

fridayReview

THE HINDU

With love from Paris
Thomas Vo Van Tao on how he was drawn to Mohiniyattam **p2**

In memory of an Ustad
Rehmat-e-Nusrat sings sufi songs popularised by Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan **p3**



SHABANA AZMI COMPLETES 50 YEARS IN CINEMA

The actor broke stereotypes to carve a niche for herself **p4**



The shakti of every woman

Several decades ago, as a young boy, when I was asked to sing a kriti for Lakshmi pooja, I sheepishly declared that a school prayer was all I knew, only to be reminded by my teacher that the famous geetham ‘Varaveena’ is on Mahalakshmi. This led me on a path of imbibing the nuances of the lyrics. Students of Carnatic music usually learn a song even before grappling with the concepts of Bhakti and Shakti. The quest still continues, especially when I sing kritis of Muthuswami Dikshitar on Devi, ranging from the simple tunes of the nottu swaras like ‘Shyamale Meenakshi’ and ‘Kamalasana’ to the exceptional ‘Kamalamba Navavarnam’. The last is more esoteric with tantrik, geometric and religious details of the Sri Chakram and its nine enclosures. The beauty of the lyrics of the Navavarnam comes through in the 11 ragas they are set in. Equally beautiful are the works of Syama Sastri, especially his ‘Ratna Thrayam’. I experience a sense of surrender when singing it. Ragas Bhairavi, Thodi and Yadukulakamboji help convey the magnificence of Kanchi Kamakshi as described in the lyrics. Swati Tirunal and Papanasam Sivan have also shared with us their musical and spiritual fervour. Muthiah Bhagvatar’s creation in raga Niroshtha is unique – it omits the only two swaras ‘ma’ and ‘pa’ where the lips touch. All this for a kriti on Vagdevi, no less!

When I embarked on a collaborative music journey with Anil Srinivasan in 2006, I felt Kali and Durga manifest in different ways while rendering the timeless ‘Chinnanajiru pen pole’ along with ‘Bhavani dayani’, both in the raga Sindhubhairavi. Particularly noteworthy is the manner in which Anil interpreted and visualised Durga as a little girl playing hopscotch on the banks of Sivaganga in Chidambaram. Subramanya Bharati’s ‘Nenjukku neethi’, ‘Kani nilam’ and Thondru nigazhndha are powerful paeans to Shakti and Bharata Mata. Speaking of bhakti towards our nation, it was not until I sang for Just Us Repertory’s play, *Rural Phantasy*, that I discovered the joy of learning the full version of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee’s Vande Mataram as a Ragamalika, which eventually found its way into my concert repertoire. The contours of Carnatic music are vast enough to include contemporary themes as well. A thillana where the lyrics not only extol Shakti to grant power to humankind but also humankind to respect every woman as Shakti is a personal favourite. Music as a veritable force of Nature can spur us to appreciate new concepts, including worship of Shakti. By the time you read this article, I would probably be singing in celebration of Devi this Navaratni, starting with ‘Varaveena’!

– SIKKIL GURUCHARAN
Carnatic vocalist

Five artistes share how they discovered themselves through the Shakti of art and the need to recognise one’s inner strength

THE POWER AND THE GLORY

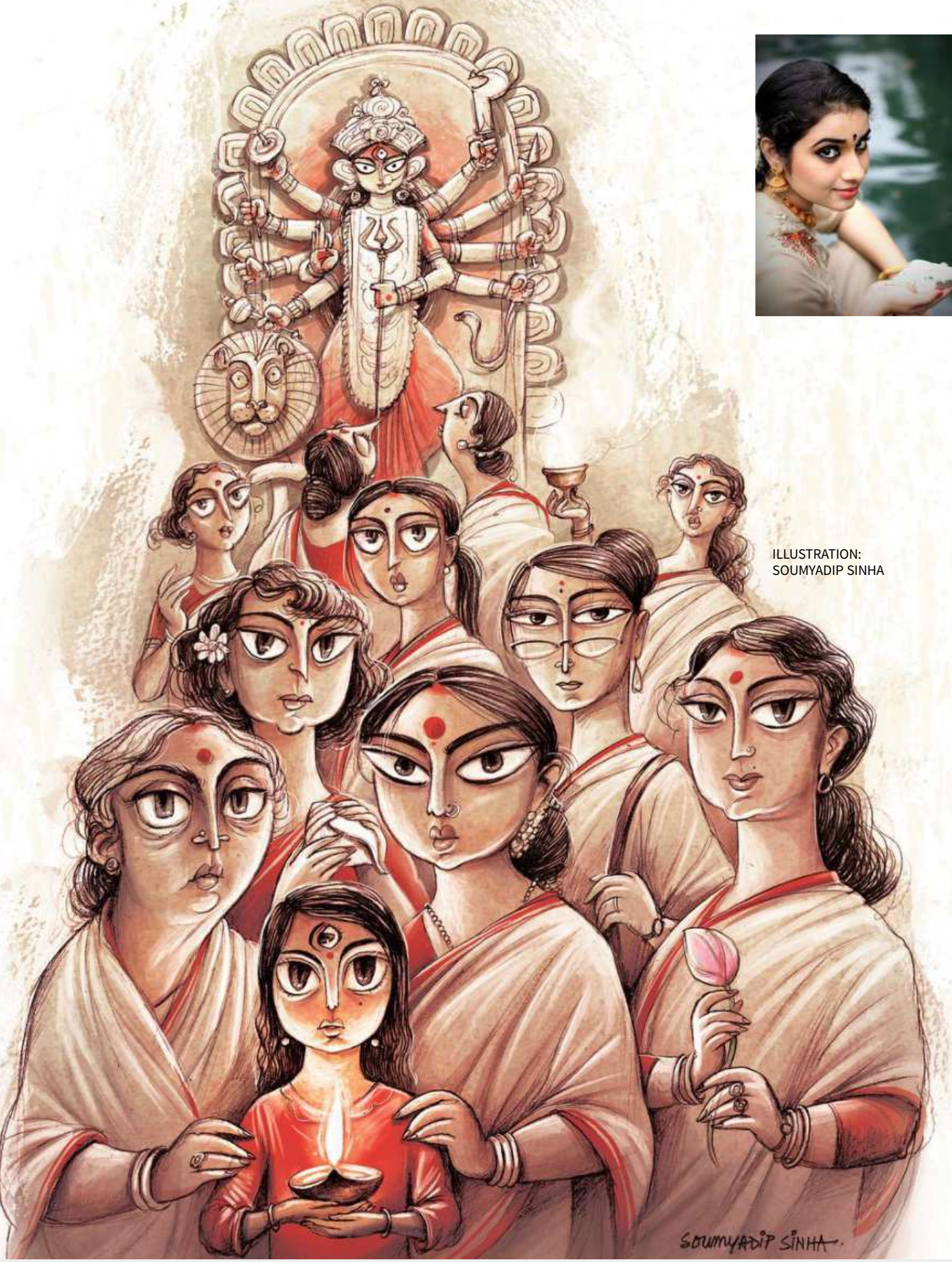


ILLUSTRATION:
SOUMYADIP SINHA

Not a distant goddess

As a dancer who has embodied the divine feminine through compositions on Devi, my understanding of Shakti has evolved beyond viewing her as a distant goddess. Initially, I encountered Shakti in familiar forms – Radha for Krishna, Parvati for Shiva, Saraswati for Brahma, and Lakshmi for Vishnu. However, as I delved deeper into her essence, especially in my production ‘Harini’, Shakti transformed into more than just a deity. She became the nurturing mother, the guiding guru, and the force that prepares devotees for divine grace. The realisation that even Vishnu and Shiva await their Shakti’s consent before bestowing blessings reshaped my perception of her role.

Shakti is not a mere consort; she is the force that drives creation, sustenance, and transformation. Sivagamasundari does not just observe Nataraja’s dance, she facilitates it. In this sense, Shakti transcends the traditional idea of being a complement to the masculine. She is the power behind all movement and change. However, there is often a disconnect between how we revere Shakti in rituals and acknowledgement of her presence in everyday life. Too often, we celebrate her in festivals yet overlook her presence within ourselves and others.

As a dancer, I feel that art helps bridge this gap, making Shakti not just a symbol but a lived reality. I’ve seen Shakti in my mother, who held our family together, in my grandmother’s quiet strength, and now within myself as I balance motherhood and dance.

The Sanskrit word *śak*, meaning ‘to be able’, perfectly encapsulates Shakti’s essence. She enables, bears, and endures – not just in cosmic terms but in every being. At this stage of my journey, what strikes me most is how Shakti transcends gender, religion, and myth. It is the hope within all of us, waiting to be awakened, fuelling our dreams and actions. Shakti is the pulse that keeps the universe in motion and the force that drives us to dance, dream, and create. It is both the cause of my dance and the dance itself. When we recognise and honour Shakti within ourselves, true magic begins.

– MEERA SREENARAYANAN
Bharatanatyam dancer

The force of Nature



As an artiste, particularly a female artiste, I believe that creativity is a form of Shakti. The energy that empowers you to imagine and manifest on stage, in whichever form you want, is again a beautiful, abstract power of that divine Shakti that artistes are blessed with.

As a folk artiste, I have got the opportunity to understand the deeper significance of worshipping the goddess. In folk traditions, she is seen as someone protecting the land (Bhudevi), the family (Kuldevi) and against illness (Sheetala Devi). And Nature plays a significant role in this worship.

The songs that I perform go beyond describing Devi’s attributes. They tell you how to conquer the demons in your life. We usually do not realise how empowering music can be. We do not always have to look at the Devi in the temple or the prayer room – strong women (shakti) are all around you.

– MALINI AWASTHI
Folk and thumri artiste

Look within

Bengali by birth, I grew up watching Devi being worshipped as the embodiment of Shakti. As a child, the powerful divine energy during Durga puja captivated me – the resonant voice of Birendra Krishna Bhadra reciting the ‘Chandipath’, soothing tunes of Agomoni (arrival of the goddess), foot-tapping beats of the *dhak* and the infectious energy of the *dhumuchi naach*. Each time I encountered the idol of Durga, I associated her with a formidable feminine force – a warrior, a woman of immense strength destined to conquer the world. Raised in an open-minded family, I felt empowered and believed I had everything I needed, which inspired me to pursue my passion for dance.

When I began to perform on stage, I felt physically invincible and thought that was the essence of Shakti. But the journey hasn’t been



easy. The challenges, the fears, the uncertainty...you feel emotionally drained. It was then that I truly discovered what Shakti means to me. It isn’t merely an external force; it’s the power that resides within. It transcends tools and weapons; it’s about cultivating inner confidence and confronting one’s own fears and demons.

Now, I understand Shakti as a pure flow – a dynamic, creative energy, a life force that propels you from within. As a performer, I have come to appreciate my true position. I no longer wish to dance merely for the sake of movement; I yearn for that divine force to guide my movements. In this sense, it’s not just me dancing – there’s a greater energy inspiring my creativity and expression. I have a dream project centered around Shakti, and I hope to bring it to life very soon.

– SANJUKTA SINHA
Kathak dancer

Self-expression



Right from my training years, I was made to understand the importance of knowing the meaning of the lyrics to convey the emotions in them. However, it was during the recording of

my album *Devi Ragamala* that I experienced the deeper impact of lyrics. The amazing verses were penned by Saurabh Savoor and set in different ragas. While singing them, I began to think about my own negative and positive energies. I seemed to discover my true self through the words. Even today when I sing them at concerts, they make me think and introspect. Gradually I realised, Shakti is the everyday existence of a woman.

– SAWANI SHENDE
Hindustani Vocalist

Musical ode
Neyveli
Santhanagopalan
and Veena
Venkatramani at the
Veenavadhini
Sampradaya Sangit
Trust event
PHOTOS: M. SRINATH



Renuka Suryanarayanan

Carnatic music has a rich collection of kritis composed by different vaggeyakaras, particularly the Trinity. Muthuswami Dikshitar's kritis are known for their intricate phrases, melodic appeal and lyrical beauty. As Dikshitar was proficient in playing the veena, one can also see its influence in his compositions. Many of his kritis are set in a leisurely veena-playing style with quicksilver madhyamakala passages to capture the essence of the ragas.

To celebrate the composer's 250th birth anniversary, a year-long event titled 'Dikshitar 250' has been organised by Veenavadhini Sampradaya Sangit Trust. The Trust, founded by Veena artiste Jayasri Jeyaraaj and Jeyaraaj, recently presented concerts by Veena Venkatramani and Neyveli Santhanagopalan at Arkay Convention Centre, Mylapore.

Stringing melodies
The evening began with vainika Veena Venkatramani's recital spanning 90 minutes. The highlight was her presentation of kritis such as 'Kadambari priyayai' (Mohanam) and 'Sadasraye abhayambike' (Chamaram). She shared that the raga, which is otherwise called Shanmukhapriya, gets the name Chamaram in the Dikshitar school. Dikshitar had followed the Asampurna Melakarta system

The enduring melody

'Dikshitar 250' celebrated the lyrical beauty of the composer's works



in naming the Melakarta ragas. Veena embellished each kriti with well-nuanced raga alapanas and kalpanaswaras. The tanam section, following the Chamaram alapana, stood out. Choice of kritis and good kalapramanam are her assets. Interestingly, the tani avaratanam by Tirucherai Kaushik (mridangam) and K.R.

Sivarama Krishna (kanjira) was rich in complexity.

Bonding with rasikas
Senior vocalist Neyveli Santhanagopalan's concert showed his ability to engage with the audience. He began with the Gowla raga composition 'Tyagaraja palayasumam'.

Accompanists Nagai Muralidharan (violin) and Mannargudi Easwaran (mridangam) elevated the presentation. Santhanagopalan got into an introspective mood in the ensuing Bilahari raga alapana as he traversed through its many layers. He presented the kriti 'Eka dantam bhajeham' with kalpanaswaras. He did not indulge in too many korvais in this segment. But in the main kriti 'Sri rajagopala bala' (Saveri), towards the second half of the recital, he came up with a few intricate korvais. An elaborate and creative niraval-svara segment followed the kriti.

Earlier, Santhanagopalan presented a Varali raga alapana with its aesthetics intact. The kriti chosen was 'Seshachala nayakam'. His 'Manasa guruguha rupam bhajare' (Anandabhairavi) had melodic appeal.

Violinist Nagai Muralidharan's repartees during the alapana and swara segements were enjoyable. Senior mridangist Mannargudi Easwaran displayed his percussive skill during the tani avaratanam.

Highpoints of Harikamboji

Bharat Sundar travelled to the raga's core to unravel its layers



Well-nuanced essays
Bharat Sundar with L. Ramakrishnan (violin), Vijay Natesan (mridangam) and Sai Subramaniam (morsing). PHOTO COURTESY: KEDARAM

H. Ramakrishnan

Kedaram recently organised a concert in memory of N.V. Subramaniam (NVS), who founded Saraswathi, a performance-oriented organisation, and the Saraswati Vaggeyakara Trust, which focussed on the deeper aspects of music. NVS was more than just a concert organiser. He had learnt to play the violin, and had perfected the art to the extent that he even accompanied senior artistes such as Maharajapuram Santhanam and T.R. Subramaniam. NVS tried to find time to pursue his passion for music despite holding a senior position in the Southern Railways.

In his concert at the Ragasudha auditorium, Bharat Sundar impressed with his voice and presentation. For instance, his Harikamboji elucidation, with engaging gamakas and lucid phrase, had a lingering effect. Senior violinist L. Ramakrishnan played the phrases with equal zeal.

Bharat Sundar chose 'Enta rani tanakenta' in an appropriate nadai in the raga. The saint says, "Lord, whatever happens, I will never move away from you." The niraval and kalpanaswaras were aptly rendered at the charanam 'Seshudu sivuniki bhushudu lakshmana'. If the extensive niraval was studded with aesthetic phrases, the impromptu swara clusters displayed the vocalist's imagination.

On the mridangam, Vijay Natesan, disciple of T.V. Gopalakrishnan, played a sprightly thani punctuated with many sparkling passages. On the morsing, Sai Subramaniam, disciple of A.S. Krishnan, was able to produce the

desired tonality with his subdued playing.

Poignant rendition
Earlier, Bharat Sundar sang a well-nuanced Dhanyasi. Dhanyasi is a raga that lets the rasika experience multiple rasas. Papanasam Sivan's 'Balakrishna paadamalar panivorkku' (Rupakam), which came next, conveyed the bhakti and karuna rasa.

The vocalist began his concert appropriately with Kedaram. He chose Dikshitar's 'Ananda natana prakasam' (Misra Chapu), a Panchabhuta kriti on Nataraja in Chidambaram. It has an in-built jathi-svara with a sollukattu in line. 'Neekela dayaradu' (Khanda Chapu) in Sarasangi by Ramaswami Sivan had niraval at 'Nerataka bhuvi mida' in the charanam segment, and an elaborate swaraprastara.

At this point, Bharat Sundar recalled how once T.R. Subramaniam stopped him while singing this niraval to point out a mistake in the enunciation of the lyric.

He next sang Tyagaraja's 'Shara shara samaraika' (Kuntalavarali) with a chittaswaram, set by the legendary M. Balamuralikrishna.

'Udayadri Pai' was part of the popular Lalitha Sangeetham (light music) programme broadcast by AIR Vijayawada in the 1980s. The lyrics were by Rachakonda Lakshme Narasimhan, and it was tuned by Malladi Suribabu in Ragamalika. The song pays obeisance to the Sun. Bharat Sundar presented this song, giving it a special touch with impressive modulation.

'Charana kamalaalayathai', a Tiruppugazh in Subha Pantuvarali, and a thillana in Khamas were the concluding pieces.

Driven by passion
A class in progress; and a solo and group performances
PHOTOS
COURTESY: THOMAS VO VAN TAO



a heavily Sanskritised Manipravalam text. Now to answer your question more practically, yes it does make a difference to know the language of the composition as it brings more spontaneity in abhinaya, but again, not all dancers in India perform compositions in a language that they have mastered.

Q: You also trained in research. Did research influence your practice?
A: Yes, I wrote my Masters' thesis on the contemporary history of Bharatanatyam. This research did impact my practice and I think it has been to some extent crucial in my decision to stop practicing this art form. I was conflicted between what I was reading about the history of Bharatanatyam and what was taught to me in dance class. The bhakti-loaded repertoire that was taught to me and its supposed antiquity and sacredness did not match with what I was reading about the tradition. I have not done formal research on Mohiniyattam but I do read everything I can about it. Unfortunately, only a few academic works have been dedicated to this art form and especially to its history as all the pre-Kalamandalam era practitioners and witnesses of their art are no longer alive.

Q: Is language ever an obstacle?
A: I don't think anybody would ask a Bengali or Gujarati Bharatanatyam dancer this question. We all fall back on translations or have friends help us translate and understand certain lyrics. Moreover, a native Tamil speaker might not be able to fully understand a Sangam era text or a Malayali

whole new narrative was made around Indian dance traditions. So, Indian dances are not completely alien to many here, but it is sometimes what paradoxically makes it even more difficult for me to set a context for my practice. Reconciling both my experience in India as a student and as a dancer and people's perception of Indian dances can indeed be at times challenging. The audience often comes to see or experience what they consider exotic or ancient, with a lot of preconceived notions based on what they have read on the so-called revival. Making sure that the context in which the art form my students learn or the audience sees on stage evolves and thrives is not something that one can do in the span of a class or in a five-minute conversation after a performance. It is an ongoing work which comprises spreading awareness about the art form through performances but also making people understand that things are not so vastly different and exotic.

Q: Do you feel the need to make Mohiniyattam contemporary to your time and context?
A: Mohiniyattam or Indian dance for that matter is not bound by time and space. It is an art that is made and practiced by people of today and no matter how ancient it is or not, Mohiniyattam is still moving forward and keeps on creating and recreating itself through different bodies. So, yes Mohiniyattam is contemporary and I would even say that it's probably ahead of its time. It asks us to slow down and observe.

The call of Mohiniyattam

Thomas Vo Van Tao, a male Mohiniyattam exponent, shares what drew him to the dance form

Kunal Ray

Thomas Vo Van Tao is a rare male Mohiniyattam exponent. After learning Bharatanatyam for 10 years, he veered to Mohiniyattam where he found his calling. His aesthetics was further shaped under the tutelage of Neena Prasad. Thomas performs extensively and teaches Mohiniyattam in Paris, France. Excerpts from a conversation.

Question: What drew you to Indian classical dance?
Answer: I was around eight when I happened to watch a documentary on South India on TV at the end of which there was a short excerpt of a couple dancing together. It left me fascinated. A few years later, by chance, I met my first teacher, who taught me Bharatanatyam for more than 10 years. Mohiniyattam came much later in my life when I travelled to Kerala and decided to give it a try.

Q: Mohiniyattam is labelled as the dance of the enchantress and also exclusively performed by women. Why did you veer towards this dance style and do you ever feel constrained by your gender?
A: I stopped Bharatanatyam and veered towards Mohiniyattam for the feeling of plenitude I experience every time I dance it. The slow or medium pace of Mohiniyattam and its movement vocabulary made me feel that I was finally

dancing. As a Bharatanatyam student and dancer, I was expected to dance a certain way and I was only taught certain type of compositions that would supposedly highlight my femininity. Without really knowing it, I was in the quest for a dance that responded more to what I am and that would allow space for what we label as femininity. I wouldn't say that my gender was ever a constraint. On the contrary, Mohiniyattam gave me ample

space to explore and fully embrace my gender in its complexity.

Q: Is language ever an obstacle?
A: I don't think anybody would ask a Bengali or Gujarati Bharatanatyam dancer this question. We all fall back on translations or have friends help us translate and understand certain lyrics. Moreover, a native Tamil speaker might not be able to fully understand a Sangam era text or a Malayali



The unconventional star

As Shabana Azmi completes 50 years in cinema, a look at some seminal roles from the versatile actor's rich repertoire

Anuj Kumar

In the 1970s when Hindi cinema was coming out of the chocolate box, there emerged an unconventional face that shunned the bouffant and the pout to carve a woman who refused to be a satellite to a hero. Shabana was fortunate to take the plunge when a ‘New Wave’ was taking shape and found a bunch of path-breaking filmmakers such as Shyam Benegal, Mrinal Sen, Goutam Ghose, Basu Chatterjee and Mahesh Bhatt, who tempered her talent to create an alchemy of ideas on screen. Over the years, her films might have failed but Shabana always shone bright.

Born to the illustrious actor Shaukat and poet Kaifi Azmi, Shabana’s conscience took root in a household where progressive poetry and proletariat politics wafted in the air. If the verses of Faiz and Ali Sardar Jafri distilled into her young mind from the baithaks organised in the drawing room of Kaifi’s Janki Kutir in Juhu, the robust realism of drama unfolding next door at the iconic Prithvi Theatre was hard to resist.

Strong presence

The liberal atmosphere instilled in her the belief that the role of arts is not just to entertain. Having imbibed the spirit of a communist household from a very young age, it was not difficult for her to understand

the value of collaboration, which essentially every abiding work of cinema demands. Right from her first appearance on screen in *Ankur*, where the young, urbane Shabana immersed herself into the role of the Dakhini-speaking maid, who is seduced into an illicit relationship by her master, she empathetically embraced characters from the margins.

Over the last five decades, Shabana has shown an amazing ability to make the mundane dramatic and the dramatic believable. She allows life to fuel her characters and preserves the residue left after her performances to inform the larger purpose of her existence where art and activism mingle without prejudice. “Art has the right to provoke as well,” she told this journalist once. Unequivocal against injustice and bigotry of all kinds, she became the voice of slum dwellers. She condemned protests against Pakistani ghazal singer Ghulam Ali’s performance in Mumbai and was among the first ones to criticise the fatwa issued against A.R. Rahman for scoring music in an Iranian film on Prophet Muhammad.

Not a switch on, switch off kind of actor, she values training and rehearsals over instinct. It is hard to find a false note in her portrayal of a Carnatic singer in *Morning Raga*, a performance that won her praise from Sitar maestro Pt. Ravi Shankar. Few remember that she sang ghazals for her character in

Muzaffar Ali’s *Anjuman* and rendered Rabindra Sangeet in Aparna Sen’s *Sonata*.

Shabana also has this knack for humanising the insecure woman squirming at the thought of sharing someone she holds dear. She expressed different shades of this fear of disintegrating facade in *Shatrang Ke Khiladi*, *Masoom*, *Pestonjee*, *Muhafiz*, and *Makdee* with a touch of hysteria. She loves to carry home the peculiarities of her characters to deliberate on their human condition, to put them in a social context, and returns to deliver performances that have aged gracefully like her.

Here are five films that define her charisma.

Arth (1982)

Mahesh Bhatt’s *Arth* is to Shabana what *Mother India* is to Nargis. From a wife whose face turns pale at the thought of her husband leaving her for another woman to becoming a self-sufficient woman, Shabana etches Pooja with remarkable empathy and strength. Interestingly, it was one of those scenes where Bhatt didn’t allow Shabana to prepare and her instinctive response to the stimulus still induces awe.

The film provided her with an opportunity to lip sync to her father’s lyrics – “Tum Itna Kyon Muskara Rahe Ho, Kya Gham Hai Jisko Chhupa Rahe Ho – became an anthem for the aching souls.

Having grown up in a communist household where everyday existence was hand to

Looking back Shabana Azmi; in *Morning Raga*; and *Ankur*. PHOTOS: THE HINDU ARCHIVES



mouth but gender equality was a given, mapping Pooja’s journey enriched Shabana’s understanding of Indian women. “My mother used to work when my poet father was not earning much. It was when I did *Arth* and played a character who says no to her philandering husband even after he says sorry that I realised how big a step it is,” she told this journalist in a previous interview.

The distributors felt the ending wouldn’t work because it was too much for an Indian man to say sorry and still not be accepted by his wife. The film did good business but soon Shabana started getting letters from women feeling stifled in their married life. “The last thing I wanted was to become an agony aunt but the film has proved to be cathartic for middle-class women who are yet to distinguish between a character and a real person.

Mandi (1983)

From *Ankur* and *Nishant* to *Susman* and *Hari Bhari*, Shabana has been a constant in Shyam Benegal’s universe. *Mandi* is, perhaps, their most formidable work together. Playing Rukmini Bai, the madam of a brothel, she is both the hunter and the hunted in the sharp satire on the position of sex workers in society. Shabana put on weight for the role, made chewing paan a habit, and visited red light areas to create a mercurial character that turns cunning, comic, and curt to survive in

filth. We have had several versions of Rukmini Bai but she stands tall in the market.

Paar (1984)

With Naseeruddin Shah, Shabana formed one of the most iconic on-screen pairs in the Indian film industry. From *Sparsh* and *Masoom* to *Pestonjee* and *Libaas*, the two have created many magic moments on screen. But their dedication to bringing alive the plight of landless Dalit labourers in Goutam Ghose’s *Paar* remains unrivalled. The 12-minute sequence where Naurangia and Rama transport a herd of pigs across a swelling river is etched in the memory of cinephiles. Their exhaustion and exhilaration give goosebumps. “It was an emotionally and physically demanding scene but Shabana and Naseer were tremendous”, says Goutam Ghose.

Khandahar (1984)

The Mrinal Sen film is a great example of how Shabana lets the silences of her characters converse with the audience. Perhaps that’s why she is a great choice to decode literary works that don’t lend themselves easily to cinematic interpretation. In *Khandahar*, based on Premendra Mitra’s Bengali short story, Shabana’s Jamini personifies the ruins of relationships. Bound by duty and love for her ailing mother, alive to see the suitor of her daughter return, Jamini finds hope when a city-bred photographer enters her life but his gaze also turns out to be exploitative. Echoing the crumbling facade of the building, Shabana unravels Jamini’s mental architecture.

Godmother (1999)

Throughout her astonishing career in parallel cinema, Shabana kept looking for a lane that would connect her craft with the reach of popular cinema. Early in her career, she worked with Manmohan Desai but in his universe, she was far from a driving force. She impressed cynics with the moving portrayal of a selfless mother in the Bollywood melodrama *Avtar* (1983) but it was Vinay Shukla’s *Godmother* that challenged her to create the ruthless Rambhi, a character that has the backstory of an art house film but gradually moulds into the avenger of a mainstream entertainer. It didn’t fully fit into her worldview but Shabana delivered a stunning portrayal that won her the fifth National Award for Best Actress.



Over the last five decades, Shabana has shown an amazing ability to make the mundane dramatic and the dramatic believable

Narayanan. The concert series concludes with the veena recital by Vasanthi Ramesh and Rajshri Ramakrishna on October 12, 5.30 a.m.

● **Sri Thyaga Brahma Gana Sabha** has organised vocal and instrumental concerts (4.30 p.m. and 6.30 p.m.) as part of the nine-day festival. Today’s concerts will be by Ramya Kiranmayi (4.30 p.m.) and Rithvik Raja (6.30 p.m.). Musicians to be featured on other days are: October 5: Padmashree Srinivasan followed by Sriranjani Santhanagopalan. Oct. 6: Deepika and Nandhika and Charulatha Mani. Oct. 7: N.S. Kamakshi and Chaitra Sairam. Oct. 8: Shruthi S. Bhat followed by Vijay Gopal (flute). Oct. 9: A. Shyam Prakash and Suryaprakash. Oct. 10: Malladi Sivanand Yasasvi and Srirangam Venkatanagarajan. Oct. 11: U. Jaya Vigneshwar (Mandolin) followed

by Prasanna Venkataraman. The series concludes with Vishruthi Girish’s vocal concerts at 4.30 p.m. and K. Kumarswamy’s Saxophone at 6.30 p.m. on October 12. The series is being held at P. Obul Reddy Hall, T. Nagar.

● **Chennai Fine Arts** presents a concert series (October 3-12). Today: C.K. Pavandeep. Oct. 5: Roopa Mulukutla Shastry. Oct. 6: Pathangi Brothers. Oct. 7: Sreeranjane Kaushik. Oct. 8: Adyar Amarabharathi Sathsangam will present Kamashi Pravaham, featuring the compositions of Lakshmi Viswanathan. Oct. 9: Shruthi Bhat. Oct. 10: Bangalore M. Nishanth. Oct. 11: Subhashree Ramachandran. Sashank Mallaya’s veena performance will be held on October 12 will bring the event to a close. All the concerts will be streamed live on cfaca Facebook page at 11.30 a.m. daily.

CALENDAR

Theatre festival

Brahma Gana Sabha, in association with Narada Gana Sabha, Kartik Fine Arts and Sri Parthasarathy Swami Sabha, will conduct a three-day drama festival at Narada Gana Sabha from October 4 to 6. Time: 6.45 p.m. The festival features three historical plays staged by different theatre groups. Details: October 4: Poovai Daya’s SRMG Creations’ Karaikal Ammaiyaar. October 5: RS Manohar’s NxG’s *Malikafoor*. October 6: Tamizharasan Theatres’ ‘*Sri Narasimhar*. Tickets at the hall or on mdnd.in. For details call 9444444767.

Veena recital

Mrunaalini Srinath, disciple of Chinna Veenai Rangarajan, will present her veena recital at the following places. Today, 6 p.m.: Srinivasa Perumal Temple, Royapettah; tomorrow, 6 p.m.: Mundagakanni Amman Temple, Mylapore; and October 6, 6 p.m.: Anjaneyar Temple, Luz, Mylapore.

Vocal concert

TKR Music Trust presents Anirudh Subramanian’s vocal concert today, 6 p.m. at the Kasturi Srinivasan Hall, The Music Academy. Anirudh will present compositions by Thiruvallampozhil K. Ram Kumar. VSP Gayatri Sivani (violin) and B. Ganapathyraman (mridangam) are the accompanists.

Music for a cause

The Christian Missions Charitable Trust (CMCT) is hosting a musical evening Love-in-Action-2024’, in aid of health care and youth development, at Museum Theatre on October 6, 6.30 p.m. It features VoyzMale, Rolling Tones, and The Octet Cantabile. A special feature ‘Grace in Motion: A symphony of faith and dance’, is by the students of Women’s Christian College.



An ode to Shiva

NCPA has organised a thematic Bharatanatyam performance by senior dancer Geeta Chandran on October 6, 5 p.m. at Jamshed Bhabha Theatre. Titled ‘Pravahati’, the performance marks Geeta Chandran’s 50-year journey in dance.

Voice and string

Madhuradhvani presents the following programmes at Arkay Convention Center, Mylapore. Details: Today, 6.15 p.m.: Delhi P. Sunder Rajan. Oct. 5, 6.15 p.m.: Madurai T.N. Seshagopalan. Oct. 9, 6.15 p.m.: Jayalakshmi Sekhar (veena). Oct. 10. 6.15 p.m.: Visveshwar Nagarajan (flute).



Navaratri contest

Looking forward to Navaratri and putting together an elaborate golu? Take part in the ‘Kolu Kondattam’ contest of *The Hindu Downtown*, which looks out for unique arrangements. Extra points for entries that include a pack of ITC Mangaldeep and Aroma Ghee in their arrangement. There is also a

special award will be given for entries that portray the theme ‘life in a day in Chennai’.

The Hindu Made of Chennai Kolu Kondattam is presented by Gopuram, co presented by Mangaldeep, Associate Partner: Aroma Ghee, Rajamanicka Mudaliyar Company, Education partner: Saraswathi Vidyalaya, Food partner: Madras Coffee House, Gift partners: Aachi, Medimix, Amman Sareez, Thiruvanniyur Cotton House, Naga, A1 Chips, PS Tamarind, Repute, Hanbao, Maestro Electric Cooker, RAS Chekku Oil

The last date to enter the contest is October 7. Upload your kolu photos on newsth.live/THKC2024CH or scan the QR code



Nine days of music

Navaratri has immense cultural significance with different styles of music performed across the country. Organisers and artistes come up with unique events during these nine days. A look at what Chennai has to offer.

● **Sunaada Lahari** is back with its annual Suprabhata Sangeetha Seva at its Alwarpet venue. Solo and duet vocal concerts, open to rasikas, will take place at 5.30 a.m. Musicians will perform in the glow of earthen lamps. Artistes to perform include: Today: Mambalam Sisters; Oct. 5: Vivek Sadasivam; Oct. 6: Aishwarya Shankar; Oct. 7: Nisha Rajagopalan; Oct. 8: G. Ravikiran; Oct. 9: Sumathi Krishnan; Oct. 10: K. Gayatri; Oct. 11: Ashwath

