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Virasat '09 is dedicated to those who left us this year



D.K. PATTAMMAL

(1919 - 2009)

Smt Pattammal once said in an interview that she was the first Brahmin to come on stage as a Carnatic singer, like Rukminidevi was for Bharatnatyam. "I was 10 when my father's friends approached him to let me sing for a gramophone record company. First, my father refused, fearing that the record will be played at all and sundry places. He did not want the works of great masters like Thyagaraja and Dikshitar and his daughter's voice to be heard at such places. Then Dr. Srinivasan of Kancheepuram, who is my husband's uncle (I was not married then), persuaded my father to let me sing. My school headmistress, Ammukutti-amma, also urged my father to let me accept the offer. After a lot of pressure from a number of his friends, my father finally agreed."

Life & Times

Pattammal, born in an orthodox Brahmin family in Kancheepuram of Tamil Nadu, was named as Alamelu, but fondly called "Patta" as a child prodigy. Her father, Damal Krishnaswamy Dikshithar inspired her to learn Carnatic music. She received no formal gurukul training. As a child, Pattammal would sit through the concerts and on returning home, would notate the kritis she heard and key phrases of ragas. Her brothers D. K. Ranganathan, D.K Nagarajan and D. K. Jayaraman - later her vocal accompanists, helped her in this task. She would also sing simple devotional hymns and songs that her father had taught her and received tuition from an unnamed Telugu-speaking musician.

Singing career

In 1929, at age 10, Pattamal gave her first radio performance for Madras Corporation Radio (MCR) and 3 years later, she gave her first public

concert at Madras Rasika Ranjani Sabha in 1932. She soon moved to Chennai to become a regular performer in concerts and gave her first performance at the Mahila Samajam (the Egmore Ladies Club), and won acclaim. In 1939, Pattammal married R. Iswaran and quickly rose to stardom with her musical career spanning more than 65 years!

Pattammal was also the first woman to have performed Ragam Thanam Pallavi in concerts. Ragam Thanam Pallavi was classed as a male stronghold and is the most difficult concert item in Carnatic music, as it calls for great skill and a

Pattammal was the first Brahmin woman to sing on stage, like Rukminidevi was for Bharatnatyam.

high degree of concentration to handle the rhythmic complexities involved. She went further to perform very complex Pallavis in intricate talas (rhythmic cycles); impressing and earning the respect of her male peers, connoisseurs and fellow-musicians. Today, many female Carnatic musicians perform Ragam Thanam Pallavi as the main item in their concerts.

Pattammal possessed a full-throated voice in the low alto/high tenor range. Her outstanding musical qualities included an overwhelming technical expertise, an uncompromising adherence to pitch and rhythm and clear enunciation of lyrics. She also has a reputation as a very disciplined musician. As a child she woke up before dawn and practised for hours.

we remember

Throughout her performing career she meticulously planned her concert items weeks in advance and practised rigorously.

Legacy

Smt Pttamal's legacy is being carried forward by her grand daughter, Dr. Nithyasree Mahadevan, also referred to as S. Nithyashri, who is an eminent Carnatic musician and playback singer for film songs in many Indian languages.

GANGUBAI HANGAL

(1913 -2009)



GANGUBAI's deep and powerful voice will always resonate in the ears of every connoisseur of Hindustani classical music. Her passing away has ended an illustrious musical career spanning over 70 years.

Gangubai Hangal was born in 1913 in Hangal village (from where she gets her second name) of Dharwad district in Karnataka to Chikku Rao Nadiger, an agriculturist and Amba bai, a vocalist of Carnatic music. Hangal received only elementary education and her family shifted to Hubli in 1928. She began to train formally aged 13 at the music school of Krishna Acharya, studying Hindustani classical music instead of Carnatic music. Following in her mother's footsteps Gangubai settled early in marriage with Gururao Kaulgi at the age of 16. Unfortunately her husband died after just four years of their marriage.

However, she continued to learn music and pay for her home too. She learned from Dattopant Desai before studying under Pt. Rambhau Kundgolkar, better known as Sawai Gandharva --guru and teacher to many eminent musicians including Pt. Bhimsen Joshi and Firoze Dastur. Another strong influence on Gangubai's music, though indirect, was the singer from Agra, Zohrabai.

At first Hangal could only study sporadically under Gandharva when he returned to his home, but received an intensive training of three years after he relocated permanently to Hubli. She was soon following the Kirana Gharana. She once said that the reason she chose Hindustani over Carnatic was because of her mother who loved the former. "Light music was never my forte. My voice is more suited to singing only pure classical," she once said.

Singing Career

Hangal's family was considered from a low social status and for women of her generation singing was not considered appropriate employment; Hangal struggled against this prejudice and made a career. She performed all over India and for All India Radio stations until 1945. Hangal initially performed light classical genres, including bhajan and thumri but later concentrated on khayal. Hangal served as honorary music professor of the Karnatak University too and gave her last concert in March 2006 to mark her 75th career year.

Gangubai's stage debut took place in Bombay, at the Bombay Music Circle, where she was heard by several eminent musicians. After her debut, Jadden Bai (mother of actress Nargis) convinced her to participate in a music conference in Calcutta. As the story goes, In Calcutta, the organizers first insisted that she first sing in a private sitting a night before the concert because they had doubts if she, a frail girl at that time, was capable of singing! She gave her test and was greatly appreciated. In fact, she was awarded a gold medal by the

Maharaja of Tripura. At the same concert she kept remembering her mother who was no more and just then felt a hand on her shoulder. When I turned around, I saw K. L. Saigal, who said, 'bahut surila' (very melodious). "I was happy but then very upset that a strange man should touch me!", she says in one of her interviews.

Gangubai Hangal received a number of awards, which included: Karnataka Sangeet Nritya Academy Award, (1962), Padma Bhushan, (1971) Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, (1973) Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship (1996) and Padma Vibhushan (2002). The Karnataka government declared two days of mourning for Hangal and a state funeral was announced in Hubli. She had the rare honour of being felicitated by nine Prime Ministers and five Presidents.

In Gangubai there was none of the affected stylised demeanor that one associates with senior artistes, she remain a simple person till the end.

TYEB MEHTA

(1925 - 2009)



Tyeb Mehta was a noted painter and part of the noted Bombay Progressive Artists' Group, which included greats like F.N. Souza, S.H. Raza and M.F. Hussain. He was from the first post-colonial generation of artists in India, who also broke free from the nationalist Bengal school and embraced Modernism instead, with its Post-Impressionist colors, Cubist forms and

brusque, Expressionistic styles.

Among his most noted later paintings were his triptych Celebration, which when sold for Rs 1.5 crore (\$317,500) at a Christie's auction in 2002, was not only the highest sum for an Indian painting at an international auction, but also triggered the subsequent great Indian art boom. He stayed and worked in Mumbai for much of his life, except for three spells at London, New York, and Santiniketan, each having a distinct impact upon his work.

Life & Times

Tyeb Mehta was born in Kapadvanj, Kheda district, Gujarat. He was brought up in the Crawford Market neighborhood of Mumbai, populated by Dawoodi Bohras. At 22 years, during the partition riots of 1947 in Mumbai, he witnessed a man being stoned to death by a mob, this he not only expressed in a drawing but it was to have lasting impact on his work, leading to stark and often disturbing depiction of his subjects.

For a while he worked as a film editor in a cinema laboratory at Famous Studios, Mumbai. Later, he received his diploma from Sir J.J. School of Art and was part of the Bombay Progressive Artists' Group (BPAG), which drew stylistic inspiration from Western Modernism.

Painting Career

He left for London in 1959, where he worked and lived till 1964. Thereafter, he visited the New York, where he was awarded the Rockefeller Fellowship in 1968. He made a three minute film, Koodal (Tamil for 'meeting place'), which he shot at the Bandra slaughter house. It won the Filmfare Critics Award in 1970. He also remained an Artist-in-Residence at the Santiniketan between 1984-85 and returned to Mumbai with significant changes in his work. Common themes of his works were trussed bulls, the rickshaw puller, from here he moved to the 'Diagonal series', which he created through the 1970s, after accidentally discovering it in 1969, when in a moment of creative frustration he flung a black streak across his canvas [4]. Later in life, he added 'Falling Figures' and several

mythological figures into his work, highlighted by the depictions of goddess Kali and demon Mahishasura.[10].

Tyeb Mehta held the then record for the highest price an Indian painting has ever sold for at auction (\$317,500 USD or Rs 15 million) for Celebration at Christie's in 2002. In May 2005, his painting Kali sold for Rs 10 million (\$230,000) at Indian auction house Saffronart's online auction. A reinterpretation of the tale of demon Mahishasura by Mehta showing goddess Durga locked in an embrace with the demon sold for \$1.5 million. In 2008 one of his paintings sold for \$2 million.

In December 2005, Mehta's painting Gesture was sold for Rs 31 million to Ranjit Malkani, chairman of Kuoni Travel, at the Osian's auction. This makes it the highest price ever paid by an Indian for a work of Indian contemporary art at an auction in India.

Mehta's were the first works by a contemporary Indian artist to sell for over a million dollars, and indicated a burgeoning interest in Indian art by the international market; as a result, Mehta became a cultural hero. He also received several awards during his career including the Padma Bhushan by Govt. of India in 2007.

HABIB TANVIR (1923-2009)



we remember

HABIB TANVIR was one of the most popular Urdu, Hindi playwrights, theatre director, poet and actor. He wrote plays such as *Agra Bazar* (1954) and *Charandas Chor* (1975) which went on to become landmarks in Indian theatre.

A pioneer in Urdu/Hindi theatre, he is most known for his work with Chhattisgarhi tribals at the **Naya Theatre**, a theatre company he founded in 1959 in Bhopal, and went on to include indigenous performance forms such as *nacha*, to create not only a new theatrical language, but also milestones such as *Charandas Chor*, *Gaon ka Naam Sasural*, *Mor Naam Damad* and *Kamdeo ka Apna, Basant Ritu ka Sapna*.

He was the last of pioneering actor-managers in Indian theatre, which included Sisir Bhaduri, Utpal Dutt and Prithviraj Kapoor and often he managed plays with mammoth cast such as *Charandas Chor* which included an orchestra of 72 people on stage and *Agra Bazaar* had 52 people.

Habib Ahmed Khan 'Tanvir' was born on September 1, 1923 in Raipur, Chhattisgarh, to Hafiz Ahmed Khan, who hailed from Peshawar. He passed his matriculation from Laurie Municipal High School, Raipur and later completed his B.A. from Morris College, Nagpur in 1944. Thereafter he attended Aligarh Muslim University.

Early in life, he started writing poetry and took upon a pen name, **Tanvir**, and soon he was being called, Habib Tanvir.

Acting/theatre Career

In 1945, he moved to Bombay and joined All India Radio as a producer. While in Bombay, he wrote songs for Urdu, Hindi films and even acted in a few. He also joined the Progressive Writers' Association (PWA) and became an integral part of Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) as an actor. Later, when most of prominent IPTA members were imprisoned for opposing the British rule, he was asked to takeover the organization.

In 1954, he moved to New Delhi,

we remember

and worked with Qudsiya Zaidi's Hindustani Theatre, and also worked with Children's theatre, and authored numerous plays. It was during this period he met actor-director, Moneeka Mishra, whom he was to later marry. Later in the same year, he produced his first significant play 'Agra Bazar', based on the works and times of the plebeian 18th-century Urdu poet, Nazir Akbarabadi, an older poet in the generation of Mirza Ghalib.

In this play he used local residents and folk artist from Okhla village in Delhi and students of Jamia Millia Islamia creating a palette never seen before in Indian theatre, a play not staged in a confined space, rather a bazaar, a marketplace. This experience with non-trained actors, and folk artists later blossomed with his work with folk artists of Chhattisgarh.

For him true "theatre of the people" existed in the villages, which he strived to bring to the urban "educated", employing both folk performers as actors alongside urban actors. During his lifetime he won several national and international awards, including the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1969, Padma Shri in 1983, Kalidas Samman 1990, Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship in 1996, and the Padma Bhushan in 2002; apart from that he had also been nominated to become a member of the Rajya Sabha (1972-1978).

His play 'Charandas Chor' got him the Fringe Firsts Award at Edinburgh International Drama Festival in 1982 and in 2007, it was credited for "an innovative dramaturgy equally impelled by Brecht and folkidioms.

Some of his popular plays are: Agra Bazar (1954), Shatranj Ke Mohrey (1954), Lala Shoharat Rai (1954), Mitti ki Gaadi (1958), Gaon ke naon Sasural, mor naon Damand (1973), Charandas Chor (1975), Bahadur kalarin (1978), Ponga Pandit (1960s), Jis Lahore Nai Dekhya (1990), Kamdeo ka Apna Basant Ritu ka Sapna (1993), Raj Rakt (2006)

His filmography includes: Foot Path (1953), Rahi (1953), Charandas Chor (1975) (lyrics and script), Staying On (1980) (TV), Gandhi

(1982), Yeh Woh Manzil to Nahin (1987), Man-Eaters of Kumaon (1986) (TV), Hero Hiralal (1988) and Black & White (2008).

PALGHAT R. RAGHU (1928-2009)



Palghat Rahu was born on January 9, 1928 in Rangoon, Burma. As a child, he was immensely talented and inducted into Mridangam lessons very early in life. His first mridangam lessons were from Tinniam Venkatarama Iyer and Trichy Raghava Iyer. Later he learnt the art from the legendary Mridangam wizard Palghat T. S. Mani Iyer. Ever since, he has accompanied numerous artists for the past 60 years with distinction. He is a graduate of mathematics.

Unique Technique

Palghat Raghu was a percussion master known for his distinctive style as well as his effortless finger movement and technical brilliance. His unique style which involves imaginative use of the Toppi (left part of Mridangam) combines melody with rhythm and lifts the concert performance to high levels. Using different techniques, he adjusted his playing style to not only different artists and instruments but also captures the bhava and sahitya of music.

His tani avartanams with complex and highly mathematical Korvais bear the stamp of innovation,

scholarship and majestic mastery of this complex instrument. The tani avartanams with other rhythm virtuosos such as Harishankar, Nagarajan (kanjira), Alangudi Ramachandran, T. H. "Vikku" Vinayakram, Subhash Chandran (ghatam), remains memorable to this day.

Palghat Raghu toured extensively across the world and performed with renowned artists like Pandit Ravi Shankar, Hariprasad Chaurasia, Shivkumar Sharma and even alongside the Tabla Wizard Alla Rakha in numerous concerts. He was also involved in East-West fusion music. He was visiting professor of music at Wesleyan University in Connecticut, San Diego State University and University of Berkeley.

He won several Awards like the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1983, Palghat Mani Iyer award (first recipient), Padma Shri in year 1985, Sangeetha Choodamani and Sangeetha Kalanidhi (2007).

Palghat Raghu is universally considered to be the torch-bearer of the illustrious Maha Vidwan Thanjavur Vaidyanatha Iyer's tradition of the art of mridangam playing, passed on to him by his most beloved guru Palghat Mani Iyer.

ALI AKBAR KHAN (1922 -2009)



ALI AKBAR KHAN was the Maihar gharana, known for his virtuosity in playing the sarod. Khan saheb was instrumental in popularizing Indian classical music in the West.

Ali Akbar Khan was born in the village of Shibpur, Comilla, in present-day Bangladesh to revered musician and teacher, Ustad Alauddin Khan and Madina Begum. Soon after his birth, the family returned to Maihar (in Madhya Pradesh) where his father was the primary court musician for the Maharaja of the princely state.

Of his training on sarod, he wrote:

"If you practice for ten years, you may begin to please yourself, after 20 years you may become a performer and please the audience, after 30 years you may please even your guru, but you must practice for many more years before you finally become a true artist — then you may please even God..."

Music Career

After years of rigorous training Ali Akbar gave his debut performance at a music conference in Allahabad in 1936, at the age of 13. Three years later, in 1939, he accompanied Ravi Shankar on the sarod during the latter's debut performance at the same conference; this was the first of many jugalbandis between the two musicians. In 1938 Khan gave his first recital on All India Radio (AIR), Bombay (accompanied on the tabla by Alla Rakha), and starting in January 1940, he gave monthly performances on AIR, Lucknow. Finally in 1944, both Ravi Shankar and Ali Akbar left Maihar to start their professional careers as musicians; Shankar went to Bombay, while Khan became the youngest Music Director for AIR, Lucknow.

In 1943, on his father's recommendation, he was appointed a court musician for the Maharaja of Jodhpur. There, he taught and composed music besides giving recitals and was accorded the title of Ustad by the Maharaja. With India's independence in 1947 Khan saheb moved to Bombay.

In Bombay, he won acclaim as a composer of several film scores, including Chetan Anand's Aandhiyan, Satyajit Ray's

Devi, Merchant-Ivory's The Householder and Tapan Sinha's Kshudista Pashan ("Hungry stones"), for which he won the "Best Musician of the Year" award. Later in 1993, he would score some of the music for Bernardo Bertolucci Little Buddha.

Beginning in 1945, Khan sahib also started recording a series of 78 rpm disks (which could record about 3 minutes of music) at the HMV Studios in Bombay. For one such record he conceived a new composition Raga Chandranandan based on four evening ragas, Malkauns, Chandrakauns, Nandakauns and Kaushi Kanra. This record was a huge success in India and the raga found a worldwide audience when a 22 minute rendition was re-recorded for the Master musician of India LP in 1965 - one of Khan saheb's seminal recordings.

He performed in India and traveled extensively in the West. Khan first came to the USA in 1955 on the invitation of violinist Yehudi Menuhin and later settled in California. He was nominated for five Grammy Awards and was accorded India's second highest civilian honor, the Padma Vibhushan, in 1989.

In 1956, he founded the Ali Akbar College of Music in Calcutta, with the mission to teach and spread Indian classical music. He founded another school of the same name in Berkeley, California in 1967 and later moved it to San Rafael, California. In 1985 he founded another branch of the Ali Akbar College of Music in Basel, Switzerland. He was the first Indian musician to record an LP album of Indian classical music in the US and to play sarod on American television.

Khan saheb participated in a number of classic jugalbandi pairings, most notably with Pt. Ravi Shankar, Pt. Nikhil Banerjee and violinist Dr L. Subramaniam. A few recordings of duets with Ust. Vilayat Khan also exists. He also collaborated with Western musicians. In 1971 he performed at the Madison Square Garden for the "Concert for Bangladesh" along with Pt. Ravi Shankar, Ustad Alla Rakha and Smt Kamala Chakravarty; other musicians at the concert included Bob Dylan, Eric Clapton, George Harrison and Ringo Starr.

Khan saheb was based in the United

we remember

States for the last 40 years of his life. He toured extensively until he was prevented from doing so by ill-health. His legacy lives on in the form of Ustad Ashish Khan who is a well known Sarod player himself.

VISHNU PRABHAKAR
(1912 –2009)

VISHNU Prabhakar was a renowned Hindi writer and had several short stories, novels, plays and travelogues to his credit. His works have elements of patriotism, nationalism and messages of social upliftment.



Vishnu Prabhakar was born on in 1912, in Mirapur village of Muzaffarnagar district in Uttar Pradesh. His father, Durga Prasad, was a religious person who kept himself untouched by modern times. His mother, Mahadevi, was the first well-

educated lady of the family who dared to reject the 'Parda Pratha' of the Hindu families. Prabhakar stayed in Mirapur until the age of 12, and completed his primary education. His matriculation happened from Hissar at his maternal uncle's place. Unable to pursue higher education owing to financial situation he joined the government service as a class IV employee with a salary of mere Rs.18 per month. He still kept his studies going along with his work and obtained degrees of Prabhakar and Hindi Bhushana in Hindi, Pragya in Sanskrit and B.A. in English.

Along with his work he pursued an interest in literature and joined a theatre company in Hissar. His literary life started with the publication of his first story Diwali in the Hindi magazine Milap in 1931. He wrote Hatya Ke Baad, his first play in 1939. He made writing as his full time career. He stayed with the family of his maternal uncle

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A FULL EDUCATION

Education today has become very information-based. There is some amount of knowledge communicated, but practically no wisdom transferred. The focus is, primarily, in the tangible domain so that young people can get jobs – the higher the potential pay packet, the more attractive is the course.

However, education has a big role to play in the intangible domain and unless we give this aspect an equal importance, we will continue bringing incomplete human beings into the society. Therefore, it is very important that our composite heritage, which is also our core competence, be introduced in a concerted manner at all levels of our education system in the curricular and the extra-curricular domains.

It can be argued that all children are not getting to learn even the basics

like 'Reading, Writing and Arithmetic' in the villages because of financial considerations. There are not enough teachers and schools – and the infrastructure is also very poor due to paucity of funds. With the Right to Education Bill being passed in both houses of Parliament, these problems will hopefully be solved to some extent. However, while the basics are necessary, they are not sufficient.

Similarly in the cities, schools with all the facilities, have children focussing on wanting to become engineers, doctors, managers, lawyers etc. Here, it is imperative that they are introduced to and made to understand our classical arts, literature and other aspects of our heritage through curricular and extra-curricular efforts. Strong heritage inputs through literature, folk and craft traditions of the area can easily

be provided at hardly any cost. This aspect should be given the importance it deserves.

These same ideas must be implemented at the college and university level. Today, many private universities make huge profits by providing only professional courses (the quality of which is also a suspect) to young people who join them. While freedom must be given to the university system, some guidelines must be set, one of which is that even engineering, medical, law, management and other professional courses must have strong curricular and extra-curricular inputs of our heritage. This can be done by making it mandatory to set up a Liberal Arts Department or School, before giving accreditation to any college or university.

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REMEMBERING THE SEVEN GEMS..

until the age of 27. After Independence he worked as the drama director at Aakashvani, New Delhi.

He made news when in 2005 he threatened to return his Padma Bhushan after he allegedly had to face misconduct at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

'PRABHAKAR'- The acquired name

There is an interesting story of how he assumed the name of 'Vishnu Prabhakar' from 'Vishnu Dayal'; his original name as was listed in the primary school of Mirapur. When he shifted to the Arya Samaj School, on being asked his 'Varna', he answered 'Vaishya'. So the teacher put down his name as 'Vishnu Gupta'.

When he joined the government service, the officers changed his name to 'Vishnu Dharmadutt' because there were many 'Guptas' in the office and it confused them. He continued writing by the pen name of 'Vishnu' when one day an editor asked him why he was not using his full name. During the course of the conversation the editor asked if he had passed any examination and Vishnu answered that he had passed the 'Prabhakar' in Hindi. Thus the editor changed his name to 'Vishnu Prabhakar'.

BOOKS HE WOTE

Prabhakar was fond of traveling. He traveled for 14 years continuously to collect material for his book - *Aawara Masiha* which is a biography of famous Bangla author, Sharatchandra. For this he had to visit all the places linked to Sharatchandra. His love of travels also resulted in many travelogues.

Some of his novels are: *Dhalti Raat* (1951), *Nishikant* (1955), *Tat Ke Bandhan* (1955), *Swapnmayi* (1956), *Darpan Ka Vyakti* (1968), *Parchhai* (1968), *Koi To* (1980), *Ardhnarishwar* (1992).

Prabhakar ji is survived by two sons and two daughters.

ANDHRA PRADESH

After a heavy schedule of programs throughout the academic year 2008-09, the state went soft after March. Activities restarted with new enthusiasm on August 9, 2009 when the Vishakapatnam chapter organized a performance of Hyderabad Brothers at Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya – Kommadi. The accompanists were Sh. Dwaram Satyanarayana Rao (Violin), Sh. V. Venkata Ramana Murthy (Mrid- angam) and Sh. Nemani Somayajulu (Ghatam).

Hyderabad Chapter witnessed a change in its Executive Body too. The responsibilities of Chapter Coordination are passed on to the new office bearers. Sh. PVRK Prasad (IAS) is the new Chairman. Kumar Ashish is the Secretary, A. Sudarshan is the Treasurer, Smt Lathamani will be coordinator for Schools and Colleges, Smt Rukmini Kulkarni will take care of Media and Smt Monica Reddy will look after orientations. The team is a good mix of both young and mature, just like a flowing river with strong banks on either side.

The new working body of the University of Hyderabad Sub-Chapter has also been formed after the successful 2 years tenure of the outgoing team under the leadership of Kumar Ashish.

A koodiyattam workshop by Sh. Margi Madhu was held at University of Hyderabad for four days (in August). The response for the workshop was great. There was also participation from neighboring institutes.

Sh. Margi Madhu also gave three performances in Hyderabad during his stay. The institutions which hosted the Koodiyattam maestro were Arora Business School, Vidyaranya School and University of Hyderabad. The Warangal Chapter hosted two performances of Sh. Madhu at Institute of Technology and Management (ITM) and National Institute of Technology (NIT). Chittoor is emerged from its dormancy and hosted the performances of Mysore Brothers on August 31. It also marked the

inauguration of a new chapter in SPIC MACAY Andhra Pradesh.

Among the other programs in Andhra Pradesh were of Carnatic Vocal by Sh.O.S Thiagrajan, Carnatic Violin by Sh T. M. Krishna and Odissi by Vidushi Kavita Dwivedi.

RAJASTHAN

The state is off to a grand start again with the Virasat 2009 from August 1. There are a number of artists touring the state, covering most cities.

Smt Vijaylakshmi Shivaji, Mohiniattam performed in Kota, Jaipur and Banasthali. Schools that participated were: Akalank Public School, Maharani School, Rampura, Govt. Girls School, Gumanpura, Central Public School, Talwandi, DAV Public School, Lakheri, (KOTA) Seedling Public School, Parasrampuria Gem International School in JAIPUR and Bansathali Vidyapeeth (Banasthali).

Sh. Salil Bhatt on Satwik veena performed in Udaipur, Nathdwara, Bhilwara, Kota, Tonk, Nagor and Chittorgarh. Participating institutions were: St. Paul's Sr. Sec. School, (Udaipur), Govt. Girls College (Nathdwara), Vivekanand School, Mayur School, (Bhilwara), Tagore Bal Niketan (Tonk), Karni Vikas Samiti, St. Teressa Sec. School, Jhalawar, Lakshdeep Sec. School, Bundi (Kota); Banasthali Vidyapith (Banasthali), Central Academy Sr. Sec. School, Senth, Govt. Sr. Sec. School, Arniyapanth (Chittor) and L. K. Singhania School (Nagor)

Sh. Tarun Bhattacharya on santoor performed in one of the longest circuits of the state covering: Jaipur, Banasthali, Kota, Fatehapur, Sikar, Sardarsaheer, Bikaner, Jodhpur, Barmer, Sirohi and Udaipur. The 15 institutions that participated were: Tagore Public School, Banasthali Vidyapeeth, Sir Padampat Singhania School, Medical College, Vidya Mandir School, Dadabari Neerja Modi Public School, Nimawat Public School, Swami Keshwanand Memorial Sr. Sec. School, Vidya Mandir School, Veterinary College, Rajmata Krishna Kumari

Girls School, Mayur's Noble Academy, St. Joseph School, Laxmipat Singhaniya School, J.K.Puram and St. Paul's School

Sh. Narendra Kholi gave talks in Kota, Chittorgarh and Jaipur while Smt Madhusmita Moanty had students enthralled by her Odissi performances at BITS Pilani, Paharia School, Pilani, BRJD Public School in Bhorugram, IASE at Sardarsehar, Maharani College- Jaipur, Govt. Sr. Sec. School, Chittor, Vishal Academy, Chittor, Sangam School of Excellence, Bhilwara and Mother Teressa Schhol at Kota.

Finally, Ustad Bundu Khan and troupe (folk) went over the state covering Sri Ganganagar, Hanumangarh, Chittorgarh and Kota. They performed at Sri Devi Girls Polytechnic College, Abohar Road, DAV Public School, Nohar, Children Paradise Sec. School, Chanderiya Sanwaliya, Govt. Girls P.G. Collge, Gandhi Nagar, IBB College, Ranpur and Chhatrapati Shivaji School, RAC

MAHARASHTRA

The Mumbai Virasat '09 was inaugurated by Pt Shivkumar Sharma at SNTD Women's University, Juhu on August 31, 2009. The Virasat series will see over 50 events in various schools and colleges across Mumbai and would include talks, movie screening, workshops and concerts.

Meanwhile, the Vidarbha region had only one artist in July. All activity since was stopped due to Swain Flue in Maharashtra. Pt. Ronu Majumdar (Flute) gave 5 lec-dems in the region: Tirupati Tantra Niketan, Akola; JNV-Shegaon; JNV- Amaravati; BVM, Wathoda and Bhide Girls High School, Nagpur. All programs were successful where number of students present at each lec-dem was between 300 and 500.

BIHAR

The Bihar VIRASAT - 2009 was inaugurated on 25th August 2009 in Patna with the programme of Pt. Hariprasad Chourasia and Pt. Vishwamohan Bhatt at the L N Mishra

Institute. Pt. Chourasia also performed at IIBM, Patna while Pt VishwaMohan Bhatt went on to perform in a few more institutions like: NMCH, NIT, St. Joseph Convent and Patna College.

Earlier Meeta Pandit gave 6 Lec Dems in Patna in July.

Shri Ramkailash Yadav of Bhojpuri Biraha performed in Bihar in the month of September. Concerts were held at Indian Railways Inst. of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering (IRIMIEE), Jamalpur; Vidya Bihar Inst. of Technology, SSKGVS, Dhamdaha, Katihar; Rampriti Uchha Vidyalaya, Belwa; DPS-Bhagalpur; DPS-Patna; DPS-Muzaffarpur and Sanghamitra Public School, Siwan

KERALA

THE state, fresh from successfully hosting the 24th National Convention, is now gearing up for a season of Virasat series. Pt. Ronu Majumdar (Flute) with Sudhir Pande (Tabla) performed in Ernakulam, Trichur, Palakkad Calicut Kasaragod and Tellicherry.

Pt. Tarun Bhattacharya (Santoor), Dr. N. Rajam (Violin), Smt Priyadarsini Govind (Bharathanatyam), Smt Sushmita Banerjee (Kathak) also went on a tour of Ernakulam and Trivandrum. Smt Ashwini Bhide Deshpande will also be touring the state soon.

In addition to the above artistes, there is a plan to have 100 film screenings featuring the classics of Charlie Chaplin and Satyajit Ray. The chapter is also in touch with South Zone Cultural Centre (SZCC) of the Central Government for getting a circuit each of Theyyam and Otamtullal sponsored by it so that we can do about programmes of this unique form in the state

CHHATTISGARH

The Virasat 2009 series was inaugurated here by Dr. N. Rajam (Volin) accompanied by Sh. Ajeet Pathak on Tabla on September 2, 2009 at DPS, Raipur.

This wonderfully coordinated effort was made possible after the

successful state convention that was held on July 18-19 where Pt. Hari Prasad Chaurasia (Flute) and Smt Sombala Kumar (Dhrupad) performed. According to state coordinator Ajay Srivastava, The strategy to involve youth in the movement is showing results.

The other programmes under the

series were held in different parts of the state: namely DMAT, KPS, Raipur; BIT Durg; NH Goel public School, Raipur, Guru Nank School, Bilaspur, GGCU, Bilaspur and OPJIT, Raipur.

A Symposium on School education was also held in Sargranth with over 300 students attending the event.



Photo: Dipanjan Ghosh

HARI JI ENTHRALLS KOLKATA LAWYERS

It was perhaps the first time that he felt nervous before going in for a concert. He was afraid that he was entering some court house with lawyers all around, said Pt. Hari Prasad Chaurasia, smilingly! He was giving the 'Living the Spiritual Dream' concert at the West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences (NUJS) on September 4, organised by the Kolkata chapter.

Hari ji also struck a humorous cord with his audience. He began with playing raag Yaman and for the next raag he asked the audience for their choice, upon which he got quite a few requests. Someone said, "Saawan ka mahina hai, raag megh malhar ho jaye!" The many requests prompted another dig by the maestro, "Aaplog to muhse bhi zyada raag jante hain. Itna to main bhi nahi janta!" By the time he was done playing the notes on his flute, its magical spell had worked yet again leaving many budding-lawyers enchanted.

The evening also gave students the avenue of interaction with the maestro as the latter lovingly invited students to ask him questions. He asked students if anyone could tell him the difference between the two ragas he had played - Yaman and Vihag, to which two students gave correct answers, giving rise to surprise and rounds of applaud from their peers! "The concert had lot of spirit, zest, josh and young people. That's what we had wanted," said Rupali Sachdev, of Kolkata chapter. Pandit ji also shared with students' the power of music. "I am glad I came here. Listen to shastriya sangeet during your studying intervals and it will increase your learning power and facial glow," he said Chaurasia.

JHARKHAND

The Jharkhand state convention was held at the Birsa Agricultural University (BAU), Ranchi, on September 5 - 6. The convention was attended by delegates from Ranchi, Jamshedpur, Dhanbad and Hazaribagh chapters.

In his keynote address, Dr Kiran Seth spoke about the concept of the movement and how to make it more effective. He said though SPIC MACAY is basically a students' movement, there was a need to involve others too, in order to bring about stability. **"While students are like the river which provides continuity, seniors and housewives are like the bank which provides support," he said.**

Jharkhand state chairperson Binay Sarawgi welcomed the delegates and spoke about the need to start new chapters in order to spread the movement in Jharkhand. Several organisational issues were discussed during the convention.

A kathak recital of Mrs Shovana Narayan was held to a packed hall in the evening. It was like a veritable feast for *rasiks* of Ranchi. The audience gave a standing ovation after the concert. Dignitaries present on the occasion, included state Industries and Mines Secretary Mr. N.N. Sinha and BAU Vice-Chancellor Dr N.N. Singh.

On the 2nd day, Ram Kailash Yadav's *Biraha* troupe stole the show. A large number of students and faculty members gathered to watch the performance and enjoyed each and every moment of it.

During the convention, it was agreed to hold a series of activities in different parts of the state in November for which names of a few artistes were suggested.

NORWAY COLLABORATION

Our collaboration with Norway has been extended for another four years. More activities will take place under this renewed cooperation. **Rikskonsertene** and **SPIC MACAY** will now be conducting more concerts and workshops in both the countries.

Four Schools have been selected in Delhi that will work with Musicians and students from Norway in these workshops. These interactive workshops will last for two years. A senior delegation from Rikskonsertene was in India in August to meet with the management, music faculty, students of these selected schools. The delegation had constructive meetings with all four schools. The meetings will help them decide which school will be able to conduct workshops in the appropriate manner. These workshops will culminate with students from Norway coming to India and students from India visiting Norway.

The delegation also met with Prof. Anjali Mittal, Dean of the faculty of Music, Delhi University to explore the possibility of a research oriented program between Delhi University and Rogaland University, Norway.

Besides this new module, under the ongoing exchange, seven musicians toured Norway from September 10 to October 3. These included Smt. Ashwini Bhide, Us. Akram Khan, Sh. Murad Ali, Su. Sunanda Sharma, Sh. Mukesh Sharma, Sh. Mithilesh Jha and Sh. Vinay Mishra. They conducted Lec-Dems in different parts of Norway. Smt. Bhide conducted 2-day long workshop in Oslo before starting her Lec-Dem circuit. In November '09, Rajasthani Folk group will be touring Norway for 14 days. They will also be performing at the famous Oslo World Music festival. Us. Bahauddin Dagar will also be touring Norway in the same month conducting Master classes in different universities in Norway.

Two groups of musicians will be visiting India between October 2009 and January 2010 to conduct school and college concerts. These Musicians have been selected by Dr. Kiran Seth during his visit to Norway. The Western Classical music group will be touring India from mid-October onwards and the Jazz Group will be touring India from the last week of January 2010. Dates will be shared with all as soon as they are finalized.

MUSIC IN THE PARK

Music in the Park series in Delhi will resume from October 2009 with the inaugural concert by legendary Kishori Amonkar and Bahauddin Dagar on October 10 at the Nehru Park, Chanakyapuri. On Oct. 31st Ustad Amjad Ali Khan will grace the park, on November 14 Ustad Sultan Khan will perform while Begum Parveen Sultana will enthrall us on November 21.

In the **Jaipur edition** of the series we've had four concerts between Apr 2009 and Sept. 2009. The concert is held on second Saturday of every month at the popular Central Park. We had Pt Channu Lal Mishra in April, Pt Debu Chaudhary in May, Us. Shahid Parvez in August and Smt Girija Devi in September.

Delhi will witness some more concerts in the coming months. Pt. Ravi Shankar and daughter Anoushka Shankar will perform on Dec 5.

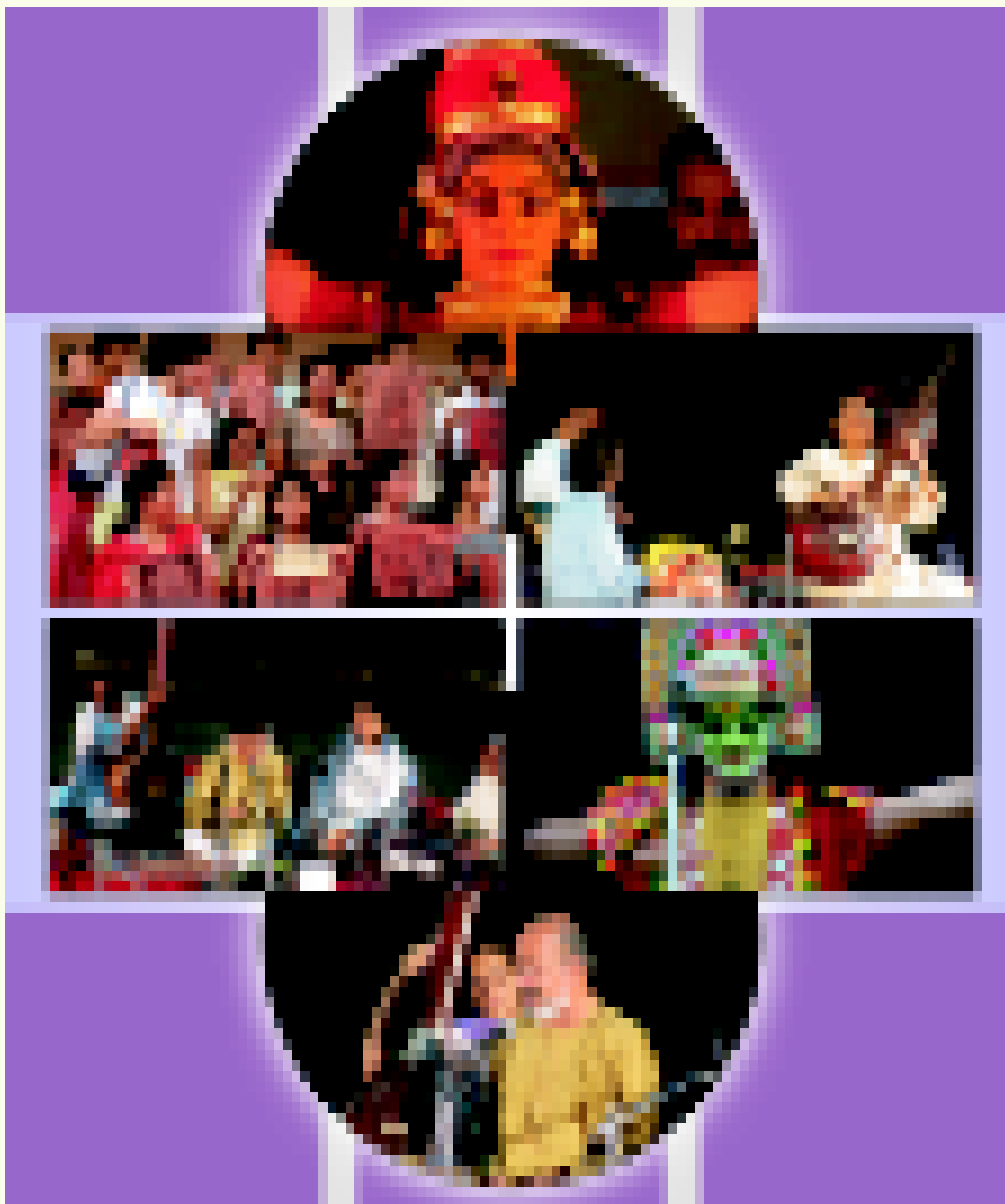
HIMACHAL PRADESH

It was a proud moment for SPIC MACAY on Sept 13, when a powerful performance of "Charandas Chor" was presented at the packed hall of the historic, 122-years-old Gaitey Theatre at Shimla, which was recently reopened after many years.

Gaitey Theater is one of the two theaters of its kind in the world, the second being in France. The first play that was staged here was "Time will tell" by the troupe from London in 1888. Noble Laureate Rudyard Kipling, Legendary Prithviraj Kapur and many famous personalities have performed here in the past.

Habib Saheb during his visit to Chandigarh had expressed his desire to perform at Gaitey. SPIC MACAY was determined to make it possible. What a befitting tribute to the departed soul that his desire is fulfilled in the year when his company NAYA THEATER celebrates its 50th anniversary. The play was inaugurated by the chief secretary who gave a standing ovation

**GLIMPSE OF
24TH NATIONAL
CONVENTION**



**GLIMPSE OF
24TH NATIONAL
CONVENTION**



Photos : Ranjeet Nirguni

state news

to the troupe. Another performance of the same play was held on Sept 14 at Auckland House school, Shimla.

PUNJAB

The Jalandhar chapter had its Virasat series at many places from September 1-3. Some of the schools that participated were Jalandhar Model Sr Sec. School, Sanskriti KMV School, Cantt. Board Sr Sec. Boys School, Eklavya School, Nakodar Road, Army Public School. Programmes outside Jalandhar were held at: Hindu Kanya Vidyalaya, Kapurthala and Kirpa Bhavan Orphanage, Lamma Pind.

TAMIL NADU/ PONDICHERRY

Though SPIC MACAY activities in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry may not inspire much pride but like they say, every cloud does have its silver lining. Two workshops were arranged for about 400 NSS Volunteers who gathered at Sriperumbudur for the NSS Mega Camp from June 22 to July 3, 2009.

The Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, in collaboration with Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNIYD) and National Service Scheme (NSS) organized this mega camp for the volunteers who came from all over India.

The tireless efforts of SPIC MACAY volunteers Ms. Shraddha and Mr. Guthi Rajashekhar from Chennai under the guidance of Panchamji from Delhi, resulted in the two workshops by two eminent artists, Smt Chitra Vishveswaran and Sh. T.V. Shankaranarayanan.

Smt. Vishveswaran explained the origins of *Bharatanatyam* and involved the audience by asking them to follow her students who were performing. Apart from the fact that the dance form is named after Bharat Muni, the name is also an amalgamation of the initial letter of the three words: **Bhava**: Expressions; **Raaga**: Music; **Thala**: Beats or rhythm. *Bharatanatyam* is incomplete without these three elements.

As for the Carnatic vocal recital by Shri Shankaranarayanan, the

rendition of the "kalpana swaras" the versatile artist was well appreciated by the audience.

Both the workshops seem to have made an indelible impression on the NSS volunteers, in particular, since it was a novel experience for them.

A program of **Western Classical Music** - Violin and Cello - by Julie Anne Derome and Gabriel Prynne was also organised on September 9 at Madras School of Economics. About 60 students attended the concert and the artists spoke about the pieces they performed and about the composers of western classical music. Towards the end, students and the artistes engaged in a discussion on the relationship between mathematics and music.

The Indian tour of these artistes was supported by the Canadian Council of Arts (CCA) and Quebec Council of Arts (QCA). The Chennai program was supported by Alliance Francaise while the Marriot Hotel was the hospitality partner.

More programs in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry are planned for October. A few programmes in August 2009 had to be cancelled due to the swine flu scare.

NORTH ZONE CONVENTION

Three hundred young delegates from Punjab and neighboring states attended the North Zone Convention of SPIC MACAY at the **Thapar University**, Patiala from Oct 1 - 4.

The participants witnessed performances of maestros of classical music, dance, leading folk artists, talks by eminent people from different fields and also attended workshops of yoga and folk arts of Punjab.

Some of the eminent artistes who performed at the Zonal convention were Pt. Vishwamohan Bhatt, Pt. Channulal Mishra, Pt. Ronu Majumdar, Sh. Wasiffudin Dagar, Smt. Rani Khanam and Wadali Brothers. There were also folk performances by renowned theater person Sh. M.K Raina.

Apart from the above mentioned performances, there was a lec-dem by Master Puppeteer Sh. Dadi Pudumjee,

a talk by senior photographer Sh. Raghu Rai and screening of Japanese film *Seven Samurai* by late Akira Kurosawa. Delegates also had the opportunity to learn from leading exponents in various art forms by participating in the intensives and workshops.

"Today, we constantly remain connected to the rest of the world through internet, television and the mobile phone but have lost touch with our inward world. Such efforts taken by institutions like Thapar University provide an opportunity to the young person to connect inwardly too." Said Dr. Kiran Seth.

"Overall, it was a multisensory and memorable experience for all the participants. The combination of diverse music and dance forms, colorful folk performances, yoga and people from different states was rejuvenating and delightful" said Dr. Abhijeet Mukherjee, Director-Thapar University.

UTTAR PRADESH

The UP Virasat was inaugurated at D.P.S. Agra on August 11 by Pt. Bhajan Sopori (Santoor) and Smt Shanti Hiranand (Ghazal). The other programmes held under the series were of Pt. Debu Chaudhuri at Allahabad and Faizabad, Pt Vishwamohan Bhatt in Varanasi and Lucknow, Sh. Mumtaj Hussain at Sikohabad, Pt. Ronu Majumdar in Gorakhpur, Devaria and Basti & Sh. Prateek Chaudhuri in Kanpur. Sh. Rajendra Prasanna, Smt Nandini Singh and Sanjeev Abhyankar also performed in various places.

HARYANA

All through August we had concerts by Sh. Ram Kailash Yadav (Biraha) at Rohtak, Hissar, Fatehabad, Yamuna Nagar, Rai, Kurushetra and by Smt Nandini Singh in Yamuna Nagar, Sonapat, Sirsa and Hissar.

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Tryst with a Mystic

C.S. Panchamkesan remembers his first meeting with Ustad Abdul Rashid Khan, who completed 100 years of age and recently performed at our 24th National Convention.

The schedule I had in my hand, of the 10th National School Convention of SPIC MACAY at Modern School, New Delhi, looked impressive with a host of legends gathered 'under one roof' for the Intensive workshops, concerts and participation.

There was a particular name in the list that looked awe inspiring. The schedule had Ustad Abdul Rashid Khan slated to perform as well as conduct a five-day workshop for children. A few months ago, one had chanced a review in *The Hindu* about this nonagenarian and that is how I recognised the name of the artist. Now that I write of this experience, I feel somewhat ashamed that it has taken me almost six decades of life to know about such a great artist of our era. I now had the opportunity to find out more about this mystic within the precincts of the hallowed Modern School.

As I walked towards the Guest House where the visiting artistes were housed, there was a great sense of an-

icipation, awe and even trepidation as to what the Darshan would be like. I asked a student where Khan Saheb would be and she directed me to a nearby banyan tree under which he was seated. I glanced yonder and saw the majestic tree which could be about seventy five years old. Little did I realise at that time that under the tree was a mystic older than the tree itself. Yes, Ustad Abdul Rashid Khan was sitting there in the pleasant sunshine of the winter month, in a very pensive and perhaps meditative mood. I somehow understood that he was not asleep but in deep search of peace and tranquility through the spiritual path of

"...I felt most humbled at the profundity of the occasion when he tried to focus his vision on me at his feet. The eyes didn't see but had strange recognition in them, the recognition the mystic had for SPIC MACAY..."

music.

I have often wondered why I am always overwhelmed when I see an elderly person. Is it the awareness of mortality or is it the awe of looking at a person with decades of struggles, triumphs, pains and achievements? As per a tradition practiced by my forefathers and bequeathed to me by my parents, I am intuitively trained to recite my lineage and offer a Namaskar at the feet of the elderly for blessings. I was uncertain as I neared the wizened old man almost beyond any anatomical size or shape, sitting there with his back towards me. From where I was, I could only see an outline of a white Kurta and a rather shaky stooped figure on a wheel chair. I came within inches of the old man, as old as time itself. The external contours of his shape reminded me of the sketch of Mahatma Gandhi - the simplicity of a sketch of an outline.

I was shocked to see the mystic whose extremities were eaten up by age and whose eyes looked vision-less. I was aware that the divine being at my arms' length had suffered a lot and was crippled by some illness. Age and illness vied with each other to debilitate his size and shape but not his will power, determination and great musical acumen. He fell on the thorns of life, bled yet he conquered everything that life shoved at him with his musical powers and he continues to do so. It moved me so much that I ran the remaining five steps and stumbled at his feet with my palms and head in a *charan sparsh*.

I realised that my forehead rested on a pair of stump like legs. Tears rolled out of my eyes and I washed these two stubs, which once upon a time were legs. My mind was filled with the sense of divine reward and a strange tranquility prevailed as I introduced myself as a SPIC MACAY volunteer. I felt most humbled at the profundity of the occasion when he tried to focus his vision on me at his feet. I became aware that the eyes didn't see externally but had some strange recognition in them which I later realised was the recognition which the mystic had for SPIC MACAY.

Continued on page 14

A NEW LOOK FOR *www.spicmacay.com*

Friends and volunteers of SPICMACAY now have another reason to cheer about. The new look website is now ready for all the net-savvy patrons.

You can now register on it, share information with your friends on orkut/facebook/twitter/gmail/hotmail/yahoo etc by clicking on the 'share this' button after any article. You can also subscribe to the online newsletter and comment on the articles if you have registered. If you want to contribute content to the website then register on the website and send us a mail at info@spicmacay.com mentioning your username, chapter details and what you want to contribute.

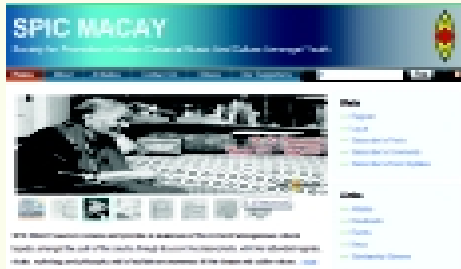
If you have old activity reports and articles, send them to us and we'll put them online. You can also send us a request to contribute content as mentioned above so that we can give you the access to add content on the website yourself.

Key features of new website:

1. Video, audio and file uploads allowed. They can be uploaded from the computer or directly lifted from other websites.
2. People can subscribe for news updates and event updates.
3. All states can post their updates. They will all show on the main site.
4. Photo gallery will soon be added.
5. Anyone can contribute articles.
6. Anyone can comment and hope to get a reply to their query. For issues like scholarship scheme it will be helpful if queries are posted on the website so that others can read them too.
7. Site is "search-engine" friendly, so articles posted on it will show higher in the search results.

Guidelines for filing reports:

1. Reports have to be compiled in Microsoft Excel 97/XP/2003 format



(.xls) or **Open Office** Calc format (.ods) ONLY.

Please note that Microsoft Excel 2007 format (.xlsx) will NOT BE accepted. If you have Microsoft Excel 2007 you can save the file as .xls by going to : **File > Save As >** and changing the format option given below the 'file name' field.

2. The fields to be mentioned:

Date, Artist, Art Form, Venue, Chapter. Please do not add any other field or change the order of the fields.

3. Keep the format of the date as Date/Month/Year, all in numeral. For example the correct format is 24/04/08 for the 24th day of the month April of 2008.

4. Do not put anything like Ustad/Pandit/Shri/Smt with the name of the artiste. Please give only the artist's name.

5. For venue write only the name of school/college and location (if required). Do not mention full address or things like auditorium/assembly grounds etc.

6. For chapter write name of the city/town and not the name of institution.

7. All events should be arranged date wise and not artist's circuit wise.

8. After you have compiled the file upload it at www.spicmacay.com/activity-report

9. Name of the file should be <chapter>-<series>-<year>.xls

Example: rajasthan-virasat-2009.xls

10. The events of foreign module should be compiled in separate file and uploaded in the respective field in www.spicmacay.in/activity-report

Name of file: <chapter>-<series>-<year>-foreign.xls

Example: rajasthan-virasat-2009-foreign.xls

11. SPIC MACAY foundation events should be compiled in separate file and uploaded in the respective field in www.spicmacay.in/activity-report

Name of file: <chapter>-<series>-<year>-foundation.xls

TRYST WITH A MYSTIC

Two arms, or rather, two stubs with all the remaining eaten away by age and illness touched my head. Initially the stubs were trying to grope and find my head and once located the small part of a hand which in its healthier days was a palm, firmly rested on my head.

His vision did not fall on me yet there was a strange feeling that he could see me. I was bewildered but a certain channel of blessings flowing from the mystic filled my mind with ecstasy. I looked at the serene being

and realised that he registered my presence. He then said that *Pancham* is a name denoting the fifth letter of the *Saptha Swaras* of music. I felt blessed and realised that destiny had chosen me to meet this sage.

Blessed are we to witness this Centenarian singing in our midst. May God make us worthy of this honour and give us the privilege to have him sing for us for many more years. Here is a musician who is more complete than many I have ever seen. Truly an awesome and inspiring is the experience.

Newly appointed Vice Chairman of SPIC MACAY, Vikas Nagrare, expresses his thoughts on issues confronting the movement ..

My tryst with this noble movement was quite accidental. It started with a peep into the auditorium of Azad Hind College, Mumbai in 1995 -96 where Smt. Kishori Amonkar was at the peak of her performance. I had gone there not to listen to any classical music, but to volunteer at the shoe counter outside. For many of us, to volunteer for SPIC MACAY programs in neighboring institutions, was a good excuse to skip classes 'officially'. Till that day, classical music just did not make any sense to me. But that curious 'peep' into the auditorium captivated me forever. The experience left me spellbound long after the performance was over. I was soon attending classical music concerts regularly, whenever I got time and the opportunity while working for long hours in the hotel industry.

In 2004, when I joined as a Faculty in a hotel management college in Indore, I confronted SPIC MACAY again. One day I read about Pt Vishwamohan Bhatt's performing at a local management institute in Indore. I left office early that day and went for the concert. It was a very fulfilling and an emotional moment for me when Pt Vishwamohan agreed to my request of playing his Grammy Award winning number. After the concert was over, I was approached by Neal Jain, the then coordinator for Indore who insisted that I come for the weekly meeting on Saturdays.

I remember going for one of the Saturday meetings and being utterly surprised to find Neal sitting all alone. I was overwhelmed by his single-minded dedication and decided to contribute to the cause then and there. Even then I had never imagined that I would be so engrossed in the SPIC MACAY movement. Over a period of time my involvement grew. I would translate press reports in English from Hindi and coordinate with the press.

Later Neal also encouraged me to do artist coordination.

Then came the Mumbai National Convention in 2004, which was the first convention I attended and it changed my entire perspective of this cause. I soon moved to Hyderabad and started contributing to uplift the activities there.

With all these years of association with SPIC MACAY one has also come to notice some issues that we as a movement must address promptly.

I find a big gap between our cultural heritage and the younger generation. No syllabus of any school or university covers music, dance, folk arts or crafts as important subjects of study. SPIC

... I have gained much from SPIC MACAY. I feel it is an integral part of my life. I learnt organizing, planning, coordination and more here . Above all, I found a big family in spicmacayites ...

MACAY is dedicated to bridge this gap but our efforts seem little. Many corporatised educational institutions still display grimace to support this cause. I am left surprised when I see the high-fee-charging schools failing to offer even a meager amount as financial support for a SPICMACAY program in their premissis. I wish these schools and colleges were more generous in contributing financially and helping us to spread.

The other issue that bothers me is that SPIC MACAY is not active in many smaller towns. For instance in Andhra Pradesh, there are few 'B' towns where programs are organized. We must focus on spreading the movement to all parts of the country. This can be done by funding these

small chapters, which most of the time become dormant due to lack of funds.

Gandhiji used to say that the real India lives in its villages. We have to convince the artists to reach out to students even in the villages. Besides the private educational institutions, SPIC MACAY must also go to the government schools. If we go through the Activity Chart of 2008-2009, one finds that most places that are highlighted come from big cities like Delhi, Hyderabad, Chandigarh, Jaipur, Kolkata, Bangalore etc where maximum number of programs are held. The Youth in these cities is anyways exposed to various art forms, even without being associated with SPIC MACAY. Our focus should be on how to inspire and make the youth in the smaller towns more aware.

Another thing that I feel strongly about is giving a chance to those artists from our 'Artsites Directory' who have so far been completely ignored. Over the years, we have seen a few artists getting too many programs while many others not figuring in our schedule at all. We must understand that all artists listed in the 'Artists' Directory' have been included after careful scrutiny. No artist is lesser than the other. Picking up selective artists gives an impression of us promoting a few artsits rather than the art form.

Then there is the case of chapters going dormant after some time due to lack of financial support or lack of a volunteer base. At Hyderabad, we have overcome these hurdles by implementing a few successful strategies. We now charge the private institutions for a performance, in such a way that we also save money after all expenses have been met. We no longer ask for one, big hefty sponsorship from a few companies but go for for smaller amounts from many. Our next step is to coordinate with the corporate-run schools for an annual fund per student.

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I feel Strongly

Even Rs.100 per student can raise about Rs. 80,000 from one school. If even five schools come up with such a contribution, it will help us raise Rs. 4,00,000 per year. No school administration or parents' body would object to such a small amount for getting inspiring and moving performances. Besides cross-subsidizing government schools and colleges, where money is a major constraint; we can also support the dormant and small chapters in a state. Because of our offering to govt. institutions we can also get lenient support from the State's Culture Department.

Dr Kiran Seth, the inspiration behind SPIC MACAY, always emphasises on the weekly meetings. I strongly agree with his views. Hyderabad Chapter has bounced back as a strong chapter only due to the regular conduct of weekly meetings. The meetings have to be regular without any break. For about 2 years, there were times I was the only person present at these meetings in Hyderabad. Today SPIC MACAY has become a brand and many institutions are eager to start chapters and have weekly meetings in their campuses.

Today, when I look back, I feel I have personally gained much from SPIC MACAY. I feel it is an integral part of my life. I learnt organizing, planning, coordination, directing students etc. here. Above all, I found a very big family in spicamacayites all over the country. Moreover, the most precious thing I learnt to face challenges.

SPIC MACAY is not only about organizing programmes, it is a platform to mould oneself into a complete human being. SPIC MACAY has given me an opportunity to serve my country in a beautiful way. India is known for its arts, crafts, traditions and culture more than anything else. I am glad that we have this opportunity to contribute to our Mother India.

SPIC MACAY JOINS HANDS WITH ICCR

THE TWO leading promoters of Indian art and culture in the world – SPIC MACAY and ICCR (Indian Council for Cultural Relations) – have agreed to come together. ICCR will sponsor some of the SPIC MACAY events in Pune, Maharashtra, which will focus on foreign students. Pune is often called the Oxford of the East or since it attracts a large number of students who come to study in the many educational institutions based here.

Under the proposed arrangement, events will be conducted at such venues where maximum number of foreign students can attend the programmes. It will be a part of the ongoing VIRASAT '09 series. This weeklong event would comprise of different modules such as concerts of classical music and dance, workshops of classical music and dance (which could be extended), yoga, talk, walks to historical monuments, screening of film classics (of Indian directors). There could also be workshops by Saiduddin Dagar and Arti Ankalekar for *Vocal music*; Sarvari Jaminis for *Kathak*, Sucheta Bhide Chapekar for *Bharatnatyam*, Divya Soma Mashe for *Warli painting*, Vijay Ghate for *Tabla*, Teejan Bai for *Pandavani* or Krishna Chandra Sahu for *Prahlad Natak* etc. On the final day of the workshop all students learning these art forms would be required to give a presentation of their experience. More details regarding the schedule of this programme will soon be decided.

HYDERABAD TO HOST NORWEGIAN GROUP

Hyderabad chapter is going to host a **Western Classical concert by a Norwegian Group** in October-end; under World Heritage Series. The performances would be organised in various schools and colleges.

SPIC MACAY GOES TO NEPAL

SPIC MACAY chapter of Nepal will be launched in October 2009. Nepal chapter is being inaugurated by Pt. Vishwamohan Bhatt. He will perform at four schools in and around Kathmandu. He will be accompanied by Sh. Ram Kumar Mishra on *Tabla*. The activity in Nepal is being initiated by the **Nepal Music Centre**. Mr. Santosh Sharma is heading the centre and is keen on bringing Indian Classical Music to the young people of Nepal.

SPIC MACAY IN SINGAPORE

The newly established Singapore chapter held its inaugural concerts by Pt. Satish Vyas (santoor) on July 31, 2009. Pt. Vyas was accompanied by Pt. Mukundraj Deo on *tabla* and gave a scintillating performance at the **S.P.Jain Centre of Management**. The second concert was held at the **Global Indian School** on August 3. The initiative for starting the Singapore chapter has been taken by Dr Samarendra Singh. A group of spicamacayites worked hard for many months to impress upon the institutions the need to create awareness of India's cultural heritage in foreign lands.

Contd. from pg.6

A Full Education

The result of all these efforts would be that a young person would become more balanced and will be able to contribute much more to the society. While satisfying and improving her material world, she would grow in the inner domain too, thereby realizing that titillation cannot give lasting happiness, which necessarily has to come through the intangible domain. A by-product would be, that a lot of problems of divisiveness and insensitivity plaguing us would get diluted if we gave the areas mentioned, adequate attention in education.

IN SEARCH OF SELF..

By Pancham

THE WORD Ashram conjures up various images in the mind. For people of the previous generation it meant isolation and disconnect from the world, perhaps in the Himalayan caves. For our generation it means a holiday once in a while in Rishikesh without much disconnect with the rest of the world!!! For the Gen Next it means a place where they can enjoy swimming, spa etc and let their hair down without anyone admonishing them.

However, for the 650 odd delegates (predominantly students) of SPIC MACAY, assembled at Trivandrum for the **24th Annual National Convention from May 24-29, 2009**, it was a totally different experience being introduced to the rich traditional Indian culture. They were here seeking a glimpse of the beauty, grace and wisdom embodied in our heritage to make it an integral part of their lives. For these people Ashram life is an opening of the inner eyes, as our logo portrays, and the realization of the joy in discovering the soul within while being a part of the world at large.

SPIC MACAY's first Convention in God's own country – Kerala saw a tremendous enthusiasm and a lot of activities. Kendriya Vidyalaya, Pattom and Kendriya Vidyalaya, Pangode were the two schools for stay, workshops, Intensives and some of the 'talk' programmes. The inauguration and concerts were held at the famous –AKG Memorial Hall.

24th May: Invocatory Panchavadyam, a typical temple art of percussion ensemble consisting of five different instruments, heralded the inauguration function. It was presented by the well known group of Sreevaraham Ashok Kumar and party. Shri M. A. Baby, Minister for Education, Kerala lit the lamp and



Dr. Kiran Seth at the inauguration of 24th National Convention

declared the Convention OPEN. In his speech, Mr. Baby lauded the efforts of SPIC MACAY to bring together the youth and provide them inspiration for a lifetime. President of SPIC MACAY-Kerala chapter delivered the opening address and spoke about value based educational system being the need of the hour.

The stage was set for the opening concert, an eagerly awaited musical experience for the audience. Pt. Shiv Kumar Sharma took the stage and it was awe inspiring to watch him at his dazzling best. Kerala had pre-monsoon climate and rains were hanging in the air.

Panditji appropriately chose to invoke the rain Gods by choosing Raag Megh. The beautiful sounds of the invocation were too much for the Rain Gods to resist as they came rushing down on the landscapes of Kerala while we were all completely drenched in the Nada Showers inside. Sh Ram Kumar Mishra gave able support on Tabla.

The second half of the evening

featuring Kalamandalam Raman Kutty Nair and Kalamandalam Gopi together on the stage rendering Santhana Gopalacharitam in Kathakali.

25th MAY: As per the convention practice, there was Yoga session every day from 4 AM conducted by Gurus from Vivekananda Yoga Kendra, Kanyakumari. The few students who came steadfastly preferred the Shavaasan so they could rest their tired limbs and eyes. At 9 AM the eminent Kavalam Narayana Panicker gave a talk on folk lore of Kerala followed by folk dance performances arranged through South Zone Cultural Centre (SZCC), Thanjavur featuring Ottamtullal and Theyyam of Kerala and Aragattam of Tamil Nadu. This was followed by



(L-R) Us. Fahimuddin Dagar, Pt. Shiv Kumar Sharma, Kerala Education Minister Mr. M.A. Baby and Swami Vivikatanand Saraswati at the inauguration.

Prahlad Natak by Jagruthi Cultural Centre, Orissa lead by Guru Krushna Chandra Sahu. Intensives began immediately thereafter and everyone had a busy time with a hurried lunch break. The food served during the Convention was delightful and the emphasis was to give the delegates an idea about Kerala's traditional culinary repertoire.

There were **10 Intensives** consisting Tabla by Pt. Ramkumar Mishra, Kudiyaattam by Smt. Kapila Venu, Dhrupad Vocals by Ust. Fahimuddin Dagar, Hindustani Vocals by Ust. Abdul Rashid Khan, Yoga by the yogacharyas of Viviktananda Centre, Kathakali by Guru Ramankutty Nair, Prahlad Natak by Guru Sahu, Kalamkari by Shri Gurappa Chetty and Patwa and Pattachitra by artists sent by East Zone Cultural Centre (EZCC).

In the evening Sh. T.N. Seshagoplan gave a Carnatic recital followed by Kudiyaattam by Kapila Venu. While the former gave a typical Kutcheri (concert in traditional style) of Raag Thanam Pallavi, the latter produced an astonishing array of mudras, bhava, adavu, footwork, theatre, mime and dance when she presented Koormavatar (the incarnation of Vishnu in the form of a Tortoise). The



social reforms, RTI, employment schemes and shared her experiences in Rajasthan through her movement MKSS.

Later in the day famous film director Sh. Adoor Gopalakrishnan presented his award winning Film "Eli Pathayam" (Rat Trap) followed by an interactive session when students asked him about his passion for choosing art films instead of commercial cinema. He said that entertainment is a misunderstood aspect of films. While commercial films give superficial and momentary entertainment, real films provide a blissful form of 'entertainment' that is long lasting. He asked all those present to think whether what they perceive in films have any real life value.

In the evening Pt. Rajshekar Mansur gave a vocal concert followed by Carnatic flute by Vidwan Dr. N. Ramani.

27th May: Smt. Anjolie Ela Menon gave a talk on Indian artistes and there was an interactive session thereafter. In her talk Smt Menon mentioned about the Buddhist influence in Indian art forms. This was followed by the screening of Akira Kurosawa film "Throne of Blood".

In the evening, Ust. Shahid Parvez gave a sitar recital followed by a Dhrupad recital by Ust. Fahimuddin Dagar. He fluently recited Sanskrit Shlokas to prove the point that music

is above everything else and the true aim of music is MOKSHA .

28th May: There was a panel discussion about the relevance of our classical art forms in the 21st century and all the Gurus who conducted the Intensive Workshops spoke on the subject. This was followed by a demo performance by the Sishyas who had been attached to the various Gurus during the last five days of the Convention.

No National Convention is complete without the Overnight Concert. The much awaited event began with a Kathak performance by Pt. Birju Maharaj followed by a Carnatic concert by Guru TV Shankaranarayanan, Rudra Veena by Ust. Asad Ali Khan, flute by Pt. Ronu Majumdar and vocal by Ust. Abdul Rashid Khan.

Pt. Ronu Majumdar got the Brahma Muhoorta slot and played a very soothing Ahir Bhairav that still reverberates. The sight of centurion Ust. Abdul Rashid Khan singing will always inspire everyone and he always sings his heart out. The Bhajan at the end of the concert never fails to bring tears or Anand Anubhuti.

One came home from the Convention highly inspired and with gratitude to the organisers who had gone several miles beyond to overcome many challenges to make the Convention a great success.

The Hindu paper (Trivandrum Edition/28th May) called it 'Discovery of India'.

A final year B.Com student Shradha Mohan from Chennai said: "It was an extraordinary experience to be under such venerable Gurus and my whole life has changed now"

SPIC MACAY National Convention aims to bring together a large community of students from all over India and make them gear up to promote an awareness of the rich and heterogeneous cultural tapestry of India amongst youth.



National Convention was dedicated to the memory of Guru Ammanur Madhava Chakyar and Kapila ji's performance was a fitting tribute to the legend. Kudiyaattam, a dying art form is, at last, in safe hands.

26th MAY: After the Yoga session in the morning, everyone assembled at the Pattom School to listen to Smt. Aruna Roy, the eminent social activist. She spoke passionately imploring the youth to fight for their rights and due empowerment as provided by the constitution. She spoke about her struggle to establish women's rightful place in the society,

Landmark decisions at the NE meeting

The National Executive (NE) body of SPIC MACAY met on 25th-26th July 2009 at IIT Delhi and discussed at length many important issues relating to the functioning of the movement..

One of the landmark decisions that the NE took was to declare Dr Kiran Seth as the Chairperson of SPIC MACAY FOR LIFE! It was also decided to suitably amend the rule book in this regard.

When the topic of the election of a Chairperson came up, Dr. Seth suggested names of some young, active and dedicated members who could take forward the spirit of the movement. Several names that were suggested, included Vikas Nagrare from Hyderabad, Dr. Rajshree from Firozabad and Kasturi Paigude or Priyadarshan from Pune.

It was, however, strongly expressed by many NE members that Dr. Seth remain the chairperson of the movement to guide the volunteers. However, for official modalities, a Vice Chairperson could be elected from outside Delhi - who is young, credible and has spent considerable time as a volunteer at the grassroot level. It was also desired that such a person should be guided to take the reins of the movement in the future. Out of the names suggested by Dr. Seth, the NE finally voted for Vikas Nagrare of Hyderabad as the Vice Chairperson for a term of two years.

OTHER DECISIONS

All important decisions regarding functioning of the movement to be ratified by the NE.

Virasat series: Chapters must increase number of less expensive modules like talks and films. Organize more intensives in schools, especially classical music and dance for students of Class I-V and organize week-long series, covering all modules.

National Conventions: Aim to make conventions completely self-sufficient, a conceptual session must

be organized for all delegates and attempt should be made to increase the time of intensives.

Weekly meetings: Every chapter coordinator must ensure that weekly meetings are held with regularity. It was stressed that the success of a chapter depended on these meetings.

Heritage Mission: Need for a mission for promoting Indian heritage in the policies of the government. Dr Seth briefed all about his meetings with Rahul Gandhi who has agreed to arrange a meeting with Sonia Gandhi to discuss this idea further.

Sandesh: The editorial group was expanded with the inclusion of Anshuman Jain. It was decided that out of four members, one be elected chief editor. Editor must take the consent of other members before sending issue for print. No need to highlight names & personalize columns as the movement is about downplaying individual contributions and promoting self-less service.

Artiste Directory: Akshay Madan of Delhi volunteered to take up the job of update with the help of other students and assured to bring out the updated directory by the next NE.

E-groups: The only authorized group for communication in SPIC MACAY shall be the on on **yahogroups**. Moderators decided in the last NE meeting shall continue with the job. It was also agreed that the Spicemacaycians on googlegroup will be closed down within a week of the meeting.

Scholarship scheme: Sucheta ji of Nagpur, Harsh Narayan and Divyendu Shekhar of Delhi will coordinate the scheme for the next year. They shall be helped by Pancham and Ricky.

Better administration: For better organization and atmosphere within the movement, Dr Seth requested everybody to solve their personal issues through one to one interactions. Mass mails will no longer be tolerated.

Appa Jalgaonkar is no more

Harmonium maestro Pandit Appa Jalgaonkar breathed his last in Pune in the early hours of 16th September, 2009. He was 87.

Appaji, suffering paralysis for last 10 years, passed away in his sleep. His wife Leela had left the earth to live with angels 11 years ago. He is survived by his disciples Shri Hanumant and Shri Suresh Phadtare. Appa Jalgaonkar was born in a farmer's family in Jalgaon, Maharashtra on January 1, 1922. His real name was Sakharam Prabhakar Jalgaonkar, but he was fondly called Appa by the music lovers.

DOORDARSHAN TO SHOW SPIC MACAY CONCERTS

IT is a matter of great pride and honor that National Broadcaster Doordarshan (DD) has decided to devote a 1-hr slot from 10.00 to 11.00 pm every Friday, Saturday and Sunday to our ongoing Virasat series 2009. They will record all our programs across India and air them on a regular basis.

To make this possible and ensure that this happens on a regular basis, central advisors are requested to send their programme schedule to Doordarshan on a regular basis. DD needs 10 days notice to be able to put together a team to cover the programmes.

NEXT N.E. MEET IN DECEMBER

The next NASCOM/National Executive meeting is tentatively scheduled for December 5-6 at IIT Delhi. Proposed agenda for the next meeting are: State Conventions Review, Upcoming State Conventions/National School Intensive, Review of Ad Board Meeting, Updating Artistes' List-adding new names, finding mechanism to take dates from artistes, categorization and facilities to be given to artistes, recognise states with a need to revive dormant chapters and suggestions for making new website more effective.

Editor's Note

It has been a very long and enlightening experience for me to work for a communiqué like Sandesh for many years. Personal reasons forced me to discontinue working for the last few years but it feels good to be back and be able to contribute to this inspiring document again.

In my new tenure, our team's priority will be to take the idea of SPIC MACAY through Sandesh to the youth in even smaller towns. I envisage to grab the attention of our young volunteers in the metros as well, through its new look. We will also ensure that the look, design as well as content of the newsletter becomes engaging again and we do not sway away from our core path.

Since June 2009, it has been a busy time for SPIC MACAY with the national convention, state conventions and Virasat series taking off all over India. We are also expanding overseas and have now opened chapters in Nepal and Singapore while strengthening relations with Norway's Rikskonsertene. At the same time it has also been a huge challenge to grab the youth's attention and involve them in our activities. Due to constant pulls and pressures from other distractions, the youth now has many more avenues to explore or things to do. Our approach and the overall effort will be aimed at retaining the depth in the content which can connect the youth, volunteers and well-wishers to our heritage.

—Anshuman Jain

The Sandesh

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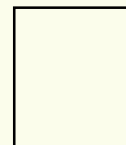
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ANNOUNCEMENT

**The 25th
National
Convention
will be held
from
June 1-6, 2010
at
IIT, KANPUR**

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