

SYMPHONY

— DIWALI IN CONCERT —

OF LIGHTS

FRI 10 NOV | 7PM
CHATSWOOD CONCOURSE




aio

Happy Diwali!

Welcome to Symphony of Lights: Diwali in Concert!

Diwali is one of the most important and widely celebrated festivals in India. The word "Diwali" is derived from the Sanskrit word "Deepavali," which means a row of lights, signifying the triumph of light over darkness - good over evil.

The Australian Indian Orchestra represents the largest collaboration between Australian and Indian musicians. A 60-piece orchestra with members from a variety of ethnicities, cultures and faiths, it truly symbolises the strength of diversity and unity.

A vibrant and joyful occasion that promotes unity, positivity, and the spirit of togetherness, what better way to celebrate Diwali than a grand concert bringing together two wonderful countries and its people!



Australian Indian Orchestra

Program

Australian Indian Overture

Shree Ganeshay Dheemahi

Kal Ho Naa Ho

Lag Ja Gale

O Saathi Re

Mozart Symphony No. 40 / Itna Na Mujhse Tu Pyar Badha

Soja Soja

Mere Dholna

INTERVAL

Beethoven Symphony No. 5 - Allegro Con Brio

Dastaan - E - Om Shanti Om

Yaadon Ki Baarat

Chaap Tilak

Suraj Hua Maddham

Janam Janam

I Still Call Australia Home

Jai Ho

The Music

Australian Indian Overture

Two patriotic tunes, “Waltzing Matilda” and “Vande Mataram” (I praise thee – Mother India!) herald a new chapter in Australian-Indian relations. Listen for the Sitar delicately plucking Banjo Patterson’s tune as the orchestra swells to a crescendo, carrying the melody seamlessly into India’s national song, “Vande Mataram”.

Shree Ganeshay Dheemahi - Prayer to Lord Ganesha

It is customary to start a concert with a prayer to Lord Ganesha, the remover of obstacles and the God of wisdom and intellect. The lyrics of this composition are in Sanskrit and were composed by the renowned Indian film composer duo Ajay-Atul. The lighting of the lamps is symbolic of Diwali and represents the victory of good over evil

Kal Ho Naa Ho - Tomorrow May Not Come

A heartfelt song emphasising the importance of living in the moment and cherishing the close relationships we have around us, despite the challenges life throws at us. We invite you all to cherish this moment as you listen to the sweeping strings and flutes carry you away on this spiritual journey of Diwali.

Lag Ja Gale - Come Embrace Me

This Golden Era tune from the 1964 Bollywood film “Woh Kaun Thi?” (Who Was She?) was almost never recorded as director Raj Kohsla initially did not like it. However, after hearing Lata Mangeshkar’s soulful rendition of it, he was convinced of its beauty, and decided to keep the song in the film where it has grown to become a gem of Bollywood.

The Music

O Saathi Re - O My Companion

Featured in the 1977 Bollywood film “Muqaddar Ka Sikandar”, this Kishore Kumar classic is a romantic ballad composed by Kalyanji-Anandji. It conveys the emotions of love, separation, and the desire to reunite with the ones we love. The song’s popularity has endured over the decades, and it continues to be cherished as one of Bollywood’s most beloved songs.

Mozart / Itna Na Mujhe Tu Pyar Badha - Love Me Not So Much!

The iconic theme from the first movement of Mozart’s Symphony no. 40 lends itself to the tune of this classic from the golden period of Indian cinema. Originally sung by legends Lata Mangeshkar and Lalit Mahmood, this song is beloved throughout India, a testament to showing music does not have borders. Listen as the symphony seamlessly transitions into the song.

Soja Soja - Sleep (Sleep)

A striking jazz number by the great Indian composer A.R Rahman, Soja Soja burst onto the silver screen in the 2019 movie ‘99 Songs’ and was sung by Shashaa Tirupati. The hero is a musician who must compose 100 songs in order to reunite with his lover. On his journey, he meets a jazz queen named Sheila who helps him compose more contemporary jazz songs. The pivotal song represents the new generation of Bollywood and the evolution of its music and movies

Mere Dholna - My Beloved

A brilliant showcase of Indian classical music, Mere Dholna celebrates Indian classical music on the big-screen and is paired with the Kathak form of Indian Classical dance, performed by Niharika Sanghi. Listen for the complex “takadimi” rhythms vocalised by tablist Abhijit Dan and singer Rucha Lange, which are then shared in a vibrant dialogue between the soloists and orchestra.

The Music

Beethoven Symphony No. 5 - Allegro Con Brio

The four most recognisable notes in classical music, Beethoven's groundbreaking work has captivated audiences for over 200 years. For the very first time, this work will be performed with the Tabla, creating a unique sound and character in this bold fusion of Indian and Western music. Listen for the rhythmic integration of the Tabla and its dazzling solos performed by virtuoso Abhijit Dan.

Dastaan -E- Om Shanti Om - The Tale of Om Shanti Om

Featured in the genre-defining "Om Shanti Om", this song was originally sung by the beloved singer Shaan, with music composed by Vishal-Shekhar and lyrics by Javed Akhtar. The song depicts the journey of the hero, Om, as he triumphs over his adversaries from his past life. Listen for the orchestra depicting love, betrayal, revenge, and Om's yearning for justice.

Yaadon Ki Baarat - Procession of Memories

Originally composed by R.D. Burman in 1973, "Yaddon Ki Baarat" is perhaps one of the most influential songs in Bollywood. A blockbuster success, the movie established the 'masala' film genre which combines action, comedy, romance and drama with musical numbers in picturesque locations – exactly what Bollywood is known for today. Depicting the reunion of three distant brothers, signifying the unity and togetherness that Diwali represents.

Chaap Tilak - The Mark of Love

A popular Sufi Qawwali (Islamic devotional song) originating in the 14th century, it is the expression of love and devotion, often associated with mystical poetry and the Sufi, Islamic tradition. Niharika Sanghi returns with a Sufi Whirling dance, to elegantly portray this mysticism.

The Music

Suraj Hua Maddham - The Sun Is Setting

This iconic Hindi song is from the 2001 film "Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham." A dreamy, romantic song of love and connection, the strings capture this ethereal atmosphere with the woodwinds and percussion adding a playful nature to the piece. Singers Rucha and Vikas bring us closer together in the spirit of Diwali.

Janam Janam - In Each and Every Birth

Composed by Pritam with lyrics by Amitabh Bhattacharya, this Hindi song was sung by Airijit Singh in the 2015 Bollywood remake "Dilwale". Once the "prince and princess" of Bollywood, Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol return to steal our hearts yet again with this song conveying the idea of being connected through multiple lifetimes or incarnations ('janam'), as their love story is destined to repeat itself.

I Still Call Australia Home - arr. Nick Greer & Ben Folds

Written by Peter Allen in 1980 and one of Australia's most beloved and iconic songs, this song celebrates the deep emotional connection that Australians feel towards their homeland, especially those who are living abroad or traveling far from home. Indeed, with a significant Indian diaspora calling Australia home, this Diwali sentiment hits home for many Australian-Indians.

Jai Ho! - Let There Be Victory!

This chart-topping anthem by A.R. Rahman took the world by storm since it was featured in the 2008 film "Slumdog Millionaire." A story of overcoming the odds and enduring sacrifices, Jai Ho captures the spirit of rising to the challenge and prevailing over adversity. Let the Diwali spirit prevail, Jai Ho!

About the AIO

Australia and India share two loves – Cricket and Curry.
Our vision is to connect us with a third love – Music.

Founded by the brothers Sagar and Suraj Nagaraj, the Australian Indian Orchestra (AIO) melds the best Indian musicians with Australia's finest orchestra players to create a unique cultural experience.

Musicians in the AIO come from top orchestras around Australia including the Sydney Conservatorium Orchestra, Opera Australia Orchestra, and the Australian World Orchestra.

Complementing the orchestra are Sydney's finest Indian singers who will bring the stage alive with the most memorable songs from celebrated Bollywood movies and artists across the decades,

Celebrating the diversity and versatility of the cultural fabric of music in Australia, the AIO exemplifies the multicultural strength of Australia. It is set to be a cultural gem and an inspiration for future generations of musicians in Australia and around the world.



The Artists



Well known in both the Australian and Indian music scenes, Suraj is a highly versatile musician known for his virtuosity and precision in performance. He is Concertmaster of the acclaimed Sydney Youth Orchestra. A highly sought-after violinist, Suraj authentically transcribes and performs complex violin passages in Bollywood songs. He has amassed an international following on his YouTube channel “Suraj Nagaraj Violin” and has performed his compositions all over India. Suraj also shares his sheet music with other young musicians across the world, increasing the accessibility of Indian music for those who have learned with Western music notation. Suraj has meticulously arranged all 16 pieces you are hearing tonight to be able to bring together the Australian Indian Orchestra.



Sagar Nagaraj is an Australian-Indian violinist. He has performed with the Australian World Orchestra and Willoughby Symphony Orchestra. He is the Artistic Director and Concertmaster of the Rosemont and Macquarie Chamber Orchestras and 1st Violin of the Rosemont String Quartet. Having come through the Sydney and Australian Youth Orchestras, Sagar understands the importance of education and the profound impact of providing young musicians with opportunities. In 2018, Sagar toured with the Australian World Orchestra across India, performing in Chennai, Mumbai, and in Kerala, sparking the idea for the Australian Indian Orchestra.

The Artists



Rucha Lange is an authentic Indian vocalist who captivates audiences with her exquisite interpretations of both modern and classical songs. Born into a musical family, she grew up listening to her Grandmother Smt. Malti Lange, a renowned singer in Gujarat and studied under the master Guru Shri Aniket Khandekar. She is known for her unique renditions of Indian classical ragas, film songs, ghazals, and devotional music. Rucha's unique vocals can be heard on the ABC Show Wakefield and in the 2015 movie "un-Indian" starring cricketing icon Brett Lee.



Vikas Kolar is a multi-award-winning singer from Bangalore, Karnataka. Trained in both Carnatic and Hindustani styles, Vikas brings his classical expertise to create a unique and authentic Bollywood style. While in India, Vikas has won several music contests at state and national level and performed for All India Radio. His voice can be heard in many professional recordings and radio jingles for the Kannada-language music industry. In 2018, Vikas received the coveted Musicfare Award, a nation-wide singing contest run by Heart & Soul productions, from world-renowned lyricist Gulzar. He was also judged as the best singer at the South Asian Film Festival in Sydney. Currently, Vikas is a sought-after singer who performs in shows across Sydney with many different bands.

The Artists



Avijit Sarkar is a multi-instrumentalist, composer, illustrator, cartoonist, writer, poet, puppeteer, philanthropist, and mathematician. With over 45 years on stage, he has entertained audiences in diverse musical styles in over 1,800 concerts. Proceeds from his numerous concerts go towards medical research and charity. In 2020, Avijit received the Australia Day Award for contributions to Art and Culture and was featured in the book "Success Stories of Indo-Australians" in 2021. Avijit is the director of Natraj Academy Sydney, where he trains and supports emerging music talent in fine Indian Arts.



A generational talent, **Ruhani Dhillon** is a singer, percussionist, guitarist, and dancer whose passion has seen her perform in concerts for international artists like Arijit Singh, Shreya Ghoshal, Atif Aslam and Jubin Nautiyal. Winner of the 2016 and 2018 NSW Percussion Championships, Ruhani has been an instrumental member of several orchestras and percussion ensembles including the Sydney Youth Orchestra, Northern Sydney Youth Orchestra and Drumfill. Ruhani is currently pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Classical Percussion at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. Her joyful style and infectious smile has touched hearts across the world via her social media platforms, and her energetic Bollywood numbers continue to rock stages across Australia.

The Artists



Niharika Sanghi has trained in Kathak for over 20 years, primarily under the guidance of her Guru and mother Ruchi Sanghi as well as renowned Kathak Gurus in India such as Smt. Nutan Patwardhan. Niharika has been part of many performances, her latest being the lead in "Anarkali The Musical", a dance production by Ruchi Sanghi Dance Company. She is also one of the main faculty members at RSDC where she trains the upcoming generation of dancers, as well as assists in choreography with a focus on powerful, cutting edge Kathak.

Ruchi Sanghi Dance Company, Australia's most esteemed Kathak dance institution founded by Ruchi Sanghi in Sydney in 2000, has surpassed two decades as a cultural beacon. As well as focusing on world-class Kathak training, RSDC also stage sold-out productions such as "Anarkali The Musical" and "Devdas The Musical." They have also showcased their artistry at high-profile venues such as the Sydney Opera House during the Confluence festival and Prime Minister Modi's reception, and performing at numerous prestigious gatherings, thereby elevating the presence of Kathak on the global stage and strengthening the ties of young Indian Australians to their rich cultural heritage.

The Orchestra

Violin 1

Sagar Nagaraj
Carolyn Griffin
James Guo
Daniel Parkee
Bonita Silva
Tim Dickinson
Nara Lee
Heather Kim

Violin 2

James Krockenberger
Khang Mai
Arum Jeon
Hayden White
Katrina Pappalo
Joseph Mai

Viola

Viktoria Vukovich
Po Wang
Cienna Irwin
Alfred Yu
Eda Talu
Jonathan Karanikas

Cello

Lauren Olofsson
Nazli Sendurgut
Samantha Knutsen
William Thorpe
Cadence Ing
Stephanie Tran

Double Bass

George Machado
Elsen Price

Harp

Kaela Phillips

Oboe

Phoebe Xu

Clarinet

Morgan Lacey

Bassoon/Saxophone

Tom Spencer
Nick Zengoski

Flute

Jessica Scott
Adrienne Hanslow

French Horn

Oliver Harris
Kaitlyn Phillips
Bridget Darby

Trumpet

Raphael Harvey
Arkie Moore

Trombone

Cooper Rands

Bass Trombone

Harry Macpherson

Tuba

Samuel Hannan

Percussion

Ruhani Dhillon
Jack Peggie
Bryn Wood
Ishvinder Singh
Buddy Lovett

Mandolin

Stephen Lalor

Tabla

Abhijit Dan

Sitar

Anil Dhital

Santoor

Behzad Ansari

Electric Guitar

Mayank Singh

Acoustic Guitar

Sadiq Rehmani

Bass Guitar

Bobby Kumar

Piano

Satyajeet Roy
Michael De Huy (Guest Artist)

Drums

Preetam Telugu

Our Partners

The Australian Indian Orchestra is proud to present
this concert with the support of its partners.



Support Our Vision

Without the generous support of our donors, the Australian Indian Orchestra would simply not be possible. Any amount over \$2 is tax-deductible and goes a long way in helping us continue to perform.

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