

## Online Events Calendar - Jan 2021

7  
Thursday  
6.00 pm

Hindustani Vocal Recital  
Poulami Chanda from India



Pravasi Bharathiya Divas

9  
Saturday

10  
Sunday

World Hindi Day Celebrations



72<sup>nd</sup> Republic Day Celebrations

26  
Tuesday

27  
Wednesday

Duruthu Full Moon Poya Day Celebrations



A Lecture Demonstration  
“Arpana” – Use and Development of poetic  
version in classical Bharatha Natyam  
by Dr. Subashini Pathmanathan,  
Faculty member of SVCC, Colombo and Founder of  
Vimalothaya Classical Bharatha Natya Kendra



29  
Friday  
6.00 pm

For details in regard to online classes on Bharatha Natyam, Kathak,  
Sitar, Violin, Tabla, Carnatic vocal, Yoga and Hindi  
please call on tell no.011 2684698 or email to [iccrcolombo2@gmail.com](mailto:iccrcolombo2@gmail.com).  
For upcoming facebook live events, visit [www.facebook.com/ICCRSriLanka](https://www.facebook.com/ICCRSriLanka)

Free Online Events. All are cordially invited

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# Sanskarika

Newsletter of the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre Jan 2021

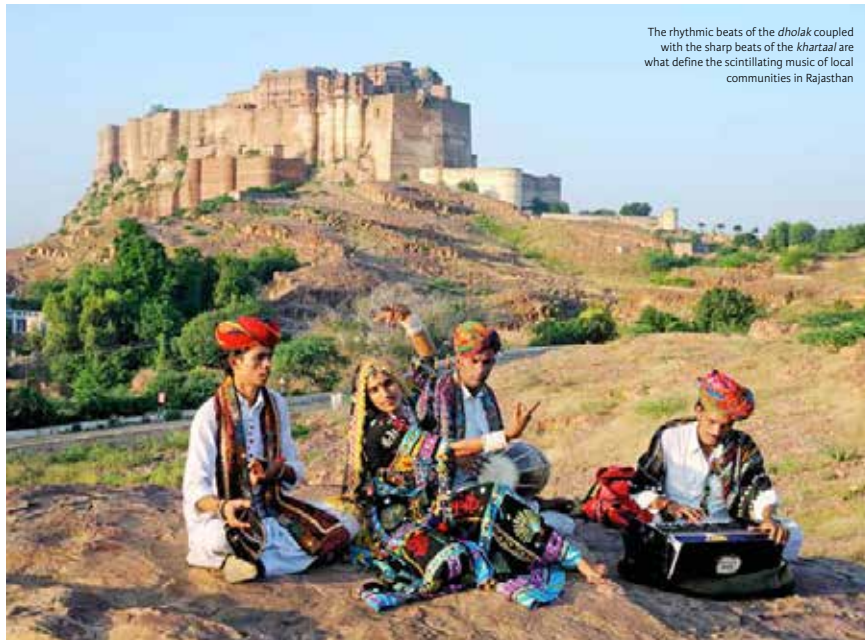


# Music

## FOR THE NEW DECADE

*From bhangra's peppy beats to the calming sounds of Kerala's sopana sangeetham, music has played a significant role in India's folk heritage. music director sneha Khanwalkar explains her views on how this rich history shapes contemporary notes. Vinayak surya swami puts it in perspective*

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The rhythmic beats of the dholak coupled with the sharp beats of the khartaal are what define the scintillating music of local communities in Rajasthan

The chugging of a local train, the honking of traffic, sounds of people coughing or sneezing, or even answering their mobile phones... Melody is being created around us all the time. I believe it was when

recording was formally introduced to the creative process of directing music that we started to understand the melody of things.

In a day and age, when millions



Buddhist monks performing ritual music with traditional drums and trumpets during the Gustor monastic festival at the Lamayuru monastery in Leh. Conforming to folk music traditions of the mountains, monks use large trumpets and wide-based drums to match their high-pitched chants, which reverberate across high mountains

trudge along their daily tasks with headphones supplementing the uncountable emotions that a person may feel, it is important to understand where it all started. But that's for the rest of the world. In India, music has always been inspired by what's around us, be it natural sounds or those made by man. From our folk traditions to classical ragas and from musical instruments played by our rural musicians to musical lores that are a part of our heritage - Indian music has traditionally relied on the sounds of life.

Today, as music in India, like everything else, undergoes transformation, it's even more important to delve into our native melodies to maintain a balance between the past and the present. Throughout my growing-up

years, I have woken up to the sound of the tanpura in the morning. Over the years, as I trained and learned more about music, I understood that every object around us has a sound of its own and all that is required is to find the right group of melodies. Interestingly, the country's phenomenal acoustic richness is discovered only when someone decides to explore a genre, and decides to travel and look for inspiration in places long forgotten.

### STARTING RIGHT

This notion of finding music in the atmosphere defined my efforts when I started making music; I wanted everything aural to be a part of it. Each sound represented a different part of the track, a different feeling and I think I wanted

my process of creating music to be democratic, if nothing else! My song "Kaala Re" from the film Gangs of Wasseypur 2, which is set in the coal mining industry, begins with the

**There are several artistes working towards propagating finer nuances of Indian folk traditions so that they stay relevant**

sound of a pickaxe hitting coal. I had captured the sound from a factory where metal chains were being jangled! Indian musical lineage has several similar examples of everyday sounds and thought-inspiring notes. Today, several young musicians in India are re-discovering this thought. The new torch-bearers of Indian music have not only decided to follow a completely new direction but have defined this direction as one governed by the idea of traditions from across the country.

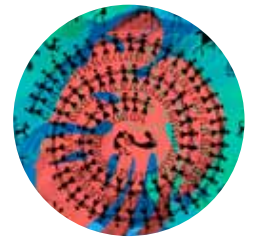
### PUSHING BOUNDARIES

Comparing closely, we will realise that what is being termed today as "alternative music" has oft been observed with some of the oldest folk traditions of the country. For example, Indian drums add a steady guiding beat to a music and raw natural feel, something which most contemporary music labels have started to incorporate. Take for example, the Manganiyar community from Rajasthan, who, according to folklore, were often summoned to hasten the advent of rain in the

desert state. It is said that their music, accompanied with the dhol (a two-faced drum) and khartaal (two wooden blocks with which artistes produce a loud clapping sound), imitated the sound of thunder and thus, appeased the rain God.

Another such example is of bhatiyali from West Bengal. Bhatiyali, also known as the boatman's song, is mostly sung solo with hardly any musical accompaniment. Experts say the riverine nature of the region where this folk music has originated from has shaped its structure. Just like the flowing river, bhatiyali has a lilting

### A different understanding



### EVENTS THAT PROMOTE ALTERNATIVE MUSIC WITH FOLK TRADITIONS

- Magnetic Fields Festival, Alisar, Rajasthan
- Ragasthan, Jaisalmer, Rajasthan
- Ziro Festival of Music, Ziro, Arunachal Pradesh
- NH7 Weekender, Meghalaya
- Serendipity Arts Festival, Goa





Members of the Maria tribe from Bastar, Chhattisgarh, performing traditional dances. Almost all musical routines from the region involve drums with low, resonating notes and a smaller acoustic range

tune – rhythmic rise and fall in its notes, like the ebbing of water.

Folk music is also defined by the intermingling of nature and sound, and the response of humans to their environment. For example, music of the hills has higher notes that travel across mountains and valleys. In comparison, communities living in forested areas of the plains sing in a lower pitch and with subdued notes. This is what I try to capture in my music.

There are several artistes and cultural organisations that are working towards propagating these finer nuances of folk traditions and powering experiments so that they stay relevant in contemporary times.

Be it the Rajasthan Rural Arts Project by Jaipur Virasat Foundation, the Soorvani Sangathanas (organisation of folk music artisans) by Tata Trust for promoting the subsistence folk artist(e)s from Kutch, Gujarat, or events like Goa's Serendipity Arts Festival that initiates and showcases massive, multidisciplinary collaborations to promote traditional and modern artistes across India – organisations are forging rural-urban partnerships to keep our euphonical traditions alive and bring them to the forefront.

### THE WAY FORWARD

The first step towards adapting the tunes of Indian folk music for modern-day sounds is to step out into the natural environs where

these melodies were born and are practised even today.

In order to explore other mediums and create a collaboration of sounds previously unheard of, I decided to step out and experience the almost mystical and diverse musical offerings of our country. If I am trying to introduce folk music through mainstream cinema, I need to

### there is a shift in the mainstream music industry towards decentered forms of music that allow room for constant experimentation

introduce the entire culture, lifestyle, thought process, food habits, politics, history and everything they stand for, through the music. Something that I did with the song "Oh Womaniya" for the film Gangs Of Wasseypur. To give the song a rustic

and raw flavour I chose housewives from Bihar, where the movie is set. In a similar way for the song "Jugni" from the film Oye Lucky Lucky Oye, I opted for renowned folk musician Des Raj Lakhani from Punjab for an authentic accent of the region. In one of my recent sound experiments at Serendipity Arts Festival, 2019, I created a sound installation "Winds of Change".

This was a spinning object made of metal, wood, cloth, sensors, audio chips and mikes. Viewers were encouraged to blow at the object, which spun as it gathered wind and transmitted sound and vibrations. As people got more involved with



A musical tradition from the eastern parts of India, bhatiyali, is centered around the region's riverine traditions. The songs, sung by boatmen, have melodic high-to-low notes and no instrumental accompaniment. This ancient tradition has been inspired by the bubbling, gurgling sound of large rivers like the Ganges

the installation, they blew harder or softer, depending on their mood, sending across signals!

Today, most alternative musicians are focussed on creating more egalitarian opportunities for listeners and artistes alike, and are looking for inspirations in the past. I am hopeful about the shift in the mainstream

music industry towards decentered forms of music that allow room for constant experimentation. I believe that we need to delve deeper into traditions to build the future of Indian music.



A girl learns to play the harmonium in Srinagar, Kashmir. Even today, in many Indian families learning classical music is considered an important part of a child's education while growing up



### Vinayak Surya Swami

*Vinayak Surya Swami is a Delhi-based journalist. He holds a degree in mechanical engineering and has worked as an apprentice Shipbuilder with the Indian Navy. A part-time writer since his teenage years, he switched to journalism to pursue his prurience for writing and travel.*