

# Association of Performing Arts of India



1998 to 2023

[www.apaiart.com](http://www.apaiart.com)





The Om symbol emoji marks content dealing with spirituality, and feelings of inner peace. Nada Brahma is a Sanskrit expression with roots in Indian Vedic spirituality. It is most commonly translated as “Sound is God.”

We take care of our tummy, our tongue, our nose, our eyes, but we rarely take care of our soul. “Our soul needs music, nice good music and that is the food of the soul. Raga, you see, is the language of God.”

Emperor of Sarod Ustad Ali Akbar Khan Sahib

## APAI’s Mission

*The mission of the Association of Performing Arts of India (APAI) is to preserve and promote Indian classical music and dance through concerts, classes, lecture-demonstrations, and formal education in schools, colleges, universities, and the community at large.*

Indian music is the oldest written music in the world, with a spiritual quality that transcends the physical realm and speaks directly to the soul. With its roots in the Vedas, sacred documents dated 4,000 years ago; Indian Classical Music is an essential component in shaping the rich cultural heritage that is India today, as well as lending itself to influencing a multitude of other historically overlooked and underfunded communities.

Inspired and guided by their heritage, Bharti and Dr. Deenbandhu Chokshi wanted to foster an understanding of Indian arts and culture in the South Florida community, not only to ensure that those of Indian descent were able to maintain their traditional culture, but also to teach the community at large about that culture and its contributions to the richness of American and World society. They decided to form a nonprofit organization dedicated to presenting live performances of Indian Classical Music and Dance and to educating youth and adults throughout the community. Their dedication to this purpose has resulted in the creation of a unique resource for South Florida.

Since its founding 25 years ago on June 5, 1998, the Association of Performing Arts of India, has brought the culture, music, dance and performing arts of the South Asian subcontinent of India to the South Florida tri-county area. APAI focuses not only on featuring premier-caliber artists associated with the Hindustani or North Indian classical tradition, but also presents classical dance and dance-drama, folk art forms, and cross-cultural events.

# APAI's History



*We both are very proud of our heritage. With the grace of all mighty, our parents and Guru's blessings, we can share our passion for Indian Classical Music and Dance with the South Florida Community. Thank you all for your support and we hope you will continue to support APAI.*

*Bharti and Dr. Deenbandhu Chokshi, 2023*

The Association of Performing Arts of India's inaugural performance was held on November 8, 1998, presenting **Ustad Rashid Khan**, a leading Hindustani vocal artist accompanied by Tabla drums and the now rarely seen Classical Indian bowed fiddle known as the Sarangi. Over the years, the Association has brought a variety of high caliber national, international, and world-known artists to our region presenting a wide range of vocal and instrumental music.

Instrumental music presented by APAI has featured all of the principal instruments of the Hindustani tradition: Sitar, Sarod (a fretless multi-stringed lute), Shehnai (the Indian oboe), Sarangi (the Indian bowed fiddle) and the bamboo flute. Presented artists have included prominent sitarists such as **Ustad Shujaat Hussain Khan**, a leading exponent of the Imdadkhani Gharana and son of the late, great Ustad Vilayat Khan, and **Irshad Khan**, along with Sarod maestro **Aashish Khan**, son of the legendary **Ustad Ali Akbar Khan Sahib**, perhaps the most respected name in Indian Classical music today. APAI has also presented Grammy award winner **Pt. Vishwa Mohan Bhatt** on the Mohan Veena (a modified slide guitar).

Vocal music has been heavily featured as well, including male and female artists who are exponents of a particular style from a number of different gharanas or musical "families." These include singers such as **Shubha Mudgal**, vocalist on many film soundtracks and a prominent recording artist in India's film industry, and the late **Lakshmi Shankar**, sister-in-law to Ravi Shankar, the featured vocalist on the soundtrack to Richard Attenborough's epic film "**Gandhi**."

APAI'S work is highly specialized, bringing world-class artists to the area. Substitutions for such programming are not readily achievable within the local community. With a view to demonstrating the commonalities of different musical traditions, the Association has twice presented fusion performances melding the musical and dance traditions of flamenco and Indian traditions.

We have showcased the Flamenco guitar alongside the Sarangi and Flamenco vocals (Cante). At the same time, audiences experienced classical Indian dance **Kathak**, side by side with the fiery steps of **Flamenco**. The common rhythmic and melodic foundation of these two very different traditions was evident in the performances and the ability of the artists to communicate with little or no rehearsal across language and stylistic barriers, which was impressive.

The Association has endeavored, and succeeded, in presenting great variety, cultural diversity and art of the highest artistic integrity and quality without neglecting the very capable dancers, singers and instrumentalists in our own community who have participated and performed in our programs dedicated to local artists. The years since our inception have seen events ranging from small, intimate audiences and community outreach programs such as numerous lecture demonstrations to sold-out houses at larger venues, each program contributing in its own way to furthering communication with our audience and the community at large.

In the future, APAI will continue to serve the community and fulfill its mission. APAI met the challenges of maintaining a performing arts organization during the most difficult years of Covid. With little opportunity to experience living art in any form, APAI's supporters and others who appreciate the arts gained a new appreciation of the unique contribution of live performance. At the same time, APAI and other arts organizations developed a greater understanding of how technology can provide both performance platforms and educational opportunities. For APAI, the difficulties of bringing artists from other countries to South Florida have also energized efforts to bring talented performers from India and other locations and, more than ever, to showcase the talents of Indian musicians and dancers, both professionals and students, in the South Florida community.

And, 2023 has been a lively year - APAI has presented

- On February 25, 2023, "Incarnations of Lord Vishnu", a dance performance in celebration of APAI's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, featuring 52 community dancers and their students.
- On April 16, 2023, in collaboration with Maharashtra Mandal of South Florida, "Music for the Soul: A Vocal Concert", featuring vocalists Vidushi Pallavi Joshi and Vidushi Apoorva Gokhale, accompanied by Sanjay Deshpande and Chinmay Kolhatker.

Renowned pianist Utsav Lal presents a master class to Florida Atlantic University students at the Boca Raton campus on April 1, 2022.





# Community Outreach

One of APAI's most important roles in the South Florida community is to reach out into youth and adults, people who live here and people who visit, to educate them about the culture and living arts forms of India. The following pictures highlight a few of the many outreach events we have presented throughout the community over the past 25 years. We have visited elementary schools, high schools, colleges, libraries, community centers, government buildings, and auditoriums across the county. Our audiences have included hundreds of young people and adults drawn from the many cultural groups represented in Broward County and South Florida.

## **In 25 years, APAI has provided Dance and Music outreach to the following institutions:**

- American Express, India Day, Plantation, FL
- Arts Serve- Art Express
- Boca Raton Museum of Art
- Broward After School
- Broward County Cultural Division, Arts Ed Forever
- Broward Library System
- India Odyssey, Blake Library, Jupiter, FL
- Borders Book Store, Sunrise, FL
- Broward College
- Broward Library System
- Broward School System
- Boys and Girls Club
- C. G. Smith Community Mental Health Center
- Carnival Center
- Children Service Council
- City of Hollywood, Global Groove
- City of Sunrise
- City of Miramar
- Coral Springs Museum of Art
- Dave & Mary Alper Jewish Community Center
- Florida Atlantic University
- Florida International University
- City of Fort Lauderdale, India Day Celebration
- India Mega Market, Hyatt Regency
- Miami Metro Zoo
- Miami Dade College
- Miramar Library
- New World School of Art
- Norton Museum
- Nova Public Library, Davie, FL
- Pine Crest School, Boca Raton
- Renaissance Festival, Pompano Beach, FL
- South Florida Hindu Temple
- South Florida Youth Symphony
- St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Lake Worth
- St. Thomas Church, Miami, FL
- Town of Davie, Cultural Diversity Festival
- Young at Art Museum
- United Cerebral Palsy Aftercare Program

## Outreach Links

- Tabla Class at Broward College <https://youtu.be/K3k6p95i7r0>
- Professor Clarence Brooks of the FAU dance department invited APAI to present a workshop in Oddissi dance style, presented by Srinwanti Chakrabarti, February 2, 2015. <https://youtu.be/w6PiGPV8l3k>
- APAI sponsored a World Dance/Bharat Natyam Dance Course; the video features the students performing at “Dance we dance” day on April 24, 2009. Rangapriya Nagaraj, Instructor. <https://youtu.be/aZlpoGKF1mg>
- World Dance/Bharat Natyam dance course, FAU Fall semester, August 24, 2009. Instructor **Rashmi Venkata Shiva Reddy** taught the course to 20 students. This is the dance recital by her class. <https://youtu.be/YwWsMaO2tB>



Bharti Chokshi at Pembroke Lakes Elementary School (2003)



Bharti Chokshi demonstrating Sitar to children (2007)



Indus Valley Civilization–Art of Sari, Broward Main Library (2008)



Rashmi Sridhar at Nova University (2004)



**Nrityagram at South Florida Hindu Temple (2002)**



**Bennett Elementary – Dance Demonstration by Rashmi Sridhar (2007)**



**Madhavi and Minakshi Menon at Choice Point (2005)**



**Didi Pathak at Alper JCC Miami (2006)**



**Coral Springs Museum of Art with Neha Shah (2013)**



**Priya Nagaraj at the North Lauderdale Library (2008)**



**Bharti Chokshi at Historical Museum of Southern Florida (2009)**



**Srinwanti at Florida Atlantic University**



**Dance demonstration by Rashmi Sridhar at Quest Center (2010)**





**Bharti Chokshi at Florida Youth Symphony (2011)**



**Malini Basu with Florida Youth Symphony (2011)**



**Santoor Demonstration  
at ArtServe by Meera Gandhi (2022)**



**Madhavi Menon at City of Miramar (2014)**



**Kathak Lecture Demo by Prashant Shah at Broward College (2012)**



**Rhythms School of Dance (2015)**



**Rajesh Ramoutar and Rajesh Bhandari at Pinecrest High School (2019)**



**After School Library outreach by Madhavi Menon (2017)**



**Madhavi Menon and group: dance demo at Broward County North Regional Library (2020)**



**Pt. Krishna Mohan Bhatt (Sitar), Saraswathi Ranganathan (Veena), Nitin Mitta (Tabla), Ganapathy Ranganathan (Mridangam): Lecture-Demonstration at Broward College-Central Campus (September 9, 2016)**





## 25 BREATHTAKING YEARS OF LIVE PERFORMANCES

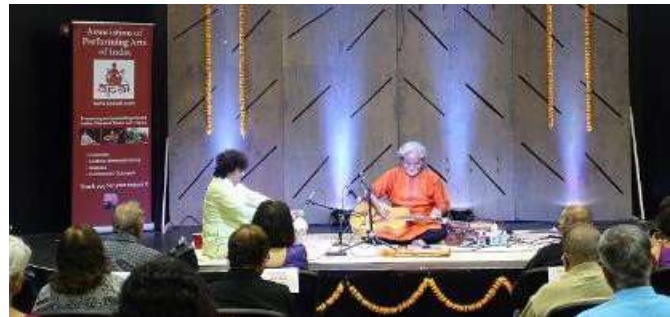
The musicians and dancers who have performed in APAI events have come from all over the world, the United States, Florida, and the local community. Whether professionals or students, their skill and grace in performing have brought APAI's audiences both pleasure and understanding.

- World renown performers, including Lakshmi Shankar, Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia, Vidushi Manju Mehta, Ustad Zakir Hussain, and the Shakti Dance Company.
- Local performers, both professionals and those just learning, have performed individually and in groups, enabling us to highlight the richness and variety of their skills and display them in events like APAI's Chitram and Unity Through Diversity events featuring dozens of local performers and concerts.
- Dance forms have included Bharatanatyam, Folk, Flamenco, Kathak, Kuchipudi, and Odissi.
- The fusion of other cultures with Indian arts has been demonstrated in performances featuring Indian Classical music and dance combined with Flamenco.
- Every instrument currently used in performing Indian Classical music has been featured, ranging from traditional instruments like the Flute, Sarangi, Sarod, Sitar, Shehnai, Veena, Violin, Pakhavaj, Mridangam and Tabla, to the grand Piano and Cello.
- Vocalists have included Ustad Rashid Khan, Pandit Jasraj, Veena Sahasrabudde, the Gundecha Brothers, Pandit Rajan Sajan Misra, Shubha Mudgal and Mitali Banerjee Bhawmik who have presented a range of music from Classical Indian to more contemporary content.



The list below includes all of the performances presented by APAI, beginning with the most recent performances and ending with our inaugural performance in June 1998.

- **October 8, 2023, “Celestial Vocal Concert”**, featuring Dhananjay Hegde, with Pranav Gurav on Tabla and Dnyaneshwar Sonawane on Harmonium
- **April 16, 2023**, in collaboration with Maharashtra Mandal of South Florida, **“Music for the Soul: A Vocal Concert”**, featuring vocalists Vidushi Pallavi Joshi and Vidushi Apoorva Gokhale, accompanied by Sanjay Deshpande and Chinmay Kolhatker
- **February 25, 2023, “Incarnations of Lord Vishnu”**, a dance performance in celebration of APAI’s 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, featuring 52 community dancers and their students
- **September 18, 2022, “Divine Strings”**, Grammy- award Winner Pt. Vishwa Mohan Bhatt on Slide Guitar and Subhen Chatterjee on Tabla
- **May 15, 2022, “Traditions”** featured Dr. S. Ramakrishnan, Madhu Chandrasekar, and Kavitha Jayaraman.
- **February 6, 2022, “Melodious Sound of Santoor and Tabla”**, Nandkishor Muley on Santoor, Rajesh Bhandari on Tabla
- **April 11, 2021**, Nandan Shastry, Vocalist; Dr. Manohar Apte on Harmonium; Rajesh Bhandari on Tabla
- **September 13, 2020**, Rajesh Ramoutar on Sitar; Rajesh Bhandari on Tabla
- **March 3, 2019**, Gundecha Brothers, Vocalists
- **May 18, 2019**, Omkar Dadarkar, Vocalist
- **August 11, 2019**, Abhinava Dance Company, **“TAD BHARATHAM”**
- **September 14, 2019, “Unforgettable Sufi and Sitar”**, Shujaat Husain



- **March 10, 2018, “Dancing for Gods: Kathak, Oddissi, Kuchipudi & Bharat Natyam Style”**
- **August 25, 2018**, 20th APAI Anniversary Program featuring Indian Film Classic **“Jalsaghar-The Music Room”** at Savor Cinema and live concert with Ustad Irshad Khan on Sitar and Surbahar; Shankhachur Lahiri on Tabla (Broward Center)
- **March 25, 2017, “Tribute to Pt. Ramesh Mishra”**; Mitali Banerjee Bhawmik, Vocalist; Dr. Manohar Apte on Harmonium; Rajesh Bhandari on Tabla
- **May 21, 2017, “Divine Strings”**; Pt. Vishwa Mohan Bhatt on Mohan Veena; Pt. Subhen Chatterjee on Tabla
- **August 26, 2017**, APAI DAY featuring local talents
- **October 7, 2017, “Melodious Music on Sarod and Tabla”**; Apratim Majumdar on Sarod; Shankhachur Lahiri on Tabla
- **September 10, 2016, “Celestial Sound of Sitar and Veena”**; Krishna Mohan Bhatt on Sitar; Nitin Mitta on Tabla; Saraswathi Ranganathan on Veena; Ganapathi Ranganathan on Mridangam
- **May 8, 2016, “Cosmic Sound of Dhrupad”**; Gundecha Brothers, Vocalists
- **April 8, 2016**, Ustad Zakir Hussain
- **March 12, 2016**, Manju Mehta on Sitar; Gourisankar Karmakar on Tabla



- **January 30, 2016**, “Dazzling Dances of India and Spain”
- **September 26, 2015**, “Indian Ragas on Piano and Tabla”; Utsav Lal on Piano; Rajesh Bhandari on Tabla
- **August 22, 2015**, “Melodious Moods “; Hemang Mehta, Vocalist; Dr. Neelesh Nadkarni on Harmonium; Meghashyam Keshav on Tabla
- **March 7, 2015**, “Enchanting Sound of Sitar and Tabla”; Ustad Shahid Parvez on Sitar; Gourisankar Karmakar on Tabla
- **January 31, 2015**, “Dancing Divas”; Srinwanti Chakrabarti and Sahana Balasubramanya, Dancers
- **October 5, 2014**, “Music for the Soul”; Kumar Mardur, Vocalist; Shri Ashis Sengupta on Tabla; Shri Satishreddi Kolli on Harmonium
- **September 6, 2014**, “Celestial Sounds of Veena & Mridangam”; Saraswathi Ranganathan on Veena; Ganapathi Ranganathan on Mridangam
- **April 26, 2014**, “Spiritual Sound of Violin”; Kala Ramnath on Violin; Abhijit Banerjee on Tabla
- **March 22, 2014**, “Unity through Diversity”, 58 Eastern and Western local artists: Vocalists, Musicians, and Dancers



Unity Through Diversity Participants and Volunteers

- **September 28, 2013**, “Rhythm of Rajasthan: Music and Dance”
- **August 3, 2013**, “Music for the Soul”;

- Dr. Noorul Hasan Khan on Sitar; Sanjoy Banerjee, Vocalist; Sudhir Limaye on Tabla; Dr. Manohar Apte on Harmonium
- **May 19, 2013**, “Celestial Vocal”; Arati Ankalikar Tikekar, Vocalist; Shankhachur Lahiri on Tabla; Milind Kulkarni on Harmonium).
- **March 2, 2013**, “Tribute to Pandit Ravi Shankar”; Alam Khan on Sarod; Kartik Seshadri on Sitar; Hindole Majumdar on Tabla; Mohini Athavale on Tanpura
- **September 8, 2012**, “Fusion of Flamenco and Kathak Dance”; Clarita Filgueiras, Flamenco Dancer; Prashant Shah, Kathak Dancer; Padmasri Dance Academy-Bharatnatyam



Prashant Shah and Clarita Filgueiras September 8, 2012

- **September 7, 2012**, “Kathak Dance Lecture Demonstration”; Prashant Shah
- **May 19, 2012**, “The Celestial Trio”; Subhen Chatterjee on Tabla; Rupak Kulkarni on Flute; Snehashish Mozumdar on Mandolin
- **March 24, 2012**, “Enchanting Sounds of Sitar and Tabla”; Anupama Bhagwat on Sitar; Shouri Lahiri on Tabla
- **February 18, 2012**, “Raga Unveiled: A Film by Gita Desai”
- **July 31, 2011**, House Concert; Pt. Krishna Mohan Bhatt on Sitar; Jeff Deen on Tabla
- **May 7, 2011**, “Madhya-Laya Percussion Concert”; Akhilesh Gundecha on Pakhawaj; Anup and Manoj Boralia on Dholak, Dafali, Matka, and Angklung; Himanshu Mahant on Tabla



### Chitram

- **April 2, 2011**, "Chitram: A Portrait of Indian Culture"; 70 local artists--vocalists, dancers, musicians.
- **January 15, 2011**, Concert by Rhythm of Rajasthan
- **September 4, 2010**, Flute Concert; Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia on Flute; Aura Rascon on Flute; Pt. Anindo Chatterjee on Tabla; Mohini Athavale on Tanpura
- **May 23, 2010**, "Celestial Music"; Ramakant and Umakant Gundecha, Vocalists; Shri Akhilesh Gundecha on Pakhavaj; Nirant Gundecha and Jennifer Melmon on Tanpura
- **February 28, 2010**, "Music for the Soul"; Mitali Banerjee Bhawmik, Vocalist; Ramesh Misra on Sarangi; Nitin Mitta on Tabla
- **December 13, 2009**, Nandkishor Muley on Santoor; Nitin Mitta on Tabla
- **August 29, 2009**, Rajeeb Chakraborty on Sarod; Reena Shrevastava on Sitar; Subhen Chatterjee on Tabla
- **April 1, 2009**, Ustad Ali Ahmed Hussain Khan on Shehnai, Pt. Subhen Chatterjee on Tabla.
- **September 26, 2008**, Shakti Dance Company, "Ramayan" Dance Drama
- **August 30, 2008** Pt.Rajan Sajan Misra-Vocal concert, Subhen Chatterjee (Tabla), Sanatan Goswami (Harmonium).
- **June 7, 2008** Shubhendra Rao (Sitar), Saskia Rao (Cello), Biplab Bhattacharya (Tabla).
- **August 25, 2007**, Shakti Dance Company, "Shiva Shakti" Dance Drama
- **June 30, 2007**, Pt. Jasraj, Vocalist; Ratan Sharma, Vocalist; Samir Chatterjee on Tabla; Rajendra Vaishampayan on Harmonium
- **March 31, 2007**, Pt. Krishna Mohan Bhatt on Sitar; Mitali Banerjee Bhawmik, Vocalist; Nitin Mitta on Tabla; Mohini Athavale on Tanpura
- **September 9, 2006**, Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia on Flute (his first South Florida appearance), Shri Vijay Ghate (Tabla)
- **October 8, 2005**, Pt. Brij Narayan on Sarod
- **August 20, 2005**, Shakti Dance Company, "Sant Meera" Dance Drama
- **April 1, 2005**, Vishva Mohan Bhatt on Slide Guitar
- **August 8, 2004**, Shakti Dance Company, "Prince to Buddha" Dance Drama
- **June 19, 2004**, Veena Sahasrabuddhe, Vocalist
- **February 21, 2004**, Local Artists Folk Dances and Music
- **August 30, 2003**, Shujaat Husain Khan, Sitar
- **April 6, 2003**, Shakti Dance Company, "Bhagavad Geeta", Dance Drama
- **September 29, 2002**, Uday Bhawalkar, Vocalist
- **August 24, 2002**, Lakshmi Shankar, Vocalist
- **April 20, 2002**, Kathak and Flamenco Dance



- **August 12, 2000**, Aashish Khan on Sarod, Pranesh Khan on Tabla
- **March 26, 2000**, David and Chandrakantha Courtney, Vocal and Tabla
- **October 30, 1999**, Manju Mehta on Sitar; Rupande Shah, Vocalist, Kadar Khan Tabla
- **September 26, 1999**, Shubha Mudgal, Vocalist
- **March 6, 1999**, Local Artists Concert; Bharti Chokshi, Miron Lesham and Shirish Patankar on Sitar; Krupal Shah and Murly Iyer on Flute, Bharathi Gopalkrishnan and Vicki Richards on Violin, Dr. Ramakrishnan on Mridangam, Tim Richards, Fernando Subirates, Rajesh Bhandari and Rajan Job on Tabla
- **June 22, 1998**, Ustad Rashid Khan, Vocalist



- **June 16, 2001**, Pt. Manilal Nag on Sitar, Ustad Ali Ahmed Husain Khan on Shehnai
- **April 14, 2001**, Indian and Flamenco Music



**September 8, 2012, "Fusion of Flamenco and Kathak Dance"; Clarita Filgueiras, Flamenco Dancer; Prashant Shah**

Congratulations on a successful production Saturday. It was quite the experience! I am still duly surprised by what I experienced watching masters of music and dance working so adeptly together as well as masters in two uniquely different dance genres collaborating in performance. The solo Kathak and Flamenco performances were brilliant, but I was completely taken aback by the duet in the second half - stunning, sensational, and exciting!

*Clarence L. Brooks, Jr., Associate Professor, Director of Dance-Department of Theatre and Dance, Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters Florida Atlantic University*





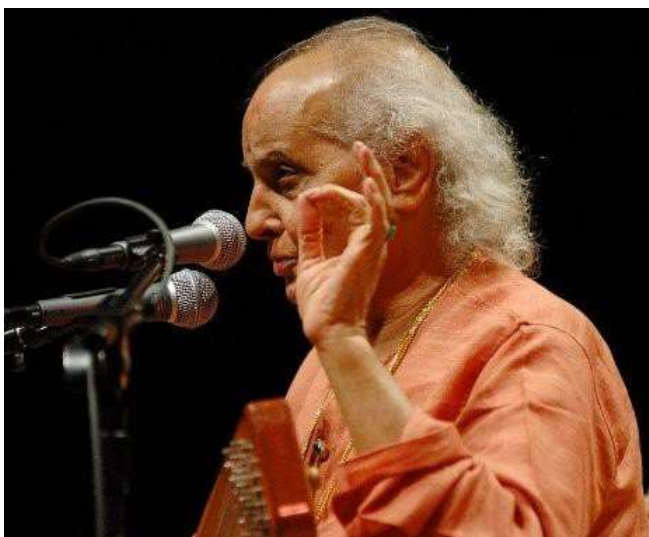
Rhythm of Rajasthan –Audience Members Join in the Performance



Singers featured in "Chitram"



Audience in Standing Ovation at Chitram, Miramar Cultural Center



Pandit Jasraj



Vidushi Manju Mehta





November 7, Smar Saha, Tabla; Ustad Rashid Khan, Vocal; Sardendu Ghosh, Harmonium



Pt. Rajan Sajan Misra

Thank you so much for the performance on Saturday evening [September 6, 2006, Pt. Hariprasad Chaurasia and Vijay Ghate]. It truly was incredible. I had no idea what to expect and on all levels I was so impressed. On a personal level I enjoyed the music tremendously. It was amazing to listen to each piece develop as it progressed. Of course, as an arts manager I continue to be impressed by what you have accomplished and the important contribution that you are making the cultural life of our community. In fact, I made a special comment at our board meeting this morning about your event.

-- Mark Nerenhausen, former CEO Broward Center for the



# The Community's Generosity

Since APAI's formation in 1998, APAI has been successful in fulfilling its mission to preserve and promote Indian Classical Music and Dance through concerts, classes and lecture-demonstrations for the South Florida community. The work that APAI does cannot be done without the help of our many volunteers, supporters, collaborators, and funders. The time, dollars, and resources provided by this diverse group make it possible for APAI to pay the many costs of presenting live performances, cover administrative costs, and provide supplies needed to perform community outreach.

The support we have received from the National Endowment for the Arts, the State of Florida Division of Arts and Culture, the National Endowment for the Arts, Broward County Board of County Commissioners, Broward Cultural Council, Broward County Cultural Division and Funding Arts Broward has been both generous and greatly appreciated.



Over 25 years, numerous individuals and organizations have offered support to APAI. Dozens of individuals – too numerous to name here -- have contributed their time and financial support in support of our mission. And, the APAI Board is especially appreciative of the time, advice, and financial support received from government entities, businesses, schools, and universities in both Broward County and throughout South Florida including:

- ArtServe
- Broward Center of Performing Arts
- Broward College
- Broward County Board of County Commissioners and the Broward County Cultural Division, with the able support of James Shermer, Grants Administrator
- Broward County Library Division
- Broward County Schools
- Dr. Daniel Lewis and Miami Dance Futures, Inc.
- Florida Atlantic University
- Florida International University
- Funding Arts Broward
- Marjorie Hahn & the South Florida Youth Symphony

As our 25<sup>th</sup> year approaches its end, APAI is looking forward to collaborating with other organizations to continue to foster an understanding of Indian culture and of Indian Classical art forms in the South Florida community.

**APAI Day, August 25, 2015**  
**Proclamation from the Broward County Board of County Commissioners**



**Broward County Commissioner, the Honorable Lois Wexler with Bharti and Dr. Deenbandhu Chokshi, Brenda K. Bryant, and Kamlesh Oza**



**October 1, 2004: Celebrating "India Day" at the Fort Lauderdale City Hall. Bharti Chokshi, Mayor Ilene Lieberman and Dr. Deenbandhu Chokshi.**



**Broward Cultural Division is a “Second Home” for APAI, a source of guidance and grant support for our many programs.**

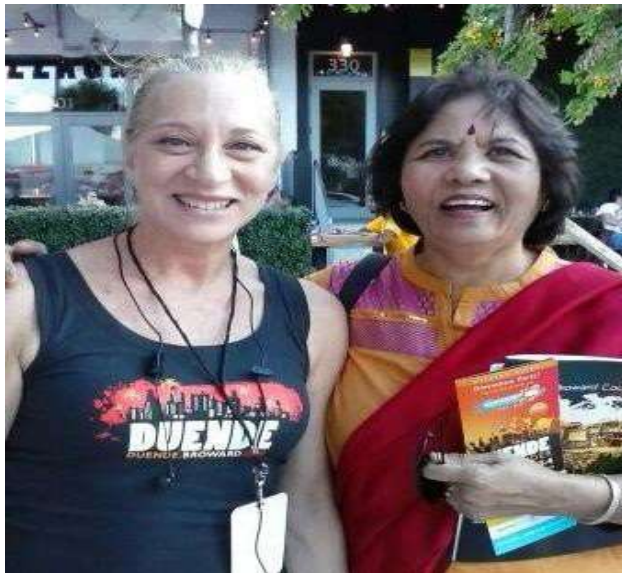
**Former Broward Cultural Division Director Mary Becht (front, 3rd from left) and Staff with Bharti Chokshi (front, 4th from left)**



**Broward Cultural Council Member Robi Kurland (left) with Bharti Chokshi at Chitram 2011.**



**Jody Leshinsky (former Marketing Director, Broward Cultural Division) (left) with Bharti Chokshi**



**Division staff member Deborah Kerr (left) with Bharti Chokshi at Rhythm of Rajasthan**





March 10, 2018: (from L) Dr. Deenbandhu Chokshi, Broward Cultural Division Grant Director James Shermer and Council Member Jodi Paris Jeffreys Tanner at “Dancing for God”, at the Broward County Main Library Auditorium



May 15, 2022: Grant Director James Shermer with Bharti Chokshi and APAI Board Secretary Uma Eniasivam, attending “Tradition”

## APAI Collaboration with the Broward County Library Division

January 21, 2016 “The Big Read Kickoff: Passport to India”: “Passport to India” featured a colorful, unique blend of traditional and contemporary Indian dance, music and art.

Accompanied programming featuring books by Indian authors. Video Links:

Part 1: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j4Q8rF\\_6eqk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j4Q8rF_6eqk)

Part 2: <https://youtu.be/9REyQmWbpFs>

August 2008 “Indus Valley Civilization: The Art of Sari” -- Video Link:

<https://get.google.com/albumarchive/102850003951464505476/album/AF1QipNLz2gd3jxFBgwmeqiVOIrOskqoj9MDt6B4gG1w?source=pwa>

## 2018 Diversity and Inclusion Award

*February 2, 2016: The Honorable Kenneth W. Detzner, Florida Secretary of State, presents Bharti Chokshi with the 2016 State Diversity and Inclusion Award, which included a check for \$1000.*



### THE DIVISION OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND THE CITIZENS FOR FLORIDA ARTS, INC. ANNOUNCE THE DIVERSITY & INCLUSION AWARDS PROGRAM.

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The Diversity & Inclusion Awards Program recognizes the efforts of individuals working to make arts and cultural programming in Florida as diverse and inclusive as possible. The Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs recognizes Florida's diversity as one of the key attributes to the state's vibrant cultural landscape and through this program aims to support the ongoing dedication of Florida's cultural organizations to lead in this area.

#### **Congratulations to the recipients of the 2016 Diversity & Inclusion Awards!**

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**Association of Performing Arts of India**

**\$1,000**

The Diversity & Inclusion Awards Program recognizes innovative and exceptional efforts that promote diversity in arts and cultural programming. The diversity in nominated programs represents efforts to broaden the reach of individuals engaged in cultural programming in Florida. Inclusion addresses the programs and organizational strategies that welcome and embrace the strengths and perspectives each person involved contributes.



April 8, 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Inspiring Story on Association of Performing Arts of India**

Broward County Cultural Arts Division

By David Schwartz

Beginning more than 20 years ago with a few friends meeting in the dining room of a house in Pembroke Pines to hear Indian classical music, the Association of the Performing Arts of India promotes Indian culture by bringing musicians, dancers and vocalists to audiences throughout Broward County.

"Our goal is to preserve our culture through concerts, lectures, demonstrations and classes," said Bharti Chokshi, APAI co-founder and executive director.

The music is the classical music of northern and southern India, not Bollywood, added APAI co-founder and board chairman Dr. Deenbandhu Chokshi. The dances are opera, studies about scripture and ancient folk stories, he said.

Performances have become "a kind of a treasure" for American audiences, Deenbandhu Chokshi added. Performances "appeal to the higher senses—to the mind and intellect, and to spirituality," Deenbandhu Chokshi said. They even have a "meditative power."

Fort Lauderdale attorney Georgia Robinson said a concert performance by Manju Bhatt Mehta on March 12-2016, the "first lady of sitar," was a "mind blowing experience. It just went right to the soul." Art, music and dance, as well as experiencing different cultures, "tenderize" the soul, Robinson said. "When you leave, you feel that your soul has been touched in a way."

Dr. Radha Kotamraju, who dances in the Kuchipudi style of southern India which goes back to the seventh century, said the popular dance form explores the mythology and history of her ancestors and combines classical music and poetry with dance. "It ties you to your roots," said the Miami physician who began dancing when she was five years old and later studied dance in India. "You find yourself in some way giving back or never giving up. It shows that you really care and feel really committed to the art."

Calcutta, India native Gourisankar Karmakar, a percussionist who now lives in Austin, Texas, often performs for APAI audiences, usually playing tabla (Indian drums) while accompanying an artist playing sitar. Karmakar said he enjoys performing in South Florida because "not only Indians but Americans too come to the concert. We get exposure to a bigger audience."

Bharti Chokshi said APAI's classical Indian performances usually attract people from ages 15 to 75. Artists often perform at schools, after school programs, libraries and museums to bring Indian music and dance to children. Some artists give master classes at South Florida colleges, she said.

APAI has "the best quality performers from India," said dancer Ranjana Warier. Students from her Indian classical Rhythms School of Dance in Davie have participated in workshops at public schools and danced in stage shows.

Dancers from APAI performances have conducted master classes at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton. "Students learned something culturally different," said Clarence Brooks, associate professor and director of dance. Brooks said he was impressed by the visiting dancers' strength as performers, how strongly they were connected to the music and how well they told the story with their eyes and hand gestures.

Broward College's Davie campus has hosted several master classes with visiting Indian musicians. One class, with about eight students, featured tabla. "They were learning a style of percussion that we don't offer," said Scott Miller, associate dean of visual and performing arts. "Without [Bharti Chokshi] and her organization, there's probably almost a 100 percent chance that the type of culture she brings to South Florida would not be brought here," Miller said. "She's providing us with a window to a culture that otherwise we would not have. Having this type of culture here really enriches our environment." ...

**2018: Association of Performing Arts of India Legacy Fund  
launch at Florida Atlantic University**



**From L: Michael J. Horswell, Ph.D., Dean of the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters at Florida Atlantic University; Dr. Deenbandhu and Bharti Chokshi; Laurie Carney, FAU Senior Director of Development and Outreach**



# Association of Performing Arts of India Preserves Music and Dance Traditions

BY HELENE EISENBERG FOSTER



Sunayana Hazarilal

The percussive beat of the *tabla* and the distinctive sounds of the *sitar* can be heard in Broward County this spring and summer thanks to the efforts of the Association of Performing Arts of India. Three concerts featuring renowned musicians as well as workshops in music and dance are offered by this Pembroke Pines-based group.

The Association of Performing Arts of India (APAI), a non-profit organization, was founded in 1998 by sitarist Bharti Chokshi and her husband and fellow musician, Deenbandhu, to promote and preserve Indian classical music and dance. After several years of providing intimate concerts for friends at home, the couple decided it was time for classical Indian music to gain recognition and to be accessible to the public in South Florida. As word spread about these performances and audiences grew, Chokshi moved the concerts to small banquet halls and ballrooms.

Indian classical music has its roots in sacred writings more than 4,000 years old. Still very popular in India, this ancient music form is growing in popularity in South Florida.

"The music was once performed only in temples and to please the gods," Chokshi explains. "After the temples the Indian classical music moved to the courts for the king's entertainment. Next, it went to the public, but its main purpose was to provide a gift of music for the gods."

Audiences in South Florida – both Indian and non-Indian – are growing according to Miron Lesham, APAI's vice president. Although based in Broward County, the performances draw crowds from as far away as Miami, Jupiter and Palm Beach.

Since its inception, APAI has presented concerts at high schools,

libraries and temples throughout Broward County. In addition to three scheduled performances for 2001, APAI offers a variety of workshops in *sitar*, a stringed instrument, and *tabla*, a percussion instrument. New this year are workshops in classical Indian dance for all ages.

"We provide the only venue for classical Indian music in Broward County. The new generation is broadening its cultural horizons and expanding its musical interest," Lesham says. He worked closely with Chokshi to attract such prominent performers as dancers Sunayana Hazarilal, La Conja and Leandra La Greca, guitarist Jorge Luis Perez, *sarangi* player Ramesh Misra and *tabla* player Samir Chatterjee for the organization's concerts this year.

Chokshi grew up in Gujarat, India, where she studied the *sitar*, a long-necked lute, under the tutelage of a skilled guru. For over 25 years she honed her skills and developed a love and appreciation for this ancient music. Through workshops, she shares her talents with local students, ranging in age from seven through adult. Additionally, she often brings her artistry to students in area schools and colleges via lecture-demonstrations. She visits India regularly to take classes from her guru.

Chokshi is thankful for the support her organization receives from Broward Cultural Affairs to present its concerts. She also says APAI utilizes the facilities and services offered by ArtServe, including the cooperative marketing program. "It is very helpful to find out about grants and to assist with publicity," she says. Her future plans for APAI include the development of programs with Broward schools and area universities.

*Helene Eisenberg Foster is a freelance writer in Boca Raton.*



Pandit  
Ramesh  
Misra

## Upcoming Performances

*All performances begin at 7:30 p.m. at the Broward County Main Library, 100 S. Andrews Ave., Fort Lauderdale. For more information, call the Association of Performing Arts of India at 954-431-4447.*

SATURDAY, APRIL 14

Flamenco Dance and Music and Indian Music  
Samir Chatterjee – *tabla* (percussion)  
Leandra La Greca and La Conja – Flamenco Dance  
Romerito de Huelva (Jorge Luis Perez) – guitar  
Pandit Ramesh Misra – *sarangi* (stringed instrument)

SATURDAY, JUNE 16

A Rare Sitar/Shehnai Duo with Tabla  
Ustad Ali Ahmed Hussain Khan – *shehnai* (wind instrument)  
Pandit Monilal Nag – *sitar* (stringed instrument)  
Subhen Chatterjee – *tabla* (percussion)

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

North Indian Classical Dance "Kathak" with live music  
Sunayana Hazarilal – Kathak dance



July 31, 2006 On The Cover:  
**FAB!** announces the calendar of events for the upcoming year:  
 Front row: Francie Bishop Good, left, Melinda Lee, Patrea St. John, Bharti Chokshi and  
 Connie Foltz.  
 Back Row: Holly Bodenweber, left, Susan Lochrie, Irvin Lippman, Bonnie Barnett,  
 Dr. Silvia Flores, and Gail Kaplan

# SOCIETY

BROWARD

*Good news. Great works. Community Spirit.*



**FAB! gears up for a jam-packed upcoming season of events**

Cover Story

## The FAB! board announces the calendar of events for the upcoming year



Standing FAB! board member Holly Bodenweber, left, Irvin Lippman and FAB! board member Melinda Lee.

**W**orking over the summer, the Broward County Chamber of Commerce has announced the calendar for the upcoming year.

The group, known as FAB! (Friends of Broward Association), has announced the calendar for the upcoming year. The group, known as FAB! (Friends of Broward Association), has announced the calendar for the upcoming year.

The group will continue to provide a variety of services to the community, including networking opportunities and social events. The group, known as FAB! (Friends of Broward Association), has announced the calendar for the upcoming year.

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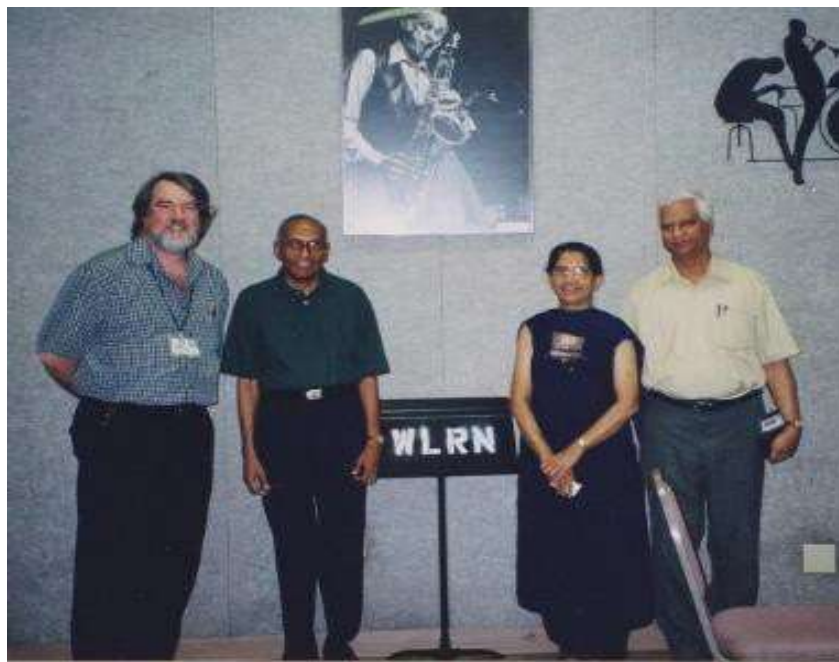
FAB! board members Francie Bishop Good, left, Melinda Lee and Gail Kaplan.





*Funding Arts Broward – better known as FAB! – awarded \$180,000 in grants to 21 area cultural organizations for 2007. The grants range from from \$1,500 to \$15,000. Pictured at the presentation ceremonies are (from left) FAB! member Cindy Levin, grant recipient Bharti Chokshi with Association of Performing Arts India, and FAB! member Jean Schwartz. "FAB! has a direct impact on the cultural climate of Broward County," Levin says. "Visual and performing arts organizations write grants applying for funds," Schwartz adds. "FAB! members contribute \$1,000 each, participate in the grant evaluation process and make the decisions for distributing the funds." To learn more, visit [www.fundingartsbroward.org](http://www.fundingartsbroward.org).*

**Live Interviews of APAI Artists on 91.3 WLRN's "Tropical Current", Hosted by Ed Bell**



*WLRN's Ed Bell with Dr. Deenbandhu Chokshi, Vidushi Veena Sahasrabudde, and Mr. Sahasrabudde.*

***Video Links to Live Interview Recordings***

**Lakshmi Shankar: August 23, 2002**

Interview with Bharti Chokshi and Lakshmi Shankar, accompanied by on harmonium Ramdatt Upadhyay and on Tabla by Rajesh Bhandari.

Video link <https://youtu.be/2e2rSehg5Zg>

**Viji Prakash of the Shakti Dance Company: August 9, 2004**

Interview with Viji Prakash highlighting the Association of Performing Arts of India's presentation of "Prince to Buddha" Video Link:

<https://youtu.be/sTeTfV50n6g>

**Dr. N. Rajam and Dr. Sangeeta Shankar:, May 6, 2006**

Video Link: [https://youtu.be/G\\_y\\_9YR4IKk](https://youtu.be/G_y_9YR4IKk)

**Shubhendra & Saskia Rao & Biplab Bhattacharya, June 6, 2008**

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/xu14L10PPTQ>

# August 24, 2018, APAI 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrating the Arts of India





## APAI On Beacon TV

June 29, 2010, Iris Acker interviews APAI's Bharti Chokshi and Miron Leshem

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/y0DALN3AKNo>





DFS College of Arts and Letters  
Department of Music  
777 Glades Road  
Boca Raton  
FL 33431

January 24, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

I began a long collaborative partnership with the Association of Performing Arts of India (APAI) shortly after my arrival at Florida Atlantic University in 2003. Since that time, President Bharti Chokshi, Chairman of the Board Dr. Deenbandhu Chokshi, and I have striven to provide education in Indian classical music traditions to students and the greater university community at FAU, in Boca Raton.

In cooperation with APAI, the FAU Department of Music and the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters has produced on-campus concerts, workshops, master classes, and in-class lectures by a host of artists from a wide variety of Indian classical music traditions. Visiting professional musicians have included innovative *raga* pianist Utsav Lal, Grammy Award-winning *mohan veena* (slide-guitar) virtuoso Krishna Mohan Bhatt, globally recognized sitarists Irshad Khan and Alope Dasgupta, and the ethereal *Dhrupad* vocal stylings of the Gundecha Brothers. APAI also funded a 2009 FAU course offering in *Bharat Natyam* Indian classical dance, which concluded with a well-received student recital. In 2018, APAI formed the FAU Foundation Legacy Fund to insure the continuation of Indian classical music education at FAU throughout the twenty-first century and beyond.

It is a great pleasure to continue my work with the Association of Performing Arts of India, and I would like to personally congratulate and thank them for their 25 years of devoted service to FAU and the South Florida region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James E. Coe', written in a cursive style.

Professor of Music  
Florida Atlantic University

## Accolades from Our Well Wishers



### *From Viji Prakash and the Shakti Dance Company ,Los Angeles*

Congratulations to the amazing organization APAI and its founders- drivers Bharati and Choksibhai ! Shakti had the honor to present almost all our productions for APAI for almost 2 decades. Bhagavad Gita, Meera, Shiva Shakti, Prince to Buddha, Ramayana and many more! Each of the events had our wonderful Lakshmi Shankar as the featured vocalist, with so many amazing Shakti musicians and dancers traveling to Florida.

And each tour was a Work of Art! Such great theatres and tech provisions, great publicity and audience response, hospitality at its best .Each time we came it was the same care and love. All the artists to this date fondly remember Shakti Florida Diaries 2002 to 2010!

Congratulations to you both and APAI on 25 years of artistic excellence!

---

### *From Ranjan and Vinod Patel and Bhavini, Ketan, Nikhil, Kavın, Amit, Minal, Sarina and Sajan*

Our hearty congratulations on this 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of your wonderful organization.

With your relentless dedication and focus, you have promoted our precious classical art in this community. Ranjan and I are very fortunate to witness performances of top-notch artists in classical music and dance right at our doorstep. To enjoy their performances from close proximity and mingle with them is a special treat, which is not easy in bigger cities. Your effort is very much appreciated.

Though effort is challenging, you always have a very welcoming smile on you.

---



### *From Mohini and Dr. Manohar Athavale*

Congratulations to Dr. Deenbandhu and Bharti Chokshi, along with APAI board, on celebrating 25 years of APAI. Because of your hard work and dedication to the Indian classical music, we, the community has enjoyed music by top-notch artists from around the world, be it vocal, instrumental or dance/drama. We wish you all the best and looking forward to more programs in the next 25 years by APAI!

---





### *From Fred Jonas*

Best Wishes on APAI's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!

For several (however many it's been) years, I have gotten immense enjoyment from APAI and its presentation to south Florida audiences of the best -- some of the brightest shining lights! -- of classical Indian art. It is dramatically enriching. Most of this has been music, and some has been dance. And the "**cherry on top**" has sometimes been a meal to go with it. I try never to miss an APAI presentation, when I can possibly get to them.



### *From Hina and Dr. Naresh Pathak*

What a phenomenal 25 years! We have listened to the "**giants**" and the "**world's best of the best**" artists. Artists of this caliber are accessible in concerts in India far away on stage when you are amongst 1000 people. Here we had the fortune of being with them up close in person, feeling immersed in their art. Thank you APAI with Bhartiben and Dr. Chokshi at helm making it all possible. With gratitude

### *From Mark Nerenhausen, former CEO, Broward Center for the Performing Arts*

*"Congratulations on 25 years of expanding our understanding of the world and art and commitment to community and culture".*

And on a more personal note, it really is wonderful to see this milestone. I continue to be impressed at what you have done and grateful to have been able to see how you have built this and to have working with you over the years. I cannot begin to count the number of times I have used your work as an example to students and other community organizations I have worked with across the country.

You are a testament to the power of art in our lives and our communities.



**Martha and Mark Nerenhausen with Bharti Chokshi at Pt. Jasraj's Concert June 2007 at the Broward Center**

*From Scott Miller, Dean of Arts, Humanities & Design, Broward College*

**“APAI is a jewel in our community.”** As a long-standing partner with Bharti Chokshi, Broward College's Visual & Performing Arts Department is proud to celebrate 25 years of APAI's excellence. Our students have benefited from this relationship. They experienced the richness of Indian culture - whether dancing kathak with master performers, learning the art of tabla or listening to ancient ragas performed anew on the modern grand piano. Presenting India's performing and visual arts has been a wellspring of inspiration to generations of arts lovers in South Florida. We are a better community because APAI continues its work to educate and enlighten us.

*Congratulations, APAI and Bharti on 25 years!*



From L: Liam, Roen, Bharti Chokshi, Professor Scott Miller, and Dr. Chokshi at Ustad Shujat Khan's concert on September 14, 2019, at the Broward Center



**CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE**

**From Nathan Katz**

Distinguished Professor, Emeritus, FIU  
Bhagwan Mahavir Professor of Jain studies  
Director of Jewish Studies  
Founder, Program in the Study of Spirituality

India is philosophy and literature. India is architecture, engineering, mathematics, and science. India is cuisine. India is sculpture and painting. India is drama. India is her gardens. But as much as anything else, India is music and dance. Ever since 1998, the Association of the Performing Arts of India has been bringing superb talents to South Florida, introducing us to this most meaningful and accessible aspect of the glorious Indian culture to us. We owe profound gratitude to Bharti and Deenbandhu Chokshi for their visionary and indefatigable leadership.

Month after month, year after year for a quarter century, the world's leading artists on classical Indian music and dance have regaled us. From all corners of India to all corners of Dade and Broward Counties, these precious sounds and sights have been an embodiment of APAI's motto, NADA BRAHMA, Sound is God.



*Best Wishes from the Gundecha Brothers on APAI's 25th Anniversary.*

<https://youtu.be/dsSwYwmjgTM>



**From Dr. Andrea M. Seidel**

Former Founder/Director, Florida International University's Intercultural Dance and Music Institute, housed in FIU's Latin American and Caribbean Center; Artistic Director, Isadora Duncan Dance Ensemble; Professor Emerita, Department of Dance, Florida International University

December 18, 2022

It is with great pleasure that I extend my deep appreciation and congratulations to the Association of Performing Arts of India, Bharti Chokshi and the Board of Directors on the 25th Anniversary of APAI. It is indeed an extraordinary milestone and pioneering achievement in the presentation, promotion, and preservation of Indian Classical Dance and Music. The South Florida cultural community is greatly enriched by APAI's stellar international programming. In addition to educating the community about these exquisite art forms, APAI through the tireless efforts of Bharti Chokshi, has reached out across many cultural boundaries to collaborate with dancers and musicians in many diverse art forms. I and my modern dance company, the Isadora Duncan Dance Ensemble, along with FIU's Intercultural Dance and Music Institute, have been privileged on numerous occasions to participate and collaborate with APAI in joint programs featuring a variety of world dance genres. It is testament to the fortitude and vision of the organization to not only prevail through this long pandemic, economic recessions, and other challenges but to thrive and prosper. It is my honor to congratulate them on their achievements and I wish APAI continued success for many more decades to come.

---

***From Peter Lavezzoli, Author of "The Dawn of Indian Music in the West",  
Bhairavi, December 8, 2022***

"It is with profound gratitude and love that I congratulate our dear Bhartiji and the entire board of directors, as we celebrate 25 years of APAI this coming February 25 – which will also happen to be the 80th birthday of George Harrison, who had a similar passion for sharing the music and arts of India with the rest of the world. Thanks to Bhartiji and APAI, South Florida has been blessed to receive magnificent performances from legends ranging from Pandit Jasraj, Zakir Hussain, V.M. Bhatt, and so many more. We thank Bhartiji and APAI for their great success of the past 25 years, and we look forward to much more to come, thanks to the support of our generous and grateful community.



**Mrs. Sukanya Shankar, Peter Lavezzoli, and Pt. Ravi Shankar**





### **From Ustad Irshad Khan**

Congratulations to you and all at APAI. We appreciate your dedicated hard work and sincerity to promote our Indian Classical arts for the last 25 years. Good luck and I wish you the best.

---



### **From Pt. Krishna Mohan Bhatt**

My heartfelt congratulations and felicitations to Dr.Chokshi and Bhartiji along with APAI team on the occasion of celebrating APAI's 25th anniversary for bringing India's finest performing arts and culture, music and musicians for all these years to the wonderful audiences of Ft. Lauderdale in Florida. With all our support, love and best wishes to you. And warm regards. Sending from Jaipur:  
Krishna M. Bhatt, Internationally acclaimed Sitarist,  
Performer, Composer, and Teacher.  
India, New York.

---



Best Wishes from Mitali Banerjee Bhawmik (vocalist) on APAI's 25th Anniversary. <https://youtu.be/f2gv6ojjMhU>

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Best Wishes from Pt. Subhen Chatterjee's (Tabla Maestro) on APAI's 25 th Anniversary.  
<https://youtube.com/shorts/iotWcwWRGXQ?feature=share>



### **From Wilbur and Hansa May**

Dear Bharti, Dear Dr. Deenbandhu--

Congratulations to your 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the outstanding celebration. It was a feast for all senses, something for the eyes, the stomach and the ears. And, of course, the mind was nourished. The movie, "The music room" was well chosen for this occasion. A masterwork in black and white, making all

emotional levels visible, notably the decline of an epoch rich in culture, as well as of a human life in the grip of old age. Fantastic! And the food was excellent. The height of the evening was the music performance, ecstatic and uplifting.

All was so well organized and planned with love making this worthy celebration a success.

Praise to your ongoing dedication to bring us the best of Indian culture. You are real ambassadors, keep going, and you will have our full support.

**Thank you.**

---

### **From Fernando Subirates**

The film was stellar; I would love to see more screenings like that which feature vintage Indian music. Both venues were great. Love the idea of dinner and show going forward.

Thank you again for the privilege of introducing the artists. I hope I did justice to the artists, the organizers and to the music.

---

### **From Brenda K. Bryant, APAI Volunteer**

A friend recently asked me why I have an interest in Indian Classical Music and Dance and why I devote so much time to working with the Association of Performing Arts of India. This is what I told him:

“It is part of the history of how we, all the human beings on this planet, came to be what we are today -- but Indian Classical Music and Dance is not a remnant of a some long-gone cultural, an archaeological record. Rather, it is a living, breathing expression of one of the seminal foundations of the World’s culture as a whole. It is a source of knowledge about an astoundingly rich culture, about critical structures in music and dance that have influenced music and dance in many cultures. And it has a kind of magic for me, the rhythms, the influences I hear in so many forms of music, from Jazz to folk to classical . . . the movements, positions, and rhythms I see in many forms of dance. The music is complex and engaging. The dance is beautiful to see.

Minu Bhaduri  
9211 W. Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, Florida 33043

Recd  
11/11/09

Dear Bharti,

Bravo! Eleven years already!  
I remember the first concert with  
Ustad Rashid Khanji, & now this  
Fear with Ustad Ali Hussain Khan Sahib  
and in between numerous well known  
'Panditjis' & 'Khan Sahibs' and Lakshmi  
Shankarji, & Yogi Gopinji.

You've worked tirelessly, in promoting  
classical Indian music in South Florida.  
Your inspiration & enthusiasm to spread  
our music, should be a motivation to  
all Indians & lovers of classical music.  
Thank you so much Bharti, for your  
continuous, selfless effort & devotion to  
music.

Regards to Dina,  
Love & Best wishes

Minu & Udayan.



# First Lady of the Sitar

By Bob Tarte

In Northern India instrumental music has traditionally been considered a male domain. Fathers pass on both their technical prowess and their acquired love to their sons or closest male relatives. Until recently, women have been left out of the loop. "The one instrument where females have made some inroads is the sitar," says Manja Mehta, who speaks from personal experience. Mehta is one of India's classical music's most renowned female sitaryas. "In ancient times it is no longer uncommon for females to study and play the instrument. Even so, there are only a handful of female sitaryas who perform professionally."

Mehta initially attracts attention wherever she plays simply because she's a woman. But her amazing rhythmic control, coupled with the sheer beauty of her melodic inventions, quickly sways aside all other considerations. The essential artistry of Indian music is the ability to breathe life into the raga form, and Mehta most definitely has what it takes, earning the praise of many of India's classical leading lights. "She is a creative performer of exceptional caliber," warmly notes tabla player Usta Ali Akbar Khan.

Born into a musical family, Mehta took up the sitar at age thirteen, thanks in part to the influence of her "first guru," her eldest brother, Shashi Mohan Bhatt, then a student of Pandit Ravi Shankar. "Having a sitarist brother in the family, it was easy to pick the sitar as my main instrument," she says. Mehta's parents, Manoharan and Chandrakalan Bhatt, both accomplished musicians in their own right, enthusiastically encouraged Mehta and her siblings.



Move over Mia Farrow, sitaryas Manja Mehta challenges the rules of a formerly male domain

"No matter what time of the day it was, there was always someone in the family practicing their music," she says of her childhood, recalling her younger brother Vishnu Mohan Bhatt plucking away at his Hawaiian guitar and her nephew, Krishna Mohan Bhatt, trying his own hand at the sitar.

This familial devotion to music continues in Mehta's own clan. Her husband, Shri Nandan Mehta, is a top-notch tabla player and a disciple of Pandit Kishan

Maharaj Manju. Her older daughter, Preeti, plays sitar. Younger daughter Hetal plays tabla and will accompany Mehta (alongside tabla player Ustaad Kadir Khan) during her Fort Lauderdale performance this Saturday.

With the help of artists such as Mehta, a new generation of female Indian musicians seems poised to break the chains of tradition, which for centuries saw women as lacking the proper qualities to master a musical instrument. "In Mughal times, the

number dhrupad style, essentially a vocal style with some instrumental accompaniment, was the leading genre in classical music," Mehta explains. "Dhrupad, which was mainly heard in royal venues, was entirely dominated by male musicians, both instrumentally and vocally." The raga veena, a large fretted zither prominently featured in dhrupad, was played by and taught solely to the males in musical families. The lighter khayal style, which

**Continued on page 100**

### Sitar

Continued from page 104  
evolved in the Eighteenth Century, began to admit female vocalists, but not female instrumentalists.

Mehta continues: "Instrumental music was first derived from dhrupad, therefore men remained the primary exponents of such music. In addition to considerations of tradition, the technique and strength required for successful performance on traditional instruments is quite significant." Accordingly the same prejudiced rationalizations used to exclude women from certain male-dominated sports were also used against aspiring female musicians in India. "The ability to endure many hours of daily arduous practice necessary to attain proficiency was also considered the province of men," Mehta adds dryly.

Miron Leshem, a member of the board of directors of the Pembroke Pines-based Association of Performing Arts of India (which is sponsoring Mehta's local performance), has only the highest praise for

**With the help  
of artists such as  
Mehta, a new  
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seems poised to  
break the chains  
of tradition.**

the sitarya. She says the association has wanted Mehta to appear in South Florida for some time. Leshem describes Mehta's distinct style as one that "combines the tantrakari ang [instrumental-based style] with the gayaki ang [vocal-based style]. In the latter approach, the sitarist tries to imitate and capture the ornaments, grace notes, and microtonal inflections that give Indian music its character and beauty. Both her fixed compositions — the gats — and her improvisations are truly memorable."

Although Mehta bucked tradition to become a critically acclaimed professional sitarya, her playing, while innovative, never strays from the traditionalist path. "Unlike other instrumentalists, she does not introduce radical elements into her music, but nevertheless her instrumental 'voice' remains fresh and distinctive," says Leshem. "Manju never degenerates into mere pyrotechnics. The quality of her tone, the ability to be different within traditional confines, and her inherent musicality all combine to make her unique."

While being a female sitar player does set Mehta apart from the pack, "my contribution is not one associated with gender," she says. "Rather it's the ability to bring out the *rasa*, the emotional qualities of a particular raga, whether they be devotion, love, pathos, or joy."

**Manju Mehta performs at 8:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 30, at the Fort Lauderdale Museum of Art, 1 E Las Olas Blvd. Tickets cost \$15-\$25. For more information call 305-388-1340.**



# Concert gives an education on Indian culture

Laura Sánchez Ramírez  
*Writer*

More and more each day, the Sunshine State is becoming the arena where a variety of folk arts come to live and share a particular enchanting. Host of people from Caribbean, South America, Asia, Africa and Europe, South Florida has used their culinary, cultural approaches and from open-minded. Idli is an example of this a's welcoming manners.

Association of Performing Arts of India also is to be part of this great feat by presenting a concert of leading sarod players, concert, taking place at Ft. Lauderdale Main

ary Auditorium this Friday will feature brothers Ash Khan and Pranesh n in a show that will ctain as well as educate a unfamiliar with the d and its music.

Its purpose is to promote in classical music," says ti Chokshi of The ctation of Performing of India. "It's a 5000 year music so we try to pre- it."

which began his training ndian classical music e he was just five. His father, Acharya Baba ddin Khan, a well- cited musician among the n people, dedicated part e life to teach his young ed grandson. Aashish's ation and talent was so and that his father, i Ash Khan contin- is training.

At the young age of 13, he performed in for the time in public, with his father at the Tansen Conference in Calcutta. Ition to his talent as a ar, Aashish, along with other Pranesh, founded ndo-American musical e "Shanti" and the fusion e "The Third Eye". Aashish has also gained tence in the film and the industry. He has worked e production of "Apu ar", "Parash Pathar" and eard Attenborough's classic "Gandhi". The "The Man Who Would ng", "A Passage to India in fingerprints.

Not only has Aashish composed Indian music, but his collaboration with American musicians has been well renowned. He has worked with John Darchan, George Harrison, Ringo Star, Eric Clapton, Charles Lloyd, Dallas Smith, and the Philadelphia String Quartet among others.

His recordings include The Wonder Wall, Young Master of the Sacred, California Concert, Live at the Royal Festival Hall London, and many more.

He has worked as a teacher in music schools at the Ali Akbar College of Music in California and the University of Washington in Seattle. Presently he teaches students in the US, Canada, Europe, Africa and his native land.

Like his brother Aashish, Pranesh was also taught by his grandfather, known as the musical giant of the 20th century North Indian Classical music. He also became involved with the art of music as a young boy who started his musical training on the Dholak (folk drum) and then on tabla.

Indian Music Terminology provided by Deah Vithash Indian magazine in the Indian music "Raga" (meaning that which colors the mind) is a melodic idea, which uses at least five notes of the octave, around which the musician, under a strict set of rules, has the freedom to improvise. Most ragas are supposed to be played only at certain times of the day or seasons of the year and each raga has its own principal mood or "rasa". There are nine rasas traditionally.

- Shrigarā: Divine or human love
- Hasya: Humor
- Karuna: Sadness
- Raudra: Anger or fury
- Vaera: Reclusion or majesty
- Bhayanaka: Fear
- Aibhuta: Wonder or surprise
- Shanti: Peace and tranquility

### Indian instruments and their history

The Sarod originally dates back to Afghanistan where it existed in it's primitive stage of evolution. The Sarod virtuoso Baba Alauddin Khan refined this instrument significantly, bringing the Sarod

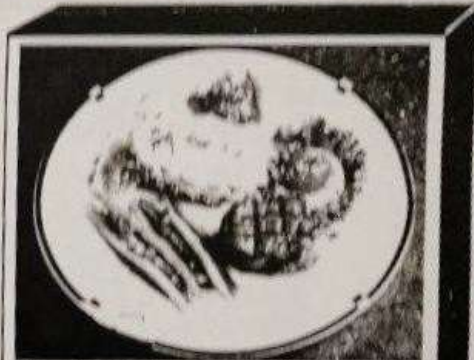
**IF YOU GO:**  
**WHO:** The Association of Performing Arts of India  
**WHAT:** A concert with leading sarod players  
**WHEN:** Saturday, Aug. 13 at 7:00 p.m.  
**WHERE:** Fort Lauderdale Main Library Auditorium, 100 S. Andrews Ave.  
**TICKETS:** \$15 and \$25.  
 For more information, call Bharti Chokshi at (954) 431-3447 or send an e-mail to [Apsinfo@indiaonline.com](mailto:Apsinfo@indiaonline.com).



into its modern configuration by adding many different features. He took upon the task of then teaching two students who wanted to learn to play this very particular instrument. One of them was his son, Ali Akbar Khan, and Ravi Shankar became his second pupil.

The Tanpura is a four to six stringed fretless instrument made of wood, and usually combined with gourd. It provides the performing artist(s) with a tonic reference and enriches the background with its unique harmonic drone. The strings are tuned in a manner that emphasizes the tonic and the dominant notes of the raga. The bridge is comprised of bone, usually deer antler and is slightly curved to not only provide a buzzing sound (as the strings are plucked), but also to generate various harmonics that enhance the tonal quality of the instrument. The size (gourd and neck) of the instrument may vary depending on whether the artist is an instrumentalist, male vocalist, or a female vocalist. It is believed that this instrument dates back to the seventeenth century and may have been included as a part of a classical music ensemble.

The Tabla has intrigued Western percussionists for a number of years. This drum of Indian origin is noted for its unique tonal quality. This quality is derived primarily from the complexity in construction of its drumhead. According to experts, the drumhead, known as pungi, pungi or pungi, is indeed so complex that it would be safe to say that no other drumhead on earth surpasses it in this regard, though others may occasionally equal it.



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Music

# Gypsy Roots

Spanish flamenco and Indian *kathak* dance styles come to Fort Lauderdale — in the same show

C'mon get happy: Samir Chatterjee and his tabla

BY BOB TARTE

**C**astanets and tablas may seem an unlikely combination. But a New York City production called *Nacho Nacho: Gypsy Storytelling* actually combines flamenco traditions with northern Indian *kathak* dance styles. Samir Chatterjee, one of the foremost Indian tabla drummers in the United States, conceived and directed the project. "Flamenco has a strong rhythmic aspect, which fascinates me,"

Chatterjee explains. "It has historical connections to Indian music and dance through the Gypsies. *Nacho Nacho* is developed on the similarities and dissimilarities of the two."

Pairing flamenco and Indian music isn't simply a bolt from the blue. The World Network label's Gypsy-music compilation CD *Road of the Gypsies* opens with "Nana del Caballo Grande," a song on

not show obvious similarities today, but their connections stretch back hundreds of years. Details are sketchy at best about the origin of the Gypsies as well as their migration across the Middle East and Europe. The word *Gypsy*, in fact, is a corruption of *Egypt*, once considered the homeland of a people more politely known as the Romanies. The Gypsies are thought to have come from the Rajasthan region of northwest India. According to one legend of Gypsy dispersion, the fifth-century Persian ruler Shah Bahram Gur invited nomadic musicians from Northern India to entertain his court. When the Romanies didn't settle into the farming life that Gur had intended for them, he expelled them from his country, and their wanderings began.

"It's not known which tribe of nomads might have made the voyage to Persia," writes Simon Broughton in volume one of *The Rough Guide to World Music*. "But the links between Romany and Indian languages such as Hindi,



## **“Flamenco has historical connections to Indian music and dance through the Gypsies.”**

which the late flamenco legend El Canarón de la Isla (nee José Monge Cruz) sings a poem by Federico García Lorca with sitar accompaniment. And the Rajasthanian Indian Gypsy ensemble Musafir has been known to include flamenco songs in its repertoire.

“In both the traditions, music came after dance, and it was created to accompany dance by providing a theme to dance to,” says Chatterjee.

Northern Indian and Spanish Gypsy music may

Punjabi, and Sanskrit make it pretty certain that is where the Rom originated.”

According to Chatterjee, “It is hard to say — or would be rather incorrect to say — that the *kathak* dance style of northern India has anything to do with flamenco as its origin or vice versa. But somewhere down the line there exists some connection between the two, as both are solo dance traditions as opposed to community dancing. There would always be a major difference between the two as *kathak*, like most Indian dance traditions, was originally performed in the temples. Flamenco has no such affiliation.”

Chatterjee has years of experience fusing divergent music styles. He has worked with Glen *continued on page 71*

## Gypsy Roots

continued from page 69

Velez, Ravi Coltrane, Dance Theater of Harlem, Da Capo Chamber Orchestra, Boston Musica Viva and other jazz and avant-garde musicians. He founded Chhandayan World Percussion Ensemble, is a member of two jazz trios, and performed with Sanjay Mishra on the multi-instrumentalist's CD *Blue Incantation*, which featured Jerry Garcia as guest artist. Since 1982 he has toured Europe and Asia and collaborated on disc and in concert with numerous classical Indian musicians. He is also founder-director of Chhandayan, an organization dedicated to promoting and preserving Indian music and culture, which means conducting classes, organizing concerts, maintaining a library, and even running a store.

Chatterjee fuses Indian classical music, Spanish music, and flamenco dance in a performance with dancer and choreographer La Conja, guitarist Romerito de Huelva (nee Jorge Luis Perez), dancer Leandra La Greca, and Pandit Ramesh Mishra, who plays the sarangi, an ancient Indian bowed string instrument.

La Conja is an experienced splicer of traditions. Together with her company, Mimbres y Vareta, she toured India in 1998, incorporating Indian dancers and singers into her Flamenco Natyam project. She also performed what she terms "a mosaic of Indian and flamenco dance" at the prestigious Guggenheim Work and Process Series. She has collaborated with flamenco greats Jose Molina and José Greco. And on her Andalusian Legacies project, she worked with Arab music legend Ali Jihad Racy. *The New York Times* describes La Conja as "a dancer of intense, beautifully modulated heat."

While Chatterjee accompanies dancers La Conja and La Greca and Misra plays the sarangi, Romerito de Huelva performs the highly demanding traditional flamenco guitar part. The guitarist began devoting himself to the intricate and complex Spanish Gypsy style of playing in 1986. In 1989 he became the first Latin American to be awarded the status of Honorary Member of the Pena Flamenca de Huelva in Andalusia, Spain, and has worked with dancers Carlota Santana, Bailes Ferrer, and Jose Greco II. The combination of his fiery, highly rhythmic performance with Chatterjee's virtuoso command of the tabla should be breathtaking.

While there are more obvious differences than similarities between flamenco and Indian music, Chatterjee notes one connection that extends beyond shared roots. "Both the styles have a lot of rhythmic footwork," he says. "In *kathak* there is a strong element of expression, which is called *Abhinaya*. In flamenco we get to see a combination of hilarious and vigorous movements. Both the styles are enriched with a fascinating sensuality. These are the areas we try to explore in *Nacho Nacho*. I hope to bring out these elements in our presentation at Fort Lauderdale as well."

Samir Chatterjee performs with La Conja, Leandra La Greca, Romerito de Huelva, and Pandit Ramesh Mishra Saturday, April 14, in the Broward County Main Library Auditorium, 100 S. Andrews Ave., Fort Lauderdale. Tickets cost \$15 to \$25; call 954-431-4447.



CONCERT REVIEW



**EAST TREATS WEST:** Subhen Chatterjee, far left, on the tabla, Ustad Ali Ahmed Hussain Khan playing the shehnai and Manilal Nag on sitar performed at the Broward County Main Library Saturday evening. Staff photo/Melissa Lyttle

## Music of India provides rich, exotic journey

BY LAWRENCE A. JOHNSON  
CLASSICAL MUSIC WRITER

While it's heartening that world music has become so popular, the term itself has become a kind of all-encompassing soufflé — an easy and intellectually lazy way to deal with the staggering abundance and variety of non-Western classical and folk music.

Few countries can rival India for the history and stylistic richness of its music. The wealth and distinctive style of that tradition was amply demonstrated with the concert presented by the Association of Performing Arts of India Saturday night at the Broward County Main Library. Founded in 1998, the organization was created by the husband-and-wife team of Deenbandhu and Bharti Chokshi to present concerts and foster awareness of Indian classical music.

Saturday night's well-attended event brought a relative rarity with a duo recital featuring Manilal Nag and Ustad Ali Ahmed Hussain Khan, masters of the sitar and shehnai, re-

A younger colleague, Subhen Chatterjee, joined the duo, offering to play raga on the tabla.

Unlike most traditional Western classical music, which borrows its tension from harmony and counterpoint, Indian music has no harmony to speak of and is centered on melody and rhythmic patterns.

The distinctive sound of Indian music is inseparable from the unique timbres of its indigenous instruments.

The sitar, a long-necked lute with a twangy, penetrating and exotic sound, has been popularized worldwide by its most celebrated exponent Ravi Shankar.

The shehnai, a reed instrument, possesses a raw plaintive yet pleasing tone, situated somewhere between a kazo and an oboe.

The tabla is a set of two small-tuned drums, played by the palms. Underpinning the three soloists was the traditional drone accompaniment, provided by Miron Lesham on surmandal (a small harp) and Ahmed Abbas Khan on surpeti (a kind of mini-harmonium).

The concert's first half was devoted to a single raga, *Madhuvanti*. The most established musical form, the raga is the backbone of Indian classical music. In three sections (slow, medium and fast), it provides a framework for a guided improvisation by the players.

More than Western classical music, the performance seemed much closer to the more freewheeling and improvisational spirit of jazz. In the raga's slow extemporized introduction or *alap*, the unearthly wail of the shehnai set a stark opening, soon joined in by the sitar. The rather nasal sound of Hussain Khan's shehnai had a strange yet haunting beauty, often sounding eerily like a soprano saxophone.

As the music picked up in tempo and rhythmic complexity, the three men echoed the blizzard of notes provided by each other, with amazing precision. Though the raga was as long as Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, the musicians maintained audience interest in an unbroken span for 70 minutes, with a fiery virtuosity and improvisational flair that was often awe-inspiring.

The second half of the concert offered three shorter works: a *thumri*, or light classical work from Punjab; a *kajri* or folk melody from Benares and finally a popular *Bhajan* or religious song, which evoked delighted murmurs of recognition from the audience.

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# East Sider

Vol. 15 No. 34

GREATER FORT LAUDERDALE ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

August 22, 2002

## Music

### Lakshmi Shankar lives up to her family's name

By Linda Dankovich  
EastSider Staff

Those with more exotic taste in music have an opportunity to hear an Indian classical vocal concert with Lakshmi Shankar, one of India's most well-known vocalists.

The Shankar family might be described as the Jacksons of Indian music. Lakshmi's brother-in-law and musical colleague is the legendary sitar virtuoso Ravi Shankar, probably most famous here for his collaborations with the late George Harrison.

Saturday's concert at the Broward County Main Library Auditorium, sponsored by the Association of Performing Arts of India, is the result of adoration and determination by asso-

ciation founder Bharti Chokshi.

"I have heard her [Shankar] live in India 10 or 15 years ago," said Chokshi. "I was in love with her voice."

After 25 years of hosting house concerts, Chokshi said she established the Association to create awareness of Indian music and to help bring it to the mainstream. She has been trying for several years to persuade Shankar to appear in South Florida.

Shankar, who recently celebrated her 76th birthday, has more than half-a-century of recording and performing to her credit and has lent her voice to many films, including the Academy Award-winning epic "Gandhi."

Having been born in

India at a time when even American woman had limited opportunities, Shankar's biggest achievement might be having a career at all. "In my mother's time, my mother was kind of rebel. My mother wanted me to sing and dance," Shankar said.

Although, as a child, Lakshmi Shankar had been more interested in music, her mother wanted her to pursue a career as a dancer, so Shankar began taking lessons at an early age. As she got older, she trained and eventually joined a dance troupe in Madras, India headed by Ravi's brother Uday Shankar. She would later marry Uday's younger brother Rajendra.

A bout of pleurisy cut



Lakshmi Shankar lends her legendary voice to an Indian music concert. (collected photo)

- 5 **Family tradition**  
Well-known Indian vocalist will be performing at the Main Library.
- 8 **'Rent,' don't buy**  
The national tour of "Rent" is coming to the Broward Center starting Aug. 27.
- 9 **It's party time**  
Dance party diva Suzanne Palmer to headline party at Sea Monster.

■ SHANKAR continues on 14





**O**n the battlefield, a warrior grapples with despair. He's certain his cause is just. A rival family has stolen his family's kingdom, but the price he must pay to regain it is too high. Many of his friends and relatives fight on the side of his rival, and killing his kinsmen would be wrong. So Arjuna lays down his bow and declares he will not fight.

But his charioteer counsels him otherwise, telling him that a person must do his duty no matter how unpleasant it may be. The charioteer is Krishna, an incarnation of the god Vishnu, and his dialogue with Arjuna comprises the 700-verse poem, the "Bhagavad Gita." Krishna's teachings reveal a mixture of practical advice, noble sentiments, a path to self-realization, and for many followers of the Hindu religion, a true historical account of a civil war in ancient India between the Kuravas and Arjuna's people, the Pandavas.

Written between 400 BC and 100 AD, the "Bhagavad Gita" is the best-known chapter of the Mahabharata, an immense Indian epic that is probably the longest poem in all of literature. On the sheer narrative level, the "Bhagavad Gita" bursts at the seams with unexpected plot twists, ethical puzzles, and larger-than-life characters. Too vivid to be confined to the pages of a book, it has been presented in many forms over the centuries, from the shadow-puppet performances of Bali to film, CDs, the theater, and dance.

The ballet interpretation by the **Shakti Dance Company** strips down the complexity by concentrating on a single theme that runs throughout the text. "It is not an entire 'Bhagavad Gita' rendition or delineation verse to verse, nor is it a rendition of the stories of the Mahabharata," explains Viji Prakash, the production's artistic director and founder of the Shakti School of Bharata Natyam. Instead, her ballet concentrates on the concept of injustice, choosing a scene from each of the "Gita's" 18 chapters that illustrates an example of the oppression of good by evil and setting that particular injustice to spectacular solo and ensemble dance accompanied by traditional Indian music.

"Take the plight of Draupadi, the Pandava queen, who was liberated and honored as a woman," Prakash says. In the play, she is handed before the Kuruva court, dramatically disrobed, and insulted. This ancient injustice has parallels in modern times, according to Prakash. "Equality, women's rights, and the

emancipation of modern times are nullified in the vulnerability of women as we read about the heinous rapes, abuse, and violence that women undergo each day."

Call the Shakti Dance Company's energetic ballet "Bharata with a conscience." Spectacular choreography, stunning costumes, and imaginative stage effects join forces with a mixture of Hindustani and Carnatic musical genres. Precision dancers slap bare feet on the stage with ankle bells ringing and arms swinging the showy South Indian dance style known as Bharata Natyam.

"Bharata Natyam interprets life, communicates feelings, explores rhythm, and delineates the essence of bhava [physical being] through facial expressions, through subtle eye movements, intense footwork, and hand gestures," she explains. Sitar legend Ravi Shankar, father of Grammy-winning singer Norah Jones, recently told Prakash, "Of all the dance productions of yours that I have seen, your 'Bhagavad Gita' is the best."

Shankar's sister, Lakshmi Shankar, is principal vocalist for the performance, singing verses of the "Gita" in the Tamil, Sanskrit, and Marathi languages. Best-known for her ethereal singing on the soundtrack of Richard Attenborough's 1982 Academy Award-winning film *Gandhi*, Shankar is accompanied by Mahesh Swamy on flute and the sarod-like veena lute, Venkatesan Vedakrishnan on mridangam hand drum percussion, and Krishna Kottu on violin. Palai Ramachandran, an award-winning Carnatic singer, and vocalist Debuz Srivathsa, who arranged most of the music for the ballet, also lend their voices to the show. Shankar is no first-timer with the Shakti Dance Company. She was lead vocalist for Prakash's ballets *Purana*



Big ballet from a very big book

*Jarudasa, Merrit, and Shyama* which toured the US and Canada. She's also toured with brother Ravi, late ex-Beatle George Harrison, and several prominent Indian performers, including legendary dancer Uday Shankar.

The national tour of the ambitious three-hour, two-act ballet celebrates the 25th anniversary of the Shakti School of Bharata Natyam, which Prakash founded in 1977. Dance has been a lifelong passion for her. Beginning at an early age, she received intensive training with the grand masters of the Tanjavur tradition of Bharata Natyam, Guru Kalyanasundaram and Guru Mahalingam Pillai, director of the Raja Rajeshwari Bharata Natya Kala Mandali, Bombay. In honor of her years of teaching, she received the "Best Guru" award from the Madras Music Academy, Chennai, India, in 2001.

Prakash turns in a gender-bending performance as Krishna, while her daughter Mythili Prakash plays the Pandava queen Draupadi — and also Karma, the half brother of Arjuna. Females playing males is an unimportant detail in the grand scope of the ballet. "This dance drama is based on Ekka-

rya, which is the depiction of different characters by one dancer, and the characters within the dance drama are differentiated by suggestive embellishments of their costumes," Prakash says. "It is vital that the spectator perceives not solely the person or character, getting lost for the universality of the traits of these characters, inherent within all human beings." *Madhusudan-tetra, Sri Shankaran Das and the athletic Harishchandra Kalyanasundaram are the other two principal solo dancers in an 18-member troupe.*

The text of the "Bhagavad Gita" can be daunting for outsiders unfamiliar with the Hindu religion, and the complexity isn't merely doctrinal. The character names alone are bewildering. Krishna is variously known as Mohana, Hrishikesh, Krishna, Govind, Madhu, Janardana, Vrishnaya, Vasudeva, and Hari. Arjuna has almost as many nicknames, and so do the other main characters. But the ballet is audience-friendly: If the sheer spectacle of the stage presentation isn't self-explanatory, ongoing narration in English sets up each scene and translates the relevant verses from the "Gita."

The battle scenes in act 1 showcase the talents of the dancers as they explode in choreographed warfare in front of a painted backdrop of charging elephants. Lighting effects enhance the passionate emotions. These scenes also give the ballet an up-to-the-minute relevance.

"We have leaders absolutely unwilling to negotiate peacefully, in the name of good Dharma, that is, justice, for the world," Prakash says. She goes on to list other features of the ancient war that are relevant today: "Bribery; making pacts, offering lands and weapons to helpful neighbors who were once enemies... Witness senseless killings of young and innocent in the name of power; knowing peaceful ways are the best ways and yet pursuing active force and aggression to justify the cause. As our country seems to be on the brink of it all, how do we not draw parallels?"

Prakash is excited about the ballet on the sheer artistic level, she says enthusiastically: "I am fortunate to have wonderful artists on my team, dancers and musicians, all who feel as passionately about this production as I do." But ultimately, she's drawn to the "Bhagavad Gita" because, "To me, it is the absolute truth." *Shakti Dance Company performs the 'Bhagavad Gita' at 6 p.m. Sunday, April 6, at Hollywood Central Performing Arts Center, 1770 Monroe St., Hollywood. Tickets cost \$20 to \$30. Call 954-924-6175.*



# Pines woman brings India to S. Florida

BY EILEEN BOKER  
Special to The Herald

India-born Bharti Chokshi of Pembroke Pines said it could take her longer than forever to become perfect at playing the sitar, an ancient Indian instrument.

"I've been playing since I was 12 years old and I am still learning," said Chokshi, now 55 and program director for the Association of Performing Arts of India. "Learning the sitar takes many lives."

But Chokshi is dedicated to bringing the music and dance of India to South Florida audiences anyway, and she proved it by presenting the non-profit association's largest and most recent offering, the epic story *Bhagavad Gita* on April 6 at Hollywood Central Performing Arts Center.

Performed by Shakti Dance Company of Los Angeles, with accompaniment by noted Indian musicians such as Lakshmi Shankar, whose vocals were heard in the movie *Gandhi*, the show captivated a packed audience who showed appreciation for the three-hour event with complete attention, some tears, and, finally, a lengthy standing ovation.

*Bhagavad Gita*, a dance musical based on the story of Mahabharat, depicts Hindu philosophy. Combining teachings about the soul and karma, the story is based on conversations between Krishna, the Hindu supreme being, and Arjuna, his disciple and friend.

"It was written 5,000 years ago, but its message is relevant today," Chokshi said. "It does not matter what religion you are, the human battles are



PHOTOS BY EILEEN BOKER FOR THE HERALD

**INDIAN ART AND CULTURE:** Bharti Chokshi, above at right, of the Association of Performing Arts of India, introduces lead dancer of the Shakti Dance Company, Viji Prakash during "Bhagavad Gita" at the Hollywood Central Performing Arts Center. At left, dancers perform to a packed house.

the same."

For Chokshi, a mother of two grown sons who holds a degree in mental health from Nova Southeastern University, Indian music and dance transcends cultural differences. It is not just for South Florida's Indian population, she said.

"In 1998, when I started the association, there were no opportunities to connect with the music and dance of

India outside of temples," Chokshi said. "But the goal of the association is to bring the culture to other people."

Chokshi, her husband, Deenbandhu Chokshi, who is a retired cardiologist, and six others are volunteers for the nonprofit group, which so far has presented one show a year featuring scores of nationally renowned artists from India.

The next show, a sitar and tabla

concert, will be at 7 p.m. Aug. 30. Call 954-885-7466.

To learn more about the culture of India and its relevance in the United States, the Culture Vultures, a South Broward group of art and culture advocates based in Pembroke Pines, will present India: Bridging the Two Cultures at 2 p.m. today in the Southwest Regional Library, 6835 Sheridan St., Pembroke Pines. The event is free.

## Get Cultured

### India cooks up some spicy instrumentals

BY AUDRA SCHROEDER

The Association of Performing Arts of India presents a performance guaranteed to knock your socks off, or at least steal the elastic out of them. Shujaat Husain Khan performs on sitar and Tony Ramaswar plays tabla for an evening of culturally refined music. Shujaat comes from a long

line of sitar players, going all the way back to his great-great grandfather. He began practicing at age 3, and he employs the musical style of the *gayaki ang* to mimic the sound of the human voice. Shujaat also sings folk songs and intertwines poetry with his music. The United Nations recently chose him as the sole artist to represent India in a performance at the prestigious Assembly Hall in Geneva. Now, that's something. Check out these two worldly musicians at the Broward County Main Library Auditorium, 100 S. Andrews Ave., Fort Lauderdale. Tickets cost \$20 and \$40, and the show starts at 7 p.m. Call 954-885-1466.



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# ARTS SCENE

## North Campus Bustles with Artistic Life

The melodious sounds of Indian music filled the air and made their way across the room to an audience that sat enraptured by the soothing songs. Shanti D. Chokshi's strokes on the sitar — an instrument that looks a little like a mandolin but has a long neck, six to seven main strings and 13 sympathetic strings running below the neck — were heard throughout the North Campus' cafeteria on a recent afternoon. Those who were lucky enough to be taking a lunch break at the time were treated to lovely tunes as well as a history lesson in Indian music — which is one of the oldest written art forms in the world — by Chokshi, who studied sitar at the Central School of Music in Ahmedabad, India, and is program director for the Association of the Performing Arts of India.

This performance was part of the North Campus' first annual Festival of the Arts, a week-long event held from November 6 - 9, that featured faculty, staff and students, as well as artists who reside in the community, showcasing their diverse talents. From student photography and art exhibits to faculty literary readings and musical performances, the celebration of human creativity proved to be a great success.

Professor Maria Jofre, who was the festival chair, said that in order to get the right blend of talent they tapped into the faculty, staff and student body. "We wanted the festival to be essentially a showcase of the talented individuals that make up the North Campus family."

The Festival of the Arts is an offshoot of Arts and Letters Day, a two-day event held yearly at the North Campus. "The committee believed that it was time to expand this event and make it accessible to a larger audience, thus extending it into a week-long festival, holding events all over campus and utilizing more home-grown talent," Jofre pointed out.

And the Festival committee pulled out all the stops for an event that included film camera demonstrations, where participants were able to try out a camera with the film department staff; a cooking extravaganza, in which attendees got to try free treats; a student film festival as well as foreign film screenings, and dancing. According to Jofre, the festival was a huge success.



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Miami-Dade Community College is an equal access/equal opportunity affirmative action institution. This information is available in accessible formats. For this or special accommodations, call 305-257-3022 three days before the event. 100-711.



The Miami-Dade Community College Foundation supports the mission and values of Miami-Dade Community College by encouraging gifts from a wide variety of sources, particularly in the areas of scholarship and program support. For more information on how you can contribute to the College, please call 305-257-8888.

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# INDIAN MOVEMENT



PHOTOS BY JARED LAZARUS/HERALD STAFF



Gaurav Smart, 16, of Pembroke Pines performs a North Indian harvest dance called a Bhangra, above, on Tuesday to help kick off a traveling exhibit at the Broward County Governmental Center in downtown Fort Lauderdale. At left, Snehal Smart, 19, of Pembroke Pines is ready to do a South Indian classical dance called Bharatanatyam, which is the oldest of all classical dance forms in India. The dance strives to portray a situation through rhythmic movement, facial expression and symbolic gestures. The exhibit is the result of a partnership between the Association of Performing Arts of India, which is based in Pembroke Pines, and Meher Designs. The showcase, which features artwork, clothing and other cultural artifacts, runs until mid-August.



Subj: **Just Great!**  
Date: 8/10/2004 6:20:46 PM Eastern Standard Time  
From: JSHERMER@broward.org  
To: Apaiofsflorida@aol.com  
*Sent from the Internet (Details)*

Bharti-

A wonderful performance on Sunday night. It was tremendous.

An authentic performance by the dance company, and a meaningful artistic experience for the audience (a full-house, a really great example of "civic engagement" with the community).

You have done a marvelous job with your company in just a few years.

I hope that APAI plans to re-apply to the *Cultural Diversity Program* (CDP), once again, for FY 2006 funding.

*For FY 2006:*

**Application Deadline: October 15**

Cultural Diversity Program Workshop  
**September 8, 2004**  
**Wednesday, 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.**  
**Main Library- Bienes Conference Room 6<sup>th</sup> Floor**

Cultural Diversity Program Deadline  
**October 15, 2004**  
**Friday, 4:30 p.m.**

Best,  
Jim

James Shermer  
Grants Administrator  
Broward Cultural Division  
100 South Andrews Avenue, 6th Floor  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301-1829  
(954) 357-7502  
954-357-5769 FAX

# SOCIETY

BROWARD

• South Florida Sun-Sentinel, Monday, July 18, 2005

Special Marketing Section

BR • SOCIETY BROWARD



The Association of Performing Arts of India present The Shakti Dance Group performing the original dance drama *Sant Meera*, featuring live music and Lakshmi Shankar as lead vocalist on August 20 at 7 p.m. at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts. Tickets are \$20 to \$49. 201 SW Fifth Ave. in Fort Lauderdale. 954-462-0222.

**MULTIPLE MEDIA:** Shakti Dance Group will tell of Sant Meera's adoration for Krishna. Association of Performing Arts of India photo



# Ancient art form lives anew in dance-drama

BY KATE MATTINGLY  
PHOTO BY STEPHEN WONG

As the dancer's eyes flicker from side to side, her hands speak a language of their own. Her legs are bent, giving her feet the power to prefer faster intricate rhythms. It's hard to believe this vibrant form of dance called Bharata Natyam is thousands of years old.

Although it originated in India, Bharata Natyam has become a global dance style. On Saturday the Association of Performing Arts of India will present a world-renowned interpreter of Bharata Natyam, Viji Prakash, at the Howard Center for the Performing Arts' Amateur Theater.

Born in India, Prakash has lived in the United States since 1976. She not only runs her own Shakti School of Bharata Natyam, but also directs a professional ensemble, Shakti Dance Company, and teaches at UCLA's De-

The word Bharata can be translated as film for bhava or abhinaya, meaning expression. Ra for raga or melody, and Ta for tata or rhythm. Natyam refers to a dance that tells a story.

In Saturday's performance, Prakash's company of 20 plus performers will tell the story of Sant Meera, India's most pious. The production will include vocalists Lakshmi Shankar, musicians, movement, sets and costumes that create a dance theatrical.

Bharata Natyam has been Prakash's passion since she was 4 years old. "My mother, like any parent who thinks her daughter is a phenomenal dancer, put me in classes with a Bharata Natyam instructor who was one of the best," she says during a phone interview.

Prakash's own daughter, Mythili Prakash, will perform the title role of Sant Meera. Viji

## IF YOU GO

**SHAKTI DANCE COMPANY** performs Sant Meera at 7 p.m. Saturday at the Howard Center's Amateur Theater, 201 5th Street, Los Angeles. Tickets are \$20, \$25, \$30 and \$40. Call 464-8522 or Ticketmaster (800-955-5111). 464-2076, 464-2233, 464-2075. 201-5th Street, Los Angeles. [www.shaktidance.com](http://www.shaktidance.com)

## Vocal, instrumental music join dance to tell Sant Meera's story

### DANCE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

Prakash will play Krishna, the Indian god.

Prakash says the show presents a new interpretation of Bharata Natyam. "It's not the solo tradition, but rather a dance-drama with visual and oral media to enhance the art form. The story is about Sant Meera's adoration for Krishna. In spite of all the obstacles in her life, Meera was devoted to the god. Her devotion could

be compared to Sufi poetry," she says.

Through her performing and teaching, Prakash enlightens newcomers to the beauty of Indian dance. "I performed a lot in the 1970s and '80s, then the company and touring emerged. Now, there are all these solo artists emerging from my school, like my daughter who is 21. I see an entire cycle growing out of the school."

To what does she attribute the recent popularity of Indian art forms? "I think there's

more population of people from India living here, and the media and celebrities like Madonna have something to do with it. There's more of an awareness of Indian culture, like yoga and tantra designs. And I think Bharata Natyam is one of the most total art forms. It encompasses religion, music, storytelling, theater and rhythm. I see everything invested in it completely."

As a teacher today, Prakash sees children pulled between many activities. "My students

have come once a week for an hour, and then I see them a week later. In the interim they've had ballet, jazz, piano, tap, tennis, soccer and religious instruction. For us in India it was three times a week and it was part of our life. We were constantly listening to the chanting and the songs, watching a lot of performances—good and not so good—and gaining a sense of the dance and its allied art forms."

At UCLA, where she has taught since 1989, Prakash encounters students "from all

walks of life." This, she says, is enriching, but a challenge. "It's hard to teach a classical art form in 10 weeks, but I love being in academia. I teach a beginner and intermediate class, and the World Arts and Cultures Department also offers classes in the dances of Ball, jazz, tap, hip-hop. It's like a dancer's paradise."

Kate Mattingly is a freelance writer in Boca Raton.





भारत का प्रधान कौंसल  
ह्यूस्टन  
CONSUL GENERAL OF INDIA  
HOUSTON

Dear Ms Bharti Chokshi

July 28, 2008

I am very happy to learn that Association of Performing Arts of India and Broward County are honouring India in a month-long celebration of her history, arts and cultures. I would have liked to attend the event in person but I regret that I am unable to participate due to other prior commitments.

India has ancient and rich cultural traditions which are also the most diverse in the world. They extend to every field - be it language, music, dance, costume or cuisine. I am sure that the presentations will effectively highlight India's vibrant culture and will generate greater interest in India. The event will, therefore, contribute to better understanding of India. I extend my best wishes for the success of this important initiative.

(S.M. Gavai)

Ms. Bharti D. Chokshi,  
Founder/President  
Association of Performing Arts of India  
10831 NW 17<sup>th</sup> Ct.  
Pembroke Pines,  
FL-33026.

3 Post Oak Central, Suite #600 • 1990 Post Oak Blvd. • Houston, Texas 77056  
Tel: (713) 626-3153 and (713) 626-2149 • Fax: (713) 626-2450 and (713) 993-9347  
E-mail: [consulgenhouston@swbell.net](mailto:consulgenhouston@swbell.net) • Website: [www.cgihouston.org](http://www.cgihouston.org)



# INDIA:

## JOURNEY THROUGH THE INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION



*The Rasa Dance - Form of Beauty: The Krishna Art of B.G. Sharma (Mandala Publishing)*

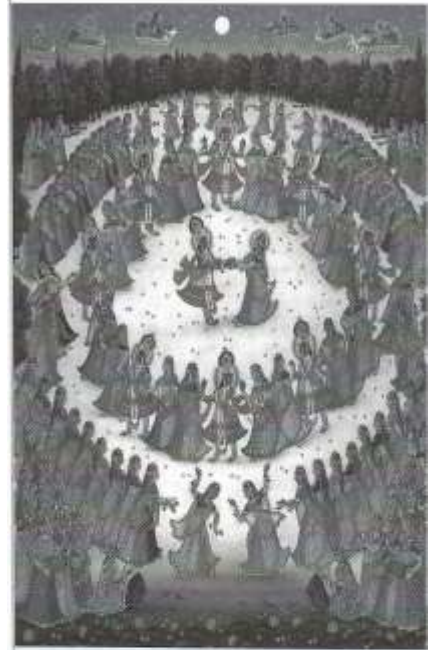
A Multi-media Presentation of the History, Arts and Cultures of India

**August 1-31, 2008**

Broward County Main Library  
100 South Andrews Ave. Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301

# INDIA:

## Journey through the Indus Valley Civilization



**AUGUST 1- 31, 2008**

A Multi-media Presentation of the  
History, Arts and Cultures of India  
Broward County Main Library  
100 South Andrews Ave., Fort Lauderdale

**AUGUST 4-31**

Broward Main Library, gallery 6  
**THE ART OF THE SARI:**  
Various styles of the Regions of India.  
The Sari is as old as the civilization of India.

**AUGUST 12, 13, 14**

South Regional BCC Library  
7300 Pines Blvd., Pembroke Pines

**INDIA FILM FESTIVAL**  
**THE APU TRILOGY**

Indian film maker Satyajit Ray created  
one of the screen's great family tales the  
story of a mother's love for her son, and  
the son's conflicting need for adventure  
and independence.

**AUGUST 16**

Broward Main Library Auditorium  
**DANCE INDIA**

An afternoon of riveting performance  
taking the audience into a journey  
through the Bharata naryam, Kathak,  
Kathakali, Manipuri, Kuchipu and Odissi.



On the Scene

'Celestial Music' provides community with culture and music

Marketing Section SOCIETY BROWARD

The Association of Performing Arts of India (APAI) recently hosted the "Celestial Music" concert at ArtServe. The event featured Pt. Ramakant and Pt. Umakant Gundecha on tabla (percussion), Shri Akhilesh Gundecha on Tanpura, with Niran Gundecha and Jennifer Melton. More than 800 guests attended the concert. Chitrapad style of vocal is a 5,000 year-old tradition of Indian classical music, and the Gundecha Brothers are amongst the most respected and active vocal performers of the Dagar tradition of Chitrapad. They studied under the eminent guru: Zia Mohiuddin, Zia Fariduddin Dagar and Srikanth Mishra. Umakant and Ramakant possess gifted voices with strong lower registers.



Jeresh Melton, left, Pt. Ramakant Gundecha, Niran Gundecha, Pt. Umakant Gundecha, Shari Chakri, and Dr. Deepanshu Chakri



Dr. Deepanshu Chakri, left, and Maseer Afroz

The brothers have worked to expand the Chitrapad repertoire by incorporating texts by Hindi poets, such as

Tulsidas, Bhaktisukt and Nirala. The Gundecha brothers have come to be regarded as a third force, co-

operating with the senior and senior Dagar. Akhilesh Gundecha learned published from Srikanth Mishra and Raja

Chitrapati Singh Jaldar. He has also received scholarships from Ustad Allaudin Khan Sangret Academy, Bhopal, and

the government of India. For more information, e-mail [apart@comcast.net](mailto:apart@comcast.net) or visit [www.apart.com](http://www.apart.com).



Eleanor Hannan

South Florida Sun-Times  
**SPOTLIGHT ON STAGE**

Thursday, August 19, 2010



**HARIPRASAD CHAURASIA**

**INDIA'S CLASSICAL INSTRUMENTALIST HARIPRASAD CHAURASIA TO APPEAR IN CONCERT AT THE AMATURO THEATRE:** Chaurasia is the foremost flutist in India and one of the best in the world. At age fifteen, he was enamored by this instrument and decided

ing in order to pursue this wind instrument. After five years of intensive training, with All India Radio at Cuttack, he was transferred to All India Radio at Bombay. Under the guidance of Sur Bahar virtuoso Shrimati Annapurna Devi, the daughter of

the great teacher and musician, Ustaaad Allaadin Khan, of the Maihar school of music, that he entered and spent the most significant years of his career. Her influence gave his music depth and dimension and was his inspiration to pursue a new career.

In addition to his classical music, Chaurasia was also an experienced Hindi language film music director and collaborated with various world musicians in experimental cross-cultural performances with the fusion group Shakti. He has worked with several western musicians, including John McLaughlin and Jan Garbarek. He has performed throughout the world winning ac-

claim from audiences and fellow musicians, winning a number of awards from the years 1984 to 2000, as an international, renowned exponent of the bamboo flute.

Save the date, for this unique performance, September 4, 2010, at 6 p.m. in the Amaturro Theatre at the Performing Arts Center. Tickets are \$29 to \$129 at the Center's box office. A post-concert fundraising dinner with the artists is \$75 additional. Call: (954) 462-0222 for information.



# Hi-Rise Society

Local Information Publications Group

March 8, 2012

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WWW.SUNSENTINEL.COM/COMMUNITY

## SOCIETY NEWS

### Hollywood Cultural Center hosts APAI event

BY DAVID UDOFF

From a labyrinth of landscapes emerges a unique documentary film titled, "Raga Unveiled," capturing Indian classical music. Presented by the Association of Performing Arts of India, the film was recently shown at the Hollywood Central Performing Arts Center. This beautiful message film is directed by Mahesh Desai who brings the serenity and origins of India's Raga music alive with performances, candid musician and scholar interviews.

Raga is ancient and derived from Sanskrit and means color or passion. Based on math, emotion and cosmic vibrations, melodies, scales and the audience experience the music is serene. Characteristics of the sounds reflect the moods of life and nature. Raga is often improvisational and taught and handed down by a musician guru.

"This is a labor of love that took three years to produce with one hundred hours of footage to create a four hour film. We have been organizing concerts for some time now and know many of the musicians and chose the very best archival interviews conducted in English," said Desai.

Segments in the film portray harpist musicians sitting cross leg on small carpets performing their varied musical instruments.

Founded by Bharti and Dr. Devanaidu Chakshi, the Association of the Performing Arts of India's purpose is to preserve and promote Indian classical music and dance through concerts, classes and lecture-demonstrations.

For information, visit [www.apaiart.com](http://www.apaiart.com), or call 854-405-4466.



Mahesh Desai and Uma Govindam

4A | Sun Sentinel | SunSentinel.com | Friday, September 7, 2012 | 4A

## People

Can't get enough entertainment news? Go online to [SunSentinel.com/entertainment/news](http://SunSentinel.com/entertainment/news)

### East meets West on the dance floor

Artists in flamenco and kathak styles will perform at Broward Center

By JAMES D. DAVIS  
Staff writer

Dances from Europe and Asia will meet onstage in Fort Lauderdale as two artists perform flamenco and kathak in what the producer calls a fusion of styles.

The show, Sept. 8 at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts, will unite two prominent performers: Clarita Figueroa, founder of the Broward Flamenco Company in Coral Gables, and Prashant Shah, head of SolaSana Dance Creations in New York.

"They'll dance apart and together, comparing the styles. But they hope the spirit of the dance will reach into the audience's soul."

"The techniques may be different, but the spirit is very much alike," says Shah.

Figueroa, who has been dancing flamenco since childhood, agrees. "I've been fascinated with Indian dance. It's a beautiful art form. And flamenco is a traditional art form. I wanted to see how similar it is."

The program will start with students of the Pichwai Dance Academy in Miramar. Then, Figueroa will dance a flamenco solo, followed by Shah's kathak solo. Then, they'll dance together.

The accompaniment will be as eclectic as the dancing. The show's producer, the Pembroke Park-based Association of Performing Arts of India, has lined up traditional Indian instruments such as sitar and sarangi, an upright stringed instrument rather like an over-size violin. Also planned are Spanish instruments including flamenco guitar and the cajon, or box drum.

At first glance, the two styles seem to have little in common.

Kathak, born in northern India, tells a story — the name itself means "story" in Sanskrit — with fluid circular motions. Dancers often wear bangles and anklets of jangle bells, which ring in rhythm to the instrumental music.

Flamenco, formed in Andalusian Spain, is an intense, emotional, is-the-moment style. The dancer holds a proud posture, sweeping her arms, clicking or stamping her feet, physically expressing the singer's lyrics.

Yet the two styles are connected historically through Gypsies, wandering tribes who migrated from India and settled in southern Spain as the "gitanos," Figueroa says. She

#### If you go

**Fusion of Flamenco and Kathak featuring Clarita Figueroa and Prashant Shah**

**When:** 7 p.m., Saturday  
**Where:** Broward Center for the Performing Arts, Amstar Theater, 201 SW Fifth St., Fort Lauderdale  
**Cost:** \$20-\$65, 10 percent off for seniors 65 and older, and for students with ID  
**Contact:** 854-462-0228 or [BrowardCenter.org/apai2012](http://BrowardCenter.org/apai2012)  
Flamenco has also been influenced by Andalusian and Arabic cultures.

"People have old-fashioned concepts of flamenco — that it's about someone screaming while someone else fills moshes," she jokes. "But it's really sophisticated and complex. That's why it's a good match with Indian dance."

She and Shah have never met, but they have experimented with each other's dance forms, saying it helps them enrich and refine their styles. Figueroa did a kathak flamenco show, which she called "Gitanos and Saffron," in 2006 in Miami Beach. When Chakshi decided to do the fusion concert, Figueroa was a natural choice.

Shah, who has danced kathak with flamenco dancers before, notes how both styles use sweeping arm



CLARITA FIGUEROA, COURTESY

Clarita Figueroa has been dancing flamenco since childhood. She also says she is fascinated with dance from India.

motions and hand gestures, but his view borders on the mystical.

"The dance is not just in the dancers' bodies, but in the space around them," he says. "The audience should not just see you dancing physically. They should also see the space around you dancing. It should be filled up with energy."

The Sept. 8 program will present Shah and Figueroa with a visible challenge: developing a program in 45 hours. Shah says he'll rely on instinct, a feel for the music and for

Figueroa's dancing. "The key factor will be spontaneity. I hope it will be love at first sight, but falling in love with kathak, me falling in love with flamenco."

Shah has a different goal for the concert: not to blend but to relate. "To me, fusion is confusion. I don't believe that A and B equals C," he says. "Then, you lose the originality of each. I believe in a meeting of the dance forms. When we get together, you will still see kathak and flamenco."

# Communit

COOPER CITY » MIRAMAR » PEMBROKE

SECTION EDITOR RUBEN CUETO » 954-574-5330 » rcueto@t

## Library presents colorful celebration



STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC BOJANOWSKI

Shalini Goel Agarwal, of Miami Beach, performs an Odissi (classical East Indian) dance at the Miramar Branch Library. The event, presented by the Association of Performing Arts of India, helped celebrate the end of the library's summer reading program and was followed by cake and henna hand art.

# All for one, and one for India

'Unity Through Diversity' offers a big look at the country's music and dancing.

**By Rod Stafford Hagwood**  
STAFF WRITER

If anything, the show "Unity Through Diversity" will be a triumph of backstage logistics.

The program of Western and Eastern music and dance staged by the Pembroke Pines-based Association of Performing Arts of India features a large cast, according to the chairman of the board, Deenbandhu Chokshi.

"I think the total number of musical artists, singers, dancers and others number [58], or something like that," he says of the event that will start at 6:30 p.m. Saturday at

the Coral Springs Center for the Arts. "We were worried that the show would be too long. We had to give everyone a strict time. They asked for more time and we had to put the foot down."

The performance will last 2 1/2 hours with a 15-minute intermission.

"But we wanted to show the diversity. There's a lot of diversity of the music, and there's a lot of diversity in the dance. And there's diversity in the national origin of the people involved. Even in the dance, there are a lot of variations. And there are a lot of children and mature adults, so there is diversity in the age of the participants."

The music will range from Bach to Indian music, which Chokshi explains "is very old. This is music from 5,000 years ago."

In addition to performances by the South Florida Youth Symphonic, the Suzuki Music Academy and

## Unity Through Diversity

**When:** 6:30 p.m., Saturday

**Where:** Coral Springs Center for the Arts, 2855 Coral Springs Drive

**Cost:** \$15-\$39 (\$2 off for seniors and students with current ID)

**Contact:** 954-344-5990 or [APAIart.com](http://APAIart.com)

professor Clarence Brooks from Florida Atlantic University, the show will include presentations from Indian dance teachers and their students.

"We wanted to make sure that all the choreographers were from the local region," says Prashant Shah, artistic director of the show. "To see all of this on one platform in one evening, that is something. That is something I see very rarely. I'm very proud of this whole even-

ing."

Shah is a senior disciple of Padma Bhushan Kamsudini Lakshia, who is a legend of the Kathak dance world residing in Ahmedabad, India. Based in New York, Shah made long phone calls and frequent trips to South Florida over the past six months, putting "Unity Through Diversity" together between his own performances as a soloist. He thinks even people who are not familiar with classical Indian dance will enjoy the show.

"Some people are just curious about the dance form, or maybe they are dancers. Some people might come and smell the forms rather than know what the form is all about," he says. "I say smell, because I don't know how to say it. You just get a [whiff] of it, like when you go to a city and you go to the market and smell the culture with food and things."



ASSOCIATION OF PERFORMING ARTS OF INDIA/COURTESY

Aparna Mantange is part of a large cast performing in "Unity Through Diversity" Saturday in Coral Springs.





Florida Center for the Book and  
Broward County Library  
invites all of Broward County to join



# The **namesake**

by Jhumpa Lahiri

## Holi Festival of Colors

Saturday, February 18 ▶ 2 to 4 p.m.  
Southwest Regional Library  
16835 Sheridan Street  
Pembroke Pines, FL 33331  
954-357-6580

Holi is a Hindu spring festival in India and Nepal, also known as the festival of colors or the festival of sharing love. Highlights of this festival will include: "Celestial India" a dance performance by Nitay Surhobhi School of Dance, Sitar music performed by the Association of Performing Arts of India, food tastings, and the grand finale color toss!



Association of  
Performing Arts of India

Visit [Broward.org/Library/Read](http://Broward.org/Library/Read)  
for more details on The Big Read

The Big Read is a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest.

The Big Read is being presented locally by Florida Center for the Book at Broward County Library, Young Art Institute Museum, and the Association of the Performing Arts of India ([www.apaiart.com](http://www.apaiart.com))

Minu Bhaduri  
8200 Jefferson Ave., Hollywood, Florida 33019

Recd  
11/21/09

Dear Bharti,

Bravo! Eleven years already!  
I remember the first concert with  
Ustad Rashid Khanji, & now this  
Fear with Ustad Ali Hussain Khan Sahib  
and in between numerous well known  
'Panditjis' & 'Khan Sahibs' and Lakshmi  
Shankarji, & Youm Gouri.

You've worked tirelessly, in promoting  
classical Indian music in South Florida.  
Your inspiration & enthusiasm to spread  
our music, should be a motivation to  
all Indians & lovers of classical music.  
Thank you so much Bharti, for your  
continuous, selfless effort & devotion to  
music.

Regards to Dina,  
Love & Best wishes  
Minu & Udaya.



THURSDAY 8/10/17

DEAR BARTI,

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR THINKING OF ME, AGAIN. I WON'T BE ATTENDING ON 8/26 BUT HOPE TO SEE YOU AND MORE AMAZING PERFORMANCES IN SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER.

I AM FLATTERED THAT YOU WANT ME TO SPEAK ABOUT MY ENJOYMENT OF INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC. I THINK I'M TOO ECCENTRIC, TOO "OUT THERE" FOR THE DIGNIFIED AND FORMAL SETTING OF THIS MUSIC, THESE CONCERTS. I'M JUST AN OLD AMERICAN HAPPY WITH VERY GOOD TASTE IN MUSIC. I DO LOVE BEING TRANSPORTED TO ANOTHER TIME AND ANOTHER CULTURE BUT I AM HUMBLER BY THE SERIOUSNESS OF THESE RAGA(S) AND THE MUSICIANS WHO PLAY THEM. I WILL JUST BE AN ATTENTIVE AND APPRECIATIVE AUDIENCE MEMBER. PART OF WHAT I LIKE IS HOW KIND EVERYONE IS.

LOVE  
DEBBIE BIGELOW