CULTURAL PERFORMANCE

While Samvaad is a dialogue it is equally a celebration of the rich heritage and culture of the tribes of India and beyond. In the last six years, the 5-day conclave has witnessed several performances from different tribes across the world. Last year, 987 musicians, dancers and culturists from 21 tribes of India showcased their talent and heritage through vibrant dances and songs in all their glory thus engaging with the larger Samvaad family.

This year, in addition to the various traditional dance forms that will be celebrated by the various tribes, we also have exquisite performances by popular artists like Tetseo Sisters, Johnny Huckle, Featherheads, Rhythms of the Earth, Salem, Guru Rewben and many more.

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Samvaad 2020 will begin with homage to Bhagwan Birsa Munda, India's mostly widely revered tribal icon, on this day which coincides with his birth anniversary. In keeping with the essence and the theme of Samvaad 2020, respected leaders and elders from tribal and indigenous communities of India and beyond will then come together to set in motion celebration and contemplation at Samvaad 2020, accompanied by the grandiose of cultural performances and release of two songs composed by Rhythms of the Earth, one of which is co-curated with Padma Shri Mukund Nayak. As is customary, the inaugural ceremony will also be complemented with the resounding beat of Nagaras.

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Tetseo Sisters (vocal quartet)
Naga tribe, Nagaland

Tetseo Sisters are siblings who have spent their young lives promoting the nearly forgotten music of the Chakhesang Naga tribe of Nagaland. They are storytellers, who present songs passed down from generations, with a contemporary twist. Their efforts have won them numerous accolades including the Nagaland Governor's Award for excellence in Music.

Tetseo Sisters are delighted to share a curated performance, singing in their Chokri dialect. The set showcases a melodious mix of vocal harmonies, traditional tunes and contemporary folk fusion tunes, accompanied by the wind instrument Bamhum, the traditional Naga Tati string instrument, Khrokhro shakers and the guitar.

Tarpa Dance
Warli tribe, Maharashtra

Warlis usher in bountiful harvests, festivals and marriages by dancing to the high pitched tunes of a wind instrument called Tarpa. Two bamboo pipes covered in palm leaves and joined to a dried bottlegourd with honeybee wax produce music in this instrument. Enjoy the Tarpa dance, all the way from Palgarh, Maharashtra!

Johnny Huckle (singer – song writer)
Wiradjuri, Australia

Award winning singer Johnny Huckle was born on the land of Wiradjuri ancestors and was raised on the Aboriginal reserve on the outskirts of Condobolin. Johnny composes songs that traverse the themes of love, identity and spirit. His lyrics are potent and thought-provoking, delivering strong, inspiring messages. Watch him perform 'Spirit Man', one of his famous numbers, among songs. It speaks about the aboriginals and their resilience, epitomizing hope, equality and the eternal tribal spirit.

Popir Dance
Galo tribe, Arunachal Pradesh

The Galos belong to the Tani group inhabiting Arunachal Pradesh and trace their common origin to a primeval ancestor, Abotani. Mopin festival is an important festival of the tribe, celebrated with much gaiety for wealth, good health, happiness and fending away evil spirits. Smearing rice powder on each other's faces marks the beginning of the festival followed by the popular dance of Popir. They dance in traditional costumes and adorn themselves with multi-coloured beaded ornaments. Immerse in the vibrant Popir dance here!

Dangi Dance
Dangi Bhil tribe, Gujarat

The Dangi Bhil tribe is native to the Dang district of Gujarat. Dangi Dance is a popular dance form performed to celebrate the auspicious occasions of Diwali, Holi and marriages. Women and men hold hands forming a chain and move in concentric circles to the beats of dhol, dholki and shehnai. The men wear lion clothes with a waistcoat and coloured turban and the women are dressed in sarees with heavy silver jewellery. Watch the alluring Dangi dance of the Bhil tribe!

Bhumij Dance
Bhumij tribe, Odisha

Bhumij means one who is born from the soil. Natives of the Swarnchuda Hills in Balasore district of Odisha, the Bhumij tribe is primarily dependent on agriculture and forest produce for livelihood. As a ritual to welcome their deity during Karma Pooja, members of this tribe perform the Bhumij dance, while a young man plays the flute to summon Radha, the deity. Watch them perform the Bhumij dance here!

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Featherheads (Band)
Naga tribe, Nagaland

Featherheads Haokui, founded by Augustine Shimray, is an indigenous Naga band based in Ukhrul, Manipur. Through music, the band attempts to inspire and resurrect the dying culture and traditions of Tangkhul Nagas, was once followed by their ancestors. A blend of alt-folk-rock, the Featherheads describe music as a universal language with no barriers. Their music is also an endeavour to bridge the gap between the northeast and mainland India with an emphatic message to the world 'Adore and respect the roots, that is who we are'. Rock and roll to their performance here!

Jabdo Dance
Changpa Tribe, Ladakh

The Changpa Tribe, mainly found in the Changtang, a high plateau that stretches across the cold desert of eastern Ladakh, are high altitude pastoralists, raising mainly yaks, sheep and goats. They bring the herd to high altitude for grazing and after they return, they gather to dance to Jabdo songs around the bonfire. 'Jab' means foot and 'do' means step, which collectively stands for 'foot stepping'. The natives perform this song to beat the cold during extreme low temperatures. Dramnyan, a stringed instrument, and flute, are the two instruments used to produce Jabdo music. Watch them tap to the Jabdo music, all the way from Ladakh!

Kinnauri dance
Kinnauri Tribe, Himachal Pradesh

The serene town of Kinnaur in Himachal Pradesh is inhabited by the Kinnauri tribe, the successors of Kinners of Vedic Times who are a mix of Buddhists and Hindus. This performance depicts Fulaich, a famous festival celebrated as a tribute to Mother Nature and flowers, an integral part of worship during this festival. Soak up in their performance here, which is a mix of diverse dance forms namely kayang, shon, shabdrok and free style.

Mangalam Kali Dance
Malavettuvan Tribe, Kerala

The Malavettuvan tribe is native to the Kasaragod district of Kerala and they are also called vettuvans, because they are experts in hunting and rely predominantly on agriculture for livelihood. Mangalam Kali is a folk dance performed during auspicious occasions including weddings. A traditional musical instrument called thudi is played during the performance. A group of thirty people, both women and men, sing and dance to the music in circles with fast rhythmic steps. Get an insight into Mangalam Kali folk dance by joining the group here!

Asari Ropa Angnai Dance
Oraon tribe, West Bengal

The Oraon tribe inhabit the states of Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha and Chhattisgarh. A big part of the rich cultural heritage of the Oraons involves dance and music. Asari Ropa Angnai is a dance performed by the farmers of the Oraon community, of West Bengal, to herald rainfall, post the scorching summer months. The farmers sing this song while they are preparing the field for sowing, inviting acquaintances to join the celebration. Asari Ropa Angnai dance embodies triumph after a successful harvest. Watch and join in their special dance and music performance here!

Rathwa Dance
Rathwa Tribe, Gujarat

The Rathwa tribe belong to Southern Gujarat and are known for their vibrant culture. Rathwa dance is performed by them to celebrate the festival of Holi. The dance is performed for five days as part of Holi celebrations and the dancers observe a fast during this period. Both women and men participate with exuberance. A few accompanying instruments are the flute, shehnai, dholak, dhol and thali. Immerse in the invigorating Rathwa dance here!

Tashi Shabdro Song
Bhutia tribe, Sikkim

Tashi Shabdro is a country song of the Bhutia tribe having beautiful descriptions of the natural environment of Sikkim - the blue sky, snowy mountains, rocky hills, tranquil meadows, lush green forests, pristine lakes, pleasant groves, proud stables, and the native land in an orderly fashion. Dancing while singing this song, the members of the tribe pray for the stability of the natural environment around. This song is sung at the end of a ceremony signifying the closing in all events.

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Goma Dhamal Dance
Siddhi Tribe, Gujarat

India's forgotten African tribe, the Siddi, is an ethnic group confined to small pockets of villages of Karnataka and Gujarat. Also referred to as Afro-Indians, they are descendants of the Bantu peoples of the East African region. Isolated and reclusive, Siddis are largely farmers and manual laborer. They have a wonderfully assimilated Indian culture and traditions. Dance and music provide them with the last delicate link to their origins. Goma is a sacred dance of the Siddhis in which the dancers stamp whirl and twist their arms to the rhythmic sound of a frenetic drumbeat, while the rest of the villagers belt out Konkani folk songs. Witness the excitement during this dance, which is palpable in every dance move!

Leheria Song
Dhodia Tribe, Gujarat

The Dhodia Adivasis are spread across Gujarat and Maharashtra. The Dhodias live amidst the hills, especially in the forest areas and have motley beliefs and culture. They celebrate history and legends through songs and storytelling. Dhodias have songs for all occasions: birth, death, marriage, harvest and festivals. Their main musical instrument is the Toor. Here they are presenting a song which is based on the tribal philosophy of life and manifest joy, happiness and mirth.

Guru Rewben (Folk musician)
Tangkhul Naga Tribe, Manipur

Guru Rewben Mashangva is a well-known folk musician of Manipur, who has been devoting and contributing his entire life to the development of Folk Music of the Tangkhul Naga of Manipur. He's hailed as the "father of the Naga folk blues" and the "Bob Dylan of the Nagas", for his contribution to Naga folk music and has two albums to his credit. He received the National Tribal Award in 2012, for his contribution to the development of tribal music from the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India. This Samvaad, he is bringing songs, which unwinds his lockdown memories and speaks about his reflection on nurturing creativity in our 'New Normal', endowed by the pandemic. Watch him perform to these songs, which reassures that this too will pass!

Birli Tribal Dance
Dharua Tribe, Odisha

Dharua tribe is a small tribal group of Odisha mainly concentrated in the undivided Koraput district of Odisha. Originally agriculturalists, the community now also engages in wage labour, basketry and forest collection. They have a strong culture and has an alluring tribal dance form. They perform the dance wearing their traditional costumes, during festivals, rituals and ceremonies. Birli is the principal dance form of the tribe, performed during the post-harvest period. Participated by men, women and youths, this euphonic dance is named after bamboo which provides livelihood to them. While the artists produce pleasant rhythms with bamboo sticks, the musicians play instruments like drum, flute and horn trumpets. Experience this distinctive dance form of the Dharua tribe here!

Sibhaca Dance
Nguni Tribe

Nguni, cluster of related Bantu-speaking ethnic groups living predominantly in South Africa. Sibhaca is a vigorous dance performed by teams of boys or men. It involves the stomping of the feet in unison, accompanied by traditional music and rhythmic traditional chants. The men wear colorful quilts and decorate their legs with mohair implements. A typical Sibhaca session can last up to one or two hours, with a variety of different rotations, songs and styles. The dancers move in unison, singing and brandishing their sticks to the beat of the drums, lifting their feet high and stamp vigorously. Dance to the hymns of the Sibhaca dance, all the way from South Africa!

Bison Horn Maria dance
Dandami Maria Tribe, Chhattisgarh

Dandami Maria tribe is spread in and around Jagdalpur in Chhattisgarh. Having a contemplative nature, they choose to live in the thick jungles of this state. Bison-Horn Maria tribe got its name from the headgear worn by the men during dance. This head ornament is made from Bison horn and further beautified with colorful beads. The Bison-Horn Maria dance is performed by both men and women together. While the men wear their colorful headgear, women adorn themselves in colorful dresses and silver ornaments. The dance is performed in easy steps, by moving about in a circle. Drums and a rod-like object are the important props used by the men and women during the dance. Join them for a tribal jig here!

Gedi Dance
Muria Tribe, Chhattisgarh

The Murias hail from Bastar district of Chhattisgarh, India. They are part of the Gondi people. Traditionally they are economically homogenous and strive to work as a collective. Gedi is a traditional dance form that is performed by the tribe. A dance of complete balance of coordination, here two dancers play the traditional instrument, timki and around 8-10 dancers surround them. All of them are mounted on a gedi as they perform with intricate handwork.

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Kanni Ritual
Irula tribe, Tamil Nadu

Irulas are a particularly vulnerable tribal group from Tamil Nadu. They have great faith in deity worship. They worship the goddess Kanni and seven virgins. They live near water bodies and worship trees and nature. Watch them perform a ritual for their deity Kanni.

Swalakia
Mara Tribe, Mizoram:

The Maras are one of the sub-tribes of the Mizos, inhabiting the southern part of the state of Mizoram in the district Saiha. Circumstance have forced let the Maras embrace western style of living; nevertheless, they still celebrate their own festivals every year. The major festival celebrated by the people is the Lyuva Khutla that is celebrated in the month of March every year. Watch them perform their traditional Swalakia dance.

Lutsango Dance
Nguni tribe, South Africa

Lutsango Dance is performed by women both married or unmarried brought together by music, dance, poetry and other related community activities. The songs explore politics, health, culture, love, nature, education and history. They reflect the comprehensive sociocultural life of the nation. They emphasize on cultural continuity from one generation to another. These songs sustain the lives of people and are fundamental in indigenous knowledge systems. Watch the performance of Nguni tribe all the way from South Africa!

CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE SESSIONS