



SAMA

Sama Arts and Akademi present

**SADIR:**

Dancing for Rajahs, Nawabs, and the Officers of the Raj

### Dora Salaam | 18th century

The common subjects of South Indian Kings addressed their ministers, men of nobility and later, the colonial officers respectfully as Dora sahib. Invoking a Salaam to welcome the Dora is a Sultanate practice that was imbued into Sadir. In this piece, Serfoji II, the Maratha King of Tanjore is welcomed. The Dora Salaam will be preceded by a “birudu,” or recitation of the genealogy and titles of Serfoji in Marathi as was done in his court.

### Pada Varnam | 19th century | Sarasa ninnu- Karnataka kapi (raga)

The ethos of Sadir repertoire is situated within the courtly aesthetic realm of bhoga (enjoyment). The legendary musicians, Tanjore Quartet, composed pada varnams where the protagonist in the poetry is the dance artist. While she addresses Lord Brihadeeswara, the presiding deity of Tanjore she also is flirting with him, inviting him to make love. This Varnam is illustrious in Sadir vocabulary and was a courtly display of bhoga at the Tanjore palace.

*“Enough of the flirting...I am in the dizzy of desire, fondle my breasts, kiss me and make love...”*

### Thumri | 18th century | Poem (Moulana Baqhir Agah Vellori) - Charukesi (raga)

Under the patronage of the Sadathullah Khan, the Nawab of Arcot (Madras) literary genres thrived in Persian, Arabic and Deccani Urdu. Artistes from across India, including 400 tawaiif’s came to settle in the Nawab’s court and were known as Kanchini’s. They performed Persian and Deccani poems composed by great Sufi masters. Later, Kanchini’s came as far away from Wajid Ali Shah’s court and brought with them Awadhi music and culture. This fused with southern traditions to create a distinct Nawabi repertoire.

### “Company” Javali | 18th century | Oh!

#### My lovely lalana (Karur Sivaramaiyya)-Kharaharapriya (raga)

Manali Muthukrishna Mudali (Moody Kitsna) was a prominent dubash (interpreter) to the British officers in Madras Presidency. A patron of artistes, he hosted many banquet dinners accompanied by country music and native Sadir dancing for the officers of the Raj. Creatively titillating bespoke pieces were composed, mainly to entertain the officers leading to an explosive development of the javali genre. Oh my lovely lalana specially composed for General Pigot is a fine example of company (Kambeeni) Javali and the cosmopolitan atmosphere in which Sadir thrived.

### Nava Padam | 17th century | Kshetrayya-Sankarabharanam (raga)

Kshetrayya, whose padams are well known in Bharatanatyam, was a prolific and contemporary composer during the Nayak era (Tamil Nadu). His poems were called nava (new genre) and they exuded amorous themes. This rare Padam composed during the reign of Vijayaraghava Nayaka is addressed to the deity Adivaraha. The heroine (a sex-worker) transacts with the hero;

*“You think you are prince charming? Well, maybe...but don’t expect to get me on a loan. I can find a dozen skilful men just like you, so you better dole out the dough, honey!”*

### Nottu Swaram and Anthem | Early 20th century

Indian composers were intrigued by military, marching band music and celtic tunes. Christian Fredrich Schwartz - a Dutch missionary in Serfoji’s court arranged many of these notations. Court composers were inspired by these, and Nottuswaram’s were born. Part of the

Sadir repertoire, this set is interspersed with the British National Anthem, composed in Sanskrit in 1912 by Narasimha Rao Naidu to commemorate the arrival of King George V and Queen Mary at the Delhi Durbar.

## Credits

### Dr Swarnamalya Ganesh, Performer

Swarnamalya is a trained Bharatanatyam dancer, an Indian actress and TV anchor. Over the years, she has anchored several shows, acted in films across various languages and performed on many stages all over the world. She has a Masters in Bharatanatyam and PhD in Dance History from Madras University.

### Chitra Sundaram, Guest Artistic Director

Chitra is a choreographer, Bharatanatyam performer, mentor and educator. Her research concerns the problems and potential of classical forms in cross-cultural and intergenerational transmission of narratives. Chitra is on the board of Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing, an Associate Lecturer at Goldsmiths and a Fellow of the Royal Society of the Arts.

### Dr Avanthi Meduri, Cambridge introduction

Dr. Avanthi Meduri is a scholar, dancer, actress, playwright, curator and an arts administrator. She is internationally recognized as the founder of postcolonial devadasi dance studies in India/US and UK. She is a Reader at University of Roehampton, London and ex-convenor of South Asian Dance Studies at University of Roehampton, London.

## Acknowledgements and Staff

**Producer** | Nina Head

**Host Trustee** | Ann David

**With thanks to** | Brij Kumar Guhare, Vibha Mehdiretta, Jay Visvadeva and Srinivas Gotru, Storey's Field Centre, LSO St. Luke's.

**Akademi Team** | Mira Kaushik OBE, Kirsten Burrows, Antareepa Thakur, Christina Christou, Sydney Rae, Claire Farmer, Rohanne Udall, Apollonia Bauer and Catherine Ibbotson.

### Guru Bharadwaj, Mridangam Artist

Guru is a young mridangist hailing from a traditional family in Andhra Pradesh. He is well recognised for his fine and nuanced playing techniques best suited for dance concerts. Apart from being an accomplished mridangist, Guru also composes jatis and korvais patterns for many modern-day Bharatanatyam dancers.

### Srikrishnan Balasubramanian, Harmoniumist

Srikrishnan is a disciple of Carnatic and Hindustani musical traditions. The fourth-generation musician from his family, he performs with prominent artists in India and abroad. He plays both the Harmonium and the violin. Srikrishnan has been accompanying Dr. Swarnamalya Ganesh for over a decade.

### (Mysore) Sangeetha Sudhir, Vocalist

Sangeetha is an award-winning vocal artist in carnatic music, singing for prominent senior dance artists. She is also a violinist, in the Parur style, performing in duet with her husband K.J. Dileep. In 2017, Sangeetha represented India in Uganda, Tanzania and South Africa and performed as an Indian Cultural Delegate.

### Balaji, Mandolin

A senior disciple of Mandolin genius U. Shrinivas, Balaji has performed world over both with his guru and as a solo artiste. The under tones that Shrinivas ji devised in playing techniques of mandolin lends itself as a soulful accompaniment to Sadir. Balaji is working on solo albums and covers. He is currently living in London.



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND**

COCKAYNE

**The London Community Foundation**



ICCR



The Nehru Centre



भारत का उच्चायोग, लंदन  
**High Commission of India**  
London, United Kingdom

**Akademi** is the UK's leading South Asian Dance organisation. It develops artists, inspires audiences and changes lives.

**Sama Arts Network** is one of the UK's oldest and most influential arts organisations in the genre of traditional and contemporary South Asian arts.