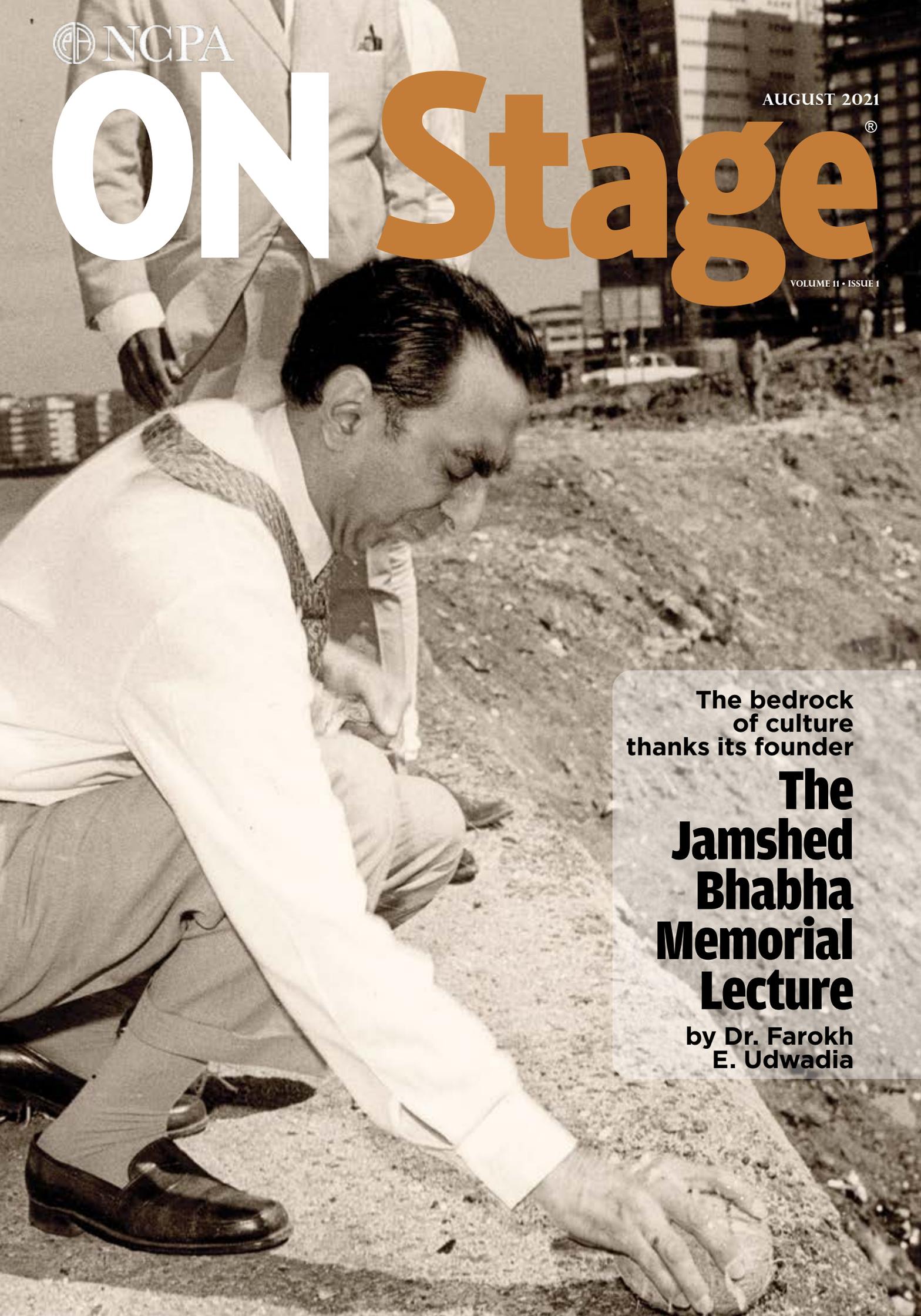


ON Stage[®]



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of culture
thanks its founder

The Jamshed Bhabha Memorial Lecture

by Dr. Farokh
E. Udawadia

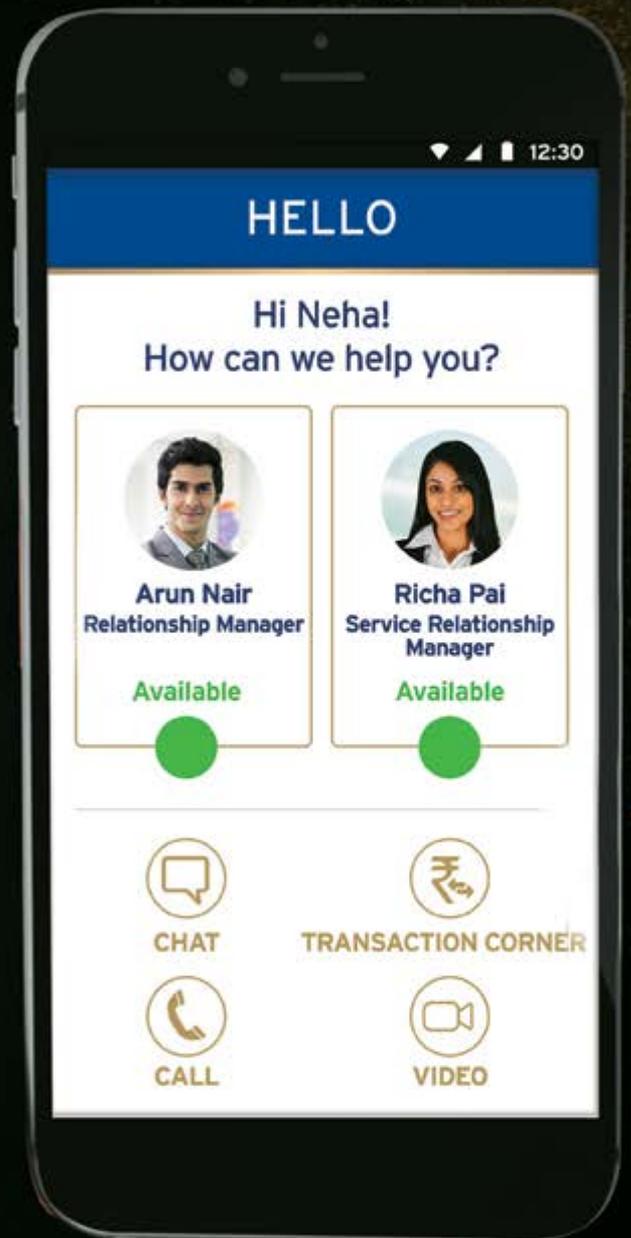
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Chairman's Note



Today, our entire lives are occupied in the pursuit of financial success and commercial recognition. Where is the beautiful image that Bombay had of being one of the most elegant cities with the Marine Drive as a model of Art Deco architecture, with the gothic buildings that adorned the city being one of the best that were left to us by the British? Don't forget that our harbour was next only to the Sydney Harbour—the finest in the world—as was the RWITC racecourse.

While these seem not so important by today's standards, they affected the lifestyle of the citizens of Mumbai. Art was displayed in its architecture. Now, the opposite prevails. Our beautiful beaches have become refuse dumps and generally, the drop in standards has been alarming.

We believe that the NCPA can definitely contribute in raising these standards if we were encouraged, be it by way of easing conditions for reverting to performances or with strict controls under which our musicians and artistes can go to various open-air spaces and public grounds and perform for the city.

However, there should be a partnership between the city and those who govern it. We are putting forward our best for Mumbai. I hope we get a response.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K. N. Suntook". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

Khushroo N. Suntook



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Khushroo N. Suntook

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Kaleidoscope

Your window to the latest in the performing arts across India and the world.



The
**Jamshed
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MEMORIAL LECTURES

A talk by

Dr. Farokh E. Udhwadia

Emeritus professor of Medicine, consultant physician,
author and Padma Bhushan awardee

Art and Mankind

Opening remarks by

Mr. Khushroo N. Suntook

Chairman, NCPA

Saturday, August 21, 2021

A webcast on the NCPA Facebook page and YouTube channel.

www.ncpamumbai.com



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Following the success of *The Disciple*, a Marathi film set in the milieu of Hindustani classical music, we take a look at more such films with classical music as the central theme and what made them successful. *By Vidhi Salla*

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The arrival of EDM revolutionised the music industry as well as the dance floor. We look at why fans around the globe can't stop raving about this four-beat rhythm. *By Anurag Tagat*

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through, the Manipuri dance ensemble is synonymous with elegance. *By Darshana Jhaveri*

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Editing Enid

Enid Blyton's books inculcated a love of reading in millions of kids around the world, but she was also controversial in her views that would, by today's standards, be considered racist. We try to understand why her works are both enduring and problematic, and what we can do about them. *By Arwa Mamaji*

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The workshop, Reimagining Dance Costumes by Sandhya Raman, offered participants a unique opportunity to learn and gain insights into costume designing for live performances. We bring you

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ON Stage brings you excerpts from the *NCPA Quarterly Journal*, an unsurpassed literary archive that ran from 1972 to 1988, and featured authoritative and wide-ranging articles. In the penultimate part of the series on categories of music, musician and ethnomusicologist *Ashok D. Ranade* examines the various aspects of folk music and its evolution.

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This Month, That Year

From the inaugural Dr. Jamshed Bhabha Memorial Lectures to a festival showcasing works of legendary Indian composers, from World Photography Day celebrations to a spectacular presentation of classical, folk and martial dance forms of India, and an evening of chamber music, we bring you some of the more memorable events that were presented at the NCPA in August 2019.

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We look forward to your feedback and suggestions. Please do drop us an email at onstage@ncpamumbai.com.

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- ▶ Receive advance e-mail notification of events
- ▶ Get a personalised membership card and gain free access to the NCPA Books and Music library
- ▶ Enjoy exclusive discounts offered by our brand partners

* Conditions apply



Membership Application form

Dear Member,

This is a reminder to renew your membership for the next annual term. Renewals are open for memberships that have expired. You also have the option of renewing your membership for the next two years. In order to keep all information up to date and recent, we request you to please fill in this membership form in order to renew your membership. Kindly submit this form along with **recent passport-sized photograph/s and your membership card/s to the membership department. You can now renew your membership online. Log on to www.ncpamumbai.com for details. For enquiry on new membership, please contact the Membership Department.**

Primary Member Name:

Joint Member Name: (in case of couple membership)

Membership No.

Address:

..... Pin Code:

Telephone: Mobile:

Email: Date of Birth:

Occupation: Company:

Date: Signature:



Be a Friend

Dear Friend of the SOI,

Thank you for your continued support of the Symphony Orchestra of India. We'd like to take this opportunity to remind you that it is time to renew your association with the SOI. Renewals are open for memberships that have expired. **Please check the validity on your card.** In order to keep all information up to date, we request you to please fill in this renewal form along with a recent passport-sized photograph and submit it to the Membership department at the Tata Theatre. A new SOI card will be issued to you immediately.

Dear Sir,

I wish to renew my association with the Symphony Orchestra of India

Name:

SOI Card No.:

Address:

..... Pin Code:

Telephone: Mobile:

Email: Date of Birth:

Occupation: Company:

Cheque No.: Date:

Drawn On:

Date: Signature:

Become a Friend of the SOI by contributing ₹15,000 p.a **. Each friend of the SOI is entitled to the following benefits:

- ▶ Acknowledgement in the SOI Souvenir Brochure
- ▶ Two complimentary tickets for any one performance each season
- ▶ Priority booking
- ▶ Invitation to at least one private reception every year
- ▶ Opportunity to meet the artistes
- ▶ Complimentary copy of **ON Stage** (NCPA's monthly magazine) at your doorstep
- ▶ Free access to the NCPA Library and the Stuart Liff library
- ▶ Exclusive access to the Members' Bar
- ▶ Exclusive offers on our brand partners

Cheques for both NCPA and SOI should be drawn in favour of 'National Centre for the Performing Arts' and submitted along with a stamp sized photograph to: The Membership Department, Tata Theatre, NCPA, NCPA Marg, Nariman Point, Mumbai 400 021.

Email: membership@ncpamumbai.com
Tel.: 66223719

** GST of 18% (9% CGST & 9% SGST) is applicable on fees for all membership categories (for NCPA & SOI) from July 1, 2017.



Remembering our
illustrious founder

The Jamshed Bhabha Memorial Lectures

Men of Substance

Ahead of the second Jamshed Bhabha Memorial Lecture, Chairman Mr. Khushroo N. Suntook reflects on the qualities that make Dr. Bhabha and Dr. Farokh E. Udawadia, the distinguished speaker for this year, kindred souls.

August 21 marks a date when our beloved founder Dr. Jamshed Bhabha would have been 107 years old. Yet, it seems like yesterday when he walked through the corridors of the NCPA. His spirit still pervades the organisation and guides us.

He would have been deeply distressed at the closing of the theatres and I am glad he is not here to see this gloomy period, but I am sure he would have confronted it with the fortitude he always showed.

Dr. Bhabha was not only a man of art but also of science. He would have thoroughly approved our foray into the digital world. The movement we are making to reinvent our business—all on account of a microscopic virus—would certainly have had his tacit approval.

There is nothing he liked better than a new idea and the telephone would ring immediately after one was brought to his notice. “Let’s have breakfast on Sunday to discuss it,” he would say.

Dr. Bhabha spoke most admiringly of his friend and his doctor of choice Dr. Farokh E. Udawadia. They were in many ways kindred souls — two personalities with largely the same values and philosophy of life, and both, matter-of-fact persons. Dr. Bhabha had desired that after he had been cremated there would be no ceremonies to continue the mourning process. Typical of the man.

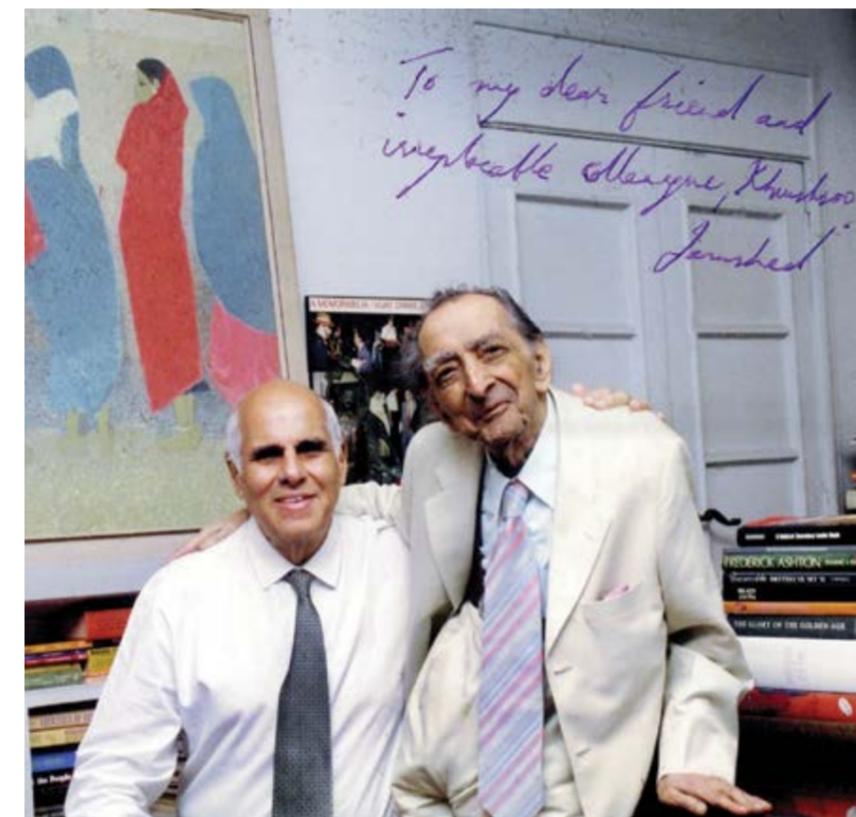
Dr. Udawadia, who needs no introduction, is a complete person. He is not only a distinguished physician but also a personality who embraces the city with his extraordinarily prominent contribution to it. His love of art and music must be mentioned, particularly music, which he makes a part of his life in spite of working nine days a week.

We request you to hear Dr. Udawadia’s profound interpretation of the importance of art in everyday life. Without this, we are nothing but calculators. ■

The lecture will be broadcast on the NCPA YouTube channel and Facebook page on 21st August 2021. For more details, please log on to www.ncpamumbai.com



Dr. Jamshed Bhabha was a man of art and science: Seen here (left) with tabla and sitar legends Allarakha and Ravi Shankar, and (right) with Nobel Prize-winning physicist Neils Bohr, J.R.D. Tata and Homi Bhabha



In Mr. Khushroo N. Suntook, Dr. Jamshed Bhabha saw a friend and an irreplaceable colleague

The Good Doctor

A legend in the field of medicine, Dr. Farokh E. Udwadia's love of art and literature has been a constant companion and guide in his practice of over six decades. In the second Jamshed Bhabha Memorial Lecture titled 'Art and Mankind', he will discuss why art deserves a place of importance in all human endeavours.

By Snigdha Hasan

He arrives at the NCPA in his scrubs one July afternoon and as he settles down in Mr. Khushroo N. Suntook's office, the pleasantries quickly make way for a fascinating conversation on the Mozart Effect, Beethoven's Ninth, Dante's early life, Correa's Champalimaud Centre in Lisbon, all interspersed with fond mentions of poetry. Dr. Farokh E. Udwadia is in the building and this is how art and science mingle in the good doctor's definition of medicine.

They say physicians like him are rare, and the long list of accolades—he was the youngest Indian ever to be elected a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh, in 1969, at the age of 38; was awarded the Padma Bhushan for Contribution to Medicine in 1987; the Giants International Award for Excellence in Field of Medicine in 1992; the Dr. B. C. Roy National Award for the year 2000 in the category of 'Eminent Medical Teacher'—attest to his complete mastery of medicine. But to his patients, he is godlike, while the agnostics and atheists among them settle for a more earthly "legendary". This veneration stems from his precise diagnoses of the most cryptic symptoms, something he attributes to bedside manner—the art of listening to the patient, and empathy. And for these, he turns to art. 'If you want to know exactly how a human being works, you will be much better off if you had an idea of the humanities. Read poetry, literature and you get a good idea of what suffering is,' he said in an interview with Bachi Karkaria.

In his last days, when Dr. Jamshed J. Bhabha was being taken to the hospital, his physician and friend of many years was by his side. "He held my hand and said, 'Farokh, you are like a rainbow in the sky,'" says Dr. Udwadia as he reminisces about their discussions on art and music. "That's how our friendship grew stronger."

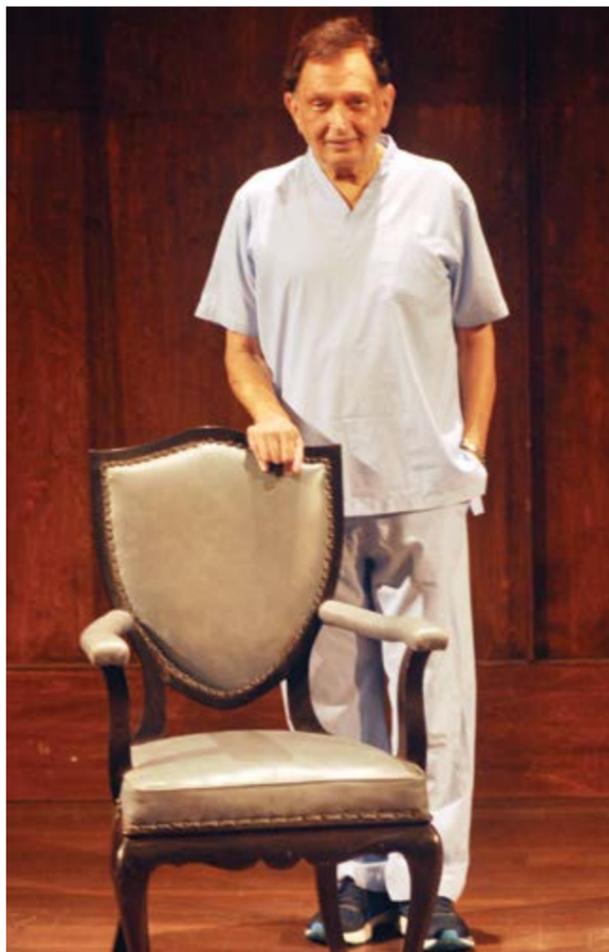
It is fitting then that Dr. Udwadia will deliver the second of The Jamshed Bhabha Memorial Lectures, a series that honours the memory of the NCPA's illustrious founder. Every year on Dr. Bhabha's birth anniversary on 21st August, an eminent speaker from diverse disciplines is invited to speak on art and culture and allied fields. The theme this year is 'Art and Mankind'.

"Art and culture influence each other [but] art transcends culture. It is a great communicator and brings people, societies and countries together," says Dr. Udwadia as he briefly discusses the themes he plans to delve into in his lecture, starting with an overview of the visual arts—painting, sculpture, architecture—

literature and music. "Music and the mind is a fascinating subject. There is also much to be spoken about how suffering affects creativity."

Art preserves what a historical fact cannot," he points out, referring to the need to preserve our culture, and civilisation that dates back to 5,000 years. "The work that the NCPA has done to preserve this socio-cultural heritage of India is remarkable; there's no other such place in the country. Yet, it hurts to see the apathy of people who wouldn't mind paying for dinner in a fancy restaurant but would crib about buying a ticket. That is why we need to start early and impress upon children the importance of art," says Dr. Udwadia, as he evokes Dante's poetry on how it was at school that he learnt to tread the path that led him to where he was.

As the conversation progresses, Mr. Suntook reveals a secret. Dr. Udwadia is a violinist himself. "Jamshed would often ask me, 'Where is your concert? The hall is free for you,'" he replies. A recital by Dr. Udwadia may not have materialised, but a lecture has. And on a topic that Dr. Bhabha would have wholeheartedly endorsed. ■



'A vital unifying and inspiring force'

These excerpts from an article by Dr. Jamshed J. Bhabha in the first brochure about the National Centre for the Performing Arts speak of his vision for an organisation in the service of the arts, and the role of the arts in nurturing humankind.

The culture of a people is no accident of history or gift from heaven which can simply be inherited: it is the expression of Man's aspirations, the fruits of his striving for a fuller life. It is grounded in human decision and effort and can be lost forever by neglect and inaction.

The National Centre for the Performing Arts was registered as a Public Trust in June 1966 under the name of the National Institute of the Performing Arts. Its present name was adopted and registered in November 1967.

At a time when magnificent centres for the performing arts are being established in various parts of the world, it seems necessary

to state the distinctive features of the Indian centre. The centre in India—in addition to being a home for the performing and expressive arts—like its counterparts in other parts of the world, is conceived primarily to maintain the continuity of the great teachers of Indian music, dance and drama, and to record and preserve the finest performances in these arts. Unlike the music of Europe and America, the music of India is largely unrecorded. A system of music scores has not yet been devised for Indian music and relatively little of it has been recorded on tape and disc. The art has been handed down by oral tradition and kept alive for centuries by teachers and masters who have been members of hereditary professions. This category of hereditary teachers is fast dying out and disappearing with the changes in society that since India's independence have ensued from growing industrialisation and urbanisation. Thus, the proposed National Centre for the Performing Arts is necessary for the survival and preservation of a great heritage of music, dance and drama, which may be lost to mankind forever, just as it has been bereft of the heritage of the classical music of Ancient Greece for want of records.

Apart from this basic reason for bringing the Indian



There's enough proof that the art, sculpture and paintings of India have drawn heavily from various dance forms. Seen here is a painting in the Ajanta caves

performing arts centre into being as speedily as possible, a brief reference seems appropriate to other important considerations which underline the need to have a national centre of the kind projected.

Trite though it may seem to say "Man does not live by bread alone", it remains a truth that bears repetition. When man's elemental wants are met, and often even when they are not, he needs something more to fill his life. Leisure has aptly been described as "the growing time of the spirit", and the quality of the arts available to man in his hours of leisure, whether in the form of drama, on the stage or the screen, or of music or dancing, helps to sharpen his faculties and finer instincts and mould the man. In fact, the importance of the role of the arts in all their forms, classical and folk, traditional and contemporary, is masked only by the complexity of present-day life and the proliferation of the arts themselves into many directions, some of little basic value. A true picture emerges of the role of the arts, if we consider times less complicated than the present.

In Ancient Greece, the arts were dedicated to the all-important purposes of religion and the creation of supremely beautiful temples. While no records survive of Greek music, which suffered the fate that threatens

to overtake much of the classical music of India, pictorial and sculptural representations of musicians and dancers show that these arts too were concerned primarily with the manifestations of religion. It is significant that the Greek *μουσική*, from which the word 'Music' is derived, was used comprehensively for all the arts of the Nine Muses. Contrasted with *γυμναστική* (gymnastic), it included the culture of the mind as distinguished from that of the body. The philosophers valued music, both in the ancient general sense and in our restricted sense, chiefly as an educational element in the formation of character.

In later centuries in Europe, the arts were similarly harnessed in the service of Christianity and created great churches, adorned in France and England by stained glass of unsurpassed beauty, and in Italy and South Europe by wall paintings which culminated in the masterpieces of Masaccio, Leonardo and Michelangelo. The earliest classical works of European music similarly took the form of religious music.

The quality of the arts available to man in his hours of leisure, whether in the form of drama, on the stage or the screen, or of music or dancing, helps to sharpen his faculties and finer instincts and to mould the man

In India, the arts were, if anything, even more closely integrated with religion, and to this day some of the greatest music and dancing is associated with temples and related to worship. The concepts and themes of religion permeated her fine arts, dance and drama. It is noteworthy that the dance in India has been inseparable from drama. The same words *nata nati*, actor actress, also designate dancer danseuse; and a theatre (*natyashala*) is equally a dancing stage. *Natya* is dancing used in drama (*nataka*). In his great treatise, the *Natya Shastra*, Bharata dealt with the three cognate arts of Acting, Dancing and Music as inseparable constituents of Drama. It is also remarkable that in no other civilisation has the classical dance had such a powerful impact on the other arts as in India, where in the great rock-cut sanctuaries of Ajanta, Ellora and Elephanta, and in the splendid temples of Konark, Bhubaneswar and South India, we see masterpieces of sculpture and painting that portray gods, goddesses and attendants in postures of grace and rhythm derived directly from the great dance forms. The manifestations of art were in truth regarded as means of education.

We thus get a truer picture of the importance of the arts to humanity as a vital unifying and inspiring

force if we consider previous centuries when life was less complicated than it is today. While in the last 200 years, in Europe and America, music has been mainly of a non-religious or secular character, it remains true of all the great arts, past or present, that they have a profoundly stirring effect on the human mind and spirit, and transcend the limitations and barriers of race, nationality, class and creed.

Today, in India, as in any developing country, the processes of industrialisation are having a widely unsettling effect on the life of the people. The movement from the country to the towns, the new strains and stresses of urban life, the pulls and pressures of labour unions and political parties have combined to loosen old ties of family and community and to destroy or diminish the regulatory effect, even if at times cramping, of old beliefs and traditions. Timely indeed is the warning given by Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, when, as President of India, he stated that "Mental slums are more dangerous than physical slums". In the ferment in which India finds

herself today, if the people's energies are to be channelled into peaceful, creative and constructive directions, more is required than the promotion of industrialisation and the advancement of science and technology: attention needs to be given to the development of the spirit and character of the people. Disruptive and divisive forces like communalism, casteism, provincialism and narrow nationalism can be combated effectively not by the use of force, but by reaching men's motivation.

The immense integrating force of the arts on the international, as on the national plane, is recognised in the famous words of Mahatma Gandhi:

"I do not want my house to be walled on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the culture of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible."

In keeping with the spirit of the universality of the arts, the National Centre's Master Plan envisages an International Division to ensure that the music and other performing arts of Asia, Europe and America have a place in the National Centre. This will stimulate cross-fertilisation of ideas and promote the development of India's arts in new directions, but from national roots, in a fast changing world.

It is in that spirit that, at the very inception of the National Centre for the Performing Arts, a powerful Board of Advisers was constituted of those who had rendered distinguished service in the fields of the arts not only in India but also in friendly countries abroad.

It is the fervent hope of all those working for the National Centre that Government agencies, foundations, firms and individuals in India and abroad, will extend generous support to an institution that is striving to preserve a most important part of the national wealth of India, a precious heritage of human striving and achievement, for the benefit of all mankind. ■

Excerpts from an article from the first brochure about the NCPA before it came into being.

News from the SOI

From pursuing higher education in prestigious conservatoires to winning laurels in international competitions, the students of the SOI Music Academy are going places.



Soli Cyrus Nallaseth

Soli Cyrus Nallaseth was among the first students of the SOI Music Academy, where he studied piano under Aida Bisengalieva. A student of the instrument since the age of five, he went on to pursue higher education in the UK. Nallaseth recently graduated from the Royal Academy of Music with a Bachelor of Music degree under the tutelage of Professor Colin Stone and Professor Sulamita Aronovsky, and will be returning for a Master of Arts degree under Stone's guidance.

The 22-year-old has been a prizewinner in several competitions including the 23rd International Chopin Piano Competition in Mazovia. He was twice selected to go to Musica Mundi, a leading chamber music festival, on a full scholarship in 2015 and 2016, where he took lessons from well-known musicians and performed in the Netherlands, and Belgium, where the course was offered.

Nallaseth has continually striven to hone his skills. He has taken masterclasses with celebrated artistes Daniel Barenboim and Maria João Pires as well as with leading concert pianists and teachers. The young pianist has played at the iconic Wigmore Hall in a chamber music concert and, in a full circle of sorts, has also performed on numerous occasions with the Symphony Orchestra of India, under the baton of Marat Bisengalieva, Piotr Borkowski and Mikel Toms.

The NCPA wishes him the very best in future endeavours.

Encouraged by SOI Music Director Marat Bisengaliev and their teachers to regularly participate in international competitions*, students currently learning music at the academy have been doing their teachers proud too.

Nyra Jain, who has been studying violin under Olga Lyapina, took part in her first strings competition in August 2020 and has participated in eight since. Most recently, she won the first prize in her category in the Domenico Savino Competition in Italy, and the Silver Award in the Rieding Competition organised in Slovenia. She also placed second in the Fiestalonia Milenio 'Music Box' in the U.K. in October 2020, and third in Fiestalonia Milenio 'Talents of Europe', Spain, in September. "Each competition entailed a lot of effort on the part of Ms. Olga, my parents and myself. It was disappointing not to be in a winning position for some of the competitions, but that motivated me to work harder. Although the competitions have been online, they have given me a lot of exposure," says Jain.

In his musical journey with the academy, Param Davda's recent achievements include the first prize in the Comparative Piano category, for students of piano as a secondary instrument, in the VIII Uljus - International Piano Competition Smederevo in Serbia in May. He also participated in the World Open Online Music Competition in the percussion category and was awarded the Laureate of the second prize. "I thank Mr. Marat Bisengaliev, Ms. Aida Bisengalieva and Mr. Pavel Vasilenia for the mentoring, support and motivation. I also wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to the NCPA for the support on the obtention of instruments."

Sumer Murthy, a student of SOI violinist Gulzara Shakir, placed second in his category in the Domenico Savino Competition as well as the Città di Sarzana International Music Performance Competition, both conducted in Italy. "This was a wonderful opportunity to see where I stand amongst other musicians my age. I've participated in one competition offline and found that more fulfilling than the online versions. I felt like I was actively part of the competition, watching other participants, performing for a live audience, and feeling the excitement leading up to my performance, rather than passively submitting a video. However, the online competitions were less stressful. I'd like to thank Ms. Gulzara for helping me with my pieces, and Ms. Aida for the accompaniment."

Maira Noor Singh participated in the first open competition for young violinists within the framework of the Fermata Classical Music Festival, organised in Russia, and secured the second prize in the Domenico Savino Competition. "I enjoyed preparing for these competitions. Although it took immense hard work on the part of Ms. Olga and me, it was exciting to have won on an international stage. I would like to thank all the teachers, especially Ms. Olga, for supporting me throughout. I feel lucky to have found a remarkable teacher and friend in her," she says. ■

**All competitions were held online in view of the pandemic.*



Nyra Jain



Param Davda



Sumer Murthy



Maira Noor Singh

Keys of note

In the final part of the series on the NCPA's collection of musical instruments, we take you through the ins and outs of a prized pipe organ gifted to the NCPA circa 1988. We also bring to the fore top-notch pianos that light up many a recital across our performance venues.

Beverly Pereira



Deep inside the recesses of the Tata Theatre sits a monumental and venerable instrument. To get a glimpse of it is awe-inspiring and to listen to it is to be imprinted with its melodious strains. The NCPA's concert pipe organ is one of four functional pipe organs in Mumbai; it is also the first of its kind, in that it is the only movable pipe organ to exist in the city. The pipe organ in itself is an instrument associated with superlatives, for it is all but impossible for any other instrument to produce the sheer variety of tone and timbre that a pipe organ can.

The concert pipe organ at the NCPA was a gift from the industrial and business community of the Federal Republic of Germany (as represented in the Indo-German Chamber of Commerce). It was built by the legendary pipe organ makers Rudolf von Beckerath Organ Builders of Hamburg between 1986 and 1987. Fittingly, it was commissioned in 1985 to mark the tricentenary of the birth of celebrated organ composers Bach and Handel; that very year, India's commemorative postal stamps paying homage to the composers were released at the NCPA. "The initial visit by our former technical and managing director (the late) Timm Sckopp was in March 1985. Upon this visit, he configured the size and tonal disposition of the instrument, taking the special situation of the rotating stage into consideration," recalls Holger Redlich, Business Manager, Rudolf von Beckerath Organ Builders. Sckopp was accompanied by a third-year apprentice at the company to install the gargantuan instrument at the NCPA in 1988. Over the first three days of March that year, the city's organ lovers were treated to a series of concerts, commencing with an organ solo by German organist Prof. Edgar Krapp, followed by a performance with the Paranjoti Academy Chorus conducted by Coomi Wadia with Prof. Krapp at the organ again, and another with the Bombay Chamber Orchestra.

The NCPA's concert pipe organ is one of four functional pipe organs in Mumbai; it is also the first of its kind, in that it is the only movable pipe organ to exist in the city

An instrument of many feats

The pipe organ is one of the most complex mechanical instruments developed before the Industrial Revolution. Mozart called it the "king of instruments", while Bach's *Tocatta* and *Fugue in D minor* remain among the most famous pieces of organ music from the Baroque era. Its complex mechanism also demands that the upkeep of this instrument is meticulous, and makes its maintenance an expensive affair. Used for organ recitals and concertos for organ or orchestra, this wind instrument is built and voiced by masterful hands and ears to suit the physical space it occupies, its sound filling the space which it was built for. Further, there's a reason behind the English idiom 'to pull out all the stops'—an organist requires immense dexterity to pull out the stops of a pipe organ to be able to switch between tones, all the while playing its keys and manoeuvring the pedals below. At the Tata Theatre, the concert pipe organ's 708 conical and cylindrical pipes are responsible for its unique sound. But it is really the combined working of the metal pipes, stops and pedals that gives the pipe organ its enormous range. The Beckerath-make instrument sports two keyboards (manuals) with six stops for the upper manual, five for the lower and three for its pedals.

The pipe organ featured at many memorable concerts after the inaugural show, until it was locked away



The concert pipe organ's 708 conical and cylindrical pipes are responsible for its unique sound; (above) the piano has an intricate design with numerous moving parts

due to the diminishing presence of Western classical music over the years, the lack of organists and that of funds. It wasn't until 2006, when the Symphony Orchestra of India was formed, that Western classical music saw a revival at the NCPA. In 2013, the department reached out to the legendary German makers upon rediscovering the beautiful instrument, now in dire need of repair. "It was obviously in a poor condition. The main problem was the fact that part of the materials such as leather and felt were eaten by insects and without these gaskets, the air pressure for the pipes could escape," Holger explains.

That year, Sun eun Kwak, Beckerath's employee in the Asian region, arrived in Mumbai for an inspection. The following year saw him return to the NCPA with the organ makers' German technician Siegmund Tessler to painstakingly perform the overhaul and repair. The pipe organ had found its voice once again and, after a grand passage of time, even enthralled an entirely new generation of listeners at a 2013 concert featuring the UK's South West Festival Chorus with the Symphony Orchestra of India. Subsequent maintenance visits from 2015 to 2017, with the last taking place in 2019, ensured that the instrument has stayed in its prime.

The pipe organ continues to be stored in optimal climatic conditions with ambient humidity levels not exceeding 40-70 per cent, while the room temperature varies between 15 and 30 degrees Celsius with a change by one degree Celsius per hour. "Our hope is that after the pandemic, the good care will continue. Our company is very proud of this fine instrument at the NCPA," says Holger.

Of ebony and ivory

Not as large as the pipe organ, but just as intricately designed with thousands of moving parts is the piano. There are several magnificent pianos at the NCPA, each of which is carefully stored in climate-controlled areas backstage of various venues. There are two Yamaha CFX concert grand pianos that respond beautifully to the requirements of technically complex performances that light up the stage of the beautiful Tata Theatre. The Steinway & Sons Model D concert grand piano, which lends itself elegantly to concertos, is played during concerts held at the Jamshed Bhabha Theatre. Finally, a smaller chamber piano — a Grotrian-Steinweg — is brought out for recitals at the Little Theatre.

Like any other fine instrument that needs a nudge to sound its best, a piano too needs to be gently coaxed into exuding its true voice. Although the NCPA's pianos are stored in climate-controlled rooms, they often go out of tune due to Mumbai's high humidity levels, which is why they require regular maintenance and adjustments to the tension of strings. The NCPA's very own piano man is Peter Salisbury, regarded as one of the world's finest piano technicians. Formerly with Steinway & Sons UK and with Bösendorfer, he has also worked with some of the most renowned venues in the world—from Trinity College of Music, Royal Academy of Music, Royal College of Music



Renowned pianist Maria João Pires plays Beethoven's Piano Concerto No 3 in C minor, Op. 37 on the Steinway at the Jamshed Bhabha Theatre in a concert during the SOI Spring 2020 Season



Renowned pianist Jean-Phillippe Collard played the works of Chopin, Fauré and Granados, on the Yamaha at the Tata Theatre

There are several magnificent pianos at the NCPA, each of which is carefully stored in climate-controlled areas backstage of various venues

right up to all of BBC's recording studios. On contract, the London-based Salisbury has visited the NCPA on four occasions to date to oversee the servicing of the Steinway, Yamaha and Grotrian-Steinweg grand pianos.

Salisbury is well known as a technician to the stars and has worked with almost every famed international concert pianist in London over the last three decades, including Evgeny Kissin, on numerous recording projects. He also travels the world with famous artistes to ensure the piano is exactly to their needs. In fact, he had visited the NCPA on two occasions to work with pianists Stephen Kovacevich in 2018 and Stephen Hough in 2017. "I always work closely with artistes. It's what I'm known and requested for because I know what they specifically need for their sound. It's a bespoke service."

On his consultation visit several years ago, the first major problem that struck Salisbury was that the city's humidity posed a major problem for the NCPA's collection of pianos. But, he says, Mr. Khushroo N. Suntook acted on his report and completely changed the operation. "Pianos go out of tune for three reasons," he explains. "Bad tuning is one and unstable climatic conditions is the second. The third is a piano with loose tuning pins." Many worn-out parts were replaced, and once they were brought up to concert condition, each piano was then set up for specific roles. Salisbury

further explains that since each venue has its own acoustics, in an ideal situation, pianos are exclusively voiced for that venue. "Both the Steinway and Yamaha had new hammers fitted, which is quite a specific job as I created the correct sound to the auditorium acoustics. The Steinway was set for concerto use in the main hall which requires a big sound. The Yamaha was set for the smaller auditorium and is used for jazz and classical performances," says Salisbury, who's currently at London's South Bank Centre in the midst of fitting actions to the pianos to give them even more choice and a more all-round sound option. "I love India, having visited it many a time and I look forward to being able to return to your hall again one day when the situation permits it," he says. ■

A Sassmann harpsichord that has lent its distinct sound to many Western classical performances also occupies a prized place in the NCPA's musical instrument collection. It was built between the 1960s and 70s, and was donated to the NCPA by the Max Mueller Bhavan. The instrument is not what it used to be in its prime, but it can still be used to accompany Baroque music as a continuo.

Although the harpsichord is not very commonly played in the 21st century, it was widely used in European classical music of the 16th to 18th centuries. The instrument features in the Russian writer Konstantin Paustovsky's short story, *The Old Cook*, in which Mozart fulfils an ailing man's dying wish to be able to visualise the day he met his wife for the first time. Mozart plays the harpsichord so beautifully that memories of the day come alive, like it was yesterday.

Kaleidoscope

Your window to the latest in the performing arts across India and the world.



Award season

Established in 1990, the Fukuoka Prize has gone a long way in bringing to the fore the extraordinary talents and cultures of the Asian region. Like every year, this year, too, the prestigious prize had a carefully selected list of nominees in the running for its three categories and the Grand Prize has been awarded to noted Indian journalist Palagummi Sainath. The Fukuoka committee recognises Sainath, the founder of People's Archive of Rural India (PARI), as a "passionately committed journalist who has continued to investigate impoverished farming villages in India, listen to voices from the rural population, and capture the reality of the people's lifestyle".

The Academic Prize was conferred on Chinese historian Kishimoto Mio, and the Arts and Culture prize went to Thai writer Prabda Yoon.

P Sainath is the 12th Indian to win a Fukuoka Prize, and the list includes names like A.R. Rahman, Ramachandra Guha, Nalini Malani and Romila Thapar. For more information, log on to <https://fukuoka-prize.org/en/laureates>

Festive music

The show must go on is what The Bayreuth Festival strongly believes in, and the world is grateful for that. The Covid-19 pandemic that's still raging on pushed the organisers of the iconic festival that celebrates the music of Richard Wagner to take the painful decision of cancelling the 2020 edition, but this year the festival will go ahead with a limited seating capacity of 900 per performance, as well as an online showcase for audiences worldwide. Between the 26th July and 24th August 2021, current and recently performed productions will be on view on www.festspiele-online.de.



Another noteworthy piece of news is that the festival will have a woman head the orchestra for the first time. Ukrainian conductor, Oksana Lyniv will conduct Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman* with an international ensemble.

The prestigious Salzburg Festival completed 100 years of enthralling audiences worldwide in 2020. Due to the pandemic, the events that were postponed will now carry on until autumn 2021. Under the festival's theme of 'Pax – Peace', the [Ouverture Spirituelle](#) will address the idea of peace—both communal and internal.

Stories that matter

Come 6th August, the annual South Australian Aboriginal art exhibition will be held at the Adelaide Festival Centre. Since its inception in 2006, OUR MOB: Art by South Australian Aboriginal Artists has been a space for First Nations artists to share their work. There will also be an edition for the youth called Our Young Mob. The 2021 edition sees the inclusion of two categories – Our Words will be a series of live panels from First Nations writers, and Our Stories will



have First Nations storytellers sharing their culture with audiences. The event will close on 24th September 2021. Visit <https://www.adelaidefestivalcentre.com.au/whats-on/exhibitions/our-mob-2021/> for more details.

Art shines through

The times may be different but there's nothing that can dampen the spirit of the Edinburgh International Festival. The stage where the world's biggest names come together to celebrate the performing arts has been set. There has been a redesign of the format, with more outdoor venues planned, and it may be a slight detour from the grandeur audiences are used to but they are in for a treat with a line-up of



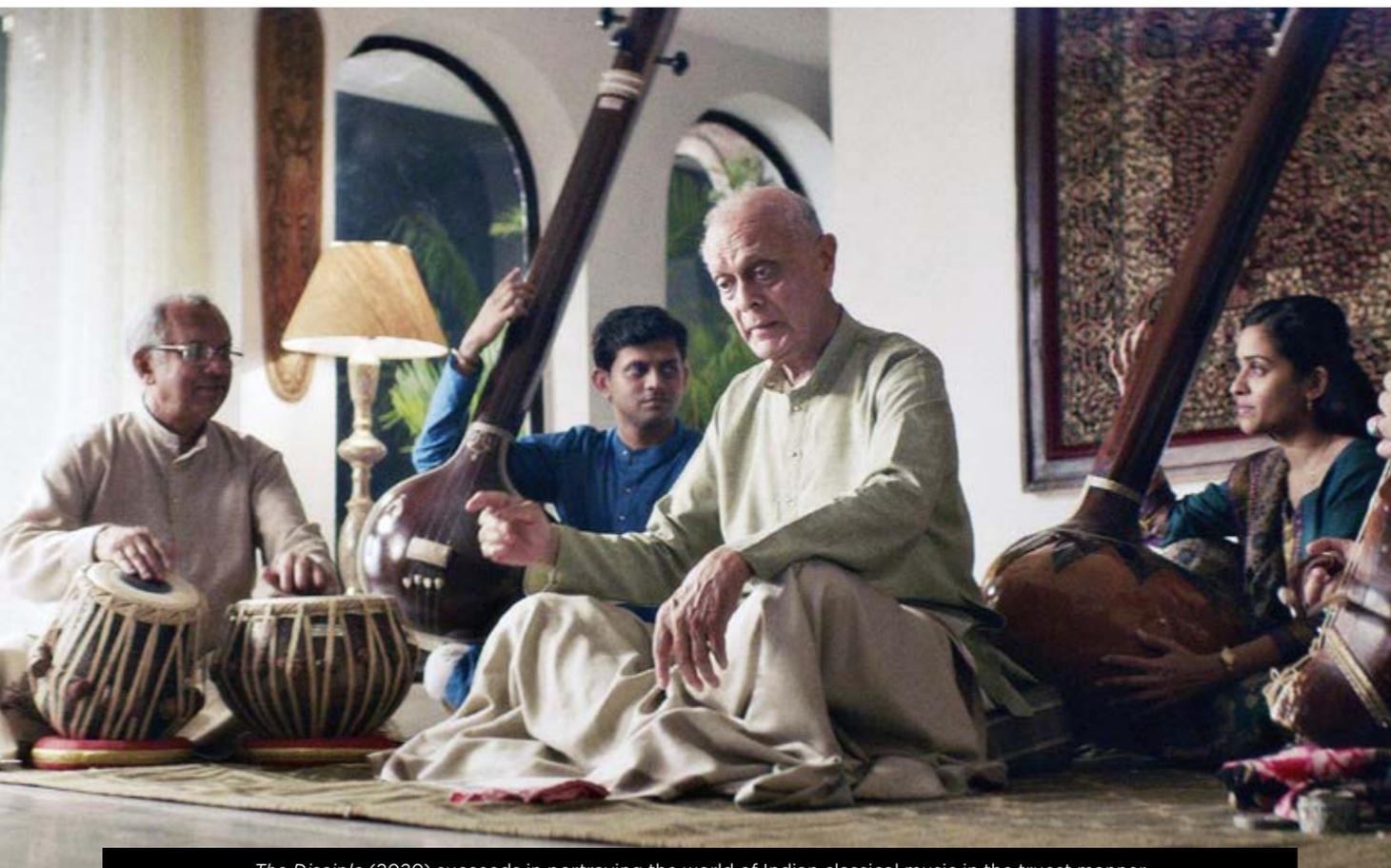
performances by South African soprano Golda Schultz and Russian pianist Daniil Trifonov, and some of Scotland's popular artistes including Alan Cumming, Nicola Benedetti and Hannah Lavery. For more information, visit <https://www.eif.co.uk/>

Another much-awaited event is set to throw open its doors and that's the Edinburgh Fringe. Though the season has been scaled down, the producers are hoping for a "joyous, beautiful experience". The workaround now reveals a programme that's a blended display of outdoor events, indoor settings and digital shows. This year sees the introduction of the Fringe Player, a platform where the audiences can access scheduled shows and view them on-demand, at their convenience. Log on to www.edfringe.com to know more. The festival will run from 6th-30th August 2021. ■

- Aswathi Nair

Sur on Celluloid

Following the success of *The Disciple*, a Marathi film set in the milieu of Hindustani classical music, **Vidhi Salla** takes a look at more such films with classical music as the central theme and what made them successful.



The Disciple (2020) succeeds in portraying the world of Indian classical music in the truest manner

The *Disciple* (2020), written and directed by Chaitanya Tamhane, is the first Indian film in 19 years to enter the competition section of the prestigious Venice Film Festival 2020 and to also win the award for best screenplay. The last Indian film to compete was Mira Nair's *Monsoon Wedding* (2001) that won the festival's highest award, the Golden Lion. Critics, connoisseurs and audiences are praising *The Disciple* for its accurate representation of the world of Indian classical music, Tamhane's masterfully restrained writing and brilliant direction.

The key difference between a classical recital and a raga-based composition for film is that in the latter, the raga is subservient to other constituent elements of a song including the structure and lyrics

a film about. Indian classical music is characterised by lifelong rigorous practice in memorisation, spontaneous improvisation and the constant pursuit of perfection. It is difficult to capture these intricate nuances in a few hours while also keeping the

The film traces the life of Sharad Nerulkar, an aspiring Hindustani classical singer who is grappling with lofty ideals of his art form and his expectations for himself.

Basking in the limelight of the film's success is the much revered, yet underrepresented genre of Indian classical music—an art form that despite having numerous exponents all over the world, is still considered niche. It is not an easy subject to make

storytelling engaging. Depicting Indian classical music on celluloid requires in-depth research and an understanding of the genre that is centuries old. Yet, a few Indian filmmakers have been brave enough to plunge into the choppy waters and bring out musically unforgettable gems. Creative decisions on the part of the filmmakers that have translated to success for these films include casting classical artistes to play lead roles on-screen, employing composers with classical training and using ragas as plot devices.

Keepers of tradition

Over the years, several Indian films have dealt with the theme of classical music. The journey began with the 1943 film, *Tansen*, where the musical legend of India was immortalised on-screen by the gifted actor and classically trained singer, Kundanlal Saigal (popularly known as KL Saigal). In the film, Tansen is portrayed as a romantic hero who can tame elephants, light lamps and make flowers bloom with his singing. In a later film, *Baiju Bawra* (1952), Tansen's genius is seen as being challenged by a "crazy" singer, Baiju, who duels with him in the court of Emperor Akbar. *Baiju Bawra* elaborates on the legend of the singer who was arguably better than Tansen and incidentally also a disciple of Tansen's guru, Swami Haridas. Following the smashing success of *Baiju Bawra*, actor Bharat Bhushan reprised his role as a devotee of classical music in *Basant Bahar* (1956) playing a fictional court singer, Gopal Joshi.

It was, of course, Satyajit Ray's National-Award-winning feature, *Jalsaghar* (1958), that created a yet-unsurpassed milestone in the depiction of Indian classical music in film. The crumbling world of the megalomaniac landlord Biswambhar Roy was juxtaposed with spectacular on-screen performances by stalwarts such as Bismillah Khan, Begum Akhtar, Roshan Kumari and Ujir Khan. The 1980 Telugu film, *Sankarabharanam*, brought to focus the world of Carnatic music and won four National Awards and several international accolades. In the last two decades, English/Telugu film *Morning Raga* (2004) and Marathi film *Katyar Kaljat Ghusali* (2015) have been instrumental in familiarising audiences with the ethos of Indian classical music.

Beyond the notes

Films that feature trained classical artistes as actors have a distinct flavour; a lack of pretence that adds authenticity to their performance. It's a real treat in *The Disciple* when 'actor' Aditya Modak as the awestruck Sharad, mesmerised by his teacher's performance in the opening scene, metamorphoses into 'singer' Aditya in the very next scene, breaking into a melodious morning *riyaz*. During the auditions for the lead role, director Tamhane was certain he wanted to cast a classical singer who could act rather than the other way around. Modak, who has been training since the age of five, was the perfect fit. Deepika Bhide Bhagwat, who plays a pivotal role in the film, is a Citi-NCPA



Having trained classical artistes as actors brings in a layer of authenticity to the performance, as seen in *Tansen*

Scholarship winner 2015-16, in the *khayal* category.

In *Katyar Kaljat Ghusali*, during the song sequences (of which there are many), non-actor Shankar Mahadevan hardly seems out of place as Pandit Bhanu Shankar Shastri when he sings taans effortlessly. KL Saigal as Tansen plays word games with co-star Khursheed Bano as easily as he sings complex melodies in ragas such as Gara, Deepak and Megh Malhar. The artistes' names in *Jalsaghar* might have been changed for the sake of the story but discerning listeners instantly recognise and rejoice when Roshan Kumari lights up the screen with the complex footwork in her Kathak performance or a glamorous-looking Begum Akhtar serves up her *thumri*, 'Bhar Bhar Aayi Mori Ankhiyan' as the camera pans to a long shot of the stately music room.

Maestros at work

The music composition and sound design of a classically based film require the composer to be classically trained at the very least. Onstage, the first (main) raga exposition may last for 45 to 60 minutes. In a *mehfil* spanning a couple of hours, an artiste may present four or five ragas (not all of the same duration, which depends upon the nature of the raga). To distil that into a five-minute performance clip on-screen while retaining the flavour of the raga is extremely



Baiju Bawra (1952) had performances by renowned classical vocalists such as Bhimsen Joshi, DV Paluskar and Amir Khan

challenging. The key difference between a classical recital and a raga-based composition for film is that in the latter, the raga is subservient to other constituent elements of a song including the structure and lyrics. Describing the process of creating the sound design for *The Disciple*, Aneesh Pradhan, noted tabla player and music historian, mentioned in an interview how he drew inspiration from 78 rpm records. Released in the early 20th century, these records demonstrate skillfully tailored three-four-minute *khayal* performances where artistes retained key elements of longer classical recitals.

Khemchandra Prakash, the composer for *Tansen*, was applauded for including a *dhrupad*-based *bandish*, ‘Sapt Suran Teen Gram’, representative of the 16th century, in which the film is set. Much of the musical authenticity of *Tansen* also had to do with Prakash’s background as a court singer for the Maharaja of Bikaner. *Basant Bahar* and *Baiju Bawra*, composed by veterans Shankar-Jaikishan and Naushad, extensively featured performances by renowned classical vocalists such as Bhimsen Joshi, DV Paluskar and Amir Khan. Adapted from a play of the same name, *Katyar Kaljat Ghusali*, which featured 16 tracks, retained some of the songs from the original play composed by classical artiste Jitendra Abhisheki, in addition to music

Depicting Indian classical music on celluloid requires in-depth research and a thorough understanding of the genre. Yet, a few Indian filmmakers have been brave enough to plunge into the choppy waters and bring out musically unforgettable gems

composed by Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy; the voices of classical artistes Rahul Deshpande and Mahesh Kale embellishing the album further.

Ragas in narration

Ragas are often ascribed specific times of day when they should be performed. While the emotions that a raga evokes in a listener is a subjective matter, knowledgeable filmmakers have used ragas as plot devices to heighten the emotional experience of a situation—from

pathos to cheer—adding more layers to the narrative as a result.

There’s a beautiful music-teaching montage in *Baiju Bawra* where Swami Haridas appears in Baiju’s visions and shows him the qualities of ragas such as Lalit, Gaud Malhaar and Puriya. The visions help not only Baiju but the uninitiated viewer appreciate the subtle nuances of Hindustani classical music.

Audiences of Hindustani or Carnatic music will agree that to appreciate a stage performance, a basic understanding of the music is required. However, films on classical music have been like guided meditations into the world of *ragadaari*, *guru-shishya parampara* and arduous practice. Future filmmakers can draw inspiration from *The Disciple*’s candid exposition into the subject of classical music and make movies that are likely to garner universal acclaim. ■

In Step with EDM

The arrival of EDM revolutionised the music industry as well as the dance floor. **Anurag Tagat** explores why fans around the globe can't stop raving about this four-beat rhythm.

Over the last decade or so, few styles of music have elicited as polarising a response as these three letters—EDM. Electronic dance music, a term that found credence thanks to the major record labels, announced itself to the world and, in no time, blazed its way into the computers and phones of youth cutting across nationalities.

Although the combination of the terms 'electronic' and 'dance music' would come across as possibly overstating the obvious, it was packaged, acronymised to EDM and put DJs at the centre of this global shift in the music industry.

Punctuated by a regular four-on-the-floor beat—4/4 time signature—the euphoric synthesiser patterns and squelching bass lines could make EDM win a volume war in today's music space. The style has steadily evolved since 2010 to shake off any staleness, making DJs and producers worthy allies for artistes across genres. As things stand today, EDM is more of an umbrella term that sometimes clubs several sub-genres together, even though styles like trap,

progressive house, dubstep and others have spawned a subculture unto themselves.

While German group Kraftwerk is widely considered to be the pioneer of electronic music, there was a lot more at play that created EDM as we know it today. Through the 1970s and 1980s, emergent genres like synth-pop, disco and house in the U.S. and Europe were rooted in the growing technology that supported electronic music. Synthesisers, drum machines and samplers grew in popularity and turntables moved over from being a hip-hop DJ's weapon to a key ingredient in live concerts. Artistes like Frankie Knuckles, Mr. Fingers, Giorgio Moroder, Derrick May were among the first wave of house music DJs and producers who lorded over dance floors and shaped music for the years ahead.

THE DROP PICKS UP

The advent of electronic music changed what it meant to be a musician. Although several electronic music producers knew their music theory and played the piano/keyboard or other instruments as well, they didn't need to be an instrumentalist anymore. Artistes were fiddling with fader knobs, routing wires and understanding sound engineering on a deeper level. Today, producers are on their computers and devices, working remotely and even on the move, setting up digital audio workstations, creating sample packs and beat libraries.

Cities like Chicago, Manchester, Ibiza, and countries like Germany and Italy were hugely instrumental in setting up a vibrant dance music culture. About four decades ago, they laid the foundation for electronic music that will likely remain hallowed ground for generations to come.

The larger growth story of electronic music has been inextricably linked to drug culture around the globe. In the late 1980s, the U.K. saw what the press dubbed as "The Second Summer of Love" in terms of drugs and music mingling to an explosive extent. Psychotropic substances are known to go hand in hand with various genres of music, but when it came to electronic music, an entirely new culture emerged—raves. This association and other preconceived notions around raves led to nomenclature like acid house, which was



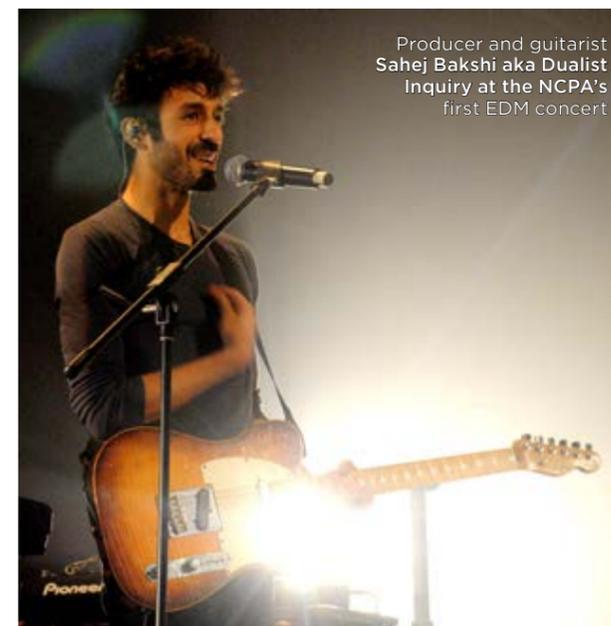
Electronic music producer Anish Sood on the second day of the NCPA's first-ever EDM concert

Today, producers are working remotely and even on the move, setting up digital audio workstations, creating sample packs and beat libraries

surprisingly linked to Indian composer Charanjit Singh, who released an album called *Ten Ragas to a Disco Beat* in 1982. As the years went on, raves continued to thrive around the world but they weren't necessarily keeping electronic music on the fringes. In fact, far from being relegated to a niche genre with an underground following, electronica popped up on the global radar in the 1990s thanks to high-energy, adrenaline-fuelled artistes like The Prodigy, Basement Jaxx, Fatboy Slim and The Chemical Brothers, while French duo Daft Punk took the reins on spacey, house and dance music that catapulted them into the mainstream. The U.K. had spawned 'superclub' venues like Ministry of Sound, indicating growing popularity, and this meant the genre had to shake off some of its negative connotations.

WHERE THE CROWDS GO

After the start of the new millennium, there was a marked rise in up-tempo, big room house, which was pretty much perfected in Europe. Within the first decade, we saw artistes like Axwell, David Guetta, Tiësto and Armin van Buuren slowly plotting their dominance of mainstream music consciousness. They didn't even need to go the remix route, considering Axwell teamed up with Steve Angello and Sebastian Ingrosso to create Swedish House Mafia and churned out hits like 'Miami 2 Ibiza' in 2010 and 'Don't You Worry Child' in 2012.



Producer and guitarist Sahej Bakshi aka Dualist Inquiry at the NCPA's first EDM concert

The NCPA presented its first-ever EDM concert over two days in August 2016



With this kind of exuberant EDM catching on, the other part that helped the genre shed its negative connotations and distance itself from the drug culture was the festival boom around the globe. Tomorrowland in Belgium, the Ultra Music Festival in Miami and Electric Daisy Carnival in the U.S. are among the big gatherings that have attained bucket-list status among electronic music fans for their sheer scale and production value. Indeed, when artistes like Daft Punk or Deadmau5 began putting together massive, elaborate stage settings—from pyramids to lasers to pyrotechnics—EDM levelled up to entrancing most of the world by 2010. Large stage production sets aside, another reason why this genre saw many takers in the festival and live music world was because it became arguably easier for a promoter to book a DJ who would come in with a console and blast their music out via a sound system than, say, an entire band with a complicated tech rider.

While Deadmau5's domain was predominantly progressive house, the U.S. also took a bite out of the U.K.'s dubstep style—chaotic, topsy-turvy style of music with heavy basslines—and birthed young stars like Skrillex. The U.K. had its heavy-hitters, of course, including Chase & Status, Skream, Benga and Kode9. Injecting a higher tempo and a frenzied style of EDM captivated even more listeners. Its angrier, edgier younger brother trap was born soon enough, and it continues to rule the airwaves.

EDM concerts have attained bucket-list status among electronic music fans for their sheer scale and production value

Today, EDM producers continue to be the go-to choice for pop and hip-hop chart-toppers if they'd like a feel-good hit. It may be a tad simplistic at times and runs the risk of repeating itself, but that could be the case with any genre in music. Technology has made the creation processes a lot easier too, and that reduces the entry barrier; although it can be argued that it's much more of a level playing field. Producers from all around the globe are now racking up millions of streams right from their homes, ready to become the next EDM stars. Closer home, we have seen the rise of artistes like Nucleya (who has got that distinct *mélange* of Indian folk rhythms melded into dubstep and bass music structures) and Ritviz, who have got Indian audiences in their palm.

With its squeaky clean production value and present rootedness in some clichés (be it throwaway lyrics about escapism and fantasies or predictable song structures), EDM can be poked through by many. However, there is no denying it is still an irresistible part of youth culture and is here to stay like it has for the last 30 years or so. ■

IN SILVERY REGALIA

From elaborate costumes to ornate headdresses and jewellery with a shimmering white theme running all through, the Manipuri dance ensemble is synonymous with elegance.

By Darshana Jhaveri

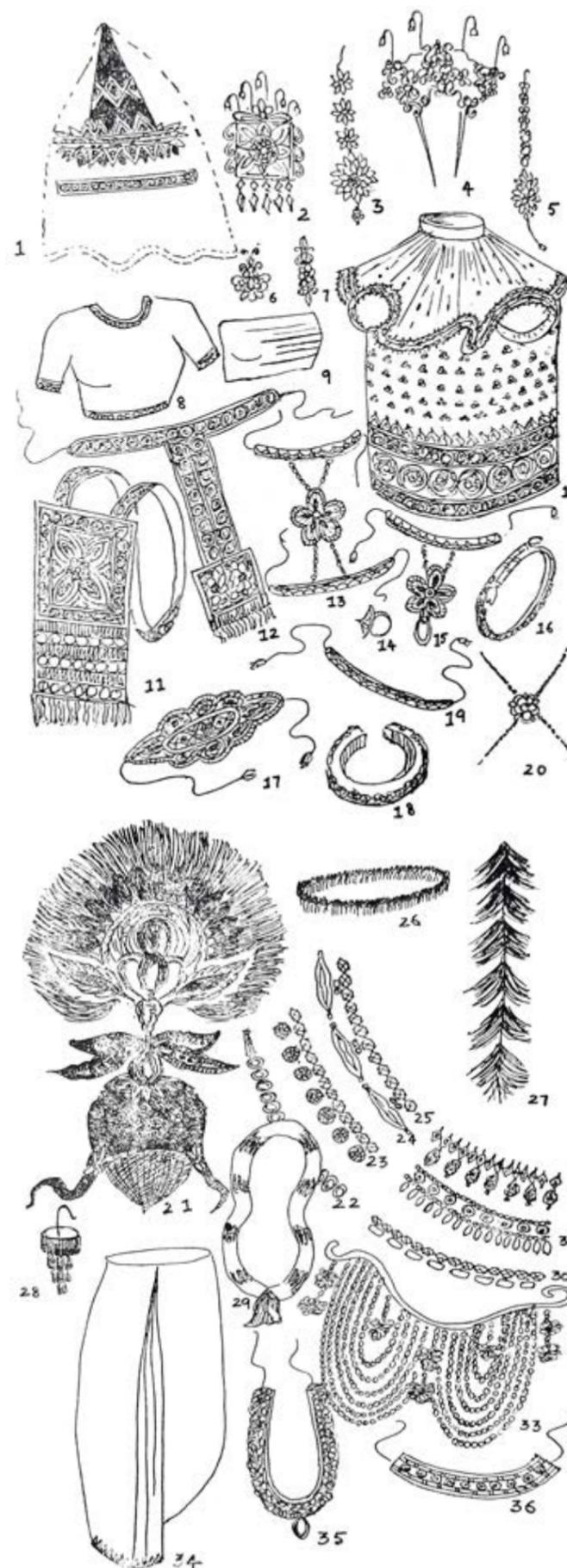
In Manipuri dance, out of the four *abhinayas* (histrionic representations) of *natya*, *aaharyabhinaya* (through costumes, ornaments, etc.) plays a very important role. Manipuri dance is known and recognised for the gorgeous and unique costumes of Radha and gopis which enhance the beauty of its graceful and lyrical dance movements. In *Rasleela*, 30 to 40 gopis dance in a circle in the temple courtyard at night, creating an ethereal atmosphere. Likewise, the costumes of Krishna and those of the 40 to 50 cowherd boys look gorgeous, with their elaborate headdress and glittering decorated belts being nothing short of a divine sight while dancing in *Goshthaleela*.

Manipuris believe that Maharaja Bhagyachandra

(1763-1798), an ardent devotee of Lord Krishna, had a divine vision in which the costumes Krishna and Radha wore in *Rasleela* appeared in his dream.

It is assumed that the inspiration for the costume of Radha and the gopis comes from the clothes of the *maibis* (priestesses) in the Lai Haraoba festival. The *kumin* (lower skirt) is inspired by the maibi's *ghaghra*, and the *poshwal* (upper skirt) by her sarong while the *innaphi* is like a shawl. As *Rasleelas* finish in the early morning glow, *poshwals* were made of thin white cloth with jari lining for shine. The high bun hairdo (*koktumbi*) of the gopis was also inspired by munis tying their hair in *jata* while worshipping; the dance itself being viewed as an offering.

Renowned Manipuri exponent Darshana Jhaveri in performance as Radha



It is assumed that the inspiration for the costume of Radha and the gopis comes from the clothes of the *maibis* or priestesses in the Lai Haraoba festival

In the last 200 years, costume makers have further enhanced the beauty of these attires by incorporating minute changes, such as putting starch in the lower skirt, measuring the length of the *phanek* worn by the female maibis and covering it with red and green silk satin cloth embroidered with silver sequins and jari borders, to make it stiffer and ornate. They also increased the length of the *poshwal* with more folds.

Female finery

There are two types of costumes—one with *koktumbi* in the headdress and the other with *jhapa*. *Koktumbi* is the conical black bun created either using just the hair or with cardboard. *Samjithet*, a diamond-shaped ornament piece with sequins stuck on it, is fixed to the centre of the bun, while *samjimakhong*, a silver border, is attached around the base of the bun. *Chubalei*, which are strands of silver threads, hang from the top of the bun. *Koknam*, a headband made of a strip with silver sequins is tied above the forehead and below the bun. This bun is then covered with *maikhum*, a thin, white transparent veil with a silver jari border that covers the face. This *koktumbi* is worn in *Maharas*, *Vasant Ras*, *Kunjaras* (dance dramas) created during the reign of Maharaja Bhagyachandra.

Potloi (costume) of Radha and gopis

1. Koktumbi, Koknam, Maikhuk
- 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Jhapa
8. Reshampurit
9. Thabakyet
10. Kumin, Poshwal
11. Khaon
12. Khwangoi, Khwangnap
13. Tankha
14. Kudop
15. Ratanchud
16. Sanakhuji
17. Tal
18. Sanakhuji
19. Tanthak
20. Pisindrai

(only for Krishna)
(Note: 11-19 for Krishna also)

Krishna's Potloi

21. Nakhum, Mukut, Chriiong, Chuda
22. Heikhru
23. Sanarembi
- 24, 25. Ngaiggoi
26. Kajenglei
27. Cherai
28. Chomai
29. Leipareng
30. Pungdum
31. Kyanglikphang
32. Marei
33. Dhara
34. Phaijom
35. Nupur
36. Ghungru

(Note: 22, 23, 24, 25, 29, 30, 31, 32, 35, 36 for Radha also)



Idols of Sri Sri Govindajee and Raseshwori at Sri Sri Govindajee Palace Temple in Imphal, Manipur. In Radha's headdress, instead of maikhum (white veil covering the koktumbi), kajenglei (ring with brass strips) can be seen.

The other type of head ornament is *jhapa*—this is worn in Nityaraswere which was introduced during Maharaja Chandrakirti's reign in 1850. *Jhapa* was also worn later in Diva Ras during Maharaja Chudachand's reign in 1941. These ornaments were primarily made of brass with red stones or silver jari. They consist of *damini*, worn at the parting of the hair; *karnaphul*, covering the ears; *kurak* of silver jari shaped like a butterfly worn on either side of the parting; and two ornaments—*samjinam* and *samjithet*, made of brass or jari, worn on the regular bun and the thin scarf that covers the bun from behind.

The costume for the torso comprises *reshamphurit*, a dark green or black velvet blouse with borders of sequin or jari on the neck, and the *thabakyat*, a white piece of cloth worn tightly to cover the chest. This is worn only along with the koktumbi.

The kumin (lower skirts) of Radha and Chandrabali are green and that of the gopis are red. They have broad borders decorated with circular designs, made from red felt and mirrors framed with brass rings. The upper portion of the skirt is decorated with scattered silver sequins and silver jari borders. The lower portion is stiffened from inside using starched canvas and cane.

The upper portion is covered by the poshwal. This is made from 5 or 10 metres of fine semi-transparent white cloth with stripes of silver and a stiff border of mirror-work along the bottom fringe. The border is stiffened with a wire, which can be shaped in curves. The costume is complemented by a *khaon*—a rectangular decorative piece made of brass-framed mirrors, gold and silver jari work and sequins. It is worn on the right side, hanging from the waist,

attached to a similarly decorated border hanging from the left shoulder. In addition, there are two belt pieces—*khwanggoi* and *khwangnap*. *Khwanggoi* is a belt decorated with brass-framed mirrors, gold and silver jari and sequins, tied at the waist over the poshwal. *Khwangnap* is a similarly decorated, 30cm-long piece attached to the belt in front.

Besides the dress, there are a number of bead ornaments worn on the hands as well. *Tal*, an oval-shaped piece made of beads, silver threads and sequins worn as an armband or the *Ananta* type of armband made of brass. *Tanthak* is a strip of silver beads and silver thread worn above the tal or ananta. *Tankha*, an ornament worn on the elbow, has a flower-shaped centrepiece and is made of silver thread and beads connected by two strips also of silver beads and jari. *Ratanchud* is a similarly decorated piece worn at the back of the palm. Its upper part is connected to a bracelet made of silver beads and threads, and the lower portion to a ring worn on the middle finger. On the feet, you will see bead ornaments called *nupur*. They have a V-shaped

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The silks and satin, the velvet, the silver and gold sequins, all create a shimmering circle of light as the gopis glide around Radha and Krishna, transforming pastoral Vrindavan into celestial heaven

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strip made of beads, silver jari and sequins, and are worn on the top of the feet tied around the second toe with strings. *Ghungrus* are anklets made of similar silver jari, beads and sequins.

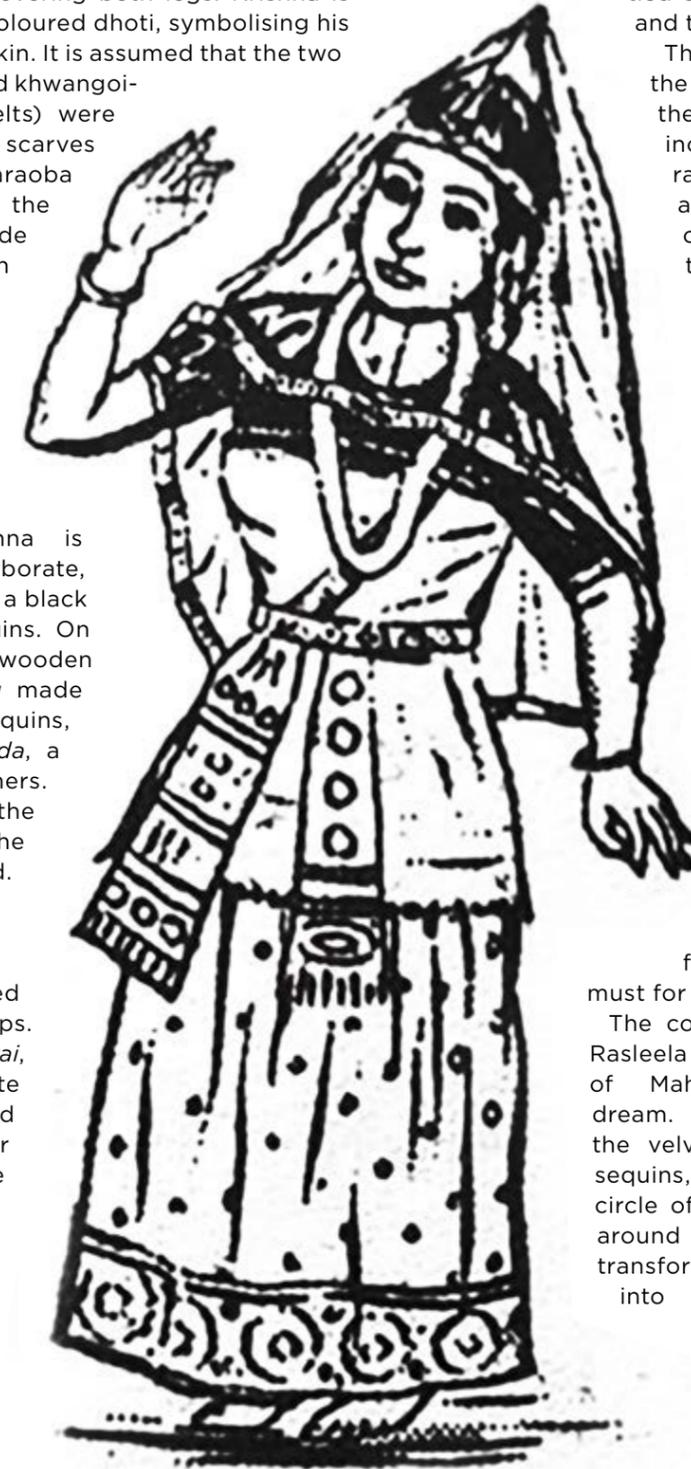
Over and above these, other ornaments include *sanakhuji*, brass bangles, *kundalnine*, brass earrings, and several necklaces called *ngangoi*, *sanarembi*, *heikru*, *marei*, *kyanglikphang*, *heibimapol* or the *kondung*.

Divine garb

Maharaja Bhagyachandra recreated the costumes of Krishna and Radha based on the vision he had had. They were designed appropriate to royalty and religious significance, with Krishna being Purushatva, Lord of Universe, and Radha being Prakrititva, his *hladinishakti*, the blissful energy. In Krishna's *potloi*, his *phaijom* or dhoti should have *trikachha* representing Satyuga-Dhyan, Tretayuga-Hom, Dwaparyuga-Puja, Kaliyuga-Sankirtan following Vaishnava faith i.e. (1) *Namei* - pleats

tucked in the back, (2) *Gunja* - front pleats and (3) *Phirei* - a cloth covering both legs. Krishna is dressed in a golden-coloured dhoti, symbolising his beloved Radha's fair skin. It is assumed that the two *khaons* (side belts) and *khwangoi-khwangnap* (front belts) were also inspired by the scarves the maibis in Lai Haraoba wore—one from the shoulder to the side and the other tied on the waist, hanging in front. However, these were embellished with embroidery, mirrors, sequins and jari to make them rich and attractive. The headdress of Krishna is decorative and elaborate, consisting of *nakhum*, a black velvet cap with sequins. On it is the *mukut*, a wooden piece with a *chirong* made of silver wires with sequins, attached to the *chuda*, a fan of peacock feathers. *Koknam* is worn on the lower border of the cap on the forehead. Above that, there's *kajenglei* or *leitreng*, a ring with 80-100 brass strips attached to red flannel strips. Then there's the *cherai*, consisting of white paper fans attached to each other to cover the *khwangnap*, the 30cm-long front belt attached to the back of the cap.

The upper portion is *resham phurit*, a blouse of dark green velvet, with jari border and sequins; this can be with or without sleeves. The lower portion is a golden-yellow colour silk *sanamachuphaijom* (dhoti), worn in the style of trikachha. Dhara, strings of coloured beads are tied in front, covering the hips. Two *khaons* (side belts), with two rectangular pieces decorated with sequins, jari and brass-frame mirrors, hang below the waist, attached to decorated thin belts on both shoulders, crossing in the front. *Kwangoi* is the decorated thin belt to which



the *khwangnap* is stitched and tied at the waist over *phaijom* and the two *khaons*.

The bead ornaments for the hands and feet are the same as Radha's and include the *tanthak*, *tankha*, *ratanchud*, *ananta*, *nupur* and *ghungrus*. Other ornaments of brass include the *sanakhuji* (bangles), *kyanglikphang* and *heikru* (necklaces), and *chomai* (brass earrings). Over the blouse, Krishna wears *pisindrai*. This is an ornament comprising two circular brass pieces—one worn on the chest and the other at the back—supported by brass chains made from flat metal pieces. The chains are fastened around each shoulder to both the brass pieces. *Leipareng*, a thin garland of white or coloured cloth, adorns the neck and that completes the attire of Krishna.

Chandan (tilak) on the forehead and nose is a must for all.

The costumes for the Manipuri Rasleela are said to be a realisation of Maharaja Bhagyachandra's dream. The silks and satin, the velvet, the silver and gold sequins, all create a shimmering circle of light as the gopis glide around Radha and Krishna, transforming pastoral Vrindavan into celestial heaven. The unusual design and radiant beauty of the costumes, which carry the audience to the elixir of Bhaktiras, reflect the natural aesthetic and artistry of the Manipuri people supported

by royal patronage in dedication to Krishna bhakti. ■

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EDITING ENID

Enid Blyton's books inculcated a love of reading in millions of kids around the world, but she was also controversial in her views that would, by today's standards, be considered racist. We try to understand why her works are both enduring and problematic, and what we can do about them.

By Arwa Mamaji

Growing up, I dreamed of being part of Enid Blyton's *Famous Five* adventures. I emulated George (Georgina), my favourite character from the series, by wearing my hair very short, and donning pants and shirts. I also fantasised about going to a school just like the one in Blyton's *Malory Towers*—a Cornish boarding school that resembled a castle with four towers on a cliff next to the sea. I wanted to be amongst these girls, growing up in the English countryside. It was a wish that was far removed from my reality. Nevertheless, I lapped up these books much like how the Famous Five guzzled ginger beer on their picnics.

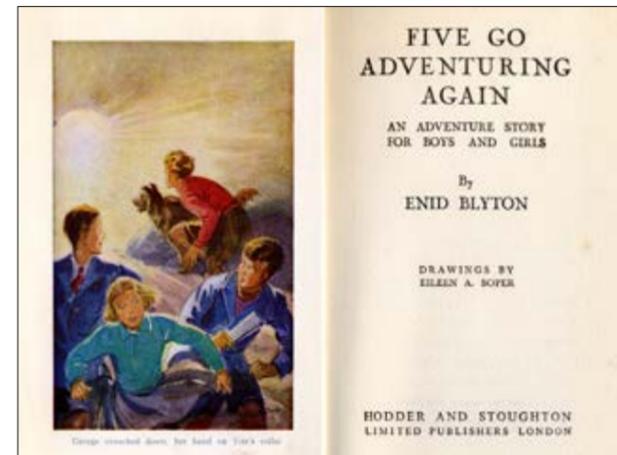
I was brought up in an environment where literature from the West made up for most of the content in libraries. I was less exposed to Indian writers or writers from other countries, perhaps due to my Jesuit school education, which focused mainly on English literature and promoted books by British or American authors. But there was another truth—there was no escaping Blyton. She was a major children's writer of her era and she devoured the market and captured the imaginations of young readers, sometimes dishing out more than fifty books a year, including fairy tales, adventure stories, early reading and school stories.

Reassessing the oeuvre

There is no question that Blyton carved a niche for herself and is a name to reckon with when it comes to children's literature. But the more I read her as an adult, I realise that her views were insular, and her characters often one-dimensional and never multicultural. Several of her books are problematic in other ways. A number of them feature golliwogs. A rag doll-like character created by illustrator and author Florence Kate Upton, and made popular by Blyton and many others, the golliwog was a popular children's toy in the 20th century, and it was incorporated into many aspects of British and American commerce and culture. Golliwogs were depicted as heroes at times, but more often as villains or naughty characters. Around the time of the civil rights era, perhaps because they propagated anti-black imagery, golliwogs waned in popularity.

The racism in Blyton's 1944 novel *The Island of Adventure* is far from subtle, where an intelligent black servant named Jo-Jo is particularly cruel to the children. The same can be said about *The Three Golliwogs* (1944) in which the characters were given offensive names. Their names were changed in the late '60s after Blyton's death. The book still remains problematic because it begins with the following lines: 'There were once three golliwogs who were most unhappy in the nursery cupboard. None of the other toys liked them, and nobody ever played with them. Their little mistress, Angela, never even looked at them as she was always playing with her very pretty dolls.' Considering that the golliwogs were dark-faced, the opening lines immediately imply that they were not pretty.

Blyton's *Little Noddy* series from the 1950s, which probably made her a household name, has deeply racist tones too because of its representation of blonde children and the golliwog. Her 1965 book, *The Little*



Blyton had some problematic views about race and colour. She also wrote some wonderful stories that taught millions of children to love books. Both these statements are true

Black Doll, is about a doll that is despised by his owner and the other toys owing to his 'ugly black face'. When a bout of rain 'washes his face clean', turning it pink, he is welcomed back home. It is alarming to think that so many children experienced a world in which Blyton was obsessed with washing off black to make it white.

Even the *Famous Five* series comes across as sexist when you read between the lines. Fathers fret about studies and mothers serve tea. There is a power struggle between Julian, Dick and George (Georgina). The female characters either act like boys or are talked down to, as when Dick lectures George: "It's really time you gave up thinking you're as good as a boy." A fair amount of text in these books has been changed now as it would be considered offensive today.

Erase or rewind

In a 2005 poll for *The Guardian*, adult readers voted Blyton's *Famous Five* series as their favourite books for children. That she inspired a love of reading in children around the world is her great, irrefutable legacy. Blyton wrote hundreds of books, which sold hundreds of millions of copies, and were translated into 90 languages. These numbers boggle the mind



Perhaps a more balanced way to approach this is not outright censorship, which is always dangerous, but a valid attempt at explaining the context, warts and all

when you consider how many young readers were influenced by words that are clearly problematic in more ways than one. But does that mean we refuse to acknowledge the deep love of reading and sense of adventure her books brought to so many children around the world? Does she deserve, as is now often suggested, to be cancelled?

Some think she does. Her works are now banned in some libraries and schools. In 2019, the Royal Mint of the United Kingdom blocked plans for unveiling a 50-pence coin commemorating the author because her books have been criticised for being elitist, sexist, racist, xenophobic, and going against the grain of the more progressive environment we live in today. It should be noted that even back in the day, there were rumblings of racism and xenophobia about Blyton's work. In 1960, the publisher Macmillan turned down her story *The Mystery That Never Was* because of its 'faint but unattractive touch of old-fashioned xenophobia'.

Perhaps a more balanced way to approach this is not outright censorship, which is always dangerous, but a valid attempt at explaining the context, warts and all. Blyton's home in Chessington has been commemorated by English Heritage's blue plaque, placed on buildings to memorialise a historical link between that location and the personality. English Heritage has now revised its website to classify Blyton's work as racist and xenophobic but says it has no plans to take down the plaque. Their statement, a powerful one, does not embrace erasure but complete honesty. It says, among other things, "We'll continue to update our website so that the story behind each plaque – and each person – is told in full."

Closer to home

Apart from telling the story in full, it might also help to make sure children have access to a diverse library, one that exposes them to different cultures. The onus of helping them recognise what is right and wrong while also sparking a love of reading in them is on parents, teachers and caregivers. Over the last couple of decades, we have had a plethora of wonderful Indian authors who have found imaginative ways to tell stories that are relevant, diverse and full of fun, teachable moments.

Blyton had some problematic views about race and colour. She also wrote some wonderful stories that taught millions of children to love books. Both these statements are true. If you loved Blyton and found the worlds she created captivating, then, by all means, invite children into those worlds, albeit under supervision. Let them imagine life in an English boarding school, filled with adventure, the smell of daffodils and ginger beer on picnics. But also invite them into a world they might recognise—the world of *nimboo pani*, tiffin boxes and faces of all colours, a world where being different is good and adventure is just around the corner. ■

Here is a list, by no means exhaustive, of books for children that are inclusive, diverse and full of adventure:

Wisha Wozzariter by Payal Kapadia, an award-winning novel about a young girl who dreams of becoming a writer, is according to *The Indian Express*, 'a rollicking read, a throwback to the good old school series by Enid Blyton' (Age: 10+)

The Weightlifting Princess by Sowmya Rajendran, who won Sahitya Akademi's 2015 Bal Sahitya Puraskar for her novel *Mayil Will Not Be Quiet!*, urges parents and children to think beyond conventional gender roles.

Taranauts by Roopa Pai is India's first fantasy adventure series comprising eight novels in English. (Age: 8+)

The *Petu Pumpkin* series by Arundhati Venkatesh has intriguing tales about friendship, tiffin boxes and secret societies. (Age 8+)

Tiger Boy by Mitali Perkins is, according to *School Library Journal*, a gripping tale that 'emphasises the deep but often fragile connection that exists between humans and nature.' (Age: 7+)

The Mystery of the Silk Umbrella by Asha Nehemiah has a well-paced plot, gentle humour and lots of adventure. (Age: 8+)

Arshia Sattar's *Mahabharata for Children* and *Ramayana for Children* are beautifully illustrated books that encourage children to think of what is right and wrong and why family is important.

Moin and the Monster by Anushka Ravishankar, known for her nonsense verse in the tradition of Lewis Carroll, is a funny book about a boy who learns to deal with a monster under his bed. (Age: 8+)

DESIGNED TO COMMUNICATE

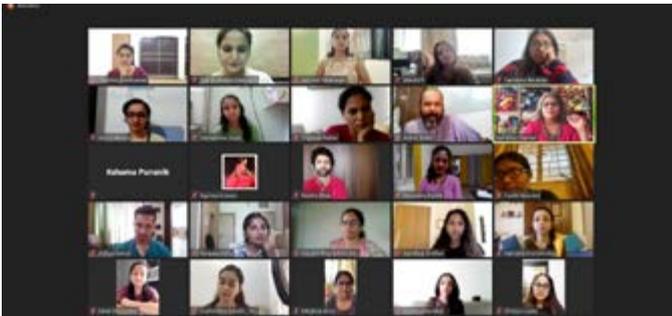
The workshop, Reimagining Dance Costumes by Sandhya Raman, offered participants a unique opportunity to learn and gain insights into costume designing for live performances. We bring you glimpses from the sessions conducted in June 2021.



The session was conducted by Sandhya Raman, a noted costume designer and curator with a focus on socially responsible designs. The founder of Desmania Foundation and an alumna of the National Institute of Design, she designs costumes for dancers practising contemporary and traditional dance forms



The first session, which focused on revisiting the reason for costuming for dance, was interspersed with clips and photographs of performances to illustrate the point that a costume communicates the details of an artiste's personality to the audience, and helps them transform into their character onstage with ease and confidence. See here: *Anekanta* by Geeta Chandran and Natya Vriksha Dance company for which Raman designed the costumes



The workshop saw participation from aspiring costume designers and dancers

The final part of the workshop was a costume clinic, an interactive session where participants discussed their ideas and got specific inputs on their designs. (Seen here) Designs presented by participants on the theme Shurpanakha, with emphasis on colour palette, fabric, jewellery and hairdo



Folk tales

ON Stage brings you excerpts from the *NCPA Quarterly Journal*, an unsurpassed literary archive that ran from 1972 to 1988, and featured authoritative and wide-ranging articles. In the penultimate part of the series on categories of music, musician and ethnomusicologist **Ashok D. Ranade** examines the various aspects of folk music and its evolution.

A striking feature of folk musical expression is the relative paucity of instrumental music in it. One reason is, of course, the dominant position that 'song' occupies in folk music as a whole. Furthermore, it is important to note that instruments are chiefly employed to accompany the sung expression, and instruments, by themselves, tend to be content imitating and reflecting the vocal expression. By and large, folk instruments lack the capacity for prolonged solo performance. On account of their innate and limited elaborational potential they remain best suited for accompanying roles entailing spurts of separate but short solo-playing. Besides, instrumental music as such makes a heavy demand on acquisition of technical skills—largely a specialist phenomenon. This degree of professionalism can hardly be imagined in folk music. Finally, the limited scope afforded to instrumental music can be traced back to the accent on collectivity in folk music. The element of community expression and the individualism involved in instrumental music run in contrary directions. It is also possible that entertainment, a prominent drive behind instrumental music, constitutes a weaker component of folk musical structures and hence the paucity of instrumental music.

Collectivity is one of the most important of the characteristics of folk music. It is symptomatic that only two of the four major musical categories, namely popular and folk, bear names that reflect the aspect of collectivity.

The collectivity of folk music is of a far-reaching nature. Collectivity as a controlling agent marks the conception, performance, propagation and the emotional content of folk music.

Creation of folk songs is seldom attributed to single individuals. For some time, it was averred that songs are

created collectively. A more accepted position is that they are communally recreated. A particular cultural group is motivated at a particular period in a particular manner towards the creation of certain musical material as a cumulative result of the prevailing socio-cultural environment. As a consequence, a folk song or its parts begin to acquire a shape. It is as if the entire atmosphere is charged with the song even though it assumes the final form—a crystallisation—through the agency of an individual. This is the reason why the general anonymity of a folk song seems meaningful since it is a recognition of the collective contribution to the emergence of a

The remarkable durability of folk songs is largely due to the comprehensive role collectivity plays in them. They outlive generations because they address the societal mind rather than the individual spirit

song. At the same time, describing the emergence as recreation allows the individual his due share.

Apart from the slightly speculative explanation offered for the collective recreation theory there is yet another discernible and more direct factor. On a majority of occasions a new song merely presents an edited, modified or altered version of those already in existence. Songs that had come into existence continue to be in the social repertoire only after society has processed them according to its requirements. This is the background against which stanzas are dropped or newly introduced in prevalent songs. To that extent, a folk song is a continuously created entity.

Propagation of folk songs exemplifies collectivity because they are sung or heard by and/or for groups. All song types are not collective in equal proportion in an actual performance but the exceptions do not render the general observation invalid. Further, the collectiveness is frequently related to the effectiveness of the songs rather than their actual propagation. In other words, they may need a group to achieve an impact though their non-collective existence or performance may not be an impossibility.

Collective tunes

The most important aspect of the collectivity of folk songs is their emotional content. Folk songs hardly ever embody the ordeals, crises or likes-dislikes of an individual. Their content is generalised to ensure a universal appeal. The same concern for reaching the maximum number of people is reflected in their tunes. This becomes clear when folk songs are structurally analysed. The thematic recurrence of events particular to the human life-cycle (e.g. birth, initiation, marriage, death, etc.) or seasonal cycles is thus traceable

to the collectivity of folk songs.

It should be clear that the remarkable durability of folk songs is largely due to the comprehensive role collectivity plays in them. They outlive generations because they address the societal mind rather than the individual spirit. They also express eternal human problems rather than topical issues. A folk song is aptly described as the voice of the collective mind.

Very often, folk music has been defined as the expression of an illiterate who perforce resorts to the oral tradition in order to perform, propagate and preserve it. However, the observation seems to have special validity in relation to cultures where art music is



Folk songs place emphasis on emotional content and universal appeal

reduced to writing in a major way. The phenomenon of the oral tradition needs to be understood differently in Indian and similar other contexts.

Durga Bhagwat, the eminent folklorist from Maharashtra, quotes Rajasekhara (12th century) as stating that the poetry of children, women and the low castes travels from mouth to mouth. Obviously, this merely confirms the prominence of the oral tradition both in folk and sophisticated expressions. It is relevant to discuss the functions directly connected with the features of folk music.

Firstly, it is due to the oral tradition that all kinds of changes can be brought about in the folk song compositions which (as mentioned earlier) are continuously created. Changes are facilitated because of these compositions.

Secondly, every culture generates and carries forward a corpus of folk songs. The very formation of such a corpus becomes possible because individual songs and song-sets are passed on from person to person and

from generation to generation. Song corpora are created by a process of slow accretion, and the existence of a flexible core is an essential precondition for the formulation of a corpus.

Thirdly, it is due to the oral tradition that techniques of composition and preservation have evolved. In this way, agents of consolidation as well as tendencies towards change are supported in their respective tasks.

Societal nature

Folk music enjoys a mixed motivation. Individual, societal and artistic motives bring it into being. However, folk music is specifically characterised by societal motives which have a close logical connection with the collectivity discussed earlier. An important point to be noted is the unambiguously non-musical thrust of societal motivation. Folk music is expected to respond to social needs of a didactic nature as opposed to the aesthetic demands related to art music. Admittedly, there are folk manifestations which entertain

but even these are found to have a social and predominantly non-art function.

The societal motivation of folk music becomes obvious through its connection with religion, language, rituals, sacraments and such other cultural manifestations. Folk music assumes its prevailing character due to its non-musical contexts, which act as live forces responsible for the conception, performance, propagation and reception of folk musical expression. It is logical for folk music to be defined as an expression of a particular culture. Such a description emphasises its regional, linguistic, as well as religious orientations. The functional element in folk music also offers proof of its societal motivation. This is not to suggest that folk music does not possess art content. What is stressed is that the societal thrust is always to be detected in combination with a variety of other motives.

The functionality of folk music can also be appreciated at a more psychological level. The frequent thematic insistence

of folk songs on cultural myths makes repeated allusions to societal dreams or the past heritage signifies a subtler functionality. Folk music performs the function of representing non-musical, cultural realities on account of its social motivation. This explains why the corpus of a society increases during those periods when the societal mind undergoes stresses and strains or is at least unusually stimulated.

Another characteristic of folk music hinted at earlier is that (for all practical purposes) it has no beginning and no end. Theoretically speaking, every composition or a song type can be said to have crystallised into a stable shape at some particular point of time. However, when one says that folk music defies chronological placement, the aim is to stress its all-time appeal. In fact, the anonymity of folk music is, to some extent, a result of the non-importance of the time dimension. When there is a very close and definite connection between music and a particular event, personage or period, the relevant music may make an exit from the permanent musical corpus. Folk music is undateable like culture and cannot be described as old or new and, in that sense, it is always contemporary.

Folk music is both changeable and unchangeable. The particular kind of flexibility folk music enjoys is causally connected with its nature. The proneness as well as the reluctance to change needs to be explained. It embodies conservatism and adaptability.

Conservatism and change

Folk music is conservative because it is an expression of the collective mind. Society is less eager than an individual either to accept the new or to reject the old. A societal mind is more than the sum total of individual minds. It is motivated differently at various levels and hence a change in any of its expressions is a complex and slow process.

Folk music is informed by diverse motivations and it is obvious that the satisfaction of all or most of the motives is a rare phenomenon. Change is accepted only when diverse motives have successfully completed a series of mutual influences.

Folk music mainly deals with themes that possess a universal appeal. Prior to finding a place in folk music, themes seem to be subjected to numerous eliminations. To introduce changes in such a time-tested entity is, therefore, the culmination of a lengthy process

completed with considerable difficulty. Changes in folk music are results of a real cultural inevitability.

The functionality of folk music also acts as an impediment to change since it does not enjoy an independent existence. If its functional partners do not undergo changes, musical change alone is inconceivable.

However, the reluctance to change is not equally intense in the case of all types of folk music. In this respect, the following observations are germane.

- Music associated with religious ceremonies, marriage and other rituals displays extreme conservatism.
- Comparatively speaking, music related to love, separation and other such common human experiences is more likely to change.
- Folk expressions, bound with entertainment items such as games, dances, etc., are prone to change.
- The easiest to change are those musical features which a performer or a particular group among them seems to prefer.

Adaptability

- If those who perform are themselves motivated to change the performance of the music concerned, then alterations can be easily introduced. A related

feature is the role of the spirit of competition, in case a large number of performers are involved.

• Folk music changes on account of its largely unwritten tradition. Language, articulation, composition and such other aspects undergo unintentional changes when the corpus of music is transmitted from person to person and from generation to generation. A near-total reliance on memory is causally related to the changes detectable in a majority of cases. Too often, the debates about the 'original, traditional or the authentic' in folk music are a consequence of the unintentional changes finding their way into the existing corpus.

• Folk music migrates when the people to whom it belongs shift their base. This is the case when people (individually or collectively) leave the place of their origin for a different domicile. On account of the change in environment, their folk music (which they otherwise cling to) undergoes changes. Somewhat disconcertingly, melodies might migrate independently. Thus one may come across near-identical melodies irrespective of distances, dissimilar texts and performing traditions. These are aptly described as 'wandering melodies'.

• Another factor that may introduce qualitative changes in folk expression assumes special significance today. When a body of songs, etc., is taken up by castes or groups of people who are professional performers, changes are introduced because they are inclined to improve the performances. Usually, the interest is in creating a better impact on the audiences by injecting better techniques or superior skills in the performances. Very frequently, the performing models thus created tend to affect the originals. However, such a pattern of mutability takes the music to art music.

• Exposure to educational influences makes for changes in folk expression. Even if the entire corpus is not changed, significant changes in style are introduced. In a way, these particular changes may be described as indirect changes because they are the result of cultural developments brought about by education.

Perhaps, the most important factor responsible for changing folk music is the proximity of art music. The consequences of this musical

and cultural neighbourhood need separate consideration.

Rootedness and mobility

Art music and folk music: Primitive and folk music can be meaningfully distinguished by the fact that the latter enjoys the proximity of another musical stream, which the former does not. To that extent, primitive music operates in musical isolation. On the other hand, in the case of folk music, there is the constant possibility of a continuous exchange of influences with both primitive as well as art music. In fact, the existence of more than one stream of music in itself indicates cultural complexity. The use of multiple language layers, recourse to the written form, the nature of the prevailing economy, the rate of industrialisation as well as mechanisation are some of the factors conducive to a more complex cultural milieu. To a certain extent, cultural

Folk music is undateable like culture and cannot be described as old or new and, in that sense, it is always contemporary

complexity suggests a corresponding multi-stream musicality. Folk music is, therefore, prone to a variety of controls symptomatically indicated by the operations of art music. A detailed enumeration of how art music affects folk music is better revealed in the musical analysis of the latter.

National expression: Owing to its close relationship with a particular people and their culture, folk music can be regarded as a form of national expression. Diverse culture groups can hardly be expected to have similar folk music. In this context, countries such as India pose a special problem. Despite the cultural oneness of the country, almost every region has folk music particular to it. Hence these folk musics, being confined to particular people, can be described as national expressions, though such a characterisation overlooks the political orientation of the term 'nation'. An interesting factor to note here is that the vocal music of a 'nation' is more homogeneous than its instrumental music.

An additional nuance in the situation is that more than one nation can have the same art music as a common tradition and hence art music cannot be strictly regarded as national expression. This is obviously not so in the case of folk music. Once again, the Indian situation needs special consideration with its single culture, two developed systems of art music and several regional expressions of folk music. However, the point to be stressed is that folk music (more than any other musical category) is closely and innately connected with a particular culture.

Geographical ties: In a manner of speaking, folk music being national expression automatically proclaims its ties with a specific geographical area. It is, therefore, logical that folk expression reflects the surroundings, the natural phenomena in its content. However, the close ties with a particular locale are a consequence of the relationship folk music has with a particular culture.

Apart from the broader cultural causation, folk music keeps close to the geographical locale because of its characteristic responsiveness to nature as a force. The seasonal cycle, agricultural, pastoral and oceanic operations, all find a place in folk music. However, this is not to suggest that nature reflected in

folk music corresponds to the actuality. It is possible to detect the depiction of nature in a manner that a particular community would wish to be surrounded by it. This may be interpreted as a direct response to the encompassing natural phenomena—though in a dialectical manner. (Perhaps the one exceptional case of Israel might suggest that geographical ties constitute a dispensable feature of folk music. The nation was preceded by its folk music!).

Migratory potentialities: Considering the stress on the element 'one culture, one group and one region', it may appear that folk music as an entity cannot migrate. However, this is not the case. On account of migrations, and also due to its largely unwritten tradition, folk music is characterised by a noticeable mobility. That which sounds good is accepted, modified, and assimilated to be pressed into service. Instrumental expression migrates in greater measure and more easily. Comparatively speaking, vocal music is closer to a culture and brooks dissociation from the people only under exceptional circumstances. ■

Folk music is innately connected with a particular culture and the region



THIS MONTH, THAT YEAR



In its 50th year, the NCPA launched The Jamshed Bhabha Memorial Lectures, a series in honour of its founder Dr. Jamshed J. Bhabha, to be held every year on 21st August, his birth anniversary. The inaugural lecture was delivered by Mr. Jawhar Sircar, eminent public intellectual, writer and speaker. The opening remarks were given by NCPA Chairman Mr. Khushroo N. Suntook and the vote of thanks by Ms. Shirin Bharucha, NCPA Governing Council Member. Seen here: Mr.Suntook (left) welcomes Mr. Sircar

From the inaugural Jamshed Bhabha Memorial Lecture to a festival showcasing works of legendary Indian composers, from World Photography Day celebrations to a spectacular presentation of classical, folk and martial dance forms of India, and an evening of chamber music, we bring you some of the more memorable events that were presented at the NCPA in August 2019.



(From left) Mr. Sabyasachi Mukherjee, Mr. Nirmal Bhogilal, Mrs. Geeta and Mr. R. Gopalakrishnan, Mrs. Pheroza Godrej and Mr. Farokh Kavarana attended the lecture, among other noted personalities



A three-day event with exhibitions, talks and seminars commemorating World Photography Day on 19th August is an annual fixture at the Piramal Gallery. In 2019, two archival exhibitions showcasing the works of the late renowned photographers Kishore Parekh and Gopal Bodhe were organised, where Bodhe's son spoke about his iconic aerial photography. Seen here: Works and books by Parekh displayed in the gallery

Noted painter, printmaker, and photographer Jyoti Bhatt, a one-time colleague of Kishore Parekh, who was best known for his work on the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971, spoke about him and his book on the war via video conferencing



Works and books by Gopal Bodhe displayed in the gallery



Mr. Sircar delivered the lectured titled 'What Ails the Arts in India?' at the Jamshed Bhabha Theatre. It was followed by a Q&A session



Eminent art director Jain Kamal and renowned photographers Swapan Mukherjee and Dilip Yande attended the exhibition and discussed Kishore Parekh's works



Dr Suvarnalata Rao, Programming Head-Indian Music at the NCPA, gave a lecture-demonstration titled *Understanding Bandish: Splendour of the Song*, on the components of a *bandish* such as language, melody and rhythm. Held at the True School of Music, it included audio-visual excerpts to explain the facet of improvisation associated with *bandish*



Pianist Pervez Mody joined the SOI Chamber Orchestra at the Experimental Theatre to present works by Mozart, Wirén, Dancla and Fitzenhagen



The cellists of the SOI Chamber Orchestra performed the *Fitzenhagen: Concert -Walzer, Op. 31 (Cello Quartet)* during the concert. The headpiece donned by the ladies was in keeping with the waltz, a Romantic piece



Charishnu, an event in collaboration with Sahachari Foundation, presented a unique dance production with 45 artistes showcasing vignettes of classical, folk and martial dance forms of India and a percussion interlude. (From left) Aditi Mangaldas (Kathak), Priti Patel (Manipuri), and Leela Samson (Bharatanatyam), who conceptualised and directed the event, share the stage in a rare moment



Some of the moving forces behind the Sahachari Foundation. (From left) Amrita Kilachand with her daughter, Nilima Kilachand, Smita Parekh, Sheela Bhogilal, Gauri Daftary Pohoomul, Brinda Khatau, Daksha Mehta and Parul Choksey



A production of Nikolai Gogol's iconic comedy of errors, *The Inspector General*, directed by New York-based Daniel Irizarry was staged at the Experimental Theatre



Every August, the NCPA invites renowned institutions of the country to showcase, share and perform their works in its August Dance Residency. The 2019 edition included a screening of the film *Kalpana*, made by the legendary dancer Uday Shankar, a dance workshop, and *Sabari*, a performance by the Mamata Shankar Dance Company, headed by the noted dancer and actress Mamata Shankar. The company is known for its dance dramas and dance ballet, presented in a style, which is a mix of classical Indian dance with a contemporary sensibility



The spectacular finale of *Charishnu* brought together diverse dance forms at the Jamshed Bhabha Theatre



Bombay Jazz, a semi-autobiographical musical play about Goan and Anglo-Indian musicians who brought jazz influences into Hindi film music between the 1950s and 1970s, was performed at the Experimental Theatre. Written by Ramu Ramanathan and directed by Etienne Coutinho, the play is based on research by Naresh Fernandes and stars actor Denzil Smith and saxophonist Rhys Sebastian D'Souza



Memories of Motown and Soul, featuring Samantha Noella and the Crooked Tailbones, celebrated the works of Michael Jackson, The Jackson Five, Marvin Gaye, Aretha Franklin, Diana Ross, Stevie Wonder and Smokey Robinson. The concert traced the roots of soul, Motown, R&B and their influence on pop music, and was held at the Experimental Theatre

NCPA *Bandish*, a three-day festival celebrating the well-structured melodic and rhythmic compositions known as bandish in Indian music, showcased the works of the great composers Oothukkadu Venkata Subbaiyer and Muthuswami Dikshitar, which were presented by eminent classical vocalist Aruna Sairam on the second day at the Tata Theatre



A short film screening for children under the 'Music for Schools' CSR programme was organised at the Tata Theatre. Nearly 1,000 children attended the screening, curated with the idea to help them appreciate film as an art form. The films were curated by acclaimed television producer Manju Singh. The NCPA's outreach activities extend to members of lesser privileged communities, enabling them to experience the magic of the performing arts, to which they may otherwise not have had access





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