

# friday Review

THE HINDU

**Timeless verses**

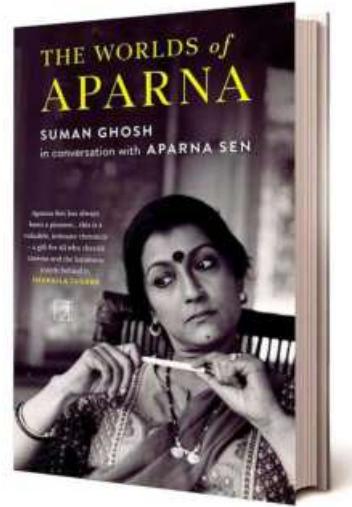
A book on composer Ambujam Krishna reveals the many aspects of her work **p2**

**Remembering Mrs. YGP**

Looking at her multifaceted interests on her birth centenary **p2**

**UNDER THE K-POP SPELL**

How the annual K-Town festival brings together stars and fans **p4**

**Shantanu Datta**

**M**ovie lovers will remember her as the playful young girl rummaging under the bed to look for her pet squirrel who has chosen the right moment to slip out and gatecrash a nuptial negotiation. She finds 'Chorki' in a matter of moments and darts out, leaving an already nervous family that has laid out a charm offensive for a prospective groom in a state of befuddlement. It is one of several comedic moments in *Samapti* (Conclusion), part of Satyajit Ray's triptych of Tagore short stories – *Teen Kanya* (Three Daughters).

Aparna Sen, nee Dasgupta, was only 14 when she played Mrinmoyee in the short film that pivots humour in the institution of marriage in familiar social settings. The year was 1961.

From playing the heroine in popular Bengali films to holding her own with stalwarts such as Ray and Mrinal Sen, Aparna is one of the legends of Bengali cinema. In between, there's been theatre, both serious (with Utpal Dutt, no less) and mainstream, activism and a nearly two-decade stint as Editor of *Sananda*, a trailblazing women's magazine. The next major shift was writing short stories. One modelled on her school principal wrote itself into a screenplay. Nurtured over two years, it was a labour of love that had to be made into a film.

**Enduring portrayals**  
36 Chowringhee Lane was born, placing itself in the central Calcutta neighbourhood to allude to the protagonist's Anglo-Indian roots but brilliantly suffixing a fictional lane to its title. The film was released in 1981, and Chowringhee Lane was so earnestly imagined that it has etched itself into the multi-cultural landscape of the city. A stellar debut, 36 Chowringhee Lane will remain one of Indian cinema's most enduring portrayals of the individual, her solitude and parched existence universalised with honesty and empathy.

Aparna has so far directed 16 feature films, including such landmarks as *Paroma*, *Yugant*, *Paromitar Ek Din*, *Mr & Mrs Iyer*, 15



Versatile Aparna Sen.  
PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

## Sen, and sensibility

As Aparna Sen turns 80, two new books trace the actor-director's trailblazing journey in cinema and theatre

*Park Avenue, Goynar Baksho, Ghawre Bairey Aaj* and, recently, *The Rapist*. She has been able to widen her lens on life with each outing, placing her women in uncharted territory within relationships and politics, allowing them agency and voice.

Three National Awards have come her way in addition to the NETPAC Jury Award at the Locarno Film Festival.

Auteur by instinct, Aparna makes sure her films bear her imprint, because she believes her directorial offerings, and not her screen idol status, define her legacy.

At 80, Aparna still sparkles. "I don't feel my age and people say I don't look my age. So, I am really not bothered," she says in filmmaker Suman Ghosh's commemorative book *The Worlds of Aparna* (Simon & Schuster India), which records his conversations with her, family and friends from the film fraternity.

Another timely book, *Aparna Sen: A Life in Cinema* (Rupa) by Devapriya Sanyal, undertakes a deep dive into

her filmography, especially with regard to her female characters. These are women who may start off emotionally vulnerable but by the end of their on-screen journey almost always claim agency for themselves. Read together, these books offer a cogent analysis of Aparna Sen the filmmaker, placing her within the framework of contemporary Indian directors.

They shine a light on the person she is: funny, at times irreverent, and offer intimate accounts of her formative years in Calcutta and Santiniketan.

Aparna grew up amid books, music, poetry and films, courtesy her parents Chidananda and Supriya Dasgupta. Their home was a crucible of the arts with poets, writers and cultural icons visiting often. It was but natural for her to imbibe a sense of aesthetics closely associated with the Bengal of the time. Her father and Ray were friends, and together founded the Calcutta Film Society, making them pioneers of the film

society movement in India. There were regular film screenings at home (the works of Ingmar Bergman, Sergei Eisenstein, and more). The first Bengali film she was "allowed" to see was Ray's *Pather Panchali*, Dasgupta Senior being quite clear that his children needn't be exposed to the formulaic offerings of commercial cinema so early in life. Yet, she spent around 20 years in that very milieu as an actor.

Aparna is a keen photographer, and a good one at that (the Henri Cartier-Bresson books at home helped), which explains her instinctive understanding of light and camera angles. "Now, we'll have to take her seriously," commented Ray when she showed him her black-and-whites. Sadly though, there'll never be an exhibition of her stills as she has lost most of the negatives ("I am not much of an archivist").

Who did she go to with the completed script of 36 Chowringhee Lane? Ray, of course. He liked it. It's

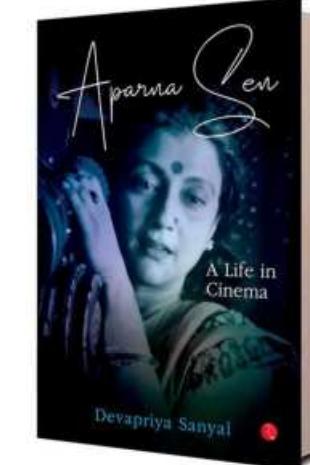
all heart, he said, and put her on to Shashi Kapoor. But, how did Aparna read her script to the Kapoors in Bombay? When did he agree to produce the film? Why did he double Aparna's directorial fees?

Suman Ghosh's book is delightfully revelatory. Beginning with the pastel-shades of Ms. Violet Stoneham's loneliness, Aparna's ever-widening world view gets reflected in the sheer range of her stories and characters. Meenakshi Iyer rediscovered her humanity while encountering a riotous mob during a bus journey (*Mr and Mrs Iyer*, 2002), homemaker *Paroma* (1985) is able to take responsibility for herself, choosing to return after a torrid affair, as Devapriya explains, "to continue to search for her own identity"; a mother-in-law bonds with her daughter-in-law (*Paromitar Ek Din*, 2000), their friendship

helping each other navigate relationships in a patriarchal family. As for Meethi, disturbed on account of a mental health condition, she ultimately takes charge and simply disappears (*15 Park Avenue*, 2005), a stunning on-screen resolution that left theatre audiences transfixed long after the end credits had rolled.

"It's my worldview that you must soak up life like a sponge," believes Aparna, "then, every experience becomes your resource material that you, perhaps, someday may go on to use." She has lived by that credo, unafraid about where it might lead her. Consider *Ghawre Bairey Aaj* (2019). For this modernist retelling of Tagore's *Home and the World*, Aparna drew from contemporary reality to arm Bimala, the female protagonist, like she had never been imagined, to reflect the filmmaker's vehement rejection of the politics of hate sweeping the world today.

Where exactly does Aparna feature among India's filmmakers? For Shabana Azmi, she's among the finest we have. "She grew up in a very syncretic atmosphere... and it hurts her as an Indian to redefine that," she explains. Anjan Dutt believes youngsters will come to regard her films as important a document as her cinematic predecessors. Most of all, critic Samik Bandopadhyay emphasises, Aparna stands out as she is among the very few filmmakers who remain political. "...Aparna has dared. And her politics lies there... in daring to do what few others are doing."

**CULTURE BRIEFS****The Lavani pulse**

Aalaap presents 'Unseen Lavani Untold Stories, Her Stage, His Gaze' by writer and theatre director Bhushan Korgaonkar and team on November 27, 6.45 p.m. at Gobbelin, Gandhi Nagar, Adyar.

It will be an evening of stories, songs, interactions and a multi-media presentation about Lavani, a genre of popular music and dance form from Maharashtra. It also explores the Lavani artistes' matriarchal traditions. Bhushan has been working with Lavani artistes since 2002. This has led him to write Lavani and other songs for music videos.

**Mélange of arts**

Carnatic musician Anugrah Lakshmanan's Minna Minni (an organisation that works with classical arts) presents Mélange fest, at The Medai, Alwarpet, from November 21 to 23, 6 p.m. The event will feature Bharatanatyam, Carnatic music, theatre and visual art presentations by both established and up-and-coming artistes. Day one (Nov. 21) begins with 'Love For laya: Appreciating The Thani Avartanam' with ghatam S. Karthick and Sarvesh Kartick; and followed by Reshika Sivakumar's Bharatanatyam and T.K.V. Ramanujacharyulu's violin solo recital.

November 22 features 'Nunmai - Where Small Things Matter' by Karuna Sagari; Carnatic vocal by Nanditha Ravi with Chidambaram Badrinath and B. Sivaraman; and 'Nin Mugam Kanden', a poignant one-woman act performed by Preethi Bharadwaj.

The concluding day will showcase a Carnatic vocal concert by S. Adithyanarayanan with Haritha Narayanan and S. Kavichelvan; 'Natyam-Myriad hues' by Urmila Sathyaranayanan, and 'The Moving Picture', an animation story by Chetan Sharma. Tickets on tikki.

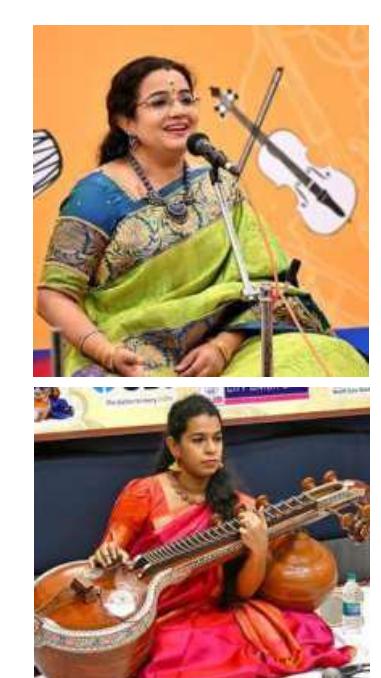
**Celebrating Dikshitar**

As part of the 250th birth anniversary celebrations of Muthuswami Dikshitar an event will be held at Dikshitar Mandapam, Ettayapuram, on November 25 and 26, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. A total of 12 concerts will be performed, each spanning 45 minutes, on both days.

It is organised by Sri Parthasarathy Swami Sabha, in association with Nadhajyothis Muthuswamy Dikshitar Memorial Committee, Ettayapuram, Narada Gana Sabha, Brahma Gana Sabha, Kartik Fine Arts, and Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Sabha, New Delhi.

The performances on November 25 are by Carnatica Brothers; Shertalai Ranganatha Sharma, Swetaranyam Sisters; R. Suryaprakash; Vasudha Ravi; Mohana Sharma; Akshay Padmanabhan; Venkat Nagarajan; Vivek Sadasivam; Shruthi Bhat; Vivek Mozhukulam; Dhanya Dinesh Rudrapatna; Anirudh Subramanian; Bharadwaj Subramiam and Prithvi Harish.

The November 26 line-up is as follows: Vidya Kalyanaraman, G. Ravikiran, B. Suchitra Balasubramanian (harikatha), Madurai Sivaganesh, Sunil Gargyan, Aditya Madhavan, Shruthi Shankar Kumar, Padmashree Srinivasan, Veena Venkatramani, Preethi Sethuraman, Archana and Samani.



**P. Srihari**

**T**he compositions of Ambujam Krishna (1917-1989) are outpourings of profound devotion and evocative poetry. With an estimated oeuvre of over 600 songs, primarily in Tamil, and also in Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Hindi and Sanskrit, she has, to her credit, songs in Manipravalam too, a literary genre characterised by a medley of languages within a single composition.

Marked by simplicity, Ambujam Krishna's songs are typically heartfelt pleadings to the Almighty for succour, drawn appropriately from the epics and puranas. This foundation, combined with her nuanced understanding of multiple cultures and idioms, gave her an exemplary composing acumen. Her innate sense for how lyrics would blend with melody ensured they were perfectly suited for being rendered as kritis.

**Enduring appeal**

Over decades, Ambujam Krishna's lyrics have attracted renowned musicians and scholars such as V.V. Sadagopan, Musiri Subramania Iyer, Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, S. Ramanthan, T.N. Seshagopalan, K.C. Thyagarajan, K.R. Kedaranathan, Madurai N. Krishnan, Ananthalakshmi Sadagopan, R. Vedavalli, Charumathi Ramachandran and R.K. Shriramkumar, who have set her words to music. That this process of musical interpretation continues even today, 36 years after her passing, serves as a testament to the enduring appeal of her lyrics.

The family of Ambujam Krishna organised an exclusive vocal recital of her



# Composer's special

Sikkil Gurucharan highlighted the many facets of Ambujam Krishna's kritis that make them timeless

compositions by Sikkil Gurucharan at The Music Academy on the occasion of the release of her biography *Devotion Through Song*, authored by well-known historian V. Sriram. The concert proved to be a memorable journey through the distinguished composer's works, with Gurucharan's rendition illuminating the many facets of her kritis. His clear enunciation of the songs brought out their lyrical excellence, and his judicious approach – limiting the

manodharma aspect to the bare essentials – enabled him to present as many as 10 songs. The repertoire featured six kritis in Tamil, and one each in Telugu, Malayalam, Hindi and Manipravalam. The accompaniment of V. Sanjeev (violin), N.G. Bharadwaj (mridangam) and S. Krishna (ghatam) provided perfect synergy.

That Gurucharan showcased Ambujam Krishna's lesser-known compositions even in ragas such as Karnaranjani and Bilahari, in

which 'Om namo narayana' and 'Kaanbadheppodhu' are popular, was a pointer to his diligence and sense of occasion.

**An evocative Karnaranjani**  
Gurucharan commenced the recital with the famous shloka 'Yaakundendu tusharaha dhaval' in Mayamalavagowla serving as a prelude to 'Sangeeta devate saraswathi', a salutation to the 'Goddess of Music' in the same raga. The charanam portrays the deity's form and attributes, extolling

her as the bestower of the 64 kalas. The short, nuanced swarakalana at the pallavi line further enhanced this invocation. After outlining the raga Karnaranjani, Gurucharan rendered 'Vandhadaindhen sri rama ramayya', revealing its emotive core – a soulful plea for refuge at Rama's feet.

Following a succinct Devagandhari alapana, the recital's standout feature unfolded – 'Maataada bekaya', a Manipravalam composition on Rama set to Misra Chapu. The lyrics featured Kannada, Tamil, Telugu and Sanskrit – the subtle shifts in language and the alliterations made it a linguistic delight. Gurucharan navigated this complex tapestry with aplomb.

The concluding line of the charanam, comprising all the four languages, delivered the thematic crux of the composition. The author here serves a potent reminder to the Lord: 'Adutha arakanukku abhayamichina neevu ahamsami ini anjabeda' (You gave refuge to the demon Vibhishana) who surrendered

unto You, saying 'I'm here, fear not henceforth'. With this, she implicitly slips in her own claim for divine protection.

This was followed by the reflective 'Eppadi bhavakkara serndhiduvaay, maname?' in



**That this process of musical interpretation continues even today, 36 years after her passing, serves as a testament to the enduring appeal of her lyrics.**

**A musical ode** Sikkil Gurucharan with V. Sanjeev (violin); N.C. Bharadwaj (mridangam) and S. Krishna (ghatam); and the book cover (below). PHOTOS: B. VELANKANNI RAJ AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Bhavapriya, posing a poignant inquiry (How will you cross the ocean of worldly existence, O mind?). Gurucharan's raga essay and the song rendition were perfectly in tune with the mood. He then presented 'Sadguru neeve', a Telugu composition in Amrutanavahini set to Desadi tala, penned as a homage to Tyagaraja.

Bilahari, the main raga of the evening, was rendered in all its splendour by Gurucharan, and was well complemented by violinist Sanjeev. The song 'Innu pol irundhida' is a profound statement of contentment – a prayer to Rama for eternal status quo. A flowing niraval and sparkling swara passages at the pallavi ensued. The percussion duo of Bharadwaj and Krishna excelled in the two-kalai Adi tala tani avartanam, weaving energetic rhythmic patterns.

Gurucharan then offered a bhava-laden rendition of the Malayalam piece 'Innu kandu unnikrishnai' in Valai. The next song was 'Piravi payan peralaam', an internal monologue, set in a lilting Khamas. A bhajan in raga Gaavati 'Maaiyaa mori' and the mangalam 'Karumugil vannanukku' in Madhyamavati drew the concert to a close.

It was a top-drawer performance by Gurucharan, who placed the composer before self. Yet, one cannot help but feel that, considering the significant contribution Ambujam Krishna has made to Carnatic music, her creations remain vastly under-represented in mainstream concerts even in Tamil Nadu.

# Culture connoisseur

In her centenary year, remembering Rajalakshmi Parthasarathy, who was not just a visionary educationist but also an ardent promoter of art

**Suganthy Krishnamachari**

**R**ajalakshmi Parthasarathy or Mrs. YGP, as she was popularly known, was an educationist who understood the importance of culture. She believed culture was part of education, a reason why she set up Bharat Kalachar, inside her popular school Padma Seshadri Bala Bhavan, T. Nagar. It doubled-up as a performance space all through the year, especially during Margazhi, featuring not just music and dance performances but also theatre. She nurtured young and promising artistes. She was also a great rasika and till almost the end of her life, she could be seen seated in the front row, enjoying performances not just at Bharat Kalachar but at other venues too.

Mrs. YGP, whose centenary is being celebrated, was Rajamma to those close to her.

Veteran actor ARS, popular on stage and in cinema, has many anecdotes to share. "When I became a part of the drama troupe United Amateur Artists (UAA) in 1963, their script writer Pattu, who had delivered many hits, had just left. Y.G. Parthasarathy was shaken. But, it was Rajamma who gave him the courage to move on. She said that UAA was not dependent on any individual. She was YGP's counsellor many a time. For instance, we had already started rehearsing the first half of the play *Padma Vyuham*, when Mouli said he needed more time to complete the play. But YGP said he wouldn't ask for a postponement as he had already booked the performance dates. So, I sought Rajamma's help. She told YGP that the reputation of the group was because of the quality of their plays, and that postponing



**Inspiring** Mrs. YGP with dancer Vyjayantimala; with the former Governor of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh ESL Narasimhan at the presentation of 'Viswa Kala Bharathi' title to Carnatic musician Aruna Sairam in 2010. PHOTOS: THE HINDU ARCHIVES



an inauguration would do less harm than a poorly-done play. The end result was a huge success."

Mrs. YGP was known to be present for most rehearsals. "She never hesitated to compliment or criticise an actor. We would turn up for rehearsals at least an hour before time, because her exchanges with writer Cho (Ramaswamy) were quite interesting. The topics they argued about ranged from politics and personalities to cinema, theatre and religion. Cho and Jayalalithaa were her favourites," adds ARS.

Actress Lakshmi remembers a different facet of Mrs. YGP. "I was only 14 when Rajamma asked me to help with actors' make-up. She had a great dress sense, and never tolerated shoddy dressing. I once wore a new saree for the play *Kannan*

*Vandaan*. But, at the end of the first scene, Rajamma asked me to change the saree, because the ends had not been hemmed," she recalls. "When YGP passed away, I was in Udupi for a shoot. Rajamma called to convey the news. When I began to cry, she said, 'He lived a full life. Don't cry and disturb the soul which is on a peaceful journey.'

As the founder of the Padma Seshadri group of institutions, Mrs. YGP had a devout student following. Actor Lakshmi remembers a Rotary Club meeting when the invitees, all highly placed professionals in their 50s, rose respectfully when 'Rajamma' entered.

Venkat, who wrote many plays for UAA, recalls how Rajamma had the knack of explaining things in an easy-to-understand manner. "When I was writing *Ragasiyam*, I told

Rajamma that I meditated for half-an-hour every day, although I couldn't understand its purpose. She said: 'A man runs every day for health reasons. He might not think there's any other practical purpose served. But, what if a thief stole something from his house one day, and he had to chase him? That's when his daily practice of running will come in useful. In the same way, meditation will build your spiritual strength, and when you face a crisis, you will be able to deal with it.' My experience has shown me that she was right," adds Venkat.

As a patron of the arts, Mrs YGP was known for her ability to encourage all. Dancer and guru Chitra Visweswaran says: "A word of appreciation from Mrs YGP meant a lot to artistes. Despite her stature, she was never intimidating."

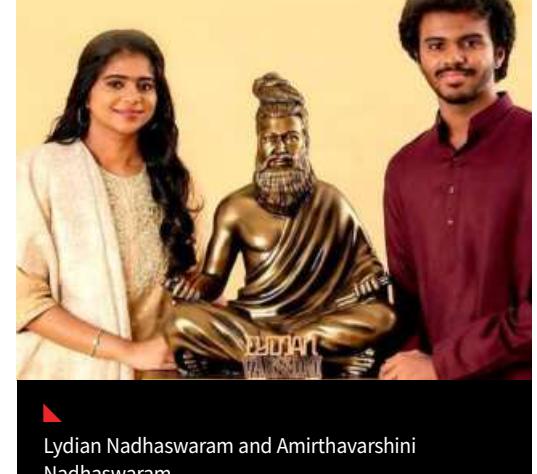
## Celebrating a visionary

Bharat Kalachar, in association with Vels Institutions, ABBAS, Rosini and TomMediaas, has organised a special line-up on November 26 to commemorate the birth centenary of Mrs. YGP. The event (only for invitees), which begins with B. Kannan's invocation, will feature dance performances by the students of Padma Subrahmanyam, Sheela Unnikrishnan, Chitra Visweswaran, Sudharani Ragupathy, Priya Murle and Satyajit Dhananjayan and Priyadarshini Govind's solo recital. Each performance spans not more than six minutes. 'Music Unplugged' session will feature performances by Kalpana Ragavendar, Madhuvanthi, Ritvik and Sudha Mahendra, who will be joined by Y.Gee. Mahendra. For theatre buffs, UAA and Y.Gee. Mahendra will present a scene from their iconic play *RAGASYAM PARAMA RAGASYAM* while Madhuvanthi and TomMediaas will present a scene from *Perumale 1*. These scenes were the favourites of Mrs. YGP.

The evening also includes a short AV presentation, prepared by S.B. Kanthan.

Actor Rajnikant will be the chief guest. Dancer-scholar Padma Subrahmanyam, Isari K. Ganesh, GJR Krishnan, Nithyasree and ARS will share their memories of Mrs. YGP. Veteran dancer Vyjayantimala will be honoured with the 'Dr Mrs YGP Award of Cultural Excellence' (instituted in the name of Late Kalyani Venkatraman by Ravi Venkatraman) on the occasion. Three close associates of Mrs YGP will also be honoured.

# Adding tunes to Thirukkural



Lydian Nadhaswaram and Amirthavarshini Nadhaswaram.

**T**he Thirukkural 1330: Musical Ethos', by siblings Lydian Nadhaswaram and Amirthavarshini Nadhaswaram, featuring more than a thousand singers from across the world, was released in September. The seeds of the project were sown a decade ago, when Amirthavarshini was 12 and Lydian, nine, but the actual work began only in September 2023.

All the 1,330 *kural*s (Tamil couplets) have been presented as a single work that runs for 22 hours, covering over 200 styles and genres, including Western classical, Carnatic, Hindustani, Jazz, Blues, Symphonic, Acapella, Indian fusion, Pop, Rap and Electronic. The age of the singers ranged from three to 94. Each verse is presented with its meaning and a succinct Tamil synopsis written by Shakthivaasan.

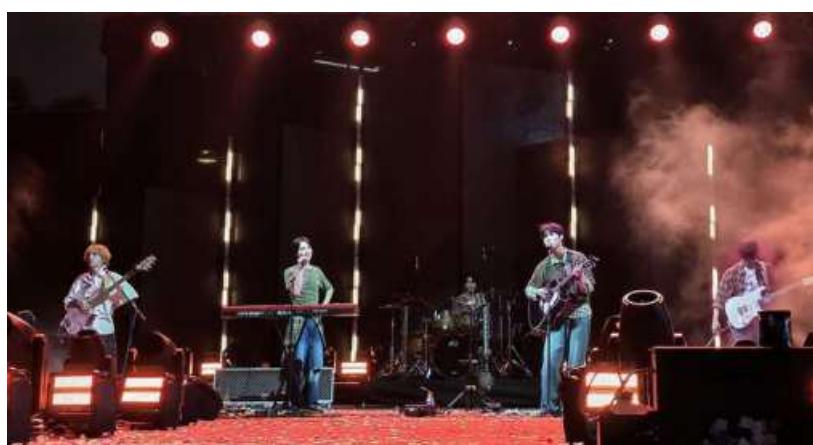
The goal of the project is that the Thirukkural and its in-depth meaning can be enjoyed and understood through music.

Multi-instrumentalist Lydian achieved global popularity at the age of 13 when he won the American competition - The World's Best- and later performed on 'The Ellen DeGeneres Show'. For this project, Lydian played, recorded, sound-mixed, and mastered all the verses, set to music by Amirthavarshini, who is also a flautist and singer.

The team is also putting together 1330 lyrical videos, with English renditions and subtitles, so that audiences the world over can connect with Thiruvalluvar.



**High on energy** (Clockwise from right) Fans watching a performance; Super Junior D&E, Taemin and ONEWE during their concert. PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



#### Rachel Rhine

There was a sense of comforting familiarity at K-Town 3.0, featuring Taemin, Super Junior D&E, ONEWE, Bang Yedam and JEY. The audience, a mix of GenZ and millennials, knew why it had gathered. After all, this was the music they discussed on school corridors, in college canteens, and during late-night phone calls. It lived on in their playlist and scented the quieter parts of growing up.

Launched two years ago to celebrate the global rise of Korean culture (Hallyu), K-Town festival lets fans immerse themselves in everything Korean. From electrifying K-pop performances to vibrant cultural showcases including authentic food, beauty pop-ups, and interactive activities, it brings the spirit of Seoul straight to Mumbai.

What makes K-pop a global sensation is its combination of powerful vocals, high-energy choreography, vibrant visuals and slick performances. But more importantly, K-pop thrives on a deep, emotional bond with the fans, who actively promote and support their favourite idols through social media and organised events, fostering a sense of community. Also, K-pop's ability to break language barriers through universal



themes and its blend of Western and Korean influences makes it accessible and adaptable.

This year's line-up of artistes were performing in India for the first time, but it didn't feel like an introduction. Taemin's performance lived up to the heightened expectation.

**Taemin's language**  
Debuting with SHINee in 2008 at just 14, for many, Taemin was the introduction to a sound and sensibility unlike any other. No one minded the buffering screens and low-resolution uploads.

On stage in Mumbai, Taemin spoke the language he has perfected over the past 15 years – movement

# Caught in the K-wave

K-Town 3.0 reflected the popularity of K-pop in India built through sustained listening and fan presence

before voice, poise before power. 'Move' drew an instant response – for, the audience had made every beat and breath theirs years ago.

'Criminal' gathered cheers, 'Guilty', 'Advice', 'Deja Vu', and 'Sexy in the Air' followed, each deepening the spell.

The most intimate moment, however, came when the crowd called out, "We've been here since 2008!" Taemin smiled and sang the chorus of 'Replay' – SHINee's debut song – a few unadorned lines, steady and unforced. It landed not only as a throwback, but as an acknowledgement of their shared history.

Speaking later, Taemin said, "It's my first time in India and I am both

thankful and sorry, because a lot of people were waiting for me."

#### Legacy and super Junior-D&E

If Taemin's set traced how people grew alongside this music, Super Junior-D&E's performance brought a sense of continuity rooted in legacy. Donghae and Eunhyuk – the long-running subunit of Super Junior, one of the most influential second-generation K-pop groups – represented the sound that shaped the early global wave.

'Growing Pains' marked the emotional centre of their set of seven songs. The song is dramatic in its rise and release, the kind of

track that holds both ache and clarity. For many in the crowd, it recalled the years when feelings were big and unfiltered, when the future felt undefined and limitless. They concluded with 'Run Away', the song unfurling like a breath, that was held, and finally let go. Donghae and Eunhyuk leaned towards the barricades reaching out to touch the hands of fans, who had waited years for this moment. "Next time, we will bring the entire group to India," they promised.

JEY opened the night with quiet confidence. There was no rush to command the stage, no urgency to hype the crowd. 'Enemy' unfolded with measured control, his restraint



#### The festival's intent

That sense of progression was deliberate. As Shital Sikarwar, CEO and Founder of TANI Events and Entertainment, said, "From the very beginning, K-Town has stood for one belief, India deserves world-class K-pop experiences, not just concerts. India is no longer an emerging K-pop audience, but is becoming an essential Asian tour market with a young population, rising disposable income, and a culture built on music and fandom."

On how the line-up was constructed, she explained, "Our curation philosophy was simple: Honour the icons. Elevate the future. Deliver a line-up that tells a story and not just a schedule."

K-pop in India grew through personal exchanges: links shared among friends, choreography practiced in classrooms, lyrics learned before language. So, when artistes such as Jackson Wang, BamBam, EXO's Chen, Xiumin and Suho, The Rose, Eric Nam, Hyolyn and B.I. came out to perform here in recent years, it felt like something long present had finally become visible. K-Town 3.0 existed in that same space.



**Universal sounds** (From left) Members of the Sai Symphony Orchestra; and Dimitris Lambrianos with Madhusudan Sai. PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

#### S.B. Vijaya Mary

When 450 musicians from 40 countries come together on one stage, the result is bound to be extraordinary.

The 'One World One Family Concert', an initiative of the One World One Family Mission, is uniting global voices and instruments on November 23 at Sathy Sai Grama, Muddenahalli, Karnataka. At the heart of this ambitious symphonic vision is Dimitris Lambrianos, the Greek-American multi-instrumentalist and conductor of the Sai Symphony Orchestra, the homegrown school symphony founded by Madhusudan Sai.

Dimitris speaks about weaving a global sound, the spiritual essence of collaboration, and the journey of 200 young Indian students, who make up the core of the Sai Symphony Orchestra. "More than 250 musicians from 40 countries will play alongside the 200 students at the concert. We will perform iconic pieces of music from each of these countries, with India represented by L. Subramaniam and Kavita Krishnamurthy," informs Dimitris, who feels the principles of music are the same everywhere.

"It is the instruments, singing languages, and rhythms that bring variety. Ultimately, music is a divine gift to humanity – what India calls 'nāda brahman'."

# Notes of harmony

Musicians unite for a concert led by Greek-American conductor Dimitris Lambrianos of the Sai Symphony Orchestra



The concert also features choirs from the Vatican and Germany, alongside a Nigerian choir and a gospel choir from the USA.

Representing Germany is one of Handel's most iconic compositions 'Hallelujah', which will bring together all the choirs, musicians and symphony orchestras.

"We have over 70 choir members, who will participate in several pieces, including those from Ukraine, Russia, Greece, and many more. Additionally, our Sai Symphony Orchestra, comprising 200 boys and girls from rural backgrounds, has

shown immense dedication and enthusiasm in learning new styles of music from around the world."

Working with Indian students has been the most joyous part of the job, says Dimitris. "Watching them discover their talents and gain confidence is the greatest reward. Many come from challenging backgrounds, like remote villages or low-income families. Some of the girls might have been married young if not for this institution," he notes and adds: "Today, they are part of India's largest symphony orchestra, performing with world-renowned musicians."

Dimitris has spent years

studying the connections between Mediterranean and Indian music.

Speaking about the links between the two traditions, he says, "I have studied various types of music. One common thread is the concept of 'saptaswara'. For instance, raga in Indian music is known as 'maqam' in Arabic music and 'scale' in Western music. The principle is the same." Similarly,

Dimitris says, "What we call 'tala' in India is simply rhythm elsewhere. These are the principles that unite the

whole world of music.

Working on this concert, bringing together a symphony orchestra with musicians from so many countries, beautifully embodies the ethos of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'."

Dimitris says that performing at Sathy Sai Grama feels very special to him.

"Karnataka has a deep musical and spiritual history." He adds: "Sathy Sai Grama is home to India's largest symphony orchestra, which makes this concert very important."

**Dr. Lakshmi Ramaswamy's Sri Mudhraalya (Estb. 1993)**  
Presents  
**"ANUSMARANA"**  
Bharatanatyam Arangetram  
Kum. A.K. AKSHARA  
10.00 am, 23<sup>rd</sup> Nov. 2025  
Vani Mahal, Main Hall  
103 GN Chetty Road, T - Nagar, Chennai

**CHIEF GUEST**  
Kalaimamani Smt. CHITRA VISWESWARAN  
Padmashri & Sangeet Natak Akademi Awardee  
(Managing Trustee - Chidambaram Academy of Performing Arts)

**GUESTS OF HONOUR**  
Sri. SEKAR  
Secretary, Kartik Fine Arts, Chennai

Sri. SHANKAR & Sri. GUNA  
Director Duo of " THE HUT FILMS"

## CALENDAR



#### Concert series

Madhuradhwani's 15th year concert series begins today at Arkay Convention Centre. Veteran mridangist Tiruchi Sankaran will be the chief guest, and Rama Varma and V. Ganesan, the guests of honour. Adyar Brothers' nagaswaram recital, at 3.45 p.m., will set the tone for the 14-day concert series. The inauguration at 5.15 p.m. will be followed by Neyveli Santhanagopalan's vocal concert at 6.30 p.m. This week's line-up: November 22, 4.15 p.m.: Alkshay Padmanabhan, and 6.30 p.m.: Amrutha Venkatesh. November 23, 4.15 p.m.: Bhavya Hari, and 6.30 p.m.: Kunnakudi Balamuralikrishna. November 24, 4.15 p.m.: Santhosh Subramanyam, and 6.30 p.m.: Nisha Rajagopalan. November 25, 4.15 p.m.: Shruthi Shankar Kumar, and 6.30 p.m.: Lalgudi G.J.R. Krishnan and Lalgudi Vijayalakshmi (violin duet). November 26, 4.15 p.m.: S. Adithyanarayanan and 6.30 p.m.: K N Ranganatha Sharma. November 27, 4.15 p.m.: Deepika and Nandika followed by Sikkil Gurucharan's vocal concert (6.30 p.m.).

#### (ADVERTISEMENT)

#### MagickHome Unveils First Winner of "Make Room for Pride" Campaign



MagickHome gifts a ₹.5 Lakh makeover to an LGBTQIA+ couple, helping them feel truly at home and accepted. MagickHome, a global interiors brand, announced the first winners of its "Make Room for Pride" campaign- Mayank and Sougata, a Bengaluru-based LGBTQIA+ couple from a multigenerational family. The initiative celebrates inclusion by creating homes where everyone feels they belong.

The team at MagickHome understood our family's rhythms and needs. The makeover feels practical, comfortable, and truly us," said Mayank.

The transformation blended warmth, elegance, and inclusivity- redefining what "home" means for LGBTQIA+ families across India.