

# friday Review

THE HINDU

**Music for the new age**

Jayanthi Kumaresan's Cup O' Carnatic shows reach out to the young **p2**

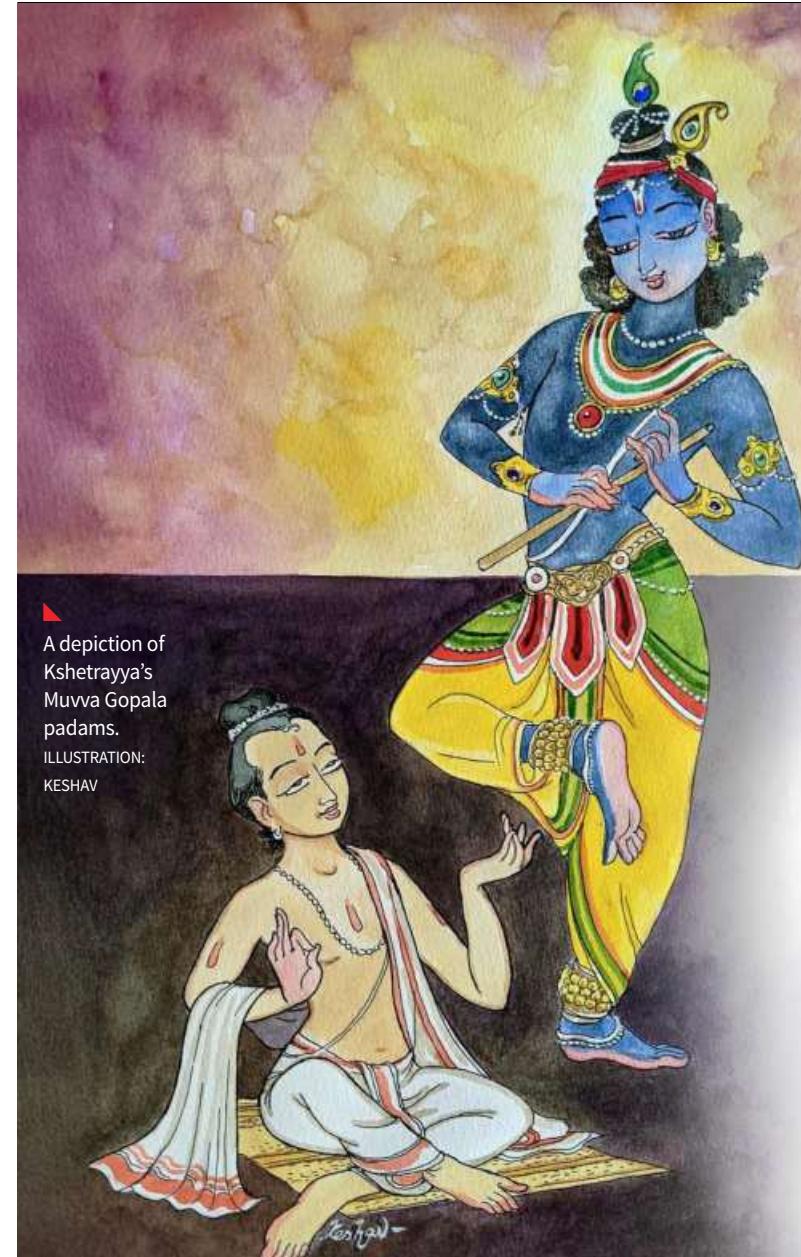
**The widening canvas**

How artist Paresh Maity has gone global with his works **p3**

## OPERA LEGEND MARIA CALLAS GETS A CINEMATIC TRIBUTE



*Maria*, starring Angelina Jolie, brings alive the soprano's life and music **p4**



A depiction of Kshetrayya's Muvva Gopala padams.

ILLUSTRATION:  
KESHAV

# Soul song

Padams and javalis are a reminder of the strong link between art and human emotions

**Savita Narasimhan**

**P**adams and javalis belong to the world of love poetry – rooted in sringara. They emerged from the temple and court traditions of South India and were central to the Devadasi repertoire.

The treatment of sringara in literature goes back as early as the 8th century with Andal's *Nachiyar Tirumozhi* and has been explored with nuance and depth by composers across centuries – Jayadeva in the 12th, Annamacharya in the 15th, Kshetragna in the 17th, and many others up to the 20th century.

When Leela akka (Bharatanatyam exponent Leela Samson) and I decided to come together for a performance that would let us explore the inherent charm of padams and javalis through our respective art forms – music and dance – it became a celebration of literature, movement, rasa and sruti. Over several sessions of discussions, we came up with a line-up of these short poetic pieces for the event, which was held in Bengaluru recently. This article is a result of our mutual artistic exchange and the desire to share it with the larger world.

Padams and javalis are subtle verses that have suggestive, nuanced meaning, as how Leela akka succinctly puts it. "At



**T. Brinda and T. Muktha** represented the hoary Dhanammal tradition that exemplified what these compositions require of musicians – a malleable voice, deep breath control and the ability to sustain notes with emotional weight

the start, we look for exact meaning – word to word, then sentence by sentence and lastly verse by verse. But along the way you realise that the meaning has to emerge from the context of the situation. There is no explanation that the poet leaves behind as an instruction manual that may guide you. It simply says it as the poet felt it. Two to three hundred years later, it is largely anyone's guess as to what he might have meant. Much is left to one's own interpretation, one's *svabhava* or nature and to a sense of aesthetic," she explains.

My own engagement with them has been shaped by a deep respect for their musical appeal. Padams feel meditative. They call for stillness and introspection. Javalis, by contrast, are quicker in emotional turns – lighter and playful. Their difference isn't one of skill, but of tone. A padam breathes slowly, through pause and weight; a javali skips along with perky charm.

Language plays a central role in both padam and javali. Telugu flows with soft musicality, while Tamil brings its own emotional cadence. When I learn or perform a padam or javali, I let the emotional resonance of the language, and the melody shape each other. The sahitya offers direction, the raga gives depth. It's a quiet dialogue, not a contest.

The emotions in a padam may reflect human love or spiritual yearning. I don't see them as opposites – both feel valid, at times intertwined. Rather than impose meaning, I try to let the raga and text lead me.

**CONTINUED ON  
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A CH-CHE



Aishwarya Raghunathan

**W**hat if a raga could unravel like a bedtime story, or a ragam tanam pallavi echo with laughter? Can humour find space between a veena phrase and a ghatam beat? And what happens when a centuries-old art form decides to look a child in the eye and say, "Come, listen"?

In Cup O' Carnatic, veena exponent Jayanthi Kumaresh dares to imagine just that. A world where Carnatic music is not only performed, but lived, spoken, questioned, and made delightfully human. Here, tradition doesn't stand still; it walks hand-in-hand with imagination, reaching out to the next generation with a gentle, knowing smile.

In Jayanthi Kumaresh's hands,



## Delectable brew

Jayanthi Kumaresh's Cup O' Carnatic is a unique blend of music, animation and storytelling

the veena becomes a seamless blend of music, theatre, storytelling, and visual poetry. On stage at the Narada Gana Sabha recently, she is not merely a performer, but a narrator, a teacher, and a companion to the audience. Through her conversations with a child, she

bridges the gulf between the ancient and the new, the known and the curious.

The roots of this production lie in a deeply personal moment, when Vidhya, a disciple of Jayanthi and a mother of two, found herself struggling to convey the depth and joy of Carnatic

music to her young children. In search of a medium that could bridge tradition and comprehension, she approached her guru with an idea: could the core concepts of Carnatic music be shared in a way that is both engaging and age-appropriate? This seed of a question blossomed

into a digital series on YouTube, Cup O' Carnatic, which has been running for more than seven years. These byte-sized episodes, rich in music and conversation, found resonance with parents, educators and students alike.

Inspired by this sustained digital engagement, the idea to



Raga journey  
Shruthi S Bhat with  
Kailasapathy  
on the violin and  
Bhuvan on the  
mridangam.  
PHOTO: SPECIAL  
ARRANGEMENT

## Notes of bhakti

Shruthi S Bhat conveyed the poignancy in Bhadrachala Ramadasu's songs

### P Srihari

**S**hruthi S. Bhat made a statement of both intent and content right at the outset of her concert, which was devoted exclusively to the compositions of Bhadrachala Ramadasu. It is rare to come across a kriti in Bhairavi as the opening number of a concert, and rarer still when it includes a niraval segment. Accompanied by G. Kailasapathy on the violin and G.N. Bhuvan on the mridangam, Shruthi presented this endowment concert under the auspices of The Music Academy at the Kasturi Srinivas Hall.

Shruthi's voice was in fine fettle from the very first note, as she opened with the shloka 'Srirama sitagaga' from the saint-poet's 'Dasarathi Sathakam' in Bhairavi. The full range of the raga's facets emerged even in the short rendition, which was a prelude to the composition 'Rama dayajudave'. The refinement lingered through the rendition of the song, particularly in the niraval and kalpanaswaras at 'Rajeeva dala lochana', creating immersive bhakti.

### Rendered with zest

'Bhadraila rajamandira' in a lilting Kuntalavarali was sung zestfully, offering a lighter and contrasting shade. Chakravakam was the first raga Shruthi explored. While the delineation stayed true to the raga's mood and structure, it occasionally veered into repetitive passages that could have been more tightly sculpted for greater coherence. Kailasapathy's version on the violin complemented that of the vocalist.

Here, Shruthi narrated a moving anecdote from the life of the 17th-century composer, which

related to the kriti 'Abbabba debbalaku' in Misra Chapu. Ramadasu, a staunch devotee of Rama, had been imprisoned by the Mughal ruler Tana Shah on charges of misappropriating funds to construct the Bhadrachala Rama temple. In this composition, he pleads with the Lord: "I promise upon your feet, please do listen. I have not laundered a single penny to anybody". After listening to his prayers, Rama and Lakshmana appeared as messengers, paid the money, and secured Ramadasu's release from prison. The song was rendered with the poignancy the context warrants, and the swarakalpana at 'Prema tho' displayed synchrony from the ensemble.

'Hari hari rama' in Kanada carried forward the devotional fervour leading into the main suite in Kamboji and the best-known composition by Ramadasu in the raga – the evergreen 'Emaya Rama' in Khanda Chapu. Shruthi began by hitting the high notes shortly before ebbing into the lower octave, and then gradually shaped the melody, revealing its splendour through gamaka-laden phrases. Kailasapathy's presentation was equally rich with melodic depth. The rendition of the kriti was replete with Kamboji's grace before Shruthi rounded off with niraval and swara exchanges at 'Paramatmudu ani ninnu' in the charanam. Bhuvan's rhythmic support was steadfast throughout, and his tanai was marked by verve and tonal precision.

A shloka, 'Sriramachandra karunakara', in Yamunakalyani was followed by the song 'Naraharideva', and the concert concluded with a mangalam in Madhyamavati.

## Courtroom drama

*Kalavu Neekkiya Padalam*, staged at the Kodai Nataka Vizha, highlighted the battle between ethics and law

### Suganthy Krishnamachari

**B**havani is a lawyer who doesn't have many cases coming her way. She is forced to settle for clients who can afford to pay very little. Ramanathan (Bhaskar), on the other hand, is a lawyer who makes money hand over fist.

ThRee's *Kalavu Neekkiya Padalam* (script V Sreevathson; direction M.V.Bhaskar) was about how dharma triumphs over the letter of the law, in two cases where Ramanathan and Bhavani face off. In the first case, an *appalam* supplier wants to get out of a contract with a multinational company, because he finds the terms unfavourable.

Ramanathan, appearing for the MNC, argues that ignorance of the law is no excuse. But Bhavani



works around the law, and makes some ethical points. She asks the executive of the MNC why he gets annual increments, while the

poor *appalam* supplier has to stagnate on the same compensation for five years. Finally, the MNC withdraws the case, fearing negative publicity.

In the other case, Meyyappan (Isaikavi Ramanan), the trustee of a private temple, accuses the temple priest of stealing temple jewellery. The jewels were in a

cupboard, inside the sanctum. There was no break in, and the priest was the only one who had a key to the cupboard. Bhavani proves, however, that there was once a spare key, which was supposedly lost by Meyyappan's father. What if the key hadn't been lost? Cornered, Meyyappan withdraws his complaint against the priest. So came another victory for Bhavani. While Bhavani's successes may leave one feeling good, because it is nice to see the underdog winning against all odds, the court scenes and Bhavani's moral haranguing were unrealistic.

The playwright had overdramatised the court scenes. A lawyer may be religious, but quoting incidents from *Thiruvilayadal Puranam*, and invoking god in a court were overboard. However, the LED backdrops for the lawyer's office, the court and Bhavani's house (Shiva, Disney, Sharath and team) were striking and well done.

Shiva gets phone calls from unknown numbers and when he answers the phone, it is Kayal at the other end, asking him why he has abandoned her. Should you believe the evidence of your eyes? Or should you not? You keep asking yourself this, throughout.

Shiva goes to pieces, and finally confesses to the crime and tells the police where he buried the body. But when the police dig up the spot, there is no corpse in the pit. The way the plot was handled and the performance of the actors kept the story gripping till the end. V. Sridhar as lawyer Saviggy, Sridhar Ramaswamy as Shiva and Satish as Kadir were particularly good in their roles.

The conclusion, however, was unconvincing and left one with many questions. There were some logical loopholes too in the play. However, to raise these questions in this review would act as a spoiler. Suffice it to say that the play was on the whole entertaining, and with a willing suspension of disbelief, you might be able to overlook the far-fetched conclusion.

## A whodunit

*Kaanal Neero* sustained interest with its

many twists and turns



### Suganthy Krishnamachari

For a suspense story to work, nothing should be obvious. It is the ambiguity that sustains interest in such stories.

Dummis Drama's *Kaanal Neero* (story and dialogues by Sridhar Ramaswamy and direction by V. Sreevathson) is one such story, where you are left wondering not who the murderer is, but whether the murder took place or not.

Shiva is a rich estate owner. His wife Kayal is an attention seeker, and torments Shiva. One day the quarrel between them takes a serious turn, and she tries to slash her wrist. Shiva wrenches the knife from her hands and pushes her down. She suffers an injury and dies.

Moving the stage LED display (LED support - TN Now), to show Shiva dragging Kayal's body out of the house and burying it, was a very clever way of portraying the scene. You see Shiva (Sridhar Ramaswamy) murdering his wife and burying her. But subsequent events leave you wondering whether Kayal is actually dead.

**Classical made cool** Jayanthi Kumaresh presenting the Cup O' Carnatic show live at Narada Gana Sabha. PHOTOS: VELANKANNI RAJ

bring Cup O' Carnatic to the stage took shape, not merely as a live extension, but as a transformative experience. The live stage version made its debut in Bengaluru and then travelled to Chennai.

With its unique blend of animation, narration and live performance, the show dares to collapse the boundaries between the performer and the audience, between digital and live, between tradition and experiment.

Keerthi Kumar's graphics and lighting design elevate the experience. The gentle strokes of Upasana Govindarajan's illustrations and Aneesh Pulikode's graphics form an impeccable backdrop and frames the narrative like a living storybook. The musical support is equally thoughtful. Giridhar Udupa on the ghatam and Pramath Kiran on the morsing and the tabla provide a responsive and understated rhythmic layer.

During a post-performance conversation, Jayanthi said, "We tested every joke on our students. If it made them laugh, we knew it had to be included." The show is rich with gentle humour, the kind that eases the listener in, especially the young.

The production took close to a year to conceptualise and refine. "We wanted to do it right. To reach out to the next generation rasikas, we have to opt for formats they would love," said Jayanthi, who plans to take the show across the globe.

# Colours, Canvas and Cannes

Artist Paresh Maity on taking the beauty of Indian landscapes to the international film festival

Shreyasi Ghosh

Last week, the world got to witness once again celebrated artist Paresh Maity's dedication to the craft he has made his. He made his Cannes Film Festival debut at the age of 60 with the watercolour 'Himalayas to the Indian Ocean', which was unveiled on May 18. This work showcased the breathtaking landscapes of the Indian subcontinent.

And then, influencer Shalini Passi wore a Manish Malhotra creation inspired by Paresh's 'Longitude 77'. "From the Himalayas to Kanyakumari, every thread tells a story. This isn't just couture, it's a canvas, blending my love for art, fashion, and India. Grateful to represent our heritage on a global stage," Shalini shared on Instagram.

From the Venice Biennale to the red carpet at Cannes, Paresh's ability to blend tradition with contemporary artistry has captivated audiences worldwide.

For Paresh, the Cannes Film Festival is like the Olympics for films. "My art is always a celebration of energy and joy. To be there at Cannes, in that atmosphere, gives me a lot of excitement and inspiration," he adds.

Paresh Maity's journey, from Purba Medinipur in West Bengal to the global stage, stands as a testament to his perseverance and ability to innovate. "I come from a very lower middle class family with no exposure to art. When I was probably seven, I was



Refreshing palette (From top) Paresh Maity at work; with Shalini Passi at Cannes; and his Jackfruit sculpture in front of Victoria Memorial, Kolkata. PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

introduced to art in school. I then knew that I would do this till the last day of my life. I started clay modelling and sculpture, making clay toys and trying to sell them in village fairs. Till Class 10, I used to make huge Saraswatis and Kalis during Durga Puja and sell them to pandals to support my family," Paresh explains.

In his artistic journey, Paresh, who was bestowed with the Padma Shri in 2014, has transcended traditional boundaries, creating some significant pieces of public art in India. His latest is a stunning Jackfruit sculpture in front of Victoria Memorial, Kolkata. This whimsical and vibrant piece reflects Paresh's ability to stay contemporary and in touch with his roots.

One of Paresh's iconic creations is the Bankura Horse, a traditional symbol of rural Bengal. Paresh breathes new life into this age-old motif, recreating images on them and marking his insignia. Paresh often reminisces about

oils, acrylics and so on. I don't choose the medium and then decide on the subject, I let the subject decide the medium,"

Paresh explains. In his artistic journey, Paresh, who was bestowed with the Padma Shri in 2014, has transcended traditional boundaries, creating some significant pieces of public art in India. His latest is a stunning Jackfruit sculpture in front of Victoria Memorial, Kolkata. This whimsical and vibrant piece reflects Paresh's ability to stay contemporary and in touch with his roots.

At the 60th edition of La Biennale di Venezia (the Venice Art Biennale) in 2024, which explored the theme of 'foreignness', Paresh was among the 12 Indian artists who showcased their work – his creation was the sculpture 'Genesis'.

But what Paresh looks forward to most is to "engage in meaningful art and give back to society through it".



Musical tribute (Clockwise from above) Pt. Sajan Mishra with son Swaransh; Sunanda Sharma with Rupak Kulkarni and Girija Devi. PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



Radha Rani'. Pt Mithilesh Jha on the tabla and Sumit Mishra on the harmonium (both from Benaras) provided

excellent support. Pt Sajan Mishra, who also hails from Benaras, was performing his second concert in memory of Appaji that day (he sang at an event in Benaras in the morning). Girija Devi had learnt from his uncle Pt. Shrichand Mishra.

Pt Sajan Mishra began his concert with raag Bageshwari, a favourite of his. As usual the singing was highly emotive. It is said that no one can convey the nuances of a bandish like a Benaras gharana singer; it was evident at this concert. Pt. Sajan Mishra sang three compositions in a slow and unhurried pace.

After the concert, the veteran vocalist shared how over 40 years he and

his brother, Pt Rajan Mishra, sang only khayal to establish the presence of their gharana in the form.

He said that in the last century singers, particularly women, from the region focussed on thumri and made it so popular that Benaras khayal style was almost forgotten. So the brother vowed not to sing thumri till they had re-established Banaras' khayal gayaki.

But at this concert, as a tribute to Appaji, Pt. Sajan Mishra and Swaransh sang a beautiful thumri in Mishra Tilang. Contributing extensively to the concert were Pt. Vinod Lele on the tabla, and Pt. Vinay Mishra on the harmonium (both are also from Benaras).

## Platforming young talents



Aarohi – A Festival of Rising Stars, a musical initiative by Pancham Nishad, makes a comeback this year with a unique perspective. Dedicated to nurturing and throwing the spotlight on young and emerging talents, this 23rd edition, features for the first time, an all-vocal concert series. The two-day annual event, which began yesterday, is taking place at Y. B. Chavan Auditorium, Nariman Point.

Artists to perform today at 6.30 p.m. are Yugandhara Keche, Darshan Melavanki and Tejaswini Vernekar. The young musicians will be accompanied by seniors – Yati Bhagwat, Swapnil Bhise on the tabla, Sudhanush Gharpure and Dyaneshwar Sonawane on the harmonium.



## WHAT IS DIMINISHING OVARIAN RESERVE?

Recently, I had a patient who came to me complaining of erratic period cycles, hot flashes and vaginal dryness. The patient is in her mid-30s, and was wondering why she was experiencing peri-menopausal symptoms at a younger age. In reality, these signs pointed to a condition known as Diminishing Ovarian Reserve (DOR) – a decrease in the number or quality of eggs in a woman's ovaries.

### What is Diminishing Ovarian Reserve (DOR)?

Every woman is born with a pre-determined, definite number of eggs in her ovaries (usually around 1 million, at birth). After the girl gets her first period, the number of

endometriosis, autoimmune disorders, medical treatments like chemotherapy or radiation therapy and / or surgery on the ovaries. Lifestyle factors also play an important role. In particular, smoking and excessive alcohol are shown to negatively affect a woman's health and contribute to DOR. Also, a diet that lacks essential nutrients and is highly concentrated with processed foods can contribute to DOR.

### Diagnosis and Treatment

Diagnosis of DOR can be done only by a doctor, who would rely on some blood tests such as Anti-Müllerian Hormone (AMH) test and Follicle-Stimulating Hormone (FSH) test, or tests for ovarian volume and Antral Follicle Count (AFC) through ultra-sound, to check the person's reproductive health.

Please understand, there is no way to make the body



Dr. K.S. Kavitha Gautham, MBBS, MS (OG)  
Managing Director,  
BloomLife Hospital Pvt. Ltd.

produce more eggs. Hence, if a woman has DOR at a young age, she may be advised to consult a fertility specialist regarding next steps in terms of planning for future options in terms of having children. Couples who are seeking to start a family can look into assisted reproductive techniques (like IVF).

[www.bloomlifehospital.com](http://www.bloomlifehospital.com)  
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Rachel Rhine

**W**ith the release of Pablo Larraín's new biopic *Maria*, starring Angelina Jolie, the world is once again drawn into the life of Greek-American opera legend Maria Callas, whose artistry, ambition and isolation were inseparable from her myth. The film premiered at the 81st Venice International Film Festival on August 29, 2024, and has been streaming on Lionsgate Play in India since May 9, 2025.

**The beginning**

Maria Anna Cecilia Kalogeropoulos was born in New York in 1923 to Greek immigrant parents. Her childhood was marred by family discord and poverty. When her parents separated, her mother took Maria and her sister back to Athens, just before World War II. Life in wartime Greece was bleak, but within that landscape, a remarkable voice came into being.

Maria trained at Athens Conservatoire under soprano Elvira de Hidalgo, who saw not only the potential but the ferocity in her voice. She practised obsessively,

# The story of a fearless voice

**Maria, starring Angelina Jolie, brings alive memories of the opera diva Maria Callas**

isolated from friends, fuelled by her mother's ambition and her own growing hunger for greatness. She would later say her youth was stolen from her by music.

Her professional debut came in the 1940s in Athens, but it was in post-war Italy that her legend started to crystallise. By the age of 25, Maria had conquered the major Italian stages, singing with an intensity that audiences had not seen in decades.

Maria Callas brought Bel Canto opera – long considered decorative and outdated – back into cultural prominence. In works by Bellini, Donizetti and early Verdi, she found emotional depth. Her *Norma* was

torn between motherhood and priestly duty. Her *Lucia* descended into madness with devastating realism. These were not just performances, they were revelations.

Her voice was unusual: expansive in range, volatile in colour, capable of both lyrical delicacy and volcanic force. Critics sometimes called it

uneven. But even those who questioned her technique admitted they could not look away.

By the 1950s, Maria had become a global celebrity. Her drastic weight loss transformed her physically and visually aligned her with the 'fashion elite'. Designers such as Dior and Biki dressed her, photographers pursued her and tabloids devoured every detail of her life.

But the transformation was not without cost. Many believed her voice became fragile after the physical change. Others pointed to the sheer emotional toll her performances exacted. Either way, her career began to slow by the early 1960s. Offstage, her relationship with the Greek shipping magnate, Aristotle Onassis, made headlines. When he left her for Jacqueline Kennedy, Maria was devastated. Those who knew Maria, said she

never recovered emotionally, though she rarely spoke about it in public. In her final years, Maria withdrew from limelight, living in solitude in her Paris apartment. She concealed her pain behind dark glasses, tailored suits, and carefully worded silences.

It is this fragile, human side that director Pablo Larraín explores in *Maria*, his introspective biopic starring Angelina Jolie. Set entirely in the last years of Maria's life, the film avoids the grandeur of her career, and instead, lingers on the quiet rituals of memory: letters, old videos, echoes of applause. Angelina's portrayal, informed by months of archival research, is inward and dignified. She plays



**The biopic, which premiered last year at the 81st Venice International Film Festival, has been streaming on Lionsgate Play in India since May 9, 2025.**

Maria, not as a legend, but as a woman who once commanded the stage, but now, wrestles with silence. What emerges is not a portrait of a diva, but of a woman confronting the ghosts of her former self.

**A legacy etched in sound**

Maria died in 1977, at the age of 53. Her ashes were scattered in the Aegean Sea, not far from the land that had shaped her identity. In 2023, Athens inaugurated the Maria Callas Museum, marking her centenary with a collection of personal objects, costumes, recordings and letters. The museum reflects not only her artistic legacy but her enduring relevance to opera, theatre and performance.

Her recordings remain widely studied and sold. Even today, no soprano can sing *Tosca*, *Norma* or *La Traviata* without facing comparison to Maria. But her influence is not measured only in sound. She changed the expectations of what an opera singer could be: not merely a singer, but an actor, a thinker and a human being on stage.

Perhaps that is why Maria Callas still matters. Not because she was flawless, but because she was fearless.

Dhruv's music compositions. "It was exciting and challenging to find a way for the varied dance forms to blend and lend themselves to the storytelling, without breaking the overall rhythm of the piece."

**Intense training**

The dancers come with intense training in multiple forms. Avantika elaborates: "All of them are performers, teachers, and in some cases, choreographers. It was a delight to be in a room full of dancers, who bring in enthusiasm, spirit and grit, willing to push boundaries and bring their own perspectives. For the actors, we made sure they too could get familiar with the movement vocabulary."

Nadir reiterates that the effort was to bring in dancers who could adapt to other styles. "For instance, there is Arushi Nigam, who plays Koel. She is a ballerina, who also does contemporary and jazz. But, here she also has to do a lot of Kathak, which was new to her. So the training was rigorous. One can't master a dance form in a few days but one can master the choreography for a particular sequence."

This is the fourth production of Aadyam Theatre's Season 7 this year. The initiative aims to push artistic boundaries in theatre through a good mix of original and adapted stories.

Along with theatre personality Shernaz Patel, Nadir also plays the role of a programming consultant for Aadyam Theatre. He says, "We invite pitches, shortlist and select the final list after a round of meetings. Aadyam gives producers the wherewithal to build a show and run it, so the costs are taken care of. We want these

plays to be present in the theatre ecosystem for years, and that has been the case with many productions."

Nadir feels this role has helped him serve the cause of theatre by enabling other Indian directors to present some wonderful work. He says the response to this season's first three plays has been "encouraging, and hopes *Mumbai Star* will offer a completely different experience".

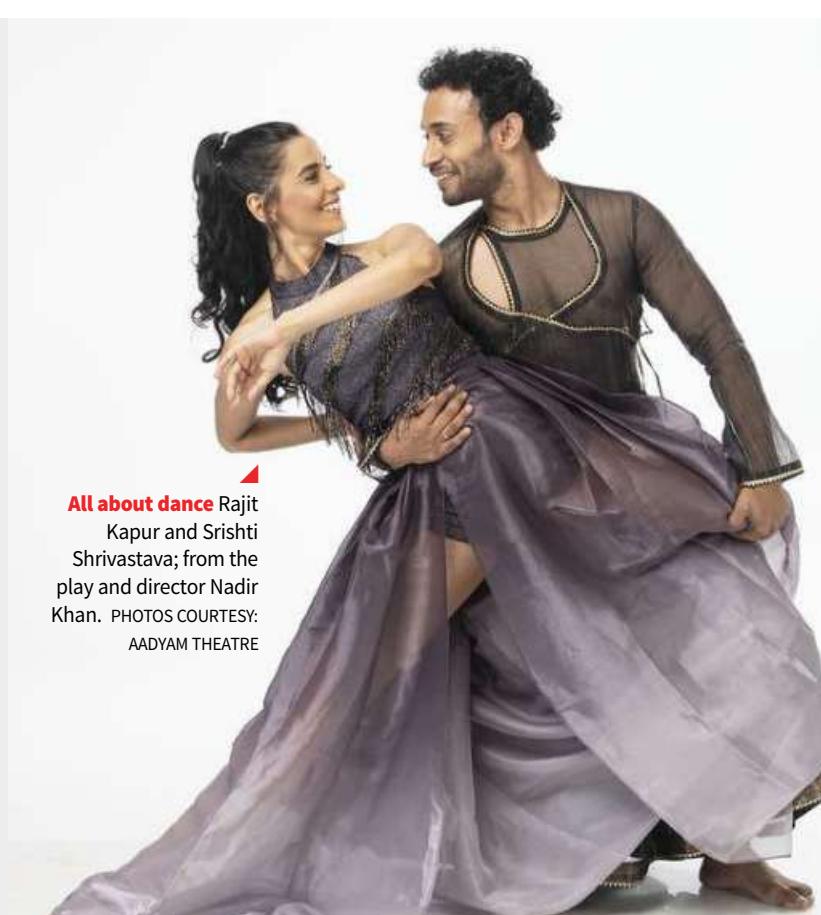
**Narendra Kusnur**

**T**heatre director Nadir Khan describes *Mumbai Star* as a 'dance musical. It is all about dance and dancers, but is set in a theatrical format as it uses narrators to tell a story. Our idea is to blend movement, music and lyrics with the theatrical element.'

*Mumbai Star* was originally written by Devika Shahani, directed by Nadir, with music by Dhruv Ghanekar. In 2023, the team toured Japan for the Min-On Concert Association. However, when it was selected for Season 7 of Aadyam Theatre, the Aditya Birla Group's theatre initiative, it needed a fresh approach. Devika, who is the producer along with Nadir had the script reimaged, which was adapted by Akash Khurana and Arghya Lahiri. It also brought on board Rajit Kapur and Srishti Shrivastava as narrators.

*Mumbai Star* begins its India run at Mumbai's St Andrew's Auditorium (May 24 and 25), followed by performances at New Delhi's Kamani Auditorium (June 14 and 15). Choreographed by Avantika Bahl, with music by Dhruv and lyrics by Ishitta Arun, it features eight songs.

*Mumbai Star* tells the story of Dev (played by Avenav Mukherjee), a young man from a coastal village of Maharashtra, who dreams of becoming a star. With only his raw



## City chronicles

**Nadir Khan's *Mumbai Star* is an ode to movement, music and people**

talent and a small amount of cash, he arrives in Mumbai, hoping to win a dance competition. Though this genre has been explored before, Nadir believes, each storyteller has his own perspective and adds: "The first thing is to tell the story truthfully and interestingly, but, different modes may be used. Creating memorable moments on stage is pure joy for a director."

A major emphasis was in choosing the right dancers. Avantika worked with guest choreographers Uma Dogra (Kathak), Vivaran Dhasmana (hip-hop) and Krutika Mehta (Bollywood). Says Avantika, "The effort was to bring together various styles, interwoven within the expansive framework of

contemporary dance. As *Mumbai Star* also captures the city's spirit, we wanted the movements to represent people from all walks of life."

Avantika shares the choreography was driven by



**While Sing India Sing helped me know all about the world of music, I got to learn about dance in *Mumbai Star*.**

**NADIR KHAN**

**ISKCON's new centre**

ISKCON Chennai inaugurates its new centre at T. Nagar on May 24. Narasimha utsavam will be performed on the occasion at Guru Balaji Kalyana Mandapam, near Natesan Park, T. Nagar. The evening will begin at 4.30 p.m. with a kirtan. This will be followed by special abhishekam and lecture (6 p.m.). There will be weekly programmes including Bhagavad Gita classes conducted on Saturdays, 7 p.m., at Alamelumangai Kalyana Mandapam, T. Nagar. For more details contact 8220017695.

**Harikatha**

Hamsadhwani has organised Varsha Bhuvaneswari's harikatha 'Bhaktha Meera' on May 24, 6.15 p.m. She will be accompanied by Mannargudi Shankararaman on the harmonium and Jayadev Haridoss on the mridangam. Venue: Youth Hostel, Adyar.

**Lecture**

Presented by Chennai 2000 Plus Trust and Vivekananda Cultural Centre, Ithihaasa Paathirangal's monthly lecture on 'Iravar Kanda Ramayanam' by VaVe.Su, will take place on May 25, 6 p.m. at Vivekananda House.

