

## PRESS RELEASE

### NATYA VELHAL: MARATHI THEATRE FESTIVAL at ROYAL OPERA HOUSE, MUMBAI

Theatre has been an integral part of celebrations all across India and has a long prominent history in Mumbai since the times of British rule. Today, there are more than 1500 theatre shows monthly in theatres of Mumbai in multiple regional languages like Marathi, Hindi, and Gujarati among many others.

The anecdotes of tamasha tradition's doyen *Patthe Bapurao*, the story and punch lines from the popular house full show of Marathi experimental theatre *Shakuntala*, *Bal Gandharva*, *Natsamarat*, *Ti fulrani* and the appreciation of adaptation of great scripts like *Dr.Kashinath Ghanekar* as movies, are popular dining table conversation with theatre lovers even today.

#### For Immediate Release

The Royal Opera House, Mumbai presents **Natya Velhal, Opera House Rangamanchavar Marathi Natakanchi Parvani**, its first ever four-day Marathi theatre festival in association with *Print Partner Maharashtra Times, Radio Partners 93.5 RED FM & 106.4 Magic FM, Ticketing Partner PAYTM Insider* and *Supported by Mumbai Theatre Guide, Astitva and Avid Learning* starting from **6<sup>th</sup> April to 9<sup>th</sup> April 2023**.

The four-day festival is designed in a way that the audience gets to witness a variety of themes through the performances ranging from Sangeet Natak, Suspense, Comedy, Thriller, Folk, Lavani, Love story, and Experimental, all under one roof.

Please read below for more details:

Touted as the city's cultural crown jewel, the Royal Opera House, Mumbai has had an important role to play in supporting and promoting theatre in the city dating back to the first ever dramatic production it hosted in 1910. From its early days, this landmark has been a vibrant theatre hub in the city and played host to luminaries and stalwarts from India's dynamic theatre community.

**Natya Velhal, Opera House Rangamanchavar Marathi Natakanchi Parvani** is an initiative to encourage regional theatre groups and welcome the audience to experience the grandeur of the Royal Opera House through their favourite Marathi plays and musicals.

The festival will host performances by some of the radiant stalwarts from the Marathi theatre industry such as **Girish Oak, Makarand Deshpande, Suchita Thatte, Gajanan Paranjpe, Amruta Subhash, Madhura Welankar Satam, Saurabh Gokhale, Anita Date, Sandesh Jadhav, Gauri Jadhav** and many more. It will be an enjoyable experience for the audiences to come and watch these charismatic individuals express their art at an equally impressive stage that compliments their exceptional talent.

The festival opens on a grand note with a mystery-themed play called **38 Krishna Villa**, further lined up with a suspense thriller called **Kaali Raani** both directed by renowned actor **Vijay Kenkare**. Followed by **Sir Premacha Kay Karaycha**, a stellar story about the dilemma of love. Also staging a unique dance musical **Jay Shanakra Vidyadhara** a lively, dance musical performance of popular dramatizations of the works by the well-known playwright **Vidyadhar Gokhale**. One cannot miss the journey of the language from the birth of the Marathi language till today, it's fun and facts, gossip, singing, dancing, drama, and dialogue is a quality and beautiful interweaving of the play '**Madhurav - Boru Te Blog**'. The humorous and edgy – a dark comedy play - **Punashcha Honeymoon** takes us on a journey through a couple who revisits their honeymoon destination to get a breakthrough in their stagnant relationship.

The festival also stages **To Rajhans Ek**, which recently was nominated for the *Zee Natya Gaurav Nominations* in four categories; an experimental drama that explores the mentality of farmers. A play for those who love a good murder mystery **You Must Die** is grand and imposing, as one has come to expect from Vijay Kenkre's plays. **Prasthan Urf Exit**, is a play directed by **Alok Rajwade**, about an old couple that is confronting the idea of death.

The festival will end on an electric note with an exhilarating *Lavani dance performance* - a traditional art form of Maharashtra. **Lavani Ke Rang** gives a glimpse into the world of traditional Lavani artists from the viewpoint of an enigmatic and quirky theatre Malkin from the *Sangeet Bari* tradition.

The above mentioned plays are brought forth by our *Festival Directors* **Ravi Mishra** and **Bhavik Shah**.

The **Royal Opera House**, with its longstanding association with art, literature, theatre, and music and has hosted Operas and live performances of artists like Bal Gandharva, Prithviraj Kapoor, Dinanath Mangeshkar and Lata Mangeshkar. **Natya Velhal** is one of the first initiatives to celebrate the culturally rich theatre traditions of the country.

**Ashish Doshi, Honorary Director of the Royal Opera House, Mumbai**, says, "The Royal Opera House has always promoted and supported a wide range of performing arts and we aim to further encourage more regional artists. Mumbai loves to watch and celebrate Marathi plays as it boasts of theatre personalities like Satyadev Dubey, Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar and Mahesh Elkunchwar. This festival is a chance to further open the hearts and doors of the Royal Opera House to a diverse new audience who haven't got a chance to explore the theatre since it reopened in 2016."

**Mr. Asad Lalljee, Curator of the Royal Opera House, Mumbai** says, “ Natya Velhal is a move to celebrate the passion of regional drama and artistry of the Marathi theatre industry with a fresh approach and new opportunities at the Royal Opera House. Many feel that the Marathi theatre does not enjoy the kind of support and encouragement that English and Hindi acts do and that even venues don't support regional plays. Our actions are only limited by our beliefs and we believe that the Marathi theatre industry has a lot to give us. We have taken the first step by opening our venue to showcase some beautiful stories from the Marathi theatre universe and this is just the start..!”

**Mr. Bhavik Shah, Festival Director** says, “Mumbai has been the heart of theatre in India and Marathi Theatre in Mumbai has a history dating back to the middle of the 19th century. We at MumbaiTheatreGuide.com and Astitva have always worked to provide the audience with plays and events around theatre which helps connect them to different genres of plays, thus ensuring that the legacy is carried forward.

Natya Velhal is one such initiative designed to connect the theatre lovers with original plays in Marathi language. The 4 day Marathi festival at Royal Opera House will showcase some of the best and awards winning productions. It's going to be the 1st of it's kind festival at Royal Opera House where theatre lovers will get an opportunity to see plays written, directed and enacted by stalwarts of Marathi Theatre.

Be ready to witness the beginning of a new chapter at Royal Opera House”.

**Mr. Ravi Mishra, Festival Director** says, “Natya-velhaal, as the name suggests, is one of kinds theatre festival happening at The Royal Opera House from 06th to 09th April. It is an important initiative and experience of pride for me to be the Festival Director of such an eminent theatre festival happening at a Venue of Heritage Value. While curating the festival, we focused on the content of the play and ensured to balance it with entertainment quotient for the Audience. The selection of genres was to bring varied experience for the viewers ranging from Sangeet Naatak, Romance, Suspense, Thriller, Crime based, Social, Socio-Political, Family relationship, Marathi Language's legacy and Folk dance based performances. This is a step towards bringing regional theatre to Opera House and exhibiting variety of regional performances for Southern Mumbai and around”.

**Sagar Bhagat, Senior Project Manager, Avid Learning** says, “Marathi theatre has seen immense growth in recent times, especially post lockdown. As the theatre continues to evolve with newer ideas, newer concepts and much more experiments; we try to encourage the artist and audience to come and have a first-class experience at the Royal Opera House and enjoy the drama”.

Join us for the launch of one of the most awaited regional theatre festivals in Mumbai!

**Where:** Royal Opera House, Mama Parmanand Marg, Mumbai - 400 004

**When:** 6th April till 9th April 2023 | 4:30 PM onwards

**Tickets:** [www.insider.in](http://www.insider.in)

**Press Email / Call:** Ayesah Dadachanji on [ayeshah.avid@gmail.com](mailto:ayeshah.avid@gmail.com) / 98201 55297

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