

Mana Dhanraj Contractor

6124 Laird Ave, Oakland, CA 94605 | 424.354.7515 | manadhanraj@gmail.com

Artistic Experience

- **Malli – Founder, Composer & Lead Vocalist | Oakland, CA | Jan 2021 – Present**
Founder of Malli, an interdisciplinary band exploring the theme of home through genre-blending music. Drawing from immigrant narratives, the project fuses Indian classical, soul, and contemporary styles into an emotionally resonant musical journey.
- **NMND – Founder, Composer & Lead Vocalist | Los Angeles, CA | Jan 2019 – Present**
Co-creator of NMND, an experimental electronic duo exploring live vocal processing and layered improvisation. The debut EP 'Integration' focuses on voice manipulation through hardware synths and field recordings.
- **Lace – Founder, Composer & Lead Vocalist | Los Angeles, CA | Jan 2018 – 2023**
Led the neo-soul project Lace, weaving together influences from jazz, funk, and South Indian music. Released 'Liar's Notebook', a debut EP showcasing groove-based songwriting and rich harmonies.
- **N.E.O. Voice Festival – Vocal Fellow | Los Angeles, CA | June 2024**
Participated in the Exploratorio concert premiering a new interdisciplinary vocal work based on the theme 'Uncanny: An Open Letter to AI', collaborating with composers and artists in a week-long intensive.
- **Overtone Industries – Soloist | Los Angeles, CA | 2021 – 2022**
Lead vocalist for 'Original Vision', a series of contemporary opera-theater works praised for innovation and cross-disciplinary collaboration.
- **Dirty Cello – Vocalist & Arranger | Bay Area, CA | June 2021 – 2023**
Performed as a backing vocalist and arranger with Dirty Cello, a high-energy ensemble blending blues, bluegrass, and rock.
- **Sweet Land (The Industry) – Vocalist | Los Angeles State Historic Park | Feb–Mar 2020**
Performed in 'Sweet Land', an experimental opera examining settler colonial narratives through diverse artistic perspectives.
- **(Un)Covered – Composer & Vocalist | Sharon Disney Lund Theatre, LA | Feb 2020**
Composed and performed original music for a multimedia dance performance inspired by Botticelli's 'Birth of Venus'.
- **We're Gonna Die – Composer & Vocalist | Bootleg Theatre, LA | Feb 2020**
Composed music for a staged adaptation of Young Jean Lee's concert-play 'We're Gonna Die'.
- **Crowd Out – Vocalist | Walt Disney Concert Hall | June 2019**
Performed in David Lang's immersive vocal piece 'Crowd Out' as part of LA Phil's Noon to Midnight festival.

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- SWEAT – Vocalist | CalArts | March 2019
Collaborated with seven vocalists in Juliet Palmer's a cappella opera 'SWEAT', depicting the lives of garment workers.

Education

- MFA in Voice Arts – California Institute of the Arts | 2018–2020
- Diploma in Voice Performance & Music Management – Swarnabhoomi Academy of Music | 2013–2015
- BFA in Textile Design – Srishti School of Art, Design and Technology | 2006–2011

Artist Management & Production

- Producer – Dada Divas, REDCAT Los Angeles (2020)
- Artist Management & Tour Manager – Gatecrash Music Management, Mumbai (2017–2018)
- Facilitator & Artist Manager – Jodhpur RIFF & Blue Lotus Festival (2012–2018)

Teaching Experience

- Voice Coach – Oakland Public Conservatory | June 2022 – Present
- Voice Coach – Starland School of Music | June 2022 – Present
- Voice Coach – Songbird Studios SF | Apr 2020 – June 2023
- Teaching Assistant – Raphaëlle Brochet | Aug 2020 – Dec 2024
- Teaching Assistant – California Institute of the Arts | Sept 2018 – May 2020
- Faculty – FECAT | Jan 2016 – Aug 2018
- Founder & Director – MELA Music Academy, Bangalore | Aug 2014 – Mar 2018