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May – June 2017

A Musical Bonanza

FESTIVAL

Summer Festival of Music

14 and 15 June

The inaugural evening opened with Iman Das from Bangalore. Trained in Patiala Gayaki under Pt. Ajay Chakravarty and Pt. Kalyan Basu, Iman chose *Patdeep* for his main raga and presented a *Bada Khayal* set to *Vilambit Ektal*, a *Chhota khayal* in *Teentala* and a *Tarana* in *Drut Ektala*. His tonal modulations and complex *Taan* patterns had the unmistakable stamp of his Guru, but the limitations of the raga made him sound repetitive. He also sang a Punjabi *Bandish* and *Tarana* in *Sohini* before concluding with *Thumri Khamaj*, immortalised by Ud. Barkat Ali Khan. Devendra Varma on the harmonium and Susmoy Mishra on the tabla provided him commendable support.

Purvi Nimgaonkar from Indore opened with Raga *Yaman*, in her cultivated voice. Initiated into classical music by her musician parents Shri Sudhakar and Rajeshwari Dixit, both vocalists of Gwalior Gharana, she is presently being groomed under Vidushi Ashwini Bhide. She has imbibed the nuances of Jaipur gayaki as well.

Her authentic treatment of the raga, remarkable *Sur-dar-Sur Barhat* during the *Bada Khayal* set to *Vilambit Teentala* and the crystal clear *Aakar Taans* of varied patterns reached her gradually, the *Chhota Khayal Neha kaise laga...* set to *Adhaa Theka* where she enjoyed playing with rhythm. Purvi concluded her recital with a lilting *Jhula*. The masterly accompaniment on the tabla by Hitendra Dixit, the gifted disciple of Pt. Yogesh Shamsi and the harmonium by Sumit Mishra, enhanced her riveting recital.

Sarita Pathak Yajurvedi, a young representative of the Rampur Sadarang Parampara, gave an impressive performance. She chose raga *Bhupali* and presented compositions of Acharya Brihaspri 'Anangarang' in *Vilambit* and *Drut Ektala* followed by a *Tarana* in *Teentala* where the *Tanaiti* took it to jet speed. Sarita concluded her concert with a thumri in *Mishra Shivananjani*. Excellent support on the harmonium by Vinay Mishra and Akhtar Hasan on the tabla enhanced her captivating concert.

The two-day festival concluded with Pt. Arun Debnath, the senior-most performer of the festival. Trained under his father Pt. Atul Nath, who in turn was the disciple of Ud. Ameer Khan and Pt. Jasraj, he has the impact of both on his *gayaki*. Assisted by his disciple Sanghamitra Acharya, he opened with *Rageshree*; presenting his own compositions in this raga, he impressed as a composer too. With his penchant for rhythm, he revelled in the rhythmic play of *Sargam* and *Akar Taans* and the varied *Tihais*. Pt. Debnath concluded his recital with the well-known *Jhaptal Bandish Dekho ri na mane Shyam...* in raga *Des*. He should have refrained from tampering with the text of the traditional *Bandish* by replacing it with his own.



Mid-summer evening with Hindustani vocalists

Climate of Destruction

EXHIBITION

Inheritance of Loss

Paintings and watercolours by Ashish Khushwaha

Curated by Uma Nair

20 to 29 May



Painting from 'Inheritance of Loss'

Beset by notions of feeling beheaded by a continuum of events and circumstances, it is perhaps most enhanced due to the volcanic developmental process around us. Consumption wise, science surmises that our planet can sustain but one America. Closer home, seeing our megacity centric growth and burgeoning population, suffice it to say that we can sustain barely even one India! The impact is unmistakable, the prospect prohibitive, and the echo says, 'Destroy! Consume!'

Acres of depleting forest and farmland replaced by concrete jungles in the name of housing, commerce and industry, dislodging flora and fauna from their natural habitat, compels serious thinking. Deeply affected, Mumbai-based artist Ashish Kushwaha adopts this as his idiom of expression, portraying denuded landscapes, headless animals, and the remaining on the brink of extinction. Conveyed powerfully with inherent tricks of watercolour, these are portents of doom, the surreal manifestations unconscious and effortless.

Disturbing is the state of Kushwaha's protagonists—the rhinoceros with the backdrop of concrete and iron grilles; jutting steel bars from row upon row of unfinished concrete pillars, are the leitmotif of the series, *Inheritance of Loss*. These precursors to massive structures look menacing in their ubiquity, the only perches left to peacock and vulture, equally hapless and bewildered at their fate!

The burnt sooty countenance of one set of paintings is offset by a climate of destruction that pervades another, wherein the very earth seems to be burning around these innocent creatures. Can we not strive together for a safer world around us?

■ ARUNA BHOWMICK

Tingling Palate

EXHIBITION

Seeds of Identity—31 Foods Mexico Gave the World

COLLABORATION: Embassy of Mexico

17 to 23 May

of nourishment in both cultures. Peanuts and corn come a close second. Other interesting flora included avocados, guacamole from avocado, agave cactus, chilli peppers in different hues, and much more.

Several varieties of peanuts, flowers and fruits from Mesoamerica form the basis of today's Mexican gastronomy—one that is diversified, healthy and creative. Many of these ingredients also spread throughout the world and were embraced by the cuisine of other countries. With the passage of time, the quintessential Mexican way of cooking gradually faded. The exhibition was a perfect attempt to give the public an engaging visual and written overview of a small yet significant part of the flora out of which Mexican culture has evolved.

From the exhibition 'Seeds of Identity'



■ GAURIKA KAPOOR

Dagar Tradition

PERFORMANCE

In Memory of Ustad Nasir Zahiruddin Dagar

COLLABORATION: *Dagar Brothers Memorial Trust*

7 May



Ustad Faiyaz Wasifuddin Dagar

The Dagar tradition of *dhrupad* singing has been honed to perfection by its spearhead exponent Ustad Faiyaz Wasifuddin Dagar. Hence his presentation in homage to his late uncle Ustad Nasir Faiyazuddin Dagar was par excellence the *raison d'être* for the choice—the composition was from the treasury of the late ustad. In his inimical style, the *alaap* overlay of the concert was its focal point with authentic touches of all the technicalities of *dhrupad* exposition. The overall aura of the music was imbued with an intrinsic melodiousness and inbuilt rhythm through

characteristic utterances of *dhrupad* exposition. The divisional command of the main lyric through the sub division of the beat rhythm was razor sharp and exact without any compromise in its musicality. The *pakhawaj* accompaniment provided by Mohan Shyam Sharma ably complimented the divisional expertise of the lyric, alongside. Thus the concert became a well rounded, competent and melodious offering for audiences.

The latter half of the evening was graced by a vocal recital by Pt. Rajeshwar Acharya of Varanasi. The veteran ustad presented his maiden concert on the Delhi stage with accompanists Govind Chakravarty (tabla) and Ghanshyam Sisodiya (*sarangi*). The artist excelled in the technicalities of his genre, but the overall performance proved to be wanting in its imaginative inputs. Overall, the combination of a highly informed, confident and melodious *dhrupad* presentation followed by a studied offering in the end made for an evening of music that showcased both the charm of innovation and the rigidity of formatting.

■ SUBHRA MAZUMDAR

Ismat Chughtai: A Progressive Iconoclast

PERFORMANCE

Kahani ki Kahani, Ismat ki Zubaani

COLLABORATION: *Brechtian Mirror and Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA)*

29 June

Written and directed by Noor Zaheer, and presented by Brechtian Mirror and IPTA, this play sought to weave the complex life narrative of Ismat Chughtai in *Kaghazi hai Pairahan*, along with her fictional narratives such as the short story, 'Gharwali'. The play-within-a-play technique, combined with certain meta-theatrical elements such as an omniscient narrator—who is Chughtai played by an actor who addresses the audience in first-person—complicate the already intricate themes that the play attempts to address. The play oscillates between crucial episodes from Chughtai's life, and the narratives in her writings that seemingly emerge from those experiences,

creating a mixed reaction in the audience—as it was evidently intended. While the performances of her short stories entertained the spectators, flashes from her own life that harked back to the era of *Anjuman Tarraqi Pasand* when the zeitgeist was of anti-authoritarianism, anti-imperialism and revolution, inspired great awe. Other Progressive writers such as Manto and Mulk Raj Anand, associates of Chughtai, facilitated the subtexts of the play and lent fascinating angles to the overarching narrative. Zaheer's engagement with questions on the position of the writer in society, the meaning of writing stories, censorship, misogyny, women's emancipation, freedom of speech, the meaning of love, spousal duty and so on, elegantly interwove Chughtai's fact with fiction, history with literature, and autobiography with imagination.

The powerful theatrical performance and the evocative narrative strategy undoubtedly proved to be a potent mix. In times of surveillance and rising communal disharmony, Zaheer gave us, if I might borrow the term from Sir Philip Sidney, a consummate 'apology' for art.

■ IPSHITA NATH

Reflections of the Past

PERFORMANCE

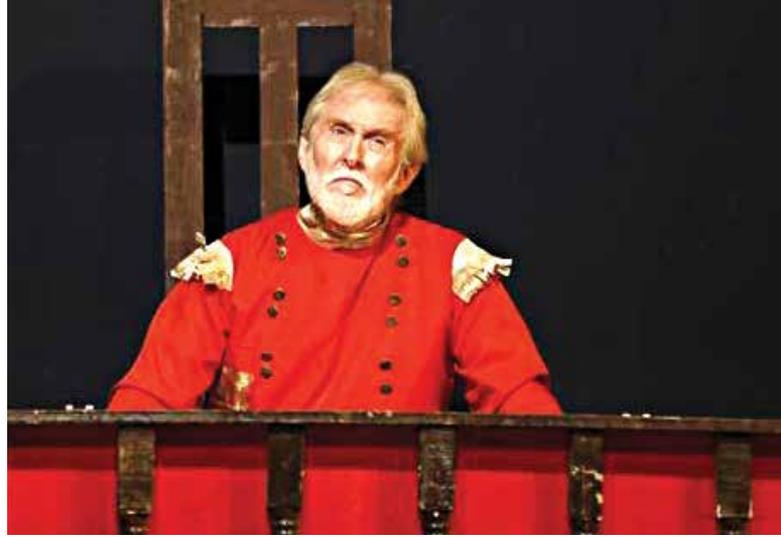
A Memoir of the Future: The Becoming Room

A monologue on the life and times of Wilfred Bion, world renowned psychoanalyst

Conceived and written by Meg Harris Williams

Performed and directed by Tom Alter

27 May



Tom Alter in 'A Memoir of the Future'

The play on the life of Wilfred Bion focused on his childhood and the war recounted by Meg Harris Williams. Meg Williams, herself a psychoanalyst, conceptualised the play grounded in major tenets of psychoanalytic theory. It underscores the centrality of childhood and social relations across the lifespan in psychoanalysis through the reflections of Wilfred Bion. A British psychoanalyst trained with Melaine Klein, Bion was raised in India till he was eight years old, after which he was educated in London. He became a Tank Commander in the First World War. The play was brilliantly performed by Tom Alter as old Bion reflecting on past happenings of his life.

Alter uses theatrical magic to bring to life the deep inner inquiries that were Brian's angst in the ongoing struggle of his own childhood reality and fantasy. Appearing as a shadow, he captures attention with movement against a film, breaking silence with a casual walk to stoically recounting his childhood experiences. The screenshots of childhood interwoven with fantasies came close to hair-raising reality as Alter modulated his voice and pitch. The often-serious account of Bion's life were sometimes presented as sarcasm and generated humour. The young Bion's dilemma about sexual urges and violence in war were well articulated in the monologue. Bion had always maintained that he was not a psychoanalyst but was 'becoming' one. This was also true of his personality in general, which was largely unfinished. Overall, it was a treat to watch.

■ ASHA SINGH

Waltz as Appreciation

MUSIC APPRECIATION PROMOTION

The Waltz as Remembrance by Justin McCarthy

6 June

Delhi's own musicologist and teacher, Justin McCarthy, spoke of the evolution of the waltz form from the late 18th century right into the early 20th century. He touched on the history, told anecdotes and read out from novels and letters, and also played a number of pieces. The waltz was a particular dance form of especial intimacy, where the man held his partner in a close embrace. This was a radical departure from earlier dance forms where men and women danced in groups. The name 'Waltz' comes

originally from the German word, *walzen* (to turn), which in turn came from the Latin word to turn (*volvere*).

Justin read out excerpts from Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* and indicated that this famous passage may have been influenced by a waltz composed by Chopin, which he played.

'The waltz as remembrance'



Besides Chopin, McCarthy played music by Schubert, Schumann and Brahms. He explained the differences in both the *Sentimental Waltzes* and the *Noble Waltzes* of Schubert. Justin explained some technical aspects, as also the mood of the composer while he played the piece. Each waltz was lyrical and memorable. When he entered the 20th century and played Ravel, he explained that Ravel introduced double melodies into his waltz, which made the piece more complex, by introducing an element of dissonance. The concert ended with a longer, more complex, but beautiful composition of Ravel.

■ CHANDANA DEY

Lalan Shah's Mystical Poetry

PERFORMANCE

Concert: *Lalan Geeti*
By Farida Parveen

COLLABORATION: Council for Social
Development

2 June



Lalan Geeti by Farida Parveen

Farida Parveen, the famous folk singer from Bangladesh, regaled the audience with her renderings of the 19th century bard from Bengal, Lalan Shah, aka Lalan Faqir. It was Rabindranath Tagore who first recognised the hidden depths in Lalan's mystical poetry, collected and published it, thus making the reading Bengali public aware of its profundity.

The occasion for this concert was India's former Foreign Secretary Muchkund Dubey's Hindi translation of 105 poems by Lalan Shah from Bangla. He first read them with surprise and delight during his time as High Commissioner in Dhaka. He is firm in his belief that the only other poet with a similar understanding of the human condition is the great Kabir, of the medieval Bhakti tradition. Kabir's own poems have survived in comparatively small numbers; the rest of his canon was composed over a fairly long period of time by Kabir Panthis, or those who chose to follow in his footsteps, expressing similar philosophical ideas and emotions. Lalan Shah may have suffered a similar fate and remained a part of the oral tradition of the wandering Baul minstrels of East Bengal but for the timely discovery of his poetry by Tagore.

Half the songs that Farida Parveen sang were Hindi translations by Dubey. Her sonorous, expressive rendering of Lalan Geeti was a bit hampered by imperfect sound balancing. The amplification was too loud even for the large hall. This glitch notwithstanding, she revealed the beauty of Lalan's poetry.

■ PARTHA CHATTERJEE

Yaadgar Shahr-i-Dilli

TALK

Past Remains: *Hazrat-i-Dehli, 1857-1947-1957*

SPEAKER: *Shahid Amin*

COLLABORATION: *Department of History,
Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi*

11 May

Brilliant and nuanced, spectacular and variegated, historian extraordinaire, Shahid Amin's equipoise and classically liberal vision spiked his soliloquy on Delhi's skeins of influence, ideas and power with a cerebral gravitas. A virtual *safarnama* chronicled with an effortless flow of gentle nostalgia—flecked with minutiae—this *khiraj-i-aqueedat* (homage) explored Delhi's 'key moments' through 'a clutch of stories'—archival, visual, aesthetic, quotidian and historicist.

The pervasive winsomeness which echoed in the reminiscences of a 7-year-old in the 'Summer of 1957', "the

layered undertones entrenched in the aluminium 'badhana' of the UP Muslim resident within the midst of 10 UB Jawahar Nagar(Retreat)", the piquant Kamla Nagar *mohalla* gossip and the sprawling Chandrawal, the Gujjar revenge and the pillage of the magnificent porticoed Matka House in 1857, the 'town gown conflict' between a belligerent village and a changing post-colonial farrago of corporate greed, all eloquently made palpable the imprint of the past on the present.

Amin's remarkable oeuvre to make details sing with interconnections, conjured how memory plays on the similitude of facts. The encampment of the *jamait-i-Angrezi-i-Bonta* at Flagstaff, the loyal *bawarchis* and *topchis-khidmatgars* to the besieged sahibs, the glorious journey of Viceregal Estate—a hunting lodge to the Vice Chancellor's office and its tryst with the freedom struggle—the rise of St. Stephens, Hindu and Ramjas colleges as exemplars of the city's encounter with modernity were the enduring leitmotif of this enthralling presentation. The layering of time and the palimpsestic readings of memory along with meanderings into ungraspable epistemes was the evening's *raison d'être*. We are what we remember.

■ BEEBA SOBTI

Kumaoni Heritage

TALK

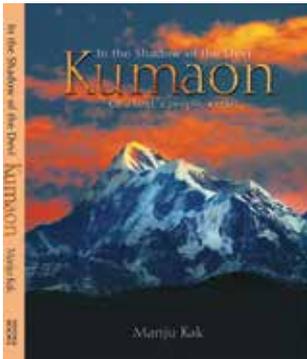
In the Shadow of the Devi—Kumaon

An Illustrated talk by Manju Kak on her new book, *In the Shadow of the Devi: Kumaon. Of a Land, People and Craft* (New Delhi, Niyogi Books 2017)

CHAIR: Molly Kaushal

COLLABORATION: Niyogi Books

15 May



A characteristic feature of the scattered and rugged rural villages was their elaborately carved wooden doorways and panels. Where money was scarce, a fortune was dedicated to install ornate façade panels. Who were these craftspersons? Perhaps a travelling guild catered to demand, as motifs as wide ranging as Ganesh, fleur-de-lis, parrot, pine, British lion, Islamic calligraphy, all quite removed from local concerns, find expression here.

Where have these carvers gone? Even after the colonisers left, remotely drafted laws and national level politics have continued to subsume Kumaoni identity.

Not a mere coffee table book with beautiful photographs, this offering of intellectually stimulating stories invites further exploration, interpretation, and transformation of attitudes that demean and thereby destroy heterodox voices. An inspiring evening enhanced by Anup Sah's amazing slides!

■ BHARATI MIRCHANDANI

'Somewherers' or 'Nowherers': A Conversation

BOOK LAUNCH AND DISCUSSION

Edge of An Era

(Juggernaut Books, 2017) by Carlo Pizzati, in conversation with Manu Joseph

INTRODUCTION: Parth Mehrotra

20 June

method, echo chambers, the refusal to see the impending inevitability and the inability to listen to, or even acknowledge, differences were key issues. Home, a sense of belonging, cosmopolitanism, migration and rootedness in light of a global relapse into a kind of nativism, an emphasis on origin, ethno-linguistic chauvinism and the rise of secessionist movements. He spoke about migration without integration, emphasising the link between economic slowdown and failed globalisation, and the attachment that comes with even a glimpse of prosperity. Nationalism and cosmopolitanism and their polarising value systems were summed up as people who were either 'somewherers' or 'nowherers'. It was a stimulating conversation, which emerged from and was buoyed by Manu Joseph's penetrating questions and Carlo Pizzati's thought-provoking answers.

Carlo Pizzati's *Edge of An Era* book launch saw the author in conversation with novelist and journalist Manu Joseph, with an introduction by Parth Mehrotra. The book focuses on three intellectuals: the philosopher John Gray, the theorist Homi Bhabha, and author and essayist Pankaj Mishra. The conversation touched on various relevant subjects, such as but not restricted to: the limits of intellectual discourse, migration, Third World subjectivity in the First World, nationalism and globalisation.

Carlo Pizzati began by talking about the transitory moment that we are currently living in. The inefficacy of intellectualism, considering the failure of punditry across the board, was also addressed. Intellectual discourse as a

■ RAKSHA THAKUR

Questioning the Challenges of My Times

TALK

Mein Aur Mera Samay
By Chitra Mudgal

COLLABORATION: Indian Society of Authors

21 June



Chitra Mudgal

books for her, she gathered the strength to raise a voice against all kinds of discrimination that kept haunting her. In interpersonal bonds, she applied all the tactics of *Sam Dam Dand Bhed* to get out of the narrow confines of a ferocious class- and caste-bound patriarchal system and start working both as a theatre activist and a campaign holder in the jhuggi clusters of Mumbai where she came in close contact with veterans like Pramila Dandwate, Paneewali Bai, Datta Samant and other trade union leaders whom she portrayed with marvellous strokes in her well received novel *Anwa!*

With great gratitude, she mentioned the people in the jhuggi clusters of Mumbai who sheltered her against threats she received from her feudal family after her revolutionary marriage to the well-known fiction writer and editor, late Awadhnarayan Mudgal. Most of these characters found a place in her highly readable novels of later years, thus becoming the permanent citizens of our imagination!

Main aur Mera Samaya captured Hindi writer and activist, Chitra Mudgal, in multiple dimensions. 'My sense of self took root in the oddest of moments', said Chitra, with memories of a childhood torn between the luxurious cantonment life in south west India and the nightmares of a feudal setup in a remote village of UP! When her parents went on a foreign posting, sons were sent off to big boarding schools and daughters were packed off to the ancestral home where questions pertaining to class, caste and gender justice literally pushed her to the great books.

Thanks to the village library and the teachers who selected

■ ANAMIKA

An Intangible Feeling

MUSIC APPRECIATION PROMOTION

A Feel for Flamenco

A presentation by Punita Singh

18 May

Flamenco is an art form that is ubiquitous and exclusive simultaneously. Punita Singh, together with the crowd, tried to uncover the elusive origins of flamenco, from Rajasthan to Spain, and even touching South America; nevertheless, the admirable combined efforts were inconclusive and left several dots unconnected. She explained, with the help of slides, the history of Spain and its eclectic political and cultural influences, especially Greek, which, perhaps, created a syncretic art form that is expressed through veritable pathos.

In order to explain the syncopated rhythm of this soulful art form, Punita encouraged the audience to clap to a few different variations of the 12-beat system. She showed a recording of Carmen Amaya, the legendary *gitana*, who expressed her intense emotions while maintaining a defiant yet graceful stance, which is the hallmark of all flamenco dancers.

Singing a single syllable while stretching it over varying notes is a distinct trademark of flamenco singers and this skill, called *melisma*, is used in their songs to share the suffering and persecution of gypsies down the ages. She showed several more slides comprising flamenco guitarists teaming up with guitar virtuosos from other genres. The *Mediterranean Sundance* slide showing the meeting of jazz and flamenco was particularly spectacular.

An interesting fact the speaker conveyed was that while flamenco is still widely performed in *tablaos* in Spain, the performers are, curiously, often Japanese! Flamenco's inscrutable universal reach compelled UNESCO to call it, befittingly, an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity!

■ RIMA ZAHEER

Glimpses of a Creative Journey

FILM AND DISCUSSION

Madhavi Mudgal's Odissi Dance Choreographies

COLLABORATION: *Gandharva Mahavidyalaya, New Delhi*

19 May

the *Rang-Devata/Devi*. She explained that it was not based on any raga but the composer Pt. Madhup Mudgal used the *Swayambhoo Swaras* for the music of this piece where the slow, leisurely pace was maintained with the *sol-fa* phrases and the Sanskrit *shloka Bharatakul bhaagya kalike, Bhava-Rasa-Rang parinat kaaye...* in praise of the goddess who impersonated *Bhava, Rasa and Ranga*.

The *Nritta* aspect came forth with *Pallavan* next, where one *Bhangima* to another created a *Karana* and the *Karanas* together created the *Angahara*. One also saw how the *laya* or rhythm came together with the introduction of *tala*. This was again a group choreography in raga *Durga*. The group choreography *Teevra Madhyam* had this particular note as its focal point.

There were also solos by Madhavi on an *Odia* poem by Shri Mayadhar Mansingh and an *Ashtapadi* from Jayadeva's *Geet-Govind*, with her signature grace and poetic *Abhinaya*. The dramatic folk tale of Odisha, the *Ganga-Stavan* and *Vadya-Vaividhya* were other remarkable group choreographies that mesmerised the audience.

■ MANJARI SINHA

Portuguese Short Films

FILMS

NY Portuguese Short Film Festival 2016

COLLABORATION: *Portuguese Embassy Cultural Centre*

11 and 12 May

Law of Gravity by Tiago Rosso-Rosso is made on an even smaller budget than the other films. It is a cool, witty send up of modern intellectual cinema by two young cinephiles who debate with utmost seriousness its nature and merit, and that of the practising directors. The two characters standing by the staircase of an old building mouthing their 'profound' thoughts could be out of an Absurd Comedy.

Ricardo Teixeira's *My River* is a lyrical contemplation on the lives of a working, middle-class young couple who decide to get away from the city and into nature by the River Douro. Their trip is used subtly as an excuse to make a case for conservation.

The shorts reveal in each case a well-developed cinematic sensibility and a genuine quest for the unusual and hitherto unexplored possibilities of the language of cinema.

■ PARTHA CHATTERJEE

Rasa in Music, Dance and Visuals

FILMS

Dance of the Enchantress

Directed by Adoor Gopalakrishnan

30 June

This was the very first Delhi showing of Adoor Gopalakrishnan and Bridget Chataignier's film on *Mohiniattam* released 10 years ago. As everyone familiar with other films of this master knows, Adoor chooses not to lean on a linear narrative to convey meaning. The viewer is respected as a *rasika* to experience the *rasa* evoked. This is done through images of *Mohiniattam* performed in temples, palaces as well as classrooms, contextualised in the Kerala environment. As Veejay Sai aptly explained in his introduction to the film, every image could be a screen shot given the impeccable camera work.

There are only two scenes with spoken dialogue. One is a finely crafted scene in a bus as dancers and their musicians are returning from a performance. The vocalist is singing and a bus discussion reiterates the revival of *Mohiniattam* by the Maharaja Swati Tirunal, while another bus rider reminds us that Vallathol Narayana, who established Kerala Kalamandalam, revived it in the early part of the last century.

The other scene is when the guru asks why a student is not in class. The answer is that she is getting married and her in-laws don't approve of her continuing to dance. The guru declares that this is an outdated attitude. Meanwhile, the images of the young girl, her betrothed, even the selection of the wedding saris are dovetailed with the *sringar* of the dance and lush Kerala landscapes.

We see the *bhava* of the recently departed Guru Professor Kalamandalam Leelamma, as well as Guru Kalamandalam Kshemavathi in the classroom sharing between guru and *shishyas*. The well-chosen dance sequences are shot in temples and palaces. I was delighted to see Swati Tirunal's *Aliveni* and the popular lullaby, *Omanathinkal Kidavo* in *Mohiniattam* for the first time as I had choreographed and performed them in Kerala in Odissi years ago.

■ SHARON LOWEN

A Dignified End

DISCUSSION

End of Life Care

*SPEAKERS: Dr. Nagesh Simha; Dr. R.K. Mani;
and Ms Harmala Gupta*

2 June

The palliative care discipline is the process of treating or managing pain and physical illness, where a cure is no longer possible. It includes use of medicines, therapies including chemotherapy or radiotherapy, and any other support for the best quality of life. When palliative treatment includes caring for people who are nearing the end of life, it is called end of life care.

The real dilemma mentioned was giving the best medical care and practice to patients with the dignity they deserve before the end, without exposing them to machine-led

tyranny and unnecessary medico-legal intervention. The laws on these, the speakers deliberated have so far until now been messy. The problems of removing life support systems, ventilators or even of patients being organ donors where the organs are first harvested and then life-support removed was cited. Home care for the patient within the family environment, with grandchildren around, which would notionally cost only Rs.20,000/- was presented against leaving the patient in with the best medical services in hospital at a notional cost in ICU of 1.1 crores and the pangs of not seeing the grandchildren around. Hospitals say they don't want problems, will not accept just an indemnity from the patients' families. Any withdrawal of interventional care must go to the High Court and if the patient is an organ donor, they harvest the organs and only then remove the life support. It gets worse for passive euthanasia, where the terms LAMA (left against medical advice) and DAMA (discharged against medical advice) come to mind. The medical profession, the patients' families need to take a holistic but affirmative view of the process of enabling dignity with the treatment of the near to death.

■ MEKHALA SENGUPTA

Conserving Heritage

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

Conserving Architecture. Edited by Kulbhushan Jain (Ahmedabad: Aadi Centre, 2017)

DISCUSSANTS: Ms Amita Baig; Ms Gurmeet Rai; Dr. Priyaleen Singh; Divya Gupta

CHAIR: Ashok Chatterjee

13 June

yet to be synthesised and institutionalised. The profession is also challenged by its inherent complexity and the lack of a comprehensive database, availability of trained human resources at relevant levels of decision-making, pro-infrastructure development, mass tourism, etc. The session concluded with an emphasis on commitment to the profession.

The audience also shared their experience regarding the state of conservation of Indian heritage. Many pointed to the immediate need of legislative supports, channelising development and trained human resources—together to protect the interest of heritage. More so, participants emphasised the importance of building on the existing body of work to allow the profession to grow through practice.

■ SOMI CHATTERJEE

'The Mimetic Nature of Violence'

BOOK DISCUSSION

Age of Anger: A History of the Present by Pankaj Mishra (New Delhi: Juggernaut Books, 2017)

PANELLISTS: Niraja Gopal Jayal; Ananya Vajpeyi; Zoya Hasan and Peter deSouza

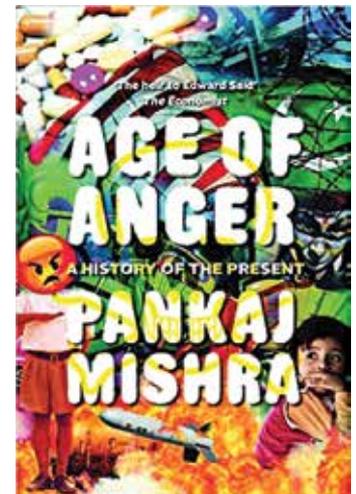
CHAIR: Ashis Nandy

24 May

In *Age of Anger*, Pankaj Mishra seeks to understand the prevailing condition of reactionary sentiments leading to populist, authoritarian regimes at present, and find its precedents by tracing an intellectual lineage of certain ways of responding. The discussion saw many critical inputs in response to a remarkably meticulous and comprehensive volume.

The discussion brought out key critical concerns. The author was lauded for 'writing about global issues in a global way'. The relevance of obscure thinkers and how their influence spanned the spectrum was appreciated. The 'mimetic nature of violence', as a concept, was appreciated for its elucidation of acts of violence. The discussion generated insightful criticisms as well. The enormous influence of new forms of media and technology was not stressed enough; and that even as the masculine, queer-phobic nature of the anger is acknowledged, gender and its resentment are mentioned but not explored. The limits of historicisation were stressed. Anger and its justification were also deliberated upon. Dr. Nandy emphasised the crucial difference between anger and violence, especially the tangibility of the latter. The discussion was incisive in its analyses of an ambitious interpretation of the present condition and its precedents.

■ RAKSHA THAKUR



Dalit Oppression

DISCUSSION

The Political Economy of the Dalit Struggle

SPEAKERS: Srinivasu Bathula; Pradeep Shinde; Smita M. Patil; and Y.S. Alone

INTRODUCTION: Vijay Naik

MODERATOR: Suhas Borker

COLLABORATION: Maharashtra Sanskritikani Rannaniti Adhyayan Samiti; and Working Group on Alternative Strategies

1 May

The main objective of Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was the upliftment of the marginalised and underprivileged classes, the Dalits, the scavengers, the untouchables and the tribals. Dalits refer to 'the untouchables' at the very bottom of the Indian caste hierarchy, and the oldest surviving oppressed group in the world. The Dalits remain even today underprivileged and untouchable, a section of Indian society which is trapped into performing scavenging and cleaning jobs, the lowest and dirtiest jobs for more than 4,000 years. Although untouchability is outlawed, the Dalits continue to suffer socially, politically, economically and culturally. Speaking up against the caste system can cost lives and invite violence to the whole community; Dalits suffer at the hands of several political forces and the Dalit ghettos are the targets of communal violence, continued state suppression and a social sanction against their welfare.

Capitalism and the later process of privatisation have not served the interests of the Dalits. They have worked against their interests, which is why despite the constitutional provisions to protect and uplift the Dalits, the census data shows that only 2.24 per cent of Dalits graduate from college every year. This is the reason for the growing activism and the current Dalit protests calling 200 million Dalits to fight for affirmative action against religious and social repression and equitable distribution of assets.



Activism and protest

■ MEKHALA SENGUPTA

Obituary

L-0381 Smt. Justice (Retd) Leila Seth
M-0276 Shri I.P. Anand
M-0995 Shri B.A. Hathikhanavala
M-1031 Shri Amal Ganguli
M-1220 Shri Ashok Kapur
M-1816 Justice P.N. Bhagwati

M-2049 Shri I. Rammohan Rao
M-2442 Shri K.P.S. Gill
A-0405 Smt. Rosemary J. Sachdev
A-1420 Dr. Basudev Chatterji
A-1436 Shri G. Ramchandani



Message from the Director

I am pleased to inform our members that Shri N.N. Vohra assumed Presidentship of the Centre on 23 June 2017. It may be recalled that he had served as Director of the Centre (1995 to 1997; and 1998 to 2003). He has been serving as Governor of Jammu and Kashmir since June 2008, prior to which he was the Union Government's Interlocutor in Kashmir. In his distinguished career as a civil servant he has served as Secretary, Defence Production, Defence Secretary, Home and Justice Secretary, Principal Secretary to Prime Minister I.K. Gujral, and member of the first National Security Advisory Board. He also chaired the National Task Force on Internal Security, IDSA Review Committee and other important committees. Shri Vohra was awarded the Padma Vibhushan in 2007, has been honoured by several universities and has also received the Paul Appleby Award (2014). He became a Life Trustee of the Centre in 2007. The IIC will benefit immensely from his long experience.

We thank Shri Soli J. Sorabjee, the outgoing President, for his leadership, support and guidance.

The results of the elections to the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee for the two-year period April 2017 to March 2019 were announced at the Annual General Meeting held on 23 June 2017.

Shri Lalit Kumar Joshi and Dr. Sachin Chaturvedi have been elected as Trustees in the individual and corporate segments, respectively. Shri Sunil Dang, Ambassador K.P. Fabian (individual segment), and Shri U.D. Choubey (corporate segment other than Universities) were elected to the Executive Committee. We extend a warm welcome to them and look forward to their guidance and support. No nominations were received for one seat of the Executive Committee from the corporate segment (Universities and Deemed Universities), for which the bye-election will be held.

We are thankful to the outgoing elected members of the Board of Trustees and the outgoing members of the Executive Committee, Finance Committee, Library Committee and House Committee, for their involvement and valuable advice rendered by them.

We have all been following the intense debate around the GST. The current complex structure of multiple indirect taxes in favour of a comprehensive dual goods and services act became a reality on 1 July 2017. It is expected to simplify and rationalise the current indirect tax regime, eliminate tax cascading, and put the economy on a high-growth trajectory. The Centre has modified its computer software and implemented GST successfully. This will help the Centre to optimise tax outcomes.

The Board of Trustees in their meeting held on 23 June 2017 passed a resolution, deeply mourning the passing away of Justice Leila Seth on 5 May 2017. She was 86. Justice Leila Seth was a Member of the Centre from 1991 and became a Life Member in 1995. She served as elected Member of the Board of Trustees for four terms — 1995-97; 1997-99; 2005-07; and 2007-09. She was Chairman of the Library Committee of the Centre between 2006 and 2009, and Chairman of the House Committee during 1994 to 2001. Justice Leila Seth was intimately involved with a range of programmes of the Centre in the fields of literature, education, law, among others. She always found time for the Centre's activities and her passing away is a great loss for the IIC.

Air Marshal Naresh Verma (Retd.)

Notices

As per Rule 9 of the Memorandum of Association and Rules and Regulations of the IIC, it shall be the responsibility of the members to ensure due and timely payment of subscription.

Members were required to pay their Annual Subscription by 31st May 2017. In case Members have not paid the Annual Subscription, they are requested to pay the same, latest by 31st July 2017.

The names of Members whose subscription falls in arrears shall be suspended from the rolls and shall be liable for the prescribed penalty in order to restore the membership.

Please keep your mailing address/email and mobile numbers updated.

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