

Music and Art transcend boundaries and speak a language that touches every soul. Artists from the country have taken their practice across borders and fostered global connections. How is this global synergy of the arts created? What forms have these cultural exchanges taken?

**Across Cultures: Sargam** presented by **Avid Learning** with **Furtados, Indian Music Experience Museum and Royal Opera House, Mumbai** is the sixth episode of the ongoing series by the same name Across Cultures. In this episode, the speakers will shed light on the artistic melange of cultures and their practice. With a focus on their endeavours, they will share how they have navigated through the cultural differences.

Our esteemed speakers and artists for the session are *Multi-instrumentalist and Composer* **Baluji Srivastava OBE**, *Classical Dancer and Choreographer*, **Aditi Mangaldas** *Author*, **Shireen Isal** and *Dancer, Actor and Painter* **Mesma Belsare**. The session will be moderated by *Classical and Contemporary Dancer* **Uttara Asha Coorlawala**.

The session will explore historical insights on how the arts have travelled, and taken new forms and what that means for its practitioners. The panelists will not only discuss the challenges they have faced while exploring synergies but the joys of working with new talents; with new cultures and thriving in each other's creative ecosystem, making the world their stage.

Read more about the series below:

This is a lecture-demonstration from the acclaimed series – Across Cultures. The series aims to look at different paradigms of an extraordinary exchange of culture and traditions, where we will try to answer the question - Is fusion a scaffolding built to support the existing structure of art, in a way glorifying it? Or is it a framework crafted to dilute, and eventually dissolve an art that the posterity wouldn't even know existed?

Join us in yet another engaging expedition across cultures!

**Date:** Wednesday, 29th June 2022

**Time:** 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM (IST)

**Duration:** 90 minutes (including Q&A)

**Format:** Live Session on Zoom

**Register:** [www.avidlearning.in](http://www.avidlearning.in)

**Press Email:** Ayesha Dadachanji on [ayeshah.avid@gmail.com](mailto:ayeshah.avid@gmail.com)



Inception of trade routes around the world have opened the possibilities for artistic crossovers and exchanges. Do you wonder how these global exchanges fostered even amidst distinct cultures and geographies? **Across Cultures: Sargam** the sixth edition of the series looks at different paradigms of art and cultural exchanges through the work of these talented individuals. The panelists will shed light on artistic mindsets, cultural sensitivities and navigating the creative ecosystem.

Join us in yet another cross-cultural exchange of ideas, perspectives and the arts!

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Dancer, Actor and Painter  
**Mesma Belsare**



Impresario and Author  
**Shireen Isal**



Classical Dancer and Choreographer  
**Aditi Mangaldas**



Multi-instrumentalist and Composer  
**Baluji Srivastava OBE**



Classical and Contemporary Dancer  
**Uttara Asha Coorlawala**

MODERATOR

DATE: **WEDNESDAY, 29 JUNE '22**  
TIME: **6:00 PM - 7:30 PM (IST)**  
RSVP: [www.avidlearning.in](http://www.avidlearning.in)



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### About Speakers:

**Mesma Belsaré** is described by *The New York Times* as “a tour de force...a true act of transcendence and religious immersion”, and by *The Dance Current* magazine as “as mesmerizing as staring into the heart of a fire”. Her gurus and mentors are Sri Shankar Hombal, Padmashri Geeta Chandran and Dr. Maya Kulkarni. Belsaré, with a lifelong immersion in classical Bharatanātyam, music, theater, art education, painting and graphic design, derives inspiration from performing and visual arts alike. She is a professional painter and holds a Masters in Art Education degree, with a sixteen-year history of art museum education at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, MA, and MassArt Art Museum in Boston, MA. Belsaré also co-founded *Samvād Boston*, an educational space to foster creative dialogue and build a community for Indian classical dancers and musicians in the New England area. She is a recipient of the Cambridge Arts Council's 'Artist-Grant', NEFA's Dance Fund, and the Government of Delhi Scholarship for advanced training in Bharatanātyam and Indian classical music. More information at [www.mesmabelsare.com](http://www.mesmabelsare.com)

**Shireen Isal** was born in Mumbai before destiny led her to settle in Paris, France, where, in 1983, she set up 'Association Sargam', an artists' management organisation which invited classical Indian musicians and dancers to tour Europe. From her base in Paris, and subsequently London, revealing the magic of India's classical heritage to a European audience became akin to a personal calling, which consumed her professional life for forty years. Negotiating the challenges of cultural differences between artists from India - giants of Indian music and dance and many younger artists too - on the one hand and western audiences and promoters on the other, all with their own distinct sensitivities and demands, she encountered a gamut of emotions: generosity, eccentricities, clashes of ego, humility and kind understanding. What remains with her today is a feeling of pure magic; four decades of a very personal experience which she relates in her book: "Joy, Awe and Tears – my association with Sargam".

Instead of "hears", it should read "heart".

**Aditi Mangaldas** is a leading dancer and choreographer in the classical Indian dance form of Kathak. With extensive training under the leading gurus of Kathak, Shrimati Kumudini Lakhia and Pandit Birju Maharaj, Aditi is today recognised for her artistry, technique, eloquence and characteristic energy that mark every performance. Besides dancing and choreographing classical productions, both solo and group, she has broken new ground by using her knowledge and experience of Kathak as a springboard to evolve a contemporary dance vocabulary, infused with the spirit of the classical. Considered a maverick in India, she has consistently broken ground, unafraid to confront social and present day concerns. Celebrated around the world for the startling richness and intricacy of her dance and choreography, she was recently nominated in the category of outstanding performance (classical) by the National Dance Critics Circle awards-2017 in the UK. She was awarded the Gujarat Sangeet Natak Academy award, India 2007 as well as the National Sangeet Natak Akademi award, India 2013, that due to compelling reasons, she declined. She is a recipient of the Indira Gandhi Priyadarshini Award and Sanjukta Panigrahi Award. She has won much critical acclaim in major dance festivals across the world. As quoted by the Guardian, London, 2017, "Mangaldas owned the stage without trying to earn it....." Or at the Perth International Arts Festival, 2016, "Her artistry and poise, her dramatic gifts and unshakable technique are truly astounding; dance as effortlessly compelling as this is a joy to watch in itself".... and at the Edinburgh International Festival, 2012, "Her concept of the intangible embraces the divine and the profoundly human: love and freedom, truth and beauty being as cosmically mystical as god."

In India, many dance critics and connoisseurs celebrate her dance,

"Her (Mangaldas') dance form, Kathak, is centuries old, but her sensibility is as modern as today. She has astonishing technical skills; yet her dance is more than that. It is movement choreographed as a series of answers to questions posed by her inquiring mind. Her mudras are delicate, often tremulous in their suggestiveness, her footwork precise and powerful. Her expression ranges from the tender to the tempestuous, from the curious to the confident, from wonderment to bliss. Her dance demonstrates what it means to be utterly free in body, mind and spirit to explore the world." Shanta Gokhale, Mumbai Mirror 2018

**Baluji Shrivastav OBE** is one of the greatest instrumentalists India has produced excelling in sitar, surbahar, dilruba, pakhavaj and tabla. The outstanding characteristic of Baluji's musical career is his versatility. His ability to concentrate on sound as his primary mode of interaction with the world has enriched his musicality and his courageous attitude to life is reflected in his approach to music. Firmly established in the Hindustani classical tradition he delights in exploring music in all its forms, entertaining the world at the closing ceremony of 2012 Paralympic Games with Chris Martin and Coldplay. He composes for film, dance, theatre and original works for Western orchestra and Indian ensembles. He is "sitarist to the stars"- Evening Standard - recording with Massive Attack, Madness, Doves, Amorphous Androgynous, and performing with great artists such as Stevie Wonder. He has his own Jazz ensemble Jazz Orient/Re-Orient and has recorded several albums. Baluji was awarded the OBE for services to music and as founder of Inner Vision Orchestra. He received the GG2 award for "overcoming adversity", the Jewel of India "Hind Rattan" from the Indian Government "for exceptional services both national and international to mankind" by The World Peace & Prosperity Foundation at the House of Lords and NRI (Non-Resident Indian) of the Year for Culture 2017 from Times of India. Recently elected to be on the Musicians Union Equality Committee.

**Uttara Asha Coorlawala** is interested in re-circulations of movement through time and cultures. Her writings about the qualities of Indianness in dance, have served as criteria at the international performance level. She currently teaches dance at Barnard College/Columbia University and curates the Erasing Borders Dance Festival in New York City now in its 14th year. She advocates for cross-cultural performance opportunities for artists. Earlier as a dancer, her solo show, brought modern dance, BharataNatyam and yoga, to stages of India, Europe, East Europe, Japan and the United States as she uniquely served both the USA (USIA) and India (ICCR) as a cultural representative. A Sangeet Natak awardee for her pioneering choreography despite her renegade path, she served as a Performing Arts advisor to the late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, and the National Center of Performing Arts, Mumbai.

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