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BIOGRAPHIES OF ANCHOR ARTISTS

Santha Bhaskar



A pioneer of Indian dance in Singapore, Santha Bhaskar is the Artistic Director of Bhaskar's Arts Academy, Advisor to Nrityalaya Aesthetics Society (its teaching wing) and Resident Choreographer for Indian dance at the National University of Singapore's Centre for the Arts.

Born in Kerala in 1939, she learnt Kerala Nadanam first before being trained in the dance traditions of Bharatanatyam, Mohiniyattam and Kathakali. She moved to Singapore in 1955, following her marriage to the late Mr K P Bhaskar, Founder of Bhaskar's Academy of Dance.

Since the early days, intercultural exchanges have informed her practice. She learnt Malay dance from Nongchik Ghani of Sriwana while dance pioneers like Lee Shu Fen and Som Said learnt Indian dance from her. More recently, her fascination with the Indian connection in Southeast Asia led her to Bangkok to study Thai dance and music at Chulalongkorn University.

Mrs Bhaskar was conferred the Cultural Medallion in 1990, and she was inducted into Singapore Women's Hall of Fame in 2021.



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Som Said



Over the last five decades, Som Said has shaped the Singapore Malay dance scene in various capacities – as a dancer, choreographer and artistic director. In 1965, she joined Sriwana as one of its pioneer members, eventually becoming its Artistic Director in 1985.

She joined the National Dance Company in 1970 and represented Singapore in many overseas festivals. In 1997, Mdm Som founded Sri Warisan Som Said Performing Arts, Singapore's first fully professional Malay dance company, and served as its Artistic Director.

Since the early days, she has championed the need for Singapore to develop its own approach to Malay dance. For her contribution, she received the Cultural Medallion in 1987 and the Public Service Medal in 1992. In 2014, Mdm Som was inducted into Singapore Women's Fall of Fame.



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Lim Moi Kim



Lim Moi Kim is the founding Artistic Director of Singapore Hokkien Huay Kuan Dance Troupe, now known as Singapore Chinese Dance Theatre (SCDT). As a dance educator, she has lectured at LASALLE College of the Arts and is an Adjunct Lecturer at Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts.

Throughout her career, she has choreographed many commendable works that have been showcased on local and global stages. Apart from dance, she is a Chinese opera performer and instructor, and is also trained in Chinese martial arts – with several honours under her black belt.

Mdm Lim recently stepped down as SCDT's Artistic Director, and currently serves as its Artistic Advisor. Her zest for the practice and promotion of Chinese dance in Singapore has not wavered.



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Raka Maitra



Trained in classical Odissi and Chhau (martial arts), Raka Maitra incorporates both forms in her practice, creating a unique aesthetic of her own. Her works are known to defy the dichotomy between “classical” and “contemporary”.

Born in Kolkata, Raka was a disciple of renowned Odissi dancer Madhavi Mudgal and a recipient of the *Shrinagarmani*, a national-level award for Odissi. She came to Singapore in 2005 and founded Chowk Productions in 2014. She currently serves as its Artistic Director.

Raka was an associate artist with The Substation from 2007 to 2011, and her approach draws on the vocabulary of Indian classical dance to create contemporary works. She also teaches Odissi. In 2020, she assumed the role of Co-Artistic Director of The Substation.



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Cai Shiji



Trained in Chinese and contemporary dance, Cai Shiji holds a Masters in Choreography (Dance) from Purchase College, New York, and is the Creative Director of Dance Ensemble Singapore (DES).

Her talent in dance was recognised from a young age. In 1997, she received a bursary from Rotary Club West to study modern dance techniques and ballet at the Tisch School of Arts in New York. As a dancer, she has performed extensively across Asia, Europe and the United States.

Married to a Peranakan, her discovery of the Straits Chinese culture has inspired her choreographic work and her passion is in telling Singapore stories through dance. DES is known for exploring the 'Nanyang Style' of dance.



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Dr Noramin Farid



Better known by his stage name, Sultari Amin Farid, Dr Noramin Farid was trained in Malay dance with Perkumpulan Seni. He is a choreographer, arts educator and researcher and the Joint-Artistic Director of Bhumi Collective, a multidisciplinary performing arts and producing company.

Amin is a recipient of the ASEAN-India Youth Award (2018), Singapore Youth Award (2017), National Arts Council Scholarship (2017) and Goh Chok Tong Mendaki Youth Promise Award (2016). He holds a PhD in Theatre, Drama and Dance Studies from Royal Holloway, University of London, UK.

As an arts practitioner-researcher, his works interrogate the normative notions of class, ethnicity, identity and gender. He believes that young practitioners must become leaders in creating artistic works that are innovative, critical and relevant to their evolving landscape.