



# diary

INDIA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

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September–October 2011

## Rare Talent

**PERFORMANCE:** *Hindustani Classical Vocal Recital* by Sanjukta Biswas  
**Collaboration:** *Sanskriti Pratishthan*  
 September 6

It is indeed rare to come across an artist so young and yet so accomplished. Listening to Sanjukta Biswas at the IIC was sheer delight. Sanjukta is a recipient of the Sanskriti-Madhobi Chatterjee Fellowship Award for 2011 and the concert was organized in memory of Smt. Madhobi Chatterjee.

Hailing from the Agra Gharana style of *gayaki*—with its emphasis on *taal* (*taal pradhan*)—Sanjukta has studied under masters like Amalendu Pal and Kalyan Guha Thakurta, before honing her skills under the leading Agra Gharana vocalist, Shubhra Guha, at the I.T.C. Sangeet Research Academy. Young Sanjukta is no stranger to awards and felicitations either, having bagged the I.T.C. Sangeet Research Academy's

promising new artist award and the V.S.K. Girija Devi Puruskar early on in her career.

Sanjukta's performance at this concert was a tour-de-force—showcasing her seemingly effortless skills. She began with a melodious *bada khayal* in *Kedar* '*Mora man manat nabin ali re...*', followed by a *drut bandish* each in *teental* '*Kangamwa mora atabi amolak...*' and *ektaal* '*Tum chatur sughar...*', with a magical display of *taan* and *alaap*.

She then performed a sensuous *madhyalaya bandish* in *raag Jog* '*Baat banavat...*', finishing with a stunning *drut bandish* in *teental*—which gave her ample scope to showcase her Agra *layakari*. This was followed by a traditional quick tempo *bandish* in *raag Chhayanat* '*Jhanan Jhanan Jhan nan nan...*' which left the audience gasping at her virtuosity. She wrapped up her performance with a soulful *thumri* in *raag Mishra Pilu*, followed by two flawless *dadras*.

Sanjukta was accompanied by Prasun Chatterji on the tabla and the virtuoso, Vinay Mishra, on the harmonium.

■ NEETA GUPTA



## Earth Festival

**FESTIVAL:** *Bhoomi – Learning from Nature, Remembering Tagore*

**Collaboration:** Navdanya and Ministry of Culture Government of India, October 1

Navdanya celebrated Bhoomi, or Earth Festival. The day-long conference-cum-festival was divided into five sessions—Tagore’s Vision of Nature and Reverence for the Earth; Robbery of the Soil; Education as Poetry in Motion; The Champa and Cherry Blossom; and Strengthening the Green Movement. It featured music, dance, puppetry, theatre, film, discussions and speeches; paid tribute to Bhoomi or Mother Earth, and recalled Rabindranath Tagore’s recognition of Nature as the best teacher in every aspect of one’s life .

The festival began with an invocation to Mother Earth, with schoolchildren singing Tagore’s

memorable song, *Hridaye Mandrilo damaru guru, guru*, followed by Mahatma Gandhi’s favourite song, *Ekla chalo re*. In her opening statement, Dr. Vandana Shiva called Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi the first ecologists of the modern era, and said that what Tagore had to offer as a vision of India is more relevant today.

As every species has its place in the forest, so also does the unifying principle of the democratic system arise from the diversity of the forest. Importance was given to children as they are the future in building earth democracy, strengthening the green movement, and continuing the legacy of the spirit of Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram—which reminds us of our bond with the world. The celebrations also included Signing of the Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth and the lighting of the diya.

■ MANDIRA GHOSH

## The Making of *Ajrakh*

**DISCUSSION:** *Cloth and Community – Fashioning Identity in Western India*, by Eiluned Edwards

**Chair:** Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan

**Collaboration:** Craft Revival Trust; Mapin Publishing; and the British Council Division  
September 7

*Ajrakh* printing was brought out of the precincts of Kutch Gujarat from 1973 onwards, mainly with the intervention of the Government of India, for the promotion of vegetable dyeing and block printing, and with the efforts of Khatri Mohammad Siddiki Ismail. The resurgence of vegetable dyeing and a new range of fabric forms, including furnishing, accessories and yardage, opened vast market avenues for *Ajrakh* printing. The traditional *Ajrakh*, done on cotton and silk, is now a fashion statement and a brand of handprints available for the global market.

Symbolism and identity are the important reflections of group cohesiveness. These are clearly marked in colour, design and the wearing styles of traditional costumes of various communities in India. There are



examples of block printing available from the ninth century onwards in various museums around the world. *Ajrakh* was among the cloth exported to Egypt in the thirteenth century. Ms. Edwards centred her talk around the *Ajrakh* fabric, its makers, promoters and wearers.

Traditionally, *Ajrakh* fabric was men’s wear, worn as *maliab* (*lungi*), the lower wear. The fabric was block printed on cotton with geometric and figurative patterns, with vegetable dyes and minerals. *Ajrakh* printing is a tedious process involving up to ten stages of printing, drying, dyeing, washing etc. If the printing is on both sides, known as *minakari*, it may go up to sixteen stages.

■ CHARU SMITA GUPTA

## Bringing the Pain of North-east Women to the National Capital

**PROGRAMME:** *Bearing Witness: Impact of Conflict on Women in Nagaland and Assam—Report, Exhibition, Film and Discussion*

**Collaboration:** Centre for North-east Studies and Policy Research and Heinrich Boll Foundation  
September 7–9

The latest in the series of events on the North-east at the IIC was called ‘Bearing Witness’, held from September 7–9. How powerful visual documentation can be to record the trauma of a society was evident from the still photographs by Kausiki Sarma of women victims of violence (perpetrated by both state

and non-state actors) in Assam and Nagaland. This was in addition to the Maulee Senapati-directed and Sanjoy Hazarika-produced and scripted fifty-minute documentary, *A Measure of Impunity*.

The three-day event, which concluded with an informative panel discussion, was inaugurated by former Union Home Secretary Gopal Pillai, who also released the report ‘Bearing Witness: The Impact of Conflict on Women in Nagaland and Assam’, co-authored and edited by Sanjoy Hazarika and Preeti Gill. The report succinctly documents the suffering of women in conflict situations in the chosen regions. It seeks to analyze the issues involved in the larger context of the challenges of nation-building, human rights and their violations, regional growth, and the failure of stakeholders and non-state groups to address these concerns.

■ UTPAL BORPUJARI

## Indological Studies

**TALK:** *Cultural Specificities in the History of Indian Science*

**Speaker:** Michel Danino, September 12

The world of Indological Studies lost one of its finest scholars with the passing of Professor Govind Chandra Pande earlier this year. In the First Memorial Lecture, Danino focused on the interface between science and culture, while the Chair for the evening, Dr. R.K. Dube, Professor, Material Sciences, IIT-Kanpur, and scholar of ancient Indian texts and embedded scientific concepts, shared the depth and range of Professor Pande’s devotion to learning.

The talk highlighted some unsolved puzzles in ancient India’s traditional knowledge systems in the fields of mathematics, astronomy, architecture and medicine. Knowledge in ancient India, though organized, was not compartmentalized in the way we have come to think of it in modern times, and we have to reorient our disciplinary and epistemological foundations in

order to do justice to this legacy, Danino argued. Avoiding over-simplifications, he pointed out the uncanny accuracy of some of the numerical calculations found in ancient Indian texts, such as those that calculate one day and night in Brahma’s life as 8.64 billion years, which is comparable to what modern science says about the age of the universe. Albeit undertaken for ritual purposes rather than for ‘practical’ ends, these excite curiosity and wonder as to the sources of knowledge these ancients must have employed to understand matter, space and time in the absence of modern technologies of measurement and observation. Danino’s own research in Dhaulavira, the Harappan city in Gujarat, shows that the sacrificial altars, built to remarkable consistency of proportion, are meant to mirror the universe in a microcosm.

He ended his deeply philosophical talk with a reference to the *Shandilya Upanishad*, which dwells on the tension between human desire to acquire knowledge and the impossibility of ever achieving it.

■ MAYA JOSHI



## IIC Experience

EXHIBITIONS: *IIC Experience*, October 15–21



In homage to Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, the Delhi Crafts Council showcased the work of seven recipients of the Kamaladevi Puruskar. It was a particular joy to see a younger generation of craftspersons not only carrying forward an inherited skill, but innovating with just the right touch of modern sensitivity within the parameters of traditional design. The Gandhi-King Plaza came alive with products of Sikki grass weaving, suzni embroidery, wood carving, Madhubani, Kalamkari and pottery, offering interested visitors an opportunity to interact with their youthful, accomplished creators.

Two photography exhibitions recalled significant events in India's history. In the one on Rabindranath Tagore and Visva-Bharati, vintage photographs of the great litterateur and artist were placed in the context of the institution that was 'outrageously new' in education in the country. This

excellently curated collection would do well to travel around our primary learning factories for the young today, with the hope that both teachers and the taught can translate Tagore's ideals into a more enlightened pedagogic process.

The second exhibition featured rare nineteenth and early twentieth century prints of Delhi's past c.1800-1920. This definitive period in the making of India's capital was presented through a selection of digitally reprinted rare photographs from The Alkazi Foundation, established by its brilliant, multifaceted founder Ebrahim Alkazi. Audio-visual recordings of events relating to the making of India's independence provided a fitting stage setting—conversations between Jinnah, Gandhi, Nehru, Rajagopalachari, the exodus at Partition from both sides, and finally, the unforgettable freedom-at-midnight speech by Nehru.

The contemporary was represented by The Raza Imprint. A collection of Sayed Haider Raza's paintings, even in reproduction, is always a treat to see. A turning point for this strong colourist came in the 1980s, when he discovered the 'bindu', centre of all creation and energy, as an originating motif for his own creations based on Indian metaphysical



thought. Vibrant colours and geometric forms emanate from the central bindu in a major part of his life's oeuvre.

■ RAZIA GROVER

## Musical Ecstasy at the IIC Experience

**MUSIC:** *Vichaara – The Inner Quest, A Personal Journey*, a Carnatic vocal recital by Vidvan T.M. Krishna, *An Experience of the Music of Gwalior Gharana*, Pt. Laxman Krishnarao Pandit and Meeta Pandit, October 16 and 20



The Carnatic and Hindustani classical music concerts at the IIC Experience this year were memorable. The Carnatic vocal recital by Vidvan T.M. Krishna was preceded by 'Vichaara—The Inner Quest, A Personal Journey', where the artiste shared how his life and music evolved to maturity with the influence of greats like his Guru Shri Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, and his research into the fifteenth century treatise *Sangeet Sampradaya Pradarshini* from where he notated the original ragas and studied their gradual progression into the two distinct raga systems of Sant Tyagaraja and Dikshitar's traditions. His profound talk substantiated his superb music that followed.

The first thing that set Krishna apart from the conventional Carnatic concerts was the accompaniment of a pair of finely tuned *tanpuras*, along with the melodious *violin* and



the *mridangam*. The second point worth mentioning is his selection of serene ragas like *Varali* with its detailed *Aalapana*, without bothering about the populist approach to merely please the audience. Opening his concert with a composition of Tyagaraja in the *Raga Yadukul Kambhoji* set to *Khand Chapu*, he went on to sing the *Varali* composition *Ambe Kamakeshi* by Shyama Shastri, and concluded with a lilting composition by Muttuswami Dikshitar.



The Hindustani music of the Gwalior Gharana was offered by none other than Pt. L.K. Pandit, the present custodian of the famed Pandit family of Gwalior, and his daughter and disciple Meeta Pandit, representing its sixth generation. Pandit took the audience on a journey of this famed Gharana from the days of Raja Mansingh Tomar and Tansen to the Scindhiya dynasty and stalwarts like Haddu-Hassu Khan and Natthan Peerbaksh, and on to how a Muslim like Ustad Nisar Hussain Khan stayed with the staunch Brahmin Pandit family to further the rich inheritance of the Gwalior Gharana.

The authentic *Khayal Gaayaki* of Gwalior Gharana was showcased by him in *Raga Yaman* with a *Bara Khayal 'palkan se mag jbaaroon...'* set to *tala Tilwada*, a *chhota khayal* in *teen-tala* and a *tarana* set to *Drut Ektala*. After this impressive recital, Meeta presented an *ashtapadi* in *Raga Bhupali*, a *tappa* in *Raga Kafi* and a *thumari* in *Raga Pilu*.

■ MANJARI SINHA

## Tradition and Modernity

**MUSIC: JAZZ** — Yuri Honing *Wired Paradise*  
*White Tiger, and Traditional Music and Dance*  
from Ethiopia

**Collaboration:** Embassy of Ethiopia  
October 17 and 19



As part of the IIC Experience 2011, two performances were held on October 17 and 19: by Dutch tenor saxophonist Yuri Honing, Mark Haanstra (bass guitar), Joost Ligbaart (drums) and Stef Van Es (electric guitar), and the National Theatre of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, comprising dancers, singers and instrumentalists.

Honing, one of Holland's leading saxophonists, is no stranger to India, having played in the country on several past occasions. His quartet (originally a quintet along with electric guitarist Frank Mobus) calls itself *Wired Paradise*. They began with a set from the album *White Tiger*, inspired by Aravind Adiga's Booker Prize-winning novel of the same name.

Honing's tenor saxophone which has something of the pure tone of Jan Garbarek, and is reminiscent of Wayne Shorter is a tantalizing mix of minimalist soundscape and visceral power. His music is replete with the sound of surprise in the narrative, and has a compelling vibrancy.

Haanstra's display of technical virtuosity, combined with his formidable skill in making the most of his bass guitar was memorable. Van Es also impressed with his sensitive handling of the electric guitar.

Apart from the *White Tiger* set, other *Wired Paradise* numbers which compelled attention were *Tenzing Norgay*, a tribute to the Nepali Sherpa who was the first man atop Mount Everest; the punk-inspired and wild *Meet Your Demons*, and the Nina Simone favourite of *Wired Paradise*, *Wild is the Wind*, which has a twenty-year association with the group.

### Ethiopian troupe

The National Theatre of Ethiopia troupe consisting of two female and two male dancers accompanied by traditional Ethiopian instrumentalists—*kirar* (strings), *washint* (flute), *masinko* (violin) and *keberot* (drums)—and two singers regaled a crowded open-air enclosure with a feast of music and dance. It was a participative evening with several Ethiopians and members of the audience joining in.

The dancers impressed with their stamina, performing non-stop for ninety minutes amidst quick changes of attire. Much of the dancing which was representative of the various regions of the East African country involved complex torsal movements, whose seductive attraction was enhanced by the often colourful dresses of the dancers.

Among the much-applauded numbers were *Tugrai* from North Ethiopia, *Konso* from the South, *Reggae* from Central Ethiopia, *Gambella* from the West, and a special song, *Amari*.

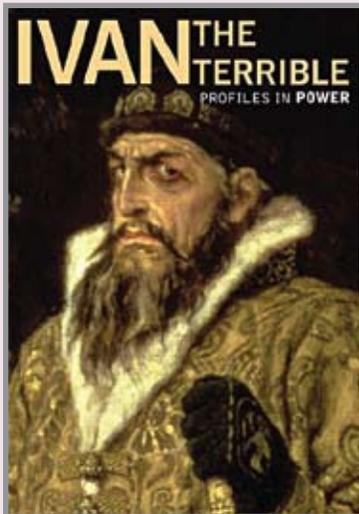
■ G. GEORGE



**Classic Fare**

**FILM FESTIVAL: Great Films, Great Filmmakers, October 15–21**

Among the most popular venues at the IIC Festival, the darkened auditorium screening the film festival has been a welcome refuge for members seeking another kind of entertainment. This year, *Great Films Great Filmmakers*, spanning the period from 1933 to 2006, showcased films of merit and excellence that have shaped the film club movement for the last five decades. These well-loved old classics, despite being screened many times at the IIC, evoked a warm response and

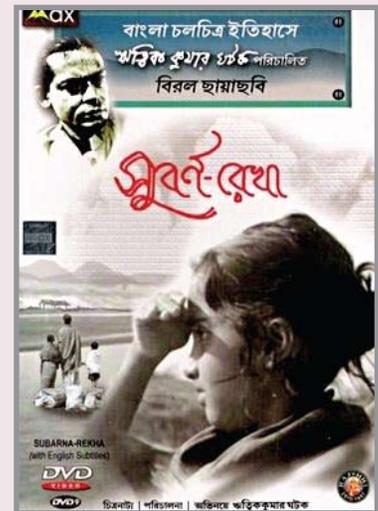


were well attended. Another significant feature was that while the films included the works of legends such as Sergei Eisenstein, *Ivan the Terrible, Part I* (about the troubled sixteenth century tsar who united Russia), this time filmmakers such as

Even here, though, the selection of their films did not include each director's landmark film.

Well-deserved tribute was also paid to several cinematic legends who had passed away in recent months, among whom was the much-loved Shammi Kapoor, whose *Junglee*, with its lilting music and romantic tale of a stuffy aristocrat's metamorphosis into a carefree man in love, still stirs passions all these years later. Tribute was also paid to Greek filmmaker Michael Cacoyannis, *A Matter of Dignity*, a saga of a business family that plots to salvage its diminishing fortunes by marrying off its beautiful daughter, Chloe, into wealth, much against her wishes. Also screened were two films of Bangladeshi director Tareque

Masud: *Ontorjatra*, 2006, which uses displacement as the central theme as the director attempts to depict a journey into the heart of the protagonist's forlorn past; and *Matir Moina*, 2002, which examines the themes of religious



Satyajit Ray and Kurosawa made way for iconic directors such as Yasujiro Ozu, *Flavour of Green Tea over Rice* (charting the marital crisis of one woman and her husband); Ritwik Ghatak's *Subarnarekha* (set against the backdrop of Bengal's partition that showcases Ghatak's impassioned social criticism); and Mrinal Sen's *Bhuvan Shome*, a tale of a lonely widower rejuvenated by the village lass, Gouri: 'Big bad bureaucrat reformed by rustic belle', as paraphrased by Ray.



tolerance, cultural diversity and the complexity of Islam.

A focus on Hispanic films showcased directors such as Luis Bunuel (*Exterminating Angel*), Tomas Alea (*Death of a Bureaucrat*) and Carlos Saura (*Bunuel and King Solomon's Table*). Other notable films were *Mon Oncle*, *Miracle in Milan*, *Blow Up*, *M*, and *Kandahar*.

■ RITU SINGH

**The Making of Visva-Bharati**

TALK: Meeting of East and West – Rabindranath Tagore’s Challenging Ideas for World Change

Speaker: Dr. Uma Das Gupta

Chair: Dr. Basudev Chatterji, October 16

Dr. Uma Das Gupta began her lecture by reminding us that the idea behind the making of Visva-Bharati as an institution was rooted in the tradition of bringing very distinct cultures together, and of Rabindranath Tagore’s efforts to bridge the gap between the East and the West. She addressed the call for a shift in the perception of a university from a local body to the idea of a universal nest, which was Tagore’s focal point in the formation of Visva-Bharati.

Dr. Das Gupta reiterated that transnational-cultural identity was important to Tagore; he was against cultural hegemony and he shared his thoughts in the several essays he wrote during the First World

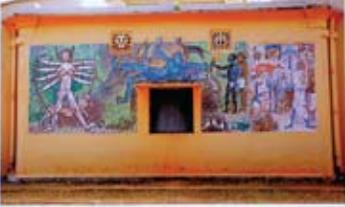
War. The West, he said, has lost its moral authority to civilization since ‘the art of civilization lay in healing, not killing’. The works of Tagore were based on a negation of nationalism in favour of humanism and human oneness. He believed that nationalism hurts the freedom that literature, art and social symbols bring, and protected Shantiniketan from it.

Synthesis (fusion) of the East and the West was important to Tagore’s ideas. And Dr. Das Gupta clearly posits Tagore’s vision to exchange intellections from both cultures without losing one’s identity. Peace and sensitivity remained crucial to his works. She ended her talk by quoting Tagore: ‘Our religions present for us the dreams of the ideal unity which is man, faith firm in the Life that creates and not in the Machine that constructs’.

■ SRISTY CHOUDHURY



**Kala Bari ('Black House'), wood hostel with exhibits (1916-17)**  
 Visible are yellow, glowing, flowers and murals based on the local scene or traditional scenes. The wall behind is inspired by the 'Marriage of Shiva' in Mattancherry Palace, Cochin, and a *dhacapatika* from Ashoka. Egyptian, Assyrian, Indian and Bahut art incorporated in the reliefs on the north side.



**Mural: transit, graphics studio, Kala Bhawan, by Somnath Hare (1977)**  
 The multi-armed goddess lets loose a snake on her victim, who bends the tooth of death to a young couple from the village.



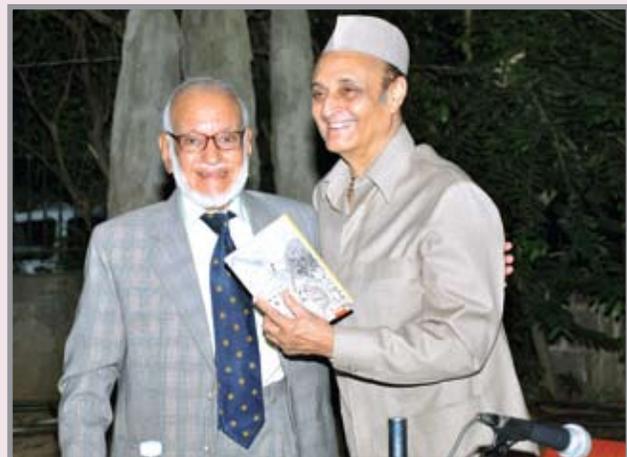
**Kala Bhawan mural, by K.G. Subramanyam (1990-92)**  
 An effluence of statues enveloping the building, its images are striking from afar and engage at various levels close up.  
 K. SIVA KUMAR, 'THE SANTINIKETAN MURALS: A BRIEF HISTORY', 1995

**Launch of IIC Quarterly**

LAUNCH: IIC Quarterly, Autumn 2011  
 October 20

The Autumn 2011 issue of the *Quarterly* was launched at the IIC Experience on 20 October. The current crises in the social fabric of the country and the public debates in civil society of necessity lead us back to Gandhi to understand the true meaning of *satyagraha*, the real significance of political activism, and the symbols of people’s power. This issue of the *Quarterly* does just that. After a delectable tea, appropriately held in the Gandhi-King Plaza, Professor M. G. K. Menon officially launched the Journal. The evening ended with a warm round of applause for Ira Pande

and her commendable work in enhancing the standard of the *Quarterly*. Ira leaves at the end of January 2012 to pursue her other diverse interests.



## Tradition in Transition

**DANCE:** *Tradition and Transference – Odissi*

October 18

**DANCE-DRAMA:** *Hey Ananta Punya*

October 21

In its cross-cultural panorama, the IIC Experience reflected music, dance and poetry in varied manifestations, Indian and foreign. Odissi dancer Madhavi Mudgal's presentation of Tradition in Transference revealed how individual artistic creativity finds adequate space for expression within the contours of the classical vocabulary—Madhavi's foundational legacy from late Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra, one of the enlightened founders of the newly designed Odissi of the fifties and sixties. If the solo *Mangalacharan Stuti* 'Maanikyaveena' in its gradual increase of speed and movement going beyond the frontal aspected dancing, with the delightful *nritya* interlude, the *ashtapadi* 'Priye Charusheela' and Oriya song 'Prana Sanginire' carried vintage, old world aroma, the legacy's transferred manifestation through Madhavi's own creativity came in



the Guru's Shankarabharanam Pallavi adapted as a duet, brilliantly performed by Madhavi and Arushi, her student. This was followed by a group creation of the *ashtapadi* 'Chandana Charchita' showing Krishna sporting with the Gopis. The dancer's aesthetic vision was further revealed in the artistry with which the Odissi movement idiom was visualized in a group expression by Madhavi's excellently trained disciples, to suit Hindustani music of *alap*, *Jod*, *Jhala* in *Madhuvanti* and Durga, in a score created by Madhup Mudgal.

Bangladesh's Shadhona presented 'Hey Ananta Punya' based on Tagore's 'Notir Puja', an adaptation of his poem 'Pujarini'. Delicate artistry and understatement marked the dance-drama's treatment of a tricky, combustible theme like religion. The story of sacrifice by Sreemati, a court dancer in the palace of the diehard Hindu King Ajatashatru, highlights the tensions surrounding the King's ruthless destruction of Buddhism, a reaction to his father Bimbisara's intense faith in the religion, with mother Lokeswari herself embracing Buddhism. Suggestive art rather than declamatory histrionics, an aesthetic simplicity of mixed dance language conceived by Warda Rihab, blending Manipuri, Thang Ta, Kathak influences, never losing narrative fluency in technique-oriented ornamentation, Suman Sarkar's musical assemblage of Tagore lyrics, fine percussion, a troupe of poised, male and female dancers tastefully costumed, and artistic stage setting and props, told the whole story.

■ LEELA VENKATARAMAN



## Cuisine Nights@The IIC Experience

FOOD FESTIVAL: IIC Experience, October 15–21

As always, the day's festivities ended with a dinner, the cuisine determined by the cultural event of the evening. So from the bright lights of the Fountain Lawns, diners walked through pathways of glittering diyas to the Rose Garden where the Centre's catering staff tirelessly laid out endless numbers of mouth-watering dishes each evening.



The opening performance of 'Stories in a Song' was followed by a Ganga-Jamuni buffet, a perfect synchronization of the senses! The menu comprised classic dishes from Varanasi and Awadh, memorable in aroma and subtle flavours. Following the strains of Carnatic music, our chefs presented the spicy food of the Chettiar merchants of Tamil Nadu. In recent years this cuisine has become very popular. On October 18, the dining spaces were crowded as Southeast Asian food from Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia was served after a scintillating performance of Odissi.

IIC's special Continental fare was the theme for one evening. Superb dishes, some created by Bhicoo Manekshaw, former Catering Consultant, and some the signature dishes of the chef, Vijay Thukral, were greatly appreciated. The menu included Stein's Potato and Sesame Soup,



named after the Centre's architect, Joseph Allen Stein, and Gateau Indira, a dish created for Smt. Indira Gandhi.

From Ethiopia came an unusual yet memorable fare with *injera*, a sourdough bread, cooked like a dosa, served with chicken or pea stew, concluding with a fragrance-filled coffee ceremony. The food of Rajasthan comprising Marwari vegetarian and the delectable meats of the Rajputs, derives its inspiration from the desert as in *sangria ki subzi* or the *bazre ki kbhchdi* with kadhi. The closing night was given to the Banglar Ranna which has become a standard dinner for the IIC Experience thanks to the inspired cooking of Chitra Ghose!. Needless to say, from the juicy giant prawns to the *lau ghanto* to the *gurer payesh*, the dinner was a huge success.

■ PREMOLA GHOSE

## Musical Collage

**STORIES IN A SONG: A Musical Collage of Theatre, Literature and History, Presented by ARPANA, directed by Sunil Shanbag, music selected and composed by Shubha Mudgal and Aneesh Pradhan, October 15**

reformers by adding a roster of patriotic songs to her repertoire; and as the eponymous girl in the *nautanki*, *Babadur Ladki*, who spiritedly fends off the advances of a lascivious British officer. The full-bloodedness of her parts extended itself to her singing, and to a lively *lavani* she performed with characteristic aplomb.

With his solid singing voice, Namit Das took every opportunity to play to the gallery, whether by



*Stories in a Song* is a montage of seven loosely interwoven theatrical set-pieces which give us an insight into the cultural strands that make up Hindustani music. Here is a unique and fascinating means of showcasing the way Indian music has been disseminated over the ages, what it has engendered, how it has been created, or parodied, and what these stories ultimately tell us about ourselves.

But it was the actors who brought energy and verve to the production. They were the repositories of oral traditions, anecdotal memories, and those little archival tidbits that tend to fall between the cracks.

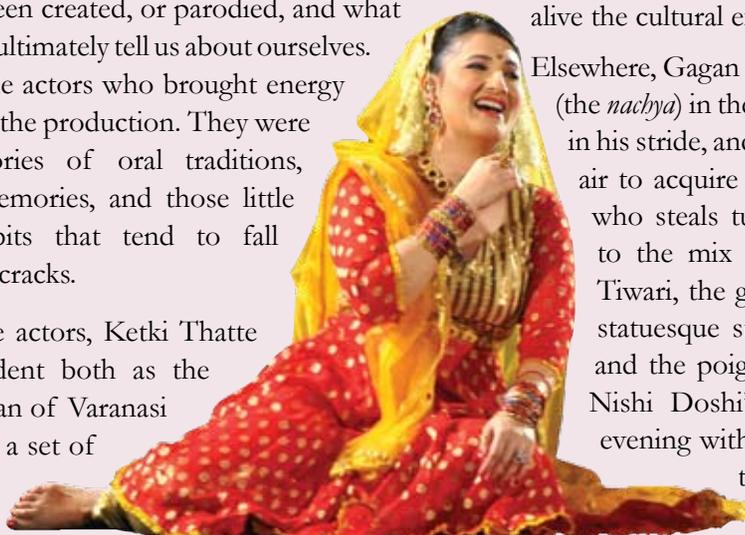
Amongst the actors, Ketki Thatte was resplendent both as the fiery courtesan of Varanasi who silences a set of anti-*nautch* social

mimicking frogs in the rain, or performing a *kajdi* in English, or by playing the unfortunate British officer from the *nautanki* to great comic effect.

Pia Sukanya's brilliant portrayal of an Englishwoman, an 'outsider', struggling to notate a piece of Indian music, backed by her beautiful operatic voice, brought alive the cultural exchanges of the times.

Elsewhere, Gagan Riar played a female impersonator (the *nachya*) in the *nautanki* with just the right *lachak* in his stride, and then as quickly, shed the foppish air to acquire the swagger of a music director who steals tunes without compunction. Add to the mix the deadpan delivery of Gopal Tiwari, the gravitas of Shubrojoyoti Barat, the statuesque stage presence of Mansi Multani and the poignant old-world charm of young Nishi Doshi's singing, and it was truly an evening with all the right ingredients in place to entertain well.

■ VIKRAM PHUKAN



## Abhinaya: Jealousy, Gossip

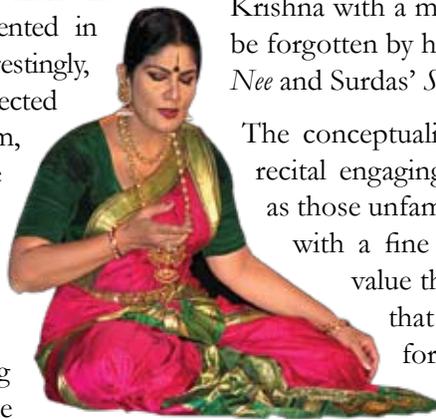
**DANCE:** *Abhinaya in Bharatanatyam*

Presented by Geeta Chandran

**Vocalist:** Sudha Radhuraman, September 19

Geeta Chandran's *Abhinaya* recital commenced with a prayer to Vishnu, and concluded with a *sankeertan* prayer. Indeed, *abhinaya* was the pivotal feature of the performance, the conduit through which she explored a host of emotions, presented in traditional Bharatanatyam *padams*. Interestingly, this performative journey reflected Chandran's own in Bharatanatyam, having learnt the *padams* under the guidance of different gurus.

In the popular *Taaye Yashoda*, the dancer switched from the *gopi* whose pot of butter Krishna has stolen, to one who is shocked at being unexpectedly embraced by the little



Krishna, each transgression eliciting a complaint directed to Yashoda about her son's antics. 'Choodare', a *Ksbetraggya Padam* narrates the manner in which the village women drop their daily chores to gossip about a young married woman, in love with Krishna and on her way to a secret tryst with him. Just as quickly, they tire of this idle chatter and resume their work. 'Moquduchi' was a poignant piece about a young woman preparing to leave her maternal home for the marital one. She bids farewell to her beloved Krishna with a mix of sadness and fear that she will be forgotten by him. Also presented were *Etai Kandu Nee* and Surdas' *Suni Sutta Ek Katha Kaboon Pyaari*.

The conceptualization and presentation made the recital engaging for informed enthusiasts as well as those unfamiliar with classical dance. Conveyed with a fine touch, the recital exemplified the value that a thinking artist brings to a craft that must combine skill with an intellect for narrative and emotion.

■ SUPRIYA NAYAK

## Tribute

**TALK:** *A Homage to Shanta Rao (1925–2007)*

Illustrated lecture by Ashoke Chatterjee

**FILM CLIPS:** *The Art of Shanta Rao*

**Chair:** Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan, September 1

Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan, speaking on the occasion, said that Shanta Rao was an exceptionally gifted dancer. She was a scholar, writer, musician, painter and a warm human being. Ashoke Chatterjee, her biographer, has written a book *Dance of the Golden Hall* with photographs by Sunil Janah, published by the I.C.C.R.

Ashoke Chatterjee spoke with touching sincerity and affection about Shanta's life, her childhood and decision to study dance, going to Kerala with G.Venkatachalam, the renowned critic as 'her chaperon' as she was very young. She studied under many great maestros. She was a contemporary of Ram Gopal and Mrinalini Sarabhai. Her performances also drew criticism and controversies because of her

Kathakali training which many thought influenced her Bharatanatyam.

Shanta's dance, as Beryl Dezoete, the Dutch writer in her book *The Other Mind* says, 'indeed possessed her', and that state was unique, which lifted her dance to another plane. Reams have been written about her, so Chatterjee observed, people ask: 'Shanta who?'

Shanta was a recluse. She was a private person with a few friends like Dharma Kumar, Homi Bhabha, Rothschild, Yehudi Menuhin, Kapila Vatsyayan, Ashoke Chatterjee and Sunil Janah to name a few. Till she passed away two years ago in Bangalore, she had kept up her practice.

Chatterjee screened a few slides and two excerpts of films, one black and white in which Yehudi Menuhin introduces her Bharatanatyam and one B.B.C. film in colour which gives glimpses of Shanta's *Mohini Attam*. The display of photographs by Sunil Janah was superb and captured Shanta's dance movements, personality and dignity. The photographs and the films are national treasures and one hopes they will be preserved for future generations.

■ SUNIL KOTHARI

## Notice

Dear Member,

At various forums members have voiced their concern about the degradation of the environment and, particularly, the reckless destruction of forests. At the previous Annual General Body meeting, some members suggested that the Centre should contribute towards protecting our forests by making greater use of electronic media and thereby save paper. Recognizing the importance of these concerns, we propose to print fewer copies of the Annual Report, the Auditor's Report & Accounts, and Revised Budget Estimates from this year onwards as a small contribution by the Centre towards protecting the environment. These reports will be e-mailed to each member, and will

also be available on the website ([www.iicdelhi.nic.in](http://www.iicdelhi.nic.in)) in electronic format. Additionally, a sufficient number of printed copies will be made available in advance for reference in the Library, and also to members who might require them before the AGM. However, if you prefer to have a printed copy of the reports, please exercise your option and let us know your preference by 21 November, 2011. We would appreciate it if you could treat this as urgent so that we can place our print order accordingly.

Your response can be sent by e-mail to [editor.iic@nic.in](mailto:editor.iic@nic.in)

Postal responses can be addressed to Publications Division, India International Centre, 40, Max Mueller Marg, New Delhi – 110 003.

**Yours sincerely,  
Sd/-, Chief Editor, Publications Division**

## Globalizing Indian Education

**TALK: *Reforming Indian Higher Education and the Importance of Global Collaborations***

**Speaker: Professor Fazal Rizvi**

**Chair: Dr. Kavita A. Sharma, September 27**

The programme was attended by a number of educationists who have been engaged in the exercise of opening Indian universities to foreign collaboration. The keynote was set by Dr. Kavita Sharma, who, while introducing the speaker, said that 'it was time that the orientation of higher education move beyond money because globalization was more of culture than economy.' The main thrust of Professor Rizvi's lecture was about the intense mobility of people and ideas taking place globally.

Regarding the scenario of higher education in India, he said that there was a great policy anxiety that now focused on three areas, namely, expansion of education to people of lower social strata, privatization of the economy, and changing methods of governance. These changes, however welcome, were taking place unevenly. There was also the problem of ensuring high standards of efficiency and research to the



*Mrs. Usba Vobra at her exhibition of photographs, 'Mirror to Nature'*

knowledge industry. In addition, there was also the ticklish issue of balancing central and federal control of educational institutions in India.

He went on to say that a new cultural politics was emerging globally in which acute mobility was causing a tension between uprooting from traditional roots and establishing new bonds. Higher education had a great role to play in this. He pointed out that these transactions were not taking place on a level playing field as the erstwhile colonizing nations still commanded greater control. The new cooperation between Indian and Western universities, said Prof Rizvi, was unavoidable and highly desirable, but great caution needed to be exercised to prevent the West taking undue advantage of it.

■ **BHARAT GUPT**

## Highlights for November - December 2011

### LECTURES

#### TALK

19 November 2011 at 11:00 am-1:00 pm, Conference Room-II  
**Celebrating Women's Leadership**  
**Manipur Women in Freedom Movement:**  
**Rani Gaidinliu**

Speaker: Ms Binalakshmi Nepram

25 November 2011 at 10:30 am-1:30 pm, Conference Room-II  
**Living Rivers, Dying Rivers:**  
**Rivers of Maharashtra and Western Ghats**

Presentations by Ms Parineeta Dandekar,  
 and Dr Pandurang Hegde

Chair: Shri Ramswamy R. Iyer

26 November 2011 at 06:30 pm, Conference Room-I  
**Benaras: Urban Forms and Cultural Histories**

Speaker: Professor Michael S. Dodson

8 December 2011 at 06:30 pm, Conference Room-I  
**China's Future: Changes or More of the Same**  
**in Politics and Foreign Policy**  
 (Collaboration: Columbia University Press)

12 December 2011 at 06:30 pm, Seminar Hall II & III,  
 Conference Block

**Muslim Devotional Art in India**

Chair: Professor Patricia Uberoi, Honorary Fellow,  
 Institute of Chinese Studies

16 December 2011 at 06:30 pm, Conference Room-I  
 FRONTIERS OF HISTORY

**Oral History and Monstrous Memories: The**  
**Case of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy**

Speaker: Suroopa Mukherjee, Hindu College

Chair: Indira Chowdhury

19 December 2011 at 06:30 pm, Conference Room-I  
 India's Emerging Geography

Speaker: Dr. Laveesh Bhandari, Director, Indicus  
 Analytics

#### PERFORMANCE

15 November 2011 at 06:30 pm, Auditorium  
**Hindustani Vocal Recital**

By Vinayak Torvi from Bangalore

20 November 2011 at 09:30 am, Auditorium  
**A Concert of Carnatic Vocal and**  
**Instrumental Music**

By budding young talents

(Collaboration: Gayathri Fine Arts)

24 November 2011 at 06:30 pm, Auditorium

**Odissi Recital**

By Geetanjali Acharya from Bhubaneswar, disciple  
 of Smt Sujata Mohapatra

1 December 2011 at 06:30 pm, Auditorium

**Hilley-ley**

Annual theatre festival, Kutumb Foundation

**Ek tha Natak and Ek Chhoti si Ram Leela**

Directed by Anand Kumar

Presented by Kutumb Foundation

10 December 2011 at 06:30 pm, Lecture Room-II (Annexe)

**Hindustani Music: Presenting Bangladeshi Artist**

Sitar Recital by Alif Laila, Vocal Recital by Samina De  
 (Collaboration: Bangladesh High Commission)

#### EXHIBITION

22-29 November 2011 at 11:00 am-7:00 pm,  
 Main Art Gallery, Conference Block

**Summ – Rajasthan**

An exhibition of acrylics, watercolours and serigraphs  
 by Thota Tharrani

**Inauguration on 21 November 2011 at 06:30 pm**

6-12 December 2011, Exhibition, Main Quadrangle  
**Non Violence**

Curated by Suraj Sadan, a visual artist

22-28 December 2011 at 11:00 am – 7:00 pm,  
 Main Art Gallery, Conference Block

**New Visions: Contemporary Traditional Indian**  
**Folk and Tribal Art**

Curated by Minhazz Majumdar, The Earth and Grass  
 Workshop

**Inauguration on 21 December 2011 at 06:30 pm**

#### FILM

24 November 2011 at 06:30 pm, Multipurpose Hall,  
 Conference Block

**Nainsukh, the Great Pahari Painter of the 18th**  
**Century**

Directed by Amit Dutta

(Collaboration: Pro Helvetia – Swiss Arts Council)

#### FESTIVAL (2 – 4 December 2011)

(Art Gallery, Multipurpose Hall, Gandhi-King Plaza, Auditorium)

**Celebrating Cultural Diversity: A Festival of**  
**Jammu and Kashmir**

Performances, exhibitions, discussions, craft  
 demonstrations and cuisine

(Collaboration: Government of Jammu and Kashmir)

## A Note from the Director

On 22 January 2012, India International Centre will mark fifty years since it moved into its home where it has lived and grown since January 1962. An occasion like this is always a time to look both back and forward. It has been felt that 2012 might be an appropriate time to create an archive for the Centre to document its fifty-year journey: the events and people who have been involved with it to make the Centre the strong and open institution that it is today with an ambience unique to it.

The initial concept was proposed by Mr. John D. Rockefeller III to Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the then Vice President of India in 1958, and a Society came into being on 9 March 1959. The idea of such a Centre that would involve the university system in the country fired the imagination of the Founder President, Dr. C.D. Deshmukh; the choice of this particular site adjacent to the Lodhi Gardens involved active interest from Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India. Hence the founding of this institution involved the interaction of men and women with a vision for India's future and her role in a world of mutual cooperation.

The first sod of earth on the site was turned by Smt. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, a Life Trustee and the first Vice President of the IIC on 15 April 1960. On 30 November in the same year the foundation stone was laid by Prince Akihito, now the Emperor of Japan. Within fifteen months, on 22 January 1962, the buildings were formally inaugurated by Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the then President of India.

The vision of the IIC, in the words of Dr. C.D. Deshmukh, was to create an institution for a meeting of minds, a place where 'various currents of intellectual, political and economic thought could

meet freely'. It was to serve as a 'bridge' for culture and communities from all over the world. Over the years, IIC has gone on to become a centre where writers, poets, film makers, artists, intellectuals, academics and philosophers meet, and where conversations on a wide range of subjects are many-splendoured, far-reaching, and deep and meaningful in scope. They cover a variety of subjects from literature, culture, philosophy, religion, ethics and human rights, international and civic affairs, environment, ecology and wildlife to science and medicine.

Many of our members have been with us on this journey of the Centre and have contributed immensely both to the institution and to the larger national polity. It is in this context that I appeal to all of you, the members of the Centre, to share your special memories with us. This could be an incident, a photograph, an article that you wrote for the *IIC Quarterly*, an event etched in your memory, a memento that you particularly like, which could even be a menu or a programme card, or an anecdote. We look forward to receiving your contribution so that we can create a 'memory wall' where we can post these through the year and eventually create an archive that will have a lasting value. Of course we will also try to recapture the passage of time from old photographs, articles, documents and other material that is with us and attempt to tell the story of the IIC, which is intertwined with many of our lives and memories, and which have impacted both individuals and society.

All communications in this regard can be sent by email addressed to

director.iic@nic.in or publication.iic@nic.in or by ordinary post.

■ Kavita A. Sharma

