

SIFA

SWISS INDIAN FINE ARTS ASSOCIATION
-THE MAGAZINE-

Threads of India

YOUR VOICE,
OUR CONNECTION

BRINGING INDIA'S RICH
CULTURE TO SWITZERLAND

PHOTO CREDIT: SATHYA SADHU, 2014

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About Sifaa



वक्रतुण्ड महाकाय सूर्यकोटि समप्रभ ।
निर्विघ्नं कुरु मे देव सर्वकार्येषु सर्वदा ॥

I began this journey in December 2020, during the quiet Margazhi season of the pandemic. With the world behind closed doors, I turned to online videos as a way of keeping our traditions alive. Each program carried the spirit of a festival—artists performing music and dance, a voice to weave the story together, three to five offerings bound into one. The response was overwhelming. What started as a single video soon became nearly twenty, stretching from Margazhi through Janmashtami, Shankara Jayanthi, International Yoga Day, Rath Yatra, Independence Day, Guru Purnima, Navaratri, and Diwali. These were my way of keeping the flame of Indian culture burning bright, even in a time of distance.

~ Sakambari Venkataraman

When the world slowly opened again, I knew it was time to carry my mother's vision beyond the screen. Together with my mother, Kumar Ramamoorthy ji, Venkatesh Sivasubramaniam ji, Seshadri Amarapuram ji, Brindarica Bose ji, Priya Apte ji, and Chidambaram Narayanan ji, we founded SIFAA on 25 November 2021. What began with a small launch in March 2022—featuring twenty artists—quickly grew into a thriving community. By mid-2025, we had brought to life thirty-six events, each a celebration where people could gather, share, and rejoice in Indian culture here in Europe.

For us, SIFAA is more than an organization. It is a bridge: between India and Europe, tradition and modernity, solitude and community. Our Margazhi and festival programs have become beacons outside India, glowing with the same spirit of Chennai's sabhas, yet rooted in new soil. We believe the arts are not just performance, but a path to peace, harmony, and human connection. And it is our joy to carry that path forward.

~ Aniruddhan Balakrishnan

People of Sifaa

Committee (incl. former)

Aniruddhan Balakrishnan – President, Committee Member & Founding Member
Sakambari Venkataraman – Secretary & Operations, Committee Member & Founding Member
Seshadri Amarapuram – Treasurer, Committee Member & Founding Member
Kumar Ramamoorthy – Branding, Committee Member & Founding Member
Dr. Venkatesh Sivasubramaniam – Former Committee Member (Digital Media, Photography) & Founding Member
(With gratitude to their families for their constant support)

Core Team & Key Contributors

Balakrishnan – All-round support
Priya Apte – Overall support & Founding Member
Srinath, Samvidha – Blog contributions
Annapurna, Kushboo, Raghavasimhan, Jasmine, Vishwa, Rajani, Divya, Aruna – Event support
Kavitha, Madhuri, Snehal – Margazhi support and coordination
Shafalica – Holi support
Raji & Sriram – Travel support
Banu Balaji – Photography
Vibha – Kolam
Shiva Anna – Sound, Video & Photography
Chidambaram Narayanan – General support & Founding Member
Brindarica Bose – Art support & Founding Member

Cultural & Festival Partners

Vijaya – My Passionate Kitchen food
Monica Bharadwaj, Swati Arora – Event stalls
Kirti Malini, Ranjani, Tasneem, Priyanka, Sudha, Valli, Priti, Sharmishta, Sindhuja – Food & cultural stalls
Prajakta Patil – Cooking stall
Vantika, Prasanthi, Glamzonic, Pooja, Bhagya, Rituparna, Moushree, Miti Shah, Neera Mallick, Dheepa Geneva, Vennela –
Clothing, jewelry & sarees
Harry, Prerna, Tina – Henna

Performing Arts – Dance

Smt. Purnima, Smt. Uthra Kalyan, Smt. Veena Steiner, Smt. Swati Gaikwad, Smt. Stuti Aga, Smt. Gayathri Muthukrishnan,
Smt. Krithika Natarajan, Smt. Pranitha Kamat

Performing Arts – Music

Smt. Uma Kumar, Smt. Girija, Shri Srinidhi, Smt. Sivani Saraswatula, Shri Nerujan Sehasothy, Shri Manu Rao, Shri Manoj
Padmanabhan

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We sincerely apologise if any names have been missed. SIFAA is a collective effort, and none of this would have been possible without the support, love, and contributions of so many in our community. All thanks to God, all our work is an offering to the Divine. Om Tat Sat Shivarpanamastu.

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FROM NEW DELHI TO BERN: HOW ART CONNECTS THE INDIAN DIASPORA

BY ANOUSHKA SINGH KUSWAHA

For H.E. Mridul Kumar, Ambassador of India to Switzerland, diplomacy is as much about dance, music, and cinema as it is about trade or policy. “The Indian community are our real ambassadors,” he says. “We come and go as diplomats, but they are the ones who remain here and celebrate their Indianness, their Indian arts and ethos.”

Since arriving in Switzerland in 2023, H. E. Kumar Ji has prioritised connecting with the Indian diaspora not just through official channels but by supporting their artistic expressions as a vital link to their heritage. For him, art is a bridge, one that helps Indians in Switzerland build community while sharing their culture with the wider public. One of his key strategies is giving local organisations ownership of cultural events. The annual International Day of Yoga, for example, expanded under his diplomatic tenure, from six cities to over thirteen by 2025. “We reached out to local organisations and gave them ownership,” he explains. “That way, the expanse becomes much bigger.”



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This philosophy resonates with young artists in the diaspora who, while experimenting with new mediums and platforms, are often rediscovering their heritage through music, storytelling, or spiritual traditions. Kumar encourages this. "Social media is powerful," he notes, "but content without soul, without that connection to tradition, doesn't last." What emerges from Kumar's vision is a model of diplomacy led by the community. The Embassy doesn't dictate the terms of cultural representation; it supports and amplifies the work already happening on the ground. Whether it's a Diwali celebration, a Carnatic concert, or a Bollywood film screening, the emphasis is on giving people tools and recognition to express themselves authentically.

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At the heart of this is an idea. "Unless you start looking at India from that perspective, you can never represent India beautifully," he says. That idea takes many forms, from a student learning Bharatanatyam in Zurich to a filmmaker screening Malayalam cinema in Geneva. Kumar's role, as he sees it, is to nurture the conditions in which these stories can flourish.

Through art, the Indian diaspora in Switzerland continues to stay rooted while adapting to new surroundings. With the embassy's support, they are not only finding new ways to express their identity, they're inviting Switzerland to listen, watch, and understand.

The background is a complex, repeating pattern. It features stylized flowers in various shapes and sizes, some with yellow centers and others with teal centers. Interspersed among the flowers are birds, including a prominent teal bird with a yellow belly and a yellow bird with a teal belly. The pattern is set against a teal background with small yellow dots.

SHEA
so far

MARCH 2022: LAUNCH EVENT

20 people and more than 50 artists gathered in March of 2022 for an event that was novel from an association that was taking its first baby steps: the SIFAA Launch Event. Held in the very heart of Zurich's old town, this event marked the first of many events that would bring together artists from all Switzerland practicing artforms from all across India.

The event featured inaugural speeches from SIFAA's Executive Committee as well as a rich variety of artforms. Starting with an inaugural Bharatnatyam performance by the very young students of Vid. Purnima Venkatesh's PDC Gurukul, the audience was taken on an artistic journey across all of India, featuring a Mandolin duo by Yatheeshwar and

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Veena concert by Vid. S. S. Srinivas, a Violin concert by Aniruddhan Balakrishnan, a Kuchipudi presentation by Vid. Somadipa Chatterjee, a Hindustani concert by Vid. Amit Sharma, a Bharatanatyam presentation by Vid. Uthra Sankaran, a Carnatic concert by Vid. Uma Kumar, a Bharatnatyam presentation by Priyakala & Krithika Natarajan, and a Carnatic duet concert by Vid. Srinidhi and Vid. Girija. The anchoring was done by Mr. Kumar Ramamoorthy, and Manyutha & Samvidha.

The event would stand as the first of many that would bring together many artists, audience members, anchors, rasikas, interested onlookers, and volunteers, all united under the common cause of celebrating Indian culture.

