

## Artist Profiles

### Curator/ Dancer



**Poorvaja Nirmaleswara-Kurukkal** is a Bharathanatyam dancer and an avid enthusiast of Indian classical arts and Tamil literature. She is a student of Guru Krishna Segaram of AustTam Fine Arts and has also received advanced training under the guidance of Dr Chinnamanur J. Krishnakumar.

Her passion for Indian classical arts has been nurtured over many years through active involvement in Sydney's vibrant music and dance community through performances and years of service with Karpahavalli and Kamban Kazhagam Australia. In 2024, she founded Namah Arts, a platform for creative collaboration and holistic learning.

A lawyer by profession, *Anbar* is the culmination of Poorvaja's deep love for her Tamil heritage and its rich musical traditions, as well as her commitment to social justice as this production was inspired by the work of the Sivan Arul Foundation. Poorvaja extends her gratitude to the Saivasithantha Centre (VIC) for the opportunity to re-stage it in support of their community service initiatives.

### Dancers



**Aruthy Kumanan** is an up and coming Bharathanatyam artist and is currently under the tutelage of Smt. Sukanya Ravindhar in Bharathanatyam and Nattuvangham, and Smt. Anandavalli in Kuchipudi.

In 2019, Aruthy co-founded Niraivadhi Fine Arts with the aim of celebrating and fostering local classical Indian arts and talent, and in 2022 founded her dance school, Arudhra Dance Academy. In 2023, Aruthy made her debut in Chennai under the guidance of Smt. Sukanya Ravindhar and Smt. Chitra Visweswaran.

Aruthy has collaborated with a number of Sydney talents and dance companies, including Rasana Dance Theatre and Lingalayam Dance Company whilst also having directed a number of shows; including solo productions.



**Durga Shivaji** commenced her Bharatanatyam training under the guidance of Anursha Tharmarajah at the Natyakshetra School of Dance. Having successfully completed her Arangetram in 2019, she continues her advanced training under Seran Sribalan of Rasana Dance Theatre; and more recently Christopher Gurusamy for abhinaya. She has also commenced training in Mohiniyattam with Darsana Arun at Navyam, Centre for Mohiniyattam.

Durga is an active and vibrant presence in the Sydney dance community. She has performed in several notable productions, including *Margam* (2021), *Sringaram* (2022), *Asura Natyam* (2024) and *Thrayee* (2025), an experimental collaboration with Mohiniyattam and Kathak.

Beyond performing, Durga is also the co-founder of Niraivadhi Fine Arts, an organisation dedicated to nurturing and promoting local talent in classical dance and music. Since its inception, Niraivadhi has successfully co-produced key productions such as *Margam* (2021) and *Natya Malai* (2023), contributing significantly to the cultural fabric of the classical arts scene.



**Ananthi Velauthapillai** is an emerging Bharathanatyam dancer who began her training at a young age under the guidance of Guru Krishna Segaram at AustTam Fine Arts. She has actively participated in numerous AustTam productions and charity events across Sydney.

In 2021, her dedication and passion for the art form culminated in the successful completion of her Arangetram. Since then, Ananthi has continued to deepen her exploration of Bharathanatyam through both solo and collaborative performances.

In 2023, she had the honour of performing at the Chidambareswarar Temple in Chennai, India.

*Anbar* has been a valuable platform for Ananthi to refine and express her artistry, and she is thrilled to share the stage with her fellow performers.



**Ramya Kuganathan** has been learning Bharathanatyam from Guru Krishna Segaram since the age of five. Under her guru's guidance, she has developed a deep appreciation for classical dance and has performed in numerous AustTam Fine Arts school productions.

In addition to her dance practice, Ramya has a strong interest in the visual arts, particularly photography and painting. Her creative expression flows seamlessly between these forms, each informing and enriching the other. Though often found behind the lens, capturing performances and artistic moments, she is honoured to have been stepping into the rhythm and light of the stage through *Anbar*.

## **Musicians**

### Nattuvangam



**Seran Sribalan**, is the director of Rasana Dance Theatre. He is a professional dancer, choreographer, teacher and Nattuvanar. He was trained in the artform of Bharatha Natyam and Nattuvangam by the world renowned gurus, The Dhanajayans. Seran has supported a number of artists in Sydney on Nattuvangam for professional shows including Margam, Dhvani, Natyaswaravali, Sudari and Iksha II.

### Vocals



**Lakshmi Kumaraguruparan** is a Sydney based Carnatic vocalist and vainika. She grew up in Chennai where she learnt from renowned Gurus Sangita Pracharya Dr. Manjula Sriram and Smt. Padmavathy Ananthagopalan.

She is the 7th generation descendent of the Carnatic Music Trinity Sri. Muthuswamy Dikshitar thus having a conducive atmosphere at home to pursue music. Lakshmi is a graded artist in the All India Radio Chennai and has performed several programs and music related chat shows on the radio and Television as a child artist. She has performed at many of the famous venues in Chennai and other cities in India including The Music Academy, Narada Gana Sabha, Krishna Gana Sabha, Shanmukhananda to name a few.

Lakshmi holds a masters degree in Carnatic music. A regular concert performer in Sydney, she is also the founder and director of Sruti Kalpa School of Music where she trains students from all parts of the world in the art form.

---

## Mridangam

**Pallavarajan Nagendran**, disciple of Vidwan "Kalaimamani" Sri T R Sundaresan, was initiated into the divine art of Mridangam at the Singapore Indian Fine Arts Society (SIFAS) which saw him develop his foundational skills under Vidwan Karaikudi Krishnamurthy and Vidwan "Isaimani" Chennai K Deenadayalan, subsequently graduating from SIFAS with distinction, under the guidance of Vidwan Trivarur Vaidhyanathan, and was awarded the title of "Vaadhiya Visharad" for Mridangam by SIFAS.



Performing since the age of 8, his passion and dedication has seen him performing globally, accompanying numerous renowned artistes in classical and contemporary music and dance productions.

## Flute

**Divyaa Sarveswaran** is a multi-talented artist who began her flute journey at the tender age of five under the guidance of Sri R. Suthanthiraraj, and is currently receiving advanced training from Sri Prapancham Balachandran. In 2023, she successfully completed her Arangetram under the tutelage of her beloved gurus.



Her passion for the Indian classical arts extends beyond the flute. She continues her training in Carnatic vocal with Smt Prema Anandakrishnan, has learned Bharathanatyam under the late Kalasuri Jayalukshimy Kandiah OAM, and also enjoys playing the Veena.

Divyaa has become a familiar presence in Sydney's music scene, regularly performing at katcheris and accompanying dancers. She has collaborated with numerous organisations, including Anbalayam, old school associations, the Sydney Murugan Temple, and various charities. Beyond the classical stage, she also performs with bands, weddings and at special events.

## Violin



**Abhinav Harishankar** is a student and performer of Carnatic classical vocal and violin based in Sydney. He is blessed to have the guidance of Vid Sri C R Vaidyanathan and Vid Sri K S Vishnudev for vocal music. Abhinav commenced his violin lessons with Vid Sri Kranthikiran Mudigonda (Sydney) and is now under the tutelage of Kalaimamani Vid Parur Sri M A Krishnaswamy and Vid Parur Smt M A K Ananthalakshmi. He regularly performs vocal and violin in Sydney, and has also performed many times in India. He has also won many prizes from international competitions.

## Rhythm Pad



**Anishsan Gowrythasan** is an up and coming percussionist from Western Sydney, with training and performance experience across South Asian, Western, and Carnatic music traditions. He began his journey in the classical art of Mridangam under Sandor Sri R. Suthanthiraraj and continues his tutelage under Sri N. Subangan. Over the years, he has had the privilege of performing alongside several distinguished local and international artists, demonstrating versatility and depth in his musical expression. Proficient on the drum kit and percussion pads, Anishsan brings together a diverse range of rhythmic influences in his performances.

## Production

### Narration and spoken word



**Neshevida Balasubramanian** is deeply passionate about the Tamil language and its rich literary tradition. A Tamil public speaker from a young age, she brings the same dedication and expressive spirit to the classical arts as a trained Bharatanatyam dancer, Carnatic vocalist, and violinist. Outside the world of performance and language, Neshevida is also a human rights lawyer and the proud mother of two young children—experiences that inform and enrich every aspect of her work and life.

### Lighting design and direction



**Lavania Pallavarajan** brings a special perspective to this craft being a Bharathanatyam dancer herself. She is a student of the late Kalasuri Jayalukshimy Kandiah OAM and acclaimed artist Christopher Gurusamy. She comes with years of experience with lighting design in various venues across Sydney for Bharathanatya performances. She is pleased to have worked with her gurus, several dance schools and world renowned artists such as Padmabhushan Prof. C. V. Chandrasekhar, Kalaimamani Smt Priyadarsini Govind and Smt Meenakshi Srinivasan.

## **Programme**

Mallari

**Ragam: Gangeera Naatai | Thaalam: Kanda Jathi Thripata | Composer: Melakaveri K. Balaji**

Sivaperuman Krupai

**Ragam: Surati | Thaalam: Adhi | Composer: Papanasam Sivan**

Small Sincere Acts

**Presented by Durga Shivaji to a musical medley**

Poosalar

**Ragam: Nalinakanthi | Thaalam: Kanda Chapu | Written by Mathuranthaki Vaithilingam**

**Music by Lakshmi Kumaraguruparan**

**Presented through dance and visual arts by Ramya Kuganathan**

Varnam

**Ragam: Keeravani | Thaalam: Adhi | Written by N. Subangan**

**Music by Lakshmi Kumaraguruparan**

**With 'Thirunaalaipovaar' presented by Poorvaja Nirmaleswara-Kurukkal**

Apoothi Adigal

**Scripted and presented by Aruthy Kumanan and Neshevida Balasubramanian**

**Set to Appar's pannisai**

Kannappan

**Extracts of Yazhpanam N. Veeramani Iyer's 'Kannappar Kuravanji'**

**Dance Drama presented by Ananthi Velauthapillai**

Thillana

**Ragam: Kaapi | Thaalam: Chatusra Jampai | Composer: Thanjavur S. Kalyanaraman**

Mangalam

**Thirumanthiram verse 270 | Thirumoolar**

## **Acknowledgments**

- Dr J Jayamohan & the Sivan Arul Foundation for inspiring this production
- Greenroom: Ratna Sharma
- Stage Management: Alexshica Alagiah
- Stage Props: Velauthapillai Subramaniam & Nagamuthu Nagendran
- Costumes: Ranjana Tailors (India)
- Costume Saris: Saree Selections (Sydney)