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Our Patrons & Special Guests at the Virasat Arts & Heritage Festival



Union Minister for Tourism & Culture, Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat ji graced the occasion and spoke eloquently about the tenacity needed to continue a Festival of Virasat's magnitude for three decades. With Ms. Sunaina Prakash Agarwal, Vice-President, Virasat Organising Committee.



Chairman & CEO, ONGC Ltd., Sh. Arun Kumar Singh graced the occasion as Chief Guest. Seen here, lighting the ceremonial lamp with Padmabhushan Sajan Mishra ji and Patron Virasat and President, Olympic Council of Asia, Raja Randhir Singh.



Chairman & CEO, ONGC Ltd., Sh. Arun Kumar Singh graced the occasion as Chief Guest. Seen here, lighting the ceremonial lamp with Ms. R.S. Narayani, ED-HCA, ONGC, along with Raja Randhir Singh, President, Asian Olympic Committee & Patron, Virasat Festival.

Ms. Ritu Khanduri, H'ble Speaker, Uttarakhand Vidhan Sabha, being welcomed by Sh. R.K. Singh, General Secretary, REACH



CVO, ONGC, Sh. Ranjan Prakash Thakur, being welcomed by renowned singer and MP, Manoj Tiwari.

Ms. Savita Kapoor, MLA, Dehradun Cantt. with Sh. Anand Bardhan, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary, Uttarakhand.





Rural Entrepreneurship for Art & Cultural Heritage

conveys special thanks to:

ONGC, UPES, Uttarakhand Tourism, United India Assurance, SBI, ONGC Videsh, ONGC MRPL, Axis Bank, MDDA, GAIL Gas Ltd., Indian Navy, Governments of Goa and Uttarakhand, Uttarakhand Police, Uttarakhand Pollution Control Board, Forest Research Institute, and our amazing audience!

The Festival Report

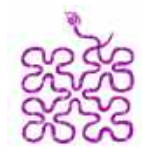
Virasat, Arts', Folklife and Heritage Festival is a fortnight long event that has become an unparalleled success story in promoting village and classical music, dance, and crafts for urban audiences. The festival has a truly national presence with an international footprint. It brings together all possible aspects of heritage through a crafts bazaar, workshops, folkdances, music, theatre, exhibitions, talks, seminars, film-festival, literature festivals, cuisine presentations and much more. The festival attracts a pan-Indian participation of about one million people along with 300 master craftspeople and 400 artistes.

The folk forms, craft, art, and culture of the mountain communities are presented with an academic perspective. Another unique aspect of this event is the participation of about 50,000 school children and youth from various schools and training institutes. The festival is free & open for all. Some features of the festival include:

- * Direct support to 350 artisans from across India through stalls at the festival.
- * Direct support to 100 culinary artistes from across India through invitation at the festival.
- * Direct support to 100 artisans/artistes/culinary artistes from the state of Uttarakhand.
- * One million people attending the festival over the fortnight.
- * Direct support to over 300 artistes performing at the festival.
- * Infusion of economies into the creative industries of India.



The Organizers



REACH
Rural
Entrepreneurship for
Art & Cultural
Heritage

REACH (Rural Entrepreneurship for Art & Cultural Heritage) is a non-profit organization engaged in the task of generating awareness of our arts, traditions and cultural practices at the grass-root level in the countryside. It strives to preserve the native wisdom and knowledge by striking a harmonious bond with the modern times. By making people aware of their rich cultural traditions and practices and preserving their heritage, it strives to restore the cultural pride to them who have been feeling powerless against the onslaught of alien values around them. Established in 1995, REACH is a voluntary movement that seeks to empower communities through innovative approaches in the field of art and culture. We promote correspondence between culture to make policy and planning community centric. Our effort is to restore local pride in cultures and strengthening them at the grassroots.



Virasat Arts' & Heritage Festival

Dehradun, Uttarakhand
15th to 29th October'24
Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Stadium



The 29th Virasat Arts' and Heritage festival, for the year 2024, was organized by REACH (Rural Entrepreneurship for Arts and Cultural Heritage), an organization well known for the promotion and preservation of rural arts and handicrafts and their cultural heritage.

REACH was established in 1995 in Dehradun and for the last 25 years, REACH is incessantly working in this direction for pan India's rural artisans and folk and tradition bearer artists. To provide an annual big platform to the rural/traditional artists, craftsmen, and artisans, REACH has been organising a fifteen days cultural festival Virasat at Dehradun in a few years' time. Craftsmen, artisans, artists from the field of music, dance, theatre, paintings, storytelling, poetry session, and representatives from all other forms of Indian art from all over India are invited to showcase their work. Virasat has been instrumental in reviving many rural arts which were once on the verge of extinction due to a lack of a platform. At this festival, programs for students from schools, and colleges in Uttarakhand are also organised under the aegis of Virasat Sadhana. In addition to this, heritage walks youth-centric activities are also organised during the festival.

Virasat this year was held from 15th October 2024 to 29th October'24 at Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Stadium, Kaulagarh Road, Dehradun.

Here is a description of all the events at the Virasat Arts' and Heritage Festival.

Day One

October 15th, 2024

Inauguration



The renowned cultural event of Uttarakhand, the Virasat Arts' and Heritage Festival 2024 was inaugurated by Sh. Satpal ji Maharaj, H'ble Minister for Tourism and Culture, Government of Uttarakhand. The lighting of the lamp marked the commencement of the event. The occasion was marked by the presence of a large audience and a number of dignitaries,

including Ms. R. S. Narayani, ED, HCA, ONGC Ltd, Sh. Sushil Sajan Chandan, GM (HR), ONGC Ltd., Smt. Geeta Khanna, Chairperson of the Child Rights' Commission, Uttarakhand and Smt. Sunaina Prakash Aggarwal, Vice President, Virasat organising Committee. Shri R.K. Singh, General Secretary of REACH, welcomed the Chief Guest and the members of the audience and promised them another edition of the festival they would savour forever.



Display by ITBP Band

The Indo-Tibetan Border Police Band was in attendance, performing soulful tunes from the folk traditions of Uttarakhand, on their bagpipes. They also performed patriotic tunes and popular ditties to keep the audience entertained for the evening.

Choliya Dance from Pithoragarh, Kumaon Himalayas



The Festival commenced with the captivating Choliya dance, a traditional folk dance originating from the Kumaon division of Uttarakhand and the Western Province of Nepal. This centuries'- old sword dance is a martial art once associated with wedding processions, and has now evolved into a symbol of Kumaoni and far-western Himalayan culture. Accompanied by martial

music, the sword-wielding performers engaged in a synchronized dance, simulating mock combat. The historical roots of Choliya dance trace back over a thousand years, embedded in the martial traditions of the Kumaoni and Khas people.

Traditional musical instruments such as Dhol, Damau, and Nagada are used as accompaniments to the Choliya dance. The performance began with the arrival of the deities, followed by renditions of traditional compositions like Bedu Pako Baro Masa, and featured acts such as Nav Murti Madobaj, Choliya Yudh, and Minar. The Choliya dance troupe was led by Prakash Rawat from Pithoragarh.

Violin Recital by Padmabhushan Dr. N. Rajam and Ragini Shankar

The inaugural concert featured a mesmerizing performance by one of the finest and most outstanding artists in the field of music, violin virtuoso, Padmabhushan Dr. Smt. N. Rajam. Her magical fingers enchanted the tuneful strings of the violin to create a divine and sublime atmosphere. She brought out a new realm into the world of classical



music by introducing the "Gayaki Ang", a technique that presents the vocal style of music on the violin, which has made her globally renowned as the lady with the singing violin. Coming from a family of traditional musicians, she mastered the Carnatic style at a very young age undergoing intensive training for 15 years under her father Vidwan Shri A. Narayan Iyer, an excellent teacher

of music and a man of great foresight. She later ventured into the Hindustani style under the tutelage of the doyen among musicians, Pandit Omkarnath Thakur and made a path-breaking entry through her Gayaki Ang. She has performed in numerous prestigious music festivals all across the globe and has been loved by audiences all over the world. Apart from being a great performer, Dr. Rajam has also served as the Dean at the Banaras Hindu University for 40 years and has also been conferred the title "Emeritus Professor" in recognition of her outstanding talents and service to music. She has been the recipient of countless prestigious awards including one of the highest civilian honours in India, the Padmashri & the Padmabhushan by the President of India, the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award & Fellowship, Kalidas Samman to name a few.

Born in a family with a musical lineage spanning over seven generations, Ragini Shankar began her training in Hindustani (North Indian) Classical Music on the Violin at the tender age of 4 under the tutelage of her illustrious grandmother, Padmabhushan Dr. N Rajam and her exemplary mother Dr. Sangeeta Shankar, ace violinists of India. She has performed in numerous prestigious music festivals all over India, Europe, North America and South East Asia. Known for her ability to reproduce vocal music on the violin, she has collaborated on musical projects with acclaimed artists in diverse genres. Ragini and her sister Nandini Shankar have been signed by Decca Records US, a part of Universal Music Group for a full-length music album for their fusion ensemble 'Taraana'. She has collaborated with Grammy Award nominated music producer Nick Patrick and acclaimed song-writer Amy Wadge for the album. Besides she has collaborated on projects with renowned lyricist Irshad Kamil's 'Ink Band', noted French composer Thierry Pecou's 'Sangata' and Sangeeta Shankar's innovative fusion 'inStrings'. She is a recipient of the Aditya Birla Kala Kiran Award and the Jashn-e Youngistan award presented by the Vice President of India. She has also appeared on the platform of Talks at Google and TedX for Indian music. She currently teaches at Sharangadev School of Music and Culture and was a faculty at the Whistling Woods International, a premier film school.

The duo were accompanied by Pt. Abhishek Mishra on the Tabla.

Padmabhushan Dr. N.Rajam and Ragini Shankar commenced the program with Raag Jog in vilambit ek taal. The raag continued in Madhya teen tal and went on to drut teen taal followed by a Tarana. They also presented the famous *bandish* in Raag Jog, 'Saajan more ghar aaye'. The programme concluded with a tune in Raag Bhairavi.



Day Two

October 16th, 2024

Crafts Workshops for Students



Student based activities are at the heart of the Virasat Festival. Master Craftsmen from different parts of the country are requested to teach their skills to students from different schools and colleges of Dehradun and around. Large number of young people sign up for the workshops.

Craft Workshops at the festival included pottery, bead making, lacquer ware,

bottle painting, weaving, tie and dye, toy making etc.

Band display by Indo-Tibetan Border Police

Indo-Tibetan Border Police is India's elite force protecting the borders with China. The ITBP Band regaled audiences with marching tunes, patriotic and folk song tunes.



Goenkaranchem Diaz, Goa's Cultural Fusion Treasure

Goenkaranchem Diaz is an organization established to promote and safeguard common Goan ethos viz Konkani Language, culture, history and heritage. The chief folk dances in Goa are the

Fugdi and Dhalo and the Kunbi. The Kunbi, however, has elements of tribal dance to it as well. Their dance belongs to the era before the Portuguese conquest. The other unique feature about this dance is the fact that it is devoid of religious content and is mainly social.

Mr Elvis Goes is a renowned Goan singer, composer, songwriter, Music Director who is popularly known as

the Mando Prince of Goa. Hailing from the picturesque town of Quepem in Goa, Mr. Elvis Goes has given several international performances at different International festivals over the years. A multilingual singer, his last International performances have been at the Spring Festival in the cities of Astana and Almaty Kazakhstan in 2019.



Elvis Goes had also the privilege of taking Goan music to the United Nations Peace Keeping Forces in the Nuba mountains of Sudan, making the UN forces groove to Konkani music many years back. Keeping the Goan Carnival Spirit alive Internationally Elvis Goes mesmerized international audiences by performing at both the Opening and Closing ceremony of the International Carnival De Victoria in Seychelles besides also performing at the Festival Da Lusofonia, Macau and WGD events in Kuwait and Qatar and other countries around the world.

A multilingual singer and a recipient of the Yuva Srujan Puraskar in Goa, he is also the director of the Internationally acclaimed Goan music and dance troupe Kepemchim Kirnnam.

At the Virasat Festival Elvis Goes Music Ensemble combined with Kepemchim Kirnnam and Shri Guru Kala Mandal to showcase rich cultural traditions of Goa mixing the Goan essence with both Eastern and Western musical influences.

The group performed Goan songs both folk couple with pop music and a variety of folk dances like the Samay Nrutya, the Dekhnni Dance, Goff, the Mando Courting dance, the Danghar dance etc.

Hindustani Vocal by Songaborti Das

Songaborti Das is a promising young Indian Classical Vocalist from Kolkata. She is a disciple of Guru Pandit Ajoy Chakraborty, learning under his tutelage as a Senior Scholar at the prestigious



ITC Sangeet Research Academy. She is also receiving training from Sri Brajeswar Mukherjee, Junior Guru of the Academy.

Songaborti started learning from her parents and started receiving her musical training in Shrutinandan, an internationally acclaimed Music Academy, since 2003 where she trained under Sri Bidhan

Mitra, Sri Abhijit Mukherjee, Smt Chandana Chakrabarty, Sri Anol Chatterjee before joining ITC Sangeet Research Academy in 2017 where she continues learning under her Guru.

In addition to being a regular performer, Songaborti is also currently a Vocal Instructor at Shrutinandan. She is the recipient of the first prize in Khayal and Thumri at the Chetla Murari Smriti Sangeet Sammilani Music Competition Kolkata in 2016. Songaborti is also the recipient of the National Scholarship under the Ministry of Culture Government of India 2019.

Songaborti started her performance with a Bandish in Raag Malkauns, *pag laagan de*. Her next presentation was in Raag Charukeshi, *gao ras na Hari gun*. She concluded her programme with a Bhajan in Raag Mishra Patdeep with *baaje muraliya baaje*. She was accompanied ably by Mithilesh Jha on Tabla and Paromita Mukherjee on Harmonium.

Kathak by Rajendra Gangani

Pt. Rajendra Gangani is an Indian Kathak dancer known for his innovative style and technical expertise. He is one of the leading exponents of the Jaipur Gharana style of Kathak. He began his journey as a Kathak dancer when he was a 4-year old son of legendary kathak exponent Kundan Lal Gangani, a torch bearer of Jaipur Gharana.



Pt. Rajendra Gangani completed his graduation from Kathak Kendra, Delhi. He has choreographed several group compositions and dance dramas, also produced a large number of thematic performances like Leela-Varnan, Raag Vistaar, Tribandhi, Sargam, Zhalak, Srijan,

Kavitakriti, Maharaas, Parikrama etc. For his contributions to the field of Kathak, Gangani received the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 2003 from the President of India A. P. J. Abdul Kalam. He is one among the few Indians who have performed solo in Queen Elizabeth Hall, London. He has performed in almost all prestigious cultural festivals across India and world including the Konark Festival, Haridas Sangeet Sammelan at Vrindavan, the Festival of India in USSR, America, Italy, Germany, France along with many other countries.

On 20th February 2024, he created a choreography of 1,484 Kathak dancers together to enter into the Guinness Book of World Records at the 50th Khajuraho Dance Festival in Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh. He has been given numerous awards and accolades, like The Sangeet Raj Samman, the Shastriya Natya Shiromani and Sitara Devi Award, to name a few.

Day Three

October 17th, 2024

Crafts Workshops for Students



Student based activities are at the heart of the Virasat Festival. Master Craftsmen from different parts of the country are requested to teach their skills to students from different schools and colleges of Dehradun and around. Large number of young people sign up for the workshops.

Craft Workshops at the festival included pottery, bead making, lacquer ware,

bottle painting, weaving, tie and dye, toy making etc.



Goichye Diaz – Goa's Cultural Fusion Treasure



Kepemchim Kirnnam and Shri Guru Kala Mandal, from Goa, showcased the rich cultural traditions of Goa mixing the Goan essence with both Eastern and Western musical influences. The group performed Goan songs both folk couple with pop music and a variety of folk dances like the Samay Nrutya, the Dekhnni Dance, Goff, the Mando Courting dance, the

Danghar dance etc.

Sitar Recital by Avaneendra Sheolika

Born in a family of four generations of Sitarists, Avaneendra Sheolika has classical music in his blood. Avaneendra had his initial training under his father, Shri Sudhakar Rambhau Sheolika. Later he trained under the guidance of the illustrious Pandit Bimalendu Mukherjee, a doyen of the Imdadkhani Gharana of Sitar. From Pandit Bimalendu Mukherjee's tutelage, he learned the intricacies of sitar and his inborn talent thrust him forward to achieve greater heights.

He made his debut at the age of seven and has never looked back since. The special feature of his performances are expositions of subtle nuances of ragas based on the *gayaki* style, his exposition of *layakari* and his use of intricate *taans*. Avaneendra is a mature artist with a deep sense of emotions in his music. Besides numerous performances in India and abroad, Avaneendra has a



master's degree in music from Khairagarh University, ranking 1st in the year 1993 in this institution. He has won many awards like the prestigious talent search scholarship from the Ministry of HRD Government of India, prestigious All India Radio Music Competition, the title of Sur-mani by Sur Singaar Samsad. Bhatkhande Lalit Kala Shikshan Sansthan, Raipur, gave him the title Sur-Ratna.

He has participated in many prestigious samarohs in different parts of India like the Tansen Samaroh, Gwalior, Arambh Festival, Swami Haridas Sangeet Sammelan, Sankat Mochan Samaroh, Varanasi. He has received honors from many foreign countries. He released few albums one of which is album Folk Phonogram of 2005, the music from the album was used as the soundtrack for the Hollywood movie Boondock Saints II.

Purabi Ang Gayaki by Padmashri Malini Awasthi

Malini Awasthi is a versatile folk musician known for her Purabi Ang Gayaki. Having trained classically, she is equally adept in various forms of Hindustani music like Dadra, Thumri, Kajri, Chaiti etc. Her knowledge of music finds a reflection in her renditions of Ghazals and Sufiyana Kalaams too.

A Ganda-bandh disciple of Padma Vibhushan Vidushi Girija Devi, she is a connoisseur of Chaumukhi Gayan of the Benares Gharana. She performs in multiple dialects like Awadhi, Bhojpuri, Bundeli, Braj. She was awarded the Padma Shri in 2016. She is currently a visiting professor at Centre for Media Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Born into a music loving family, her father was fond of classical music and her mother deeply cherished the Purab Ang Gayaki and Bhajans. This blend reflects in the mellifluous singing of the singer today.



Along with her academic training, she received her formal tutelage from renowned Ustad Rahat Ali Khan. She went on to do her Postgraduation in Hindustani classical music from Bhatkhande University, Lucknow, and a Postgraduation in Modern History with specialization in Medieval and modern Indian architecture, from University of Lucknow simultaneously. She was conferred with a gold medal in both of her master's degrees.

She is a regular performer at popular classical music festivals throughout India. She has been appointed as a member of expert committee on folk music by Sangeet Natak Akademi. She has founded an organization called Sonchiraiya, for promotion and proliferation of folk music, giving platforms to many artists from different regions, for the past 10 years.

Day Four

October 18th, 2024

Crafts Workshops for Students



Student based activities are at the heart of the Virasat Festival. Master Craftsmen from different parts of the country are requested to teach their skills to students from different schools and colleges of Dehradun and around. Large number of young people sign up for the workshops.

Craft Workshops at the festival included Sanjhi Craft, Pottery, bead making,

lacquer ware, bottle painting, weaving, toe and dye, toy making etc.

Folk Dances from Kumaon

Folk dances such as Jhora, Chancheri and Chapeli, representing the rich folk heritage of the Kumaon Himalayas were presented.



Hindustani Vocal Recital by Ruchira Kedar

Training initially under her father Sh. Dilip Kale, she further learnt the intricacies of Hindustani classical and semi-classical vocal music from the renowned vocalist of Jaipur Gharana, Dr. Alka Deo Marulkar. Thereafter, Ruchira received a residential scholarship with the prestigious ITC Sangeet Research Academy, Kolkata and received invaluable *taaleem* from the celebrated Gwalior-Jaipur gharana vocalist Padmashri Pt. Ulhas Kashalkar and she continues to learn from him even

now. She also received significant guidance in Thumri and other semi-classical forms from the doyen of Banaras gharana, Padma Vibhushan Vidushi Girija Devi.

She has earned a master's in music and English Literature and received Junior Research Fellowship from University Grants Commission, India and is pursuing a PhD degree. She was awarded Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar by Sangeet Natak Akademi, Saraswati Sadhana Samman in memory of Ganasaraswati Vidushi Kishori Amonkar, an A Grade by All India Radio and Doordarshan Gold Medal, Sur Mani by the Sur Singar Samsad, Mumbai.



An established category artist with the Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) for representation of Indian music at national and international platforms she was awarded with the HRD Ministry's Scholarship for Young Artists, Govt. of India. She has established herself as one of the most promising torch bearers of Gwalior-Jaipur gharana. Her performances are

acclaimed for her highly melodious and fluid presentation of ragas. Her exceptionally skilful and emotive renditions of a variety of Hindustani musical forms like Khayal, Thumri, Dadra, Hori, Kajri etc. have earned her the hearty admiration of connoisseurs & music lovers in India and abroad.

Odissi Dance Recital by Padmashree Ileana Citaristi

Born in Italy, Padmashree Dr. Ileana Citaristi holds a Doctorate in Philosophy with a thesis on Psychoanalysis and Eastern Mythology. She has come to Indian dance after years of experience in the traditional as well as experimental theatre in Europe.



Ileana has been living in Orissa, India, in close contact with the people, their language and culture. Her mentor in the Odissi Dance style is the renown Guru, Padma Vibhushan Kelucharan Mohapatra. She is equally at home with the different martial postures of

the Chhau dance of Mayurbhanj, which she has learnt under the guidance of Guru Shri Hari Nayak, obtaining the title of Acharya from the Sangeet Mahavidyalya of Bhubaneswar in Orissa.

Her contributions, besides the many performances and lecture-demonstrations given in all the major centers in India, include articles on Oriya culture published in Indian and foreign magazines, research work for film-documentaries on Odissi and Chhau dances and practical dance workshops for dancers and theatre workers which she regularly conducts under invitation by different institutions in India and abroad. She has given performances in all the major dance festivals in India as well as many culturally rich foreign countries.

Ileana is a top-grade artist for Doordarshan and is empaneled as Outstanding Artist in ICCR. She has been awarded the prestigious title Leonide Massine for the art of dance in Italy, the Raseshwar Award by the Sur Singar Sansad, the National Award for best choreography for her dance direction to the Bengali film Yugant directed by Aparna Sen, the Order of the Star of Italian Solidarity from President of Italy and received the prestigious award, The Golden Nutcracker, as a distinguished international artist in Italy. She was awarded the Padmashree for her service to dance.

On the academic site she has conducted research on the Martial Arts of Orissa under the aegis of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts. She has been granted a senior fellowship by the Dept. of Culture, Government of India, for writing a book on Kelucharan Mohapatra's life. She has also authored My Journey: A Tale of Two Births. In Bhubaneswar she is imparting training in Odissi and Chhau dances to local as well as visiting students. Ileana has organized several festivals unique in concept, like the festival of films on performing and visual arts, the Kalinga Mahotsav, a Festival of Martial Dances.

Day Five

October 19th, 2024

Chakravyuh – Uttarakhand's Folk Environmental Theatre



Pandava is a ritual tradition of the Garhwal Himalayas. It includes a daily *pooja shastrik* (ritualistic worship in accordance with the mainstream tradition) and folklore, elaborate dances twice a day, and a cycle of folk plays interspersed with the sequence of dance and ritual. Pandava ritual is held in every valley of the region, albeit the intensity and structure varies. In Tons

and Yamuna Valleys, in the west, it is held for a short period as per the wish of the Pandavas. It is held for a week or a fortnight in Saryu, Kosi, and Kali valleys. But in Mandakini and Alaknanda valleys, it continues over a period of one month to six months. Bawai village, having more than 600 households, has to perform Pandava for three months so that everyone has a chance to dance and offer puja. In Tamlag Patti of Pauri District, the Mori (after the name of the ritual tree called Mori), another name for Pandava, lasts for complete six months.

Integral to the lives of the Himalayan communities are the age-old traditions that trace their origin to the Mahabharata. One of them is Pandava Lila, a form of environmental theatre better known as Chakravyuh, which is enacted in the villages of Uttarakhand after Diwali. Some of the villagers are possessed by the various characters from the Mahabharata who inadvertently begin enacting their roles (impromptu) in an oracle-like fashion. This is in stark contrast to the similar dramas enacted in the plains where the characters rehearse their roles. Chakravyuh marks the pinnacle of the environmental theatre tradition in Uttarakhand Himalaya. Chakravyuh is a part of that dying tradition of this region which today needs support, intervention and impetus.

Chakravyuh theatre form of Garhwal region is highly ritualistic. Pandava ritual begins with the lighting of the lamp. When villagers wish to hold Pandava, during a dance performance on the Deepawali night, the lamp for Pandavas is lit in the temple or house dedicated to them. It may be a well-thought-out decision or it may be a freakish act by a band of youth. But once the lamp is lit, ritually, it becomes mandatory on the villagers to hold Pandava. Then for about a week village folks assemble and dance in the Pandava square twice a day, afternoon and night, and dance without ritual costume or ritual weapons (attributes). Then, on an auspicious day, the weaponry of the Pandavas is taken out with great fanfare and due ritual. Now onwards, the persons possessed by their respective Pandava characters like Narayan, Yudhishtir, Bhim, Arjun, Nagarjun, Draupadi, Kunti, Nakul, Sahdev, Hanuman, Babrik (Babrubaham), Tilbil, Malu, Phulari, Vasudanta etc. begin to dance with their ritual costume on, holding their weapons in hand.

Etymologically speaking, '*chakra*' stands for a circle, and '*vyuh*' for fortification or strategy. It was a battle-fortification or strategy during the Mahabharata War, details of which are very little known today. It is, however, a dramatic display during the Pandava ritual in the Central Himalayas. The way in which its set is erected can give the performance the name of a "circular array" drawn according to a geometrical design which is a common mathematical sport of the folks.



Sitar Recital by Samanwaya Sarkar



Samanwaya Sarkar is a promising Sitar player hailing from a musical family. Since his childhood, he followed his father Sri Swapan Kumar Sarkar in every step of his musical pursuit as his father was under the tutelage of Sri Lalit Mohan Sanyal. Being an outstanding Sitarist of the present generation, he is known for his mesmerizing approach and sparkingly perfect strokes on his

expression of *meends*, *gamaks*, fast and intricate *taans* from the lower octaves to soaring heights with ease. His unique way to unfold ragas gives his audience a unique aesthetic bliss of mind, for which he has achieved a remarkable reputation throughout the country and abroad at such an early age.

He started his primary lessons from his very childhood at the hands of Pt. Sasanka Bandopdhyaya of Senia gharana. His subsequent taalim from Pt. Manilal Nag , Pt. Shyamal Chatterjee and Pt. Kumar Prasad Mukherjee. He belongs to Bishnupur, Senia Maihar and Agra Atrauli Gharana has greatly contributed to his unique style of blending Tantrakaari Ang with Gayaki Ang of Dhrupad and Khayal.

For a decade he remained under the tutelage of the legendary vocalist Padma Vibhushan Girija Devi as a Gandabandh disciple, from whom he has imbibed the intricacies of khayal, thumri, tappa, dadra, jhula etc in his Sitar. He has been also performing duet of Sitar and Vocal with a fine young vocalists maintaining the traditional way of tantrakaari ang and gayaki ang. He composed music and performed live with Debapriya Adhikary, for an Australian film, The Sleeping Warrior, based on Indian and aboriginal spirituality.

He is the director, along with Debapriya Adhikary, of the documentary film, Girija: A Lifetime in Music, that received 65th National Award as the Best Documentary on Art and Culture from Govt of India and also got Awarded as the Best Documentary on Art and Culture Feature by Los Angeles Independent Music Festival. He has performed in almost all the prestigious musical festivals all over India and many a reputed venues in foreign countries.

Hindustani Vocal Recital by Padmabhushan Pt. Sajan Mishra and Swaransh Mishra

Pt. Sajan Mishra, a khayal singer of the Indian classical music is one of the leading exponents of the form today. Khayal style singing is considered as the 300 years old style of the Banaras gharana. Mishra brothers have been performing their art of singing all across the India as well as the world. They are the great singer of the India from the Banaras gharana. They have started



their music career in their teen ages. Now after the demise of his brother and partner he has partnered with his son, Swaranash Mishra.

Previously, Mishra brothers have performed in many other countries such as Germany, France, USA, UK, Switzerland, Austria, Muscat, The Netherlands, USSR, Qatar and Singapore. They had launched around 20 music albums of the khayal style (known as the khayal gayaki), semi classical tappa and variety of Bhajans.

Pt. Sajan Mishra, a disciple of grandfather Bade Ram Das ji Mishra and father Hanuman Prasad Mishra, is a prestigious name in the classical music. Pandit ji was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 2007. He received the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1998, the Gandharva National Award for in 1994-1995, and the esteemed National Tansen Samman for 2011-12. The Mishra family define their music as an act of devotion and gratitude towards Saraswati, the Goddess of Music and Learning.

Swaransh Mishra represents the sixth generation of classical musicians belonging to the great Banaras Gharana with a lineage of 350 years. He has started to hone his skills under the able guidance of his father Padmabhushan Pandit Sajan Misra. He has started his classical career by debuting in prestigious Sankatmochan Festival, Varanasi, and has performed in many classical events like Raag Rang Festival. He also actively participates for the projects for the society, Kala-Ashram started by Pt. Birju Maharaj.

Day Six

October 20th, 2024

Virasat Super Bike Rally

Super bike riders have become a part of the festival, as they help raise awareness about the need to preserve arts and heritage among youth, while also spreading the message of safe adventure activity.



Violin Recital by Vidushi Kala Ramnath

Vidushi Kala Ramnath with her singing Violin stands among the world's finest, most inspirational instrumentalists. Her playing has been featured on the Grammy-nominated Miles from India project, and compositions of hers have appeared on the Grammy-winning album, In 27 Pieces and the Kronos Quartet's 50 For The Future. The UK-based Songlines magazine hailed Kala Ramnath as one of the 50 among world's best instrumentalists and selected album Kala as one of its 50 best recordings. She was the first Indian violinist ever to be featured in the violin Bible, The Strad. She was the subject of a solo essay in the third edition to The Encyclopaedia- Rough Guide to World Music. Her contributions feature in Hollywood soundtracks like the Oscar-nominated Blood Diamond and many more.

Born into a dynasty of prodigious musical talent, one which has given Indian music such violin legends as Prof. T.N. Krishnan and Dr. N. Rajam, Kala's violinistic vision began manifesting early. Recognizing her innate talent, her astute grandfather, Vidwan A. Narayan Iyer took her under his tutelage. Thus began her most auspicious journey on the road to astounding renown and international acclaim.

She also became a pre-eminent disciple of the legendary vocalist Pandit Jasraj. During this mentorship Kala began formulating a voice quite unlike other Indian or non-Indian violinists. Justifiably her voice came to be dubbed 'Singing Violin'. Acknowledged as a virtuoso of staggering proportions, Kala has performed at the most prestigious world stages and music festivals in India.

Kala has been bestowed the 'A Top' grade by India's Radio and Television and is one of the youngest artists to have achieved this honour. She is the recipient of many awards - notable among them are the Rashtriya Kumar Gandharva Sanman, Pandit Jasraj Gaurav Puraskar and the Sur Ratna. Recently and most notably of all, she was awarded the Sangeet Natak



Akademi Puraskar. An established name in the world music scene, Kala today is keen to enrich the lives of under-privileged children through music in the form of her foundation, Kalashree.

Sufi Quawaali by Mohammed Anwar Khan

Anwar Khan Rehmat Quawwal is the grandson of the famous qawwal Mian Rahmat Khan of the Sirhandi Gharana of Punjab and Sindh. Sirhandi is known for being rooted in the Sufi traditions and have many proponents of Sufi and quawwali singers.



Anwar started singing from the tender age of five and has been consistently learning and performing under the able guidance of his grandfather Rahmat Khan Sahib. His renditions of qawwali is traditional but robust. His presentation of ghazals and Sufi Kalaams are known all over.

He has extensively performed in India as well as foreign countries like Hong Kong and Dubai and other Southeast Asian and European countries. In recognition of his art form he has been awarded by the Punjab government.

Day Seven

October 21st, 2024

Virasat Saadhana – Classical Music and Dance Recitals by school students

Virasat Saadhana is a platform designed to showcase the remarkable talents of schoolchildren. This festival has become a vital opportunity for budding artists to exhibit their skills. The day's programme featured a captivating array of classical dance performances by young students representing 17 different schools.



Talk by Qamar Dagar on Calligraphy



BS Negi MPPS proudly hosted a captivating talk on calligraphy led by the renowned artist Ms. Qamar Dagar. Ms. Dagar, a celebrated pictorial calligrapher, shared her unique approach to blending Hindi and Urdu scripts to create a distinctive visual language. Emphasizing the artistic synergy between these two scripts—Hindi written from left to right, and Urdu from

right to left—she showcased how she transforms traditional calligraphy into a compelling art form.

A recipient of the Nari Shakti Samman, Ms. Dagar has also garnered the Women's International Award and the Pioneer Artist Award. Hailing from the esteemed Dagar family, known for their contributions to classical music, she has chosen pictorial calligraphy as her medium of expression.

Her remarkable works are featured in private collections across India, Europe, and the United States, reflecting her innovative spirit and dedication to her craft. The event was a resounding success, inspiring attendees with Ms. Dagar's passion for art and her commitment to cultural expression.



Folk Dances from Jaunsar-Bawar

The Jaunsar-Bawar region of Uttarakhand has a tradition very rich in arts and culture. Several folk forms of the region, such as Tandi and Raso were presented at the festival.

Kathak Dance Recital by Shinjini Kulkarni

Talent, beauty, dedication, grace, elegance...the list goes on. And in fact, you can find all such adjectives, but even that wouldn't be enough to describe the magic that Shinjini Kulkarni weaves on stage with her dance performances. Born into the ninth generation of the Kalka Bindadin lineage, Shinjini Kulkarni is the granddaughter of Kathak legend Pandit Birju Maharaj.

From the age of three, Shinjini began training in Kathak under the tutelage of her grandfather, according to her, "learning in our house is a rite of passage".



Shinjini's first guru was her aunt, Mamta Maharaj, who gave the basic training to all the children in the family. Later Birju Maharaj ji was her Guru and then after him his eldest brother Pt. Jaikishan ji Maharaj was her guru,. She gracefully carries the weight of this huge legacy, but she

says that His legacy is too big for one person to carry, the whole Kathak fraternity is carrying his legacy. An outstanding student academically, Shinjini has recently completed her graduation in History Honours from the premier Arts college of the country, St. Stephen's College, Delhi University. While excelling in her studies, she has also continued her training with utmost dedication and sincerity.

She has performed at prestigious festivals such as Khajuraho dance festival, Sankat Mochan Samaroh, Taj Mahotsava, Chakradhar Samaroh, Kalidas Festival, Kathak Mahotsava, etc. She has given numerous solo performances and group shows in various cities of India and abroad such as New York, San Francisco, Houston, Minneapolis, Bangkok, Tehran, Chabahal to name a few, and has received affectionate appreciation and blessings by the audience in the short span of her career. She has had a tryst with Bollywood, and just like her nana, it has been short.

She has acted in films like Jaanisaar by Muzaffar Ali, Bengali film Har Har Byomkesh and a Bhojpuri movie with Ravi Kishen. Shinjini is also a member of the newly formed pure classical based percussion band – LayaCurry. She has had the privilege to be a part of her grandfather's choreographies such Nritya Keli, Editing, Holi Utsav, Krishnayan, and Loha, to name a few.

In 2018, She received the Tarana Foundation's Yuva Pratibha Award, in New Delhi. In 2017, Shinjini was conferred with the title Nritya Shiromani at the International Cuttack Dance Festival. Later in 2017, she received the Parampara Samman by Sangeet Kala Niketan, Jaipur. She also received the prestigious Smt. Krishna Hangal Memorial Award acknowledging her as an emerging talent in the field of Indian Classical Music and Dance in 2015.

Hindustani Classical Vocal Recital by Omkar Dadarkar



Shri Omkar Dadarkar hails from a family of Marathi Natyasangeet exponents. He received his initial guidance from his aunt, the late noted classical vocalist Manik Verma and thereafter from Ram Deshpande. After being awarded the CCRT scholarship (Delhi) for classical music, he was groomed by Pandit Yashwantbua Joshi under the scheme of Guru-

Shishya-Parampara of the Dadar-Matunga Cultural Centre. A Sangeet Visharad and Bachelor of Arts in Marathi Literature and History, Shri Omkar Dadarkar joined ITC SRA as a scholar in July 1999, receiving rigorous talim under Pandit Ulhas Kashalkar. . He also trained in the light classical form under Vidushi Girija Devi and Srinivas Khale.

Shri Omkar Dadarkar has fast gained recognition as a regular concert performer all over India as well as U.S., Canada, and the U.K. His performances in ITC Sangeet Sammelans at Kolkata, Delhi and Mumbai besides other prestigious programmes in India and also Nepal and Canada

have been highly applauded. He has been widely acclaimed for his performance at the prestigious Darbar Festival, U.K. His numerous awards include the prestigious Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar for 2010 conferred by the Sangeet Natak Akademi to talented artistes below the age of 35, the Aditya Vikram Birla Puraskar in 2009, the Shanmukhananda Hall-Mumbai-Sangeet Shiromani Award and he is also the first recipient of Chaturanga Sangeet Shishyavrutti Award given by Chaturanga Pratishthan in collaboration with Mhaskar Foundation, Mumbai. He was previously working with Mumbai Educational Trust, as Music In-charge, until he returned to ITCSRA as a Musician Tutor in 2010 and is currently a Guru at the Academy.

Day Eight

October 22nd, 2024

Virasat Saadhana – Classical Music and Dance Recitals by school students

Virasat Saadhana is a platform designed to showcase the remarkable talents of schoolchildren. This festival has become a vital opportunity for budding artists to exhibit their skills. The day's programme featured a captivating array of classical dance performances by young students representing 17 different schools.

Talk on Cultural Diversity of India by Rakesh Sinha

In a captivating address, Rakesh Sinha spoke passionately about India's unique cultural and intellectual heritage, stressing the need for the younger generation to stay connected with the nation's traditions while embracing modernity. Sinha's speech revolved around critical themes, including cultural diversity, the evolution of Indian civilization, and the interplay between culture and technology in the present age. Sinha emphasized the importance of cultural roots, remarking, "The new generation must carry the basics of our culture forward," while acknowledging how the Indian ethos, over time, has evolved with its diversity. Using examples from regions such as Meghalaya's Garo Hills, he drew parallels between India's cultural vibrancy and other traditions across the globe, highlighting how even remote places share similar customs.





A notable portion of the speech focused on the growing concerns around technology's impact on human thought and freedom. Sinha warned that the "freedom of mind is questioned by technology and AI" and urged policymakers to ensure that technology supports, rather than limits, human creativity and consciousness. He also touched on India's rich intellectual history,

referencing key figures such as Vinoba Bhave and India's ancient texts, particularly the Upanishads. Sinha argued that the philosophical debates in India were never about religion but rather focused on ideas, much like the "milk and sugar" metaphor he used to illustrate the harmonious mixing of diverse thoughts and beliefs.

The concept of secularism was another major theme, with Sinha calling attention to the question of "Why is India a secular country?" He explained that India's secularism is deeply embedded in its cultural ethos, which has allowed for centuries of coexistence among different faiths and practices. On a global note, Sinha reflected on India's relationship with other cultures, including the African-Indian connection, which has strengthened over time through shared struggles and mutual respect. He also mentioned the urgency of addressing global crises, asserting that "human consciousness emerges in the hour of crisis."

In conclusion, Sinha urged for the flourishing of India's cultural ethos and the protection of its intellectual heritage, noting that there are 50 lakh manuscripts in India that hold untapped wisdom. He called upon society to nurture this heritage while resisting forces, like dictatorship, that stifle knowledge and freedom. The speech was a compelling reminder of the importance of balancing cultural preservation with the innovations of modern technology, encouraging both introspection and progressive action for India's future.

Talk on Raga to Bollywood by K.L. Pandey

K.L. Pandey, a renowned music enthusiast, delivered an enlightening talk on the intricate world of ragas to students and faculty at the UPES, Bidholi Campus. The event was facilitated by Dr. Nishant Mishra, Head of the DSW Organization at UPES, who presented Pandey with a commemorative planter in appreciation of his contributions.



Born in Hardoi, Uttar Pradesh, KL Pandey dedicated 38 years to the Indian Railways while nurturing his passion for classical music. His journey began with a three-year formal training, inspired by the melodies he absorbed from the radio.

The session kicked off with a captivating presentation of "Sangeet Ki Shakti" from the film Rani Roopmati, which

emphasized the transformative power of music and the significance of ragas. Throughout his talk, Pandey maintained an interactive atmosphere, rewarding engaged students and faculty with chocolates for their insightful responses. Pandey shared his extensive research, analysing 174 ragas and discussing their patterns, favourites among music directors, and a diverse array of taals. His depth of knowledge was further highlighted by his publication, *Sur Samvaadini*, which explores the nuances of classical music. This event not only celebrated the rich heritage of Indian classical music but also inspired the next generation of artists in Bollywood.

Sitar and Santoor Jugalbandi by Sanskriti and Prakriti Wahane



Music Tradition is in the veins of Wahane Family. Sanskriti and Prakriti are treading the same path paved by their father, Dr. Lokesh Wahane. Sanskriti pursued her Master's degree (M.A.) in Sitar (2022) from Indira Kala Sangeet Vishwavidyalaya, Khairagarh (C.G). She has been awarded A Grade in Sitar by AIR, Delhi 2024. She made her first debut at age of eight. She received

her initial education in the field of music from her father Dr. Lokesh Wahane Ji, Gandabandh disciple of the world famous Sitar Maestro Ustad Shahid Parvez Ji (Etawah Gharana). Sanskriti's tradition and style of playing is unmatched. It is characterised by a rare phenomenon of purity of Raga, Gayaki and Tantrakari Ang. Presently she is pursuing the training of traditional music under the worthy guidance of world famous tabla maestro (Talyogi) Pt. Suresh Talwalkar ji.

Sanskriti won the 1st position in All India Radio competition in 2017 by Prasar Bharti. She has also received the honour of very prestigious, Shri Ravi Koppiker Memorial Award in the category of Hindustani Instrumental Music-Sitar, by ITC Sangeet Research Academy (2018) held in

National Centre for the performing Arts, Mumbai. Recently, both Wahane sisters have performed their Jugalbandi on the very prestigious Darbar Festival in London 2022.

Prakrati Wahane is pursuing her Master's degree (M.A) in English Literature (2022) Vikram University, Ujjain (M.P). She started taking training of music from her father Dr. Lokesh Wahane. She has been Awarded A Grade in Santoor by AIR Delhi, 2024. She made debut at an early age of eight and since then is pursuing the traditional music training as a devoted artist. Prakrati's tradition and style of playing santoor is unmatched. It is characterised by the exceptional tone and methodology combined in Gayaki and Tantrakari along with purity of the Raga.

Ghazals by Pratibha Singh Baghel

Pratibha Singh Baghel is an artiste who sings Hindustani classical music, ghazals as well as Bollywood film songs. She was born in Rewa. She completed music qualifications Sangeet Prabhakar and Sangeet Parveen. Influenced by her uncle, she is trained for singing thumris. She made her debut on the music reality show Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Challenge 2009. She



was one of the top finalists, her performance received critical acclaim, and she received opportunities for stage shows in Mumbai and eventually playback singing spots in Bollywood films.

She lent her voice to feature films including: Issaq, Bollywood Diaries, Shorgul, Humpty Sharma Ki Dulhania, Zid, Baazaar, Manikarnika: The Queen of Jhansi, Dono and Baba Ramsaa Peer. Her song Jheeni Re Jheeni along with classical vocalist Rashid Khan is considered one of her best. In 2020, Baghel released a ghazal album along with violinist Deepak Pandit, called Bole Naina, which also featured the lyricist Gulzar and tabla player Zakir Hussain. She teamed up with composer Abhishek Ray to release a series of singles: a sufi rock in Dhaagey, Indian folk song in Kanha ki Preet, a love ballad in Ilzaam, and a ghazal fusion song Kaise - The Music of Goodbye. She has also released an independent ghazal single called Kya Kije under the Bazm-e-Khas label, composed by Ghansham Vaswani. In the same year, she was also featured in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's album Sukoon.

Day Nine

October 23rd, 2024



Virasat Saadhana – Classical Music and Dance Recitals by school students

Virasat Saadhana is a platform designed to showcase the remarkable talents of schoolchildren. This festival has become a vital opportunity for budding artists to exhibit their skills. The day's

programme featured a captivating array of classical dance performances by young students representing 17 different schools.

Enchanting Melodies by Naval Band, Unison World School

Unison School, in collaboration with REACH, hosted the Enchanting Melody event featuring the esteemed Navy Band. The event, held at the school, aimed to celebrate maritime history and the pivotal role of the Indian Navy. The ceremony commenced with an inspiring inaugural speech by Retd. Commodore Gautam Negi, who set the tone for the day's festivities. Following his address, Sub Lieutenant Shreya Joshi shared insights into maritime history and the significance of the sea, emphasizing its vital contributions to national heritage.

Retd. Commodore Monica then took the stage to discuss the importance of self-reliance within the Indian Navy. She elaborated on the Navy's diverse roles, career opportunities, life aboard ships, and the processes for joining, including SSB interviews and pathways through the Indian National Academy and National Defence Academy.

The audience was then introduced to the Navy Band by Captain Kukreti, who highlighted the talented musicians.

The concert began with the traditional Maangal and included Navy marches, Uttarakhand folk songs, and popular Bollywood hits, captivating the audience throughout. As the event drew to a close, Mrs. Mona Khanna, Principal of Unison School, presented a bouquet to the Navy officers and addressed the gathering, expressing gratitude for their service and contribution to the nation. The event concluded with the national anthem, leaving attendees inspired and united.

Talk by Dr. Arshiya Sethi – Why are the Arts Important for Youth?

Author and independent scholar of dance and the arts, twice a Fulbright Fellow, Dr. Arshiya Sethi has been writing and commenting on the arts for over four decades. Editor in Chief of the international Dance Journal, South Asian Dance Intersections, published by the University of North Carolina, Charlotte, USA, she has several essays in publications including international ones. Coauthor of the book Non-Gharanedaar: Moranrao Kallianpurkar the paviour of Kathak, which has the distinction of being the first book on Indian dance with QR codes and a cloud attached to it. She has also edited the international publication Dance under the Shadow of the Nation looking at how Dance adapts when out of familiar boxes of nationhood and national borders. She has recently translated Perna Shrimali's book Tatkaar: The Internal journey of Kathak. She is currently completing her book on Sattriya through a political lens. Her new ongoing work is on Arts and the Law. Sethi has been acknowledged as an institution builder building tangible institutions like the India Habitat Centre, or intangible ones like city festivals and even digital ones like Danz Lenz, India's dance film festival.

Dr. Sethi spoke on Aligning to the times: Challenges for the young in pursuing equitable and sustainable models of careers in dance. Her talk made a bold argument that the universe of dance in India is not aligned with its current needs and responsibilities, and requires a tweaking of ecologies, sociologies, content and agenda. In a tryptic of arguments, it makes these revelations, interrogating the domains



of classical dance as well as popular dance in films and television's dance reality shows. Foregrounding some of the discourses and discussions in the field of dance practice and studies globally, she tasked the community of young dancers and stakeholders nurturing dance activity and dance heritage with clear responsibilities in its intragenerational movement and transference. This realignment, is essential for the very existence, equitability and sustainability of the art, in the future. Some of the ways of marshalling the paradigm towards a new reality, demands the strengthening dance spaces to be safe, ethical, brave inclusive, reorganizing the agenda, to serve a larger purpose, requiring the revoking of regressive content, where necessary and mainstreaming the arts as a human right, for the joy of creativity. Only then will dance become part of the development-oriented construct and future readiness process. This imbricates with the idea of Indian art and culture being like a river- alive in its flow and subscribing to the model of a Parampara - where the detritus gets dropped and only the best survives the moment. As a work in progress, constantly in the making, and never a completed project, there is scope for such re-alignment and re-viewing.

Hindustani Vocal by Anol Chatterjee

Anol Chatterjee is a very rare combination of a finest Indian Classical vocalist, a music trainer and music composer and a sensitive lyricist. Anol Chatterjee is a rising name in the field of Indian Classical Vocal Music. The flavour of Anol's music is essentially of Patiala Gharana, the style, which was made popular by the great maestro Ustad Bade



Ghulam Ali Khan Sahab, but Anol has incorporated the best parts of other Gayakies or styles like Kirana, Jaipur, Agra Benaras etc to establish an attractive & beautiful style of his own. His exceptional sense and command over rhythm has made this Gayaki more unique.

Born to musical parents Shri Mihir Chatterjee and Smt. Madhumita Chatterjee, Anol's early grooming was initiated from his mother and Shri Bishwanath Chowdhury. Soon after it continued successively from Late Ajit Kumar Chakrabarty, Smt. Chandana Chakrabarty, and Shri Shantanu Bhattacharya. Later on, he was fortunate to be the direct disciple of Padmashree Pandit Ajoy Chakrabarty, the internationally acclaimed Indian vocalist and is still training under his tutelage.

Anol is an ex-scholar of ITC Sangeet Research Academy, Kolkata. Anol is also a permanent artiste both in Khayal and Ragpradhan in All India Radio, Kolkata. He is an empanelled artiste of I.C.C.R; Govt. of India. He has received the National Scholarship for Young Artistes from the Ministry of Culture. He also performed at the Yuva Pratibha Sammelan by Sangeet Natak Academy. He stood First in the prestigious Dover Lane Music Competition. Anol is an upcoming and promising performer of India. He has performed in a number of concerts throughout West Bengal and outside. Anol has been touring abroad since 2003. He has visited USA, UK, Canada, & Scotland for several times. He has worked as a guest artiste to teach Indian music in SAA UK, an organization, affiliated by The Leeds College of Music, UK. Anol is training talented students in Shrutinandan, a renowned music institution for last ten years.



Hindustani and Carnatic Classical Flute Jugalbandi – Ronu Mazumdar and Shashank Subramanyam



Ronu Mazumdar, the flautist of renown, started his learning from his father who learned from Late Pandit Pannalal Ghosh, who was the pioneer of flute playing and introduced it into classical music. Ronu ji's father was his first guru and later he became the disciple of Late Pandit Vijay Raghav Rao ji, the legendary flautist of all time. Ronuji's training in

vocal music was done by Pandit Lakshman Prasad Jaipurwale. In 1980, he met Bharat Ratna Pandit Ravi Shankar ji in the recording of the famous song Atha Swagatam, Shubh Swagatam, a welcome song composed for Asiad 82. Pandit Ravi Shankar Ji was delighted with Ronu's musical abilities and he became a part of his orchestras, and popular albums like Chants of India with Gorge Harrison, Ex-Beatles.

Ronu ji received his first award in the All India Radio Award was his first recognition, Aditya Vikram Birla Award in the year 1999, Sangeet Natak Akademi Award 2014, Lifetime Achievement Award by Navbharat Times, Pandit Jasraj Gaurav Puraskar, National Kumar Gandharva Award in the year 2006, and Pandit Jasraj Gaurav Puraskar in the year 2008. He has also been nominated for the Grammy for album Tabula Rasa with Bela Fleck and others. He started his Bollywood journey in the year 1981 with the help of R.D. Burman. He has also performed with Lata Mangeshkar in many memorable songs. He has also been associated with Vishal Bhardwaj for film Maachis.

In 2014 he won the prestigious Sangeet Natak Akademi Award. Today, Ronu Majumdar is among the more popular musicians on this instrument, and is especially popular with the younger generation for his creative improvisations. Pt Majumdar's music is rooted in the Maihar Gharana which has musicians of eminence like Pt Ravi Shankar and Ustad Ali Akbar Khan to its credit. Apart from his concerts all over India in different music festivals, he also participated in the Festival of India in Moscow and Asiad '82 in New Delhi. He has toured extensively in Europe, the United States, Canada, Japan, Singapore, Thailand, Australia, New Zealand and the Middle East.

Shashank Subramanyam is an accomplished flautist from India, specializing in Indian classical music. In recognition of his contributions to the arts, the Government of France honored him with the prestigious title of Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres. Shashank is also noteworthy for being the youngest recipient of the Government of India's Sangeet Natak Akademi's senior award. Shashank received training in Carnatic music from his father, Palghat K.V. Narayanaswami, and in Hindustani music under the guidance of Pandit Jasraj. Shashank pursued his flute playing without formal Gurus and is self-taught.

Having displayed exceptional musical talent from a young age, Shashank began performing at the age of 6 and has continued to showcase his artistry for over three decades. One of the pivotal moments in his career occurred when he was invited by The Music Academy in Chennai to perform at the prestigious SADAS Concert when he was just 12 years old. His journey into the professional circuit began in 1990, where he delivered notable performances in various cities, including Adelaide, Australia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and Singapore.

Throughout his career, Shashank has engaged in collaborative performances with an array of talented musicians from both India and around the world. His versatility is evident as he performs in a diverse range of concert environments, including pure Indian classical, symphonies, jazz, films, and crossover projects. Shashank has not only led many ensembles but has also made appearances as a guest artist with renowned bands.

The significance of his contributions was recognized on a global scale, with BBC World TV producing a documentary about him titled Destination Music. Grammy Nomination for the CD album with Guitarist John McLaughlin for the year and Kalaimamani from the Government of Tamil Nadu. Shashank has performed and taught in prestigious institutions in India and over 50 countries around the world.

Day Ten

October 24th, 2024

Virasat Saadhana – Classical Music and Dance Recitals by school students

Virasat Saadhana is a platform designed to showcase the remarkable talents of schoolchildren. This festival has become a vital opportunity for budding artists to exhibit their skills. The day's programme featured a captivating array of classical dance performances by young students representing 20 different schools.

Seminar on Ill-effects of Single Use Plastic



A day-long seminar was held at the DIT University Auditorium to address the ill-effects of Single Use Plastic. The welcome address was given by N. Ravi Shanker, Fr. IAS, Pro Vice Chancellor of the University. The Chief Guest on the occasion was noted Anthropologist Dr. Lokesh Ohri. He spoke on his experiences with how

irresponsible disposal of single use plastic is emerging as a major cause for man-animal conflict and severely affecting the health of the bovines. The Registrar of the University along with several faculty members and students were present.

Several experts from IIT, Roorkee and New Delhi addressed the students. Students from DIT University and UPES also presented their research and case studies on the growing menace of single use plastic. The day-long seminar concluded with a pledge by all present to curb and control the consumption of single use plastic.



Nav Jyoti Sanskritik and Samajik Sanstha - Folk Dances from Garhwal, Uttarakhand



Garhwali folk dance encompasses various dance forms that are unique to the region. Some popular types include Jhora, Langvir Nritya, Choliya Dance, Barada Nati, and Pandav Nritya. Each dance form has its distinct characteristics, movements, and costumes, representing different aspects of Garhwali culture.

The local people of the region are associated with many tribes and work hard to earn their living. Folk dance and music forms an integral part of the people and culture of Garhwal. Folk Dances of Garhwal were presented by Nav Jyoti Sanskritik and Samajik Sanstha, Dehradun.

Classical Vocal Recital by Jawaad Ali Khan

Ustad Jawaad Ali Khan is top grade artist of AIR and Doordarshan. Carrying forward a great tradition, and proud descendant of a lineage of great masters, Ustad Jawaad Ali Khan is son of Karamat Ali Khan and very talented grandson of Padma Bhushan Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, doyen of the Kasur Patiala Gharana and one of this century's greatest vocalists.



He started formal training under his uncle and guru, Ustad Munawar Ali Khan, second son of Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan. He groomed him in the intricate Chaumukhia style of the Kasur Patiala Gayaki.

In his several concerts in India and abroad he has been following his beloved grandfather with his expertise in weaving complex Taan patterns and their control over Swara and Laya. His rendering of Khayal, Thumris with beautiful Gayaki, he is innovating his own projection and creating his own technique and aesthetics. His audio-tape Yaad-e-Sabrang, featuring a set of exquisite Thumris and Dadra dedicated to Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, has recently been released by Weston.

He has been awarded many national and international awards from Punjab and Delhi governments, from Toronto Academy and Lahore Music Award. He was accompanied by Dr. Deepak Verma, Angad Singh, Paromita Das and Shubh Maharaj.

Enchanting Melodies by Naval Band



The origin of the Indian Naval Band goes back to 1945 when it was formed with a handful of Naval musicians. It has come a long way since then and today the Navy has many trained musicians in its ranks at various bands across the country. The Indian Navy Band, also known as Indian Naval Symphonic Band is the Indian Navy's full time music band. It is currently

attached to the INS Kunjali. At the time of its commissioning, it had a strength of 50 musicians.

All band members have a bachelor's degree from recognized university and can play competently in at least one military sponsored instrument.

Today, the band uses traditional instruments such as the Mridangam, the Tabla, and Carnatic instruments. The band also has made enhancements in recent years to include the additions like adding a large string section comprising Violins, Violas, Cellos and Double Basses to make it a complete symphonic orchestra.

The band showcased a diverse repertoire, featuring:

Uday Das (Flute/Soprano Saxophone)
Amal Jose (Clarinet/Vocal)
Roshan Thapa (Clarinet)
Rupam Roy (Clarinet)
Vardan Chauhan (Clarinet)
Vishal (Alto Saxophone)
Sandeep Digal (Tenor Saxophone)
Arun Kumar (Bassoon/Lead Guitar)
Rahul Joshi (French Horn)
UKK Reddy (Cornet)
B Anandaraj (Cornet)
John Paul AD (Cornet/Vocal)
Mamooopreet Singh (Cornet/Keyboard)
Swapnil Chetri (Tenor Trombone)
Bhoopathi E (Tenor Trombone/Keyboard)
Anthony Raphel (Euphonium/Octa Pad)
Shrijeeth VR (Bass)
V Pranav (Bass)
SB Rana Magar (Bass)
Prince Varghese (Percussion)



Day Eleven

October 25th, 2024

Sit and Draw Competition for Students

The sit and draw competition is a large gathering of young people coming together for creative pursuits. The given topic was, My City, My Heritage. The Sit and Draw session was very well attended.



Crafts' Treasure Hunt

Around 40 students eagerly joined a thrilling treasure hunt held as part of Virasat. The hunt featured six hidden chits, each placed in various stalls, adding excitement and challenge for the participants. Students from both Doon International School and Shri Guru Ram Rai (SGRR) School, Balawala, took part in the activity, showcasing



great teamwork and enthusiasm.

In the end, it was the team from Doon International School, City Campus, that emerged victorious, successfully finding all the hidden clues. The students celebrated their win with joy, marking a memorable experience and a successful hunt for the hidden treasures.

Sitar Recital by Mehtab Ali Niyazi

Mehtab Ali Niyazi hails from the renowned Bhendi Bazaar Gharana. Initiated into the world of Sitar by his father, the accomplished Sitar player Ustad Mohsin Ali Khan, Mehtab started

learning at the tender age of 4 guided by his father and Ustad Wazir Ali Qadri, a distinguished harmonium player of the Bhendi Bazaar Gharana.

He made his debut performance at the age of 6 during Pandit Birju Maharaj Ji's birthday celebration. He won the 1st prize at the Sangeet Natak Akademi competition in 2016. Mehtab's journey is



studded with noteworthy achievements. He has represented India in successful international concerts. Notable performances include engagements with the Bengal Foundation in Kolkata, Bhoomija Trust in Bangalore, Sankat Mochan in Banaras, and a tribute to tabla maestro Ustad Allah Rakha Khan Sahab during Guru Purnima.

Recognized as one of India Today's Next 100 Achievers, he is the recipient of the prestigious Shanmukhananda Fellowship Award in 2019, 2020, and 2022. His significant presence and impactful musicality were acknowledged with an invitation to present at India Today's Conclave in 2023.

Bhojpuri Folk Music by Manoj Tiwari



Manoj Tiwari is a versatile singer and actor, who is also serving as a Member of Parliament from North East Delhi. He was appointed as Delhi BJP president in 2016. He was the head of the BJP organisation in Delhi when the party recorded a record victory in 2017 MCD elections.

Born in 1971 in Kabir Chaura, a locality of Varanasi in Uttar

Pradesh, Tiwari is one of the six children of Chandradev Tiwari and Lalita Devi. He hails from Atarwalia, a small village in the Kaimur District of Bihar. Tiwari completed his M.P.Ed. degree from Banaras Hindu University. Prior to his involvement in politics, he had spent years as a singer and an actor in the Bhojpuri film industry.

In 2003, he took a role in the film *Sasura Bada Paisawala*. He followed this with the films *Daroga Babu I Love You* and *Bandhan Toote Na*. The BBC reported in 2005 that Tiwari and Ravi

Kishan were the biggest male stars in the Bhojpuri cinema market. Manoj Tiwari also sang, *Jiya Ho Bihar Ke Lala Jiya Tu Haazar Sala in Gangs of Wasseypur*.

Day Twelve

October 26th, 2024

Heritage Quest Quiz for students



The Virasat Heritage Quest is a keenly contested competition where school students representing different teams attempt to showcase their knowledge about the heritage and culture of India. 36 teams vied for the honours this year.

Flute Recital by Pravin Godkhindi

Pravin Godkhindi is an Indian classical Hindustani flute player. He has mastered both the tantrakari and gayaki style of playing on the flute. He was called a top ranking artist in Hindustani bansuri, by Akashvani.

He was the first Indian flautist to perform on the 8-foot long flute and was the first Indian to represent bansuri at the World Flute Festival in Mendoza, Argentina. He has won National awards for compositions in films *Beru* and *Vimukthi*.

He gave his first public performance at the age of six. He has learnt from Gurus - Pandit Venkatesh Godkhindi and Vidwan Anoor Ananth Krishna Sharma. He has been awarded titles such as



Surmani, Naada-Nidhi, Sur Samrat, Kalapraveena, Aryabhata, Aasthana Sangeet Vidwan from the Udupi Sri Krishna Mutt.

Folk and Light Music by Osman Mir



Osman Mir is an Indian folk singer who has been singing in Hindi Movies since 2013, whose songs have been featured mainly in Hindi and Gujarati. His song Mor Bani Thanghat Kare from movie Goliyon Ki Raasleela Ram Leela is the first Hindi movie song that Osman Mir Sung in 2013. The first Gujarati song sung by Osman Mir is title song for Movie is Mey to chundadi odhi tara namni,

whose music composer was Advin Vaj Appu.

Osman Mir was born in Vayor, Kutch, Gujarat, India. His father, Husenbhai, was a tabla player at Gujarati folk called Bhajan and Santvani. Osman Mir was interested in music from his childhood. He has passed his high school education then eventually he started learning Tabla from his father at very early age and started performing Tabla on live events with his father at the age of 13. He started his career as Tabla player with late Shree Narayan Swami.

Tabla was just starting for Osman Mir, he was interested much in singing, he keeps learning basic lessons of singing from his father and then he officially trained by his Guru Ismail Datar. Once on the auspicious day of Gurupurnima in a musical concert he went as a tabla player to Pujya Shree Moraribapu's Ashram at Talgajarda, where Parthivbhai introduced Osman to Bapu praising his vocal ability. His first gift to audience was "Dil Kash Tera Naksha Hai". From this point of time his golden journey as a singer begun. His debut concert was arranged in Ahmedabad which is arranged by Pradip Dave, Osman Mir has ability to perform almost any kind of music, Bhajan, Ghazal, Semi-Classical, Sugam, Gujarati-Folk.

Osman then spell bound audience through thousands of public performances. He has given playback for nearly 58 Gujarati movies. He has performed across the globe in 25 countries. His singing is influenced by Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Mehndi Hassan, Jagjit Singh and Ghulam Ali Khan.

His son, Amir Mir, accompanied him in the vocal performance.

Day Thirteen

October 27th, 2024

REACH Vintage and Classic Car and Bike Rally



The Virasat Arts and Heritage Festival recently hosted an exciting Vintage Car and Bike Rally, bringing together car and bike enthusiasts. The event was graced by Sh. Bhagat Singh Koshiyari, former Governor of Maharashtra, as the Chief Guest, and Sunaina Agarwal, Vice President of the Virasat Organising Committee, as the Guest of Honour.

Around 22 vintage cars and 40 vintage bikes participated in the rally. The journey started from the BR Ambedkar Stadium (ONGC) and made its way to the Pacific Mall, where enthusiasts gathered to view these beautiful vehicles up close. The rally concluded with a return to the BR Ambedkar Stadium, marking a memorable celebration of automotive heritage.

Sarod Recital by Abhishek Lahiri

Born into a musically rich environment in Pune, he initially underwent training in vocal and tabla at age four, before anchoring himself on the sarod, under the tutelage of his father and Guru Pt. Shekhar Borkar of the Maihar Senia Gharana.

Rigorous and intensive training followed. At the age of ten, he presented his first concert for which young Abhishek Lahiri was lauded for his erudite performance by many connoisseurs of music. He was awarded a National Talent scholarship instituted by the C.C.R.T. (Government of India) at the age of 11 and was subsequently specially invited to participate in



many of their camps for outstanding young scholars. He won many music competitions in and around Maharashtra. Under the Balodhyan initiative, he presented many memorable programs for the All India Radio. He released his first solo CD titled Pratibha in 2008, at the age of 16. In 2015 he was a prize winner at the National Youth Festival held in Indore, as well as at Mysore, in 2016. He also went on to receive the Senior scholarship instituted by the Ministry of Culture in 2016. Recently, he was awarded the Gaansaraswati Kishori Amonkar Yuva Puraskar in 2019.

A versatile musician, Abhishek has been performing professionally since 2002. He has since been attending various respected music festivals, both as a student of the art, as well as a competent artiste. Following the footsteps of his father, today Abhishek's renditions are characterised by a unique blend of the sarod, sitar, and vocal styles of Hindustani Music. His natural instinct for aesthetic music coupled with his incredible control over sur and laya have enthralled audiences in various parts of India and abroad.

Early accolades and stage did not cause him to sway away from regular practice and rigorous riyaz. His debut album, "Pratibha" was released in 2009.

Nostalgic Tunes by Brian Silas

Brian Silas is a Piano Maestro. He is the recipient of the prestigious Yash Bharti Award for excellence in music. Brian has pioneered this technique to adapt the Piano a distinctively western instrument to the music of his own country.

The romance between Brian and the piano began early, it has been a burning desire, an insatiable passion to master the instrument. Brian's early years were spent in Kanpur in a family steeped in music and tradition. He plays from sheer instinct. Incredibly, despite his parents' insistence, he has had no formal training in music. As Brian grew up, the world of music, became the Goddess that he must relentlessly pursue. His tryst with the piano has got Brian fame and accolades from



audiences in India and abroad. Brian was honoured by an invitation to play at the UN Hall in New York on the occasion of India's 51st Independence Day. He has played at Indo-American society at the Rockefeller Centre in New York in front of Mr. Bill Clinton. He has also played for the Indian High Commission in the UK. He has had a series of successful tours in the U.S., Canada, UK, Middle East, Europe and Mauritius.

The music that Brian plays is not only soulful but also very close to our hearts. The old Hindi songs with their compositions by the geniuses of yesteryears and lyrics are beyond words. His music is an ode to them. Romance, philosophy, joy or sadness, teasing and cajoling the music

encompasses all the aspects. Brian beautifully captures the essence of all that is excellent in music. He has more than 20 albums to his credit.

Children have a special place in Brian's heart and he is associated with Tamanna, an organization for special children. Palna and Prayaas, by raising funds with his music.

Day Fourteen

October 28th, 2024

The Tawaif Story – Nawab Jaan and Mirza Ghalib with Manjari Chaturvedi



Manjari Chaturvedi is a scholar and has a Masters' Degree in Environmental Sciences from the Lucknow University. She trained in the professional category of Kathak Dance at the Kathak Kendra from the legendary UP Sangeet Natak Academy.

She trained initially in the Lucknow gharana of Kathak under the guidance of Arjun Mishra. She also studied

abhinaya under Kalanidhi Narayan at Protima Bedi's Nrityagram. She closely studied Baba Bulleh Shah's contribution to Punjabi Sufi traditions. The great Sufi saint Maulana Rumi and Amir Khusro also influenced her and brought about the creative twist in her dance. Chaturvedi began her career as a Kathak dancer. She attempts at building an interface with diverse forms like the music of Rajasthan, Kashmir, Awadh, Punjab, Turkmenistan, Iran and Kyrgyzstan. She is particularly drawn to Sufi mysticism and has endeavoured to incorporate movements in her performances that are reminiscent of the meditative practices of the whirling dervishes. She has therefore, chosen to name her dance style as Sufi Kathak.

She has performed in more than 300 concerts in more than 22 countries across the world. In the last two decades, Manjari has performed concerts all over the world. In the past decade Manjari Chaturvedi has collaborated and performed with a wide range of international artists as Global Fusion

The Courtesan Project is an initiative by Manjari Chaturvedi that is dedicated to work towards removing social stigmas associated with Courtesan, the Tawaifs, and thereby giving them much deserved respect and place as artists par excellence. "The Lost Songs and Dance of Courtesans - Gender discrimination in Arts and How it Shapes the Art for Future" is a project that archives

and documents the lives and stories of the incredible women performers. It brings alive dance and stories of women who were stigmatised by the society for being performers both music and dance and in an unfortunate society ridden by gender discrimination were not even part of the documentation history of the performing arts. Hence it becomes imminent we tell their brilliant stories to the world and show their dance. In the wake of inadequate research and documentation, several myths and misconceptions shroud lives and history of courtesans.

Classical Vocal Recital by Mahesh Kale

Mahesh Kale is the most promising name in the firmament of Hindustani classical music. He honed his *gayaki* in the Gurukul system learning from Padmashree Pandit Jitendra Abhisheki, he has an illustrious pedigree, and his thrilling performances bear this out.



Mahesh Kale, India's National Award-winning

vocalist is not just an exemplary performer, but he's also an educator and reformer. Kale, after winning India's National Film Award as the Best Playback Singer, for his classical piece in the film *Katyar Kaljat Ghusli* (2016), has firmly established himself as a face of Indian classical music of the new generation and has performed extensively across India, US, Europe, UAE, Australia, and Southeast Asia. Mahesh Kale has received a proclamation from the US House of Representatives for successfully bridging the gap between classical and non-classical audiences, creating a shared platform for them to enjoy together.

Mahesh has several other awards to his credit like India Community Centre's Inspire Award. The Maharashtra State Governments Award, Pride of India, Rotary's award for The icon for the Youth. Several mainstream awards like Radio Mirchi, Zee, Sanskriti Award, to name a few. He has also served as jury for various awards including the Maharashtrian of the Year.

Mahesh maintains an open outlook towards music to reach out to the new generation while retaining the traditions. He has performed with world renowned artists here and abroad. His collaborative works, ably demonstrate his versatility as a composer and singer. In an effort to spread awareness and education about Indian classical music in the western world, Mahesh has given lecture-demonstrations and talks at various academic institutions including Stanford University, Harvard University, TEDx, and the Commonwealth Club.

Kale, who holds a degree in Engineering Management, is also the founder of the Indian Classical Music and Arts (ICMA) Foundation, a non-profit focused on preserving, nurturing, and celebrating Indian Classical Music. Kale is also a teacher and an inspiration for a motivated student body of over a thousand students across 15 countries through his music school, MKSM, which is headquartered in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Concluding Day

October 29th, 2024

Queen of Indian Pop – Padmabhushan Usha Uthup, Live in Concert



Usha Uthup has crossed boundaries through music for over 54 years and has spread a message of love and unity, peace and harmony, tolerance and integrity, and happiness - through music. From discotheques to concerts across India and the World, she has addressed the youth about the values of music that makes us human. She lives as she believes, presenting even the most contemporary

songs dressed in traditional attire projecting the fact that India is a true melting pot of world cultures with its own distinctive cultural identity.

She comes from a traditional middle class South Indian family. Her career began in 1969 at Chennai nightclub called Nine Gems and she has recorded more than a hundred albums. She sings in Seventeen Indian languages and Eight Foreign languages. Usha's melody speaks a universal language and transcends religion, race, nationality and caste. She has given people in far flung cultures an unexpected image of an Indian woman: strong, independent, humorous, intelligent and loaded with talent.

She has worked for Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity mobilising funds for Prem Daan, Sishu Bhavan, home for the dying in Kalighat, Kolkata. She was honoured with Key to Kenya for contribution to bring communities of the world together through song. She has worked extensively for Spastics Association, leprosarium and supported the home for people suffering from leprosy across the nation, innumerable NGOs and with the Govt. supporting research for cancer, aids, women trafficking, child abuse. She has also worked with The Richard Gere Foundation for Aids. She has been representing India through ICCR across Europe, Africa and Asia,

She has received the coveted Padma Shri Award in the year 2011. A TEDx speaker, she performed at Davos in the world economic forum to a standing ovation. She received the Filmfare Award in 2011. She has received the coveted Padma Bhushan Award in the year 2024.

She also made an interesting foray into the acting career as a singer and actor in few Malayalam, Tamil, Kannada as well as Hindi and Indie movies. Her filmography and songs are innumerable to list here and she is still going strong with her wonderful voice.

Efforts to Promote Crafts and Artisans at Virasat Festival



“Artisans smiling with hope is the biggest achievement of Virasat festival.”

In this edition of the festival, a special effort was made to promote crafts from different parts of the country and link the end buyer with the craftsman. This is an effort to eliminate middlemen and to ensure that the artisans of our country get a fair price for what they produce, utilising

years of inter-generational knowledge and skills acquired over several years of practice.

The following were the efforts undertaken by the us to promote crafts and craftsmen during the Virasat '24 Festival:

1. Virasat Festival is well-known for offering a very large market to artisans who are drawn to the festival from different parts of the country. Over 15 days of the festival, almost a million people visit the event to experience the craft traditions of India. This year too, The festival saw a great footfall and being in the days between the Dussehra and Deepavali, the festival offered a great opportunity to buyer and seller alike, since this is the time when artisans achieve maximum sales. Some of the crafts represented at the festival included weaves from Assam, Sanjhi from Mathura, Cane from Nagaland, Chanderi Silk from Madhya Pradesh, Chikankari from Uttar Pradesh, Miniature paintings from Rajasthan, and Madhubani and Manjusha Paintings from Bihar. Uttarakhand crafts were also included in the form of Wool Weaving, Copperware and Wood Carving craft. Artisans from Uzbekistan and Afghanistan also participated.





2. The festival also included displays of certain crafts where the artisans not only sold the their craft, but also displayed the process of making the craft. During such displays, the visitors to the festival get to shoot their queries directly to the craftsmen about the process of making the craft, and they are also able to learn first-hand the intricacies and effort that goes into making such objects. The highlights of this year's display were Glass-

Blowing from Agra-Firozabad in Uttar Pradesh, Lac Bangle making from Jodhpur, Rajasthan, Madhubani Painting from Bihar and Hand Block Printing from Rajasthan.

3. This year, the festival also made efforts to make crafts more accessible to the differently abled *divyang* community in Dehradun and surrounding areas. Several differently abled - groups of people were invited to the Virasat Festival from institutions such as Latika Roy Foundation, National Institute for Visually Challenged and Bajaj Institute of Learning, and special workshops on crafts were conducted, keeping in mind the special needs of these people.
4. To acquaint young people with the wealth of Indian handicrafts, the Heritage Quest Quiz was organised at the festival grounds. The Quiz featured special sections on Indian handicrafts. Students from over 40 schools participated in this mammoth event. Prize winners were given Awards and Certificates.
5. Another event that attracted a lot of attention and participation was the Crafts' Treasure Hunt organised at the Virasat grounds. Participating teams from various schools and colleges of Dehradun, Haridwar and Mussoorie were given clue chits about various crafts present at the festival and the students were asked to identify these crafts on the basis of clues given. The teams identifying all the crafts first were given awards. The event generated a





lot of excitement as it also included the physical activity of running around the crafts' village and meeting the craftsmen, asking questions about their art-form.

6. To give young people authentic knowledge about crafts of India, several other events such as Sit-and-Draw Competition, Craft Workshops, Craft

Demonstrations etc. were also organised. The festival team organised the raw materials and invited young people to sit with the artisans and engage in production of crafts' items which they could take back home.

7. Talks and Seminars were organised at the festival to highlight the craft traditions of Uttarakhand, the processes involved in the making of handicrafts and the difficulties of marketing. Artisans and experts, along with the public, participated enthusiastically in these programmes.
8. An effort was also made to include women self-help groups in the marketing of organic foods and crafts. Women federations were invited to set up stalls, and market their home-made products to the large number of visitors at the festival.

Overall, the festival was a great opportunity to promote artisanship and crafts of India, especially in such a large event being organised as a part of the Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav. Large number of artisans were benefitted and showed their willingness to return to the festival again in the coming years. The visitors also left satisfied with the experience.

The festival has been a magnet for artisans ever since it was established and this was underlined this year too, at the Virasat Arts' and Heritage Festival.

Over the years, we shall try to reach out to more visitors and strengthen their interface with the crafts of India.



Efforts to Integrate Differently-Abled Youth with the Events at the Virasat Festival



This year, we made a special effort to integrate young differently-abled people with the festivities at the Virasat festival. Special invitations were sent out to institutions, requesting their participation in the various youth events, as also inviting them to perform on the Virasat stage. The Festival generated quite a buzz among the differently abled community and saw enthusiastic participation from many groups.

Many children participated in the events at the Virasat festival and were given prizes too. They experienced the joy of making crafts and also got to mingle with other youth from different schools and colleges of the city.

Many young people also performed for appreciative audiences, regaling them with their efforts.



The Virasat Arts and Heritage Festival has truly emerged as an inclusive event, giving equal opportunities to all citizens, irrespective of their physical abilities and mental faculties. The social inclusion at the Virasat Festival was very fulfilling for organisers and visitors alike, and gave everyone an opportunity to be sensitive and sensitized towards people with special needs.

Sampling of Branding, Stalls and Publicity at the Virasat Festival



LED Screens

