

A festival for everyone

SAMARPANA – the Asian Festival of Classical Dance 2015 proves that classical dance forms are joyful, meaningful and relevant. Samarpana producer Gayatri Sriram calls it “a festival for everyone”, Ms Lalitha Vaidyanathan, the conductor of LalitAnjali, an orchestra performing in the festival, says it’s “a unique opportunity and an artistic challenge for performers” and festival director Jyoti Ramesh says it’s “a celebration of the versatility of classical arts”.

Into its fourth year and in collaboration with Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay, this year’s Samarpana promises an exciting programme.

The festival, which will be held on the weekend of Aug 21 at the Esplanade, opens with a unique, specially-commissioned collaboration, as renowned playback singer Kavita Krishnamurti Subramanian sings for top Odissi soloist Sujata Mohapatra in Sur-Gati – The Universal Rhythm.

Singapore artistes have a big presence this year with Lalit Anjali, collaborating with Shijith and Parvathy Nambiar (below right), the renowned bharatanatyam duo from Chennai in Upasana – A Homage. The performance premiered at the Ananya Samarpana festival (the India chapter of Samarpana) in June where it won over audiences and critics.

Through The Eyes Of My City features 10 classical and contemporary Singapore-based dancers in a piece that narrates their feelings towards Singapore. “It’s a milestone year for Singapore,” says Dutch choreographer Kalpana Raghuraman of the Korzo Theater, The Hague, “and this piece just

fits in beautifully!”

Contemporary dance fans are in for a treat as Akram Khan’s protege Aakash Odedra (below) presents his celebrated work Rising, a set of four pieces choreographed by the greats of contemporary dance including Khan, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui and Russell Maliphant. “Aakash Odedra is a highlight of the festival, trained as he is in Indian classical dances. And now he’s found a unique voice in contemporary dance, using his classical training,” says Ms Ramesh.

Celebrated author Dr Devdutt Pattanaik adds another dimension to the festival. “Why do we dance?” is the topic the mythologist discusses, bringing together motivation, philosophies and examples from Hindu mythology in a presentation that is sure to get audiences to re-examine their attitude towards dance.

Panellists Dr Stephanie Burridge, Deepak Mazumdar and Antonio Vargas talk about Sensuality in Classical Dance, in a free discussion at the library@esplanade, moderated by noted dance scholar Dr Sunil Kothari.

The festival will also honour Mrs Neila Sathyal-ingam, doyenne of bharatanatyam in Singapore, with the Samarpana Citation and give a young artiste an opportunity in the

Upcoming Artiste slot. The artiste, Meenakshi Venkatraman, will perform Devi – Forms of the Feminine, a depiction of the different forms of the Mother goddess.

Samarpana – the Asian Festival of Classical Dance will run from Aug 21 to 23 at various venues at the Esplanade. Tickets are available from SISTIC. For more information, visit www.samarpanafestival.net, e-mail info@samarpanafestival.net or call 9753-0531.

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