**Divya Kasturi- Curriculum Vitae**

**Biography**

Divya Kasturi is a multifaceted Dance practitioner with more than three decades of performing experience. Trained in the two styles of *Bharatanatyam* and *Kathak,* Divya is also a *Carnatic* vocalist. She has lent vocals for various albums and films in India and she has worked with Sir Paul McCartney and Nitin Sawhney in the UK. A qualified Electronics engineer, Divya completed her M.A in South Asian Dance Studies at the Roehampton University, London, setting the record of creating the first virtual masters dissertation in the field of South Asian Dance Practice-as-Research. Her long stint in the South-Indian Television industry spans a portfolio of tasks including news reading, program anchoring, conceptualizing musical shows, also directing and presenting a dance learning series for kids. As part of *Look East* feature, she has performed for the BBC. Divya has also performed in Complicite’s multi-award winning theatre production, *A Disappearing Number* that has toured internationally including the West-end , Broadway and National Theatre’s NT-live series. Divya integrates her interdisciplinary skills into developing unique live performances and interesting choreographies through exciting collaborations. Combining Dance and Technology, a pioneering achievement was combining 3-D Hologram Technology and South-Asian Dance for the first time in the UK. Divya recently choreographed ‘A Little Princess’- a musical for National Youth Musical Theatre (NYMT) and is a Studio Wayne McGregor QuestLab 2 artist (2019).

**Dance Training-** Dance, for Divya, has been a part of her life since the age of four. Her formal training in *Bharatanatyam* was initiated by *gurus* Smt. & Sri Aravindan of *Kalakshetra, Chennai.* Destined to explore a different sub style of B*haratanatyam*, she came under the tutelage of g*uru* Udupi Sri Lakshminarayana, a torchbearer of the Kanchipuram Ellappa style of B*haratanatyam (i.e. Balasaraswati style)*  since 1996 until his demise in 2015. Therafter Divya has been doing a lot of self-training and attending workshops and intensives with esteemed practitioners like Smt. Nandini Ramani(India), Chitra Sundaram and Mavin Khoo (UK). She has also been awarded a number of titles and honours in India for her dancing.

**Qualification**- M.A.in South Asian Dance Studies at Roehampton

University, London.

-National award in live events and promotions at level 2 (Continued Professional Development qualification)

- Bachelor of Engineering (electronics and communication), Bharath Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai, India

**Lockdown projects/activities-**

* April 2020 - Live performance-sprinkled talk for MANCH UK (digital platform)

\* August 2020- Filming for a new classical dance-film

* September -October 2020- Invited to teach an excerpt from my current work ‘To *Varnam…*with love’ to LABAN 3rd year Dance students for their assessments and was also part of their assessor panel.
* December 2020- Created a film with Asian/Indian Community youth partcipants and adults that was released on DKC YouTube channel.

\*January 2021- Released a new classical Bharatanatyam Dance-film online for a fellow musician working in virtual collaboration with a cohort of artists.

**Few Past** **performances**

**4th February, 2020-**  ‘To *Varnam…*with love’ at Warwick Arts Centre,UK

**17th January, 2020-**  Special performance at Indian High Commission, London.

**December 28th, 2019-**  Invited speaker at World Tamil Economic Conference, Chennai, India to speak on ‘Dance and Technology’

**December 2019- 1st January, 2020-**  Indian tour of solo-classical work

**November 18th- 22nd, 2019-**  Was chosen as a Choreographer-observer for Akhram Khan Classical Intensive, London

**October 28th- November 8th, 2019-**  Was chosen as QUESTLab artist representing region curated by Studio Wayne McGregor, London

**October 20th, 2019-**  Performed ‘Darshan’ at Upahaar Festival of Dance, London

**October 19th, 2019-**  preview of ‘ To *Varnam…*with love’ (TVWL) presented at Key Theatre, Peterborough supported by Arts Council of England through their project grants.

29th September, 2019- Annual Student showcase by Divya Kasturi Company-youth wing at Trestle Arts, St.Albans in the presence of both Mayors of Stevenage & St.Albans City.

14th and 21st September ,2019- Dancing Melodies- a collaboration with an instrument ‘Chitraveena’ presented in Birmingham by Udhbav and in Stoke-On-Trent for APF Charity.

**July 4th, 2019-** Devised and performed a movement-responsive-performance at St.Albans museum in collaboration with a co-dancer/performer, a theatre-director and education/outreach professional in response to Barbara Hepworth's exhibition.

**June 29th, 2019**- Performed at INDIA Day festival at Milton Keynes, UK

Performed at finale event of STEVENAGE Festival, UK

**June 22nd, 2019-** ‘Oru Naal Pothumaa’- a thematic solo on poet Kannadasan’s compositions at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chennai for SABA Foundation.

**February 9th, 2019**- Performed at BALA 100 valediction performance in Chennai organised by Dr. Raghavan Centre for Performing Arts, Chennai.

**December 2018 to January, 2019-** Performances in India.

**November 3rd, 2018-** Echoes from the past- series 2- in collaboration with vocalist Devie Neithiyar at Bushey Arena, Hertfordshire

**21st October, 2018-** ‘Anvaya’- solo classical work at Trestle Arts Base, St.Albans

**6th October 2018- Choreography commission by SAPAC to create ‘Spirit of Ranikhet’ for Swindon’s local dancers as part of High Sheriff’s Gala event.**

**15th September, 2018-** Nrithya Kutcheri- collaboration with Carnatic Brothers at Swindon Hindu Samaj/Temple

**26th August, 2018- Choreographed a two hour long solo work for 12 year-old as part of her graduation performance in London.**

**July-August 2018- Choreographer of the West End musical ‘A Little Princess’ for NYMT (National Youth Music Theatre)**

**January 15th & March 15th, 2018**- As part of an artistic curation by Jose Forrest-Tennant for Future Possibilities Lab, I created an R & D work titled –‘Form and Function in extinct Fossil Vertebrates’ combining South Asian Dance & Music with a Geologist. Partnered by Arts & science festival @Lapworth Museum, Sampad, University of Birmingham, Birmingham Open Media.

**December 19th-Jan 1st, , 2018-**  Solo performances tour in Chennai, India

**November 17th- 19th,**  2018 -Speaker at panel – Dance & Technology and performed at 4th International Tamil Economic Conference held at Durban, South Africa

**October 8th, 2017 -**  Divya Kasturi presented a trio of works at Trestle Arts Base, St Albans

**October 1st, 2017** – ‘Nrithya Kutcheri’- Divya Kasturi in collaboration with Carnatica Brothers( from India) at Chester, Manchester

**September 25th, 2017** – ‘Dancing Melodies’- UK premiere of Bharatanatyam and Chitravina at Nehru Centre, Indian High Commission Cultural Wing, London

**8th September, 2017**- ‘To *Varnam…* with love’ – an R & D Commissioned as part of The Place(London) Choreodrome 2017 artists and supported by Grants for the Arts, England.

**26th May, 2017-** Performance excerpt at High Commission of India, London as part of the UK-Tamil Women’s network

**20th May, 2017- *Echoes from the Past*-** a collaborative classical solo performance with live musicians from India at Trestle Arts Base, St.Albans, UK as part of their 15th Birthday celebrations.

**December 2016 & January 2017-**  India performance tour; Premiered ‘Thyagaraajeeyam’ on 1st January,2017

**October 31st, 2016**- Workshop and performance through Music in Detention at Yarlswood,Bedford

**August 26th, 2016**- Choreographer for an event in Chennai, India.

**May 20-22nd, 2016**- Navadisha 2016- Speaker & performer at International Conference at Birmingham, UK

**July 3rd, 2016-** Performed for ***Incarnations*** at V & A Museum, London, for Shane Shambhu Company.

**February 13th, 2016** - Pancharatnanjali at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, London

**December 2015-January 2016**- India tour- *Margazhi /Winter season performances*

**April- June 2015**- “Forgot your password?” at Watford Palace Theatre, The Place, Key Theatre and Harlow Playhouse- UK

**September 13th, 2014** - Performed CONFLUENCE at Kings Place Festival, London through Akademi

**June 2014-** Was part of an International creative residency-Interactivos, Birmingham integrating Dance and Technology.

**February 28-29th, 2014-** Presented work-in-progress of ‘Forgot Your Password?’ at South Bank Centre, London, commissioned by Akademi as part of Choreogata.

**December- January 2014- India tour of NowHere (**5 shows in Chennai and 1 in Bangalore)

**November 2014**- Worked with performer/choreographer Chitra Sundaram in her R & D work titled ‘Sthreedom’.

**October- November 2014**- Received funding from the Arts Council for undertaking a three week intensive R & D of “Forgot Your Password” with a sharing at ThePlace on 5th November,2013 and at University Campus Suffolk on 23rd October,2013.

**June- July 2013**- Completed a UK National Tour of ***NowHere*** including Peterborough, Colchester, Derby, Newcastle, Bradford and London funded by Grants for the Arts.

**February 2013- March 2013**- Choreographed a piece -‘***ID***’ for Forefront Dance Company at University College Suffolk , Ipswich,

**November, 2012**- National and International tour with Sadhana Dance performing live vocals and physical theatre for their production Elixir.

**October 26th, 2012**- Choreographed a music and dance piece titled ‘***Vandana***’ for Stevenage World Forum’s annual event Celebrate in association with Stevenage Borough Council.

**October 20th, 2012**- Performed at Sonika Festival in Madrid, Spain.

May 25-27th , 2012**-** Was invited to showcase my recent work titled *NowHere* at the **Dublin Dance Festival 2012.**

April 18th,2012- Performed an excerpt of *NowHere* at The Alchemy festival, South Bank Centre, London.

February- June 2012- Performed live vocals for Sadhana Dance Company’s production titled **Elixir** that toured nationally in the UK.

October 2011- Selected for an interdisciplinary placement program exploring digitization in the field of South Asian Arts in Madrid- A project funded by Leonardo Mobility Programme, in collaboration with Medialab Prado, Madrid and Sampad, UK.

From 2007- 14th October, 2010**:** Performed in the multi-award winning play, A Disappearing Number with the theatre company Complicite. This included more than 200 shows all over the globe in Spain, Austria, Amsterdam, France, Germany, Italy, India, USA including Broadway, UK including West End and National NT live series and a radio version for BBC 3.

September 2000-2006: Worked as an English News reader, program conceptualiser, master of ceremony and anchor for various television programs in a private South Indian Television network.

**Dance teaching experience**

Ongoing teaching experience includes one-to-one teaching sessions for students on private arrangement and weekly group classes for the local community groups in Stevenage and Peterborough,UK, in addition to choreographing for their showcase productions.

- April 2018 & August 2018 : Workshops for NYMT as part of devising musical production.

- February 2018: Dance workshops for NYMT (National Youth Music Theatre)

- 8th October, 2017: Dance workshop for Fun Palace @ Trestle Arts Base, St Albans.

- 30th July, 2017: Master class for NYMT (National Youth Music Theatre), London

-31st October, 2016: Dance workshop for Yarlswood Detention centre, Bedford

- August, 2015: Workshop for choreographers collective at Dance East, Ipswich

- September, 2014: Performance workshop at Kings Place Festival, London through Akademi.

- 22nd October, 2013: Workshop for University Campus Ipswich Dance students.

- March 8th, 2013 : Workshop for Dance Undergraduates at Parkside Federation, Cambridge

- October 2012: Workshop for dance professionals in Madrid, Spain.

- March 2012 : Workshop conducted at Milton Keynes for Pagrav Dance Company

- May, 2011: Bharatanatyam and Bollywood – an educative and practical workshop conducted at Highfield School, Letchworth Garden City, UK.

- April, 2011: South Asian dance workshop for kids at Hat Factory, Luton.

- October-November, 2010: Workshop in Stevenage schools as part of ‘Our Country 2’ project being organized by Stevenage World forum in three local schools.

- Assisted in *kathak* dance workshops at the South bank centre for their Imagine children’s festival (February, 2010)

- Presented my paper analysing the semiotics of South Asian dance at the post-graduate lecture session at Roehampton University, London (November, 2009).

- Dance workshops for professional dancers in Sydney organized by the Sydney theatre festival group as part of our tour in December ’08.

- Participated in the two week Ethnochoreology conference, IPEDAK 2008, held at Norway.

- A practical session of my paper was presented to the dance student community at Roehampton Univeristy as part of my practice based project (February, 2008).

- Handled a participatory workshop class for undergraduate students of dance at Roehampton University, London in South Asian dance (February ’08).

- Assisted in Complicite’s workshop sessions for theatre and school children organized by Barbican Theatre in London during October ‘07.

-Conducted dance & Indian culture taster workshop at Biggleswade School, Bedfordshire.

**Additional experience**

Trained in the South Asian *carnatic* vocal music since childhood and have had varied experiences in presenting full length concerts and singing for numerous albums, and jingles back in India.

- Lent vocals for Sir Paul McCartney and Nitin Sawhney for their musical albums in the UK.

- Founder of a cultural trust, registered in India in the year 2005, wherein art festivals are conducted annually in Chennai, India .

- One of the Executive Directors, UKWNET(UK Women’s Network)- Arts & Culture wing.

- Contributed articles on performance reviews in CONFLUENCE, a South Asian newsletter, UK and NARTHAKI, India.

- Conceptualised, directed and presented a television show for a kids television channel in India, teaching South Asian Dance for young kids, telecast in 2007.

**Review Excerpts**

“*fine contributions from Divya Kasturi* ”– **The New York Times** on ‘A Disappearing Number’

“*The protagonist, Divya herself (or at least a version of her) feels an intense sense of loss...*   
*Aided by a series of projections... The piece culminates in a pleasing sequence where the dancers use touchscreen gestures on each other’s bodies – the kind of pinching and stroking we’re used to conducting on our touchscreen phones… juxtaposing true physical contact and online communication*.”

- by [Alan Ward](http://www.remotegoat.com/uk/user_view.php?uid=35746)

“*dealt with the subject with refreshing humour…It seems bharatanatyam is well suited to depicting a person manipulating the screen on their PC, adding new meaning to traditional hand gestures…Divya Kasturi’s strong, soulful Carnatic singing”* – by **Malcolm Kee**

*“Divya Kasturi echoes the view that there is a need to create a new language, even in words. “We have to find more secular language for…dance… bringing it with us into a contemporary world, not losing that dimension but aware of the changed context.”she performs with clear articulation, a sharp focus and perfectly enunciated gestures” -* **The Irish Times**