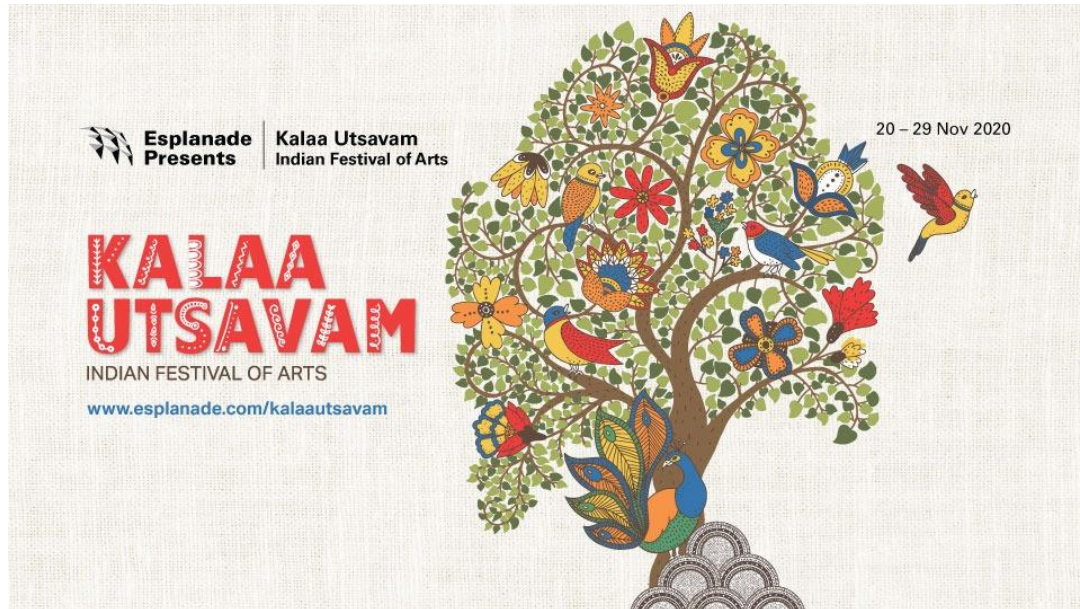


Esplanade Presents

## Kalaa Utsavam – Indian Festival of Arts 2020

20 – 29 Nov 2020

[www.esplanade.com/kalaautsavam](http://www.esplanade.com/kalaautsavam)



Amidst an unexpected and sweeping pandemic, we hold on to hope. Here is where I truly believe the arts has the magnitude to build resilience and vigour in difficult times, connect mankind closer to the beauty of nature and reaffirm the positivity of life in all its permutations. Hence the key visual of *Kalaa Utsavam – Indian Festival of Arts* this year is inspired by the concept of the Tree of Life, which symbolises new beginnings, positive energy, good health, wisdom and a bright future.

In this 19th edition of *Kalaa Utsavam*, we throw the spotlight on the local Indian arts that has shaped Singapore's cultural and arts scene in more ways than one. The festival highlights include three digital premieres: ***Amara – Dancing Stories of Banteay Srei*** by Apsaras Arts; ***Pallavi through Abstractions*** by Chowk Productions and ***Pathey Nimidam – 10-minute Tamil plays*** in collaboration with RDG. Look out for an array of free digital programmes, our annual ***Chakra-thon*** hindustani music performances by prominent artists from India, ***Stories for Solving*** specially for families, and podcast conversations with **Zakir Hussain, Leela Samson, Arundhati Nag, Atul Kumar, Devdutt Pattanaik** and Singapore artist **Md Raffee**.

While we hope that the vibrance of Singapore's arts scene will return soon in all its splendour, we are delighted to showcase a festival line-up that includes newly recorded works, archival screenings and livestreamed performances. Following government announcements that live performances can resume from 1 Nov with the appropriate regulations in place, we are also pleased to welcome audiences back at Esplanade with live shows during *Kalaa Utsavam*. We invite everyone to immerse yourselves in this uplifting atmosphere from 20 to 29 Nov and hope that the offerings this year, bring back the magical moments of experiencing the diversity of the Indian performing arts, once again.

Rajeswari Ramachandran  
Producer, The Esplanade Co Ltd  
On behalf of the *Kalaa Utsavam* team

## About Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay

Esplanade is Singapore's national performing arts centre. It has a year-round line-up of about 3,500 live performances presented by Esplanade, its partners and hirers. Esplanade also brings the arts virtually to audiences in Singapore and beyond, through its diverse range of digital programmes on *Esplanade Offstage*, an all-access backstage pass to the performing arts and guide to Singapore and Asian arts and culture, with videos, podcasts, articles, quizzes and resources.

As an arts centre for everyone, Esplanade also creates opportunities for seniors, youth, children and underserved communities to experience the arts. More than 70% of the shows that take place each year at the centre are non-ticketed.

The centre works in close partnership with local, regional and international artists to develop artistic capabilities and content, push artistic boundaries and engage audiences. Esplanade supports the creation of artistic content by commissioning and producing new Singapore and Asian work for the international stage. It also develops technical capabilities for the industry nationally.

To bring even more of the arts to a wider audience and provide more platforms to support Singapore's next generation of artists, Esplanade is building a new theatre along its busy waterfront. Named Singtel Waterfront Theatre, the 550-seat venue will open in 2021.

Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay is operated by The Esplanade Co Ltd (TECL), which is a not-for-profit organisation, a registered Charity and an Institution of a Public Character. The Charity Council awarded TECL the Charity Governance Award – Special Commendation for Clarity of Strategy in 2016, and the Charity Transparency Award for four consecutive years since 2016.

TECL receives funding support from Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth and its Community Programmes are supported by Tote Board Family, comprising Tote Board, Singapore Pools and Singapore Turf Club.

Visit [Esplanade.com](https://www.esplanade.com) for more information and [Esplanade.com/Offstage](https://www.esplanade.com/offstage) for an all-access backstage pass and insider's guide to Singapore and Asian arts and culture.

~ End ~

Issued by *The Esplanade Co Ltd*.

For more information, please contact:

Koh Sian Eng  
Senior Manager, Marketing (Communications & Content)  
The Esplanade Co Ltd  
Email: [ksianeng@esplanade.com](mailto:ksianeng@esplanade.com)

Tan Wen Rui  
Manager, Marketing  
The Esplanade Co Ltd  
Email: [twenrui@esplanade.com](mailto:twenrui@esplanade.com)

## ANNEX

### **Amara – Dancing Stories of Banteay Srei by Apsaras Arts (Singapore)**

20 – 29 Nov 2020

Online and ticketed on SISTIC Live



Photo credit: Bernie Ng

Banteay Srei is unique among Cambodia's famous sacred buildings. It stands out from other ancient Angkorian temples with its petite size, the pink hue of the hard, red sandstone from which it is made, and the intricacy of its exquisitely sculpted wall relief carvings of motifs, figures and scenes from the Hindu *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* epics.

Built by Khmer courtiers in the 10th century, Banteay Srei was originally named Tribhuvanamaheshwara, and its surrounding town named Isvarapura, both in dedication to Lord Shiva, though the temple venerates both the gods Shiva and Vishnu. Later on, it was dubbed Banteay Srei or "Citadel of Women" in Khmer, perhaps in tribute to the plethora of enchanting female *devatas* (deities) adorning the temple's walls as well as the life-sized sculptures of *yogini* (sacred women) found within its compound.

See these ancient figures and scenes from the Hindu epics come to life and listen as the *yoginis* unravel mystical stories of the sacred temple in this exhilarating dance production.

A digital premiere for *Kalaa Utsavam* 2020 by Singapore's Apsaras Arts Dance Company, established in 1977, recently the inaugural recipient of *Stewards of Intangible Culture and Heritage* by Singapore National Heritage Board.

1hr 10mins, no intermission

\$15

*Esplanade&Me Specials*

\$5 off for *Esplanade&Me* Black, White and Discover members

**Pallavi through Abstractions**  
by Chowk Productions (Singapore)  
20 – 29 Nov 2020  
Online and ticketed on SISTIC Live



Photo credit: Bernie Ng

A “*pallavi*” is both a repeated refrain in carnatic music and a category of classical odissi that is pure dance, stripped of story and characterisation, accompanied only by music. At first slow and graceful, a *pallavi* in odissi gradually builds in tempo and intricacy, blossoming as the music unfolds.

*Pallavi through Abstractions* is the final outcome of the *Pallavi Series* (2016 – 2018), a three-part choreographic exploration of the grammar of the odissi dance form. It explores odissi’s relationship to space, time and stillness, offering lines of increasingly complex movement, placement, stillness, and shifting balances extrapolated from odissi’s repertoire.

In this film, *Pallavi & Space* navigates the relationship between the performance space and the abstract space inhabited by dance using odissi’s “*chowk*” position; *Pallavi in Time* contemplates the body moving to rhythm with the “*tri-bhang*” stance; *Pallavi with Stillness* seeks to deconstruct odissi by isolating and accenting torso movements.

A digital premiere by Singaporean contemporary Indian dance company, Chowk, this filmed performance is a unique collaboration between dancer-choreographer Raka Maitra and local filmmaker Ler Jiyuan, whose dynamic camera lens frames the *pallavi* to tell a riveting story of a dance form that transcends borders.

Chowk, rooted in odissi, seeks to create an Asian contemporary dance expression that dissolves the dichotomy between tradition and modernity.

45mins, no intermission

\$15

*Esplanade&Me Specials*

\$5 off for *Esplanade&Me* Black, White and Discover members

## Pathey Nimidam – 10-minute Tamil plays

In collaboration with RDG

20 – 29 Nov 2020

Online and ticketed on SISTIC Live

RDG's annual Tamil 10-minute play festival *Pathey Nimidam* was founded in 2013 by festival director and theatre practitioner, Hemang Yadav. It involves the participation of numerous Tamil and non-Tamil theatre practitioners—directors, playwrights and actors—in the creation of diverse works wrought from mutual respect and cultural exchange. For the first time, the 7th edition of *Pathey Nimidam* is presented at *Kalaa Utsavam – Indian Festival of Arts*. This edition's nine narratives deal with different subject matter, but all highlight issues close to our hearts. Directors of all the nine plays collaborated with K. Rajagopal, a film maker, to film the plays for digital premiere.

-----



**2+2** – If you truly believe in something, would you vouch for it even when questioned? If someone asks you to affirm something you've known your entire life, will you do it?



**Alone** – A mom-to-be finds herself in a 'spot' an entire night. Will she emerge triumphant?



**Blessings** – A man who has just been stood up by the girl he wants to propose to discovers that some disappointments may be blessings in disguise.



***Change Shift*** – Sonia needs to pick up her passport fast as her wedding in Tamil Nadu is tomorrow but Mr Goh needs to reach Tampines now for shift change. Will they both make it in time and what will they learn along the way?



***LIVE*** asks “What are some questions about life and death you would like answered before the angel of death invites you to the afterlife?”



***Locker Room God*** – A queer police officer seeks answers from God after their identity has been discovered at work.



***THE REUNION*** finds two old friends reunited after many years. One spews callous comments while the other patiently waits for just the right moment for reprisal...



***Sama Sama*** questions if the grass is really greener on the other side.



***Watching the World Go By*** shares the struggles in a transnational woman's life.

Advisory: *Locker Room God* and *THE REUNION* contain some mature content and coarse language. Recommended for 16 years and above.

Performed in Tamil, with English subtitles.

1hr 30mins, no intermission

\$15

*Esplanade&Me Specials*

\$5 off for *Esplanade&Me* Black, White and Discover members

## **Disha – A Vision (Excerpts)** **by Spanda Dance Company (India)**

Premieres on 20 Nov 2020, Fri, 8pm

Available on Esplanade Offstage till 20 Dec 2020, Sun, 11.59pm



“An enchanting insight into *Bharatanatyam*.” – *The Straits Times*

In their Singapore debut and first-ever performance at *Kalaa Utsavam – Indian Festival of Arts 2014*, renowned dancer-choreographer Leela Samson’s acclaimed dance ensemble performs some of their most striking *Bharatanatyam* works to live music scored by Dr Rajkumar Bharathi.

An impressive synergy of bodies, *Disha – A Vision* is choreographed such that each dancer is part of a greater scheme moving together with one consciousness. No dancer is whole without the others, much like the elements of life.

Did you know: This was the first time the Spanda Dance Company had ever performed to live music.

For this digital presentation of *Disha – A Vision*, only the following excerpts will be screened:

- *Spanda Maatrika*,
- *Akaash*
- *Gange Maam Pahi*
- *Aadidano Ranga*
- *Poorvi Tillana*

40mins

Free



## Mudiyettu

by Mudiyettu Sangham Keezhillam (India)

In association with Soorya (Singapore)

Premieres on 20 Nov 2020, Fri, 8pm

Available on Esplanade Offstage till 20 Dec 2020, Sun, 11.59pm



Enjoy this ritual theatre which recreates the clash between the demon Darika and the goddess Kali. *Mudiyettu* was performed during the opening weekend of *Kalaa Utsavam – Indian Festival of Arts 2017*.

Did you know: *Mudiyettu* was the last performance staged at the Esplanade Edge outdoor venue before it had to make way for Esplanade's new Waterfront Theatre.

*Mudiyettu* was inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, making it the second performing art form from Kerala to be recognised by the UN agency after *Koodiyattam*. This presentation marked the first time *Mudiyettu* was performed in Singapore.

Legends tell of the demon Darika who challenged Kali, the goddess of destruction and death, to a duel. During their confrontation, Kali slayed Darika with the blessings of Lord Siva. Their battle is re-enacted yearly in the ritual theatre *Mudiyettu*, an elaborate performance in which the entire village participates. *Mudi* refers to Kali's headgear, which is made of wood or metal and donned by the actor playing the role of Kali.

Performed in *bhagavati kuvus* (the temple of the goddess) in summer right after the harvest, the dancers will purify themselves through fasting and prayer right before the performance. They then invoke the goddess Kali by drawing her image (known as *kalam*) on the temple floor with coloured powders, preparing the ground for the enactment to follow.

*Mudiyettu* is traditionally performed at temples in villages along the Chalakkury and Muvattupuzha rivers. Fostering social harmony, they continue to strengthen communal bonding among the different castes and communities of Kerala.

40mins

Free

## Tholu Bommalatta

by Chitrakaari Tholu Bommalatta (India)

Premieres on 20 Nov 2020, Fri, 8pm

Available on Esplanade Offstage till 20 Dec 2020, Sun, 11.59pm



*Tholu bommalatta* is a Telugu shadow puppetry theatre art form that hails from the Indian states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka. This performance was presented at *Kalaa Utsavam – Indian Festival of Arts 2019*.

In Telugu (the official language of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana), *tholu bommalatta* literally means “the dance (*atta*) of the leather (*tholu*) puppets (*bommalu*)”. Among its many traditions, *tholu bommalatta* puppets are best known for their considerable size, which can range from 120 – 180 cm in height.

Based on stories found in the *Ramayana* and sometimes the *Mahabarata* or key texts in Vaishnavism, the performances also include comedy skits and live music.

On stage, the puppets will appear behind a white curtain moving in front of a light source causing their colourful shadows to appear before the audience. The practice of *tholu bommalatta* encompasses art forms such as painting, engraving, music, dance, acting and storytelling.

Did you know: A centuries-old tradition, *tholu bommalatta* is credited with bringing stories of Hindu epics to remote areas of the Indian sub-continent before the arrival of radio, television or cinema. Puppeteers then are known to perform throughout the entire night.

30mins

Free

## Chakra-thon

In Hindustani classical music, time-specific ragas evoke the cycle of diverse moods and emotions that we experience at different times of the day (*prahar*) and seasons of the year. Curated by National Arts Council Young Artist Award recipient Nawaz Mirajkar, *Chakra-thon* is a series of time-specific concerts that run from dawn to dusk. Each concert features a solo performer or duo giving eloquent voice to human emotion through his/her musical instrument.

### Krishna Rajani by Rakesh Chaurasia

**Accompanist: Ojas Adhiya (Tabla)**

Premieres on 21 Nov 2020, Sat, 1.30am

Available on Esplanade Offstage



Late night is a time of deep sleep, dark mystery and the surfacing of the subconscious in dreams and tender longing.

Plunge into the depths of night with the haunting sweetness of hindustani flute music as Rakesh Chaurasia plays poignant night (*rajani*) ragas on his *bansuri*.

The *bansuri* is a side-blown bamboo flute. One of the oldest musical instruments of the Indian subcontinent, it is traditionally played in hindustani classical music and is celebrated for its association with the Lord Krishna, commonly depicted playing his divine flute.

The nephew and disciple of flute maestro Pt. Hariprasad Chaurasia, Rakesh Chaurasia carries on the family's musical legacy with his exceptional gift. An accomplished musician who has recorded with most of the leading stalwarts of the Indian film industry, Rakesh has also performed solo at major events within India and abroad, and performed internationally in classical and semi-classical concerts in Japan, Australia, Europe, South Africa and the USA, and in festivals such as WOMAD in Athens, *Festival of India* in Japan, Russia, Europe and the USA, *Festival of Saint-Denis* in Paris and *Leicester International Music Festival* in England. He was invited to conclude BBC Radio's 24-hour live music broadcast celebrating Her Majesty the Queen Elizabeth's Silver Jubilee.

30mins

Free

**Mangal Dhwani by Sanjeev Shankar & Ashwani Shankar**  
**Accompanist: Anand Shankar (Tabla)**  
Premieres on 22 Nov 2020, Sun, 5am  
Available on Esplanade Offstage



The period between 4.30am to 6am is believed to be an auspicious time of day, when heavenly beings are said to grace the earth – *Brahmamuhurtham*. As such, it is a good time for meditation and spiritual practices, when *poojas* (prayers) can take place.

As the night transitions from deep slumber to the breaking of dawn, awaken to the auspicious sounds (*mangal dhwani*) of the *shehnai* whose musical scales induce positive vibrations and energy for the day ahead.

The *shehnai* is a woodwind instrument with a double reed at one end and a metal or wooden flared bell at the other. Distinguished by its nasal, melancholic sound, the *shehnai* is both a folk and classical instrument, played at weddings, temples and concerts alike.

Trained by their *shehnai* maestro father and grandfather, Pt. Daya Shankar and the late Pt. Anant Lala, in the Banaras gharana style of playing, brothers Sanjeev and Ashwani are exceptional instrumentalists in the *gayaki ang* (using instruments to mimic human vocals) style. The duo has won awards and performed at various music festivals and recitals.

30mins

Free

**Pratah Sangeet by Anupama Bhagwat**  
**Accompanist: Rahul Pophali (Tabla)**  
Premieres on 23 Nov 2020, Mon, 7.30am  
Available on Esplanade Offstage



Sunrise heralds a new day, awakening nature and mankind to renew the promise of life.

*Pratah sangeet* – literally “dawn music” – is thus inspiring and rejuvenating. Get an early morning spiritual uplift as Anupama Bhagwat evokes sunrise melodies on the *sitar*.

Commonly used in Hindustani classical music, the *sitar* is a traditional Indian plucked instrument with 18 strings, a long neck, and a gourd resonating chamber.

Renowned *sitar* musician, *Surmani Anupama Bhagwat*, disciple of Acharya Pandit Bimalendu Mukherjee, has carved a niche with her versatile and eclectic style - her sensitivity and erudition taking her to the highest echelons of the modern genre. She has performed internationally since 1995, at prestigious festivals and conservatories, notably: *SouthBank Center* (London, UK), *Ali Akbar Khan School of Music* (Basel, Switzerland), *Musée Guimet* (Paris), *Dover Lane Music Conference* (Kolkata). A master in the Imdadkhani style, Anupama exhibits great finesse in her *gayaki*-style performances, bringing out the lyrical beauty and emotive cadences of the *sitar*.

Rahul Pophali, a disciple of Pandit Nishikant Barodekar, is a leading *tabla* exponent and teacher of the Punjab Gharana, with several global performances over two decades. Besides classical *tabla*, he also collaborates in jazz, flamenco, and other world music genres.

30mins

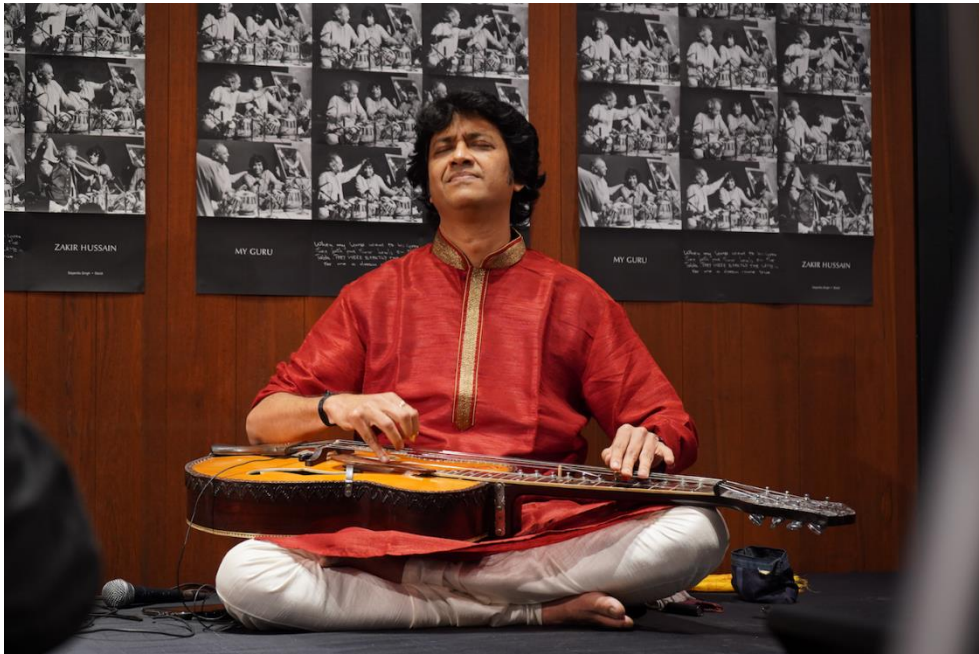
Free

## Swara Prabhath by Manish Pingle

Accompanist: Tanay Rege (Tabla)

Premieres on 24 Nov 2020, Tue, 11am

Available on Esplanade Offstage



Morning is a time of peak human activity, when the brilliance of the sun fills us with vitality and life.

Welcome the reign of the sun and celebrate its cosmic energy with invigorating *swara prabhath* or morning musical notes, performed by Manish Pingle on the *mohan veena*.

The *mohan veena* is a highly modified arch top guitar. It features an additional 12 sympathetic strings (*taraf*) underneath the main melody strings, to make its sound suitable for Indian classical music.

Trained in Indian slide guitar by the late Vishnu Walivadekar, and a senior disciple of legendary *sitar* player, Ustad Shahid Parvez, Manish is one of the few top Indian slide guitarists in India. He has performed extensively in India, as well as across Europe, Middle East, Southeast Asia and Australia. Manish has won accolades performing Indian classical music concerts and also collaborated with international maestros like saxophonist George Brooks, blues musician Michael Messer, French composer Hector Zazou, and African kora player Lamine Cissokho. Manish's album CALL OF THE BLUES with Michael Messer topped the Transglobal world music chart for three consecutive months and iTunes UK for two consecutive months. Manish has been awarded the title 'Surmani' by Surshringar Samsad Mumbai and the Music Excellence award by Camroon Creations Goa. He has also received an exclusive honour from the World Book of Records, London, for his matchless contribution to the Indian classical music. Manish is a qualified sound engineer who has worked on films like *Life of Pi*, *Eat, Pray Love* and *Basmati Blues*, and the TV series *Satyamev Jayate*.

30mins

Free

**Triprahar Raga by Sangeet Mishra**  
**Accompanist: Dhaivat Mehta (Tabla)**  
Premieres on 25 Nov 2020, Wed, 1.30pm  
Available on Esplanade Offstage



The first half of the afternoon is typically a peak period in the daily routine of work and chores, and the midday *triprahar* (3<sup>rd</sup> part of the day) *raga* (scale) is a busy raga that captures the period's liveliness.

Evoking the bustle of early afternoon, Sangeet Mishra rouses audiences with a vivid *sarangi* performance of the *triprahar raga*.

The *sārangī* is a short-necked string instrument that is played with a bow. Used in hindustani classical music, its sound is said to resemble that of the human voice –particularly with ornamentation techniques such as *gamaks* (shakes) and *meends* (sliding movements).

Sangeet Mishra, of the Banaras gharana school of music, is an 8th generation *sarangi* player. His first guru was his paternal grandfather, the late maestro, Pt. Narayan Das Mishra, from whom he learnt vocals. He learned sarangi from his paternal grandfather, renowned sarangi player late Pt. Bhagwan Das Mishra, and his father, the world-renowned sarangi maestro, the late Pt. Santosh Kumar Mishra. A versatile and sought-after performer, he is known for his solo recitals, accompaniment playing and international collaborations with musicians from different genres.

30mins

Free

**Sangeet Sayamkaal by Dhananjay & Ninad Daithankar**

**Accompanist: Sameer Puntambekar (Tabla)**

Premieres on 26 Nov 2020, Thu, 4pm

Available on Esplanade Offstage



As afternoon cedes to evening, the vigour of the day starts to wane as things slow down.

Unwind with the contemplative melodies of *sangeet sayamkaal* – music of the evening – which, played on the shimmering *santoor*, lead us gradually from bustle to calm as the sun begins to set.

The Indian *santoor* is a trapezoid-shaped hammered dulcimer or zither, similar to the Chinese *yangqin*, and a variation of the Iranian *santur*, traditionally played in Sufi devotional music. Carved from walnut or maple, the *santoor* has 100 metal strings which produce a soft waterfall of metallic sounds when struck in quick succession.

Renowned *santoor* player Dr. Dhananjay Daithankar is a disciple of maestro Pt. Shivkumar Sharma. He first learnt santoor from Pt. Ratanlal Tikoo. He has won numerous awards including Pune ki Aasha , Surmani, the Dattopant Deshpande award at the *Sawai Gandharva Festival*, Prabha Atre Purskar and many more. He has performed extensively in India and abroad, composed music, and released many albums.

Ninad has been learning *santoor* from his father and guru Dr. Dhananjay Daithankar for the last 12 years, and has performed in various music festivals in India and also performed with his father in the Canada tour. He is a Citi-NCPA young musician scholarship holder and has received many prestigious awards like 'Ajay Bakshi Smriti Puraskar' at the hands of Taalyogi Pt. Suresh Talwalkar, and the young musician award from Ganvardhan.

30mins

Free



**Sur Sandhya by Debasmita Bhattacharya**

**Accompanist: Ashok Mukherjee (Tabla)**

Premieres on 27 Nov 2020, Fri, 6pm

Available on Esplanade Offstage



As dusk falls and the last glint of sunlight vanishes from the horizon, the day's burdens are shed and thoughts turn inward.

The raga *sur Sandhya*—late evening musical notes—typically reflects the reverie and romance of the twilight period between dusk and nightfall. As Debasmita Bhattacharya's *sarod* sings, its fluid melodiousness and metallic reverberations evoke dreamy musings.

Used mainly in hindustani music, the *sarod* or *sarode* is a stringed, fretless instrument with a body made of teak and skin, and a long metal fingerboard used to produce the continuous slides between notes known as *meend* (*glissandi*).

From West Bengal, India, Debasmita is one of India's finest young *sarod* players, representing the rich musical tradition of the Senia Shahjahanpur gharana. She learnt the *sarod* from her father and guru, *sarod* maestro Pandit Debasish Bhattacharya and the late Padma Bhushan Pandit Buddhadev Dasgupta of the Senia Shahjahanpur gharana, and at the ITC Sangeet Research Academy (Kolkata). Debasmita has performed at numerous music festivals all over the world including *Darbar Festival* (London), *Ravenna Festival* (Italy), *Desiyup* (Amsterdam), *Chaiti Music Festival* (China) and *Sawai Gandharv* (India) to name a few. Debasmita has received many prestigious awards and collaborated with musicians from diverse cultural backgrounds.

30mins

Free

**Ratra Ragini by Arshad Ali Khan**

**Accompanists: Pinaki Chakrabarty (Tabla) & Tathagata Mishra (Harmonium)**

Premieres on 28 Nov 2020, Sat, 11pm

Available on Esplanade Offstage



Night is typically a time of stillness and sleep, a time when human activity abates, and the mind and body come to rest.

Be lulled into a state of contemplation, calm and repose as Arshad Ali Khan sings *ratra* (night) *ragini* (a derivative melody related to a raga), eloquently expressing a myriad of emotions from tenderness to gratitude for the day.

Hindustani classical music is highly focused on vocal performance. The major vocal forms or styles associated with hindustani classical music are *dhrupad*, *khyal*, and *tarana*.

From his grandfather who was a *sarangi* maestro, the late Padmashree Ustad Shakur Khan, and his maternal uncles and gurus Ustad Mashkoo Ali Khan and Ustad Murbarak Ali Khan, Arshad Ali Khan was extensively trained in the Kirana gharana. He entered ITC Sangeet research academy when he was only six and was invited to perform at the prestigious *Sawai Gandharva Festival* at the age of nine. Guided by the late Pt. Bhimsen Joshi, Arshad has established himself as a promising talent among the next generation of hindustani vocalists.

30mins

Free

## Making A Scene

*Making A Scene* is an Esplanade podcast about how art gets made. In this series, artists reflect on topical issues and connections that bind them across art forms and countries, and talk about what inspires their art. These five podcasts have been curated as part of *Kalaa Utsavam* and feature a series of chats with prominent artists that take you from Singapore's Indian band scene to the relevance of theatre in Mumbai and Bangalore.

### **Making A Scene: The Magic of Zakir Hussain's Music**

**Artist: Zakir Hussain (USA)**

**Host: Himanshu Verma**

Releases on 20 Nov 2020, Fri

Available on Esplanade Offstage



Photo credit: Jim McGuire

Hosted by Himanshu Verma and featuring US-based tabla master Zakir Hussain, this podcast will introduce listeners to the celebrated percussionist's work and career while sprinkling in tips for students of the tabla as well as other budding musicians.

Known for his work with the fusion band Shakti and sitar virtuoso Ravi Shankar, Zakir Hussain is an Indian composer and music producer who has helped brought the tabla to international prominence. The eldest son of classical tabla player Ustad Allah Rakha, he was awarded the prestigious Padma Shri in 1988 and the Padma Bhushan in 2002, two of the highest civilian awards given out by the Republic of India. In 1990, he was also conferred the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award by Sangeet Natak Academy, India's national performing arts academy. In 1999, he was awarded the United States National Endowment for the Arts' National Heritage Fellowship, the highest honour given to folk and traditional artists.

Himanshu Verma is the founder of *Connected To India*, an online portal that uncovers and shares stories of Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and the Indian diaspora.

## **Making A Scene: Tracing the history of Indian Bands in Singapore**

**Artist: Md Raffee (Singapore)**

**Host: Sheela Narayanan**

Releases on 20 Nov 2020, Fri

Available on Esplanade Offstage



Uncover Singapore's Indian band scene from the 1940s to the '70s and '80s when MD Raffee's band *The Vasatham Boyz* made their entry until the present time. Learn about Raffee's contributions to Singapore and India's music scenes and what inspired him to become a full-time musician.

Mohamed Raffee has been active in Singapore, Malaysia and India's music industries for over 35 years. His repertoire ranges from Indian ghazals to Western classical, jazz, pop, rock and blues music. A multi-instrumentalist proficient in both Western and traditional Indian instruments, he rearranged and produced the Tamil song *Munneru Vaaliba* for the 1998 National Day celebrations. Raffee has also scored theatre productions such as *The Coffin is Too Big for the Hole* for Singapore theatre group Agnikoothu and films such as *Gurushetram–24 Hours of Anger* (2010) as well as Kollywood hit director Ravikumar's *Jaggubhai* (2010). Raffee also worked closely with acclaimed Indian film music director A. R. Rahman from 1995 to 2007 while collaborating with other composers as arranger, keyboard programmer and instrumentalist. Raffee has released four albums of original music with his band *The Vasantham Boyz* and he continues to perform regularly with them.

Sheela Narayanan spent 13 years as a journalist covering beats from social issues to arts and entertainment before making the switch to corporate communications. As one of the hosts for this podcast series, she is thrilled to be part of Kaala Utsavam 2020, particularly at a time when the resilience of artists everywhere is being severely tested. She believes that their works and creations have never been more important in helping our communities survive these extraordinary times.

## **Making A Scene: Theatre and Its Place in Society in Mumbai and Bangalore** **Artists: Atul Kumar and Arundhati Nag (India)**

**Host: Sharul Channa**

Releases on 20 Nov 2020, Fri

Available on Esplanade Offstage



This podcast surveys Mumbai and Bangalore's theatre landscape by looking at the artists and groups that have part of the scene for more than 30 years as well as others that are currently on the rise. What are the challenges they face in terms of future opportunities and audience development? Is theatre part of everyday life or is it exclusive to the affluent? Does theatre reflect the voices in the society it inhabits and can it continue to thrive amid a global pandemic?

Atul Kumar is a theatre artist and director who heads The Company Theatre. Trained in visual theatre in France, he has directed plays such as *The Respectable Prostitute* (1987) and *Smell* (2004) and translated works such as Moliere's *Tartuffe* and Lonesco's *The Chairs* into Hindi. Aside from conducting theatre workshops and conferences, his theatre company is also known for its collaborations with international groups. Atul has appeared as an actor in movies such as *Thakshak* (1999), *Mangal Pandey: The Rising* (2005), *Mixed Doubles* (2006) and *Talvar* (2015).

Arundhati Nag is an Indian film and theatre actress. One of India's best-known multilingual theatre actors, she cut her teeth with the Indian People's Theatre Association in Mumbai before taking part in productions performed in Gujarati, Marathi, Hindi, Kannada, Tamil, Malayalam and English.

Following her marriage to actor-director Shankar Nag (1980–1990), she continued her theatre career in Bangalore by joining several Kannada plays including Girish Karnad's *Anju Mallige*, Jayant Dalvi's *Sandhya Chayya* and Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage*. She also acted in feature films such as *Nodi Swamy Navirodu Hige* (1983), *Accident* (1984), *Parameshi Prema Prasanga* (1984), *27 Mavalli Circle* (1986) based on the Broadway play *Wait Until Dark*, and *Nagamandala* (1996).

In 2004, Nag established Ranga Shankara, an avant-garde theatre that has emerged as a significant cultural hub in Bangalore. Nag is also a recipient of the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (2008), the Padma Shri (2010) and winner of Best Supporting Actress at the 57th National Film Awards in 2010.

Sharul Channa is a Singapore stand-up comedian. Fuelled by the desires to give women a voice and put Singapore on the global comedy map, she has staged sold-out shows such as *Crazy Poor Sita* and *Disco Sheela and Other Indian Superwomen* that highlight the challenges faced by women today.

## **Making A Scene: The Devdutt Phenomenon**

**Artist: Devdutt Pattanaik (India)**

**Host: Himanshu Verma**

Releases on 20 Nov 2020, Fri

Available on Esplanade Offstage



Hosted by Himanshu Verma, this podcast will look at what made Devdutt Pattanaik a successful author and mythologist. Their discussion will also delve into his latest book *Pilgrim Nation* as well as the challenges he has faced as a writer and his approaches to overcoming them.

Devdutt Pattanaik writes on how mythology continues to be relevant to modern societies, especially in management, governance and leadership.

Trained in medicine, he worked for 15 years in the healthcare and pharmaceutical industries before becoming a full-time writer. He is the author of 41 books including bestsellers such as *My Gita*, *Jaya*, *Sita*, *Business Sutra* and the *7 Secrets* series.

A speaker at TEDIndia 2009, he spoke on the roots of Eastern and Western mythologies and how understanding these myths can help resolve conflicts between different world views. His television shows include *Business Sutra* on CNBC TV18 and *Devlok* on Epic TV. He consults organisations on culture, diversity and leadership and works with filmmakers on storytelling.

Himanshu Verma is the founder of *Connected To India*, an online portal that uncovers and shares stories of Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and the Indian diaspora.

## Making A Scene: Bharatanatyam's Waves of Change

Artist: Leela Samson (India)

Host: Himanshu Verma

Releases on 20 Nov 2020, Fri

Available on Esplanade Offstage



This conversation will explore the Spanda Dance Company's vision and mission. It will also look at how *Bharatanatyam* has evolved within its traditional framework and examine how choreography has transformed to connect with today's audiences and find relevance in a modern world. Diving into Leela Samson's journey in dance including her work as a mentor, this podcast will also look at what her practice means to her and shed light on how a dancer can make the transition to becoming a choreographer.

Leela Samson was inspired to become a dancer at nine after her father sent her to Kalakshetra to learn Indian classical dance and music under famed choreographer Rukmini Devi Arundale. From 1975 to 2005, Leela taught at the Sriram Bharatiya Kala Kendra institution in Delhi. She also choreographed *Spanda* - a body of work known for taking *Bharatanatyam* in such bold inventive directions, it still enthral audiences with its blend of tradition and innovation 20 years later.

As a soloist, Leela's seemingly understated delineation conceals an inspired source that makes her a virtuoso performer as well as a sensitive interpreter of *Bharatanatyam*'s nuances. Reputed for her *abhinaya* (the art of expression in Indian dance) and impeccable form in *nritta*, Leela has performed extensively at prominent dance festivals in India and other parts of the world.

Director of Kalakshetra from 2005 to 2012, Leela took steps to broaden the academic paths of dancers who graduate from the arts and cultural academy. She also spearheaded the digital transformation of the campus while consolidating the many institutions that came under Kalakshetra's banner. Today, Leela is still doing what she loves best – to dance, teach, and explore the relationship between the dancer and the socio-political forces that shapes artistic practices. She continues to perform as a soloist while traveling with the Spanda Dance Company for their showcases at home and abroad.

Himanshu Verma is the founder of *Connected To India*, an online portal that uncovers and shares stories of Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and the Indian diaspora.

## Stories for Solving – Riddle Stories from India

by Kamini Ramachandran, Raghavendran Rajasekeran and Kumuda Krovvidi

Premieres on 20 Nov, Fri, 8pm

Available on Esplanade Offstage



If you are good at figuring out clues and solving puzzles, it's time to put on your thinking cap and enjoy these classic folktales from India, which are riddles wrapped inside stories.

### One Coin

Travel to the busy bazaar with the lazy boy and follow his adventures in the marketplace as he tries desperately to find the answer to his father's question.

### The Magic Sticks

Be part of the village *panchayat* (council) gathering and find out how the wise man reveals the thief amongst them.

What secrets are concealed within a coin and a stick?

You can also create your own storybooks to bring around to retell these riddle tales by printing and colouring the Indian folk-art scenes from the video.

Narrated by master storyteller Kamini Ramachandran, *Stories for Solving* comprises two videos set to music by Raghavendran Rajasekeran with traditional Indian folk-art illustrations by Kumuda Krovvidi.

40mins

Free

---

**More information about *Kalaa Utsavam*'s live performances will be available later.**