

When the Arts & Science Entangle



This 11 – 26 March 2016, NUS Arts Festival (NAF) bridges the arts and science to explore the theme of Wonder. Dive into the amazing world of quantum mechanics as Festival artists tap on top academic minds in NUS for inspiration to create fresh new works.

One such Festival artist is NUS Indian Dance Resident Choreographer, Santha Bhaskar, whose new *Bharatanatyam* work, *Sambhavna*, portrays concepts in quantum mechanics to do with entanglement, energy and particles. She will work with researchers from the Centre for Quantum Technologies (CQT) as CQT's Outreach Fellow till April 2017. This first installation of *Sambhavna* is a work-in-progress excerpt of a full work scheduled for September/October this year. The free admission showing on 18 and 19 March will include presentations on the music and science behind *Sambhavna*, a sharing session by Mrs Bhaskar, and a 10-minute performance.

Sambhavna is one of several new Festival works incubated via a deeply collaborative approach that involves NUS talents, arts practitioners and academics. Audiences get more interaction with the artists this year through pre- or post-show dialogues sessions at selected Festival shows.

The dancers involved in the conceptualisation of *Sambhavna* are appreciative of the creative opportunities they have received.

Nishalini, a third-year biomedical undergraduate from the Faculty of Science, "It's a way of bringing science into the arts. We get to contribute ideas for the choreography but as the concepts in *Sambhavna* are not typical to the *Baratanatyam* dance language, it's a challenge. I'm basically treating this whole production like a science experiment."

“ *The choreography reminds me of some of what I would try to teach in my own lectures - there is a sense of intertwinement and a bit of asymmetry.*

The dance feels deep. ”

- CQT Research Fellow Dr Sai Vinjanampathy after watching an excerpt of the work last November.

A Cultural Medallion recipient and a versatile artist who has created many cross-disciplinary and experimental works, Mrs Bhaskar's past creations have spliced various forms and topics with classical Indian dance. These include *Pappadam*, which combined hip hop and Indian dance and *Anweshana – The Search For Nalanda*, a production backed by a two-year research project into then newly discovered Nalanda university in India. *Anweshana* opened the NUS Arts Festival in 2011. Her recent productions include *CHAKRA* (2012), the first traditional Indian dance production to incorporate sand art and *XPressions* (2013), a work that pushed boundaries in terms of orchestration and use of space. ■

Catch *Sambhavna* on 18 & 19 March, 8pm at UCC Dance Studio. Admission is free with registration at www.nusartsfestival.com