

MENAKA THOMAS

SINGER | SONGWRITER | TEACHER | PERFORMER

www.menakathomasmusic.com

musicwithmenaka@gmail.com

I am an Australian fusion singer, with a background in South Indian Classical (Carnatic) music. I create music that is a blend of Indian traditional music with contemporary influences. My vision is to inspire connection, unity, social and self-awareness through music creation, teaching and performing.

MUSIC EDUCATION

- South Indian Classical (Carnatic) Music from the Sri Krishna Music Academy (Brisbane) 1989 – 2006
- Graduate Certificate in Music Studies: Vocal Pedagogy (Queensland Conservatorium of Music, Griffith University) – December 2023

CAREER PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

- Music co-composer and performer for "Back To Bilo" (Queensland Theatre, Brisbane Festival 2025 and Darwin Festival of 2026)
- Tour of Sunshine Coast hosted by Red Chair, March 2026
- "Finding Our Voice- Backstage with Women in Voice" (Queensland Museum, 2025)
- Featured performer at Brisbane Jazz Club for International Women's Day, 2024
- "Reverberations" – collaboration with visual artist Kuweni Dias Mendis (Queensland Multicultural Centre, 2024 and 2026)
- Featured artist in "Songs of Hope" - QPAC, 2023
- Performer in "Durga Chronicles" (Bunjil Place, Melbourne, 2023)
- "Women in Voice" (Brisbane Powerhouse, 2022)
- Creative Producer and performer in "Into the Light" with QLD Ballet, Thomas Dixon Centre, 2022
- Artist Residencies: Wild Mountains Song Writing Retreat (2022) and the Brisbane Powerhouse, BrisAsia Festival (2022)
- Co-creator of "Soul Gazing: A Sonic Journey through the Cosmic Skydome" at the Sir Thomas Brisbane Planetarium, as part of the BrisAsia Festival, 2023, 2024 and 2026
- Featured artist BrisAsia Festival (2022 – 2024)
- Performing artist in "LIVE Hypnotica" at the Brisbane Powerhouse as part of BrisAsia Festival, 2022
- Featured artist in BEMAC Live series in November 2020 and 2023
- Launch of debut album "My Eyes Can See" at the Queensland Multicultural Centre (2019) and second album "Bittersweet" (2024)

- Album launch with band "Spirit of Bhakti", Queensland Multicultural Centre, June 2015
- Toured with musical group "Spirit of Bhakti" in Cairns, Byron Bay, Sydney and Central NSW
- **Notable venues performed at:** Queensland Performing Arts Centre (QPAC), Queensland Theatre, Queensland Multicultural Centre (QMC), Brisbane Powerhouse, Brisbane Jazz Club, Thomas Dixon Centre (Brisbane), Metro Arts (Brisbane), Oodies Café (Bundaberg), Queensland Museum (Brisbane), Redlands Performing Arts Centre (RPAC)
- **Festivals:** Woodford Folk Festival, Brisbane Festival, National Multicultural Festival (ACT), Queensland Multicultural Festival, Festival of Tibet (Brisbane), Anywhere Festival (Brisbane), Brisbane Fringe Festival, Encounters India Festival (Brisbane), Brisbane YogaFest, Ekam Yoga Festival (Central NSW), 4eb Carnivale (Brisbane), FESTURI (Sunshine Coast), MOSAIC Multicultural Festival (Brisbane), BrisAsia Festival, Sydney Super Retreat, SPARK Festival (Ipswich), The Ground Beneath Us Festival

PRODUCTION EXPERIENCE

- Assistant Producer for the BrisAsia Festival, 2024
- Creative Producer for "Into The Light" – a production with QLD Ballet, Thomas Dixon Centre, 2022
- Event Producer for Harmony Day Festivals for the Vedanta Centre (2023 and 2024)

RECORDING EXPERIENCE

- Recorded soundtrack for play "Back to Bilo" (Queensland Theatre) in 2025
- Recorded album "Bittersweet" at Hunting Ground Studios, Brisbane, in 2024.
- Recorded single "Beyond Skin Deep" at Radio 4eb studios, Brisbane, in 2023.
- Recorded 2 singles as part of the Wild Mountains Song Retreat in 2022
- Recorded single "On the Horizon" at Radio 4eb studios, Brisbane in 2021.
- Recorded single "Feel The Joy" in August 2020 as part of the "Music Masala" project 2020
- Solo debut album "My Eyes Can See" recorded at Hunting Ground Studios, Brisbane – launched 2019
- Recorded single "Madhura Meenakshi" at Radio 4eb in Brisbane as part of "Music Masala" project, 2019
- Recorded for soundtrack for short film "Refraction", 2017
- Recorded with band "Spirit of Bhakti" on debut album "Open Door", launched 2015

WORKSHOP AND TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- "Weaving Worlds" community workshops
 - McIlwraith State School and Gin Gin Community Centre (Wide Bay region, QLD), funded by the Regional Arts Development Fund (RADF), 2025
 - Bundaberg, 2024 and 2026
- "Weaving Voices" – Oodies Café, Bundaberg, 2025; Cooloom, Sunshine Coast, March 2026
- ARTSLAB: Wellbeing for Artists: online workshop hosted by Bundaberg Regional Galleries, July 2026
- "City Sings": community singing workshop hosted by Moreton Bay Regional Council, June 2026
- Facilitator for the Lullaby Project (6 week program, Brisbane and Caboolture), February 2026

- Guest teacher for the MOSAIC Multicultural Choir in 2025 (Brisbane)
- "Maal – One Spirit" – workshop collaboration with Indigenous Elder Uncle Glenn Barry and Japanese Koto player Takako Haggerty for BrisAsia Festival, 2025 and 2026
- "Boomerang Banter" – Collaboration with Indigenous Elder Uncle Glenn Barry for the BrisAsia Festival, 2024
- "Yoga for the Singing Voice" – March 2024, Brisbane
- Guest facilitator at "HeartSong" retreat in Springbrook, 2023 and 2024
- Guest workshop facilitator at Wild Mountains Song Writing Retreat, 2022
- Online workshop "Looking After Your Singing Voice" - 2021
- "Kirtan Connection" - 10-week online course offered during COVID-19 social restrictions,
- Workshop "Find Your Voice" - Yoga Retreat in Springbrook QLD, 2019
- Workshop "Sound Meditation" - Yoga Retreat in Springbrook, 2019
- Workshop "Tuning In: Learn to Sing Traditional Kirtan" - 6-week workshop in Brisbane, 2018
- Workshop "Tuning In: Learn to Sing Traditional Kirtan" - 1 day workshop in Myocum, NSW, 2018
- Teaching of South Indian Carnatic music to children and adults since 2014
- Workshop "Introduction to Indian Classical Music" - Byron Bay, 2012

PRESS AND MEDIA PRESENCE

- 612 ABC Brisbane Morning program with Rebecca Levingstone and Ashwin Segkar
- "The Big Note" with Cameron Stephen on 3MDR 97.1FM (Victoria)
- "What Do You Reckon?" evening program on 612 ABC Brisbane
- "The Rhythm Divine" on ABC Radio National
- "Breakfast with BEMAC" on Radio 4eB Brisbane
- "World Beat" with Rick Heritage on 4zzz
- "Global Grooves" with Rick Heritage on 4eb
- "Women's Profile" with Maureen Mopio on 4eb Gig Highlights
- Featured on ABC Coast FM (Sunshine Coast)

AWARDS

- Recipient of the Regional Arts Development Fund (RADF) grant to deliver workshop "Weaving Worlds" to rural schooling communities outside of Bundaberg, 2025
- Recipient of the Regional Arts Development Fund (RADF) grant to deliver workshop "Weaving Worlds" in Bundaberg, 2024
- Winner of the 2023 Queensland Music Awards (World Music Category) for the single "Space", alongside musical collaborator Mou
- Nominated as finalist in the 2025 Queensland Music Awards for single "Bittersweet"
- Nominated as a finalist in the 2022 Queensland Music Awards for single "On the Horizon"
- Nominated as a finalist in the 2016 Queensland Music Awards for single "Open Door", alongside musical collaborators
- Received a "highly commended" Queensland Music Award in 2020 for single "Feel the Joy", alongside musical collaborators
- Successful recipient of the BrisAsia LIVE Creative Residency Fellowship 2022

MEMBERSHIP

- Member of the Artistic Advisory Panel for the Brisbane Multicultural Arts Centre (BEMAC)
- Member of QMusic