

MoonArra Artistic & Cultural Proposal



Introduction to MoonArra:



Founded by Bangalore based guitarist and composer Jagadeesh Ramanujam Mudambi & Vocalist songwriter, Madhuri Jagadeesh, MoonArra meaning “three streams” was formed in 2006 as a fusion of the interaction and collective influences of Indian Classical, European Classical, Jazz and World Music Influences of its



core members. MoonArra’s mission has always been to collaborate and connect with musicians and audiences worldwide, bringing the message of peace and harmony, goodwill and tolerance in today’s environment.

MoonArra has performed internationally in significant jazz festivals and concerts overseas across Asia, Arica and Europe.



MoonArra has had 10 international overseas concert performance tours since its inception in 2009.

MoonArra's most recent was a successful concert tour of Europe June 2023 spanning 5 Countries – Sweden, Germany, Austria, Italy & Hungary – 10 concerts in 10 cities, 3 workshops and a album recording. In all MoonArra collaborated with 25 musicians.

June 2 – Concert at Gothenberg Redberg Theater

June 4 – Concert at the Barn, Gothenberg

June 8 – Album live recording

June 13 – Workshop and concert at Nuremberg Music University Germany

June 14 – Concert at KQA Kempten Germany

June 16 – Concert at Baden Square, Vienna

June 17 – Concert at Hobi Raum, Baden

June 19 – Concert at Milan Arts Center, Italy

June 20 – Concert at San Vittorio, Bologna, Italy.

June 22 – Pannonhalma Jazz Festival, Gyor. Hungary

June 25 – Concert at Byatorbagy Town Hall, Budapest, Hungary.

EUROPE

- Concert and festival tour of Europe June 2023 – Sweden, Germany, Austria, Italy, Hungary – 10 cities, 10 concerts, 3 workshops and an album recording “Kamanabillu”.

MoonArra's Significant International Festival Performances -

- Concert Tour and workshop in Vienna & Szentendre, Hungary 2018
- Two week Exchange program in May 2017 at ZHDK Switzerland and "Concert for Change"
- Concert Tour of Zurich, Vienna, Budapest, Krakow Poland 2017
- Concert Tour of Vienna, Baden, Austria & Dublin, Ireland in 2016

AFRICA

- Tanjazz 2015 International "Jazz of 5 Continents Festival" and India Meets Africa at Tangiers, Morocco Sep 8 to 14 2015.

ASIA

- Java Jazz Festival in Indonesia March 5-8 2009
- Bangkok Jazz Festival March 10-15 2010
- Invited by internationally renowned drummer Lewis Pragasam to perform at the inaugural of Little India in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia on Oct 28 2010.
- Asiabeat Anthology Launch in KL Malaysia in Dec 2012



- Delhi International Jazz Festival on Mar 17 2012

MoonArra's collaborations with musicians:

India

- *Prakash Sontakke – Slide Guitar, Hindustani Vocals*
- *Karthik Mani – Drums, percussion, konnakol*
- *Vid. Sukkanya Ramagopal - Ghatam*
- *Mythili Anantharaman – Indian Classical Vocals*
- *Jataveda Banerjee – Indian Classical Vocals*
- *Adarsh Shenoy – Tabla*
- *Madhu Chapai – Flute (Banduri)*
- *Milind Date – Flute (Bansuri)*

- **Indonesia**

- *Gilang Ramadhan - Drums*

- **Malaysia**

- *Lewis Pragasam – Drums*

- **Japan**

- *Haruyo Kimura*

- **Vienna/Austria:**

- *Peter Natterer – Saxophone*
- *Phillipine Duchene – Pianist*
- *Richard Barnert – Bass*
- *Reinhardt Winkler – Drums*
- *Uli Pesendorfer – Drums*

- **USA**

Phil Scarff – Saxophone

Germany

Magnus Dauner – Drums

Alex Bayer – Bass

Italy

Nicola Baroni – Cello

Ricardo – Sax

Jamal – Violin

Yaya Dembla- Kora

Irene Robbins– Piano, Vocalist

Tim Daniels – Clarinet

Francois – Bass

Leo Gandolfo - Drums

Hungary

Norbert Kael – Pianist

Andras Lakatos – Drums

Hoppal Mihaly – Bass

Sweden

Biggi Vinkeloe – Saxophone/Flute

Annika Tornqvist – Bass

Vanja Holm – Drums

- **Africa**

- Moriera Chonguica (Maputo)– Saxophone
- Gnawa Ben Abdellah (Tangiers, Morocco)-

Brief Bios:

Jagadeesh M.R(Jagadeesh Ramanujam Mudambi) –

Guitar player, composer and founder of MoonArra, Jagadeesh is an experienced guitarist performing with pop, rock, jazz and fusion ensembles for three decades. Playing both nylon classical guitar and electric steel string guitar, Jagadeesh, with his band MoonArra, besides collaborating for a long time with Dr. Prakash Sontakke & Karthik Mani, has also performed with international Malaysia based drummer Lewis

Leaving on a jet plane

MoonArra is set to tour Sweden, Germany, Austria, Italy and Hungary, collaborating with musicians there on original compositions

Ruth Dhanaraj
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Bengaluru-based jazz band MoonArra is all set to kick start its 10th international concert tour. Starting on June 1, the month-long concert tour will see the band perform in Sweden, Germany, Austria, Italy and Hungary.

During the tour, MoonArra will

present 10 concerts and hold four music workshops.

"While we will be collaborating with a few new musicians as well as those we've performed with before, the highlight of this tour will be the presentation of original compositions by MoonArra and participating artists," says Jagadeesh MR, guitarist and founder of MoonArra.

He will be joined by vocalists



Madhuri Jagadeesh, Mythili Anantharaman and Javeda Banerjee for the tour.

"Collaboration between musicians has always been the core of what we believe in," he adds.

According to Madhuri Jagadeesh, co-founder of MoonArra, while in Sweden, the band will be working with flautist

Biggi Vinkeloe to perform at the Women and Roots festival where women artists from around the world present their music and their stories from their perspective.

During the Italian leg of the tour, the band will stage Operaaga - The Music and Dance of Migrant Hearts which will see the Persian setar (a lute-like,

On the road again
MoonArra gears up for its 10th international concert.
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

three-stringed instrument), African percussion and classical instruments such as the saxophone, flute and cello, fall in harmony with jazz singers and movement artists.

In Hungary, the band will be a part of the Pannonthalms Jazz Festival at the 1,000-year-old UNESCO Heritage site of the Pannonthalma Arch Abbey.

"Besides our performance with three Hungarian musicians, we've also been invited to interact with the monks and the music of the abbey," adds Madhuri.

In keeping with their mantra of being a world fusion ensemble, MoonArra will be sharing the stage with drummer Magnus Dauner who is trained in Indian classical percussion.

INDULGE

music/dance/drama

culture

preview

OVER THE MOON

For International Jazz Day, the country's premier jazz band releases a collaborative album, *Manouche*. Founder Jagadeesh Ramanujam Mudambi tells us more



(From left) Madhuri, Jagadeesh, Prakash and Karthik of MoonArra

doing the mixing. The final mix is being done in a studio.

How was the experience of collaborating with these artists?

The album has artists all the way from Austria, Japan, Hungary, Sweden, Germany, Italy, USA and of course India. Three-player Harry Kumar, saxophonist/producer Natture, bassist Lijoy Mithal, cellist Anna Todor are just a few of the names on the bill.

Collaborations go a little deeper than a one-off case and that's how it enriches our musical knowledge and the music. Jazz doesn't necessarily reside only in the geographical region but also in the cerebral and regions of the heart and soul.

Available online at www.moonarra.com
@moonarra

FULL 'MOON' rising in Morocco

City-based world music ensemble, MoonArra is all set to perform at the Tanjazz Festival

SNEHA K. SUNDAR

DECCAN CHRONICLE
Ever thought what it would sound like if jazz ever married Carnatic or Hindustani music? Bengaluru's world music ensemble, MoonArra, invites those sensibilities and nails it at that. A fusion of Madhuri's vocals, to Karthik Mani's drums, Jagadeesh Ramanujam's bass and Prakash Sontakke's slide guitar, this band is headed to the Tanjazz Festival in Morocco next month. But before that, they are all set to enthral their city with a memorable set list on August 30.

The four of them have often bopped into each other or played the odd gig since 2002. But it was only in 2009 that they announced themselves as a group and came together, almost like streams. "MoonArra means three streams in Tamil and Malayalam," they explain, coming together from diverse backgrounds only to make music that speaks to the soul. "Music is a great connect as it is open-mindedness towards all forms. Backgrounds cease to matter when music is a common factor. Diversity is unifying," says Jagadeesh, about their collective

upbringing in the classical that binds them. Describing their sound as "eclectic, progressive yet traditional," the quartet derives inspiration from great masters of all genres and of course, from life within and outside.

"We evolve with internal collaborations, meaningful associations, constant ideation and incremental innovation — nothing too linear," adds Prakash Sontakke, whose recent album in the cap has been co-composed by the Grammy Award-winning Hindu of Samsara. Although an achievement that they'll always be kicked about is getting along so well musically, the band has had quite the journey. Aside of performing at jazz festivals across the country, they've also been a part of the Jazz Festival in Indonesia, Bangkok Jazz Festival, were even invited by renowned drummer Lewis Praggan to perform at Little India's inaugural attended by the then Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh at Kuala Lumpur and even received a special letter of acknowledgment from jazz genius Herbie Hancock, UNESCO's Goodwill Ambassador for Intercultural Dialogue.

Having recently launched their debut album *Andaz Akcent*, they are now working on their second. "It might be in three parts," reveals Karthik, adding that they are simultaneously working on three live productions and an Indo-Jazz poetry project.

"When musicians are in sync, the blend of music is never a challenge — but unfortunately, some of the challenges we face are from the outside — fellow musicians and other detractors," he voices. As MoonArra internalises this year's theme at the Tanjazz Festival — Jazz of five continents and prepares for a special collaboration with Gnawa Express at Morocco, after their performance this week at BlueFRUG, they don't leave their private fan out of the mix. "We read a lot, watch movies, travel and sip on cups of chai and coffee over endless conversations. We sometimes listen to random, even cheesy stuff at times, because there's always something to be learnt from everything," smiles Madhuri. Oh, and did you know they are all dangerously good friends and very sporting? They also believe their sense of humour ranges from slapstick to very and witty. Who doesn't like a good gag with a twist? "We'll take one of that."

Music is a great connect as it is open mindedness towards all forms. Backgrounds cease to matter when music is a common factor

Pragasam and Asiabeat, Indonesian drummer Gilang Ramadhan, reputed santoor maestro Pt. Tarun Bhattacharya and his ensemble, Carnatic vocalist Ramamani, ghatam vidwan virtuoso Smt. Sukanya Ramagopal, Australia based guitarist Tommy Smith, Khanjira Vidwan Amrit, flautists Pt. Milind Date and Vidwan Ravichandra Kollur, percussionist Muthu Kumar, jazz guitarist Gerard Machado, Goa based percussionist Carlos Gonsalves amongst others. His interest in flamenco music led him to Spain where he spent a month studying under Juan Maria Paul in Sevilla. Jagadeesh also developed an interest in playing the Oud after a trip to Cairo, Egypt. As Head of Events at Radio Indigo (till 2008) Jagadeesh was instrumental in conceptualising a number of international quality concert events, reviving and putting together what is arguably Bangalore's finest and one of India's best Jazz Festivals - The Indigo & Blues Festival in 2007 - and in 2009 a 3 Day Jazz Festival at the UB City for the Bengaluru Habba. Jagadeesh continues to network with musicians both locally and internationally as part of his events interest.

Music Education & Curation

Jagadeesh is the Director of the Bangalore School of Music, heading the Jazz & Contemporary music Dept., Music Relations, concerts, events, programming, since 2016 after the BSM Founder's demise. Starting with Operations and handling both academics and cultural areas of the institution, Jagadeesh successfully revived the East West Music & Dance Encounter, a long standing festival of the School, and held cultural events, workshops, master classes and concerts across Bangalore for an entire month from as many as 100 visiting overseas jazz and classical artists.

The image shows the front page of the Bangalore Times newspaper. The masthead at the top reads "Bangalore Times" in large, bold letters. Below the masthead, there are two small side stories: "BTA Party peeps got grilled Pg3" on the left and "BACKBEAT Genelia's south for the winter Pg6" on the right. The main headline is "FUSION IN THE FAR EAST" in large, bold, blue letters. Below the headline, a sub-headline reads "Bangalore world fusion band MoonArRa is all set to take their music to Malaysia". To the right of the headline is a photograph of the band members, with a caption listing them: "Wilson Kenneth, Karthik Mani, Prakash Sontakke, Madhuri and Jagadeesh MR". The article text begins with "Nirmala Govindarajan | TNN" and "M adhuri, Jagadeesh MR, Prakash Sontakke, Karthik Mani and Wilson Kenneth — band members of Bangalore-based world fusion band MoonArRa are set to play at the Inauguration of Little India in Malaysia tomorrow. They'll be back in the Far East, after being the only Indian band to perform at the Bangkok Jazz Fest earlier this year. BT chats with Jagadeesh MR, co-founder and guitarist of MoonArRa about this special trip." The article continues with several sub-sections: "BACK IN THE FAR EAST..." (We seem to be getting more popular in South East Asia...), "BANGALORE AND WORLD MUSIC..." (Bangalore is a melting pot of all kinds of music...), "NEW GAGS FOR THE FEST..." (We're going to perform songs from our new album...), "SPECIAL INVITATION FROM INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED DRUMMER LEWIS PRAGASAM..." (We met him in Bangkok six months ago...), "INDIAN INFLUENCES IN OUR MUSIC..." (Indian influences in our music...), "PERFORMING IN LITTLE INDIA..." (There are so many first- and third-generation Indians...), and "THE INDIAN FLAVOUR..." (We want to represent India...).

Jagadeesh is part of an International jury for the successful Seven Virtual Global Jazz Contest Italy, now in its 7th edition, a global contest to tap into talented jazz musicians all over the world.

Jagadeesh is involved both in the educational and cultural spaces of jazz in Bangalore since more than ten years having curated successful jazz festivals, , Indo German Jazz Week, International Jazz Day UNESCO and its message of “Jazz for Peace and Goodwill and inter-cultural dialogue and presence of Jazz in education, science and culture to name a few. Curenly Jagadeesh has been curating 14 Editions of Café Jazz Sessions, a monthly event with jazz musicians participating to increase the awareness of jazz and to mentor younger musicians in the improvisation and

Moonarra world fusion

Monday 12 March 2013 23

culture curvy

Delhi Age

Get a taste of jazz

The second year of the three-day Delhi Jazz Festival promises eclectic mix of Indian and Western Jazz for music lovers

SWATI VISHNI

Delhi is all set to sway with the romantic notes of saxophone from different countries on one platform, as Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) and Soher presents the second year of the three day Delhi Jazz Festival from March 16-18, 2012 at Nehru Park.

This year, some of the top notch jazz bands from across the globe are participating in the festival including Woktek Marzolewski Quintet (Poland), HPT (India), The Louis Banks Matrixx (India), Dini Vinsalade Quartet (Georgia), Monarra (India), EOL TRIO (France), Magos Herrera (Mexico), Bica-Dier-Sueck Trio (Germany) and Kikano Browning Croom (Spain).

People from France, USA, Germany, Belgium, Pakistan, Morocco, Sweden, U.K.

(Above) Members from the band HPT; (right) Louis Banks

Canada, Netherlands, Australia, Italy, Singapore and many others are expected to visit Delhi's most well-attended cultural festivals ever. Says Suresh Goel, DG, ICCR, "The impressive success of the first Delhi International Jazz festival last year, which witnessed about 10,000 people in Nehru Park, inspired its second edition. It also established that the audience has a broad horizon and eclectic taste for music."

Sueck Malhotra, a multi-percussionist from HPT, shares that the band will be performing fusion of old and original melodies.

inspired by Indian music and culture. Performing for the first time, the band will play under the theme, 'You Can Only Play What You Have Lived'. "Our music is inspired by the Indian music, where we belong. We will also have terrific set of hybrid drums and instruments," he adds.

Band Monarra will be performing a set list consisting of vocal and instrumental compositions from its album *Indian Accent*. Jagadeesh M.B. of the band says, "Jazz is like any other art form that needs patrons. ICCR along with SERHER is doing a tremendous for promoting the genre in India. I only see the festival growing, and we hope to see more bands from India in the Jazz festival."

About the jazz scene in India, he says, "Earlier, Jazz was more popular in cities like Kolkata and Mumbai, but it's well represented in Bengaluru and Mumbai as well. With more Hindi pop and rock scene in Delhi, Jazz is still developing. I hope we give the Delhi audience a taste of jazz that appeals to listeners of all ages," sums up Sueck.

Members from the band Monarra

Paint notes on canvas

AGE CORRESPONDENT

Music has always inspired art in more ways than one. Taking inspiration from the rains, artist Abhinav Chowbey, recently showcased his first solo, "Bhairavi" in the capital.

Curated by art critic Uma Nair, these abstract expressions musically tune into the mood of the paintings. "I love music and so all my work are a depiction of the musical notes in my head as I used the brush. You'll see different expressions on the canvas, depicting the high and low notes as in music," he says.

Interestingly, as you look through the artist's works, strong shapes, dynamic textures and sur-

faces in bright colour and abstract patterns grip your attention. "I have tried and played in various moods. You'll come across various contrasting textures. It's more like, when the music is slow, the colours that dominate the canvas are subtle and relaxed. And loud music lead to some strong blocks,

solid colours," says the artist.

For someone who has formal training in tabla and took on to playing the drums in 1996, he also went to Trinity College to learn Jazz. But drums remain his favourite. "I play the drums and love music."

When I paint, I usually listen to music as it helps me put my thoughts together. My works are nothing but a compilation of musical notes of music," he concludes.

The exhibition is on till March 18 at Chavla Art Gallery, Saket

Abhinav Chowbey; his works

Watch out

FILM FESTIVAL GETS DIGITAL

The UFO 0110 International Digital Film Festival (country's only digital film festival is in its 4th Edition) is an annual event showcasing cutting edge digital films from around the world.

The mission is to take the digital art and film movement forward and provide fresh and innovative content to the viewers. Films like *The Big Black*, *Sadhya* (Kolkata), *4 Voice Proof*, *Chicken Soup* and a *Premiere Show*, *Malegaon Ka Ghar* will be showcased.

On 18 March 15, 11am to 1pm
5th Fort Auditorium,
August Kranti Marg

JOURNEY INTO IRANNA'S LIFE

Gallery Espace presents "Lining Herotopos: A Journey into G.R. Iranna's Shadow of the In-Between". These works are an extension of the artist's ongoing visual meditations on the ephemeral, illusory, and indeterminate significance of human existence.

Till March 15, 11 am - 7 pm
6th community Centre, New Friends Colony

CRAFTS MELA

Dastkar, an organization, helping crafts and craftspeople from across India is organising the Dastkar Festival Bazaar 2012. From Art embroidery to Walnut wood carving from Kashmir, the fair will showcase over 60 crafts and crafts groups from 18 states and union territories, selling indigenous arts.

On 18 March 10.30am to 4pm
15-A, Sector - 7, Dwarka

When I paint, I usually listen to music as it helps me put my thoughts together

creative process of jazz, with workshops and performances. Jagadeesh also curates and programmes in clubs and pubs with a view to provide commercial opportunities for musicians in Bangalore. Jagadeesh continues to network with musicians and organisations both locally and internationally as part of his events interest.

Madhuri Jagadeesh– A Masters in World Literature., Singer songwriter and co founder of MoonArra, Madhuri's vocals has influences from all over the world, but rooted in India. She began singing in school operettas and small musical productions since she was eight years old. She's also been singing professionally since she was eighteen. She's always loved the open sound of jazz and finds it the most inclusive form of music and a universal mode of communication. Madhuri has found a niche in world music and is constantly

MoonArra's video and music links:

Youtube:

<https://youtu.be/-ERqCkclYLU>

<https://youtu.be/OkswmfNhFho>

<https://youtu.be/h8CAFUr7ECo>

https://youtu.be/_xRh96ig7rM

https://youtu.be/_xRh96ig7rM

<https://youtu.be/r3HpiJd9Tek?si=ruUQ4zUsxydf1mLU>

Music

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/15cxy2KhuvY05uWVdpcOeQlmn2nePPCm?usp=sharing>

MIXING GENRES

Bound for Bangkok

MoonArra, the Bangalore-based world fusion band, has been invited to perform in Thailand, at the prestigious Bangkok Jazz Festival on March 10 and 11. The band, which plays a mixture of Indian classical, jazz and Hindustani music, talked about their life and music.

"All of us have a similar approach towards music. Our collective upbringing in Carnatic and Hindustani classical, the rhythmic quality of jazz and a thousand other songs are some of the things that brought us together," says Jagadeesh, who incidentally also came up with the name MoonArra. MoonArra, which means three streams in Sanskrit, explains the band's approach towards music with different genres blended together into one. "We do a lot of jazz songs with Indian ragas. Jazz is such a free flowing form of music that every other genre can come into it," says Madhuri, the lead vocalist.

Prakash Sontakke, who is trained in Hindustani classical, sings the ragas and also plays Hindustani slide guitar. Jagadeesh plays acoustic guitar



VIVID From MoonArra.

and oud. "It's something I picked up while travelling through Egypt," says Kenneth Wilson, known as Kenny is the youngest member of the band.

"I actually used to teach him English," says Madhuri. A talented bass player, he is currently honing his skills in jazz. Karthik Mani, one of the most energetic of the lot, plays South Indian percussion, drums and *konnakol*. "All the guys are very critical of me actually. They keep giving me music tips," says Madhuri laughing. On being asked if

there were any disadvantages of being the only woman in the music band, she says, "I have to cook for all of them. Kenny helps but is always late."

MoonArra is the only Indian band to be selected to play at the Bangkok Jazz Festival. "This thing happened when

we performed at *Java Jazz Festival* last year. They saw us perform and invited us to perform in *Bangkok Jazz Festival*," says Jagadeesh. The *Bangkok Jazz Festival*, part of the Asian Jazz Federation, boasts an impressive line-up of international artists like jazz bassist Christian McBride, trumpeter Randy Brecker, iconic blues guitarist Robbenford, virtuoso guitarist Steve Lukather of Toto and Darryl Jones, known for his frequent appearances with The Rolling Stones. The band would be performing some of their original compositions like *Blue Fuse* and *Interpreter of Melodies*, written by Madhuri, along with covers of artists like Ella Fitzgerald, Susheela Raman and Sheela Chandra.

When asked about their plans for the future, they said they would like to perform at European music festivals. Sonal Sher

looking to expand the scope and possibilities of this genre with new influences and sounds from around the world as she travels. Her other interests include fine arts, performing arts, applied arts and she's been in the field of training, learning and development as a consultant and has conducted developmental programmes in corporates, corporations, organisations and institutions. She has an understanding of Indian Classical and Western Classical Music and uses both in her exploration of jazz and world music. A vocalist and songwriter, Madhuri has conceived and created significant concert productions for MoonArra such as Operaaga, Raagas Round Midnight, Women Aah Men, The Cosmic Tree. The second edition of Operaaga was also successfully produced in Italy (Milan and Bologna June 2023) in collaboration with Italian musician Nicola Baroni and his ensemble.

Madhuri was also recently featured in an interview with Swedish based musician Biggi Vinkeloe in the first edition of Turnaround Magazine, run by Washington based jazz musician Amy Bormet and her foundation Washington Women in Jazz. The edition also featured an interview with jazz icon Dee Dee Bridgewater. Madhuri was also featured on Joan Cartwright's Women in Jazz Global radio podcast for women who perform and compose their own music and presented two of her compositions.

Concert Performance: MoonArra's stage performance is between 45 mins to 2 hours duration of Indian Classical-Jazz-World fusion music. The music is original, also interpretations, unique and involves a set format as well as improvisation, engagement and interaction, to strike a balance between art and entertainment. MoonArra's music aims to show the relationship between Indian and Western music, the relationship to world forms, using jazz as a universal, inclusive genre of music encompassing everything.

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