get ready for a soulful evening with the best of blues in the city that has none.

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

THEATRE

UnErase's Women's Day Special

English/ Hindi (100 mins)
Experimental Theatre
Saturday, 16th – 8.00 pm

An NCPA Off-Stage Presentation

This year, celebrate Women's Day with some heart-warming poetry and stories by UnErase Poetry. They are back with their flagship event, the UnErase Women's Day Special, celebrating women and breaking gender norms.



Vanika Sangtani, 16th, Experimental Theatre

Also, they turn seven this year. So, join in for the celebrations.

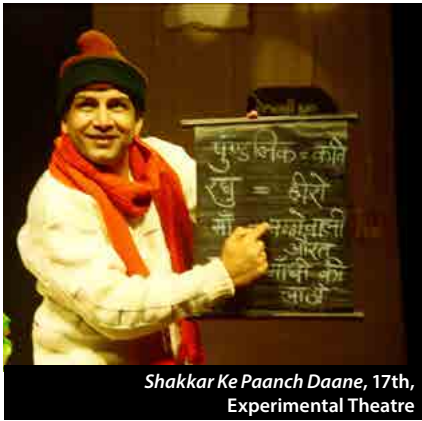
From stories of gender to tales of sexuality, from poetry that brings us closer together to words that inspire and empower, this Women's Day is about the journey.

Performers: **Taranjit Kaur, Vanika Sangtani, Sainee Raj, Helly Shah, Priyanshi Bansal & others**

Suggested age: 16+

Tickets:
₹539/- (Members)
₹599/- (Public)
(Plus GST)
Box Office now open

THEATRE



Shakkar Ke Paanch Daane

Hindi Play (70 mins)
Experimental Theatre
Sunday, 17th – 5.00 pm & 7.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation in collaboration with aRANYA Production

Rajkumar has been requested to write a poem which will be published in a compilation. If you knew Rajkumar you would realise the absurdity of the request. In an hour-long monologue, Rajkumar tells us about his unremarkable life in his nondescript village and the five grains of sugar—the five people—who have stood out in this drab life for reasons stranger than fiction. The filmy mother; her poet brother, Pundaleek; Raghu, the school hero; old man Radhey; and the anonymous 'Truckwala dost'. As Rajkumar talks, the five grains become

part of a game that he has been unknowingly playing for years ... and Rajkumar realises that everyone has a story inside them.

Written & directed by **Manav Kaul**
Performed by **Kumud Mishra**
Lights: **Ram Saidpure**
Sound: **Ghanshyam Lalsa**

Suggested age: 8+

Tickets:
₹540 & 450/- (Members)
₹600 & 500/- (Public)
(Plus GST)
Box Office now open

THEATRE

Micro Theatre

Short Plays
Godrej Dance Theatre
Sunday, 17th – 5.00 pm & 7.30 pm

An NCPA Presentation

Micro Theatre brings together a community of artistes to present a collection of one-act plays on one stage. Six independent directors lead each play, giving each story a unique style and flavour.

Kheer
English (12 mins)



Kheer revolves around a family dinner, where the dessert for the night, the precious kheer, goes missing. As this dysfunctional unit of four tries to solve the mystery of the missing kheer, we see them pondering, laughing and scheming as hilarious secrets and deep-seated feelings are revealed. We are reminded of what family really means when people stick together, despite their differences.

Directed by **Rutwik Deshpande**

Excess Baggage

Hindi (12 mins)



Excess Baggage, 17th, Godrej Dance Theatre

Two distinctive Bollywood icons forge a unique friendship when they encounter each other on their way to 'The Iconic Female Characters Retreat'. *Excess Baggage* is your ticket to a chaotic ride that turns into a confrontational, vulnerable and empowering journey. So, grab a seat and witness our protagonists unburden themselves between the stations of the past and the present.

Directed by **Raashi Priya Nahata**

Fake News Loves Bots

English (12 mins)



Fake News Loves Bots, 17th, Godrej Dance Theatre

Fake News Loves Bots is a sci-fi comedy set in the Twitter universe, where Preeti's sincere and scarcely active Twitter account encounters a propaganda-spreading bot who is determined to "hack" the account. The bot eventually persuades the account, showing it the thrill of viral tweets, multiple likes and exponentially growing followers—all of which is achieved by spreading ... fake news.

Directed by **Ishita Karra**

All My Eyes

English (12 mins)

A son's attempt to reach his distant father. Expressing himself through the one thing his father disapproves of



All My Eyes, 17th, Godrej Dance Theatre

most, Aman uses his poetry to bring his innermost turmoils to life, quite literally. A poem he never wants his father to read manages to find its way to Mumbai's biggest stage.

Directed by **Soham Pujara**

A Loser's Guide to Flirting

English (12 mins)



A Loser's Guide to Flirting, 17th, Godrej Dance Theatre

A young man's incapability to flirt is brought to light when a woman assumes that he is hitting on her at a party. When he reveals his insecurities around approaching women, she starts to give him lessons on flirting.

Directed by **Rishab Talwalkar**

The Arrangement

Hindi (12 mins)



The Arrangement, 17th, Godrej Dance Theatre

A whimsical short musical that explores the internal struggles of a man and a woman as they prepare for a blind date, their nerves creating a symphony of emotions. Nimesh and Anjali find themselves caught

in a whirlwind of anticipation and self-doubt when stepping into the unknown world of romance, but in the grand orchestration of life, love always has a perfect arrangement.

Directed by **Jasmin A Singh**

Tickets:

₹450/- (Members)

₹500/- (Public)

Box Office now open

FILM



World is Family, 19th, Godrej Dance Theatre

The World is Family

Hindi Film with English Subtitles
(196 mins)

Godrej Dance Theatre

Tuesday, 19th – 6.30 pm

The Indian Express Film Club screening in association with the National Centre for the Performing Arts

Through insightful conversations with family members, including his parents, Anand Patwardhan explores the tumultuous journey of India from a colony to an independent nation. He gives us a ringside view of a newly formed country struggling to come to terms with its multitudes. It is Patwardhan's most personal film, and as powerful as the rest of his work.

Director: **Anand Patwardhan**

Producer: **Jaya Anand Patwardhan**

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.

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC



The Postman Always Rings Twice, 20th, Tata Theatre Garden

Movies Under the Stars

The Postman Always Rings Twice
(1946)

Film Screening

(B&W - 113 mins)

Tata Theatre Garden

Wednesday, 20th – 6.30 pm

An NCPA & Film Heritage
Foundation Presentation

The Postman Always Rings Twice (1946) is a classic film noir about Frank Chambers (John Garfield), a drifter who becomes entangled in a passionate affair with Cora Smith (Lana Turner), the wife of a diner owner. The two lovers conspire to murder Cora's husband, leading to a web of betrayal and moral ambiguity. The film explores themes of lust and greed, with a tense atmosphere and notable chemistry between the lead characters. It is considered a classic in the noir genre and has influenced several subsequent works.

Director: **Tay Garnett**

Screenplay: **Harry Ruskin** and **Niven Busch**

Based on a novel by **James M. Cain**

Cinematography: **Sidney Wagner**

Music: **George Bassman**

Cast: **Lana Turner, John Garfield, Cecil Kellaway, Hume Cronyn, Leon Ames**

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

Wednesday, 20th – 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.

A bouquet of three documentary films:

Aravali: The Lost Mountains

Hindi Film with English Subtitles
(22 mins)



Aravali - The Lost Mountains, 20th, Little Theatre

Aravali: The Lost Mountains is a documentary on marble quarrying in Rajasthan's Rajsamand district, India. The Aravalli Range is believed to be India's oldest mountain range, and plays a crucial role in the ecosystem. Groundwater levels and average rainfall have also depleted as a result of continual mining for the last 35 years, resulting in a serious water crisis and air pollution in Rajsamand. On the other hand, mining is the primary source of income for the majority of the population. As a result, this film examines both sides of the same coin, namely, the economy and the environment.

Producer Udaipur Pictures: **Jigar Nagda**

Written and directed by **Jigar Nagda**

Cinematography: **Ayush Sharma**

Additional Camera: **Burhan Habshee**

Editor: **Shubham Dixit**

Music: **Piyush Ranjan**

Sound & Mix: **Atharva Joshi**

Pandhari ke Rang

Hindi/ Marathi / English Film with
English Subtitles (36 mins)

Pandhari ke Rang is a colourful documentary covering the equally



Pandhari ke Rang, 20th, Little Theatre

colourful career of legendary make-up artiste, Pandhari Juker, popularly known as "Pandhari Dada". The documentary traces the creative journey of Pandhari Dada, in the then much-ignored field of make-up. Having worked in the Hindi film industry for over 40 years with some of the biggest stars in the country, Juker was a much sought-after make-up artiste. The floating belief was that if one has their make-up done by Pandhari Dada, they are bound to be successful.

Written & directed by

Sachin Shirke & Pankaj Sharma

Producer: **Films Division**

Raga of River Narmada (Waterscapes) India

A film by **Rajendra Janglay** (12 mins)

Dhrupad Singing by Ramakant and Umakant Gundecha



Raga of River Narmada, 20th, Little Theatre

Winner of National Film Award in 2006. Certificate of Merit at MIFF 2008 for its fascinating visuals and exceptional use of *dhrupad*

Director Rajendra Janglay's *Raga of River Narmada* is a cinematic ode to the many moods, colours and shapes of River Narmada, juxtaposed with a traditional *dhrupad* recitation. Like a *dhrupad* melody, with its single melodic line and complex framework of *ragas*, the river too is a single entity which takes on various incarnations from the playful gush of the streams to the turbulence of the rapids to the ethereal calm of its union with the sea.

The river evokes the song that echoes over the valleys and plains, setting tune to life itself. The song plays on while the river flows endlessly, an ancient entity with a life of its own but joined together in tradition, in culture, and in nature.

Sound: **Hari Kumar M**

Camera: **Rajendra Janglay**

Producer: **Madhya Pradesh Madhyam**

Editing: **Jitendra Wagre** and
Koshalendra Tomar

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.

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC

Dante's Divine Comedy for India

A lecture/performance on Dante's masterpiece by **Franco Ricordi**
Little Theatre

Thursday, 21st – 6.30 pm

An **Instituto Italiano di Cultura di Mumbai** Presentation

Franco Ricordi will start by illustrating his philosophical interpretation of Dante's 'Divine Comedy'. He will then analyse parts of some of the cantos. In the second part of the lecture, he will recite extracts from the narrative poem to express the theatricality of the text which, like the great poems of antiquity by Homer and Virgil, is, above all, an "oral" text. In this context, Ricordi will underline the difference between Dante, the author and Dante, the character. The latter is instrumental in understanding *Paradiso*, the final part of 'Divine Comedy'. The lecture will also highlight how Dante, the character, seems similar and, at the same time, antithetical to Hamlet, often described by William Shakespeare as his alter ego. These analogies between the two greatest poets of what Harold Bloom describes as the Western canon have also been observed by Thomas Carlyle and T. S. Eliot. The importance of India in 'The Divine Comedy' will be underlined from *Inferno*, Canto XIV, *Purgatorio*, Canto XXVI and *Paradiso*, Canto XIX.

Franco Ricordi is a philosopher, actor, theatre director and artistic director. He is currently working on one of the most original and evocative interpretations of the Western thought. Among his publications, with *Mimesis Edizioni*: *Shakespeare filosofo dell'essere* (2011); *Pasolini filosofo della libertà* (2013); *L'essere per l'amore* (2015); *Il grande teatro Shakespeariano* (with *Elisabetta Pozzi*, 2016).

Admission on a first-come, first-served basis

THEATRE

Buckingham's NEW Secret

English and Parsi Gujarati Play
(100 mins)

Tata Theatre

Thursday, 21st – 7.00 pm

(Jamshedi Navroze Special)

Ten years ago, the biggest secret in the Parsi community was out—the royal family sitting in Buckingham Palace is actually just a bunch of Parsis. Now, a decade later, they've got another secret that they are trying hard to guard from the world. Come watch as Her Majesty and the family take you on this hilarious ride with the new secret, with new family members, new diplomats and all of them are a bit older, wiser, crazier and a little more Parsi.

Written and directed by

Meherzad Patel

Produced by **Silly Point Productions**

Cast: **Danesh Irani, Pheroza Modi, Darius Shroff, Azmin Mistry, Danesh Khambata**, amongst others

Tickets:

₹1,800, 1,350, 1,080, 900, 720, 450 & 315/- (Members)

₹2,000, 1,500, 1,200, 1,000, 800, 500 & 350/- (Public)

(Inclusive of GST)

Box Office now open

INDIAN MUSIC

Barasat Rang: Celebrating Holi

with **Dhananjay Hegde, Ruchira Kedar & others**
Experimental Theatre



Dhananjay Hegde, 22nd, Experimental Theatre



Ruchira Kedar, 22nd, Experimental Theatre

Friday, 22nd – 6.30 pm

An NCPA Presentation

Holi, a traditional festival that celebrates the advent of spring, captures the spirit of exhilaration in one's heart, whether it is the song of a young couple in love, a bride or the eternal epic love of Radha and Krishna. Above all, Holi signifies the triumph of good over evil, and therefore it is the time to celebrate with colour, music, dance and gaiety unleashed.

This recital seeks to recreate the unbounded spirit of Holi that is intrinsic to the melody, rhythms and literature of myriad genres prevalent in north India. The range of genres from classical, semi-classical to light music will depict the vibrant tones of Holi.

Initiated into music by his parents, **Dhananjay Hegde** has trained with Venkatesh Kumar and Vinayak Torvi. **Ruchira Kedar** has had the privilege of training with Dr. Alka Deo Marulkar and Ulhas Kashalkar. Additionally, she has also studied semi-classical music with Girija Devi. Representing the younger generation, both have participated in several prestigious festivals across India and overseas and are recipients of Sangeet Natak Akademi's Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar award.

Imbued with imagination, creativity and emotive expressions, this thematic

presentation will include myriad compositions across genres: *khayal*, *dhamar*, *chaturang*, *thumri*, *bandish ki thumri*, *bhajan*, *abhang*, *hori*, *Awadh ki hori*, *Shivji ki hori*, *Rasiya* and more, all portraying the fun and frolic of the festival of colours.

Tickets:

₹270 & 180/- (Members)

₹300 & 200/- (Public)

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

THEATRE



Adrak Ka Swaad

by Karunesh Talwar

Stand-up Comedy in Hinglish
(60 mins)

Experimental Theatre

Sunday, 24th – 5.30 pm & 8.00 pm

An NCPA Off-Stage Presentation in collaboration with Karunesh Talwar

Adrak Ka Swaad is Karunesh Talwar's brand new stand-up show. His idea of fun is staying indoors, watching Test cricket, consuming carbohydrates and taking naps while every other person his age wants to go out to party, drink, dance and explore nature. In this show, he makes fun of those people, one of whom he has been in a long-term relationship with. The couple moved to Goa, the unofficial capital of partying, drinking, dancing and exploring nature. So, as you can imagine, he is deeply annoyed and is coming to your city to tell you all about it.

Performed by Karunesh Talwar

Suggested age: 16 +

Tickets:

₹720/- (Members)

₹800/- (Public)

(Inclusive of GST)

50 early bird tickets of Rs.500/- each per show

Box Office now open

THEATRE

9 Parts of Desire

English Play (80 mins)

Godrej Dance Theatre

Sunday, 24th – 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

MULTI ARTS & PRESENTATION

Author Talk Series

Book Discussion and Reading

Meher Pestonji's *Poems* and *Being Human in a War Zone*

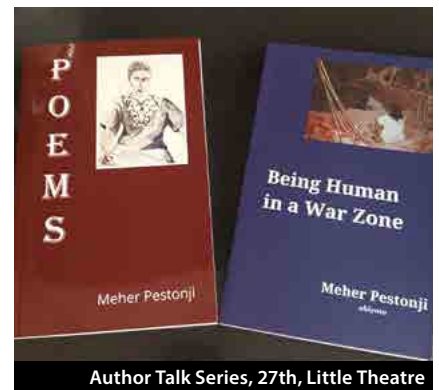
Little Theatre

Wednesday, 27th – 6.00 pm

An NCPA Library Presentation

Meher Pestonji in conversation with Dr. Omkar Bhatkar

International exchanges on Zoom are changing the way literature is written, perceived and experienced. Virtual friendships built over weekly spoken



word sessions lead to an interest in varied cultures and find their way into creative expressions. Meher Pestonji's two books, *Poems* and a collection of short stories titled *Being Human in a War Zone* emerged out of exposure to unfamiliar geographies, sparking concerns that might have remained in the shadows had she not been interacting with poets across the world. She heard a poet's angst about a missing brother in Ukraine, saw vivid photographs of wildfires in Greece and felt the anxiety of Americans at a shoot-out in their neighbourhood. These triggered her imagination to emerge as poems and stories.

Meher Pestonji is a writer, journalist and social worker from India. She has worked as a journalist for more than 25 years, covering a wide range of topics including art, theatre and film while concentrating on human rights concerns like housing rights, communalism and street children. She has covered the entire course of proceedings of the Srikrishna Commission which looked into the 1992-1993 Bombay riots. Her debut book, *Mixed Marriage and Other Parsi Stories*, a collection of short stories, was published by HarperCollins India in 1999 and garnered excellent reviews. Her play *Feeding Crows* won the first prize in the South Asia category in the BBC World Service and British Council International Radio Playwriting Competition 2009.

She has participated in poetry readings all around the world via Zoom, in addition to having her poems published in several anthologies.

Free entry on a first-come-first-served basis.

What's Next

April & May 2024

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

WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC



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

Masterworks of Chamber Music

Marat Bisengaliev, violin

Ralph de Souza, violin/viola

Members of the Symphony Orchestra of India

Jamshed Bhabha Theatre Stage

Tuesday, 2nd April – 7.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation

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

Programme:

Spohr: Duo for two violins, Op. 3 No. 1
Haydn: Quartet in G major, Op. 76 No. 1
Ravel: Quartet in F major
Tchaikovsky: String sextet in D minor, Op. 70 "Souvenir de Florence"

Tickets:

₹900 & 450/- (Members)

₹1,000 & 500/- (Public)

(Inclusive of GST)

Box Office: 9th March for Members

& 12th March for Public

DANCE

NCPA Mudra Dance Festival 2024

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

Manipuri by Latasana Devi and Bharatanatyam by Prachi Saathi

Experimental Theatre

Thursday, 4th April – 6.30 pm



Latasana Devi, 4th April, Experimental Theatre

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

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

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

Saathi is set to showcase *When Walls Dance*, a distinctive performance that seamlessly merges two ancient art forms: the traditional Indian dance, Bharatanatyam, and the tribal art of the indigenous Warli tribe. This innovative presentation incorporates cutting-edge technology and multimedia elements, such as motion design and projection. The overarching aim of the project is

to embrace a 'more-than-human' perspective on life, drawing inspiration from the inherent connection to nature prevalent in tribal and pre-modern lifestyles.

Tickets:
₹270 & 180/- (Members)
₹300 & 200/- (Public)

Marga Nritya
by Piyal Bhattacharya
and
Group Bharatanatyam
by Sridevi Nrithyalaya
Experimental Theatre
Saturday, 27th April – 5.00 pm



Piyal Bhattacharya, 27th April, Experimental Theatre

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

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

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



Aditi Mangaldas, 28th April, Tata Theatre

Kathak
by Aditi Mangaldas and
Odissi
by Sujata Mohapatra
Tata Theatre
Sunday, 28th April – 5.00 pm

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

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

Sujata Mohapatra is considered a benchmark of excellence in Odissi today. Her performances have catapulted the art form to the global stage. Mohapatra spent 20 years under the tutelage of Kelucharan Mohapatra. In recognition of her perseverance, vast body of work and the profound impact she has had on the Indian dance community, the Indian Government has conferred on her the Sangeet Natak Akademi Puraskar.

Mohapatra's choreography pays homage to the authentic roots of Odissi. With each step and gesture, she unravels a cultural tapestry, showcasing artistic finesse that has

been carefully preserved and nurtured over time. Amidst the graceful cadence of her dance, Mohapatra generously shares poignant anecdotes from her personal journey, providing the audience with a glimpse into the traditions, challenges and triumphs of taking forward Guruji's legacy.

Tickets:
₹630, 450 & 270/- (Members)
₹700, 500 & 300/- (Public)
Box Office for the Festival: 9th March for Members & 12th March for Public

INDIAN MUSIC

Saz-e-Bahar
Festival of Indian Instrumental Music
Godrej Dance Theatre
Friday, 5th & Saturday, 6th April – 6.30 pm

An NCPA Presentation
Supported by EdelGive Foundation

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

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

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

5th April
Dr. Aneesh Pradhan (tabla)
Milind Raikar (violin)



Aneesh Pradhan, 5th April, Godrej Dance Theatre

PRAKASH PRABHU (ANEESH PRADHAN)

Acclaimed as a soloist and an accompanist for vocal music, instrumental music and dance, **Aneesh Pradhan** is a disciple of the illustrious tabla maestro Nikhil Ghosh from whom he inherited a rich repertoire of traditional solo compositions. A recipient of several prestigious awards, he performs, teaches and has recorded numerous times for domestic and international record labels. He also composes music for film, theatre and dance projects. Holding a doctoral degree in history, his study and research in the areas of history, music education, performance and patronage has led to several significant international publications including books.

Milind Raikar was introduced to music by his father, Atchut Raikar, and later on, mentored by violin maestro



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

6th April
M. Sivakumar (nadaswaram)
Manish Pingle (slide guitar)

Having been trained by his father, M. L. Srinivasan, **M. Sivakumar** had a debut on the concert platform at a tender age of 10. He also trained with the renowned nadaswaram maestro, Mylai S. Rajendran and went on to perform in several prominent music festivals. Sivakumar has had an opportunity to work under the baton of many



M. Sivakumar, 6th April, Godrej Dance Theatre

distinguished music directors and earn prestigious awards and accolades for his service to music.

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

Manish Pingle received initial training in Indian slide guitar under



Manish Pingle, 6th April, Godrej Dance Theatre

Vishnu Walivadekar, and thereafter he sought advanced training with sitar maestro Shahid Parvez. Besides performing in major festivals across India and overseas, he has had the privilege of collaborating in several fusion projects with international maestros like George Brooks (saxophone), Michael Messer (Blues), French composer Hector Zazou and African Kora player Lamine Cissokho. A qualified sound engineer, he is a recipient of many prestigious awards.

Daily Tickets:
₹270/- (Members)
₹300/- (Public)
Box Office: 9th March for Members & 12th March for Public

WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC

Danish Chamber Players
Jamshed Bhabha Theatre Stage
Sunday, 7th April – 5.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation

The Danish Chamber Players will

perform a concert of chamber music.

Programme:
Debussy (arr. Westh): Prelude à l'après-midi d'un faune
Grieg (arr. Westh): *Lyric Pieces*
Nielsen: *The Fog Is Lifting*
Ravel (arr. Højsgaard): *Tzigane*
Schubert (arr. Westh): Fantasy in F minor, D.940

Tickets:
₹900 & 450/- (Members)
₹1,000 & 500/- (Public)
(Inclusive of GST)
Box Office: 9th March for Members & 12th March for Public

THEATRE



Purane Chawal, 7th April, Tata Theatre

Purane Chawal
Hindi Play (100 mins)
Tata Theatre
Sunday, 7th April – 7.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation in collaboration with D For Drama production

Set in contemporary Mumbai, this Hindi adaptation of Neil Simon's *The Sunshine Boys* delves into the world of two retired comedy geniuses who are brought together after 12 years to reprise their iconic comedy act for the biggest festival of comedy in the country. The only problem is they can't stand each other. Will they be able to put aside their differences and create the same magic they once did?

Adaptation of *The Sunshine Boys* by **Neil Simon**

Directed by **Sumeet Vyas**
Adapted by **Farrukh Seyer** and
Avinash Gautam
Cast: **Kumud Mishra, Shubhrajyoti
Barat, Ghanshyam Lalsa/Ishar
Sunya, Ayesha Raza, Kirti V.A.,
Divyendu Saurav & Prashant Pandey**
Sets: **Vivek Jadhav**
Lights: **Vikrant Thaker**
Sound: **Divyendu Saurav**

Tickets:
₹1,620, 1,350, 1,080, 900, 450 &
270/- (Members)
₹1,800, 1,500, 1,200, 1,000, 500 &
300/- (Public)
(Plus GST)
**Box Office: 26th February for
Members & 29th February for
Public**

WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC



Maria Badstue, 12th April, Tata Theatre

SOI Chamber Orchestra Danish Chamber Players

Maria Badstue, conductor
Indira Mahajan, soprano
Tata Theatre
Friday, 12th April – 7.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation

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

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

Programme:

Copland: Appalachian Spring
Barber: Knoxville Summer of 1915
Mahler: Adagietto from Symphony No. 5
Beethoven: Symphony No. 4

Tickets:

₹1,080, 720 & 450/- (Members)
₹1,200, 800 & 500/- (Public)
(Inclusive of GST)
**Box Office: 9th March for Members
& 12th March for Public**

SCREENING

Nabucco

by **Giuseppe Verdi**
Opera Screening
(Approx. 175 mins)
Godrej Dance Theatre
Saturday, 13th April – 4.00 pm

An NCPA-The Metropolitan Opera (New York) Presentation

The success of **Giuseppe Verdi**'s third opera, a stirring drama about the fall of ancient Jerusalem at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar “Nabucco”, catapulted the 28-year-old composer to international fame. The music, and Verdi himself, were subsumed into a surge of patriotic fervour culminating in the foundation of the modern nation of Italy. Specifically, the ‘Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves’ also called ‘Va, pensiero’, in which Israelites express longing for their homeland, came to stand for the country’s aspirations for unity and that exciting era in Italian history, the *risorgimento* or resurgence.

In a remarkable career spanning six decades in the theatre, Verdi composed 26 operas, at least half of which are at the core of today’s repertoire. His role in Italy’s cultural and political development has made him an icon in his native country. **Temistocle Solera**’s libretto takes some liberties with biblical history while the characters, other than the title role, are dramatic inventions, but the story stays close to events as they are related in Jewish scriptures: primarily Jeremiah, as well as two Kings, two Chronicles, Daniel and the Psalms. The first part takes place around the destruction of the first temple in Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E, with the remainder of the opera set in various locations in the city of Babylon. *Nabucco*’s score, with its contrasts of the dynamic and the serene, provides an ideal frame for the personal and communal aspects of the drama. The chorus is assigned a major role, giving voice to a wide spectrum of feelings, from terror at the beginning to despair, faith and finally bright hope. Rather than depicting a character that goes mad, as in so many other operas, Abigaille’s aria reflects a personality that embodies madness through sheer malice. The opera contains a brief scene of madness for the title character, but Verdi gives more emphasis to Nabucco’s return to sanity in his poignant Act IV aria ‘Dio di Giuda’. A supreme example of operatic prayer, of course, is found in ‘Va, pensiero’. The simplicity of the choral melody and the unity of the vocal line perfectly encapsulate the communal sentiment.

Nabucco, 13th April, Godrej Dance Theatre



Conductor: **Daniele Callegari**
Cast: **Liudmyla Monastyrskya, Maria Barakova, SeokJong Baek, George Gagnidze & Dmitry Belosselskiy**

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

INDIAN MUSIC



Rajashree Kelkar Pathak, 13th April,
Experimental Theatre

Rangi Sari Gulabi: A Tribute to Shobha Gurtu

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

An NCPA Presentation

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

Rajashree Kelkar Pathak has had the privilege of training under Sarala Bhide, a senior disciple of Shobha Gurtu, and later on, from the virtuoso herself for a number of years. Pathak is a recipient of several awards and accolades including an award from the All India Radio for *thumri* and *ghazal* and a gold medal at the Bombay University light music competition. Having equal command over *khayal* as well as *thumri*, *dadra*, etc., she is an 'A' grade artiste of AIR and Doordarshan. Besides her performances at numerous prestigious venues, she has also sung for films.

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

Tickets:
₹270 & 180/- (Members)
₹300 & 200/- (Public)
Box Office: 9th March for Members
& 12th March for Public

THEATRE



The Siddhus of Upper Juhu, 13th April, Tata Theatre

The Siddhus of Upper Juhu

English Play (90 mins)
Tata Theatre
Saturday, 13th April – 7.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation in collaboration with Rage Productions

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

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

Directed by **Rahul da Cunha**
Cast: **Rajit Kapur, Shernaz Patel, Meera Khurana, Kajli Sharma & Shishir Sharma**

Tickets:
₹2,250, 1,800, 1,350, 1,080, 900, 720 & 450/- (Members)
₹2,500, 2,000, 1,500, 1,200, 1,000, 800 & 500/- (Public)
(Plus GST)
Box Office: 26th February for Members & 29th February for Public

WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC

SOI Music Academy
Marat Bisengaliev, conductor
Jamshed Bhabha Theatre
Sunday, 14th April – 5.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation

Under the direction of SOI Music Director **Marat Bisengaliev**, the students of the SOI Music Academy come together for their annual concert that will showcase their accomplishments over the past year. The concert will feature soloists of the academy with the SOI Chamber Orchestra, SOI Music Academy Chorus and percussion ensemble.

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



SOI Music Academy, 14th April, Jamshed Bhabha Theatre

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC



Shreya Bhattacharya, 14th April,
Experimental Theatre

Jazz Odyssey: Classic to Modern Brilliance

Experimental Theatre
Sunday, 14th April – 6.30 pm

An NCPA Presentation

Shreya Bhattacharya, vocals
Clement Rooney, piano
Amandeep Singh, guitar
Emanuel Simon, percussion
Jarryd Rodriguez, sax
Arjun Chakraborty, drums
Avishek Dey, upright bass

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

Tickets:

₹675 & 450/- (Members)

₹750 & 500/- (Public)

(Plus GST)

Box Office now open

WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC

Artie's Festival India

Experimental Theatre
Wednesday, 17th & Thursday,
18th April – 7.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation

Pierre Fouchenneret, violin
Mathilde Borsarello, violin



Gauthier Herrmann, 17th & 18th April,
Experimental Theatre

Antoine Berlioz, viola
Gauthier Herrmann, cello
Jean-Michel Dayez, piano

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

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

Programme:

17th April

Beethoven: String Quartet Op. 59 No. 1
(Razumovsky No. 1)

Dvořák: Piano quintet Op. 81

Various violin and piano pieces

18th April

Beethoven: String Quartet Op. 59 No. 2
(Razumovsky No. 2)

Ravel: Piano trio

Dvořák: Notturmo Op. 40 for Strings
(with members of SOI Chamber Orchestra)

Tickets:

₹720 & 450/- (Members)

₹800 & 500/- (Public)

(Inclusive of GST)

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

THEATRE



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

Dekh Behen - Part Two

English/Hindi Play (80 mins)

Experimental Theatre

Saturday, 20th April – 5.00 pm &
7.30 pm

An NCPA Presentation in
collaboration with Akvarious
Productions

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

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

Written by

Dilshad Edibam & Tahira Nath

Directed by **Perna Chawla &**

Shikha Talsania

Set Design by **Parth Varshney**

Light Design by **Yael Crishna**

Sound Design by **Varrunn Bangera**

Produced by **Akarsh Khurana & Saatvika Kantamneni**

Age: 18+

Tickets:

₹630 & 450/- (Members)

₹700 & 500/- (Public)

(Plus GST)

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

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC

Spring Board

Tata Garden

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

An NCPA Presentation

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

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

20th April – Urban Soul Blues Collective

21st April – Polaris

Tickets:

₹450/- (Members)

₹500/- (Public)

Box Office now open

THEATRE

Red

English Play (90 mins)

Experimental Theatre

Sunday, 21st April – 4.30 pm & 7.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation in collaboration with Water Lily (formerly Masque)

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

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

Writer: John Logan

Director: Daniel Dsouza



Cast: Vikram Kapadia & Daniel Dsouza

Design: Viraj Sushi Karnik & Daniel Dsouza

Light Design: Gurleen Judge

Suggested age: 12+

Tickets:

₹450/- (Members)

₹500/- (Public)

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

THEATRE

Cast Off All Shame

English & Hindi Play (80 mins)

Godrej Dance Theatre

Sunday, 21st April – 6.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation in collaboration with Story Circus

Cast Off All Shame begins with the spirit of Bhakti poet Janabai coming alive and taking over a radio show as an RJ. She then talks to various women callers who reach out to her with everyday issues of gender and patriarchy. Thus, the solo theatre piece consists of a series of vignettes—some



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

hilarious, some gut-wrenching—about Indian women from a variety of classes and settings. Their situations are illuminated by women Bhakti poets—Janabai, Lal Ded, Akka Mahadevi, Avvaiyyar, Soyarabai—whose poems appear as ‘characters’ in this show.

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

Written, directed and performed by Ulka Mayur

Tickets:

₹360/- (Members)

₹400/- (Public)

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

THEATRE

Love and Information

English/ Hindi/ Marathi (120 mins)

Experimental Theatre

Thursday, 25th & Friday, 26th April – 7.30 pm

Saturday, 27th April – 9.00 pm

Sunday, 28th April – 4.00 pm & 7.30 pm

An NCPA Production in association with Aasakta Kalamanch, Pune

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

The vignettes mirror the rapid pace of channel-hopping or scrolling through social media, highlighting potential implications for relationships in an era dominated by instant gratification and short attention spans. The play's kaleidoscopic structure, touches on an array of themes such as memory atrophy, privacy erosion, alienation from the self and the decay of genuine emotion. Through its experimental

form and astute observations, *Love and Information* speaks directly to the way we make meaning of our lives and existence when there is an over-exposure and saturation of different kinds of information.

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

Age: 18+

Tickets:
₹900, 720 & 450/- (Members)
₹1,000, 800 & 500/- (Public)
Box Office: 26th February for Members 29th February for Public

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC



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

An NCPA Presentation

In Mumbai, International Jazz Day has been celebrated for the last 12 years. The 13th edition, curated by **Louiz Banks**, will feature a huge line-up of artistes spread over a span of three hours. From jazz standards to jazz fusion, the concert will feature some of the finest musicians and singers in the country. The NCPA, along with Banks, celebrates this iconic day live at the Tata Theatre, Mumbai.

Tickets:
₹900, 720 & 450/- (Members)
₹1,000, 800 & 500/- (Public)
(Plus GST)
Box Office: 9th March for Members & 12th March for Public

WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC

**Piano Recital
by Elia Cecino**
Experimental Theatre
Tuesday, 30th April - 7.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation in
collaboration with the Mehli Mehta
Music Foundation

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

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

SCREENING

Carmen
by Georges Bizet
Opera Screening
(Approx. 205 mins)
Godrej Dance Theatre
Saturday, 18th May – 4.00 pm

An NCPA-The Metropolitan Opera
(New York) Presentation

Georges Bizet was known as a brilliant student and prodigy, but his works only found lasting success after his untimely death—most notably through *Carmen*, which premiered three months before he died. The score of *Carmen* contains so many instantly recognisable tunes

that it can be easy to overlook how well-constructed it is. The major solos are excellent combinations of arresting melody and dramatic purpose—from the baritone's famous 'Toreador Song' to the tenor's wrenching 'Flower Song' to the title character's alluring 'Habanera' and 'Seguidilla'. The duets and ensembles are equally beguiling. Acclaimed English director **Carrie Cracknell** brings a vital new production of one of opera's most enduringly powerful works, reinvigorating the classic story with a staging that moves the action to the modern day and finds, at the heart of the drama, issues that could not be more relevant today: gendered violence, abusive labour structures and the desire to break through societal boundaries.

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

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

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC

Eliane Elias
Live in Concert
Tata Theatre
Thursday, 30th May – 7.00 pm

An NCPA Presentation

Brazilian jazz pianist, singer, composer and arranger, double Grammy award-winner, double Latin Grammy award-winner, five-time Grammy nominee and four-time Latin Grammy nominee, three Gold Disc award-winner and three-time best vocal award winner **Eliane Elias** will make her India debut at the Tata Theatre on 30th May 2024. This is a concert you do not want to miss.

Tickets:
₹1,800, 1,350, 1,080, 900, 720 & 450/- (Members)
₹2,000, 1,500, 1,200, 1,000, 800 & 500/- (Public)
(Plus GST)
Box Office: 26th February for Members & 29th February for Public



ANDREW SCOTT
VANYA

AFTER ANTON CHEKHOV

THEATRE SCREENING

AN NCPA-NATIONAL THEATRE LIVE (LONDON) PRESENTATION

adapted by **Simon Stephens**

directed by **Sam Yates**

designed by **Rosanna Vizeae**

MAR 6, 2024 | 6:00 PM
GODREJ DANCE THEATRE, NCPA

FLEABAG

WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY

PHOEBE WALLER-BRIDGE

DIRECTED BY
VICKY JONES

THEATRE SCREENING

AN NCPA-NATIONAL THEATRE LIVE
(LONDON) PRESENTATION

MAR 6, 2024 | 8:30 PM
GODREJ DANCE THEATRE, NCPA



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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

March 2024

Day	Date	Time	Event	Venue
Sat	2nd	7.00 pm	Paolo Fresu & Rita Marcotulli Live in Concert featuring special guest Trilok Gurtu	TATA THEATRE
Sat	2nd	7.00 pm	<i>Hai Mera Dil</i> Hindi Play	Godrej dance theatre
Tue & Thu	5th & 7th	2.00 pm	NCPA <i>Nrityaparichay</i> 2024 Classical Dance Training for Schoolchildren Annual Performances by Students	EX THEATRE
Wed & Thu	13th & 14th	2.00 pm		TATA THEATRE
Tue	5th	6.00 pm	Talks on Western Classical Music	LITTLE THEATRE
Wed	6th	4.00 pm		Stuart-Liff Collection Library
Wed	6th	6.30 pm	Short Film Corner Short Film Screenings	LITTLE THEATRE
Fri	8th	6.30 pm	Living Traditions: Festival of Jharkhand (8th & 9th March) Nagpuri songs by Prithviraj Sinhdeo & group Ho dance by Uma Kumari & group <i>Gohaeer Jatra</i> : folk play written and directed by Deepak Lohar A Presentation by Birs Kala Kendra <i>Kudmali Jhumar</i> songs by Kamal Mahato & group <i>Chhau</i> dance by Dildar Ansari & group <i>Phurgal Dishom Rin Bir Ko</i> , folk play by Jeet Rai Hansda & group	EX THEATRE
Sat	9th	6.30 pm		EX THEATRE
Sat to Fri	9th to 15th	12.00 noon to 8.00 pm	Tradition, Transition, Modernity by The Art of India	Experimental Garden & Sunken Garden
Sun	10th	5.00 pm & 7.45 pm	<i>Perfect Family</i> Hindi Play	EX THEATRE
Sun	10th	5.00 pm & 7.30 pm	All Stars Comedy Stand-up Comedy English/Hindi	Godrej dance theatre
Sun	10th	6.30 pm	Turkish Delight! by The Bombay Chamber Orchestra	TATA THEATRE
Tue to Thu	12th to 14th	10.30 am to 5.30 pm	Guru in Residence Masterclass on <i>Bandish</i> in Hindustani music conducted by Ajoy Chakrabarty	West Room 1
Wed	13th	4.00 pm	Talks on Western Classical Music	Stuart-Liff Collection Library
Tue	19th	6.00 pm		LITTLE THEATRE

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

Day	Day	Time	Event	Venue
Wed	13th	6.30 pm	NCPA <i>Umang</i> Bharatanatyam by Samrat Dutta & Santanu Roy and Kathakali by Renjish Nair	Godrej dance theatre
Fri	15th	8.00 pm	Janine Harouni: Man'oushe Stand-up Comedy in English	EX THEATRE
Sat	16th	5.00 pm & 7.00 pm	<i>I Killed my Mother / It Wasn't My Fault</i> English and Hindi Play	Godrej dance theatre
Sat	16th	6.30 pm	The NCPA Soulful Blues (16th & 17th March) Demetria Taylor	TATA THEATRE
Sun	17th	6.30 pm	Terrie Odabi	TATA THEATRE
Sat	16th	8.00 pm	UnErase's Women's Day Special English/Hindi	EX THEATRE
Sun	17th	5.00 pm & 7.00 pm	<i>Shakkar Ke Paanch Daane</i> Hindi Play	EX THEATRE
Sun	17th	5.00 pm & 7.30 pm	Micro Theatre Short Plays	Godrej dance theatre
Tue	19th	6.30 pm	<i>The World is Family</i> Hindi Film with English Subtitles	Godrej dance theatre
Wed	20th	6.30 pm	Movies Under the Stars <i>The Postman Always Rings Twice</i> (1946) Film Screening	Tata Theatre Garden
Wed	20th	6.30 pm	Reality Check Documentary Film Screenings	LT LITTLE THEATRE
Thu	21st	6.30 pm	Dante's Divine Comedy for India A lecture/performance on Dante's masterpiece by Franco Ricordi	LT LITTLE THEATRE
Thu	21st	7.00 pm	<i>Buckingham's NEW Secret</i> English and Parsi Gujarati Play	TATA THEATRE
Fri	22nd	6.30 pm	<i>Barasat Rang</i> : Celebrating Holi with Dhananjay Hegde, Ruchira Kedar & others	EX THEATRE
Sun	24th	5.30 pm & 8.00 pm	<i>Adrak Ka Swaad</i> by Karunesh Talwar Stand-up Comedy in Hinglish	EX THEATRE
Sun	24th	7.00 pm	<i>9 Parts of Desire</i> English Play	Godrej dance theatre
Wed	27th	6.00 pm	Author Talk Series Book Discussion and Reading: Meher Pestonji's <i>Poems</i> and <i>Being Human in a War Zone</i>	LT LITTLE THEATRE



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WITH AASAKTA

LOVE & INFORMATION

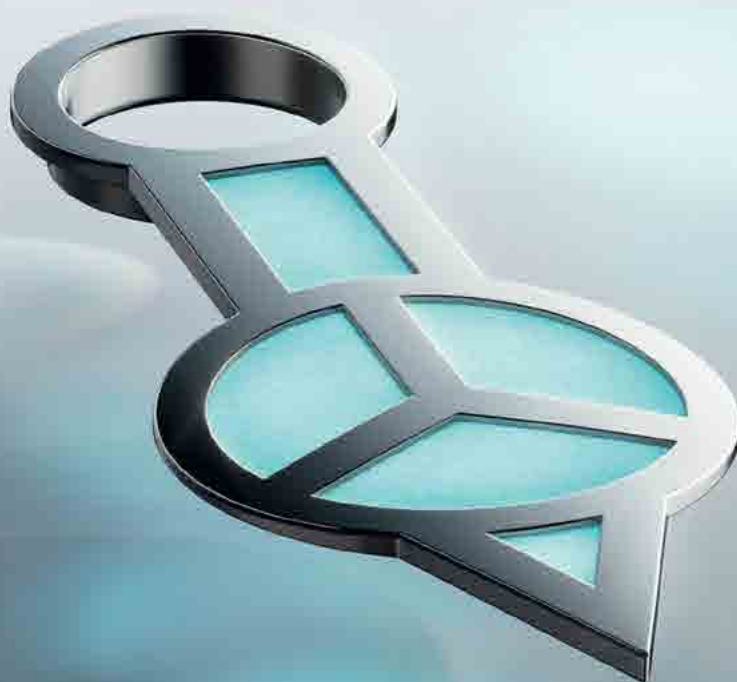
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Apr 25 to Apr 28, 2024
EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE, NCPA

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BRING ON THE NIGHT

This is our Chromalight display. Unveiled in 2008, it offers optimal and long-lasting legibility in the darkest of surroundings thanks to a luminescent substance developed by Rolex and patented. White under the light of day, it glows blue in darkness and makes it possible to read the time in all lighting conditions. Composed of aluminium, strontium, dysprosium and europium, it has the ability to store

ambient light's energy only to better release it, gradually, whenever it may wane. First obtained in powder form, it is then heated to a very high temperature and mixed with a resin, before being applied manually to the hands and indexes. Its characteristic blue hue is a most reliable ally to repel the reach of darkness. A most precious glow in even the darkest of nights.

#Perpetual

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