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Diwali in B.C. spotlights women in inaugural series

by Janet Smith on October 11th, 2017 at 3:22 PM



“The way you celebrate Diwali in Canada is different from India,” Rohit Chokhani says. “I’ve always curated the fest to be multicultural.”

After curating Diwali Fest for the past four years, Rohit Chokhani is taking on an even bigger vision.

He’s launching Diwali in B.C., a five-week cultural celebration from Thursday (October 12) to November 16 that takes South Asian–flavoured, culture-fusing theatre, dance, and other works provincially.

The inaugural year puts the spotlight on women, with the artistic theme of Shakti, or the power of the feminine. “I just wanted to represent people who aren’t being represented—and women are doing diverse work,” Chokhani tells the *Straight* by phone.

Chokhani, who’s worked as everything from an apprentice director at Bard on the Beach to producer in residence at the National Arts Centre, explains his desire to go

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provincewide was partly because of high demand from audiences and a wish to expand his personal curatorial statement. He adds there's no shortage of work to program, or local artists doing it.

“The way you celebrate Diwali in Canada is different from India,” he says. “I’ve always curated the fest to be multicultural.”

Amid the offerings, look for not only the interdisciplinary performance *Encounter* at the Cultch, but Deepa Mehta’s most recent film, *Anatomy of Violence* (November 4 at the Cineplex Odeon International Village), which takes a hard look at the men who committed the notorious gang rape on a bus in India.

Elsewhere, Diwali in B.C. is copresenting the return to town of Dipti Mehta’s *Honour: Confessions of a Mumbai Courtesan* (October 20 to November 4 at the Vancity Culture Lab), and Touchstone Theatre’s production of Pamela Mala Sinha’s *Happy Place* (October 19 to 29 at the Firehall Arts Centre, in association with Ruby Slippers Theatre). November 16 at the York Theatre, look for classical bharata natyam work *Shyama*, choreographed by Mandala Arts and Culture Society’s Jai Govinda and performed by Arno Kamolika, based on Rabindranath Tagore’s epic drama.

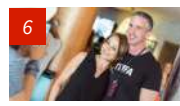
There’s more programming (see www.diwalibc.ca/), with a cabaret-style Diwali celebration at the Evergreen Cultural Centre in Coquitlam, the farthest-afield of the offerings—so far. Chokhani hopes eventually to reach the farthest corners of B.C.

with his arts offerings. “This year is just a steppingstone,” he says.

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ON THE LIST

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OCTOBER 4, 2018 BY JMINTER

Diwali in BC spreads the light until November 17

Diwali is the Hindu festival of lights, celebrated every autumn in the northern hemisphere. Diwali in BC, founded in 2017 by Rohit Chokhani, has a goal to spread Diwali celebrations throughout the province over the coming years.

The theme for the 2018 celebrations, running now until November 17, is 'New Horizons' and features programming in Vancouver, Coquitlam, Vernon, Maple Ridge, and Nanaimo.

"In our second bold and ambitious year, we respond artistically to racial tensions and gender abuse that continues to threaten the safety of the world in which we live, with the theme of New Horizons," says Chokhani.

"In A Vancouver Guldasta, we have fresh conversations around trauma and healing through the lens of a Punjabi-Sikh family living with a Vietnamese refugee in Vancouver. In The Believers Are But Brothers we take a deeper look at toxic masculinity, and with Shyama we explore different colours of love, the price of desire, forgiveness, and morality through one of India's most celebrated playwrights – Rabindranath Tagore. Chokhani adds, "We are also excited to expand our Diwali programming to three new cities while we continue to grow and evolve in the existing cities."



A Vancouver Guldasta

Here is a look at the 2018 Diwali in B.C. programming:

A Vancouver Guldasta : October 2-21 at Vancity Culture Lab | Presented with The Cultch

Diwali in B.C., Vernon : October 9-13 various events and performances at locations around Vernon, including the Vernon & District Performing Arts Centre

Shyama : October 27 at the York Theatre

Co-presented with Vancouver Tagore Society and in community partnership with Mandala Arts & Culture Society, with support from BC Arts Council.



The Believers Are But Brothers
photo: Jack Offord

The Believers Are But Brothers : October 30-November 10 at Vancity Culture Lab | Presented with The Cultch

Diwali in B.C., Maple Ridge : November 10 at The ACT Arts Centre
This inaugural event is presented with The ACT Arts Centre.

Diwali in B.C., Coquitlam : November 11 at Evergreen Cultural Centre

Diwali at Evergreen is in its second year and is presented by the Evergreen Cultural Centre.

For details about these events and more are available at diwalibc.com



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Diwali In B.C. To Take Place October 3 To
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SIX-WEEK EVENT EXPLORES AND CELEBRATES ‘NEW HORIZONS’ THROUGH THEATRE, DANCE, AND CULTURALLY SPECIFIC WORKSHOPS ACROSS VANCOUVER, COQUITLAM, VERNON, MAPLE RIDGE, AND NANAIMO

DETAILS AT WWW.DIWALIBC.CA

(Vancouver, BC) – Award-winning Artistic Director of Diwali in B.C., Rohit Chokhani is pleased to announce the 2018 programming for Diwali in B.C. – a provincial initiative aimed at making Diwali celebrations province-wide over the next five years.

Launched in 2017 with the artistic theme of Shakti – feminine power – Diwali in B.C. saw huge success with presentations such as Navarasa Dance Theatre’s Encounter, Dipti Mehta’s Honour: Confessions of a Mumbai Courtesan and Pamela Mala Sinha’s Happy Place, to name a few.

The artistic theme for the 2018 celebrations, which take place October 3 to November 17, is ‘New Horizons’ and features programming in Vancouver, Coquitlam, Vernon, Maple Ridge, and Nanaimo.

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“In our second bold and ambitious year, we respond artistically to racial tensions and gender abuse that continues to threaten the safety of the world in which we live, with the theme of New Horizons,” says Chokhani. “In A Vancouver Guldasta, we have fresh conversations around trauma and healing through the lens of a Punjabi-Sikh family living with a Vietnamese refugee in Vancouver. In The Believers Are But Brothers we take a deeper look at toxic masculinity, and with Shyama we explore different colours of love, the price of desire, forgiveness, and morality through one of India’s most celebrated playwrights – Rabindranath Tagore. Chokhani adds, “We are also excited to expand our Diwali programming to three new cities while we continue to grow and evolve in the existing cities.”

Here is a look at the 2018 Diwali in B.C. programming:

A Vancouver Guldasta

October 2-21 at Vancity Culture Lab | Presented with The Cultch

A Vancouver Guldasta focuses on a Punjabi family in Vancouver in the early 1980s as they navigate through the experience of trauma and violence occurring in Punjab, and their daughter's complicated friendship with a Vietnamese refugee teen who lives in their basement. The story takes place during the Indian government's armed invasion of the 'Golden Temple' — the holiest shrine of the Sikhs — in the epicentre of the Sikh diaspora, South Vancouver, B.C. A Vancouver Guldasta is an examination of common experience, identifying home, and processing trauma.

Diwali in B.C., Vernon

October 9-13 at various locations in Vernon, including the Vernon & District Performing Arts Centre

This inaugural event is presented with the Vernon & District Performing Arts Centre and will culminate in a multicultural showcase of diverse artists from different backgrounds. Activities throughout the week will include workshops, discussions, dance performances, musical performances, cultural activities, and crafts. The festival's final performance, featuring headliner Shiamak Vancouver, takes place at the Vernon & District Performing Arts Centre on Saturday,

October 13 at 7:00pm.

Shyama

October 27 at the York Theatre

Co-presented with Vancouver Tagore Society and in community

partnership with Mandala Arts & Culture Society, with support from BC Arts Council. A Bharatanatyam interpretation of Tagore's epic Bengali dance drama Shyama with original choreography by Jai Govinda. This dance theatre piece is a tribute to the first non-European Nobel-laureate poet Rabindranath Tagore and his magically visual poetry and music of love. Dance artist Arno Kamolika has been collaborating with musician Shankhanaad Mallick and with director Rohit Chokhani for over two years on this production, and Diwali in B.C. will debut their most current version of this poetic, deep philosophical story that will be performed on stage with other Bharatanatyam dancers in B.C.: Grihalakshmi Soundarapandian, Jaylakshmi Ravindra , Malavika Santhosh, and Vidya Kotamraju.

The Believers Are But Brothers

October 30-November 10 at Vancity Culture Lab | Presented with The Cultch

Written and performed by Javaad Alipoor, and co-directed by Javaad Alipoor and Kirsty Housley, The Believers Are But Brothers is an electronic maze of fantasists, meme culture, 4chan, the alt-right, and ISIS. Old orders are collapsing, from the postcolonial nation states of the Middle East to the European Union and to the American election. Through it all, tech-savvy and extremist groups rip up political certainties. Amidst this, a generation of young men find themselves burning with resentment and without the money, power, and sex they think they deserve. This bold one-man show explores the smoke and mirrors world of online extremism, anonymity, and hate speech.

Diwali in B.C., Maple Ridge

November 10 at The ACT Arts Centre

This inaugural event is presented with The ACT Arts Centre. The evening celebrates South Asian culture with classical and contemporary dance as well as live music performances, and a special performance by Shiamak Vancouver.

Diwali in B.C., Coquitlam

November 11 at Evergreen Cultural Centre

Diwali at Evergreen is in its second year and is presented by the Evergreen Cultural Centre. The South Asian themed evening features live music as well as classical and contemporary dance performances, including a special performance by Arno Kamolika.

Details and further Diwali in B.C. programming announcements for Nanaimo to be made soon.

Download images at:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/e6yan3zotbhcfi8/AAB2n0WwsNUHI_6gTaidKchCa?dl=0

For interview requests and additional images, please contact Teresa Trovato at teresatrovatopr@gmail.com.

For more information on Diwali in B.C., visit www.diwalibc.ca.

(http://drishtimagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/A-Vancouver-Guldasta_image3.jpg)

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A CULTURALLY-RELEVANT CELEBRATION OF DIWALI

Mumbai-native, Rohit Chokhani, is bringing a new province-wide Diwali celebration to the streets of Metro Vancouver. The idea behind the artistic platform, [Diwali in B.C.](http://surrey604.com/2017/10/04/celebrate-diwali-with-launch-of-new-provincial-initiative/) (<https://surrey604.com/2017/10/04/celebrate-diwali-with-launch-of-new-provincial-initiative/>), according to Chokhani, is “not to recreate the Indian celebration of Diwali but to celebrate the new year and South Asian culture in a way that is inclusive and welcoming of other cultures that represent Metro Vancouver.” He felt it important to produce something non-denominational so that anyone of any background who felt drawn to the theatre, dance and film performances could be a part of the conversation. Diwali in B.C. is coming to life through [various events](https://surrey604.com/2017/10/04/celebrate-diwali-with-launch-of-new-provincial-initiative/) (<https://surrey604.com/2017/10/04/celebrate-diwali-with-launch-of-new-provincial-initiative/>) taking place from October 14 – November 16, 2017.

When Chokhani left India at the age of 22 for the United States and then Canada, he missed the experiences of celebrating what is also known as the Festival of Lights with family and friends. That personal desire to connect his upbringing with his new identity as an immigrant in the Western world was the catalyst for this initiative. Using his artistic voice as a director and producer was a natural vehicle to pursue this inspiration.

ON SHAKTI, OR FEMININE POWER

The program he has curated centres on the theme of shakti, or feminine power. When asked about the origin of this theme, Chokhani recalled, "There are a few criteria I always watch out for because diversity and inclusivity is very important, so I always program a festival making sure that there is a good distribution of gender equity around it, and I also make sure all cultures are represented... even within the South Asian landscape."

Interestingly, all the works that grabbed his attention this year were put out by women, making the theme 'feminine power' come to surface almost on its own. This aligns with Chokhani's Eastern philosophy which includes the belief that the Divine comes in masculine and feminine forms, just as people – regardless of gender – have masculine and feminine energies.

IMPORTANT CULTURAL CONVERSATIONS THROUGH ART

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This spiritual element became the perfect backdrop for cultural conversations around sex trafficking ([Honour: Confessions of a Mumbai Courtesan](#) (https://tickets.thecultch.com/Online/default.asp?doWork::WScontent::loadArticle=Load&BOparam::WScontent::loadArticle::article_id=2FF19682-523B-4EFD-838B-553252CA281C)), society's responsibility in encouraging certain destructive masculine behaviours ([Anatomy of Violence](#) (<http://vaff.org/>)), healing after abuse ([Happy Place](#) (<https://tickets.firehallartscentre.ca/TheatreManager/1/login?event=753>)) and indigenous stories from India that make one reflect on Canadian topics such as reconciliation ([Encounter](#) (https://tickets.thecultch.com/Online/default.asp?doWork::WScontent::loadArticle=Load&BOparam::WScontent::loadArticle::article_id=F3795959-C3DC-4435-9E0F-639609277B78)), to name a few. Each performance has the incredible mandate to showcase the capability of women and "leave you with a deeper question that makes you think about life and maybe eventually help you grow as an individual or community," according to Chokhani.

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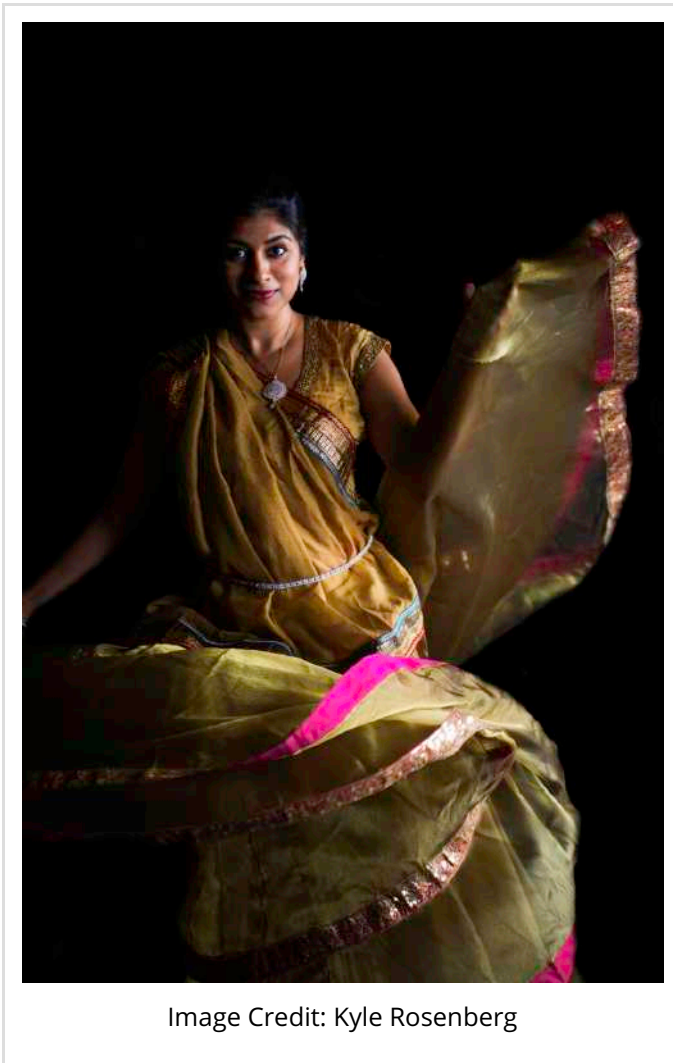
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In addition to creating space for these important topics through Diwali in B.C., Chokhani also invests in a secondary project, [Project SAT](https://rchokhani1981.wixsite.com/projectsat) (<https://rchokhani1981.wixsite.com/projectsat>), which he describes as a platform for the next generation of theatre makers. For those who are interested in writing, directing and producing, there are numerous workshops designed to help bring dreams to life. Some of these will be held in conjunction with the Diwali initiative.

For more information about Diwali in B.C. and Jessie Richardson Theatre Award-winner Rohit Chokhani, please visit www.diwali.bc.ca

<https://rchokhani1981.wixsite.com/diwalibc>.



Rohit Chokhani www.diwalibc.ca

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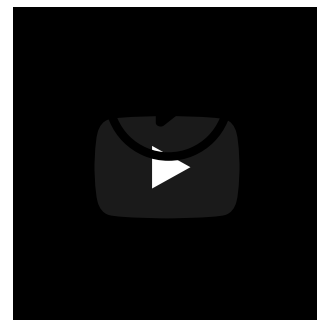
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City Dream
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Five reasons to check out Diwali in B.C.

Diwali in B.C. celebrates the Indian New Year with six weeks of theatre, dance and workshops.

SHAWN CONNER ([HTTPS://VANCOUVERSUN.COM/AUTHOR/THATSHAWNCONNER](https://vancouver.sun.com/author/thatshawconner))

Updated: September 26, 2018



A scene from *A Vancouver Guldasta*, on at Vancity Culture Lab Oct. 2 to 21 as part of Diwali in B.C. *PARDEEP SINGH / PNG*

Diwali in B.C.

When: Oct. 3 to Nov. 17

Where: Various locations in Vancouver, Coquitlam, Vernon, Maple Ridge, Nanaimo

Tickets and info: diwalibc.ca (<http://diwalibc.ca>)

1. A Vancouver Guldasta. Now in its second year, Diwali in B.C. is a multi-disciplinary festival which celebrates the festival of lights (Diwali) during the annual Indian New Year. The 2018 edition is a six-week event with theatre, dance and “culturally specific workshops” in various B.C. locales, and is themed New Horizons. Kicking off the festival is a remount of last year’s A Vancouver Guldasta. Written and directed by Vancouver-based Paneet Singh, the ’80s-set play concerns a Punjabi-Sikh family living in south Vancouver, their daughter’s relationship with a Vietnamese refugee, and the Indian government’s invasion of the Sikh holy shrine, the Golden Temple.

2. The Believers Are But Brothers. Written and performed by English playwright Javaad Alipoor, the one-man play received positive reviews when it opened at the Edinburgh Festival in 2017. Using digital media, fictional accounts, and the results of his research, Alipoor explores how and why some young men become extremists.

3. Shyama. A collaboration between dance artist Arno Kamolika, musician Shankhanaad Mallick and Chokhani, Shyama is a Bharatanatyam (a genre of Indian classical dance) interpretation of a romantic tragedy told through dance and song. It was written by Rabindranath Tagore, the first non-European Nobel-laureate poet (in 1913).

4. Bombay Black. A hit at last year’s Vancouver Fringe Festival, Anosh Irani’s Bombay Black is about an Indian exotic dancer and her embittered mother.

5. Diwali on the road. Classical and contemporary dance, live music and more are part of the Diwali in B.C. presentations in Vernon, Maple Ridge, and Coquitlam.

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Five reasons to check out Diwali in B.C.

 **SHAWN CONNER**

Published:
September 26, 2018

Updated:
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Filed Under:
The Province >
Entertainment > **Local Arts**



A scene from *A Vancouver Guldasta*, on at Vancity Culture Lab Oct. 2 to 21 as part of Diwali in B.C. Pardeep Singh / PNG

Diwali in B.C. celebrates the Indian New Year with six weeks of theatre, dance and workshops.

Diwali in B.C.

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Where: Various locations in Vancouver, Coquitlam, Vernon, Maple Ridge, Nanaimo

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2. **The Believers Are But Brothers.** Written and performed by English playwright Javaad Alipoor, the one-man play received positive reviews when it opened at the Edinburgh Festival in 2017. Using digital media, fictional accounts, and the results of his research, Alipoor explores how and why some young men become extremists.

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4. **Bombay Black.** A hit at last year’s Vancouver Fringe Festival, Anosh Irani’s Bombay Black is about an Indian exotic dancer and her embittered mother.

5. **Diwali on the road.** Classical and contemporary dance, live music and more are part of the Diwali in B.C. presentations in Vernon, Maple Ridge, and Coquitlam.

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Jennifer Suttling (left), Loveleen Kaur, Amandeep Singh and Suzanna Singh get into the Diwali spirit at the Diwali Outfits and Jewelry Sale at Arise Studio Friday, Oct. 5. (Katherine Peters/Morning Star)

Diwali outfit sale preps Vernon for inaugural fest

Diwali in Vernon kicks off Oct. 9

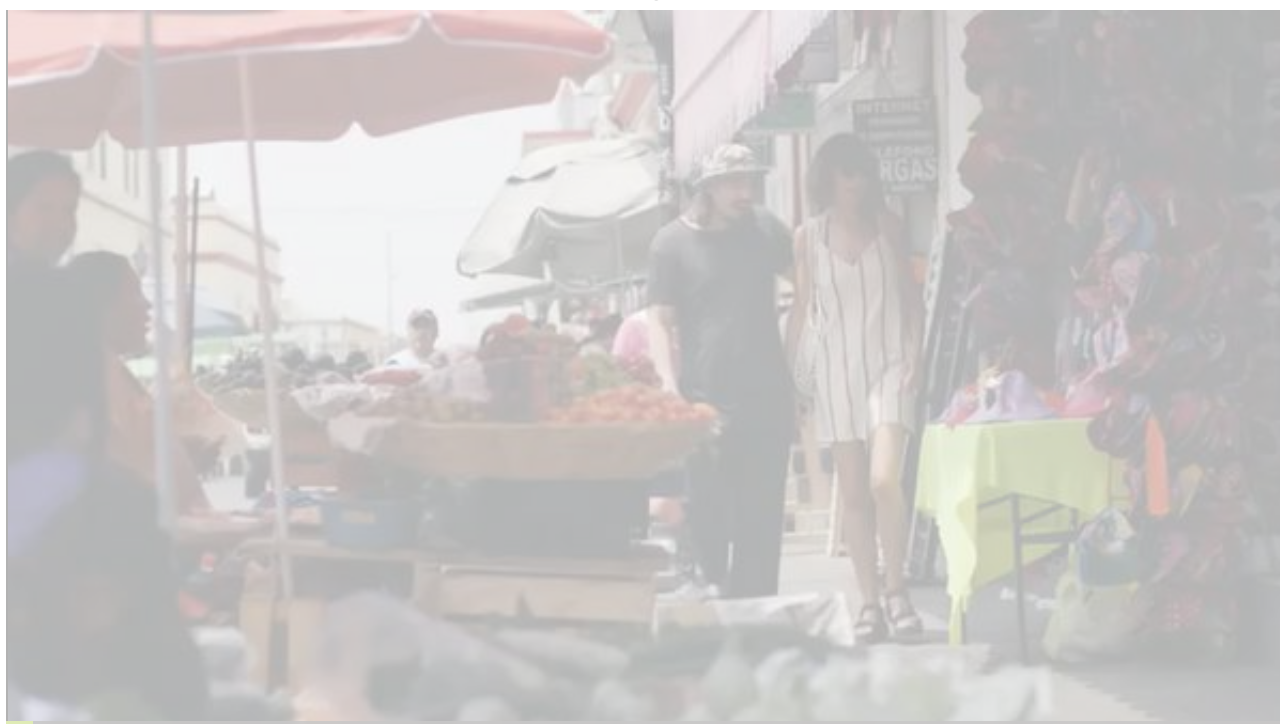
MORNING STAR STAFF / Oct. 8, 2018 8:00 a.m. / COMMUNITY

In preparation for Vernon's first Diwali festival, hosted by the Vernon and District Performing Arts Centre and Diwali in B.C., Arise Studio was in full swing getting everyone ready with sarees and jewelry.

Friday's Diwali Outfits and Jewelry Sale at Arise Studio in the Alpine Centre acts as a preparatory event to the five-day festival.

Related: First annual Diwali in Vernon kicks off after Thanksgiving

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Diwali is the celebration of light over dark and is celebrated every fall with friends and family gatherings, lights, bright colours, rangoli art, and even fireworks. Every south Asian may celebrate Diwali in a different fashion and for a different reason; however, it's a universal theme, artistic expression and colourful artcrafts remain the common thread that defines Diwali.

Several events will take place across the city, with the festival culminating in a live performance at the Vernon and District Performing Arts Centre Oct. 13.

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Entertainment October 5, 2018 3:23 pm

Updated: October 5, 2018 5:51 pm

Diwali in Vernon Festival: A celebration of light, cultures

By Doyle Potenteau and Shay Galor Global News

The Diwali in Vernon Festival run October 9th to the 13th. Many activities are planned throughout the five-day event.

Diwali is the Hindu festival of lights, and next week in Vernon there's going to be a huge event throughout the city.

"Next week, we have our inaugural Diwali in Vernon festival," said Erin Kennedy of the Vernon and District Performing Arts Centre. "It's a celebration of light for South Asian cultures.

"We will have pop-up events all over town at the library; we'll have rangolis that people can work on. We'll have lantern making festivals. And it will culminate in a final performance here at the Performing Arts Centre with a multicultural showcase and dance."



Related

- **Diwali Carnival: India Fest of Lights**
- **The Hindu Society of Manitoba**

READ MORE: Fun ways to celebrate Diwali

The Diwali in Vernon Festival run October 9th to the 13th.

The festival will launch on Tuesday, October 9th, 7 p.m. at the Okanagan Regional Library. On Wednesday, a

welcomes the public to celebrate Diwali

-  **Dense smoke from Diwali fireworks causes 20-vehicle pileup in northern India**

free lantern-making workshop will take place at the Vernon Community Arts Centre, from 10 a.m. to noon, and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Lanterns can be taken home or left on display as part of the Centre's exhibit, which runs September 28th to October 25th.

Other events include an interactive kids workshop on October 11th, a yoga class on October 12th and a pop-up performance on October 13th at the library.

"In Vernon, there wasn't a Diwali festival and we partnered with Diwali in B.C., based out of Vancouver, and they've been growing throughout the province," said Kennedy. "And we saw what was happening throughout the valley and we wanted to bring something to Vernon. We're hoping that it will grow."

For more about the Diwali in Vernon Festival, [click here](#).

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Diwali in BC, a provincial initiative aimed at making Diwali celebrations province-wide over the next five years created by Rohit Chokhani took place from October 3 to November 17. The artistic theme for the 2018 celebrations, which take place October 3 to November 17, is 'New Horizons' and featured programming in Vancouver, Coquitlam, Vernon, Maple Ridge, and Nanaimo.



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Rohit Chokhani

13 October 2017 |  [Email This Post](#) |  [Print This Post](#)

The artist **Rohit Chokhani** discusses [Diwali in BC](#), a five-week event beginning this weekend, and Project SAT (South Asian Theatre), an initiative to promote theatrical production here, as well he discusses his work at various production companies here in Vancouver, with Joseph Planta.

Text of introduction by Joseph Planta:

I am *Planta: On the Line*, in Vancouver, at *TheCommentary.ca*.

Rohit Chokhani joins me now. The 2017 Jessie Award recipient for Significant Artistic Achievement has lived in Vancouver for seven years, and in as many years has held positions at various arts organisations including general manager at Touchstone Theatre and Urban Ink Production, artistic associate at Bard on the Beach, producer-in-residence at the National Arts Centre, as well as artistic producer at the South Asian Arts Society. He has also started Project SAT, SAT as in South Asian Theatre. It's an initiative that creates a network for developing, touring, producing, and presenting national and international South Asian theatre projects in Canada. I'll get Mr. Chokhani to tell us about that, and Diwali in BC, which begins this weekend. It's a five-week event exploring the theme of Shakti. We'll reflect on feminine power, and the theatrical, dance, and cultural workshops that will feature works from the film director Deepa Mehta, among many others. Visit www.diwalibc.ca for more. Please welcome to the *Planta: On the Line* program, Rohit Chokhani; Mr. Chokhani, good morning.



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Artistic Director and cultural leader Rohit Chokhani is pleased to launch Diwali in BC – a new provincial initiative aimed at making Diwali celebrations province-wide over the next five years.

During its launch year, Diwali in BC will explore the artistic theme of Shakti – feminine power – through theatre, dance, film, and culturally specific workshops. The programming will feature works primarily created by women, including Academy Award-nominated Canadian director Deepa Mehta, Dora Award-winning playwright Pamela Mala Sinha, Dr. Aparna Sindhoo along with her pioneering South Asian Contemporary Dance Theatre company Navarasa Dance Theater, rising South Asian award-winning actress Dipti Mehta, and classical dance theatre artist Arno Kamolika.

“After the success of celebrating Diwali through my curation in metro Vancouver over the past four years, it became clear to me that there was a province-wide demand to go beyond metro Vancouver and a need for a new organizational structure to hold this vision for the next five years,” says Chokhani. “Diwali in BC is my response to that need. This year, I am thrilled and honoured to showcase the work of strong, intelligent and



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incredibly talented women, and hope our city and province embraces this initiative.”

The inaugural Diwali in BC will feature the following programming:

Encounter

October 17-22 at the York Theatre | Presented with The Cultch
Navarasa Dance Theatre’s Encounter is a provocative performance blending daring physical theatre with bold storytelling. Inspired by award-winning writer Mahasweta Devi’s short story, and using acrobatics and original music, Encounter is the story of an indigenous woman, her defiance against injustice, and her communities’ struggle to uphold their indigenous way of life. Tickets at <http://bit.ly/2fUewIx>

Honour: Confessions of a Mumbai Courtesan

October 20–November 4 at Vancity Culture Lab at The Cultch | Presented with The Cultch

In this one-woman play, award-winning actress Dipti Mehta transports us to Mumbai’s red-light district to spotlight the plight of those trapped in the world of sex trafficking. Tickets at <http://bit.ly/2yJaiuW>

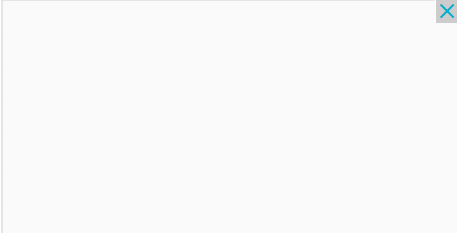
Anatomy of Violence

November 4 at Cineplex Odeon International Village | Co-presented with Vancouver Asian Film Festival
Deepa Mehta’s film Anatomy of Violence examines one of the country’s most internationally notorious crimes: the 2012 gang rape and murder of a 23-year-old woman on a Delhi bus. In collaboration with theatre director Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry, Mehta worked improvisationally with her actors to envisage possible sociological and psychological backgrounds and pasts for both the perpetrators and the victim—highlighting a patriarchal culture, cycle of abuse, and an economic system skewed against the disadvantaged. Film screening followed by panel discussion, “Sparking Celluloid: Filmmaking for Social Change”, comprised of local filmmakers, artists, and social justice workers. Tickets available October 5 at www.vaff.org

Happy Place

*October 19-29 at Firehall Arts Centre | Presented by Touchstone Theatre in association with Ruby Slippers Theatre and Diwali in BC

Written by Dora Award-winning actress and playwright Pamela Mala Sinha, whose powerful performance in Nirbhaya (2015) took Vancouver by storm, Happy Place takes us into the experiences of seven women in an in-patient care facility, living together in the most extraordinary circumstances. It is a glimpse into lives filled with courage, compassion, humour, and startling

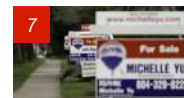


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surprise. Happy Place features an amazingly diverse cast of Vancouver actresses with over fifty Jessie Richardson Theatre Awards and nominations combined, and the directorial return of acclaimed director, Roy Surette. *Preview on October 19; Production Run, October 20-29. Tickets at <http://bit.ly/2hzf22c>

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November 16 at the York Theatre | Co-presented with Vancouver Tagore Society

A Bharata-Natyam interpretation of Rabindranath Tagore's epic dance drama 'Shyama'. Choreographed by Jai Govinda, Artistic Director at Mandala Arts & Culture Society, and performed by his disciple Arno Kamolika, this dance theatre piece is a tribute to India's highly acclaimed playwright Rabindranath Tagore. Tickets at www.thecultch.com

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Diwali at Evergreen

November 5 at Evergreen Cultural Centre | In collaboration with the TriCity India Heritage Network

As part of the VARIETY SERIES at the Evergreen Cultural Centre, Diwali in BC is proud to bring the Diwali celebrations to Coquitlam. This South Asian, cabaret-style evening features classical, Bollywood, and contemporary dance as well as classical live music performances. Tickets at <http://bit.ly/2xNgTXo>

For more information on Diwali in BC, visit www.diwalibc.ca

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The Shiamak Dance Team headlines the multicultural showcase that closes off Diwali in Vernon Festival Oct. 13. (Photo submitted)

Vernon Diwali festival to shine

Inaugural festival is Oct. 9-13

PARKER CROOK / Sep. 26, 2018 1:00 p.m. / ENTERTAINMENT

It's five days of lights, performances and art, all with the purpose of celebrating culture.

Through a partnership with Diwali in B.C., the Vernon and District Performing Arts Centre is at the helm of the Vernon Diwali Festival, which runs Oct. 9-13 at venues across the city.

The Festival will host a variety of multicultural activities around Vernon, culminating in a showcase at the Vernon and District Performing Arts Centre Oct. 13 at 7 p.m. The Diwali in Vernon Festival showcase is part of the Spotlight Special Presentation series.

Related: Performing Arts Centre announces Spotlight series

Vernon's festival falls under Diwali in B.C.'s 2018 umbrella with the theme New Horizons. Programs are also being conducted in Vancouver, Coquitlam, Maple Ridge and Nanaimo.

“In our second bold and ambitious year, we respond artistically to racial tensions and gender abuse that continues to threaten the safety of the world in which we live, with the theme of New Horizons,” said Diwali in B.C. artistic director Rohit Chokhani.

“In *A Vancouver Guldasta*, we have fresh conversations around trauma and healing through the lens of a Punjabi-Sikh family living with a Vietnamese refugee in Vancouver. In *The Believers Are But Brothers* we take a deeper look at toxic masculinity, and with *Shyama* we explore different colours of love, the price of desire, forgiveness, and morality through one of India's most celebrated playwrights — Rabindranath Tagore.”

In Vernon, the week kicks off with the Festival Launch at the Okanagan Regional Library Oct. 9 at 7 p.m. Featuring pop-up performances by local artists and the launch of an interactive Rangoli art project, all ages are invited to attend this free event. Soul Studio will also be hosting a BollyX Class at 5:45 p.m. Pricing and registration information can be found through Soul Studio's website, soulstudio.ca.

A free Lantern Making Workshop follows on Oct. 10 at the Vernon Community Arts Centre from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1-4 p.m.

“Drop in during these times to make a beautiful handmade lantern,” said a Vernon and District Performing Arts Centre spokesperson.

Children must be accompanied by an adult. Lanterns can be taken home on the day of the workshop, or they can be left on display as part of the Centre Gallery’s Diwali in Vernon Festival exhibit, which runs Sept. 28 to Oct. 25.

The Library will be hosting a fun and interactive kids’ workshop Oct. 11 at 3:30 p.m. where kids can learn about the history of Diwali and South Asian dance.

Read more below



On Oct. 12 start your day at Soul Studio for their Yin Yoga Class at 10:15 a.m., then head to the Vernon Public Art Gallery and take part in a Rangoli art project. Open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., all ages are invited to come and contribute to making a large community Rangoli. This activity will be open during regular gallery hours until Oct 20.

From 3:30 to 4:30 p.m., don’t miss the Okanagan Science Centre’s Stars and Mythology event: a planetarium show centred around South Asian mythology and its connection to Diwali. The cost is included with regular admission to the Science Centre: \$5 for children, \$8 for adults, \$5 for seniors. No pre-registration is required.

To end off the day on Friday, Record City is hosting a World Dance Concert with Zimbamoto and local guests with doors at 7 p.m. and show at 7:30 p.m. Early bird price is \$15 per person, tickets at the door are \$20. Get \$5 off by showing a Diwali in Vernon Festival showcase ticket at the door (and get the \$15 price). Also, if patrons buy tickets to the Zimbamoto concert, they can receive \$5 off your Diwali in Vernon Festival showcase ticket.

For the last day of the festival, Oct. 13, the Library will be hosting a pop-up performance at 2 p.m. This is a free event for all ages.

“The festival will culminate in a multicultural showcase of diverse artists from different backgrounds,” said Vernon and District Performing Arts Centre artistic director Erin Kennedy. “Activities throughout the week shall include workshops, discussions, dance performances, musical performances, cultural activities, crafts and a wide range of other possibilities.”

The multicultural showcase of diverse artists from different backgrounds, headlined by the popular Bollywood dance group from Vancouver the Shiamak Dance Team, will take place at the Vernon and District Performing Arts Centre Oct. 13 at 7 p.m. Pre-show activities will begin in the lobby at 5 p.m. Tickets for



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the Diwali in Vernon Festival showcase are \$35 for adults, \$32 for seniors and \$30 for students. Call the Ticket Seller Box Office at 250-549-7469 or visit www.ticketseller.ca.

To end off the night, the Curry Pot will be hosting an Indian Buffet Dinner at 9 p.m. Eat with the performers and celebrate South Asian culture with delicious food. Tickets for the Curry Pot dinner are \$30 per person. Limited tickets available, buy now through the Ticket Seller.

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Diwali in BC

By **posted by: Rattan Mall** - October 3, 2017



ARTISTIC Director Rohit Chokhani is launching Diwali in BC – a new provincial initiative aimed at making Diwali celebrations province-wide over the next five years. During its launch year, Diwali in BC will explore the artistic theme of Shakti – feminine power – through theatre, dance, film, and culturally specific workshops. The programming will feature works primarily created by women, including Academy Award-nominated Canadian director Deepa Mehta, Dora Award-winning playwright Pamela Mala Sinha, Dr. Aparna Sindhoo along with her pioneering South Asian Contemporary Dance Theatre company Navarasa Dance Theater, rising South Asian award-winning actress Dipti Mehta, and classical dance theatre artist Arno Kamolika.

The inaugural Diwali in BC will feature the following programming:

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[October 17-22 at the York Theatre | Presented with The Cultch](#)

Navarasa Dance Theatre's Encounter is a provocative performance blending daring physical theatre with bold storytelling. Inspired by award-winning writer Mahasweta Devi's short story, and using acrobatics and original music, Encounter is the story of an indigenous woman, her defiance against injustice, and her communities' struggle to uphold their indigenous way of life. Tickets at <http://bit.ly/2fUewIx>

Honour: Confessions of a Mumbai Courtesan

[October 20-November 4 at Vancity Culture Lab at The Cultch | Presented with The Cultch](#)

In this one-woman play, award-winning actress Dipti Mehta transports us to Mumbai's red-light district to spotlight the plight of those trapped in the world of sex trafficking. Tickets at <http://bit.ly/2yJaiuW>

Anatomy of Violence

[November 4 at Cineplex Odeon International Village | Co-presented with Vancouver Asian Film Festival](#)

Deepa Mehta's film Anatomy of Violence examines one of the country's most internationally notorious crimes: the 2012 gang rape and murder of a 23-year-old woman on a Delhi bus. In collaboration with theatre director Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry, Mehta worked improvisationally with her actors to envisage possible sociological and psychological backgrounds and pasts for both the perpetrators and the victim—highlighting a patriarchal culture, cycle of abuse, and an economic system skewed against the disadvantaged. Film screening followed by panel discussion, "Sparking Celluloid: Filmmaking for Social Change", comprised of local filmmakers, artists, and social justice workers. Tickets available October 5 at www.vaff.org

Happy Place

[*October 19-29 at Firehall Arts Centre | Presented by Touchstone Theatre in association with Ruby Slippers Theatre and Diwali in BC](#)

Written by Dora Award-winning actress and playwright Pamela Mala Sinha, whose powerful performance in Nirbhaya (2015) took Vancouver by storm, Happy Place takes us into the experiences of seven women in an in-patient care facility, living together in the most extraordinary circumstances. It is a glimpse into lives filled with courage, compassion, humour, and startling surprise. Happy Place features an amazingly diverse cast of Vancouver actresses with over fifty Jessie Richardson Theatre Awards and nominations combined, and the directorial return of acclaimed director, Roy Surette. *Preview on October 19; Production Run, October 20-29. Tickets at <http://bit.ly/2hzhf22c>

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For more information on Diwali in BC, visit www.diwalibc.ca



Navarasa Dance Theatre's "Encounter" will be staged at Vancouver's York Theatre from Oct. 17 to 22.

New 'Diwali in BC' festival explores feminine power through theatre, dance, film

Five-week event founded by artistic director Rohit Chokhani

Fri Oct 13th, 2017 2:40pm / [ENTERTAINMENT](#) [LOCAL ENTERTAINMENT](#)

A new provincial initiative celebrates Diwali for a month, from Oct. 14 to Nov. 16.

The five-week [Diwali in BC](#) festival explores "feminine power through theatre, dance and film, and shines a light on works created by diverse and talented women."

Artistic director Rohit Chokhani is the force behind the inaugural event, which in its launch year will explore the artistic theme of shakti, or feminine power.

The programming will feature works primarily created by women, including Academy Award-nominated Canadian director Deepa Mehta, Dora Award-winning playwright Pamela Mala Sinha, Dr. Aparna Sindhoor along with her pioneering South Asian Contemporary Dance Theatre company Navarasa Dance Theater, rising South Asian award-winning actress Dipti Mehta, and classical dance theatre artist Arno Kamolika.

“After the success of celebrating Diwali through my curation in Metro Vancouver over the past four years, it became clear to me that there was a province-wide demand to go beyond Metro Vancouver and a need for a new organizational structure to hold this vision for the next five years,” Chokhani stated.

“Diwali in BC is my response to that need. This year, I am thrilled and honoured to showcase the work of strong, intelligent and incredibly talented women, and hope our city and province embraces this initiative.”

None of the events are planned in Surrey for 2017, but the city is in the festival's future plans.

This year, Navarasa Dance Theatre's "Encounter" will be staged at Vancouver's York Theatre from Oct. 17 to 22, followed by Dipti Mehta in "Honour: Confessions of a Mumbai Courtesan," at Vancity Culture Lab from Oct. 20 to Nov. 4.

Later, Deepa Mehta's film, "Anatomy of Violence," will be shown on Nov. 4 at Cineplex Odeon International Village, in a co-presentation with Vancouver Asian Film Festival.

For Touchstone Theatre, Pamela Mala Sinha's play "Happy Place" hits the stage at Vancouver's Firehall Arts Centre from Oct. 19 to 29, and the dance drama "Shyama" will be at the York Theatre on Nov. 16.

Elsewhere, the festival will include a "Diwali at Evergreen" event at Coquitlam's Evergreen Cultural Centre on Nov. 5.

Diwali in B.C. explores feminine power with 5 weeks of celebrations

Artistic director of events hoping to expand across province in coming years

By Clare Hennig, [CBC News](#) Posted: Oct 16, 2017 9:00 AM PT Last Updated: Oct 16, 2017 9:00 AM PT

Diwali is just around the corner and, this year, an event curator and artistic director in Metro Vancouver is stretching the celebrations over five weeks and turning the attention to feminine power.

Rohit Chokhani, who has curated Diwali events for the past four years and won a 2017 Jessie Award for his work, said he wanted to do something different with the Hindu festival of lights celebrations this year.

"The projects that I was interested in and the artists that were interested just happened this year to be all strong female voices," Chokhani said. "I saw that there was an overlaying arch in all of these voices — it was around shakti which is also a Diwali message of feminine power."

Shakti, he said, is the underlying tie between the various [Diwali events in B.C.](#) Some of the big female names in the events include filmmaker Deepa Mehta, dancer Arno Kamolika and actress Dipti Mehta.

Chokhani described Diwali as one of the biggest celebrations of the year.

"During the time of Diwali, the idea is to take the universal message of Diwali which is good over evil, light over darkness, and knowledge over ignorance and celebrate that message in an artistic way and hopefully transform lives by using performing arts as a mechanism for it," he said.

Expanding across the province

Chokhani is hoping to make Diwali celebrations more accessible to all British Columbians with his new project.

"This is a new initiative with a new organization behind it and the idea is to expand provincially over the next five years," he said.

For now, the events are all in the Lower Mainland. Chokhani said he is having conversations with artists and organizations across the province from Vernon to Vancouver Island about spreading the festivities.

"The idea is to create an artistic platform for artists to showcase the multiculturalism of Canada and South Asian works at the same time so there is an intercultural dialogue," he said.

Diwali in B.C. celebrations premier on Tuesday, Oct. 17 with "Encounter" at the York Theatre and run until Thursday, Nov. 16.

With files from On The Coast and North by Northwest.



The Vernon and District Performing Arts Centre in collaboration with Diwali in B.C. is launching the inaugural Diwali in Vernon Oct. 9-13. (File photo)

Vernon Diwali Festival seeks performers

Inaugural festival slated for Oct. 9-13

MORNING STAR STAFF / Jun. 25, 2018 5:00

a.m. / [ENTERTAINMENT](#) / [LOCAL ENTERTAINMENT](#)

Diwali is coming to Vernon.

Diwali in B.C. and the Vernon and District Performing Arts Centre Society announced the inaugural annual Diwali in Vernon Festival 2018, set to take place at multiple locations in Vernon as part of the Diwali in B.C. festival occurring province-wide.

“The festival will culminate in a multicultural showcase of diverse artists from different backgrounds,” said artistic director Erin Kennedy in a release. “Activities throughout the week shall include workshops, discussions, dance performances, musical performances, cultural activities, crafts and a wide range of other possibilities.”

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The Society is currently looking for performers, speakers, artists and workshop instructors to participate in the 2018 Festival. The proposed activities should be relevant and appropriate to the multicultural themes of the festival and the underlying theme of Diwali, more popularly known as the festival of light in India.

The festival will aim to showcase artists from Vernon and the Okanagan region. Other national artists visiting Vernon specifically for this festival will also be performing.

“We are interested in submissions from a wide range of emerging and established artists with diverse backgrounds including but not limited to Indigenous, South Asian or South Asian influenced artists and performers practicing traditional or contemporary performing arts,” Kennedy said.

“Artists performing a fusion of cultures will also be considered. Our Festival is committed to engaging with values of inclusivity and equity within our communities. We strongly encourage submissions from individuals who self-identify as being from underrepresented backgrounds or from communities that often feel marginalized.”

Solo, duet and group performers are welcome to apply. Dance or music performances can be from five minutes in length up to 20 minutes. Performances longer than 10 minutes shall only be considered from professional artists. Emerging artists are encouraged to keep their performances to a maximum of five-10 minutes in length.

The festival will run Oct. 9-13 with the final show at the Vernon & District Performing Arts Centre Oct. 13 at 7 p.m.

[Related: Vernon Performing Arts Centre announces Spotlight series](#)

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Rohit Chokhani Announces DIWALI IN B.C. This Fall

by BWW News Desk Aug. 14, 2018

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Award-winning Artistic Director of Diwali in B.C., Rohit Chokhani is pleased to announce the 2018 programming for Diwali in B.C. - a provincial initiative aimed at making Diwali celebrations province-wide over the next five years.

Launched in 2017 with the artistic theme of Shakti - feminine power - Diwali in B.C. saw huge success with presentations such as Navarasa Dance Theatre's Encounter, Dipti

Mehta's Honour: Confessions of a Mumbai Courtesan and Pamela Mala Sinha's Happy Place, to name a few.

The artistic theme for the 2018 celebrations, which take place October 3 to November 17, is 'New Horizons' and features programming in Vancouver, Coquitlam, Vernon, Maple Ridge, and Nanaimo.

"In our second bold and ambitious year, we respond artistically to racial tensions and gender abuse that continues to threaten the safety of the world in which we live, with the theme of New Horizons," says Chokhani. "In A Vancouver Guldasta, we have fresh conversations around trauma and healing through the lens of a Punjabi-Sikh family living with a Vietnamese refugee in Vancouver. In The Believers Are But Brothers we take a deeper look at toxic masculinity, and with Shyama we explore different colours of love, the price of desire, forgiveness, and morality through one of India's most celebrated playwrights - Rabindranath Tagore.

Chokhani adds, "We are also excited to expand our Diwali programming to three new cities while we continue to grow and evolve in the existing cities."

Here is a look at the 2018 Diwali in B.C. programming:

A Vancouver Guldasta October 2-21 at Vancity Culture Lab | Presented with The Cultch A Vancouver Guldasta focuses on a Punjabi family in Vancouver in the early 1980s as they navigate through the experience of trauma and violence occurring in Punjab, and their daughter's complicated friendship with a Vietnamese refugee teen who lives in their basement. The story takes place during the Indian government's armed invasion of the 'Golden Temple' - the holiest shrine of the Sikhs - in the epicentre of the Sikh diaspora, South Vancouver, B.C. A Vancouver Guldasta is an examination of common experience, identifying home, and processing trauma.

Diwali in B.C., Vernon October 9-13 at various locations in Vernon, including the Vernon & District Performing Arts Centre This inaugural event is presented with the Vernon & District Performing Arts Centre and will culminate in a multicultural showcase of diverse artists from different backgrounds. Activities throughout the week will include workshops, discussions, dance performances, musical performances, cultural activities, and crafts. The festival's final performance, featuring headliner Shiamak Vancouver, takes place at the Vernon & District Performing Arts Centre on Saturday, October 13 at 7:00pm.

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Shyama October 27 at the York Theatre Co-presented with Vancouver Tagore Society and in community partnership with Mandala Arts & Culture Society, with support from BC Arts Council. A Bharatanatyam interpretation of Tagore's epic Bengali dance drama Shyama with original choreography by Jai Govinda. This dance theatre piece is a tribute to the first non-European Nobel-laureate poet Rabindranath Tagore and his magically visual poetry and music of love. Dance artist Arno Kamolika has been collaborating with musician Shankhanaad Mallick and with director Rohit Chokhani for over two years on this production, and Diwali in B.C. will debut their most current version of this poetic, deep philosophical story that will be performed on stage with other Bharatanatyam dancers in B.C.: Grihalakshmi Soundarapandian, Jaylakshmi Ravindra , Malavika Santhosh, and Vidya Kotamraju.

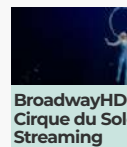
The Believers Are But Brothers October 30-November 10 at Vancity Culture Lab | Presented with The Cultch Written and performed by Javaad Alipoor, and co-directed by Javaad Alipoor and [Kirsty Housley](#), The Believers Are But Brothers is an electronic maze of fantasists, meme culture, 4chan, the alt-right, and ISIS. Old orders are collapsing, from the postcolonial nation states of the Middle East to the European Union and to the American election. Through it all, tech-savvy and extremist groups rip up political certainties. Amidst this, a generation of young men find themselves burning with resentment and without the money, power, and sex they think they deserve. This bold one-man show explores the smoke and mirrors world of online extremism, anonymity, and hate speech.

Diwali in B.C., Maple Ridge November 10 at The ACT Arts Centre This inaugural event is presented with The ACT Arts Centre. The evening celebrates South Asian culture with classical and contemporary dance as well as live music performances, and a special performance by Shiamak Vancouver.

Diwali in B.C., Coquitlam November 11 at Evergreen Cultural Centre Diwali at Evergreen is in its second year and is presented by the Evergreen Cultural Centre. The South Asian themed evening features live music as well as classical and contemporary dance performances, including a special performance by Arno Kamolika.

Details and further Diwali in B.C. programming announcements for Nanaimo to be made soon.

Diwali in B.C. is honoured to have its home on the unceded territories of the Coast Salish people of the xwm??kw?y?m, Skwxwú7mesh and S?ilw?ta? Nations. Diwali in B.C., which falls under the Raghupriya Arts and Culture Society, is a new initiative founded and produced by Rohit Chokhani. After producing and curating numerous Diwali celebrations throughout Metro Vancouver for the last four years, culminating in a Jessie Richardson Theatre Award, Rohit is embarking on this new, bold, and ambitious initiative to make the Diwali celebrations province-wide over the next five years. This initiative was founded in 2017 in Metro Vancouver. Diwali in B.C. is an annual multicultural, multi- disciplinary, inclusive festival which aims to showcase artists from diverse backgrounds and different abilities to celebrate the festival of lights during the annual Indian New Year. www.diwalibc.ca.



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Diwali in BC to take place October 14 to November 16

Vancity Culture Lab at The Cultch 14 Oct '17 to 16 Nov '17 @ 12:00 PM - 10:00 PM



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Previous	October 2017						Next
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	29	30	31				

Artistic Director and cultural leader Rohit Chokhani is pleased to launch Diwali in BC - a new provincial initiative aimed at making Diwali celebrations province-wide over the next five years.

During its launch year, Diwali in BC will explore the artistic theme of Shakti - feminine power - through theatre, dance, film, and culturally specific workshops. The programming will feature works primarily created by women, including Academy Award-nominated Canadian director Deepa Mehta, Dora Award-winning playwright Pamela Mala Sinha, Dr. Aparna Sindhoor along with her pioneering South Asian Contemporary Dance Theatre company Navarasa Dance Theater, rising South Asian award-winning actress Dipti Mehta, and classical dance theatre artist Arno Kamolika.

The inaugural Diwali in BC will feature the following programming:

Encounter

October 17-22 at the York Theatre | Presented with The Cultch
 Navarasa Dance Theatre's Encounter is a provocative performance blending daring physical theatre with bold storytelling. Tickets at <http://bit.ly/2fUewlx>

Honour: Confessions of a Mumbai Courtesan

October 20-November 4 at Vancity Culture Lab at The Cultch | Presented with The Cultch
 In this one-woman play, award-winning actress Dipti Mehta transports us to Mumbai's red-light district to spotlight the plight of those trapped in the world of sex trafficking. Tickets at <http://bit.ly/2yJaiuW>

Anatomy of Violence

November 4 at Cineplex Odeon International Village | Co-presented with Vancouver Asian Film Festival
 Deepa Mehta's film Anatomy of Violence examines one of the country's most internationally notorious crimes: the 2012 gang rape and murder of a 23-year-old woman on a Delhi bus. Film screening followed by panel discussion, "Sparking Celluloid: Filmmaking for Social Change",

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Diwali in BC to take place October 14 to November 16

comprised of local filmmakers, artists, and social justice workers. Tickets available October 5 at www.vaff.org

Happy Place

*October 19-29 at Firehall Arts Centre | Presented by Touchstone Theatre in association with Ruby Slippers Theatre and Diwali in BC
Written by Dora Award-winning actress and playwright Pamela Mala Sinha, Happy Place takes us into the experiences of seven women in an in-patient care facility, living together in the most extraordinary circumstances. It is a glimpse into lives filled with courage, compassion, humour, and startling surprise. *Preview on October 19; Production Run, October 20-29. Tickets at <http://bit.ly/2hzf22c>

Shyama

November 16 at the York Theatre | Co-presented with Vancouver Tagore Society
A Bharata-Natyam interpretation of Rabindranath Tagore’s epic dance drama ‘Shyama’. Tickets at www.thecultch.com

Project SAT Workshop Series

Various Dates at Various Venues | In collaboration with New(to)Town Collective
Workshops with Anosh Irani, Dipti Mehta, Rohit Chokhani, and New(to)Town Collective. Schedule details at www.projectsat.ca

Diwali at Evergreen

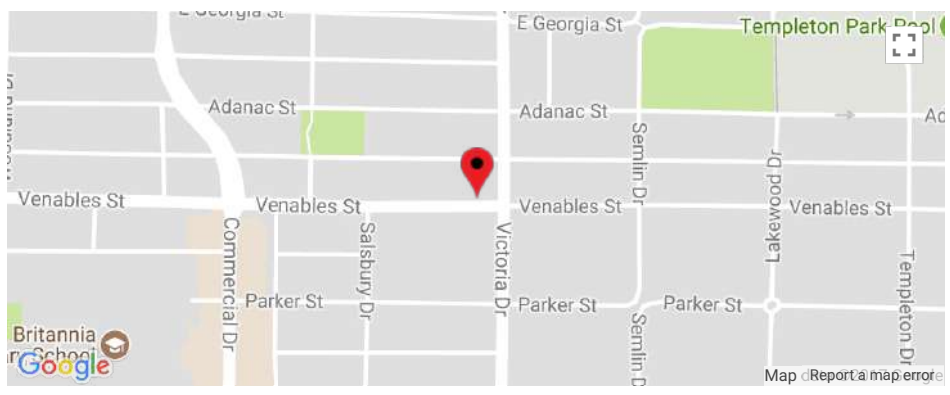
November 5 at Evergreen Cultural Centre | In collaboration with the TriCity India Heritage Network
Diwali in BC is proud to bring the Diwali celebrations to Coquitlam. This South Asian, cabaret-style evening features classical, Bollywood, and contemporary dance as well as classical live music performances. Tickets at <http://bit.ly/2xNgTXo>

For more information on Diwali in BC, visit www.diwalibc.ca

Image by Jessica Mentis

Event Location

Vancity Culture Lab at The Cultch
Address: 1895 Venables St
Postcode: V5L 2H6



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Five reasons to check out Diwali in B.C.

Diwali in B.C. celebrates the Indian New Year with six weeks of theatre, dance and workshops.



Shawn Conner

[More from Shawn Conner](https://www.theobserver.ca/author/www.thesnipenews.com) (https://www.theobserver.ca/author/www.thesnipenews.com)

Published on: September 26, 2018 | Last Updated: September 26, 2018 2:17 PM EDT



A scene from *A Vancouver Guldasta*, on at Vancity Culture Lab Oct. 2 to 21 as part of Diwali in B.C. *PARDEEP SINGH / PNG*

Diwali in B.C.

When: Oct. 3 to Nov. 17

Where: Various locations in Vancouver, Coquitlam, Vernon, Maple Ridge, Nanaimo

Tickets and info: diwalibc.ca (<http://diwalibc.ca>)

1. A Vancouver Guldasta. Now in its second year, Diwali in B.C. is a multi-disciplinary festival which celebrates the festival of lights (Diwali) during the annual Indian New Year. The 2018 edition is a six-week event with theatre, dance and “culturally specific workshops” in various B.C. locales, and is themed New Horizons. Kicking off the festival is a remount of last year’s A Vancouver Guldasta. Written and directed by Vancouver-based Paneet Singh, the ’80s-set play concerns a Punjabi-Sikh family living in south Vancouver, their daughter’s relationship with a Vietnamese refugee, and the Indian government’s invasion of the Sikh holy shrine, the Golden Temple.

2. The Believers Are But Brothers. Written and performed by English playwright Javaad Alipoor, the one-man play received positive reviews when it opened at the Edinburgh Festival in 2017. Using digital media, fictional accounts, and the results of his research, Alipoor explores how and why some young men become extremists.

3. Shyama. A collaboration between dance artist Arno Kamolika, musician Shankhanaad Mallick and Chokhani, Shyama is a Bharatanatyam (a genre of Indian classical dance) interpretation of a romantic tragedy told through dance and song. It was written by Rabindranath Tagore, the first non-European Nobel-laureate poet (in 1913).

4. Bombay Black. A hit at last year’s Vancouver Fringe Festival, Anosh Irani’s Bombay Black is about an Indian exotic dancer and her embittered mother.

5. Diwali on the road. Classical and contemporary dance, live music and more are part of the Diwali in B.C. presentations in Vernon, Maple Ridge, and Coquitlam.

Trending in Canada



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The hooded
figurine:
Entirely



The Shiamak Dance Team headlines the multicultural showcase that closes off Diwali in Vernon Festival Oct. 13. (Photo submitted)

Vernon Diwali festival to shine

Inaugural festival is Oct. 9-13

PARKER CROOK / Sep. 26, 2018 1:00 p.m. / ENTERTAINMENT

It's five days of lights, performances and art, all with the purpose of celebrating culture.

Through a partnership with Diwali in B.C., the Vernon and District Performing Arts Centre is at the helm of the Vernon Diwali Festival, which runs Oct. 9-13 at venues across the city.

The Festival will host a variety of multicultural activities around Vernon, culminating in a showcase at the Vernon and District Performing Arts Centre Oct. 13 at 7 p.m. The Diwali in Vernon Festival showcase is part of the Spotlight Special Presentation series.

Related: Performing Arts Centre announces Spotlight series

Vernon's festival falls under Diwali in B.C.'s 2018 umbrella with the theme New Horizons. Programs are also being conducted in Vancouver, Coquitlam, Maple Ridge and Nanaimo.

“In our second bold and ambitious year, we respond artistically to racial tensions and gender abuse that continues to threaten the safety of the world in which we live, with the theme of New Horizons,” said Diwali in B.C. artistic director Rohit Chokhani.

“In *A Vancouver Guldasta*, we have fresh conversations around trauma and healing through the lens of a Punjabi-Sikh family living with a Vietnamese refugee in Vancouver. In *The Believers Are But Brothers* we take a deeper look at toxic masculinity, and with *Shyama* we explore different colours of love, the price of desire, forgiveness, and morality through one of India's most celebrated playwrights — Rabindranath Tagore.”

In Vernon, the week kicks off with the Festival Launch at the Okanagan Regional Library Oct. 9 at 7 p.m. Featuring pop-up performances by local artists and the launch of an interactive Rangoli art project, all ages are invited to attend this free event. Soul Studio will also be hosting a BollyX Class at 5:45 p.m. Pricing and registration information can be found through Soul Studio's website, soulstudio.ca.

A free Lantern Making Workshop follows on Oct. 10 at the Vernon Community Arts Centre from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1-4 p.m.

“Drop in during these times to make a beautiful handmade lantern,” said a Vernon and District Performing Arts Centre spokesperson.

Children must be accompanied by an adult. Lanterns can be taken home on the day of the workshop, or they can be left on display as part of the Centre Gallery’s Diwali in Vernon Festival exhibit, which runs Sept. 28 to Oct. 25.

The Library will be hosting a fun and interactive kids’ workshop Oct. 11 at 3:30 p.m. where kids can learn about the history of Diwali and South Asian dance.

Read more below



On Oct. 12 start your day at Soul Studio for their Yin Yoga Class at 10:15 a.m., then head to the Vernon Public Art Gallery and take part in a Rangoli art project. Open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., all ages are invited to come and contribute to making a large community Rangoli. This activity will be open during regular gallery hours until Oct 20.

From 3:30 to 4:30 p.m., don’t miss the Okanagan Science Centre’s Stars and Mythology event: a planetarium show centred around South Asian mythology and its connection to Diwali. The cost is included with regular admission to the Science Centre: \$5 for children, \$8 for adults, \$5 for seniors. No pre-registration is required.

To end off the day on Friday, Record City is hosting a World Dance Concert with Zimbamoto and local guests with doors at 7 p.m. and show at 7:30 p.m. Early bird price is \$15 per person, tickets at the door are \$20. Get \$5 off by showing a Diwali in Vernon Festival showcase ticket at the door (and get the \$15 price). Also, if patrons buy tickets to the

Zimbamoto concert, they can receive \$5 off your Diwali in Vernon Festival showcase ticket.

For the last day of the festival, Oct. 13, the Library will be hosting a pop-up performance at 2 p.m. This is a free event for all ages.

“The festival will culminate in a multicultural showcase of diverse artists from different backgrounds,” said Vernon and District Performing Arts Centre artistic director Erin Kennedy. “Activities throughout the week shall include workshops, discussions, dance performances, musical performances, cultural activities, crafts and a wide range of other possibilities.”

The multicultural showcase of diverse artists from different backgrounds, headlined by the popular Bollywood dance group from Vancouver the Shiamak Dance Team, will take place at the Vernon and District Performing Arts Centre Oct. 13 at 7 p.m. Pre-show activities will begin in the lobby at 5 p.m. Tickets for the Diwali in Vernon Festival showcase are \$35 for adults, \$32 for seniors and \$30 for students. Call the Ticket Seller Box Office at 250-549-7469 or visit www.ticketseller.ca.

To end off the night, the Curry Pot will be hosting an Indian Buffet Dinner at 9 p.m. Eat with the performers and celebrate South Asian culture with delicious food. Tickets for the Curry Pot dinner are \$30 per person. Limited tickets available, buy now through the Ticket Seller.



Member Centre

Diwali in BC Celebrations

Name: Diwali in BC Celebrations

Date: November 10, 2018

Time: 8:00 PM - 10:00 PM PST

Website:
<https://www.theactmapleridge.org/act-presents/act-presents-series/diwali-in-bc-at-maple-ridge/>



Photo by Shiamak Vancouver

Event Description:

Join us for a multicultural Diwali in BC celebration, right here in Maple Ridge! This South Asian evening, hosted by Diwali in BC's Jessie Award winning **Rohit Chokhani**, will feature classical as well as contemporary dance and live music performances. This amazing showcase will be headlined by **Shiamak Vancouver**, a local company created by the Bollywood star choreographer **Shiamak Davar**.

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Location:

The ACT Arts Centre
11944 Haney Place
Maple Ridge, BC
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Date/Time Information:

Saturday, November 10, 2018
8:00pm

Contact Information:

[Send an Email](#)

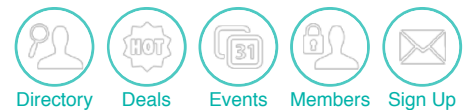
Fees/Admission:

Premium \$32
Preferred \$27
Orchestra \$22

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Nov 2 2018 Annual General Meeting

Chances, Maple Ridge
22710 Lougheed Hwy,
Maple Ridge, BC V2X 2V6

Nov 7 Non-Profit Showcase
The ACT Maple Ridge
11944 Haney Pl, Maple Ridge, BC

Dec 5 2018 BEA Nominees & Christmas Luncheon

Pitt Meadows Golf Club
13615 Harris Road,
Pitt Meadows, BC V3Y 2R8

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Proposed Shelter, Burnett Street, Maple Ridge

April 2018

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**“DIWALI IN BC” TO TAKE PLACE OCTOBER 14 TO
NOVEMBER 16, 2017**

**FIVE-WEEK EVENT CELEBRATES FEMININE POWER
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WOMEN**

(Vancouver, BC) | Artistic Director and cultural leader Rohit Chokhani is pleased to launch Diwali in BC – a new provincial initiative aimed at making Diwali celebrations province-wide over the next five years.



During its launch year, Diwali in BC will explore the artistic theme of Shakti – feminine power – through theatre, dance, film, and culturally specific workshops. The programming will feature works primarily created by women, including Academy Award-nominated Canadian director Deepa Mehta, Dora Award-winning playwright Pamela Mala Sinha, Dr. Aparna Sindhoor along with her pioneering South Asian Contemporary Dance Theatre company Navarasa Dance Theater, rising South Asian award-winning actress

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WITH
LAUNCH
OF NEW
PROVINCIA
L
INITIATIVE
(<http://surrey604.com/?p=33487>)



Published
10/4/2017

(http://surrey604.com/?p=33487)

Dipti Mehta, and classical dance theatre artist Arno Kamolika.



“After the success of celebrating Diwali through my curation in metro Vancouver over the past four years, it became clear to me that there was a province-wide demand to go beyond metro Vancouver and a need for a new organizational structure to hold this vision for the next five years,” says Chokhani. “Diwali in BC is my response to that need. This year, I am thrilled and honoured to showcase the work of strong, intelligent and incredibly talented women, and hope our city and province embraces this



Newly renovated Newton Recreation Centre re-opens with celebration (<http://surrey604.com/?p=33482>)



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(<http://surrey604.com/?p=33482>)

initiative.” The inaugural Diwali in BC will feature the following programming:

Encounter | October 17-22 at the York Theatre | Presented with The Cultch

Navarasa Dance Theatre’s *Encounter* is a provocative performance blending daring physical theatre with bold storytelling. Inspired by award-winning writer Mahasweta Devi’s short story, and using acrobatics and original music, *Encounter* is the story of an indigenous woman, her defiance against injustice, and her communities’ struggle to uphold their indigenous way of life. Tickets at

<http://bit.ly/2fUewlx>
(<http://bit.ly/2fUewlx>)

Honour: Confessions of a Mumbai Courtesan | October 20-November 4 at Vancity Culture Lab at The Cultch | Presented with The Cultch | In this one-woman play, award-winning actress Dipti Mehta transports us to Mumbai’s red-light district to spotlight the plight of those

Halloween Fun Event at Central City on October 31!
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trapped in the world of sex trafficking. Tickets at <http://bit.ly/2yjaiuW> (<http://bit.ly/2yjaiuW>)



Anatomy of Violence | November 4 at Cineplex Odeon International Village | Co-presented with Vancouver Asian Film Festival

Deepa Mehta's film *Anatomy of Violence* examines one of the country's most internationally notorious crimes: the 2012 gang rape and murder of a 23-year-old woman on a Delhi bus. In collaboration with theatre director Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry, Mehta worked improvisationally with her actors to envisage possible sociological and psychological backgrounds and pasts for both the perpetrators and the victim —highlighting a patriarchal



Ride For Refuge 2017 Helps Raise Nearly \$2,000,000! (<http://surrey604.com/?p=33470>)

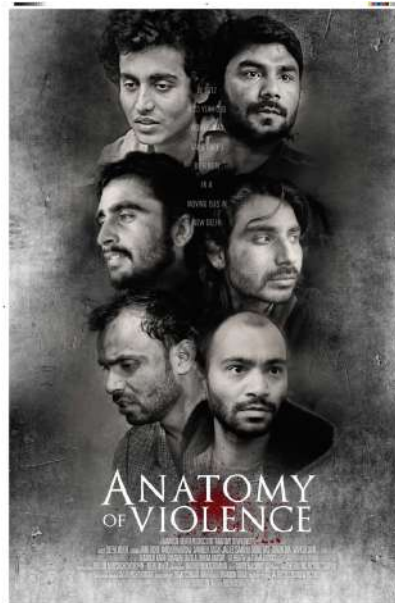


Published

(ht 10/1/2017

tp://surrey604.com/?p=33470)

culture, cycle of abuse, and an economic system skewed against the disadvantaged. Film screening followed by panel discussion, "Sparking Celluloid: Filmmaking for Social Change", comprised of local filmmakers, artists, and social justice workers. Tickets available October 5 at www.vaff.org (<http://www.vaff.org>)



Happy Place | *October 19-29 at Firehall Arts Centre | Presented by Touchstone Theatre in association with Ruby Slippers Theatre and Diwali in BC

Written by Dora Award-winning actress and playwright Pamela Mala Sinha, whose powerful performance in *Nirbhaya* (2015) took Vancouver by storm, *Happy Place* takes us into the experiences of seven women in an in-patient care facility, living together in the most extraordinary circumstances. It is a glimpse into lives filled with courage, compassion, humour, and startling surprise. *Happy Place* features an amazingly diverse cast of Vancouver

Surrey Events Calendar - October 2nd to October 8th

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City Dream Centre Raising Funds to Provide Mobile Dental Care For Surrey's Needy (<http://surrey604.com/2017/09/29/city->

actresses with over fifty Jessie Richardson Theatre Awards and nominations combined, and the directorial return of acclaimed director, Roy Surette. *Preview on October 19; Production Run, October 20-29. Tickets at <http://bit.ly/2hzf22c> (<http://bit.ly/2hzf22c>)

Shyama | November 16 at the York Theatre | Co-presented with Vancouver Tagore Society

A Bharata-Natyam interpretation of Rabindranath Tagore's epic dance drama 'Shyama'. Choreographed by Jai Govinda, Artistic Director at Mandala Arts & Culture Society, and performed by his disciple Arno Kamolika, this dance theatre piece is a tribute to India's highly acclaimed playwright Rabindranath Tagore. Tickets at www.thecultch.com (<http://www.thecultch.com>)

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Workshops with Anosh Irani,
Dipti Mehta, Rohit Chokhani,
and New(to)Town Collective.
Schedule details at
www.projectsat.ca
(<http://www.projectsat.ca>)

Diwali at Evergreen

| November 5 at Evergreen
Cultural Centre | In
collaboration with the TriCity
India Heritage Network | As
part of the VARIETY SERIES at
the Evergreen Cultural
Centre, Diwali in BC is proud
to bring the Diwali
celebrations to Coquitlam.
This South Asian, cabaret-
style evening features
classical, Bollywood, and
contemporary dance as well
as classical live music
performances. Tickets at
<http://bit.ly/2xNgTXo>
(<http://bit.ly/2xNgTXo>)

**For more information on
Diwali in BC, visit
www.diwalibc.ca
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JoyTV's Fraser
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VANCOUVER IS AWESOME

Diwali in BC explores 'New Horizons' with six weeks of celebrations

By **Melissa Shaw** - August 14, 2018





Shiamak Vancouver will be performing on October 13 at Diwali in Vernon Photo contributed

Diwali in B.C. is going to be bigger and better this year with programming from October 3 to November 17.

“In our second bold and ambitious year, we respond artistically to racial tensions and gender abuse that continues to threaten the safety of the world in which we live, with the theme of New Horizons,” says festival artistic director and 2017 Jesse Award winner Rohit Chokhani in a news release.

Diwali in B.C. features dance, theatre and culturally specific workshops in Vancouver, Coquitlam, Vernon, Maple Ridge and Nanaimo.

A Vancouver Guldasta is on from October 2 to 21 at the The Cultch’s Vancity Culture Lab and is an examination of common experience, identifying home and processing trauma.





A Vancouver Guldasta Photo contributed

The story focuses on a family living in Vancouver in the early 1980s navigating through the experience of violence in Punjab their daughter's complicated friendship with a Vietnamese refugee who lives in their basement.

A Vancouver Guldasta takes place during the Indian government's armed invasion of the "Golden Temple," the holiest shrine the Sikhs.

The Believers Are But Brothers runs from October 30 to November 10 at Vancity Culture Lab. The one-man show, written and performed by Javaad Alipoor, explores the world of online extremism, anonymity and hate speech taking a deeper look at toxic masculinity.

Catch *Shyama*, a Bharatanatyam interpretation of Tagore’s epic Bengali dance drama with original choreography by Jai Gov on October 27 at the York Theatre.





Shyama Arno Kamolika Photo contributed

“With Shyama we explore different colours of love, the price of desire, forgiveness, and morality through one of India’s most celebrated playwrights – Rabindranath Tagore,” says Chokhani.

The Hindu festival of lights falls on November 7 this year and the full schedule for Diwali in B.C., including information about to buy tickets, [is available online](#).

Melissa Shaw

Melissa is a reporter at Vancouver Is Awesome and has worked primarily in radio and online media. She grew up in Ontario, went to school in Halifax and worked in Northern B.C. before moving to Vancouver. If you've got a story to share email: melissa@vancouverisawesome.com



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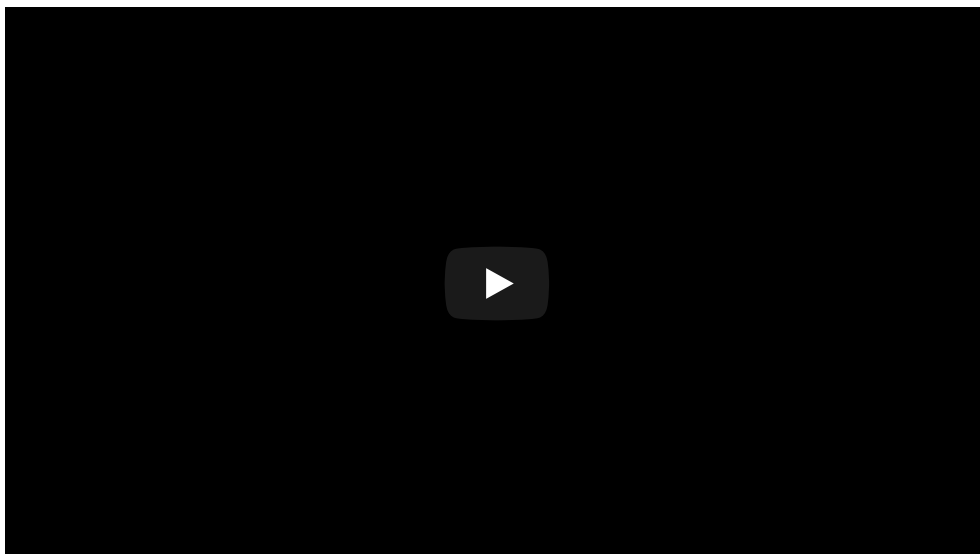
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Vernon

East meets West in Vernon

Darren Handschuh - Oct 10, 2018 / 5:00 am



East will meet West during the inaugural Diwali in Vernon Festival Saturday.

Diwali in BC and the Vernon and District Performing Arts Centre Society teamed to present the event that will be taking place at multiple locations in Vernon.

The festival started Tuesday and culminates with a final show at the Vernon & District Performing Arts Centre on Saturday, Oct. 13 at 7 p.m.

Rohit Chokhani, with Diwali in BC, said this year, the Diwali is being held in five cities.

"Vernon is one of our biggest expansion," said Chokhani. "I can imagine it will only grow and get bigger. I think the message of Diwali is about unifying and we are in a world where there is a lot of divisiveness going on so I think the spirit of Diwali brings everyone together. It doesn't matter what your culture is or what your background is, it's just a celebration where we all come together."

Erin Kennedy, artistic director for the Vernon and District Performing Arts Centre, said this is the first time for the Diwali in Vernon, but she hopes it will become an annual event.

The festival will showcase artists from Vernon and the Okanagan region as well as national artists visiting Vernon specifically for this festival.



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The Shiamak Dance Team headlines the multicultural showcase that closes off Diwali in Vernon Festival Oct. 13. (Photo submitted)

First annual Diwali in Vernon kicks off after Thanksgiving

Festival begins Oct. 9

Oct. 3, 2018 5:30 p.m. / [ENTERTAINMENT](#) / [LOCAL ENTERTAINMENT](#)

Janelle Escott

Special to The Morning Star

The Thanksgiving celebrations do not have to end come Tuesday morning, as the first annual Diwali in Vernon Festival kicks off right after the long weekend on Oct. 9.

Two non-profit organizations, Diwali in BC and the Vernon and District Performing Arts Centre, have been hard at work curating a week-long multicultural celebration in Vernon. The festival will include Bollywood-style dance workshops, kids' lantern-making activities, rangoli art displays, and a final showcase on the Performing Arts main stage on Oct. 13.

Though the event is new to Vernon, celebrating Diwali in Western Canada has been gaining traction for the past several years, thanks to Diwali in BC's artistic director, Rohit Chokhani.

"I grew up with Diwali. It was an important part of my lifestyle," says Chokhani. "Since moving to Canada, many south Asians including myself wanted a way to celebrate Diwali."

Diwali is the celebration of light over dark and is celebrated every fall with friends and family gatherings, lights, bright colours, rangoli art, and even fireworks. Every south Asian may celebrate Diwali in a different fashion and for a different reason; however, it's a universal theme, artistic expression and colourful artcrafts remain the common thread that defines Diwali.

"Think of it as Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years' all wrapped into one," Chokhani laughs.

Related: Diwali festival to shine

Related: Diwali Fest seeks performers

After several years of creating Diwali celebrations in Vancouver, Chokhani and his team launched Diwali in BC in 2017, a multiculturally-inclusive initiative intended to showcase the artistic talents and diverse backgrounds of local artists and performers in celebration of the festival of light (Diwali) during the Indian New Year. In its' first year, Diwali in BC received an overwhelmingly positive response and has expanded in 2018 to include three new cities in the province, including Vernon, Maple Ridge, and Nanaimo.

The Diwali in Vernon Festival is unique in that it has come together with the contributions of many different people of different backgrounds, all in an attempt to showcase local artistry and talent in a way that is fun, colourful, and most importantly, accessible.

“Don’t worry about understanding it completely,” says Chokhani, “and think of it as a variety show.”

Several pop-up performances around the city will feature Bollywood-style dances, classical Indian dance including local performers. The final showcase at the Vernon and District Performing Arts Centre will include Vernon Chidorikai Japanese Dancers and the Shiamak

Vancouver Bollywood dance team. Preceding the show, guests are welcome to chai and samosas in the lobby and following the final performance, guests are invited to take part in an evening of community, friendship, and celebration with a ticketed buffet dinner at the Curry Pot downtown.

With the announcement that the first Diwali in Vernon Festival would take place in early October, the community has since come together to make the event a success already. The Vernon Community Arts Centre launched their Diwali-themed art exhibit on Sept. 28 and will showcase the art until Oct. 25. Downtown businesses will be decorating their window displays in celebration of the festival of light and Sareena Nikoli of Soul Studio will be hosting Bolly-X and yin yoga classes.

“In the world today there is a lot of divisive confusion, but Diwali does the opposite,” says Chokhani. “Diwali is about making more connections and deeper experiences across cultures.”

With free and ticketed events happening all over the city, the inaugural Diwali in Vernon Festival welcomes all ages and all backgrounds to participate in the festivities and celebrate the season of light, love, and giving thanks for family and friends. It brings people from

different cultures, abilities and backgrounds together to share a cup of chai or have a conversation about a performance or an activity.

More Information about the week-long pop-up performances and workshops can be found on the TicketSeller website, www.ticketseller.ca.

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(Contributed) Shiamak Vancouver will be performing in Diwali in B.C. in Maple Ridge on Nov. 10.

Celebrating the Festival of Light in Maple Ridge

Diwali in B.C. will be at the ACT on Nov. 10

COLLEEN FLANAGAN / Nov. 7, 2018 6:00 a.m. / ENTERTAINMENT

Diwali in B.C. is coming to Maple Ridge.

The inaugural event will feature an evening of South Asian culture, including classical and contemporary dance and live music performances. Rohit Chokhani has been curating different Diwali-based events for the past six years.

“The idea is it’s kind of like a journey to India and with different musical and dance from South Asia,” explained the Jesse Award-winning artistic director.



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The event is part of a provincial initiative aimed at making Diwali celebrations province-wide over the next five years.

Diwali in B.C. was launched last year with the artistic theme, Shakti, meaning feminine power.

This year the theme is New Horizons, with performances responding artistically to racial tensions and gender abuse in Vancouver, Coquitlam, Vernon, Maple Ridge and Nanaimo.

The festival started Oct. 3.

“What we are trying to do is to have shows that respond to those themes and those questions that are continuing to come into the limelight these days,” explained Chokhani.

“The New Horizons theme for me as an artistic director and a curator for the Diwali in B.C. Festival came out of two things: one, was more into how do we respond to what’s going on in the world and we certainly see a lot of violence happening against gender and I also see a lot of racial tension emerging politically and societally,” he said.

For Chokhani, Diwali, the Indian New Year and the celebration of light over darkness, does not necessarily mean that celebrations should centre around the light.

“We also look at darkness and go inwards, introspect on it and understand darkness much more. I think the theme speaks to that,” he said.

Chokhani grew up in Mumbai, India before moving when he was 22-years-old and he says Diwali is about bringing different cultures together.

“In India, the geography and the demographics are slightly different but there is still a lot of diversity. There are Hindus, there are Muslims, there are Sikhs and there are also different parts of India that have different

demographics and diversity,” said Chokhani, comparing the diversity in India to Metro Vancouver and the rest of Canada.

The show at the ACT will have everything from Bollywood dance performances to classical India and South Asian dance performances and classical singing. Between acts there will be storytelling and an explanation of the history of the dance forms and how it all ties in to the concept of Diwali.

The headliner is Shiamak Vancouver.

“Shiamak is a very well known Bollywood curator. If you’ve seen a Bollywood movie there is a pretty high chance that he has choreographed a number in it,” said Chokhani of the owner of Bollywood dance schools all over the world.

“I feel like the spirit of Diwali and the concept of Diwali brings people together and we can have conversations,” said Chokhani, adding that it’s like Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas squeezed into five days of celebration.



The Shiamak Dance Team headlines the multicultural showcase that closes off Diwali in Vernon Festival Oct. 13. (Photo submitted)

Vernon Diwali festival to shine

Inaugural festival is Oct. 9-13

PARKER CROOK / Sep. 26, 2018 1:00 p.m. / ENTERTAINMENT

It's five days of lights, performances and art, all with the purpose of celebrating culture.

Through a partnership with Diwali in B.C., the Vernon and District Performing Arts Centre is at the helm of the Vernon Diwali Festival, which runs Oct. 9-13 at venues across the city.

The Festival will host a variety of multicultural activities around Vernon, culminating in a showcase at the Vernon and District Performing Arts Centre Oct. 13 at 7 p.m. The Diwali in Vernon Festival showcase is part of the Spotlight Special Presentation series.

Related: Performing Arts Centre announces Spotlight series

Vernon's festival falls under Diwali in B.C.'s 2018 umbrella with the theme New Horizons. Programs are also being conducted in Vancouver, Coquitlam, Maple Ridge and Nanaimo.

“In our second bold and ambitious year, we respond artistically to racial tensions and gender abuse that continues to threaten the safety of the world in which we live, with the theme of New Horizons,” said Diwali in B.C. artistic director Rohit Chokhani.

“In *A Vancouver Guldasta*, we have fresh conversations around trauma and healing through the lens of a Punjabi-Sikh family living with a Vietnamese refugee in Vancouver. In *The Believers Are But Brothers* we take a deeper look at toxic masculinity, and with *Shyama* we explore different colours of love, the price of desire, forgiveness, and morality through one of India's most celebrated playwrights — Rabindranath Tagore.”

In Vernon, the week kicks off with the Festival Launch at the Okanagan Regional Library Oct. 9 at 7 p.m. Featuring pop-up performances by local artists and the launch of an interactive Rangoli art project, all ages are invited to attend this free event. Soul Studio will also be hosting a BollyX Class at 5:45 p.m. Pricing and registration information can be found through Soul Studio's website, soulstudio.ca.

A free Lantern Making Workshop follows on Oct. 10 at the Vernon Community Arts Centre from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1-4 p.m.

“Drop in during these times to make a beautiful handmade lantern,” said a Vernon and District Performing Arts Centre spokesperson.

Children must be accompanied by an adult. Lanterns can be taken home on the day of the workshop, or they can be left on display as part of the Centre Gallery’s Diwali in Vernon Festival exhibit, which runs Sept. 28 to Oct. 25.

The Library will be hosting a fun and interactive kids’ workshop Oct. 11 at 3:30 p.m. where kids can learn about the history of Diwali and South Asian dance.

Read more below



On Oct. 12 start your day at Soul Studio for their Yin Yoga Class at 10:15 a.m., then head to the Vernon Public Art Gallery and take part in a Rangoli art project. Open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., all ages are invited to come and contribute to making a large community Rangoli. This activity will be open during regular gallery hours until Oct 20.



From 3:30 to 4:30 p.m., don't miss the Okanagan Science Centre's Stars and Mythology event: a planetarium show centred around South Asian mythology and its connection to Diwali. The cost is included with regular admission to the Science Centre: \$5 for children, \$8 for adults, \$5 for seniors. No pre-registration is required.

To end off the day on Friday, Record City is hosting a World Dance Concert with Zimbamoto and local guests with doors at 7 p.m. and show at 7:30 p.m. Early bird price is \$15 per person, tickets at the door are \$20. Get \$5 off by showing a Diwali in Vernon Festival showcase ticket at the door (and get the \$15 price). Also, if patrons buy tickets to the Zimbamoto concert, they can receive \$5 off your Diwali in Vernon Festival showcase ticket.

For the last day of the festival, Oct. 13, the Library will be hosting a pop-up performance at 2 p.m. This is a free event for all ages.

"The festival will culminate in a multicultural showcase of diverse artists from different backgrounds," said Vernon and District Performing Arts Centre artistic director Erin Kennedy. "Activities throughout the week shall include workshops, discussions, dance performances, musical performances, cultural activities, crafts and a wide range of other possibilities."

The multicultural showcase of diverse artists from different backgrounds, headlined by the popular Bollywood dance group from Vancouver the Shiamak Dance Team, will take place at the Vernon and District Performing Arts Centre Oct. 13 at 7 p.m. Pre-show activities will begin in the lobby at 5 p.m. Tickets for the Diwali in Vernon Festival showcase are \$35 for adults, \$32 for seniors and \$30 for students. Call the Ticket Seller Box Office at 250-549-7469 or visit www.ticketseller.ca.

To end off the night, the Curry Pot will be hosting an Indian Buffet Dinner at 9 p.m. Eat with the performers and celebrate South Asian culture with delicious food. Tickets for the Curry Pot dinner are \$30 per person. Limited tickets available, buy now through the Ticket Seller.

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Navarasa Dance Theatre's "Encounter" will be staged at Vancouver's York Theatre from Oct. 17 to 22.

New 'Diwali in BC' festival explores feminine power through theatre, dance, film

Five-week event founded by artistic director Rohit Chokhani

Oct. 13, 2017 2:40

p.m. / [ENTERTAINMENT](#) / [LOCAL ENTERTAINMENT](#)

A new provincial initiative celebrates Diwali for a month, from Oct. 14 to Nov. 16.

The five-week [Diwali in BC](#) festival explores "feminine power through theatre, dance and film, and shines a light on works created by diverse and talented women."

Artistic director Rohit Chokhani is the force behind the inaugural event, which in its launch year will explore the artistic theme of shakti, or feminine power.

The programming will feature works primarily created by women, including Academy Award-nominated Canadian director Deepa Mehta, Dora Award-winning playwright Pamela Mala Sinha, Dr. Aparna Sindhoo along with her pioneering South Asian Contemporary Dance Theatre company Navarasa Dance Theater, rising South Asian award-winning actress Dipti Mehta, and classical dance theatre artist Arno Kamolika.

“After the success of celebrating Diwali through my curation in Metro Vancouver over the past four years, it became clear to me that there was a province-wide demand to go beyond Metro Vancouver and a need for a new organizational structure to hold this vision for the next five years,” Chokhani stated.

“Diwali in BC is my response to that need. This year, I am thrilled and honoured to showcase the work of strong, intelligent and incredibly talented women, and hope our city and province embraces this initiative.”

None of the events are planned in Surrey for 2017, but the city is in the festival’s future plans.

This year, Navarasa Dance Theatre's "Encounter" will be staged at Vancouver's York Theatre from Oct. 17 to 22, followed by Dipti Mehta in "Honour: Confessions of a Mumbai Courtesan," at Vancity Culture Lab from Oct. 20 to Nov. 4.

Later, Deepa Mehta's film, "Anatomy of Violence," will be shown on Nov. 4 at Cineplex Odeon International Village, in a co-presentation with Vancouver Asian Film Festival.

For Touchstone Theatre, Pamela Mala Sinha's play "Happy Place" hits the stage at Vancouver's Firehall Arts Centre from Oct. 19 to 29, and the dance drama "Shyama" will be at the York Theatre on Nov. 16.

Elsewhere, the festival will include a "Diwali at Evergreen" event at Coquitlam's Evergreen Cultural Centre on Nov. 5.

For more details about Diwali in BC, visit diwalibc.ca.



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New Diwali in BC festival explores feminine power through theatre, dance, film

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Oct. 13, 2017 12:00 a.m. / [ENTERTAINMENT](#)

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For more details about Diwali in BC, visit diwalibc.ca.

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by [Shawn Conner \(http://www.insidevancouver.ca/author/sconner/\)](http://www.insidevancouver.ca/author/sconner/) in [Events \(http://www.insidevancouver.ca/category/events/\)](http://www.insidevancouver.ca/category/events/) on October 13, 2017



Inspired by a short story, Encounter blends physical theatre with bold storytelling.

Diwali in BC takes place for five weeks, beginning this Saturday and running until Nov. 16. The festival includes dance, theatre, film and more, with many of the shows celebrating the festival's theme of feminine power, or shakti. Here are some highlights. (Click on titles for tickets.)

Encounter (<http://bit.ly/2fUewlx>)—Inspired by a short story by Indian writer **Mahasweta Devi** (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahasweta_Devi), Navarasa Dance Theatre uses acrobatics and original music to tell the story of an indigenous woman, her defiance against injustice, and her communities' struggle to uphold their indigenous way of life. (Oct. 17-22 at the York Theatre, 639 Commercial Dr.)

Honour: Confessions of a Mumbai Courtesan (<http://bit.ly/2yJaiuW>)—Writer/performer Dipti Mehta delves into the world of sex-trafficking in Mumbai's red-light district. Mehta has performed the show in cities like Boston and New York, where it has received rave reviews. (Oct. 20-Nov. 4 at Vancity Culture Lab, 1895 Venables St.)



Dipti Mehta in Honour. Kyle Rosenberg photo.

[Anatomy of Violence \(http://www.vaff.org\)](http://www.vaff.org)—The Deepa Mehta film examines one of India’s most internationally notorious crimes: the 2012 gang rape and murder of a 23-year-old woman on a Delhi bus. Mehta collaborated with theatre director Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry and her actors “to envisage possible sociological and psychological backgrounds and pasts for both the perpetrators and the victim,” according to the Diwali media release. A panel discussion, Sparking Celluloid: Filmmaking for Social Change, follows the screening. (Oct. 5 at Cineplex Odeon International Village, 88 W. Pender St.)

[Happy Place \(http://bit.ly/2hxf22c\)](http://bit.ly/2hxf22c)—Actress/playwright Pamela Mala Sinha delves into the lives of seven women in an in-patient care facility. Happy Place features a diverse cast of Vancouver actresses with over fifty Jessie Richardson Theatre Awards and nominations combined. (Oct. 20-29 at Firehall Arts Centre, 280 E. Cordova St.)



Happy Place takes audiences into the experiences of seven women in an in-patient care facility.

For more information on Diwali in BC, visit [diwalibc.ca](http://www.diwalibc.ca). (<http://www.diwalibc.ca>)

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Company Wang Ramirez (France)

Borderline

Oct. 26-27, 2018 – 8pm at the Vancouver Playhouse. Tickets and details at DanceHouse.

Acclaimed choreographic duo Sébastien Ramirez and Honji Wang combine hip hop and contemporary dance with martial arts to explore the meaning of democracy, immigration, manipulation, and the place of individuals in our society today.

Shyama

Presented by Diwali in BC and the Vancouver Tagore Society.

York Theatre, Vancouver.



Arno Kamolika in *Shyama*. Photo by Mohammad Mustafizur Rahaman.

www.vancouveropera.ca.

Set in the heart of vibrant fin de siècle Paris, the wealthy widow Hanna Glawari schemes to win the heart of dashing handsome Count Danilo. A scandalous caper ensues while suitors conspire to obtain the widow's fortune. This wonderfully lavish Art Nouveau-inspired production opens Vancouver Opera's 2018–2019 season and is directed by Canadian Kelly Robinson. Italian Canadian soprano Lucia Cesaroni will be making her role debut as Hanna Glawari and Count Danilo will be performed by tenor John Cudia. Susan Memmott-Allred's costumes and Michael Yeargan's sets evoke the Belle Epoque period, with choreography by Josh Beamish.

Oct. 27, 2018. Tickets and details at [Diwali in B.C.](#)
A Bharatanatyam interpretation of Tagore's Bengali dance drama *Shyama* with original choreography by Jai Govinda. This dance piece is a tribute to the first non-European Nobel laureate poet Rabindranath Tagore and his magically visual poetry and music of love. Dancer Arno Kamolika has been collaborating with musician Shankhanaad Mallick and with director Rohit Chokhani for over two years on this production, and Diwali in B.C. will debut their current version of this poetic, deep philosophical story that will be performed on stage with other Bharatanatyam dancers: Grihalakshmi Soundarapandian, Jaylakshmi Ravindra, Malathi Santhosh, and Vidya Kotamraju.

Franz Lehár's ***The Merry Widow (Die Lustige Witwe)*** presented by Vancouver Opera

Queen Elizabeth Theatre, Vancouver

Oct. 20 – 28, 2018. Tickets and details at [www.vancouveropera.ca](#)