A host of global artistes are set to take stage at a world music festival in the city this weekend

**Isai does it**

For the last six years, the Global Isai festival has found a permanent spot in the city's musical calendar. While December has always been synonymous with the Margazhi music season, come February, world music finds a stronghold in the city.

With a list of 20 artistes from around the globe, the sixth edition of the festival promises a two-day mash-up of music from the blues and jazz to Carnatic fusion rock and hard rock covers on the gaukurum (the Korean zither-like string instrument).

“Global Isai was started to test the waters of the city’s acceptance to different genres of music.” Given the rapidly growing music scene, it has become permanent,” says festival director, Edison Prithviraj.

**High-strung lines**

While the main attractions this year are the bands F-16s and Masala Coffee, making her India debut will be gaukurum prodigy Luna Lee. While the traditional instrument is not likely to be the go-to choice for rock bands, the Seoul-based musician has mastered classic guitar riffs and solos on this 21-string instrument, including Deep Purple’s Smoke on the Water, Dire Straits’ Sultans of Swing and even Jimi Hendrix’s Voodoo Child. “I used to listen to various genres as a child. I soon found myself playing whatever I liked. It could be pop, jazz, rock or Western classical like Bach,” says the 23-year-old. Catch her along with some Nirvana and Pink Floyd covers on the first day.

**Curated medley**

The festival also hosts the blues band Zila & the Swing Mates and debuitantes reggae artiste Kom Zet, all the way from Reunion Island. “We will be performing in Bengali and touring Kerala following the Global Isai festival,” says Zila, guitarist and lead singer of the band. Audience can look forward to upbeat hềs interspersed with laid back Jaimois. Also among the festival’s headliners is a second-time—Mumbai-based Kathak dancer Aditi Bhatwad, who will fuse the forms of bharatnatyam, kathak, flamenco and Sufi music in a 45-minute performance. “The love we got from Chennai in my last performance was immense. Audiences were surprised at how a classical dance form could be fused with jazz. This time, they are in for a bigger surprise,” she offers. Other bands to look out for are Elektric circus, Kuranagan, Thakara and Raditronics.

**Setting the tone**

Maria Roe Vincent uses her favourite actor’s movies to get ‘vera-level’ lyrics

IF you’re a Dhanush fan, definitely check out this song, Maria Roe Vincent’s latest single, Konjam Vera Mari weaves into its lyrics all of our favourite movie titles from Anegan, and Uthama Puthiran to Maryan, Polaivoo and Velaikkaran. And guess what, we haven’t even hit the chorus yet.

Just when you thought this was a tribute song trough, you catch the lyrics: “I am a big fan of Dhanush, and I was thinking of how to best incorporate some element of him in this song, but not overpowering.” She adds, “So I thought of using his movie titles, song titles, catch phrases, etc., in the lyrics and saw that it sounded.”

The experiment, with lyrics by Josh Vivian seems to have worked, with an addictive party vibe to up the fun. Musically, the tune is in stark contrast to her usual sound—you’ve likely heard her a capella group Ki Fi sing on the background score of Singham 3 or Maria’s African vocal on Jayan Raji’s upcoming Vasamagal. Landing up at the studio to have Harris Jayaraj ask her to sing in Swathi with a pre-emptive of 15 minutes was a bit of a surprise, she admits. Fortunately, Maria has been influenced by the American music since she was a child. “Lately, because my sister Maryann is an Afro-Beat dancer, we’ve been exposed to the African culture, language and tone,” the 27-year-old tells us.

Of late, the artiste says she’s also been keeping herself busy by extending her love for make-up to her brand new company GoGurlBeauty, which caters to fashion shoots and weddings. Of course, she might give you a discounts if Dhanush happened to be your guest. Listen to Konjam Vera Mari on iTunes, Wynk, Sound and Google Music.

—Rebecca Vargese

—Sonali Shenoy