**Performing Arts at Serendipity Arts Festival 2025**

This year, as Serendipity Arts Festival marks its tenth edition, the performing arts take centre stage with a programme that is as diverse as it is daring. Over the past decade, the festival has been a platform where classical traditions meet contemporary experiments, where folk voices are amplified alongside international collaborations, and where audiences discover the many ways in which performance can speak to the times we live in.

From the very beginning, Serendipity Arts has believed in creating a festival that is not only celebratory, but also reflective — a place where artists can take risks, reimagine inherited forms, and create work that resonates deeply with audiences. In its milestone edition, from **December 12 to 21, 2025** in **Panaji, Goa**; the performing arts offerings span dance, theatre, and music, unfolding across the city’s cultural landmarks such as **Azad Maidan, Santa Monica Jetty, the Directorate of Accounts and SAG Ground**, among others — reaffirming the festival’s commitment to making the arts accessible, experimental, and alive with infinite possibilities. From **Kala Academy**’s sub-venues—**The Foundry, The Quad, and Dinanath Mangeshkar Kala Mandir**—to **The Old GMC Complex** with its **Theatre, Access Village, Old GMC Building, Food Lab, and Talks Corner**, the festival stretches across spaces that each carry their own rhythm and character.

**Dance: Reimagining Movement**

**Dance at SAF 2025** is a conversation between tradition and the contemporary, the body and the imagination. This dialogue can be witnessed in ***Razai*** curated by **Jayachandran Palazhy** at the Old GMC Building. The performance transforms the intimacy of a shared duvet into a stage for memory, love, and resilience, its everyday objects coming alive through AI-driven sound and projection-mapped visual design; brought together by artists from India, Italy and Japan. At The Theatre, **Palazhy** also brings ***Folios of Time 2.0***, a platform for India’s next generation of movement artists to shape their work-in-progress works into fully developed performance under the guidance of two renowned choreographers from India and the UK, grappling with themes like climate crisis, migration, war and various existential themes under the current evolving socio-political landscape. ***Superhero*,** hosted at The Foundry, through evocative symbolism, challenges the dualism of conventional ideas around heroic and villainy; while ***Deus Nos Acudi*** places the body in the consumer society to interrogate how the systems of power have historically shaped the individual expression and collective identity. The most anticipated, ***Enowate —*** meaning “truth stands”, is a spellbinding solo performance happening at Dinanath Mangeshkar Kala Mandir that dives into the exploration of the universal question, “who am I?”, connecting with the otherworldly forces significant to the animistic practice of African heritage.

From **Tanusree Shankar’s** curation at The Theatre comes ***Double Bill - Nimbus + Pallavi***, where Nimbus uses the metaphor of clouds for the swirling and condensing of expectations and desire — only to dissolve into loss and despair as their elusive forms slip away; and *Pallavi*, integrating a rich musical framework, presenting Carnatic (South Indian) violin and Odissi (east Indian) rhythms, is a dialogue where bodies weave together in crescendo, navigating the relationship between movement, space and dancing bodies. In another **Shankar’s** curation at Dinanath Mangeshkar Kala Mandir, ***Samvatsar Katha,*** inspired by Kalidas’ *Ritusamhaar*, Magh’s *Shishupaalvadh*, and Shudrak’s *Padmapraabhritak* brings forth a vibrant visual depiction of turning of the seasons throughout the year. With Hindi translations blended with Sanskrit classics this performance attempts to make it linguistically more accessible to the contemporary audience.

Echoing at The Theatre, Old GMC, **Geeta Chandran’s *Bhagavathy***, a journey into a ferocious grace where confrontational symbols of Goddess Bhagavathy’s embodiment of contradictory traits are adopted to deconstruct the ideas of inherited devotion, gendered power, and the dualities women are often forced to suppress. On the other hand, The Quad hosts Ramman — an offshoot of the devotional movement, a traditionally historical practice dated back to hundreds of years from the region of Devbhumi. This three layered performance consists of the mask dances (18 pious masks made of significant Bhojpatra scientifically known as Betula utilis wood) that date back to time immemorial, Ramkatha performance and worship of Bhumiyal Devta, which is the village deity of about 300 families of Saloor-Dungra villages. In another curation of Chandran at TheFoundry, ***Embodied,*** we witness an exploratory dialogue between two dancers, one contemporary and the other classical. Both embodying Manipuri dance form, collectively delve into the history and technique of the art in search of the essence of the Manipuri Dance.

Meanwhile, **Ranjana Dave’s *Duty Free*** is open through the day, functioning as an exhibition space and embodied archive, interspersing the behind-the-scenes labour of dance – improvisation, repetition, failure – with performances and workshops at scheduled intervals. Its artists set up interactions that are tactile, embodied, textual and aural, offering movement prompts and traces of their practice for you to engage with. Over eight days, three dance artists take turns inhabiting a riverfront verandah in the Old Goa Medical College building, making it both studio and stage.

**Theatre: Stories of Resistance and Renewal**

Theatre at SAF 2025 is raw, bold, and deeply resonant mapped across venues like Kala Academy, SAG ground, GMC and more. Works like ***Seconds Before Coming*** at The Theatre, Old GMC and ***Something Like Truth*** at TheFoundry, Kala Academy curated **by Quasar Thakore Padamsee**, explore women’s experiences, desires and agency. The former is an inquiry into the fluid boundaries of pleasure and abuse where the protagonist spirals into hedonism in the process of confronting childhood traumas and adult desires only to be left grappling with the questions to make sense of it all when she falls in love unexpectedly; the latter presents a fictional theatrical exploration of truth, resistance, justice and pursuit of integrity through four monologues of women across time and space.

**Mahesh Dattani’s** curationreflects the everyday negotiations of identity and survival in a fractured world emerging at the intersection of various intricate social processes, desire and social categories such as caste, class and gender. At The Theatre, ***OTTAM: Born to Run*** brings forth the life of Akai Amaran, a Pariyar girl from rural Tamil Nadu battling caste and class in her pursuit to become one of India’s leading track and field athletes as an 800 metres runner. Having to take a gender test that she fails, her diligently created world collapses, confronting the questions of gender and sex becoming most apparent in the field of sport where the body is on display for anyone who wishes to dissect it; Dinanath Mangeshkar Kala Mandir shelters ***Kavan,*** an Ambedkarite opera, through satire attempts to encapsulate the experiences of a young Ambedkarite navigating through individual ambition and desires situated in the India we see around us today where complex terrains of hegemonic caste and class are still prevalent; and at The Foundry ***Mezok*** presents a collection of interwoven stories as a provocation to interrogate the liminal realms between longing and separation along with the bureaucratic red tape that binds it all. It captures how in today’s world the individual finds themselves maneuvering through the complex maze of systems, processes and bureaucracy along with carrying their dreams and desires on their back.

**Anuradha Kapur** curates powerful narratives such as ***You Really Want to Know My Story?*** at TheFoundry, a blistering show about two prisoners on death row — a dalit bus driver and a muslim migrant worker. This research based performance, adapted from the accounts of several prisoners, their families, and details of prison conditions, provokes us to interrogate the skewed criminal justice system and the dehumanization of individuals at the receiving end of the social hierarchy. ***The Legends of Khasak***, based on O.V. Vijayan’s novel that blurs myth, memory, and philosophy will take place at the SAG Ground. This magical theatrical performance, while tracing the journey of a young man stumbling upon a remote village in Kerala, pulls the protagonists along with the audience into the rich tapestry of the land — its people, its myths, and the haunting whispers of its legends through a sensorial symphony. Concurrently, Dinanath Mangeshkar Kala Mandir becomes a host for ***Gosht Sanyukta Manapmanachi,*** another curation of Kapur, is a tribute to the 180+ years old Marathi Theatre legacy by presenting the story of two 1920’s legendary artists — Sangeetsurya Keshavrao Bhosle and Balgandharva. Despite owning their own theatre companies, these two veteran artists decided to work together in a play to raise funds for the Tilak Swarajya Fund during the non-cooperation movement in the times of difficult socio-economic politics during British rule. ***Bolavita Dhani*** also explores the history and the role that prompters have played in Marathi theatre over the years. Celebrating their presence on the one hand, it also sheds light on their active absence on the stage and a life of anonymity on the other.

Presented at The Theatre, **Sankar Venkateswaran** reimagines the classical ***Mṛcchakaṭikam in Kutiyattam***, slowly unfolding of drama and the internal life of each character where Mrcchakatikam, from the world of Sanskrit drama, a witty, romantic, political, and deeply human play transforms within the aesthetic of Kutiyattam using its gestures, music, rhythm, and grammar to evoke the life of ancient Ujjayini. His ***Bob Marley from Kodihalli***, inspired by the spirit of Jamaican reggae legend Bob Marley, draws on Ambedkar’s *Waiting for a Visa, Rohith Vemula’s final letter, and poetry by N.K. Hanumanthaiah* to probe the violence of caste and discrimination. Through a mix of Brechtian theatre and Kannada musical interludes, the play explores the complex realities of three young migrants navigating urban India’s seemingly liberal yet deeply exclusionary spaces, examining the burden and politics of identity in a caste-ridden society. Conceptualized by Venkateswaran, this year Serendipity Arts launched ***Puppet Folk Arts Lab*** at The Quad to mentor and facilitate new work by traditional puppeteers from across India. The performances will entail the contemporary versions of traditional forms of puppetry holding a 3000 year old history.

Other highlights include ***Swang Jas Ki Tas*** at TheQuad***,*** a curation by **Lillete Dubey.** The play, inspired by the famous story *Thakur Ka Roothna* and performed as Swang — an endangered ancient form of Indian folk theater, uses humour and musical performance as a medium for critical commentary on various societal issues. And at the Theatre, ***Nihsango Ishwar: The Loneliness of a God***, set on the final day of Krishna’s life, transports us to a moment after the dust of Kurukshetra has settled and the destruction of the Yadavs has already passed. This piece questions the loneliness of god, succumbed to his profound wisdom and superconsciousness that makes him a spectator to the inevitable future

From stand-up comedy to Ambedkarite opera, from folk Swang (*Jas Ki Tas*) to avant-garde experimentations, theatre at Serendipity this year insists that the stage is not just a place for performance, it is a site for questioning, resistance, and imagining new futures.

**Music: A Decade of Sound and Celebration**

Music at SAF 2025 echoes across genres, geographies, and generations. At The Arena at Nagalli Hills, on one end there are tributes to legends: ***Ustad*,** curated by longtime collaborators **Zubin Balaporia** and **Ranjit Barot,** is a musical tribute honouringmaestro **Zakir Hussain.** From jazz and fusion to Indian classical and contemporary improvisation, it is a line-up of extraordinary musicians whose journey has been shaped by the legendary maestro himself; ***Dard-e-Disco*** curated by **Bickram Ghosh**, reviving the irresistible beats, powerful vocals, vibrant arrangements, and bold stagecraft is a nostalgic tribute to the golden age of 80s Bollywood disco that transcended borders and genres.

On the other end of the spectrum, contemporary collectives like ***The Revisit Project*** *co-*curated by **Zubin Balaporia** and **Ehsaan Noorani** ***—*** demystifying the complexity and rigor of jazz with a distinctive and characteristic twist blending groove, old-school funk, and rhythmic improvisation with sharp reflections on life, love, and politics in India;Parallely, at the Idea Park, **Jack of Spade’z,** an indie rock trio formed by musicians from Manipur and New Delhi, showcasing their blend of soaring melodies, raw energy, and emotionally resonant lyrics; represent the vibrancy of today’s musical landscape.

In a carefully curated line-up at Dinanath Mangeshkar Kala Mandir, ***A Vintage Christmas: Timeless Classics*** Barot sets the stage for the incoming Christmas season in a classic Hollywood/Vegas style big band production of the most iconic songs of the season. Meanwhile in ***Ranjit Barot and Roysten Abel’s Beat Route*** at Nagalli Hills***,*** he presents an ensemble blending folk rhythms with electronic music, evoking contrasts between Rajasthan’s deserts and Kerala’s greenery.

In this edition, soulful jazz, regional textures, and global sounds, all come together in a heady mix. At Nagalli Hills Balaporia and Noorani’s co-curation presents ***The Gold Standard,*** promising a nostalgic musical journey, honoring jazz’s legacy with fresh interpretations and a contemporary edge. In another vibrant performance rooted in soul, funk, jazz, and blues at the Idea Park, ***SlyFly and The Blues Company*** bring together a powerhouse lineup of keys, horn section, backing vocals, drums, bass, and guitar, all crafted under Sly’s direction. Noorani’s ***The Nagaland Madrigal Singers*** at Dinanath Mangeshkar Kala Mandir spans classical sacred works, Naga and Asian folk music, and international folk songs; an ensemble of professionally trained graduates showcase both cultural heritage and artistic versatility. At The Arena, Nagalli Hills, Balaporia brings to life **Konkan Funk,** where the Coast Meets the Groove, reimagining the folk and traditional music of the Konkan region through vibrant funk, blending coastal sounds, local rhythms, and native dialects, whereas **Motown Madness** is a celebration of the iconic soul, funk, and groove of Motown legends like Michael Jackson, The Supremes, and Stevie Wonder, together creating a high-energy musical journey that spans cultures and eras.

Dinanath Mangeshkar Kala Mandir becomes a site for a unique reconstruction, ***1871 in 2025 - Parsi Gayan Uttejak Mandali***, where **Aneesh Pradhan and Shubha Mudgal** revive the first *jalsa* of the Mandali on April 28, 1871, Mumbai’s earliest formal music clubs established in the city for the study and performance of Hindustani music. Meanwhile at the Nagalli Hills, ***Clay Play,*** an ensemble aimed to recreate a pulsating soundscape of a *Jagor —* a traditional Goan procession, consolidates a collection of various clay-made percussion instruments with distinct playing techniques at the heart of which lies the *ghumat*, a traditional instrument from Goa; In another curation, ***Serendipity Soundscapes Presents Vaarso by Priya Saraiya and Anandadhara by Sourendro and Soumyojit*** explores love through its many hues reflected in two major musical cultures present in our country. Placed geographically opposite each other, Gujarat and Bengal demonstrate the universality of love through their respective songs and poetry.

Experience the most anticipated ***River Raag*** at the Santa Monica Jetty, a unique sunset cruise from Santa Monica Jetty, featuring enchanting *jugalbandi* across the Mandovi, creating an unforgettable evening of sound and serenity***;*** and lastly, in celebration of the festival’s 10th anniversary, **Bickram Ghosh** alsocurates a special concert at Nagalli Hills, ***Fading Traditions, Emerging Sounds,*** as a union of revered maestros the night promises intricate rhythms and soulful vocals embedded in gratitude, memory, and shared joy, looking back at the last decade and setting the tone for the next.

A Decade of Serendipity

Over ten years, Serendipity Arts Festival has grown into South Asia’s largest interdisciplinary arts festival, not by following trends but by nurturing the voices of artists and creating spaces where audiences can connect with art in all its forms. The 2025 performing arts programme is a reflection of this ethos—bridging the classical and the contemporary, amplifying the local while engaging the global, and always insisting that the arts belong to everyone.

Mr. Sunil Kant Munjal, Founder and Patron of Serendipity Arts Foundation, expresses:

“Performing arts have an extraordinary power to connect communities. They bridge barriers of language and geography through rhythm, movement, and expression. Especially exciting about this year’s practices is the effort to hold on to centuries-old traditions while embracing new forms that reflect our changing times. This duality preserves our cultural heritage. It also creates platforms for artists to experiment and find new vocabularies. It is this balance that makes our Festival a living, evolving space for exchange.”

Adding onto that, Smriti Rajgarhia, Director of Serendipity Arts, says:

“The performing arts have always been at the heart of Serendipity. They remind us that art is not only something we watch, but something we feel, experience, and carry with us. In this tenth edition, we are celebrating the extraordinary journeys artists have taken with us over the years—and opening the doors to all that lies ahead.”

**Beyond the Core: Special Projects, Foundation Initiatives and Institutional Collaborations**

The performing arts programming is further energised by projects that expand its scope across cultures and disciplines. Among the **Special Projects** are— ***Oblation*** by **Vijay Thillaimuthu**, by Tamil-Australian electronic composer Vijay Thillaimuthu, inviting audiences to encounter the infinite; and **Ontroerend Goed**’s ***Handle with Care,*** uniquely co-created by the audience through letters, objects, and simple tasks, unfolds a playful collective experience of intimacy, connection, and discovery; both taking place at The Foundry. And at the Idea Park we have ***Light Star Guiding*** straight from Poland, blending jazz, post-rock, and contemporary music pushes the boundaries of performance-making.

Within the **Foundation Initiatives**, the ***Independent Music Production Grant*** brings to the stage at Nagalli and Idea Park, works from independent musicians like **Jatayu** and **Chirag Todi**, whereas echoing at the ***B-Side*** are new voices and experimental sound practices, striving to spark conversations around music production, DJ-ing, research, performances, and collaborative sonic explorations focused on emerging acts across South Asia. As part of this edition, B-side will host performances by two artists as part of the second phase of the Serendipity x Asia TOPA Exchange. Alongside these three disciplines, the festival also has an ensemble of other disciplines such as Visual Arts, Craft, Photography and Culinary arts. These initiatives sit alongside the festival’s **Institutional Collaborations**, including exchanges with partners such as Pro Helvetia, Arts Centre Melbourne, The Substation, The Polish Institute and British Council, Institut français India, which expand cultures, geographies, and artistic disciplines.

**Registrations Are Now Open**

Registrations for Serendipity Arts Festival 2025 are now live! Visit the official festival website to secure your Art Pass, book your tickets, and stay updated on workshops, performances, exhibitions, and more. More programmes will be announced soon so keep checking back for updates.

**Link:** <https://www.serendipityartsfestival.com/register>

Ten years of Serendipity Arts Festival have shown us the transformative power of performance - how stories move us, how rhythm unites us, and how movement can transcend borders. This anniversary edition is bigger and better than ever, reaffirming our commitment to supporting artists and inviting audiences to celebrate the limitless energy of dance, theatre, and music. **Join us in Panaji, Goa, from 12–21 December 2025, to celebrate the 10th edition of Serendipity Arts Festival.**

**About Serendipity Arts Festival**

Serendipity Arts Festival transforms 300,000 square feet of iconic buildings and alternative spaces into South Asia's premier multi-disciplinary cultural platform. Spanning visual, performing, and culinary arts alongside film, live arts, and literature, the Festival challenges status quo relationships—between art and viewer, city and citizen, proscenium and audience. Working within these dialectics, we foster conversations that strengthen cultural ecosystems and create human channels spreading impact across regions and generations. Having proven that cultural placemaking can transform cities, the Festival operates as a nomadic structure designed to adapt to any city and any stage. This cultural experiment supports artistic practice while demonstrating how culture cultivates empathetic leadership, teaches kindness, and builds the foundation for a safe, healthy, and progressive society.

**Serendipity Arts**

Serendipity Arts is a not-for-profit collaborative platform based in Delhi, fostering empathy, curiosity and cross-cultural dialogue by supporting emerging artists across South Asia. The Foundation’s aim is to nurture artistic practice, promote research, and provide sustainability and education in the field of the arts. Over the past decade, Serendipity Arts has encouraged cultural heritage projects alongside contemporary art practices with extensive residencies, grants, collaborative projects, art writing initiatives and a multi-disciplinary arts festival.

**Awards & Recognition**

Serendipity Arts and its leadership have garnered significant recognition for their contributions to culture and accessibility. Mr. Sunil Kant Munjal, Founder-Patron of Serendipity Arts, was conferred the Chevalier de l'Ordre national du Mérite by the French Government, in acknowledgment of his enduring commitment to arts and culture. As the visionary behind Serendipity Arts, he continues to build bridges between heritage and innovation, connecting India with the world. The Serendipity Arts Festival has received multiple accolades, including the Cultural Impact Award at the Business Goa Lifestyle Awards 2025 for its role in shaping Goa's evolving cultural and creative landscape. The festival was also honored as Best Cultural Festival at the 8th Annual LCD Berlin Awards, reaffirming its position as a leader in cultural placemaking globally. Additionally, Serendipity Arts received the Svayam Accessibility Award 2025 in the Accessible Tourism & Culture category, recognizing its sustained efforts to create a truly inclusive, barrier-free cultural space.

**The tenth edition of Serendipity Arts Festival is set to take place in Panjim, Goa, from 12th-21st December, 2025.**