

Bindu Gopal Rao

# A MELTING POT FOR TOMORROW'S STARS

*The vibrant Jackfruit Festival returns, offering a platform for young musicians to shine while fostering community and inclusivity through music*

It's that time of year again! The sixth edition of Bhoomija's Jackfruit Festival for children kicked off in Bangalore on Friday, promising yet another unforgettable experience. Organised in collaboration with the Indian Music Experience Museum and supported by Arundhati Moorthi Philanthropies, this year's festival boasts of an exciting line-up of concerts and workshops designed to make your weekend musically vibrant.

Under the artistic direction of the renowned Vidushi Shubha Mudgal and distinguished tabla maestro Dr. Aneesh Pradhan, the festival showcases performances by young talents—aged 17 and under—from across India. Friday's highlight was a performance by students of the Shristi Special Academy, presenting compositions crafted under the guidance of celebrated vocalist and actor MD Pallavi.

"We're thrilled to introduce fresh voices and young talent from all corners of the country in the festival. Another special concert to look forward to is the 'Singing Into the Future 2.0'. Though these young musicians hail from diverse backgrounds and study various musical traditions, their raw talent, refined through the dedication of their gurus, is bound to touch the hearts of all who listen," shared festival director Mudgal.

'Singing Into the Future 2.0' will take place on Sunday at 7:00 pm, showcasing prodigious young talents from across India.

## Choosing right

The selection of participants for the festival has been a thoughtful and meticulous process, with merit and talent taking precedence. "We don't just scout for new voices a few weeks or months before the festival; it's an ongoing process throughout the year. Once we discover promising young talent, we engage with their guardians to gauge their willingness to participate," says Mudgal.

She explained that they stay in regular contact with the gurus to ensure they are well-informed and comfortable with their students participating in the carefully curated performance. "The guru-shishya bond is sacred, and we make it a point that all our artistes receive their guru's blessing before committing to the festival," adds Mudgal.

Additionally, it's made clear to the young artistes, their families,



and their gurus that this is an ensemble production, where they will share the stage with many other gifted performers, Mudgal informs.

## The zing of workshops

The festival offers two types of workshops. The first, tailored for schools, is led by Vasu Dixit and Jayachandra Rao, who have elevated these sessions into engaging, educational experiences. "Vasu will be conducting workshops on songwriting and singing, while Jayachandra will focus on rhythm," shares Gayathri Krishna, Founder and Managing Trustee of Bhoomija.

The second set of workshops, open to all music learners, features four maestros. Sruti Sadolikar will teach Hindustani vocal, Ratnamala Prakash will guide participants through Sugama Sangeetha, Pradhan will offer a course on tabla, and Purbayan Chatterji will lead 'Beyond Boundaries', a workshop exploring cross-genre collaborations. All workshops kicked



off on Friday and continue through Saturday.

## Fostering inclusion

The festival caters to musical talents from diverse backgrounds with special focus on those who have the zeal for music but not the means to pursue it. The lineup of performers includes children with developmental disabilities, those from various economic backgrounds, and young musicians learning



different musical traditions. Coming together for the festival fosters a rich exchange of experiences and highlights the incredible diversity that defines the nation.

Preema John, Museum Director of the Indian Music Experience, says, "Welcoming children of diverse intellectual abilities and economic backgrounds to participate in a music festival like Jackfruit creates a sense of belonging within a larger community. Music, as always, serves as a powerful unifying force, infusing their lives with joy and camaraderie."

She adds that a children's music festival is essential for nurturing young talent and cultivating a passion for music. "It provides a vibrant, supportive environment where kids can learn, enjoy, and connect with one another. These children are the future—tomorrow's musicians and music lovers," she says.

Mudgal adds that when performers from different genres, styles, and states come together, they learn more about each other's music than they ever could on their own. "During our rehearsals for the festival in 2023, it was a delight to observe how each group of children initially approached one another with reticence yet curiosity. Grad-

ually, they began to interact, play together, and even try each other's instruments. By the end of the rehearsal, the atmosphere transformed; they were cheering," she shares.

If you're interested in attending the show or participating in the workshops, all the details are available at [www.bookmyshow.com](http://www.bookmyshow.com). Registrations can be completed on Facebook or at the venue, 45 minutes before the first session begins. There's plenty to gain for participants as well. Excited much?

## WHAT, WHERE & WHEN

- **Venue:** Indian Music Experience Museum and MLR Convention Centre
- **Date:** September 20 – 22
- **Performances:** 6 pm onwards
- **Workshops:** 12 noon onwards
- Tickets for the shows and registrations for the workshops are available on [www.bookmyshow.com](http://www.bookmyshow.com)
- **For more details:** [contact@bhoomija.org](mailto:contact@bhoomija.org) / 9743734630

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR 20, 21, AND 22 SEP 2024 (FRI, SAT, AND SUN)

- **Raag Sadhana:** A Journey into Raagdari Music with Vidushi Shruti Sadolikar. Time: 12 to 2 pm
- **Nambabahude Gelati** – A Sugama Sangeetha Workshop with Vidushi Ratnamala Prakash. Time: 4:30 to 6:30 pm
- **Tabla Solo Repertoire:** Aesthetics and Interpretation with Pandit Aneesh Pradhan Time: 2:30 to 4:30 pm on Fri, 20, and 9:30 to 11:30 am on Sat, 21 and Sun, 22
- **Beyond Boundaries:** Elaboration of the Raag-Taal System and Fusion. Time: 4:45 to 7:45 pm
- **Boots 'n Cats and Snares 'n Hats** with Vineeth Vincent



Aneesh Pradhan



Purbayan Chatterjee



Shubha Mudgal



Sooryanarayanan Hariharan



Vineeth Vincent



Jayesh Khare