

SIFF's initiative to groom young talent

A nationwide, completely online cultural competition was conducted by the Singhal Iyer Family Foundation (SIFF); it received a whopping 12,000 applications from students in cities as well as villages.

The competition commenced in January 2021 with the objective of encouraging talented youngsters by rewarding them with prizes worth 25 lakhs rupees. It featured 20 different categories across classical and contemporary art forms. The top hundred finalists were selected over three rounds, after extensive evaluation and screening by a panel of judges. These finalists were mentored by artists from their respective fields under the 'Young Artiste Advanced Mentorship Programme', sponsored by SIFF.

Kavita Iyer, co-founder of SIFF, who believes that the competition brought out the best in each contestant. says that it was a fulfilling journey for the committee and the founders to see the growth of these young students. Names of the winners of the first season—Tamish Pulappadi (instrumental guitar), Akshita Singh Chouhan (vocal), Janki DV



The finalists

(Bharatanatyam) for the title of "Young Artiste of the Year" were announced on 4 September 2021 in a grand virtual event. The title winners bagged one lakh rupees each, while the winners in each category received a prize of 25,000 rupees (about twenty such prizes were announced).

Renowned artists such as L. Subramaniam, Nikhitha Gandhi, Ehsaan Noorani, Shalmali Kholgade, Terence Lewis, Shovana Narayan and the Black Ice crew were featured in this event.

Kavita Iyer

Many initiatives of SIFF have been successfully implemented, the most notable being the 'Young Artiste Courses' offering focused SIFF comprehensive curriculum in performing arts that aims to enable students to become practicing artists. The participants are to be trained via live classes, supported by guided practice sessions, creative assignments, learning in groups and more. The end-to-end specialising programme spanning a few years with focus on practical knowledge and application makes this unique.

The SIFF comprehensive curriculum, pedagogy and accreditation are developed with the guidance of the advisory panel consisting of veteran artists such as Madhavi Mudgal, Nikhitha Gandhi, N. Rajam, Rudrapatnam Thyagarajan, and Uday Bhawalkar.

VIBHA KRISHNAKUMAR
(A young student at Vidya Mandir, Mylapore, and also a disciple of Carnatic vidushi Geetha Raja)

