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## Pembroke Pines-based Indian cultural group plans 2011 shows

By Chris Guanche, Forum Publishing Group

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A [Pembroke Pines](#)-based Indian cultural group is bringing new shows to [Miramar](#) and [Fort Lauderdale](#) in 2011.

The nonprofit Association of Performing Arts of [India](#), founded in 1998, features a variety of cultural outreach, educational programs and several yearly performances throughout South Florida. Its first performance for 2011 will be "Rhythms of Rajasthan" from 7 to 9 p.m. Jan. 15 at the [Broward Center for the Performing Arts'](#) Amaturo Theater, 201 SW Fifth Ave. in Fort Lauderdale. Tickets range from \$25 to \$60.

The show will focus on folk music from India's Rajasthan state, which shares a western border with [Pakistan](#). The area's history makes for an interesting musical experience with Muslim musicians performing Hindu-based songs, said Bharti Chokshi, the association's founder. The musicians, on tour from India, also use instruments that are specific to the area, including the Sindhi Sarangi, a stringed instrument.

"It's very special," Chokshi said. "They come from Muslim communities, but they praise Hindu deities and holidays like [Diwali](#) and Holi. Their roots are Hindu."

Chokshi, a sitar player, regularly performs at cultural outreach events at schools, churches and museums. In addition, the association taught several dance classes in 2009 at [Florida Atlantic University](#), but funding for such courses has since dried up. Still, Chokshi has an interest in teaching classes if given a venue.

"If a university has an interest, I can find the artists," she said.

Chokshi said that in 2011, she wants to acquire dedicated studio space to bring in performers to teach classes to a broad audience.

"I want to let the community get that experience and introduce them to Indian dance," Chokshi said.

Chokshi also is working on the "Portrait of India" show that will run in April at the Miramar Cultural Center. It will mark a change for the association, which usually brings over performers from India for its shows. This time, Chokshi wants to recruit local performers and will begin auditioning for male and female vocalists in January.

The show will feature brief presentations on different regions of India, followed by a demonstration of music and dance native to that area.

"We usually bring in artists from the outside, but I wanted to utilize locals in a professional way," she said.

For more information, visit <http://www.apaiart.com> or call 954-885-1466.

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