

theatre group AK Theatre presents 'Jing-Jak', an interactive theatre production for children featuring the age-old art of Indian puppetry in musical theatre. It tells the story of three friends: Radin Mas, a princess; Jak, a boy turned horse; and Jing, a sad, chubby peacock. Using traditional art forms of Poi Kaal Kuthirai (horse dance) and Mayilaatam (peacock dance), the story of friendship and the importance of inner beauty is celebrated in this fun-filled Tamil play.

Where: Special Exhibitions Room, Indian Heritage Centre

When: Saturday, 11am and 3pm

Admission: Free

Info: For children aged four and older

4. Natya Darpana, a classical Indian dance showcase

The original performance uses classical Indian dance to portray the various Indian festivals celebrated in Singapore. It features several of the country's leading Bharatanatyam dance schools, choreographers and dancers, such as Gayatri Sriram (right).

Where: Victoria Theatre and Concert Hall

When: Saturday, 7pm

Admission: \$10 via Sistic (call 6348-5555 or go to www.sistic.com.sg)

5. Dina Raga Malika, a classical Indian music showcase

Indian ragas or melodies are associated with different times of the day or seasons. Classical musicians will present Carnatic and Hindustani styles of music, bringing together elements from the north and south of India. The showcase features vocal and instrumental music, including various musical instruments such as string instruments veena and sitar, together with the flute and tabla.

Where: Special Exhibitions Room, Indian Heritage Centre

When: May 15, 7pm, evening ragas; May 16, 4pm, afternoon ragas; May 17, 10am, morning ragas

Admission: Free

6. Street Carnival: Traditional Trades

Travel back in time and see traditional Indian traders in action. Get your fortunes read by the parrot astrologer or buy some fresh curd and milk from a milk seller.

Where: Indian Heritage Centre



The showcase brings together the best of the performing arts, theatre, dance and popular culture, including a rock concert.

Popular Bollywood singer-composer Shankar Mahadevan kick-started the festival with a sell-out weekend concert at the Esplanade last Saturday.

Dr Krishnan, 51, says: "We felt it was important that popular culture is not missed out. We have tried to present many events that cut across various themes such as traditional arts and crafts, games, trades and food. We also want to cover the cultural traditions of many regions in India."

Among those invited to participate in the inaugural edition of CultureFest is celebrated Singapore-based classical Indian dancer Gayatri Sriram.

Dancers from her school in Singapore, Shruti Laya School of Dance, will be part of the opening act.

Sriram herself will be performing with other dance luminaries such as Santha Bhaskar, 75, artistic director and choreographer of Bhaskar's Arts Academy, at the Victoria Concert Hall on Saturday.

Sriram, 42, says: "This is such a wonderful community effort and the centre is a fantastic showcase of how Indians have contributed to Singapore."

"It is an honour to be part of a festival that is well thought through. It has not only reached out to the various Indian dance schools in Singapore, but also put in incredible effort to choreograph what promises to be a spectacular opening act."

Backed by the National Heritage Board, the centre cost \$16 million to build and gallery outfitting works cost \$5 million. The building is the culmination of nearly seven years of work and is the newest addition to Singapore's heritage landscape.



Indian heritage on a high

Singapore and Malaya. The fourth show-

Irani, 55, says: "We have a

The Straits Times, Singapore

May 5, 2015

Indian Heritage on a High by Deepika Shetty