

Sunday, December 21, 2025

## 92NY Harkness Dance Center Presents What Flows Between Us: A Festival of India's Classical Arts in Cross-Cultural Dialogue

Company: 92NY

Venue: 92NY

Location: new york city, NY

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92NY Harkness Dance Center announces What Flows Between Us: A Festival of India's Classical Arts in Cross-Cultural Dialogue, a day-long immersion into the depth, rigor, and expansive imagination of the Indian classical arts. Curated by renowned kathak artist, choreographer, educator, and 92NY Artist in Residence Rachna Nivas, the festival gathers extraordinary women from North and South Indian classical music, dance, percussion, and poetry—artists whose lifelong devotion to mastery is matched by their thoughtful engagement with cross-genre collaboration. Vendor markets will be active throughout the day, offering traditional food and artisanal goods and the festival culminates with the New York premiere of SPEAK, a groundbreaking rhythmic conversation between kathak and American tap featuring Nivas, Fulbright scholar Rukhmani Mehta, MacArthur Fellow Michelle Dorrance, and tap legend Dormeshia.

The festival is presented as part of Women Move the World, 92NY's 2025/26 Harkness Mainstage Series. For tickets and more information, visit <https://www.92ny.org/event/what-flows-between-us>.

"There's a particular urgency and joy in spotlighting powerful women artists — not just as performers, but as choreographers, collaborators, and cultural makers." — Rachna Nivas

What Flows Between Us takes its name from the fluid intelligence of feminine energy — like water and rivers, it is expansive, adaptable, and shaped by the landscapes it moves through. While the festival brings together classical traditions from North and South India — forms with rigorously distinct movement languages, musical systems, and histories that are often misunderstood as one — it also illuminates the resonances they share with Western classical and jazz: rhythm, improvisation, poetry, devotion, and the embodied passing down of lineage.

But the festival also emphasizes that true cross-genre dialogue can only emerge from profound knowledge of one's own form—a principle rooted in Nivas's training under her guru Pandit Chitresh Das. Rather than "fusion," these artists embody a shared ethos: maintain the integrity of their form while finding common ground, treating differences not as something to dilute or absorb, but as essential to a world where plurality thrives.

"Collaboration is not a shortcut or a gimmick; at its highest level, it is an act of integrity — the culmination of years of disciplined study," comments Rachna Nivas. "Only from that depth can artists recognize shared currents without erasing difference, and create work that is rooted, honest, and transformative. When we collaborate from this place of mastery and reverence, we begin to see the nuances that flow between us across borders, traditions, and histories, expanding our lens of humanity through art."

### Evening Performance—SPEAK

The festival closes with the New York premiere of SPEAK, an acclaimed collaboration between kathak and American tap. Conceived by kathak virtuosos Rachna Nivas and Rukhmani Mehta, and co-created with MacArthur Fellow Michelle Dorrance and tap legend Dormeshia, SPEAK brings together four veteran artists whose years of dialogue and artistic exchange have forged a rare cross-genre kinship. Developed over several years and now being remounted and further expanded through a Works & Process residency, the work arrives in New York at a moment of renewed creative depth and artistic rigor.

Though born continents and centuries apart, kathak and tap share parallel histories of struggle, resilience, and community. In SPEAK, these dynamic, percussive traditions converge in a captivating collaboration that interweaves rhythm, poetry, storytelling, music, and dance. Since its 2017 U.S. premiere to sold-out audiences and its subsequent touring across major cities in India and the U.S., SPEAK has earned widespread critical acclaim for its artistic virtuosity and social resonance. Carried by an ensemble of leading Indian classical and jazz musicians, SPEAK celebrates lineage, improvisation, and the capacity of women artists to push tradition forward without compromising its integrity.

#### Festival Highlights

The festival features leading female artists whose work bridges classical tradition with contemporary expression:

Saili Oak (San Francisco) — a sought-after Hindustani vocalist performing traditional repertoire as well as live excerpts from her album *Beyond*, in collaboration with a Western classical string quartet, played by Sahana Shravan, Dylan Hamme, Sunjay Jayaram, Jackie Hager.

Nirmala Rajasekar (Minneapolis) — a rare master of the South Indian veena performing both solo Carnatic works and collaborative compositions with her daughter, vocalist and Western classical composer Shruthi Rajasekar.

Yamini Kalluri (NYC) — a rising Kuchipudi soloist carrying forward the lineage of Andhra Pradesh, bringing a form rarely showcased on major New York stages. She will be accompanied by her Carnatic ensemble musicians called The Kritya Music Ensemble - Vocalist: Rohith Jayaraman, Nattuvangam: Vivek Ramanan, Mridangam: Harsha Mandayam Bharathi and Violin: Laya Raghav. Her collaborative piece will be with Western classical pianist Jiahao Han.

Nandana Sen — writer, actor, and advocate presenting readings of her mother Nabaneeta Dev Sen's celebrated poetry accompanied by live kathak interpretation.

Ramona Sylvan (Toronto) — one of the few female tabla players in North America, leading an interactive tabla demonstration and an all-women North-South Indian percussion battle featuring Samyuktha Sreeram (ghatam) and Shubha Chandramouli (mridangam).

#### Festival Schedule

Saturday, February 21, 2026 | 92NY

11:00 am – 1:00 pm | Bittenwieser Hall

##### Musical Performance

Featuring Saili Oak, Sahana Shravan, Dylan Hamme, Sunjay Jayaram, Jackie Hager, Nirmala Rajasekar, Satyaprakash Mishra

##### Musical Performance

Featuring Nirmala Rajasekar with Shruthi Rajasekar accompanied by Samyuktha Sreeram, Shubha Chandramouli

##### Followed by Artist Conversation

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm | Warburg Lounge

##### Community Lunch

2:30 pm – 4:00 pm | Bittenwieser Hall

##### Dance, Poetry & Percussion Performances

Featuring Yamini Kalluri, Kuchipudi dancer with live ensemble

Nandana Sen poetry reading with live kathak accompaniment

4:15 pm – 5:15 pm | Venue TBA

##### Interactive Percussion Demo + All-Women Percussion Battle

Ramona Sylvan, Samyuktha Sreeram, Shubha Chandramouli

5:30 pm – 6:30 pm | Warburg Lounge

##### Community Dinner

7:00 pm | Kaufmann Concert Hall

SPEAK — New York Premiere

Vendor marketplace open throughout the day.

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<https://www.92ny.org/>

Schedule  
December 21, 2025: 11:00am, 7:00pm

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