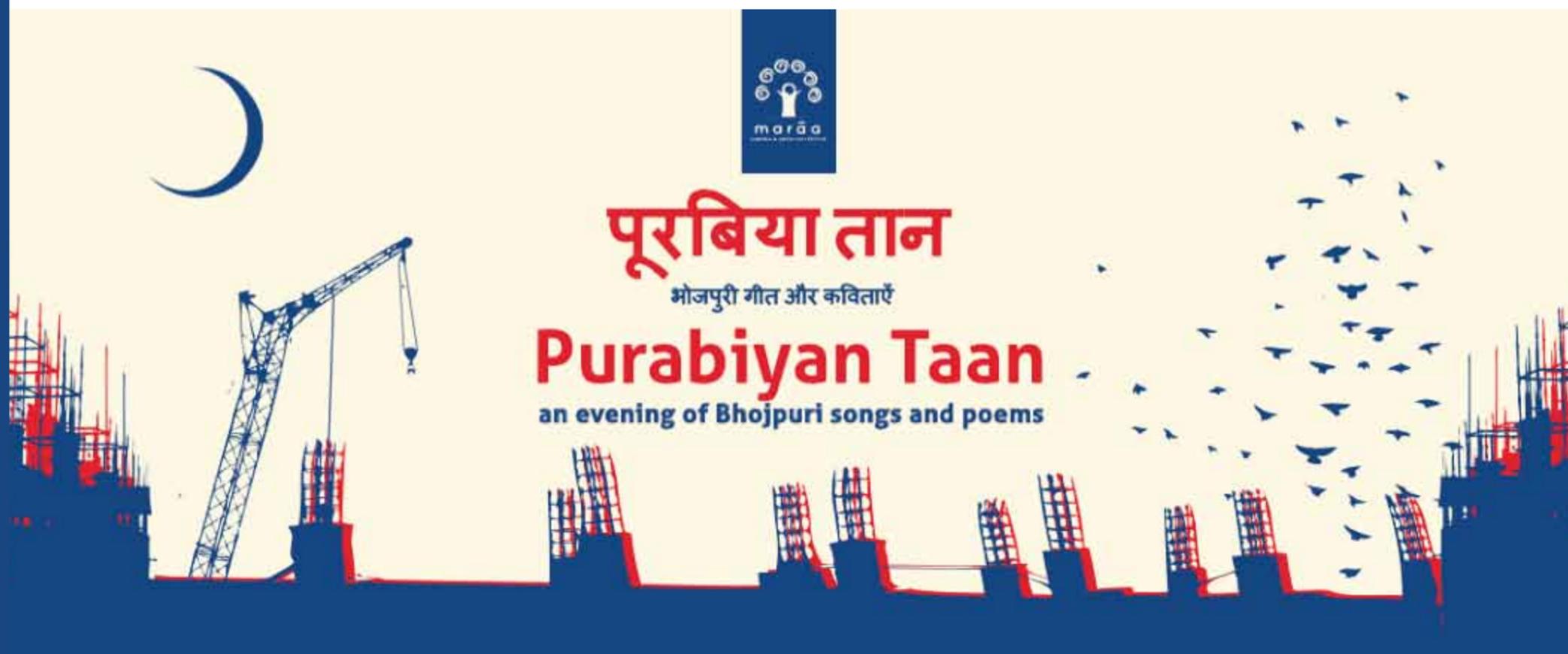


Purabiyan Taan: an evening of Bhojpuri Songs and Poems

Lecture Performance by Kalpana Patowary

27th July | Monday | Azim Premji University | 10th floor auditorium | 5:45 pm onwards



"I want my songs to travel outside our villages. Yes it's safe there in its original form, but it is of no use unless the world hears our very soulful music."

Kalpana Patowary

Despite mainstream success, within the Bollywood film industry, her interest is in studying various lesser-known folk forms. Her recent album, *'The legacy of Bhikhari Thakur'* is the first recording of the work of Bhikhari Thakur. Bhikhari Thakur was an Indian playwright, folk singer and activist who developed the folk theatre form of *'Bidesia'*.

Bidesia, refers to migration- in the context of Bhikhari Thakur's work, this refers not only to the geographical dislocation, but also to a larger sense of cultural alienation, experienced by the migrant. The album comprising nine songs, brings to life Bhikhari's Thakur's work, reiterating its relevance in a contemporary context that is marked by the flows of migration.

Other than Bidesia, Kalpana has also been studying other folk forms from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, including Birha, Purvi, Pachra, Kajri, Sohar, Vivah-geet, Chaita and Nautanki. Her intent is to experiment with various styles, including jazz and blues, reinterpreting these forms musically, and taking them to diverse audiences.

As part of season 4 of MTV@coke studio she presented *'Khadi Birha'* (folk songs sung by the Ahir's in Bihar and Nepal) that narrate experiences of migration, during the colonial period, when a huge population of Bhojpuri people left Indian shores to work in sugarcane, cocoa, jute and other plantations in Caribbean countries. Through this body of songs, Kalpana explored the diasporic tradition that connects India to the Caribbean.

Her experimentation with various folk forms, led to the release of a world music album, titled *'The Sacred Scriptures of Monikut'* about the reformer, wandering philosopher, saint and poet, Mahapurush Srimanta Shankardeva and his disciple Mahapurush Srimanta Madhavdeva from Assam. The album featured collaborations with Trilok Gurtu, an indian percussionist, Guru Rewben Mashangva - considered the father of Naga folk blues, PAPON Angarag Mahanta, a singer from assam and Zubeen Garg, a singer and producer from Assam.

She has put together an anthology of *Birha* - tracing its development across UP and Bihar which she intends to launch in Bangalore on the 26th of July. She will also be performing at Ravindra Kalakshetra at 5:30pm on Sunday, 26th July.