

# INDIA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE IIC Diary

## IIC EXPERIENCE : A FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS, 2022

### Search for the Self

#### INAUGURATION OF THE FESTIVAL

By Shri N. N. Vohra, Life Trustee, IIC

#### FOLLOWED BY 'Uncharted Seas'

Kathak presented by Aditi Mangaldas Dance Company—The Drishtikon Dance Foundation

14 October 2022



Kathak danseuse Aditi Mangaldas likes to push the structured boundaries of traditional classical dance in her performances. 'Uncharted Seas', showcased by her dance company at the inaugural of the 'IIC Festival of the Arts', was expectedly off the beaten path. Choreographed by Mangaldas, 'Uncharted Seas' took the audience on a search for the intangible, using both classical Kathak and contemporary dance based on Kathak.

It is always more difficult to express an esoteric concept because it does not have a story. Holding the attention of the audience can be daunting when the dancer does not recite *bols*, and then uses her skills to interpret that through her dance, especially the rhythmic and rapid movement of feet. But Mangaldas has mastered the art of taking the audience along on her voyages into the unknown and unseen, thanks to the training and guidance she received from legendary Kathak gurus Kumudini Lakhia and Pandit Birju Maharaj.

Mangaldas dazzled the audience with her energy, grace and her own vocabulary of movement developed to communicate her indefinable concept. The unusual choreography translated into mesmerising solo items and group dances. While interpreting the search most people experience for love, freedom, God, truth and the meaning of life, Mangaldas did not give any answers. Instead, she posed the questions through several pieces of dance with her free-flowing and talented students—Gauri Diwakar, Rashmi Uppal, Anandita Acharjee, Shubhi Johari, Sunny Shishodiya, Manoj Sonagra and Gaurav Bhatti—and left it to the audience to relate it to their own lives and come up with answers.

The innovative use of light and vocal compositions by well-known artists Shubha Mudgal and Aneesh Pradhan enhanced the performance. Live music provided by musicians Mohit Gangani (tabla), Ashish Gangani (pakhawaj and effects) and Faraz Ahmed (vocal and harmonium) added just the right resonance to the imagery of the search for the self.

■ SWAPNA MAJUMDAR

### A Cappella Masterpieces

#### CONCERT: 'Diamonds are Forever'

Presented by Paranjoti Academy Chorus from Mumbai for IIC@60

COLLABORATION: Parzor

15 October 2022

The IIC presented a concert featuring a Cappella masterpieces by the Paranjoti Academy Chorus as part of the 'Festival of the Arts' 2022.

The Paranjoti Chorus was founded by composer/conductor Dr. Victor Paranjoti in 1960. After his death in 1967, his protégé Coomi Wadia took over as conductor. India's longest surviving choir is, by some distance, the finest choir in the country. They have undertaken several tours overseas and performed extensively



worldwide to much international acclaim. Saturday's concert was conducted by their Associate Conductor, Harin Amirthanathan.

A Cappella literally means 'in the church style', in Italian, and a Cappella singing is the performance of solo or polyphonic (multi-part) compositions by voice without instrumental accompaniment. This genre is probably as old as humanity itself. A Cappella music was originally used in religious music and developed in 15th-century Europe, although it now extends to secular music across the world.

A Cappella singing is probably the most difficult and accomplished form of choral singing. It is what sets a

good choir apart. Instrumental accompaniment is what helps a choir to maintain perfect pitch and tempo and togetherness; for a choir to achieve this a Cappella, and to bring forth musical nuances, requires an extremely high level of virtuosity, discipline and practise.

The Paranjoti Chorus was technically excellent and amply fulfilled all criteria for a quality a Cappella performance. The vocal balance was very good, with all the sections blending together perfectly; the dynamics were also excellent. You could not hear a single voice sticking out, which is the ultimate in choral singing.

The repertoire mostly consisted of works by modern composers, highlighting pieces composed/arranged by Victor Paranjoti, songs written by members of the Choir and arranged by Coomi Wadia, by Indian composer Vanraj Bhatia, Indian folk music, and music from across the world. For me, the highlight of the evening was their rendition of 'Abendlied' by Josef Gabriel Rheinberger, which featured complex harmonies and a wide dynamic range. However, one felt the music would probably have been better appreciated if the masterpieces had been more widely 'known' to the audience.

■ S. CHIDAMBAR

## Mesmerising Morning Ragas

**CONCERT:** Hindustani Vocal Recital  
By Ashwini Bhide-Deshpande from Mumbai

16 October 2022

It was a rare concert of morning ragas when the reputed representative of the famed Jaipur Gharana Vidushi Ashwini Bhide-Deshpande performed on a Sunday morning for the 'IIC Experience'. Surrounded by two finely tuned acoustic tanpuras, and one in her own hands, a melodious atmosphere was created even before her first *sur-lagaav* when she opened with '*Miyan Ki Todi*', an important variant of *Todi*, the popular morning raga created by Miyan Tansen.

Accompanied by Pt. Vinod Lele on tabla, Dr. Vinay Mishra on harmonium, with Rutuja Lad for vocal support, Ashwini presented both the *vilambit* and *drut khayal* set to slow and medium tempo of *teentaal*, respectively. She treated this raga with remarkable reverence and restraint, especially during the *mandra vistar* in *vilambit khayal* and the rhythmic nuances of the *chhota khayal* '*Begun gun gaiye...*'.

The detailed delineation of the morning raga '*Miyan Ki Todi*' reached noon, the time reserved for varieties of *sarang*. Hence, regarding the time theory of Hindustani classical music, '*Brindavani Sarang*' was the most appropriate choice for her second raga. Here



the first *bandish*, '*Mora jiya bekal hoye Sakhi ri...*', was her own composition, set to the rare nine-beat time cycle, carefully bringing the *mukhda* of the *bandish* to the '*sam*'. It was followed by the famous *teentaal* composition of the legendary Ustad Faiyaz Khan, '*Sagari umaria mori biti jaat Piya bin*', composed with his '*mudra*' (pseudonym) '*Pempiya*'. Ashwini's cascading '*aakar taans*' perfectly matched the *bandish*, where the very opening phrase was studded with fast *taans*.

The concluding Kabir bhajan, '*Chadar ho gayi bahut puraani*', set to the *chanchar theka* of *Taal Deepchandi*, created a serene atmosphere for the ascetic poetry, augmented by the austere aura of Mishra Jogiya.

■ MANJARI SINHA

# Swinging the Songbook

**CONCERT:** 'Swinging the Songbook'  
Presenting Carlton Braganza and  
his Big Band Wagon

**16 October 2022**

The Fountain Lawns were packed and the audience came out to dance on the grass when Carlton Braganza and his Big Band Wagon sang and played at the 'IIC Festival of the Arts' 2022. A big band usually consists of 10 or more musicians. This ensemble had five: Jarryd Rodrigues (alto saxophone), Senon de Souza (trumpet), Semy Braganza (trombone), Jeshurun D'Cruz (drums) and Ian de Noronha (keyboard and bass). The music, which included complicated harmonies and syncopated rhythms, had mostly been arranged by Darryl Rodrigues.

They started off with 'Mack the Knife', a Bertolt Brecht song, and went over to nice and slow swing with 'I'm in the Mood for Love'. Jarryd Rodrigues had a long solo on the saxophone and Ian de Noronha took over on the keyboards before Carlton started to sing. 'Fly Me to the Moon' had lovely arrangements for the sax, trumpet and trombone. It was when they played a Louis Prima medley of Neapolitan songs, 'O sole mio' and 'Buona Sera', that Carlton Braganza started to sing in Italian, while the saxophone, trumpet, trombone and drums maintained a steady rhythm under the vocals.



Jarryd Rodrigues kept the audience spellbound during his solos on the saxophone. Vocalist Meghna Das joined Carlton in singing the Fred Astaire song, 'Cheek to Cheek', but it was when she sang 'At Last' that she let her voice free.

The horn section was strong when Meghna and Carlton sang the show tune 'The Lady is a Tramp', and there was a fine trombone solo at the beginning of 'Moon River'. A jazz number from the film *Parineeta* got the audience on to the dance floor. They rounded off the set with 'Something Stupid', an Elvis song, 'Such a Night', 'New York New York' and 'Bye Bye Blackbird'.

Carlton Braganza became known all over India during the lockdown, when he sang songs from his bedroom every night in a programme called 'Jukebox Jammies'. Usually there is an emphasis on improvisation in jazz, and Carlton is a great improviser, but big bands stick to written compositions and arrangements, where importance is given to sections of instruments rather than soloists. It was fun to see how Carlton took up the challenge of singing when the ensemble did not improvise all the time but followed set written arrangements.

■ **ASTRI GHOSH**

# Towards a Positive World View

**PLAY:** 'The Old Man'  
Presented by Orchid Theatre, Assam

**17 October 2022**

'The Old Man', based on Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and The Sea*, was directed by Sahidul Haque, adapted in Assamese by Dikhamoni Bora, with voiceover poetry by Niranjan Nath. Stylised mime and immersive choreography made the language immaterial. As the play opens, the audience is acquainted with the fact that the protagonist of the story, the old fisherman Vodai, has gone 84 days without catching a single fish. In fact, this fisherman is so unlucky that his young apprentice, Rongmon, has been forbidden by his parents to sail with the old man, and been ordered to fish with more successful fishermen. Still dedicated to the old man, however, the boy visits Vodai's hut each night, hauling back his fishing gear, getting him food and talking to him about his life's journey and nostalgic stories from his past.



The mighty Brahmaputra, with its tributaries flowing through Assam, is the lifeline of the people in the valley who earn their livelihood and are dependent on the river directly or indirectly, either as fishermen, boatmen or as daily wagers. The conflict between the fisherman and nature was epitomised by Tapan Baruah's low mood lighting design and crafty compositions. The mood was enacted through mime by the actors Niranjan Nath, Barnali Medhi, Jintu Moni



Deka, Himangshu Dewri and Sahidul Haque. They rocked a make-shift boat to create an illusion of a stormy river. We saw fish markets, with fishermen and rag pickers. Even shadow puppetry with a sail boat was created by a hand-held lantern torch.

Haque's deft handling of the production created his vision of a man's loneliness and isolation enhanced by

an uncontrollable destiny of repeated failures, which was epitomised by a fisherman's only goal—to catch just a fish. However, as the director visualised it, even as this situation seems hopeless, life gifts one with the will power to push oneself mentally towards a stronger, more positive and optimistic world view.

■ MANOHAR KHUSHALANI

## Mulaqaat

**CONCERT:** *Polish and Ukrainian Folk Songs and Music*

**COLLABORATION:** *Polish Institute and Embassy of Ukraine*

**18 October 2022**

*Mulaqaat* featured Karolina Beimcik (vocals, violin) from Poland and Dana Vynnytska (vocals) from Ukraine, both from the band 'Babooshki'. Playing with Indian instruments were Shariq Mustafa (tabla, vocals), Ejaz Hussain (sarangi), Aditya Balani (guitar) and Divij Kapoor (double bass, keyboards).

'Babooshki', a Polish-Ukrainian music ensemble, formed to explore collaboration between Polish and Ukrainian music, has released a number of albums in the last few years. Karolina is a multiple award-winning vocalist and also plays the violin. Dana is a well-known vocalist from Ukraine. Shariq is a fifth-generation tabla player and vocalist from the Farukhabad Gharana, and Ejaz is a sarangi player from the Ajarara gharana. Aditya is a Delhi-based guitarist and founder/director of the Global Music Institute. Divij is the bassist of the Delhi-based band 'Kraken'. The concert presented a blend of Polish, Ukrainian and Hindustani music—a 'fusion' of sorts.

The songs featuring a fusion of Polish and Ukrainian folk styles worked well; both Karolina and Dana have good voices that blended well in harmony. There were a couple of interesting time signatures used—one



song in 5/4, and another in 7/4 that worked well with the tabla and sarangi. Shariq sang well in his vocal solo numbers where he did not try anything extravagant and stuck to traditional Hindustani classical and Indian folk styles. Ejaz did well and easily adapted his playing to Polish-Ukrainian folk genres.

The songs featuring fusion with Hindustani music were good in parts. Western musicians are usually not very comfortable with the modal structures and quarter-tones used in Hindustani music. However, Karolina seemed comfortable here and incorporated quarter-tones into both her singing and violin playing (the violin adapts itself well to playing quarter-tones, which is why it is one of the very few Western instruments used quite extensively in Hindustani music). The guitar tended to be a little overpowering overall, especially while using distortion effects that are normally more suited to rock music. Also, there were some places where it sounded discordant with the lead melody; there were also a few instances where the guitar and bass were not on the same page.

■ S. CHIDAMBAR

## Sumptuous Dessert

**CONCERT:** *Three Generations on the Violin*

**19 October 2022**

As the annual Arts Festival meandered to a close, the audience was treated to a sumptuous dessert. The servings were just enough for them to go back with a yearning for a bit more.





Dr. N. Rajam was partnered by her daughter, Sangeeta Shankar, and granddaughters, Nandini and Ragini Shankar. Known for their unique *gayaki ang*, their music was in perfect sync, embellished by the excellent support on the tabla by Abhishek Mishra. Every *bol* followed the contours of the music, thus enhancing the musical value of the concert.

The concert kicked off with the popular evening raag *Yaman*. A brief *alap* prefaced a leisurely *vilambit gat*. Several rounds of beautiful *taans* helped set the mood for the evening. This was followed by an organic progression to gats in *madhyalay* and *dhrut*. *Taans* cascaded, one upon the other, the entire team participating with equal gusto and responding to each other beautifully. Abhishek matched them step for step as the notes of the violin blended with the bols of the tabla to become one musical body. Even the superfast *taans* towards the conclusion were not devoid of the trademark Rajam grace. The team finished with an

across-the-octave flourish, to rapturous applause from the audience.

Rajam and team followed with a lilting *Kajri* of the *purabiya ang* in raag *Khamaj*, '*Barsan Laagi Badariya Rum Jhum ke*'. The exchange of *taans* floated lightly in the air as the baton passed from one to the other. Girija Devi had popularised the composition amongst connoisseurs some decades ago. They concluded the concert with *Bhairavi*, starting the *alap* on the high notes. Sharply etched notes with a blend of the delicate characterised the *alap* and the subsequent *madhyalay* composition. All that longing associated with the *Bhairavi* phrases shone through. The maestro retains all her dexterity and grace, and led the team superbly. Sangeeta was rock solid in her support; Nandini and Ragini are a revelation, and one looks forward to hearing more of them in future.

■ RAHUL RAJAGOPALAN

## Eternal Love

**PERFORMANCE:** '*Nitya Amore*'

**COLLABORATION:** *Embassy of Italy and Seher*

**20 October 2022**

'Love between human beings. Love between countries. Love between institutions. Love as a feeling—beyond boundaries, borders and barriers ...'. With these apt words, Italian Ambassador HE Vincenzo de Luca introduced '*Nitya Amore*'. The performance brought together contemporary dancers Francesca Dario and Nunzio Perricone, Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi exponents Aranyani Bhargav and Ayana Mukherjee, with additional choreography by Michele Oliva and musical compositions by Giovanni Sollima, Ganesh Krishnaswamy, Leslie Charles and Dhruv Bedi.

The show opened with the Italian duo in black, performing to a haunting soundtrack with the refrain 'hold me'. With the entry of percussion and strings, the movements became more animated, dissonant and confrontational. A slower *pizzicato* section, with bodies intertwined, seemed to restore harmony. As the music and lights faded, out of the darkness emerged Aranyani and Ayana, dressed in black and red with traditional accoutrements. Accompanied by a languorous soundtrack by 'Fragment of Light' and movements sometimes mirroring, parallel and back-to-back, their mudras and expressions depicted a range of emotions from love and longing, to interdependence and independence. Complementary and contrasting movements continued as percussion added rhythm,



returning to a slower pace with playful embraces and tranquil closure with bodies in intimate repose.

The next segment featured live music with Dhruv Bedi on sitar, Ganesh Krishnaswamy on flute, Deepak Kumar and Shambhunath Bhattacharji on tabla. The dancers took positions diagonally, proceeding to the centre to perform solo and in sub-groups, all eventually centre stage as a '*tihaai*' marked a cadence. More interaction between pairs was accompanied by a change of raga and tala, another *tihaai* transitioning to the next section. From their positions on the floor, the four arose as the music picked up speed. Traditional Indian and contemporary Western movements blended effortlessly, punctuated by silent pauses as performers literally uplifted each other, ending with a carousel and a warm huddle. The final segment featured the Italian duo performing almost acrobatically, while the Indian duo reverted to traditional steps, all eventually coming together in a final 'namaskar' and bow, paying homage to the musicians, the audience, the Gods of dance and love.

■ PUNITA SINGH



## VIGNETTES









# Five Important Films

**FILM FESTIVAL :** *New Wave—Rebellious Poets of Cinema*

Curated by Shivendra Singh Durgapur,  
Film Heritage Foundation

**14 to 20 October 2022**

Five important films from world cinema were screened at IIC from 16 to 20 October 2022. The Swiss–French master Jean-Luc Godard (1930–2022), one of the pillars of the French New Wave that decisively influenced the grammar and syntax of filmmaking, was honoured with the screening of two of his early films, namely, *Breathless* (1960) and *To Live Her Life: A Film in Twelve Scenes* (1962). The first, featuring the charismatic Jean Paul Belmondo, then a rising star, and Jean Seberg, an exceptionally attractive American newcomer, proved to be a smash hit in France. This existentialist thriller about a charming petty gangster and an American woman, an itinerant journalist in Paris doubling as a hawkers selling *The New York Herald Tribune*, fortuitously brought together, ended violently. The film, with its uncanny mastery of technique and dark content wittily served, continues to inspire filmmakers the world over.

*To Live Her Life: A Film in Twelve Scenes*, with Godard's muse Anna Karina playing Nana, the prostitute whose life is chronicled, in an exquisitely stylish tragedy in 12 scenes representing various aspects of her life, already reveals Godard as a depicter and examiner of an increasingly dystopian world. Godard's collaboration in both of these b&w films with Raoul Coutard, a prescient cinematographer who understood the subtlest workings of the director's mind, elevated them to the level of art.

Francois Truffaut's *Four Hundred Blows* (1959) ushered in the French New Wave. It was a deeply felt, realistic rendering of the life of a restless, traumatised teenager living with his stepfather and mother, both of whom are themselves troubled but not unloving. The film



is, in turns, witty, sad and unsettling. *Four Hundred Blows* was a huge critical and financial success, and launched the career of a great director.

*Paris, Texas* (1983), a German–American co-production directed by Wim Wenders and photographed in colour with profound psychological insight by the Dutch cameraman, Robby Mueller, remains one of the most moving love stories in the history of cinema. Harry Dean Stanton's performance as an absconding husband with an uncertain memory of the past and his relationship with his wife and little son, both of whom he loves deeply, is one of the most treasured memories of cinema. Nastassia Kinski, as the wife left to her own devices, is the perfect foil to the actor. Sam Shepherd's script and Wender's direction blend into a seamless, memorable whole.

*Uski Roti* (1970), a film criticised in its time for its 'slowness', leaves a very different impression 50 years later. Mohan Rakesh's perceptive Hindi story about the filial anguish caused by a truck driver set in rural Punjab is directed with great feeling by Mani Kaul, a quality that comes across despite the deadpan dialogue delivery. K. K. Mahajan's beautifully graded b&w photography captures the ambience of the Punjab countryside, and the ennui it is witness to in the film.

■ PARTHA CHATTERJEE

# Glimpses of Cinematic Brilliance

**FILM FESTIVAL:**

*New Wave—Rebellious Poets of Cinema*  
Curated by Shivendra Singh Durgapur,  
Film Heritage Foundation

**14 to 20 October 2022**

Films focussing on the Czechoslovak New Wave Movement constituted a varied display of performances on the silver screen, a veritable treat for film buffs. Among them was *Closely Watched Trains*, a film on German-occupied Czechoslovakia during the Second World War. Based on the novel by Bohumil Hrabal, it depicts the story of Milos Hirma who is a newly appointed train dispatcher at a station. Infatuated by a pretty lady conductor, Masa, he has a complicated sexual encounter with her. The film ends when Milos, at the behest of partisans, drops a bomb on a German ammunition train and blows it up, but himself gets

killed by the fire of a machine gunner on the train. The film won the Academy Award for the Best Foreign Language Film in 1968. *Diamonds of the Night* (1964) is by famed Czech director Jan Nemec who had to live in exile from his native Czechoslovakia when the country was a satellite of the former Soviet Union. This film won the Grand Prize for the Best Debut Film at the International Film Festival Manheim-Heidelberg, 1964. Essentially, the film is about two boys fleeing a concentration camp under the Third Reich. Captured by a party of German hunters, they are handed over to the Mayor of the town. He, in turn, sends them to a military court from where they escape while en route. The ending is ambiguous, as one is left in doubt whether the boys are killed or not.

The two other Czech films featured were *Loves of a Blonde* and *Daisies*. Made in 1965, *Loves of a Blonde* is directed by Milos Forman. A factory supervisor asks the military to organise manoeuvres in his town so that he can have a gala dance to boost the morale of his female workers, which leads to some hilarious consequences. *Daisies*, on the other hand, is a comedy



which is regarded as a high point in the Czechoslovak New Wave Movement. The film depicts two girls, both named Marie, who want to have a blast, and in the process end up dating elderly men, do drunken antics in a night club and try to pick up a man on call. The film ends on a sober note.

■ ARVINDAR SINGH

## Rare Treasures

**EXHIBITION :** *Treasures of Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library*

**14 to 20 October 2022**

The Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library in Patna represents the remarkable confluence of middle-class philanthropy, Islamic intellectual reform projects, hometown loyalty, and one man's visceral passion for books. The Library originated in the private collection of Muhammad Bakhsh Khan, a passionate collector of Arabic and Persian books, who charged his son Khan Bahadur Khuda Bakhsh with turning the collection into a library open to the public. After his father's death in 1876, Khuda Bakhsh began doggedly acquiring books, and in this frenzy of acquisition was assisted by the redoubtable Muhammad Maqi, on a monthly retainer of ₹50 to scour the Middle East, for rare manuscripts. In the aftermath of 1857 and the fall of the Mughal empire, the great Mughal collections and that of other royal and aristocratic libraries were looted and destroyed. Khuda Bakhsh set about collecting the scattered remains and would engage in bidding wars to acquire rare manuscripts. Although a lawyer with a thriving practice, Khuda Bakhsh did not have vast wealth but ploughed all his earnings into new acquisitions.

In 1969, the Library was declared an 'Institution of National Importance' by an Act of Parliament. The Library—a collection of about 21,000 rare manuscripts, microfilms, slides, audio and video cassettes, and more



than two lakh printed books—organised an exhibition at IIC of its rare, valuable and cherished manuscripts, and placed scores of original handwritten treasures on display. One of the most precious items on display was a rare manuscript of the Holy Quran from the 9th century. A rare book on medical science in Arabic and *Tarikh-e Khandan-i Timuriyah* reminded visitors to the exhibition that surgery travelled to Europe from Arabia.

An old manuscript of *Diwan-i-Hafiz* was a great draw. A manuscript of the Gita, in Urdu script, was also displayed, with exquisite illustrations depicting various events. It might surprise many that there are more Urdu translations of the Gita and Ramayana than in modern Hindi, i.e., the Devanagari script! The Director of the Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Library, Patna, Dr. Shayesta Bedar was also present at the Inauguration.

■ ATHER FAROUQUI



# Simplicity and Intricacy

## EXHIBITION OF CONTEMPORARY ART

*Aadi—Art of the Gond*

**COLLABORATION:** *The Raza Foundation*

**15 to 28 October 2022**

An exhibition of contemporary art by artists of the Gond community from Patangarh and Mandla, Madhya Pradesh, was inaugurated on 15 October 2022 by Shri O. P. Jain, Founder President, Sanskriti Pratishthan. This traditional Gond art exhibition provided a different perspective on art by combining traditional methods with contemporary themes. It also provided a unique insight into the culture and art of the people of central India, demonstrating their relationship with cosmic, natural, social and religious worlds. Most of the artworks have been presented as modern or urban contemporary art; yet, despite the subject matter, they are imbued with the traditional, spiritual and cultural heritage of the artists.

It is common for Gond artists to use signature styles and patterns to distinguish their work from other Gond artists. The central theme is nature, and animals like the snake, elephant, crocodile, etc., are portrayed beautifully. A certain sense of balance and symmetry can be observed in the patterns used, such as spiral forms, curved lines, geometrical shapes, etc. One of the most captivating features of Gond art is its simplicity; yet, in this simplicity lies incredible intricacy and the minutest of detailing which makes it distinctive. The splendid works of the various artists differed in concept and depiction, but all of them had an implicit symbolic connotation.

■ ONAM VAID



# Textile Intersections

**COLLABORATION:** *National Handloom Corporation Limited, Govt. Of India.*

**14 to 20 October 2022**





# Down Memory Lane

HERITAGE WALK: IIC@60

16 October 2022

Six decades in an Institution's lifetime is an opportune time to reflect on its journey. To commemorate that milestone, this year's 'IIC Experience' conceived a heritage walk to reacquaint Members with the genesis and history of the Centre. The walk, conceptualised by Shri Suhas Borker, was flagged off by Shri N. N. Vohra, Life Trustee, IIC, and was conducted by historian and pedagogue, Beeba Sobti.

Around two-score curious Members and friends accompanied Sobti as she went down memory lane to describe the living heritage of the Centre. Envisaged in 1958 as an oasis of intellectual and cultural ferment and social conviviality, the foundation stone was laid in 1960 and inaugurated in 1962 by the then president, S. Radhakrishnan. The Centre, the collective brainchild of Nehru, Radhakrishnan, C. D. Deshmukh and Rockefeller, was given concrete shape by American architect Joseph Allen Stein, who had made India his home.

Sobti underscored Stein's design philosophy which envisioned the Centre as being in conversation with its environs and earlier architectural traditions, ergo, segueing effortlessly into the adjacent Lodhi Garden and its monuments. Stein's design, she said, was a symphony of architectural forms—the horizontal and the vertical, juxtaposed to the sensuously curvilinear—entirely made up of local material, unadorned yet organic, spartan yet elegant. She highlighted Stein's play with geometry: the hexagon of the auditorium and the dining room, or the waffle design of the soffits of the staircases of the reception lounge.



Living heritage has to adapt to changing times and dynamic needs, and the Centre has undergone alterations in its lifetime: a water body that reflected the building, now filled over and remade into a lawn; a summer gazebo at the rear readapted into an amphitheatre; a floor added to augment capacity, etc.

Sobti alluded to the botanical denizens—the silk cotton and the *Alstonia scholaris* trees—which are coeval with the lifetime of the Centre. She shared morsels of information of her conversations with the chefs, who were privy to the most favoured dishes. The Gandhi-King Memorial Plaza, though a later construction, was made in memory of two men who never met, but connected in this space for their shared ideas and values.

The walk concluded as the group made its way to the *Bada Gumbad* in Lodhi Garden; the crossing of the threshold from one space into another was a seamless movement that blurred boundaries and erased differences.

■ AJAY JAISINGHANI

# An Autumn of Interesting Reading

LAUNCH OF THE IIC QUARTERLY

Autumn 2022, by Shri N. N. Vohra, Life Trustee, IIC  
Edited by Omita Goyal, Chief Editor, IIC Publications

19 October 2022

The unveiling of the Autumn number of the *IIC Quarterly* has become synonymous with 'The IIC Experience: A Festival of Arts'. Shri K. N. Shrivastava, Director, IIC, welcomed the audience present. In her remarks, Omita Goyal mentioned that the *IIC Quarterly* was one of the intellectual streams of the Centre and it was only appropriate that it should be thus showcased.



She attributed the *Quarterly's* unique image to its contributors, who willingly contributed varied subjects to the issue. Shri N.N. Vohra noted in his address that it was heartening the *Quarterly* had a good number of young contributors. A copy of the *Quarterly* was sent to every one of over 7,000 IIC Members without subscription, as it was felt a hard copy had no alternate

and would be read by family and friends. He added that the journal would soon be on the Digital Library Network of the Centre and thus be accessible the world over.

Professor Ashis Nandy, Trustee, IIC, dwelt on the cerebral quality of the *Quarterly* and how it had evolved as a publication read by the Who's Who of the country. The evening closed on a satisfying note for audience and organisers alike.

■ ARVINDAR SINGH

## Gourmet's Delight

**FOOD FESTIVAL** at the IIC Festival of the Arts  
Curated by Professor Pushpesh Pant

**14 to 20 October 2022**

The Food Festival was launched this year with an evening of cuisine from Rampur called 'The Lost Gems of Rohilkhand', curated by Aslam Khansama. The star of the evening was *kundan qaliya*, the gold standard for Indian meat-eaters. Other delectable delights were kebabs and *taar korma*. The *satrangi sabz pulao* and *kathal ka kofta* delighted vegetarians, topped by *sohan halwa* and other desserts.

The enjoyable variety of Anglo-Indian fare at 'The Raj Re-visited' dinner was prepared by Chef Vijay Thukral. It included vegetable and chicken pantheras, traditional kedgeree of flaked fish, 'dak bungalow' chicken, herb roast lamb, 'railway' mutton curry, soup and breads, all pleasing to the palate. Traditional bread and butter pudding, and 'Lady Kenie' gulab jamun catered to the sweet tooth.

Chef Gunjan Goela had laid out a sumptuous street food Sunday brunch, 'From the Streets of India'. Displayed on the buffet were some specifically Old Delhi foods: *nagori*, filled with potato *subzi*; *matri-kulcha*, a snack; *bedhmi subzi*, a lunch item; and deserts like jalebi, as well as *Daulat-ki-chat*. Other street foods that have made their way into Delhi were *nizami* rolls with chicken, and stuffed *idlis*.

'Eating Sud-East', Pan Asian cuisine presented by Chef Nishant Choubey, was an interesting potpourri representing the cuisine of several Asian countries. Starters, including sweet potato satay with peanut sauce and Vietnamese wraps with dipping sauce, roused curiosity. There was raw papaya salad and Korean buckwheat-radish soup. Burmese chicken *khao suey*, and Malaysian mutton *rendang* tickled the palette, as did vegetarian dishes like Thai green curry and Malaysian *rendang* with young jackfruit. The one dish that stood out was Indonesian chicken satay.

'A Hyderabadi Daawat', prepared by the Chefs of the IIC, comprised a selection of vegetarian as well as non-vegetarian food, including what is known as Telengana cuisine—*bagharey baingan*, *mirchi ka salan*, *nargisi kofta*, and biryani and kebabs. The *raan*

*sikandari* was a treat. *Bisi bele hui Anna*, containing a mix of vegetable and rice, another speciality of the region, was a popular dish.

Chef Mukesh Sharma of the Alma Café presented 'A Polish Repast'. The elaborate menu comprised *barszcz*, beetroot soup, and *rosol*, clear chicken soup with celery, that were followed by *placki ziemniaczane*, potato pancakes served with white wine sauce. *Pierogi*, dumplings; *Krokiety*, baked crepes; *kotlet schabowy*, chicken with thyme, rosemary and potatoes; and *gulasz* with *kasza gryczana* stew were other draws. *Zygmuntowka*, an almond pastry with chocolate mousse; *jablecznik*, an apple pie; and *paczki*, strawberry-filled donuts, were irresistible desserts.

The aperitif, in 'Fusion Food', turmeric kombucha was pleasantly intriguing, perhaps with a ginger base. The commonplace *golgappa* was imaginatively reconstituted, made of *ragi* with plum chili shots. Crispy Szechuan leaf pakora with *buransh* chutney, the exciting array of gluten-free *jowar bajra rotis* and nutritious red rice were other instant draws. The desserts, *kunafeh* with candied orange and cream cheese, and banana toffee with sesame seeds, were tasty treats. This dinner was curated by Chef Nishant Choubey.

Finally, it was Italy—'Italy on a plate', by the Chefs of IIC. There were stuffed risotto balls, fried chicken with basil mayonnaise, stuffed cannelloni, pan-seared river sole, vermicelli flan, grilled chicken with capers and olives. The piece de resistance—lamb, stewed in red wine sauce—followed. The desserts, orange and almond cake, as Sicilian as the Mafia, and the lemon Mascarpone cheesecake, were a delight.

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