



MANDALA
SOUTH ASIAN PERFORMING ARTS

PROGRAM GUIDE

KAHANI: REIMAGINING STORIES

November 12, 2022

www.mandalaart.org



KAHANI: REIMAGINING STORIES

Concept And Executive Artistic Direction
Pranita Nayar

**Inspired by the paintings of Mewar Ramayana,
Courtesy of The National British Library**

Music By
Langa & Manghaniyar Musicians,
Recording By Rupayan Sansthan, Jodhpur India

Musicians:
Algoza - Habib Khan Langha; Dholak - Eklash Khan Manghaniyar ;
Kamaicha - Dare Khan Manghaniyar; Khad Taal - Khete Khan
Manghaniyar; Morchang - Shakoor Khan Langha; Sarangi - Kutla
Khan Langha

WITH

Dancers:
Farah Yasmeeen Shaikh, Tarana School of Music and Dance: Frist
Tarana by Manisha Gore, Archana Sathappan, Amisha Naik,
Deboshree Maitra, Shubhra Kannan, Gail Marattil, Anju Bhandari
Karvekar; Thumari by Vaishali Nagoree & Sanika Lingayat; Second
Tarana by Raina Parekh, Kaavya Parameswar, Shika Shah, Naya
Patel, Bela Das; Pandit Ravi Shankar tarana by Akanksha kashyap &
Serene Bose



Projection Design

Mulham Katayah

Artistic Direction

Pranita Nayar

Animation

Pranav Jakhar


Assisted by: Aadit Arora

Choreography

Farah Yasmeen Shaikh

Technical and Venue Operations

Metea Valley High School



ABOUT THE ARTISTS



Farah Yasmeen Shaikh

Farah Yasmeen Shaikh is an internationally acclaimed Kathak artist - performer, choreographer and instructor, and Founder & Artistic Director of Noorani Dance. Farah is known for her evocative storytelling, technical precision, delicacy and grace, with two decades of training from the late Pandit Chitresh Das.

Farah has gone on to develop a unique artistic voice as a solo performer and choreographer for the Noorani Dance Company, often addressing topics of historical and social relevance, while also maintaining the classical elements of Kathak. Her own traditional and innovative works include *The Forgotten Empress* - based on the life of 17th Century Mughal Empress Noor Jahan, *The Partition Project* — based on the 1947 India-Pakistan Partition and *Nazaakat aur Taaqat - Delicate Power*. A TEDx speaker, and host of her own podcast, *Heartistry Talk Show*, Farah is invited as a public speaker to events for her eloquent delivery and thoughtful approach. Noorani

Dance and Farah have received numerous grants and awards that include the National Endowment for the Arts, Walter & Elise Haas Fund, New England Foundation for the Arts, Gerbode Foundation, Zellerbach Family Foundation, Alliance for California Traditional Arts, California Arts Council, Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, and others. Since 2015, Farah has been performing and teaching throughout Pakistan - engaging in meaningful exchanges with artists, organizations, students, and art-loving and desiring Pakistanis. She is now a sought after presence and contributor to the cultural arts landscape in Pakistan.



Tarana Dance School

Tarana Dance Academy is one of the leading dance schools in the Chicagoland area, promoting Indian classical dance amongst new generations, and helping to allow for a more cultured tomorrow. The goal for the school is not only to promote dance, but to instill both confidence and discipline within the students. Today school has successfully finished 250 kathak graduation.

Shows like “Krishna’s Message for Human Kind,”, “Kathak Through the Ages”, “Festivals of India”, “Colors of Rainbows”, “A Project for Peace and Harmony”, “A Story of the Indian Classical Instruments”, “Ramayana in Sita’s Point of View”, etc. are examples of unique productions produced by Tarana.

SYNOPSIS

The Bow Contest

In the court of Janak, a contest is held to find a suitor for Sita. The winner must shoot an arrow from the bow of Lord Shiva. Only Ram lifts the bow. A celebration takes place: Ram and Sita are married.

The Banishment

In Ayodhya, coronation celebrations begin for Ram. Kaikeyi grows fearful for herself and her son, Bharat. Kaikeyi persuades King Dasharath to grant her the two past promised favors: to banish Ram for 14 years and crown Bharat as the new King. Ram accepts his banishment and Sita and his brother, Lakshmana, accompany him into exile.

Exile

After crossing turbulent waters, the beauty and mystery of the jungle become abundant to Ram, Sita and Lakshmana. Creeping vines with blossoming flowers and forest critters beckon them into their new life.

The Tale of Shurpanakha

Shurpanakha roams freely in her jungle kingdom and encounters Ram's hut. She dresses in her best garments and vies for their attention. Repulsed by her actions, Lakshmana cuts off her nose and ears. Shurpanakha is shocked by the pain and goes to her brother, the great King of Lanka, Ravana seeking revenge.

The Golden Deer

Sita sees a deer and begs Ram to bring it to her. The deer is Mareecha, the uncle of Ravana, in disguise. Ram finally shoots the deer, but Mareecha uses his powers to imitate Ram's voice. Lakshmana and Sita are afraid when they hear Ram's voice; Lakshmana decides to search for Ram and draws a protective circle around Sita. Ravana takes the opportunity to take Sita away to be his new bride, but cannot break the circle. He transforms into a beggar and tricks Sita to step outside of the circle. After a fight, Ravana takes her away in his chariot.

Hanuman meets Sita

In Lanka, King Ravana hopes to win the love of Sita. He visits her in the palace garden where she stays, but she refuses him. Hanuman spies on the palace of Lanka. He promises Sita that Ram will come to her rescue, but she is wary of his words. Hanuman presents Sita with Ram's ring and reassures her. Hanuman is captured and Ravana gives the command to set his tail afire. Hanuman then sets the kingdom of Lanka ablaze before escaping.

The Bridge

Prince Ram and Lakshmana organize a great army of loyal animal soldiers. To reach the shores of Lanka, they must cross a sea, which their monkey soldiers easily fly across. By blessing individual stones, they are able to create a magical floating bridge to the other side.

The Battle

The armies of Ram and Ravana prepare for battle. They have a tremendous battle. Ram begins shooting his precise arrows at Ravana, but to no avail; Ravana reemerges with strength after each blow. Finally, Ram calls upon the heavens and aims the divine arrow at Ravana. The arrow pierces Ravana's navel—his one point of weakness—and he falls to his death. The heavens erupt in joy. Sita and Ram are reunited. Ram is restored as a hero and king in Ayodhya.

MEET OUR TEAM



PRANITA NAYAR

Executive Artistic Director

As the founder of Mandala Arts, Pranita Nayar brings over 35 years of expertise in building programming and platforms for cultural arts and their practitioners. She holds an M.A. in Dance Ethnography from the University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign and served as Artistic Director of the Kalapriya Center for Indian Performing Arts from 1994 - 2014. Nayar is a 12-time recipient of the Master Teaching Artist award from Illinois Arts Council Agency and a 2016 recipient of the Chicago Dancemakers Forum Lab Artist Award, given to artists with clear artistic vision and compelling area of inquiry. She has choreographed over 30 original works evolving the practice of Bharatanatyam traditions and has toured internationally. This year's Story of Ram is truly a childhood dream, drawing from memories of community, celebration and artistic wonder.

AADIT ARORA

Assistant for Animation

Aadit is a sophomore at DePaul University and has a background in music performance, video editing and animation. Aadit has worked with Mandala on various projects involving animation, most notably "With Rumi " that used projections of animated calligraphy with dance movement. On the side, he has a YouTube channel (FANIMATOR), where he creates content that combines his passion for film, their scores, and animation.

PRANAV JAKHAR

Animation

Pranav Jakhar is a graphic designer and video editor originally from Jodhpur, Rajasthan. Over the past couple of years, Pranav has been creating visuals for Mandala Arts during an era of digital performance. Pranav graduated from NIFT Mumbai with a degree in design and visual communications and is now collaborating out of Bangalore. Outside of digital creations, Pranav enjoys painting, gardening and photography.



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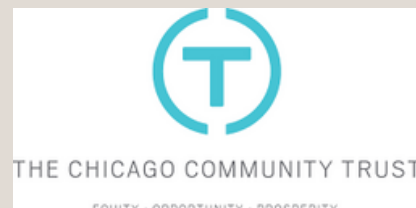
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