

Esplanade Presents

## ***Kalaa Utsavam – Indian Festival of Arts 2019***

15 – 24 Nov 2019

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



Dear Friends of the Media,

The arts is a reflection of our times and gives us insight to a community's cultural practices and beliefs. In celebration of the Deepavali season, Esplanade – Theatre's on the Bay's annual *Kalaa Utsavam – Indian Festival of Arts* features artists from across the Indian diaspora and will take place from 15 – 24 Nov 2019. The programmes in the 18th edition mirror the evolution of our times and remind us how tradition can keep us rooted and enrich us as we navigate this contemporary age.

We welcome back Bangalore-based carnatic rockers Agam, who bring their unique blend of classical carnatic sounds with a rock twist. Commissioned by Esplanade, this concert will see the band perform an exclusive segment with celebrated Hindustani vocalist Kaushiki Chakraborty, for the first time ever. Dance maverick Aditi Mangaldas returns to *Kalaa Utsavam*, this time with *Inter\_rupted*, a work that showcases her signature blend of the classical *kathak* tradition, contemporary dance elements and theatre design.

*The Lost Wax Project* is a contemporary dance work by young choreographer Preethi Athreya—who has been trained in the classical form of *bharatanatyam*—that seats the audience around an intimate, circular stage. *The Threshold* is an intimate musical conversation which sees artists Pallavi MD and Bindhumalini celebrating the lesser-known journeys of remarkable women across continents and spanning generations.

Bollywood music fans can look forward to the Singapore debut of composer, singer and lyricist Amit Trivedi, who is often touted as the torchbearer of the new generation of pop music. Meanwhile, Actors Ensemble India Forum also makes its Singapore debut with *Ultimate Kurukshetra*, a side-splitting comedy and a modern take on the epic Mahabharata. The Guitar Prasanna Trio makes its debut at *Kalaa Utsavam* in a concert that showcases their signature musical style that marries Western genres such as rock, metal, blues and funk with carnatic music.

Over the years, we have had the privilege of journeying with many of our Singapore artists, supporting them in their artistic evolution. *Kalaa Utsavam 2019* continues to be a platform for many artistic firsts. With Bhaskar's Arts Academy, we co-produce *Marabu – The First Ripple*, the group's first venture into the dance-theatre genre, presented as the first of a trilogy. Swarhythm Ensemble, a multi-ethnic group of talented Singapore musicians founded and led by accomplished tabla artist Nawaz Mirajkar, will launch their first album in a concert. Homegrown Hindi band The Band Walle, who were part of our *Fusion Beats Mentorship* programme last year, returns to the festival with their first ticketed concert. In *Airavata and his Mammoth Task*, young children will be inspired by the tales of the King of Elephants and the brave and loyal vehicle of Indra.

We give our heartfelt thanks to our Sponsor Singapore Press Holdings and Supporting Sponsor House Brand, a food product manufacturer, for their generous support of *Kalaa Utsavam – Indian Festival of Arts 2019*.

Join us as we traverse a vibrant world of Indian arts and culture, and celebrate Deepavali through the arts at *Kalaa Utsavam*!

**Rajeswari Ramachandran**

Producer

*Kalaa Utsavam – Indian Festival of Arts*

## 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 performances and activities presented by Esplanade, its partners and hirers. 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 with at least 550 seats along its busy waterfront, opening 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 three consecutive years since 2016.

TECL is funded by 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 [www.esplanade.com](http://www.esplanade.com) for more information.

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Issued by *The Esplanade Co Ltd*.

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## **About Kalaa Utsavam – Indian Festival of Arts**

*Kalaa Utsavam – Indian Festival of Arts* is an annual festival that celebrates Indian arts during the festive period of Deepavali. Launched in 2002 as a three-day festival, *Kalaa Utsavam* has since grown into a 10-day festival that presents a spectrum of classical to contemporary works by artists from the Indian subcontinent, the Indian diaspora and Singapore.

Join us from 15 – 24 Nov 2019 as we celebrate the arts and the beauty of Indian culture.

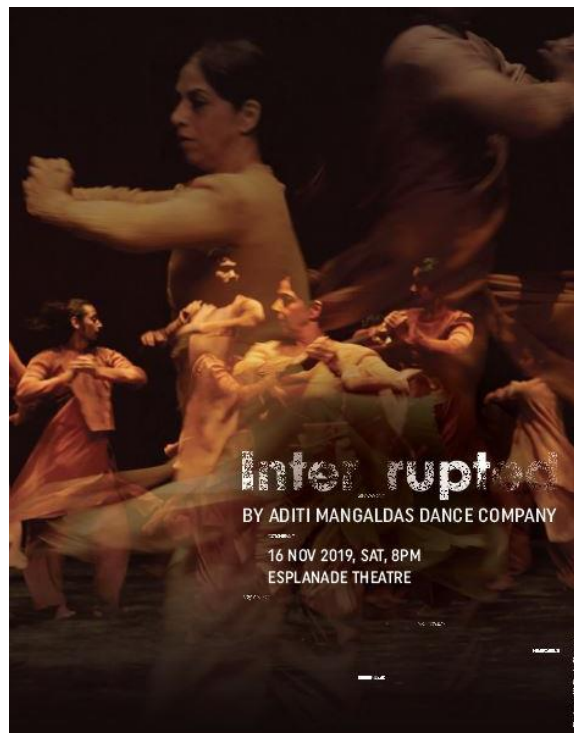
## **Ticketed Programmes**

### **Inter\_rupted**

by Aditi Mangaldas Dance Company – The Drishtikon Dance Foundation (India)

16 Nov 2019, Sat, 8pm

Esplanade Theatre



As the body disintegrates, where do thoughts and emotions reside? When thoughts and emotions disintegrate, where does your trace reside? And when all is gone from the known, where does your love reside?

*Inter\_rupted* explores the human body—its fragility, disintegration, resilience, vulnerability, inevitability and renewal. It asks of the audience to celebrate the body and its existence, the way it lives and breathes as something that is transient, flowing, and yet interrupted.

Dance maverick Aditi Mangaldas returns to *Kalaa Utsavam* for the fourth time, bringing her signature blend of the classical *kathak* tradition, contemporary dance elements and theatre design. The choreography will feature musicians as part of the set—diverging from the classical Indian dance tradition of placing the seated ensemble at the side of the stage. *Inter\_rupted* was awarded the Best Other Contemporary Work at the Seeing Dance annual awards in 2016.

“This piece wasn't easy to make, as I had to face the very “moment” that the work talks about. In this piece that is all I have done – tried to not capture anything...just to face it, if possible,” says Aditi.

#### Aditi Mangaldas

A leading dancer and choreographer in the classical Indian dance form of *kathak*, Aditi Mangaldas received training from gurus Shrimati Kumudini Lakhia and Pandit Birju Maharaj. She is known for consistently breaking new ground, by using *kathak* as a springboard to evolve a contemporary dance vocabulary that is infused with the spirit of the classical.

1hr 10mins, no intermission

\$40^

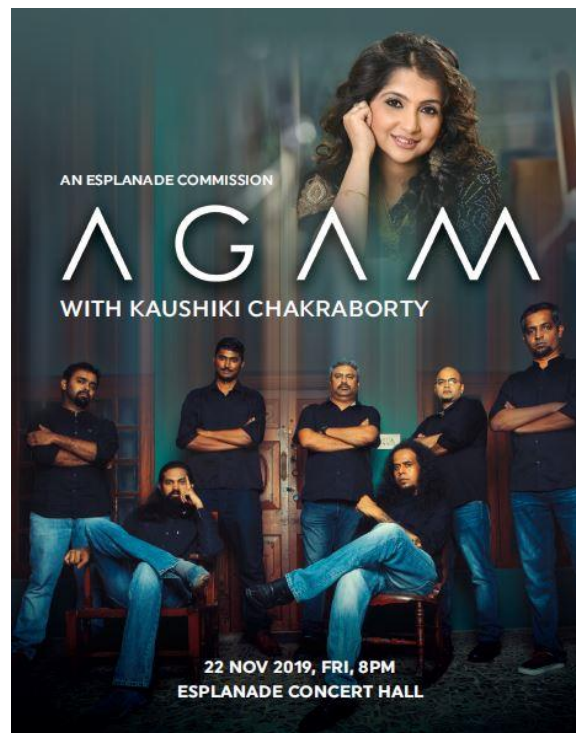
Limited concessions for students, NSF's and seniors: \$27

## **Agam with Kaushiki Chakraborty (India)**

**An Esplanade Commission**

**22 Nov 2019, Fri, 8pm**

**Esplanade Concert Hall**



In this festival commission, carnatic rockers Agam are back with a new avatar!

Agam perform their popular favourites and hit songs in this concert, which also features an exclusive segment with specially crafted repertoire performed by the band together with prominent hindustani vocalist Kaushiki Chakraborty. Conceptualised by award-winning producer Sai Shivanam, this collaborative segment reimagines familiar tunes of both Agam and Kaushiki.

A memorable music experience awaits you by Agam and Kaushiki, also known as the Nightingale of the East.

#### Agam

Formed in 2003, Agam is a Bangalore-based carnatic progressive rock band. Their unique soundscapes arise from reinterpreting classical carnatic sounds with a rock twist. Agam was featured

in the Malayalam music channel KAPPA TV—a new generation channel that enjoys great popularity among youths of Kerala. The band last performed at *Kalaa Utsavam* in 2017.

#### Kaushiki Chakraborty

Kaushiki Chakraborty is one of the most celebrated Indian classical vocalists. Her concerts showcase her unique mastery over *khayal* and *thumri* styles of hindustani classical vocal music. Coming from a musical family Kaushiki's father and teacher is the renowned Ajoy Chakraborty. Hailed as a prodigy, Kaushiki has established herself as one of the finest interpreters of the Indian classical style, completely devoted to the music and its spiritual depth.

#### Sai Shravanam

Sai Shravanam is one of the few classically trained sound designers in India, and his in-depth knowledge of rhythm, melody and score writing is his greatest strength in music production. Since 2004, Sai has been composing for background scores in theatre, instrumental and vocal albums, recordings and films. In 2012, his versatility fetched him commendable recognition as a Sound Recordist/Additional Engineer for the Academy award winning film *Life of Pi* directed by Ang Lee.

1hr 30mins, no intermission

\$35\*, \$50^

Limited concessions for students, NSFs and seniors: \$24\*

## **Amit Trivedi Live In Concert (India)**

**23 Nov 2019, Sat, 8pm**

**Esplanade Theatre**



“His live shows are amazing, packed with energy and great orchestration.” – The Hindu

Get ready for a night of Bollywood fever as National Award-winning composer, renowned singer and lyricist Amit Trivedi makes his Singapore debut! Expect nothing short of a dazzling concert full of his catchy and danceable numbers, explosive stage presence and an evening filled with *josh!* Groove to the best of Amit Trivedi as he performs with his co-singers and band at *Kalaa Utsavam 2019*.

### Amit Trivedi

One of the most in-demand music composers in Bollywood, Amit Trivedi has composed for top films such as *Dev D*, *Lootera*, *Kai Po Che*, and *Secret Superstar*, to name a few. His free-flowing use of Indian folk instruments, sometimes paired with a distinctly Western base of rock and electronica, has continuously broken new grounds in Indian cinema.

Touted as the torchbearer of the new generation of Indian music, Amit has won accolades including the National Award, Film fare, GIMA, Mirchi Music Award and Screen Awards. He was featured in Coke Studio@MTV Season 2, 3 and 4, and made waves on the *MTV Unplugged* in 2017 where he presented twists of his own songs.

2hrs, no intermission

\$55\*, \$75\*\*, \$105, \$135^, \$165^

Limited concessions for students, NSFs and seniors: \$45\*, \$60\*\*

## **Guitar Prasanna Trio featuring Mohini Dey and Harvey Wirht (India/USA)**

**15 Nov 2019, Fri, 7.30pm**

**Esplanade Recital Studio**



The Guitar Prasanna Trio makes its *Kalaa Utsavam* debut with a captivating fusion of musical ideas and energies!

Consisting of frontman and guitarist Prasanna, bass phenomenon Mohini Dey and Surinamese master drummer Harvey Wirht, the trio perform hits from Prasanna's iconic albums *Be the Change*, *Electric Ganesha Land*, *All Terrain Guitar* and the latest *Bowling for Peace*. Experience their signature musical style that blends Western genres such as rock, metal, blues and funk with carnatic music.

### Prasanna

A fearless innovator in contemporary music and yet steeped in the authentic carnatic tradition, Prasanna is a pioneer in performing carnatic music on an electric guitar. He has performed and recorded with multiple Grammy-winning artists including Esperanza Spalding, Victor Wooten and Joe Lovano.

Besides Pandit Ravishankar and A.R. Rahman, Prasanna is the only other Indian composer to have scored the music for an Oscar-winning film. In 2003, he was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award for carnatic music by H.H. Shri Jayendra Saraswathi.

#### Mohini Dey

One of the most well-known young bassists in the world, Mohini Dey has stunned the bass fraternity with her daredevil chops combined with exceptional musicianship. The Indian bass sensation has performed with an array of superstars from Steve Vai and A.R. Rahman, to Alex Lifeson of Rush and Zakir Hussain.

#### Harvey Wirht

Surinamese drummer Harvey Wirht brings an extraordinary level of musical diversity to his explosive playing. He has played with great artists across the globe from the legendary Harry Belafonte and Cameroonian master singer Gino Sitsou, to Moroccan singing star Mallika Zara. Wirht performed at notable occasions including President Obama's Peace Ball event, the Nobel Peace Prize event, the *Late Show with David Letterman*, and *The Tonight Show* with Jay Leno.

1hr 30mins, no intermission

\$30^

Limited concessions for students, NSF's and seniors: \$18

## **Marabu – The First Ripple**

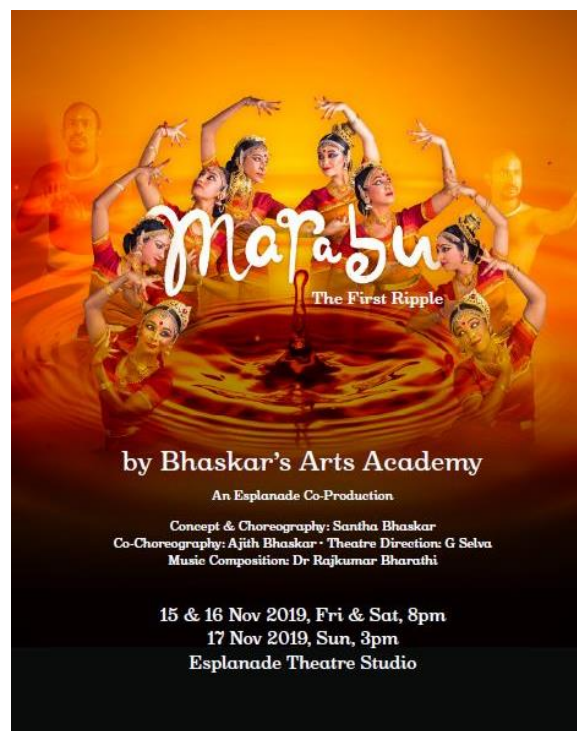
**by Bhaskar's Arts Academy**

**An Esplanade Co-Production**

**15 & 16 Nov 2019, Fri & Sat, 8pm**

**17 Nov 2019, Sun, 3pm**

**Esplanade Theatre Studio**



Presented as the first part of a trilogy, dance-theatre production *Marabu – The First Ripple* traces the passage and legacy of the Indian community in the Southeast Asian region.



This creative retelling of historical events revolves around the protagonist—a peasant—and his journey through the Chola invasion, that eventually leads to the construction of the Bhujanga Valley temples.

Created specially for *Kalaa Utsavam 2019*, the collaborative piece sees veteran artist and Cultural Medallion recipient Santha Bhaskar teaming up with co-choreographer Ajith Bhaskar and theatre director G Selva. “The story of our ancestors and their culture, and where we came from are the inspirations behind *Marabu*,” says Bhaskar. This co-production with Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay brings to life certain pages in the book of time that capture pertinent moments of the Singapore Indian community and their shared history with other communities.

*Marabu – The First Ripple* features performers from Bhaskar’s Arts Academy, Suvarna Fine Arts (Malaysia), Avant Theatre and Gamelan Singamurti.

1hr 15mins, no intermission

Performed in Tamil with English surtitles.

\$30^

Limited concessions for students, NSFs and seniors: \$18

## **The Lost Wax Project (India)**

**15 Nov 2019, Fri, 8pm**

**16 Nov 2019, Sat, 6pm**

**Esplanade Annexe Studio**



There is no space and time before movement. The body does not move into space and time—it creates space and time.

Our bodies are constantly in motion, reaching out towards something and creating different relationships with everything around us. In a way, they constantly seek to reinvent themselves and become something else. This potentiality appears every time language exceeds its syntax, every time another exceeds our reach, every time we sense more than we comprehend.

*The Lost Wax Project* explores the potentiality of space and its interrelations with the human body. The title is a metaphor from the sculpting process, in which wax moulds are used to cast metallic sculptures. When the sculpture takes its final shape, the wax that fills the mould is “lost”.

“You are seeing something tangible, but [what] made it tangible is no longer there,” says choreographer Preethi Athreya, comparing the casting process to the function of the body in space. In this work, she crafts a circular stage around which the audience sits, inviting them into an intimate experience of the negative space between human bodies.

#### Preethi Athreya

Chennai-based contemporary dancer and choreographer Preethi Athreya was trained in *bharatnatyam* under the Dhananjayans. She went on to attain a post-graduate degree in Dance Studies from the Labon Centre, London, and has been working with the eminent choreographer Padmini Chettur since 1999.

1hr 10mins, no intermission

There will be a post-show talk with the artists after every performance.

\$20^

Limited concessions for students, NSFs and seniors: \$12

## **The Band Walle featuring Palwinder**

**17 Nov 2019, Sun, 6pm**

**Esplanade Annexe Studio**



Following their debut performance at *Kalaa Utsavam* last year, homegrown Hindi band The Band Walle returns to the festival stage with a special performance featuring singer-songwriter Palwinder Singh. Comprising four talented musicians from diverse musical backgrounds and influences, the band will be bringing you contemporary renditions of Bollywood, Punjabi folk and Bhangra music. Originals by Palwinder will also be performed for the first time, backed by The Band Walle.

### The Band Walle

Led by Harsha Channa, The Band Walle crosses boundaries set out in both Indian and Western music cultures, painting a unique soundscape for the Singapore music scene. Indie artist KisH lends his vocals and plays the guitar, classical percussion-trained Ish takes the drums and blues boy Nilesh plays the keys. They are an alumni of Fusion Beats Mentorship programme 2018, which is part of *Kalaa Utsavam*.

### Palwinder Singh

*Dhol* musician and Bhangra dancer Palwinder Singh started his musical journey at the age of eight with the *tabla*. His love for drums grew and he picked up more percussion instruments over the years. After releasing his first single *Reh Giya* in 2017, he went on to produce *Bahaan* in 2018 and *Soniye Ve* in 2019.

1hr, no intermission

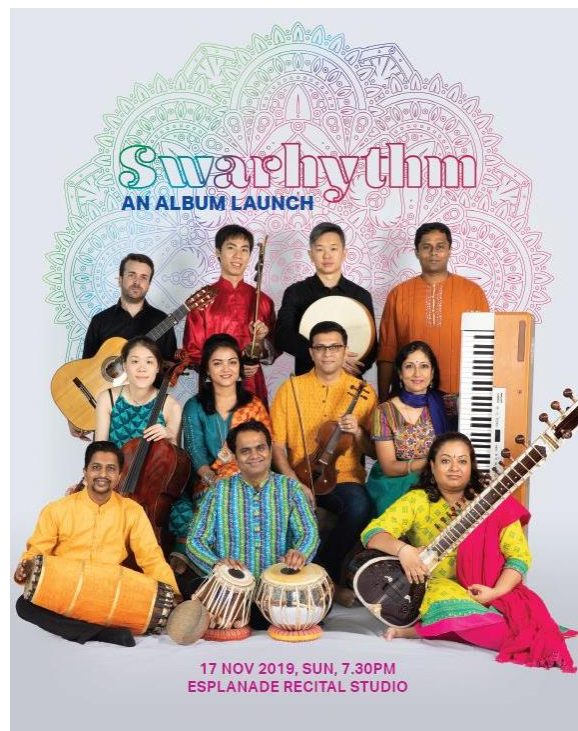
\$12 (Free standing)

\$20 (Free seating)

## **Swarhythm – An Album Launch**

**17 Nov 2019, Sun, 7.30pm**

**Esplanade Recital Studio**



Known for their creative and contemporary interpretations of traditional music, Swarhythm Ensemble comprises a multi-ethnic group of talented local musicians. Founded and led by accomplished *tabla* artist Nawaz Mirajkar, the group will be launching their first recorded album *Swarhythm* at *Kalaa Utsavam* 2019.

The songs on record are a majestic confluence of the rich melodies and rhythms of India, weaved in with ethnic Malay and Chinese elements, as well as some exciting Spanish influences. The performance will also feature artists from India.

### Nawaz Mirajkar

Nawaz Mirajkar draws inspiration from the diverse sounds of traditional and contemporary music present in Singapore. He has collaborated with acclaimed flautist Rakesh Chaurasia, veteran drummer Sivamani, as well as the Singapore Symphony Orchestra. Nawaz's works as a music composer have been featured in *Kalaa Utsavam* in 2015 (Antharagni) and 2013 (Taal Express). He was awarded the Young Artist Award (Music) by the National Arts Council in 2011.

### Swarhythm Ensemble

Tabla: Nawaz Mirajkar

Piano: Renu Suresh

Sitar: Swetha Baskaran

Vocals: Vathiar Mohanavelu Sai Vigneshwar

Vocals: Alimpan Mukherjee

Chinese drum and percussion: Toh Kai Siang Eugene

Erhu: Lim Kwuan Boon

Cello: Gan Ying Ying

South Indian percussion: Mahesh Parameswaran

Violin: Bombay V Anand

Spanish Guitar: Alberto Marin

Sarod: Praashekh Borkar

Bansuri: Sunil Avachat

1hr 15mins, no intermission

\$30^

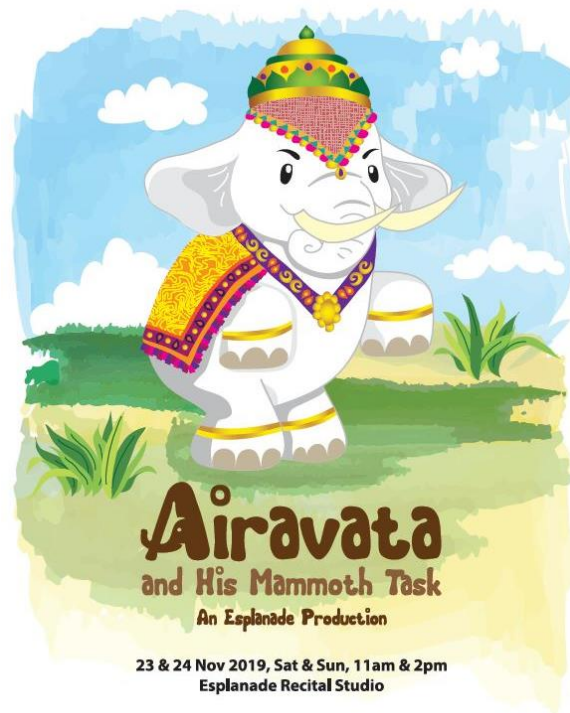
Limited concessions for students, NSFs and seniors: \$18

## **Airavata and his Mammoth Task**

**An Esplanade Production**

**23 & 24 Nov 2019, Sat & Sun, 11am & 2pm**

**Esplanade Recital Studio**



What comes from an egg, is large and white, and soars through the sky? An elephant, of course!

Not just any elephant—but the King of Elephants! Airavata is his name, and he is the brave and loyal *vahana* (vehicle) of Lord Indra.

The kingly duo goes on all sorts of adventures—from bringing rain to earth and battling the powerful forces of Ravana, to facing off against the evil Vritra. Join the faithful Airavata as he brings Lord Indra across heaven and earth, and find out if he prevails at mammoth tasks.

This engaging production is narrated in English, and features music and dance.

45mins, no intermission

Performed in English. Recommended for children aged 4 – 8.

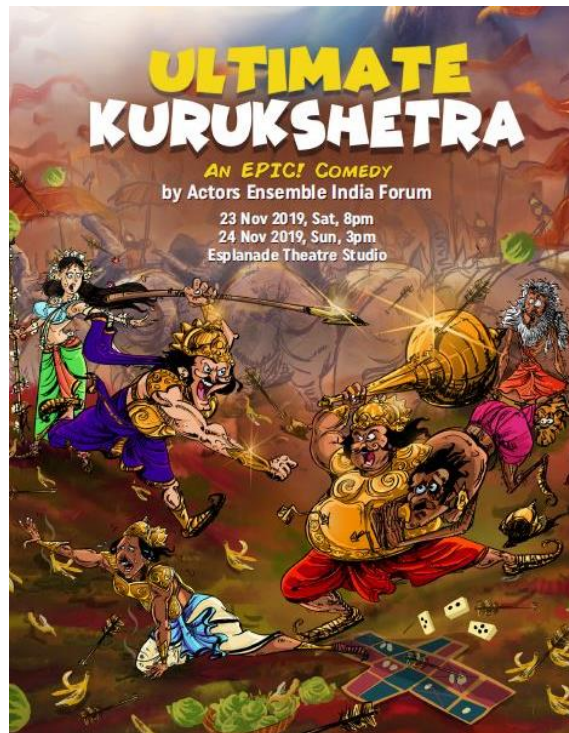
\$20

## **Ultimate Kurukshetra – An EPIC! Comedy** by Actors Ensemble India Forum (India)

**23 Nov 2019, Sat, 8pm**

**24 Nov 2019, Sun, 3pm**

**Esplanade Theatre Studio**



“...a side-splitting comedy and a different take on the Mahabharata” - The Hindu

It is the first day of the battle of Kurukshetra. As two massive armies face off and the battle charge is about to begin, a warrior of great repute is having a moment of self-doubt off stage.

But very far away from this central action, and completely obfuscated by elephant bums, we meet the protagonists of our tale. There they are, at the rear-end...of the rear-guard. Enter Sudarshanaa warrior, Adi—his charioteer, Daksha—a mahout and Maya—a courtesan. As their lives intertwine and destiny brings them all together to this truly epic moment in time, each of them must choose...the “right action”.

*Ultimate Kurukshetra* is a modern meditation on *dharma*, presenting the macrocosm of the great living tradition known as the Mahabharata, in the microcosm of the stage. While the comedy might appeal to all, those familiar with the moral conflicts and philosophical dilemmas in the epic might find some pleasant surprises.

#### Actors Ensemble India Forum

Founded in 2007 by actor/director Mallika Prasad Sinha, Actors Ensemble India Forum (AEIF) is a theatre and media production company that has produced critically acclaimed works for the stage, socially engaged documentaries, and mixed-genre art projects. AEIF often pulls together people from different disciplines, working with artists, climbers, scientists, archaeologists, as well as researchers working on urban policy issues.

2hrs, no intermission

Performed in English. Recommended for ages 13 and above.

\$30^

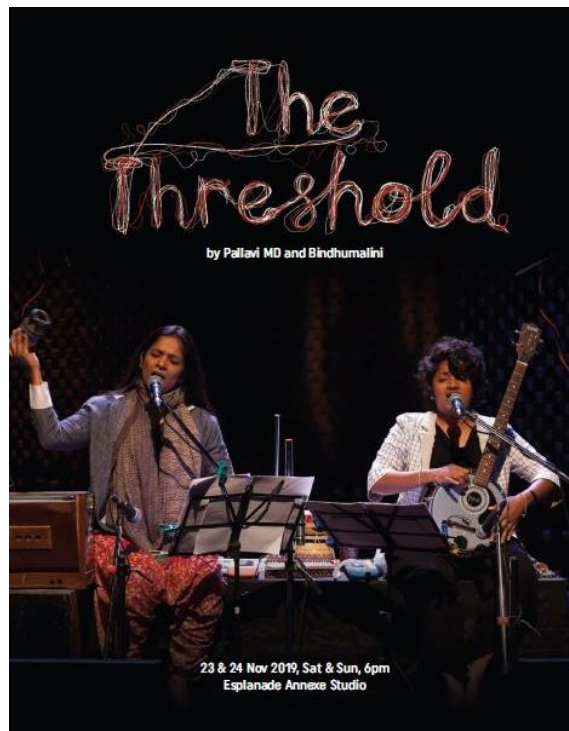
Limited concessions for students, NSFs and seniors: \$18

## **The Threshold**

by Pallavi MD and Bindhumalini (India)

23 & 24 Nov 2019, Sat & Sun, 6pm

Esplanade Annexe Studio



*The Threshold* is a musical conversation. In this unique and intimate production, musical duo Pallavi and Bindhumalini explore the issue of gender and its lived experiences through a lens of compassion. From the stories of Hypatia, Agnodice, Kharbaoucha and Fanny Mendelson, to the songs of Sule Sunkkavva, Nina Simone and Meera, *The Threshold* celebrates the tales of remarkable women across continents and spanning generations.

Pallavi and Bindhu's voices weave the lesser-known journeys of these women, accentuated with a rich plethora of sounds from instruments such as the harmonium, flute, kazoo, *swarmandal*, *udukkai*,

*ghungroo, kartal*, rainmaker and the banjo. They will be singing in a variety of South Asian languages, as well as Italian, Spanish and English.

#### Pallavi MD

Pallavi MD is a singer, actor, sound designer, composer, editor and filmmaker, with works featuring multidisciplinary collaborations. Pallavi's solo play *C Sharp C Blunt* won her the META best actress award. She also claimed the Best Actress Award at the Aryabhata Award for her role in teleseries *Garva*. Pallavi bagged the Karnataka State Film Award for Best Playback Singer in 2006 and 2007 for her song *Nodayya* sung in the film *Duniya*. She has received the State Kempegowda award for her contribution in the field of music, and the Central Academy's Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar award for her work in music and poetry.

#### Bindhumalini

Bindhumalini juggles many hats. She is a musician, music director, actor and graphic designer, on top of being one of the rare artists trained in both carnatic and Hindustani classical forms. Bindhu is known for her soulful voice and deeply spiritual renditions of poetry and songs of the mystics from the subcontinent. She has composed and sung for films, theatre productions, jingles and independent albums in Hindi, Kannada, and Tamil. Recently, Bindhu won the National Film Award for Best Playback Singer – Female for *Mayavi Manave* from the movie *Nathicharami* (2018).

1hr 40mins, no intermission

Performed in English with songs in various languages.

There will be a post-show talk with the artists after every performance.

\$30^

Limited concessions for students, NSFs and seniors: \$18

#### **Ticketing Information**

^*Esplanade&Me* Specials

Black & White Card: 15% & 10% savings

#### *Kalaa Utsavam Special*

Enjoy 10% savings when you purchase any four tickets across *Kalaa Utsavam* shows by 16 Oct 2019.

Terms and conditions apply. Applicable on Cat 1 tickets only, excluding *Airavata and his Mammoth Task*.

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

SISTIC Hotline: 6348 5555 / (School or) Group Booking: 6828 8389 or email [boxoffice@esplanade.com](mailto:boxoffice@esplanade.com). Admission age: 6 & above, unless otherwise stated. Ticket prices exclude SISTIC fees. Terms and conditions apply.

#### **Free Programmes**

More information about the free programmes for *Kalaa Utsavam 2019* will be announced later.