

# Mana Dhanraj Contractor

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With her formative learning experiences in the Hindustani Classical tradition, she has studied and performed a variety of singing styles like jazz, R&B, Persian, Carnatic classical and Hindustani Classical music. Her focus on improvisation and fusion has led her to develop a unique style of globally conscious musical interpretation.

## **EDUCATION:**

- California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), MFA in Voice Arts August 2018-May 2020
- Swarnabhoomi Academy of Music (SAM), Diploma in Voice Performance and Music Management August 2013-August 2015
- Srishti School of Art, Design and Technology, BFA in Textile Design August 2006-March 2011

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE:**

### **Raphaelle Brochet | *Teaching Assistant* | August 2020 - Present**

- Created syllabus for a beginners guide to Carnatic improvisational concepts
- Edited and translated existing educational texts to English from Kannada and Tamil
- Created a presentation on the similarities between improvisation in Jazz and Carnatic styles
- Online teaching assistant to all workshops hosted by French vocalist, Raphaelle Brochet

### **California Institute of the Arts | *Teaching Assistant* | September 2018 - May 2020**

- Taught and created syllabi for individual voice lessons to graduate and undergraduate students taking voice studies as an elective
- Created teaching materials on the use of gear and technology for a course on mic techniques for singers
- Curated sessions, invited guest speakers and edited teaching for a course on dadaism and contemporary opera for Jacqueline Bobak
- Teaching assistant to Carmina Escobar for a course on Experimental Vocal Techniques where I helped curate sessions, coordinate presentations and organise the final performance at venues across Los Angeles

### **FECAT (Foundation course in Expressive & Creative Arts Therapies) | *Faculty* | January 2016 - August 2018**

- Created presentations for the importance of music therapy as a form of expressive art therapy
- Curated a list of resources for students to draw from all related to Music Therapy

### **MELA Music Academy | *Founder, Educator and Director* | August 2014 - March 2018**

- Founded an after school Music Program to teach Contemporary music to children
- Worked on and created syllabi for all instruments to be accessible to students of all ages
- Helped create software to organise class schedules, budgeting, fee collection, and class reminders for over 350 students
- Head of the Creative Outreach team that organised workshops, concerts, show cases, music festivals, and education drives to over 60 different schools from lower income neighborhoods in India so as to make music education accessible to all
- Vetted and hired all music teachers for the school
- Created a hybrid syllabus blending Indian pedagogical technique to teach contemporary western voice to over 75 students of all ages over four years

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## **VOLUNTEER POSITIONS:**

### **Gubbachi Learning Community | *Volunteer* | October 2015-May 2020**

- Organised music workshops for bridge Learning Centres across the learning centers
- Curated folk music from across South India into a syllabus

### **Regional Institute of English | *Volunteer* | January 2008 - January 2010**

- Collected a list of songs for first time english learners to use in schools across Karnataka
- Worked on language exercises through music
- Assisted on set for over 150 films on the english language for first time learners ages 6-13

## **SELECTED RECENT PERFORMANCES:**

### **Lace | *Composer & Vocalist* | January 2018 - present**

- Founder, composer and vocalist of the Los Angeles Based Neo Soul project - Lace

### **NMND | *Composer & Vocalist* | January 2019 - present**

- Founder, composer and vocalist of the Los Angeles Based Electronic project - NMND

### **SWEET LAND (opera by the Industry) | *Vocalist* | LA Historic Park, Feb 27th - March 13th, 2020**

- Performer for an Experimental Opera following diverging perspectives on the history of the first settlers into the United States

### **(Un)Covered | *Composer & Vocalist* | The Sharon Disney Lund Theatre, Los Angeles, February 22nd, 2020**

- Composed music for a A performance of dance, theater, and art based on Botticelli's The Birth of Venus.

### **We're Gonna Die | *Composer & Vocalist* | The Bootleg Theatre, Los Angeles, February 20th, 2020**

- Composed music for a A retelling of Young Jean Lee's life-affirming concert play, WE'RE GONNA DIE

### **Crowd Out-David Lang | *Vocalist* | Walt Disney Concert Hall, June 1st, 2019**

- Performed with over 400 musicians to bring David Langs piece to as part of Noon to Midnight, where performers intermingled with the audience, slowly transformed the swirling babble and chatter into a stunningly orchestrated whirlwind of voices.

### **SWEAT | *Vocalist* | CalArts 21-23rd March 2019**

- Performed and worked with 7 other voices to bring to life Juliet Palmers SWEAT, an acapella opera that weaves a vivid picture of a sweatshop's inner workings. An acapella opera that exposes the truth behind the fashion industry.