

Esplanade Presents

Kalaa Utsavam – Indian Festival of Arts

19 – 28 Nov 2021

www.esplanade.com/kalaautsavam

Tickets on sale 12 Oct 2021, Tue, 9am

Esplanade&Me Priority Booking 11 Oct 2021, Mon, 12pm



In 2002, *Kalaa Utsavam – Indian Festival of Arts* was Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay’s first festival after the centre’s *Opening Festival*. It kicked off Esplanade’s calendar of regular cultural festivals and programmes which have grown from strength to strength. This year, we are humbled to commemorate *Kalaa Utsavam*’s 20th year of championing the Indian arts.

As the first Indian arts festival with a multi-genre focus in Southeast Asia, the festival has sought to be a catalyst for excellence by developing and supporting the creations of Singapore artists in debut performances and premieres.

Continuing in this direction, this year’s edition features a breadth of newly produced Singapore works by bharatanatyam dance company **Bharathaa Arts**, fusion band **Brahmastra**, Indian contemporary dance company **Chowk Productions**, veteran singer composer **Mohd Raffee**, vedic metal band **RUDRA**, classical music ensemble **SIFAS Alumni** and thematic music showcases by **Singapore Indian Orchestra and Choir** and **Temple of Fine Arts**. We look forward to having audiences back at the centre to enjoy these live performances.

Over the years, *Kalaa Utsavam* has also brought artistic teams from all over the world together to raise the bar creatively through commissions and collaborations. In a similar vein, we bring together renowned lyricist **Javed Akhtar** and acclaimed singer **Shankar Mahadevan** for the first time in a digital commission. Through this premiere, screened in the Esplanade Theatre, we continue to showcase international artists in *Kalaa Utsavam*, despite current travel restrictions.

For the first time, we have specially curated short films by international and Singapore filmmakers. We hope to keep our audiences connected to the rich diversity of Indian culture and the diaspora's stories through these in-venue and online screenings.

In this milestone year, we thank our audiences, artists and supporters for the many magical moments shared at *Kalaa Utsavam*. In particular, we express our deepest appreciation to *Kalaa Utsavam 2021*'s Principal Sponsor, the High Commission of India and supporter The Silent Foundation. We will continue to build on the festival's pioneering spirit, its vision to inspire artistic dynamism across borders and be a torchbearer for the Indian performing arts. Do join us, from 19 to 28 Nov 2021, to experience the beauty, vibrancy and joy of the Indian arts once again at *Kalaa Utsavam*!

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

Annexe

Raffee 50 – A Musical Jubilee by Vasantham Boys (Singapore)

19 Nov 2021, Fri, 8pm
Esplanade Theatre
1hr 45mins



Join veteran artist Mohamed Raffee and his band The Vasantham Boys in this landmark performance at the Esplanade Theatre! One of Singapore's most recognisable music figures, Mohamed Raffee gained prominence for his distinct World music sound, with raaga-based compositions influenced by all kinds of musical genres, including jazz, pop, R&B, funk, and many more.

This concert will feature the music from hit albums such as *Breakthro* and *Karupayee*, followed by the official album launch and first official performance of his latest album, *The New Horizon* (2021).

Mohamed Raffee will be on lead vocals and guitar, accompanied by The Vasantham Boys comprising Mohamad Bashir on piano and keyboards, Mohamed Noor on drums and percussion, and Daniel Sitranen on bass guitar. They will also be supported by established musicians Joe Jayaveeran and Navin Kumar Nagpal on percussion, Munir Alsagoff on guitar, Leo Mendoza on electronic wind instrument, Euntaek Kim on keyboard synthesisers, as well as Suthasini, Vishnu Balaji, Kaushik Iyer and Nanditha on vocals.

More about Mohamed Raffee:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/MusicMohamedRaffee>

<https://www.esplanade.com/offstage/arts/generation-m-the-music-guru-multi-hyphenate>

Performed in Tamil

Cat 1: \$38^, Cat 2: \$30*

^ *Esplanade&Me* Black 15% | ^White 10% | ^Discover 10%: Package of 4 across min. 2 shows (applicable to Concert Hall and Theatre shows of *Kalaa Utsavam 2021* only)

*Concessions (Limited): \$22

Dil Abhi Bhara Nahi – Legacy of Sahir Ludhianvi (Screening)
by Javed Akhtar and Shankar Mahadevan (India)
An Esplanade Commission

20 Nov, Sat, 4pm & 8pm
Esplanade Theatre
1hr 30mins



Sahir Ludhianvi, known as a colossus among film lyricists, is considered by many as one of the foremost Urdu poets of the twentieth century.

In commemoration of his birth centenary in 2021, walk down memory lane with Javed Akhtar as he renders Ludhianvi's poetry in his own unique and admirable style, sharing memories of his friendship with the poet and celebrating his life and work. Shankar Mahadevan puts his words to music, lending his voice to his famous poems and songs. As one of Sahir's closest friends, this production is also a touching tribute to their friendship, one wrought by their love for Urdu poetry and their respective accomplishments as poets and lyricists.

Sahir was a poet first, and then a lyricist. He wrote haunting poetry about the harsh realities of life and even his song lyrics reflected the same underlying intelligence and sensitivity. Still, he experimented continuously with his writing. In a career spanning around 30 years, he wrote 718 songs for 111 films. His work deeply impacted Indian cinema and thus he was awarded the Padma Shri in 1971. His untimely death in 1980 left a gaping hole in the world of arts.

Sahir Ludhianvi was an enigmatic, multi-faceted character: Seen as a progressive and revolutionary poet who also wrote some of the most enduring love songs of Hindi cinema, he was also an atheist who created several remarkable devotional songs, an egotist who alienated well-known music directors while standing up for talented newcomers, as well as an idealist who fought for the recognition of lyricists. While he was a difficult man to understand or sympathise with, his endlessly fascinating character never ceased to capture attention.

"Ab ek raat agar kam jeeye, toh kam hi sahi, Yahi bahut hai ki hum mashaaley jalaa ke jeeyein."

Even if I lived a night less, let it be so I lit a spark, at least, while I lived.

Performed in Hindi

\$30

Esplanade&Me Black 15% | White 10% | Discover 10%: Package of 4 across min. 2 shows
(applicable to Concert Hall and Theatre shows of *Kalaa Utsavam 2021* only)

Concessions (Limited): \$22

RUDRA

27 Nov 2021, Sat, 8pm
Esplanade Theatre
1hr 30mins



In a unique performance that brings two genres at the extreme ends of a spectrum together, Rudra ascends the stage with three critically acclaimed classical musicians, Aditi Gopinathan (vocals), Raghavendran Rajasekaran (flute) and Viknash Balakirshnan (mridangam). The band will play a repertoire of songs from eight albums spanning 29 years, showcasing Vedic philosophy through the depiction of a man's journey from birth to enlightenment. A meeting of heavy metal, Indian classical music and ancient Indian philosophy, this performance is arguably the first of its kind and promises to be an epic and enriching experience like no other.

More about Rudra:

<https://www.facebook.com/RudraBand>
<https://www.instagram.com/official.rudra/>

Performed in Sanskrit
For 13yrs & up

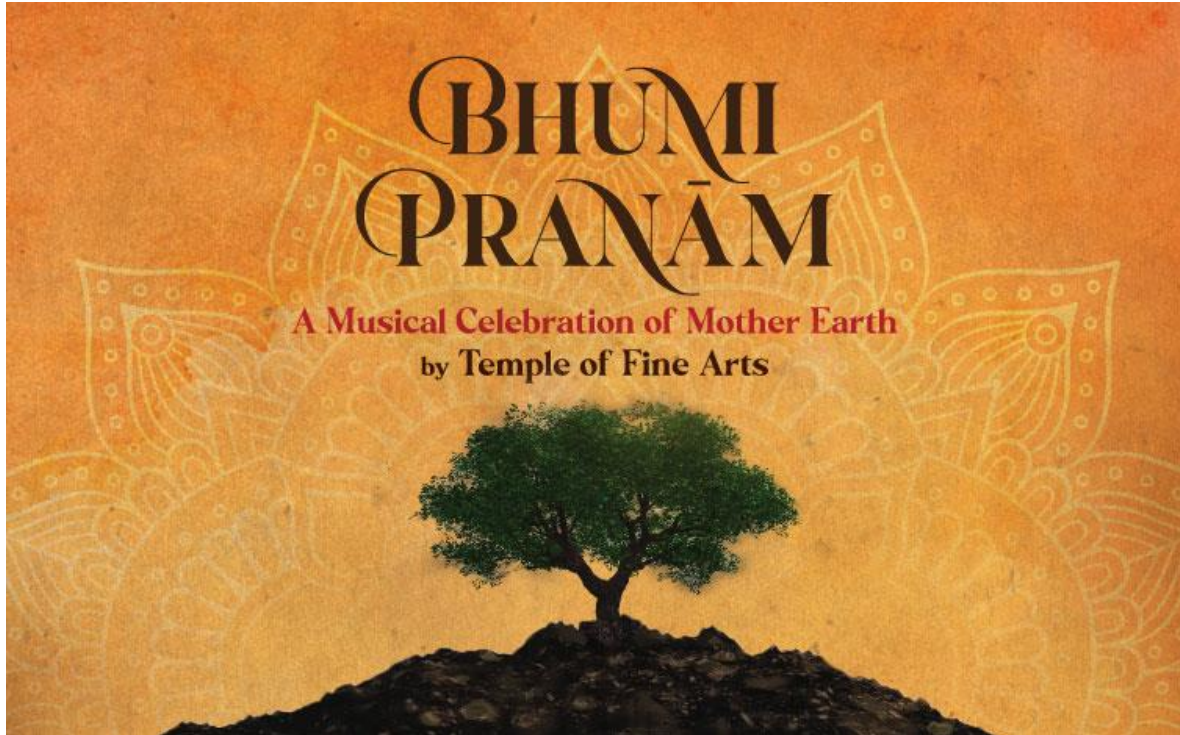
Cat 1:\$30^, Cat 2: \$22*

^Esplanade&Me Black 15% | ^White 10% | ^Discover 10%: Package of 4 across min. 2 shows (applicable to Concert Hall and Theatre shows of *Kalaa Utsavam 2021* only)

*Concessions (Limited): \$16

Bhumi Pranām - “A Musical Celebration of Mother Earth“ by Temple of Fine Arts

20 Nov, Sat, 7.30pm
21 Nov, Sun, 6.30pm
Esplanade Concert Hall
1hr 10mins



In Greek mythology, Earth is revered as Gaia, the ancestral mother of all life. So too do Hindu scriptures, which worship Mother Earth as Bhooma Devi or Prithivi. As an artistic expression exploring the beauty and significance of Mother Earth, this musical production will reflect the simple but oft-forgotten truth that we are inextricably woven into the fabric of nature itself, without which humanity would cease to be. Despite the destruction wrought upon the Earth by humankind, Mother Nature continues to sustain us. This is but a humble attempt to present an ode to the planet that sustains us, a reminder to cherish and preserve her gift to humankind.

The Temple of Fine Arts (TFA) hope to celebrate the significant role that the nature has in our daily lives through the presentation of a musical orchestra ensemble enhanced by visual projection. More than ever, the rapid and multiple challenges the earth is experiencing, such as climate change and a global pandemic, has made humans question if the earth is indeed suffering from mankind's excesses. The world at large is at a point where it is longing for something beyond entertainment and materialism. The difficult experiences as well as the forced period of pause in our lives have made many of us ponder deeply and in the process, reset our priorities in a renewed light: Can we live in a more sustainable way? What kind of world do we want to pass on to our children and future generations?

As a result, there is a shift in mindsets towards a more holistic way of living, be it our choice of food, a greener environment, or a more spiritual outlook. The incorporation of selected Chinese and Malay instruments into the existing Indian ensemble of instruments symbolise the coming together of various races as a harmonious united front to spread positivity and solidarity in these unprecedented times. It is the hope of TFA that this musical endeavour will impact the audience at an emotional level and augment existing environmental awareness efforts.

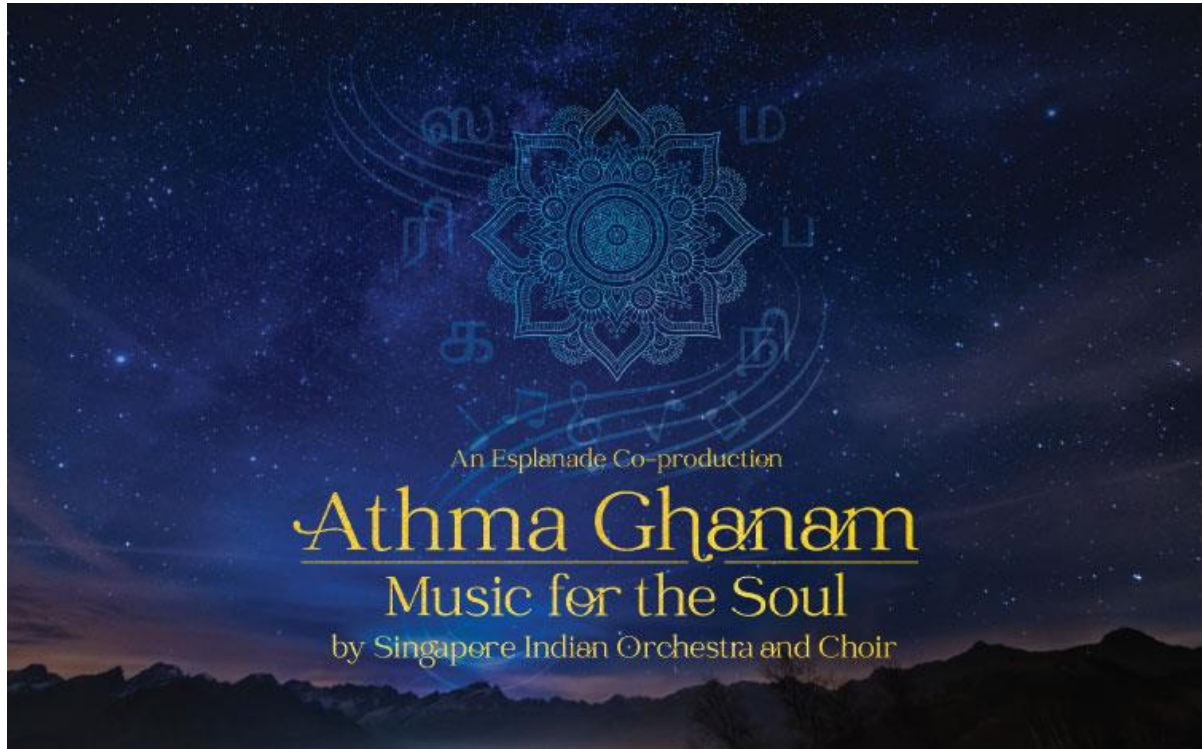
Cat 1: \$38^, Cat 2: \$30*

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*Concessions (Limited): \$22

Athma Ghanam – Music for the soul
by Singapore Indian Orchestra and Choir (Singapore)
An Esplanade Co-production

28 Nov, Sun, 3pm & 7pm
Esplanade Concert Hall
1hr 45mins



Music can awaken the soul. It is one of the oldest forms of spiritual medicine known to humanity. Soulful music has the power to lift us out of depression or move us to tears. It is a profound expression of humanity, and touches our very core, regardless of culture or creed.

The Singapore Indian Orchestra and Choir (SIOC) are proud to bring *Athma Ghanam – Music for the soul* to the stage, an evening of music in all its forms rendered through a myriad of rhythm, melodies and harmonies. The SIOC marks its 36th year with this diverse showcase of musical pieces to form a special repertoire that aims to rejuvenate with the healing energy of music. Compositions from all over the world, ranging from Indian classical *ragas* to contemporary world music, are presented alongside a melodious choir as well as captivating visual elements. This amalgamation of creative mediums creates Expressions that can enhance healing and empowerment. *Athma Ghanam* is a contribution from the SIOC to connect, move and inspire everyone during these challenging times.

Our heartbeat is the rhythm, our voice is the melody that resonates as we speak, our health is the harmony of the body and mind, our breath is the silence between the notes. In the words of George Leonard, “We do not make music. Music makes us.”

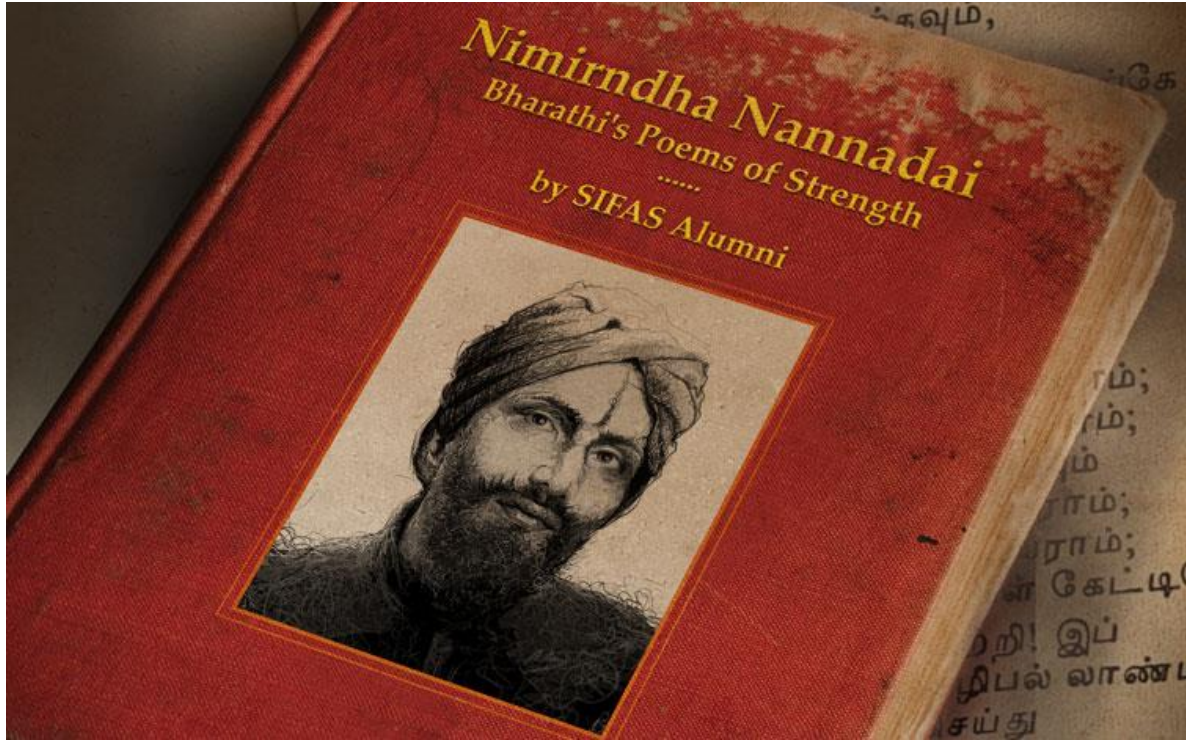
Cat 1: \$38[^], Cat 2: \$30*

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*Concessions (Limited): \$22

Nimirndha Nadai – Bharathi's Poems of Strength by SIFAS Alumni (Singapore)

19 Nov, Fri, 7.30pm
20 Nov, Sat, 3pm & 7.30pm
Esplanade Recital Studio
1hr 15mins



Nimirndha Nannadai is the Singapore Indian Fine Arts Society (SIFAS) Alumni's musical tribute to the indomitable spirit that blazed in the heart of the great Tamil poet, Mahakavi Subramania Bharathi. A spiritually rooted visionary, his revolutionary thoughts established him as one of the 21st century's most relevant poets. As Bharathi's death centenary is celebrated this year, we look to showcase his poems of self-confidence, determination, and societal progress.

Whether in the form of fiery exhortations to action, sage advice to young children, or reflective musings on the nature of life, his poetry has lent itself as inspiration to music, dance, theatre and film productions, as well as Tamil culture at large. For this concert, selected poems of Bharathi's have been set to music composed by Dr Rajkumar Bharathi, great-grandson of the poet, and will be presented by an ensemble featuring both Indian classical vocals and instruments and Western instruments. The concert will also feature immersive projection, adding a visual dimension to the experience.

Performed in Tamil

\$30^{^*}

[^]Esplanade&Me Black 15% | White 10% | Discover 5%

*Concessions (Limited): \$22

Mighty Warrior Prince Bheema

An Esplanade Production

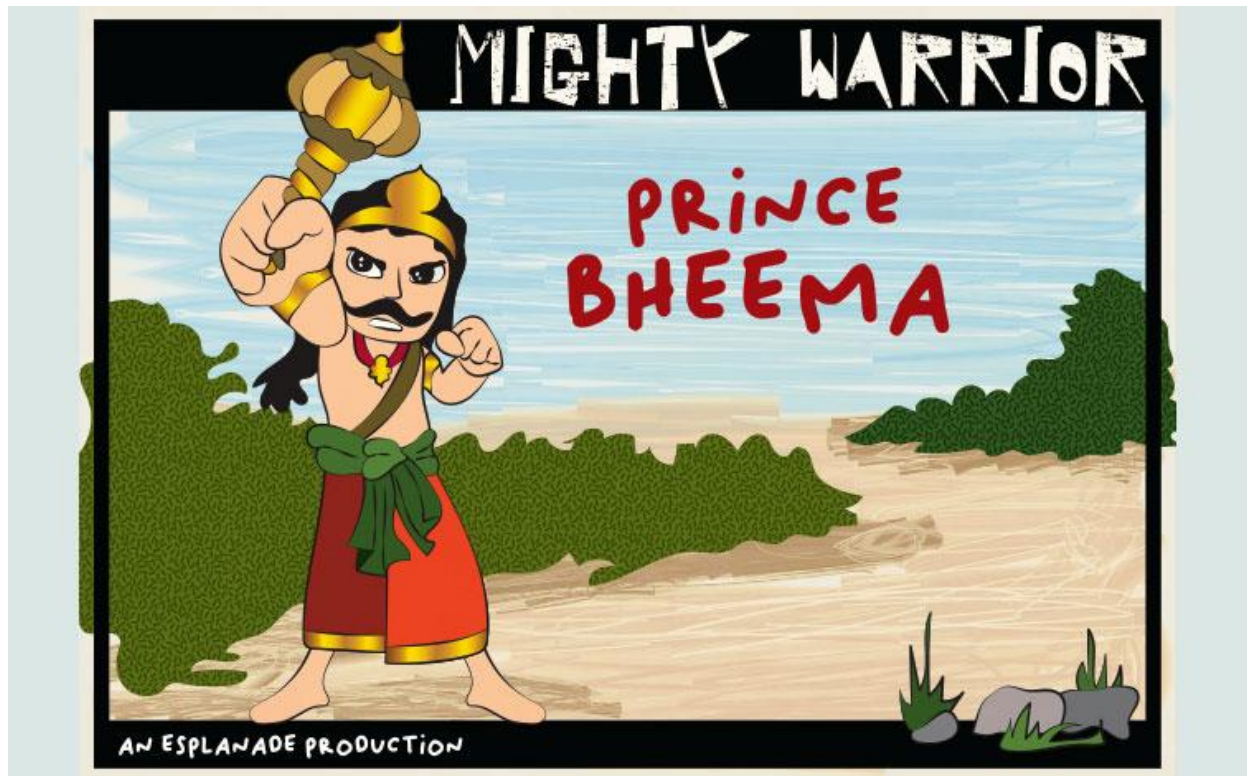
26 – 28 Nov, Fri – Sun

26 Nov, 7pm

27 & 28 Nov, 11am, 2pm, 4.30pm & 7pm

Esplanade Recital Studio

45mins



Have you heard of the mighty Bheema, the strongest of the Pandavas?

Come meet the warrior prince and find out how he gained the power of 1000 elephants and fought the evil demon Bakusara!

Catch the exciting adventures of superhero Bheema from the famous epic, the Mahabharata.

Performed in English

Admission age: 1yr & up

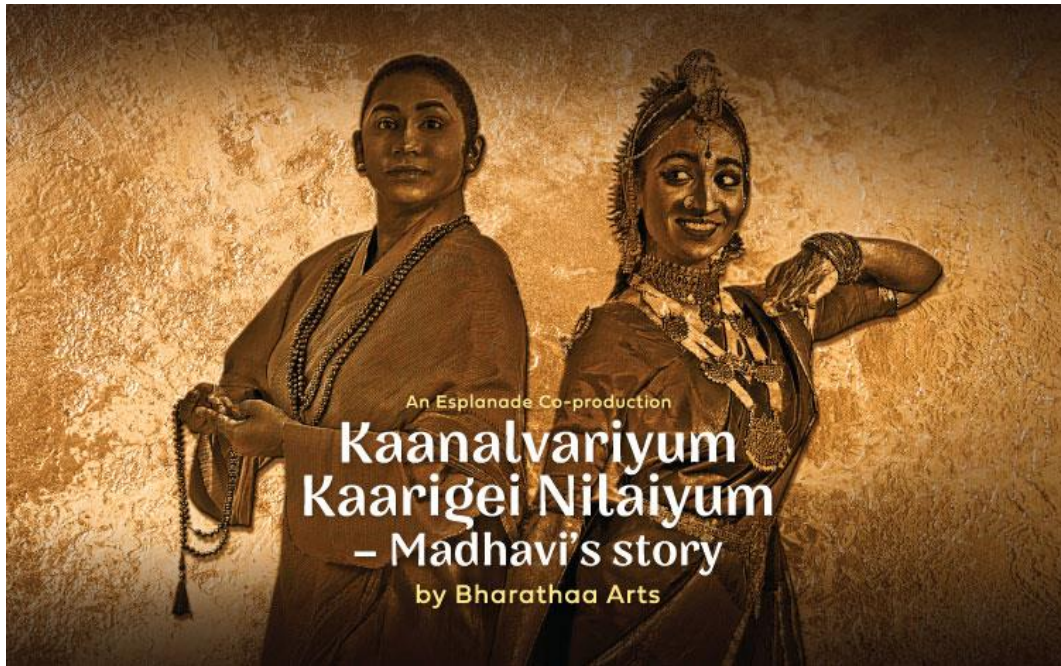
Recommended for ages 4 to 8yrs old

\$20

E&Me PIP's Club 10% (min. 2 tickets)

Kaanalvariyyum Kaarigei Nilaiyum – Madhavi’s story
by Bharathaa Arts (Singapore)
An Esplanade Co-production

19 – 21 Nov 2021, Fri – Sun
19 Nov, 8pm
20 – 21 Nov, 3pm & 8pm
Esplanade Theatre Studio
1hr 30mins



The *Silappathikaram* by Ilango Adigal is the first epic narrative written in Tamil. A timeless classic, it is one of India’s literary masterpieces. The story revolves around the lives of three characters: Kovalan, a rich businessman, his wife Kannagi and the courtesan, Madhavi. This tale of passion, revenge, valour has lent itself to many adaptations both in dance and cinema. Against the backdrop of his narrative is the detailed cultural and geographical depiction of the Tamil land nearly 200 years ago.

Bharathaa Arts present an adaptation of this text from Madhavi’s perspective. The story of her life is related as a flashback through a conversation with her daughter, Manimegalai, who lives in a Buddhist monastery with her.

The narrative will dwell on the emotional upheavals in the life of Madhavi, who falls in love with Kovalan but chooses to renounce her life to become a Buddhist monk. This dance-drama will bring alive traditional folk dances practiced in those times and show the rich cultural heritage of the Tamil people of the *Sangam Chola* period.

Paired with songs of longing, *Kaanalvariyyum Kaarigei Nilaiyum* is a story of a woman’s turmoil that unravels the universal emotions of love, betrayal and search for peace.

Performed in Tamil

\$30^*

^*Esplanade&Me* Black 15% | White 10% | Discover 5%

*Concessions (Limited): \$22

Marma Medai – Theerppu (The Judgement)

An Esplanade Production

26 – 28 Nov, Fri – Sun

26 Nov, 8pm

27 & 28 Nov, 3pm & 8pm

Esplanade Theatre Studio

1hr 20mins



Five people wake up in a strange place with no exit. They do not know one another and cannot recall anything about themselves. With no knowledge of why or how they arrived at this place, they sense that it is unsafe. Whatever lurks around, is not pleasant. Will they be harmed or will they manage to escape?

Be entranced by the mystery of *Marma Medai – Theerppu (The Judgement)*, a new play with characters borrowed from the long-running 1960s Tamil radio play series, *Marma Medai* by M K Narayanan.

Playwright and director: Grace Kalaiselvi

Production manager: Clarisse Ng

Stage Manager: Shivani Rajan

Actors: Gayathri Segaran, Indumathi Tamilselvan, Karthikeyan Somasundaram, Pramila D/O Krishnasamy and Rebekah Sangeetha Dorai

Set designer: Noor Effendy Ibrahim

Lighting designer: Emanorwatty Saleh

Sound designer: Ramesh Krishnan

Multimedia designer: K Rajagopal

Image designer: Kesavan Odaippan

Performed in Tamil with English subtitles
For 16yrs & up

Advisory:
This production contains strobe lighting, sudden sound effects and coarse language.

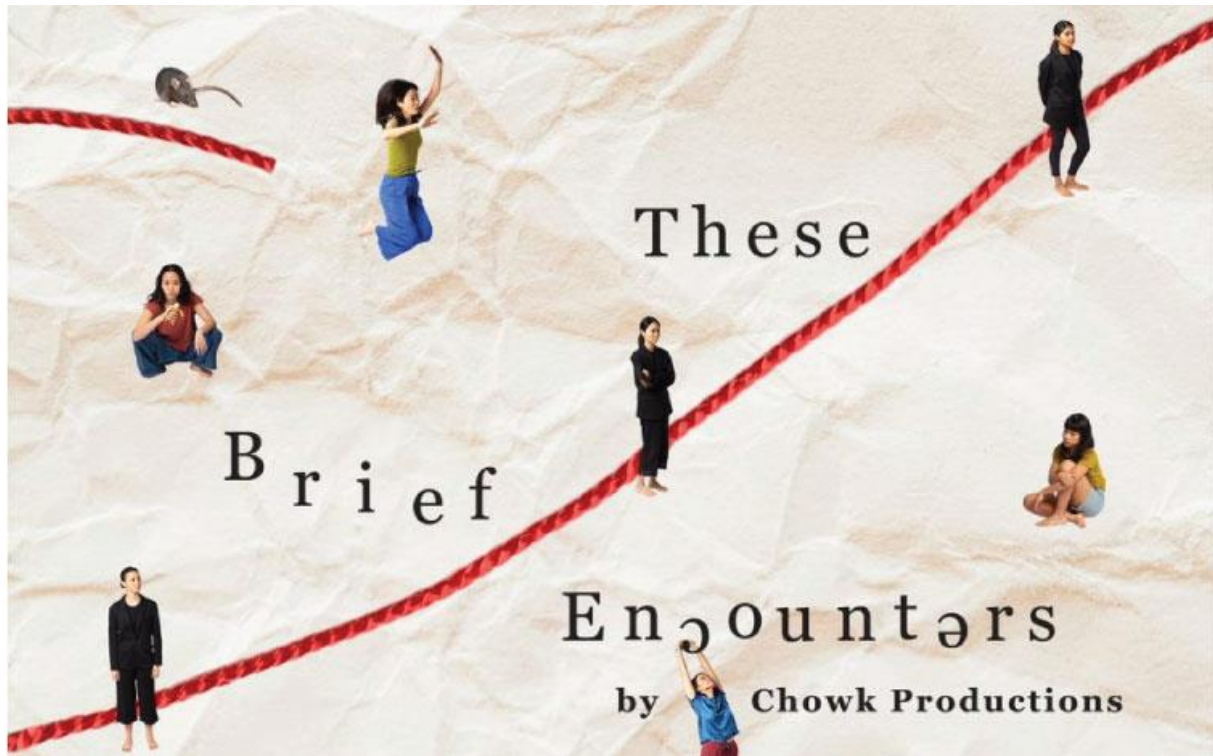
\$30^*

^*Esplanade&Me* Black 15% | White 10% | Discover 5%

*Concessions (Limited): \$22

These Brief Encounters
by Chowk Productions (Singapore)
An Esplanade Commission

19 & 20 Nov, Fri – Sat, 4pm & 8pm
Esplanade Annexe Studio
1hr 10mins



In a world irrevocably changed by the COVID-19 pandemic, how do we respond to our new lives on an individual level and as a society? How do we process these new experiences? *These Brief Encounters* is a contemporary dance performance created in response to *The Plague* by Albert Camus, exploring how a novel published in 1947 captures the spirit of the present day.

Camus' *The Plague* operates on an allegorical and a literal level, finding meaning in ordinary people doing extraordinary things out of simple decency—a sentiment which still rings true today.

Choreographed by Raka Maitra, *These Brief Encounters* is the first collaboration between Chowk Productions and Siong Leng Musical Association.

Choreographer: Raka Maitra

Dancers: Sandhya Suresh, Caroline Chin, Anushka Ghosh, Elizabeth Sergeant Tan, Tan Weiyang, Vanessa Toh

Musicians from Siong Leng Musical Association

Production Designer: Muhammad Izdi

Lighting Designer: Stev.e Kwek

For 13yrs & up

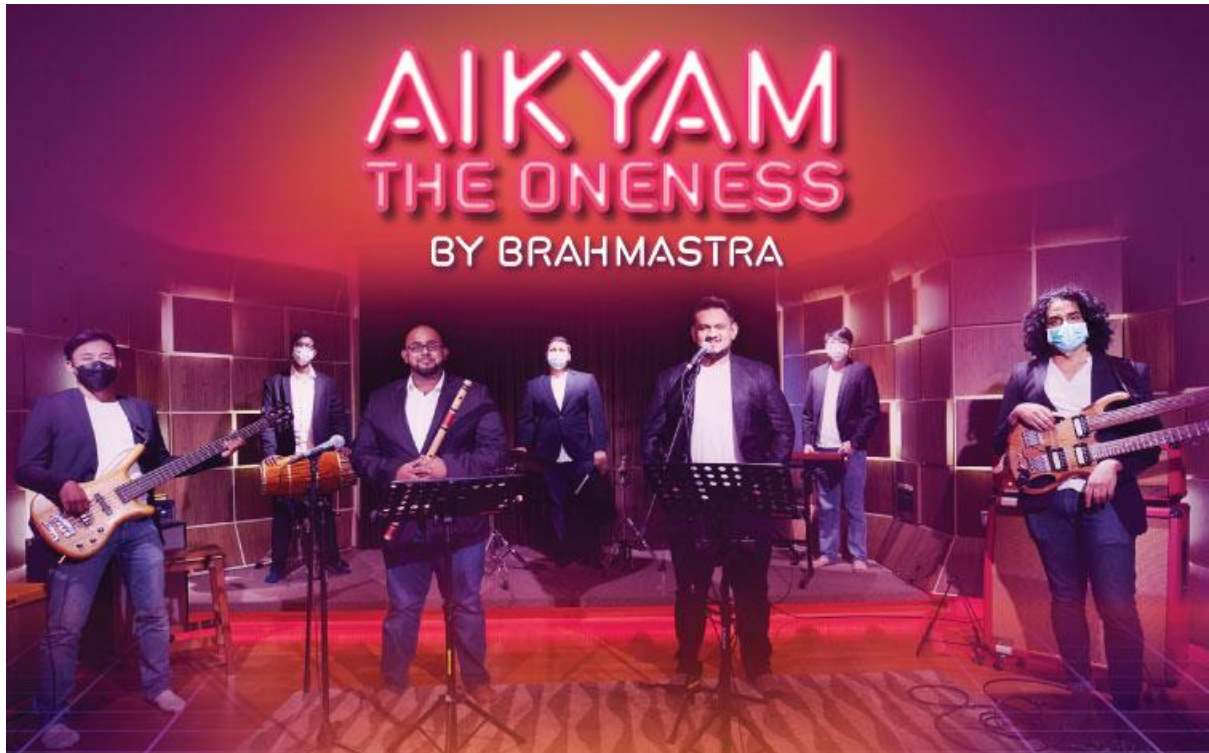
\$30^*

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*Concessions (Limited): \$22

Aikyam – The Oneness by Brahmastra (Singapore)

21 Nov 2021, Sun, 6pm & 8pm
Esplanade Annexe Studio
45mins



Join award-winning Indo-ASEAN contemporary ensemble Brahmastra as they present the world premiere of their new album, *Aikyam – The Oneness*.

Featuring six original compositions, the new album is an immersive musical experience that will take you through the journey of Brahmastra as they explore life's meaning through music and the soulful connections that manifest. Enjoy a blend of music from different communities such as Indian folk, carnatic and Hindustani classical music, jazz, blues, funk, and more. This album includes the award-winning composition, *Thadai Edhuvai*.

Alongside these new tracks, Brahmastra will also be performing music from past releases include *Desire*, *Inner Urge* and *Kadhalin Kaatre*.

More about Brahmastra:

<https://www.facebook.com/Brahmastrasg/>

<https://www.instagram.com/brahmastrasg/?hl=en>

Performed in Tamil

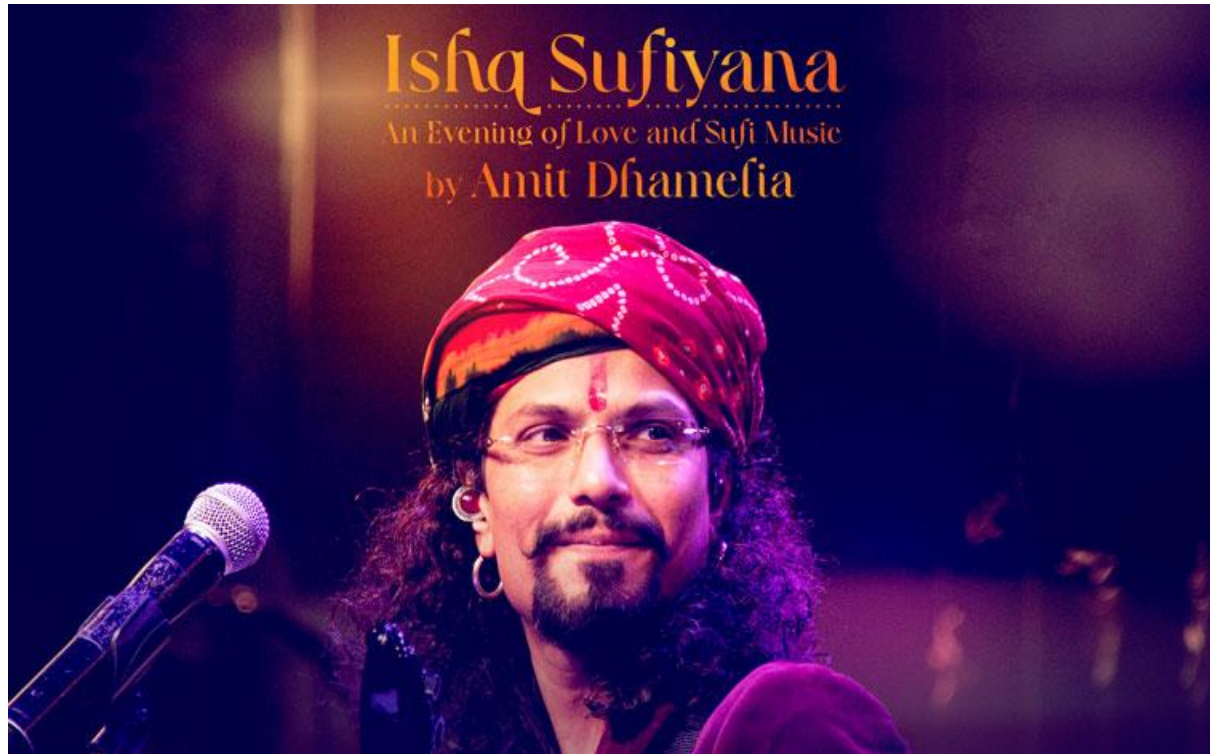
\$20^*

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*Concessions (Limited): \$15

Ishq Sufiyana - an evening of love and Sufi music by Amit Dhamelia (Singapore)

26 Nov, Fri, 7.30pm & 9.30pm
Esplanade Annexe Studio
1hr



The seclusion that people have endured due to the pandemic has thrown light on several existential questions: What is happiness? What is fate? What is our purpose? Why do we suffer? Amit Dhamelia and his band bring you Sufi music, a musical form that explores these deep spiritual questions through poignant poetry and lilting melodies.

Sufism profoundly extols ageless virtues and playfully reprimands human foolhardiness. This musical journey wishes to kindle inspiration and hope for people to continue seeking out their own destinies and self-actualisation. Since Sufi music is an established form of acoustic music, expect to be regaled with unplugged versions of well-known love songs from Bollywood, folk songs and Amit Dhamelia's original compositions.

More about Amit Dhamelia:

<https://www.facebook.com/amit.dhamelia>

Performed in Hindi and Punjabi
For 13yrs & up.

\$20^{^*}

[^]Esplanade&Me Black 15% | White 10%

*Concessions (Limited): \$15

Film Screening: For the Love of a Man – Rajnikanth Documentary by Rinku Kalsy (India)

27 & 28 Nov, Sat & Sun, 2.30pm & 8.30pm
Esplanade Annexe Studio
1hr 30mins



For the Love of a Man follows the fans of superstar Rajnikanth, whose fandom often becomes integral to their identities and those of people around them. The visual ethic of fandom and star mimicry reveal a form of star worship that is unique to Indian cinema culture. The lives of fans and their families present to us themes of brotherhood, aspiration, political affiliation, or even just means of being noticed. From bankruptcies to reformations from lives of crime, the lives of the fans offer stories that range from the heroic to the horrific—all in a day's work in turning a film star into a deity. *For the Love of a Man* premiered at the Venice Film Festival in September 2015 and showed at the Mumbai and Dubai Film Festivals in 2015

Screened in Tamil with English subtitles.

For 13yrs & up
Rating: NC16

\$5
For *Esplanade&Me* members only

Film Screening: Koothu by Sandhya Kumar (India)

27 Nov, Sat, 4.30pm
Esplanade Annexe Studio
52mins



In many villages in Tamil Nadu, a theatre tradition continues to link people with the past. Closely connected with religion and caste rituals, *koothu* brings to life stories about gods, demigods, kings and demons from the Indian epics. A typical performance runs all –night, and performers wear elaborate make-up, costumes and wooden ornaments while simultaneously singing, dancing and acting on stage. *Koothu* companies tour the countryside, often commissioned by villages to perform for several consecutive nights. Yet, despite its enduring rural popularity, *koothu* struggles to find place and patronage in urban art circles, partly due to its associations with the lower castes. Who creates the binaries of folk and classical? Through the work of two *koothu* masters, P. Rajagopal and Sambandan Thambiran, the film delves into questions of representation and patronage of the art form while presenting its art and aesthetics.

The screening is co-curated with IFA, an independent, nationwide, not-for-profit organisation that makes grants and implements projects under practice, research and education in the arts and culture in India.

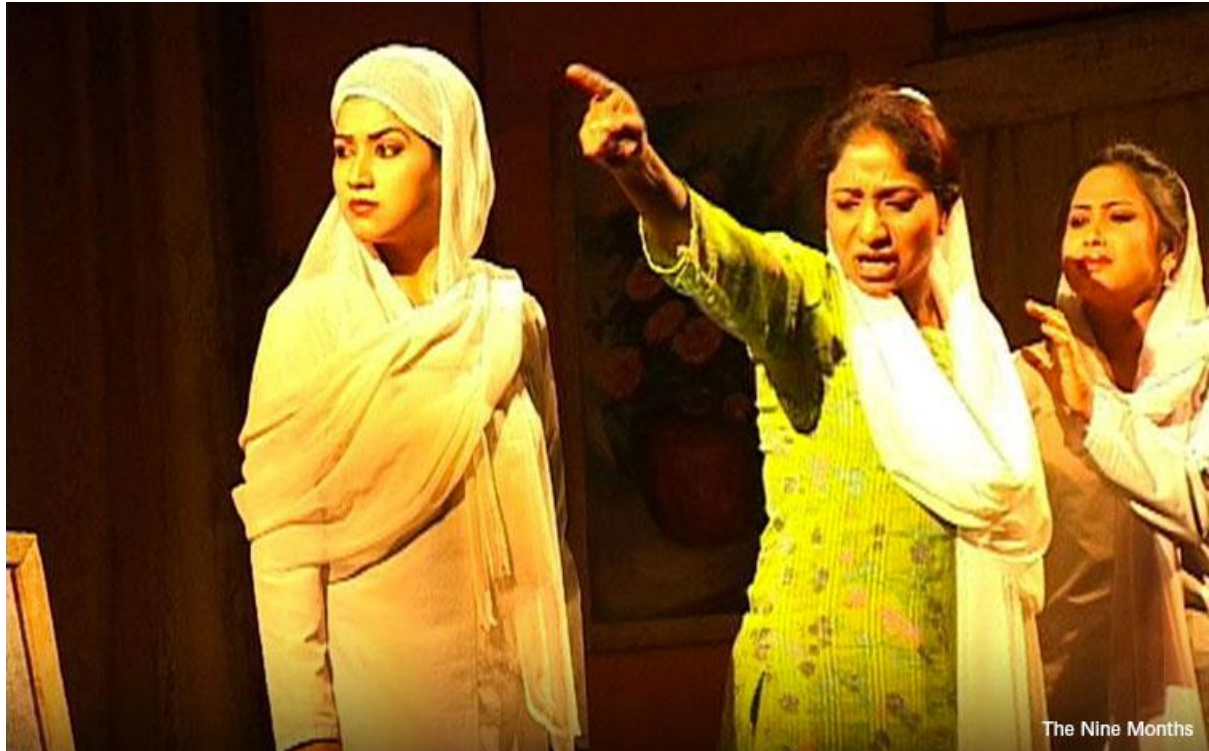
Screened in Tamil with English Subtitles.

For 13yrs & up
Rating: To be advised.

\$5
For *Esplanade&Me* members only

Film Screening: The Nine Months by Merajur Rahman Baruah (India)

27 Nov, Sat, 6.30pm
Esplanade Annexe Studio
1hr 17mins



This evocative film explores the history, form, style and aesthetics of Assam's mobile theatre. It records the transformation in themes and repertoires in the genre of performance, as well as captures the experiences and perspectives of its promoters, directors, actors, technicians, and stagehands while documenting the impact of globalisation on its practice. Take a look at the various kinds of plays staged by the mobile theatre, the issues the community deals with and how the genre has transformed from presenting mythological and folk stories to contemporary themes with social and political implications.

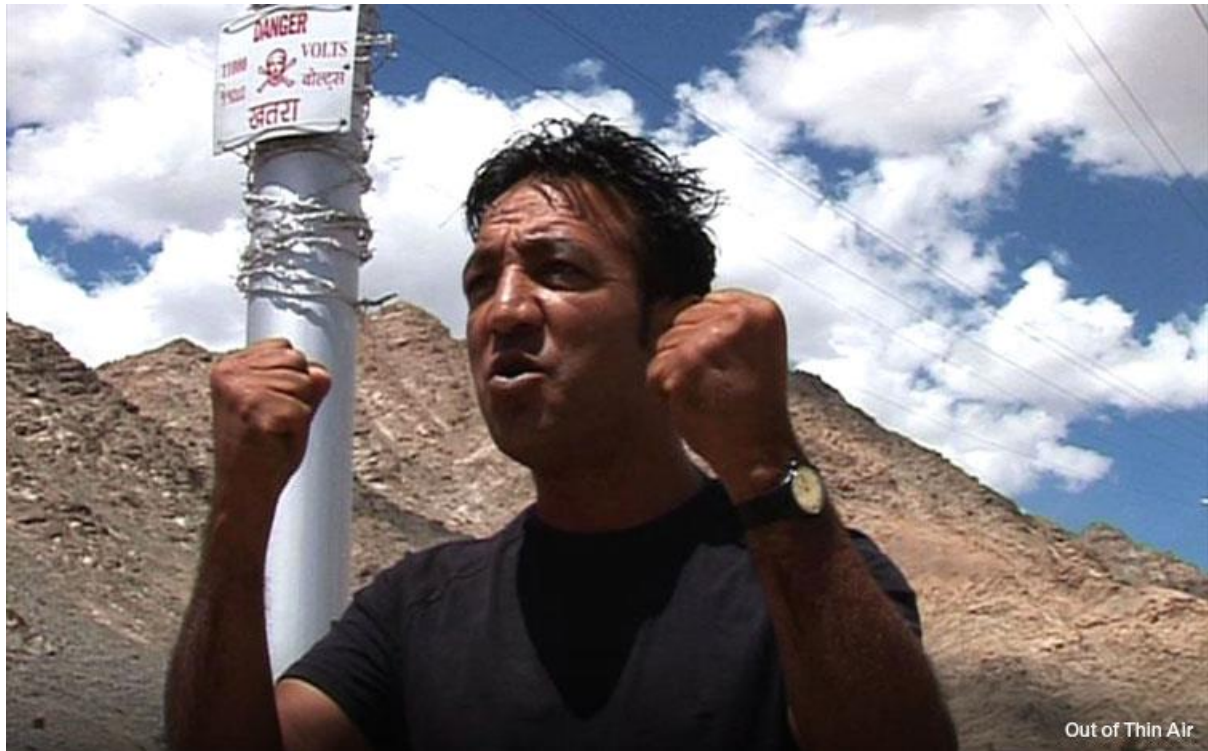
This film and its screening were made possible with support from India Foundation for the Arts (IFA), an independent not-for-profit organisation that awards grants and implements projects under practice, research and education in the arts and culture in India.

Screened in Assamese with English subtitles
For 13yrs & up
Rating: To be advised.

\$5
For *Esplanade&Me* members only

Film Screening: Out of Thin Air by Shabani Hassanwalia and Samreen Farooqi (India)

28 Nov, Sun, 4.30pm
Esplanade Annexe Studio
50mins



Out of Thin Air is the story of one of the most surreal and hostile landscapes in the world—Ladakh. See beyond the postcard-perfect images and follow the subterranean film movement that has taken root in the region over the past six years, becoming the voice of the people. Today, taxi drivers, grocery store owners, cops and monks are producers, directors, camerapersons and actors of one of the youngest and most dynamic, local film industries in the world.

This film and its screening were made possible with support from India Foundation for the Arts (IFA), an independent not-for-profit organisation that awards grants and implements projects under practice, research and education in the arts and culture in India.

Screened in Hindi & English with English subtitles
For 13yrs & up
Rating: To be advised.

\$5
For *Esplanade&Me* Members only

Film Screening: Casting Music by Ashok Maridas (India)

28 Nov, Sun, 6.30pm
Esplanade Annexe Studio
46mins



Casting Music seeks to explore the musical tradition of the Savita Samaj, a community whose contributions to the musical legacy of the *nadaswaram* has remained untold. The film deftly combines stories of the instrument along with those of its performers, their negotiations and struggles as a community of musicians and barbers, and their intertwined lives beyond the musical world. The film uses the instrument as a visual metaphor to examine the socio-economic issues that are influencing sweeping changes in the lives of the community members.

This film and its screening were made possible with support from India Foundation for the Arts (IFA), an independent not-for-profit organisation that awards grants and implements projects under practice, research and education in the arts and culture in India.

Screened in Kannada, Telugu with English subtitles
For 13yrs & up
Rating: To be advised.

\$5
For *Esplanade&Me* Members only

Short Films

by local filmmakers

19 Nov, Fri, 8pm – 28 Nov, Sun, 8pm

Online. All day viewing

Approximately 90mins in total for all films

Screened in Tamil with English subtitles

Ratings: Varies.

\$5

Free for *Esplanade&Me* Members

Playlist includes the following films:

When Mirrors Had Meaning

by Yugavardhan

PG | 13mins 19s



With searing visuals and memorable scenes, *When Mirrors Had Meaning* follows 70-year-old Krishan as he sets off on a journey in search of his distant memory, leaving behind a letter to his family. His daughter Priya is the first to find the letter and assumes the worst. Her mother Rani finds her in a frenzied state but is calm after reading the note, as she has an idea of where her husband might be. They eventually find him in a temple speaking to someone in Hokkien, someone not visible to them. While Priya is confused, Rani knows exactly what is going on, and unveils Krishnan's storied history to his daughter.

Nodigal Sivanthaal – Yen Pidiyil Nee (Holding You)
by SINGAPORE INDIAN THEATRE & FILM EXPLORERS LTD (S.I.T.F.E)
PG | 12mins



What can you do when letting go is beyond your control? Inspired by one of Rama Kannabiran's Tamil short stories, *Tanah ANAH Merah Diary*, *Yen Pidiyil Nee* (Holding You) is a Tamil short film about a lady who recollects her beautiful moments with her husband and her past while on her way to bid her final goodbye.

Nodigal Sivanthaal – Vaergalaada (Dance of the Roots)
by SINGAPORE INDIAN THEATRE & FILM EXPLORERS LTD (S.I.T.F.E)
PG | 19mins



What happens when the ground you relied on for survival starts moving? Inspired by one of Ma Ilangkannan's Tamil short stories, *Murungaimaram* (Drum Stick Tree), *Vaergalaada* (Dance of the Roots) is a Tamil short film about migrant worker brothers, Vellaiyan and Karuppanan, whose individual personalities and decisions push one of them to the point of no return.

Smell of Coffee
by Nishok
PG | 11mins 43s



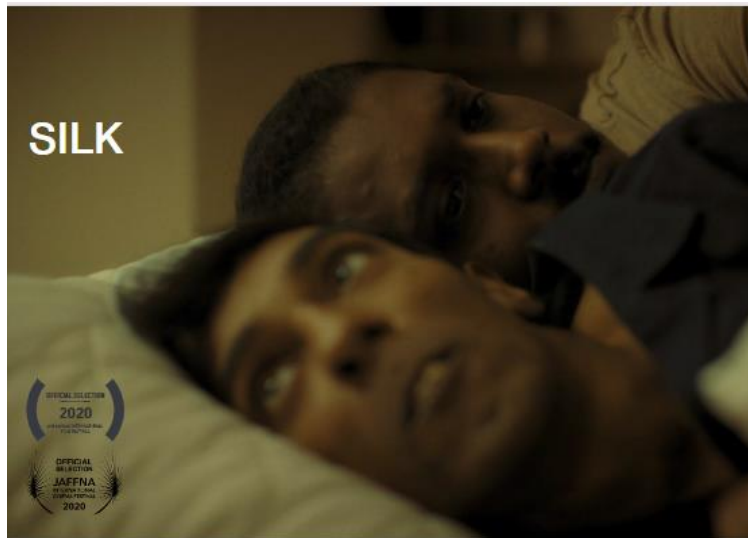
Raga accompanies his grieving grandmother in the wake of his grandfather's passing. Perplexed by his absence, Raga innocently yearns for his return. A faint yet familiar smell piques his curiosity, leading him on a journey of self-discovery in the fading apartment.

Dark Light
by Vikneshwaran Silva
NC16 | 21mins 15s



Mari, a construction worker from India, visits a red-light district seeking Mei, a sex worker from China. However, Mei dislikes him and rejects him. In that moment, he becomes distracted by a large crowd surrounding a gambling table. They are playing a game of dice and Mari takes part in it. After winning a few rounds, he decides to leave but gets forced to put all his money down by the gang member in charge of the table. Mari gets conned and they run away with his money. Mari chases after them but gets ambushed and beat up. Feeling the pressure of having to send money back home to feed his family in India, he does the unthinkable to salvage the situation.

Silk
by Don Aravind
NC16 | 12mins 44s



A dutiful son struggles to reunite his fractured family as they deal with his ailing father's condition. However, the shocking discovery of a family secret threatens to undermine his efforts.

More information about *Kalaa Utsavam's* free programmes to be announced at a later date.