



# Bangaloreans to reinvent the art of story

by Shyama Krishna Kumar

**Bangalore:** Rooted in oral traditions and dating back to the beginning of human speech, storytelling is one of the few art forms that will probably never see its death. With World Storytelling Day being celebrated on March 20, Bangalore will witness a host of events where children, tales and imagination will take centre stage.

One such event is Bake a Tale to be held at Atta Galatta, between April 22 and 26. Cooked up by Deeptha Vivekanand, storyteller and founder of Ever After and Monika Manchanda, celebrity chef and founder of Sin-A-Mon, the workshop is coming back to the city for its second edition.

"I think the idea came to me while I was researching stories for various workshops, and I noticed that a lot of them featured food prominently. I myself bake and love to dabble with cooking. So I thought it would be great to collaborate with someone and curate a workshop for kids that will marry these two aspects," explains Deeptha, who is also the founder of the Bangalore Storyteller Society that acts as a forum for vet-



Ruhi J, programming executive, Aantarya Theatre House

eran and upcoming storytellers alike.

"I think we are finally seeing a rise in the number of storytellers in the city because now everyone is looking to find their own strengths and they work within a specific niche, which in turn is leading to the rise of these specialised storytelling sessions," opines Deeptha.

Another interesting event happening closer to date at Atta Galatta is Night Night, on March 20 to mark World Storytelling Day. A free event, parents and their children between the ages of 3 and 9 are invited in their



Gayathri Krishna, managing trustee of Bhoomija

night pyjamas to a unique storytelling session. "Padmavati Rao will be doing the storytelling. She's been toying with the idea of telling stories under dim lights. So we thought the 20th of this month was most appropriate. After all, we were all introduced to stories as bedtime tales that we listened to in comfortable clothes, hugging our toys. This will celebrate that," says Ruhi Jhunjhunwala, programming executive, Aantarya Film and Theatre House, which is organising the event.

Ruhi also informs that they're looking to take the event to people's homes at



Deeptha Vivekanand, storyteller and founder of Ever After

## WORLD STORYTELLING DAY: MARCH 20

some point, so children can sleep over.

Gayathri Krishna, managing trustee of Bhoomija and a performance art promoter, attributes the growth of story telling in Bangalore to Ranga Shankara and their efforts in creating a suitable environment for children to participate in storytelling sessions. "At Ranga Shankara, they have taken this art very seriously. They've had big names in the field like Vayu Naidu and Stefo Nant-sou come and narrate stories

to children. They have also had regular storytelling sessions for children over the last couple of years called the Little Cloud," says Gayathri. She is all praise for S Suren-dranath who brought back storytelling in a big fashion to Ranga Shankara.

Under Arundhati Nag's supervision, Ranga Shankara has also created a small space for children on their third floor, 'where they can escape into this surreal space and listen to stories'.

Gayathri is now roping in



Padmavati Rao, theatre personality

Vishaka Hari, the *hari katha* exponent, to narrate tales to children against the backdrop of Carnatic music. The event, set to take place in May at Jagriti as well as MLR convention centre, will see Vishaka narrating the tales of Hanuman and Little Krishna to children. "Traditional art forms like this need to be exposed to our children. Nowadays, even parents are very open and eager to let their children explore various art forms," says Gayathri.

For Geetha Ramanujan, founder of Kathalaya, storytelling is all about the direct energy that is transmitted



Geetha Ramanujan, founder of Kathalaya

between the teller and the listener. "I have visited some storytelling festivals, and they actually have people telling stories through video conferences. This is no story telling," she says firmly.

For World Storytelling Day, Kathalaya will have a marathon storytelling session, with about 15 storytellers weaving tales around the theme Monsters and Dragons for 10 to 15 minutes each.

There will be three shows at 4.15 pm, 5.15 pm and 6.15 pm.

"For the past fifteen years we've mainly done them