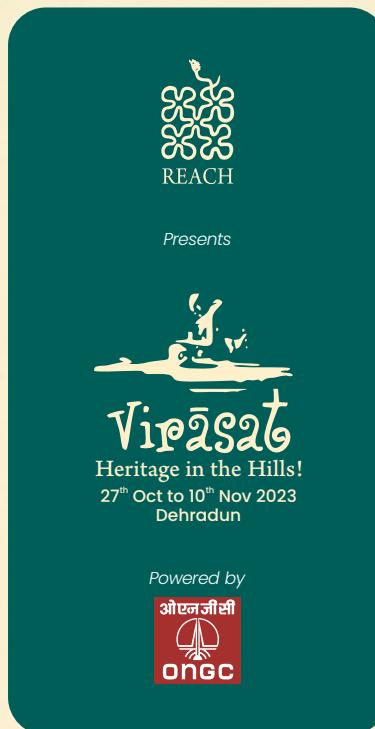
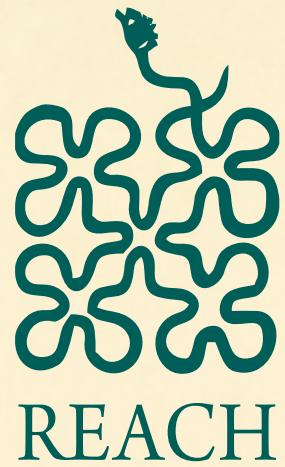




VIRASAT 2023 REPORT

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THE VIRASAT ARTS' & HERITAGE FESTIVAL

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, folk dances, music, theatre, exhibitions, talks, seminars, film-festival, literature festivals, cuisine presentations and much more. The festival attracts a pan-Indian participation of about half a million people along with around 300 master craftsperson and 400 artistes.

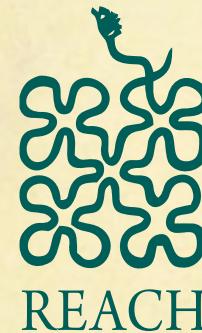
The folk forms, craft, art, and culture of the mountain communities are presented with an academic perspective. Another unique

aspect of this event is the participation of about 50,000 school children and youth from various schools and training institutes. 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
- Around five lakh 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.

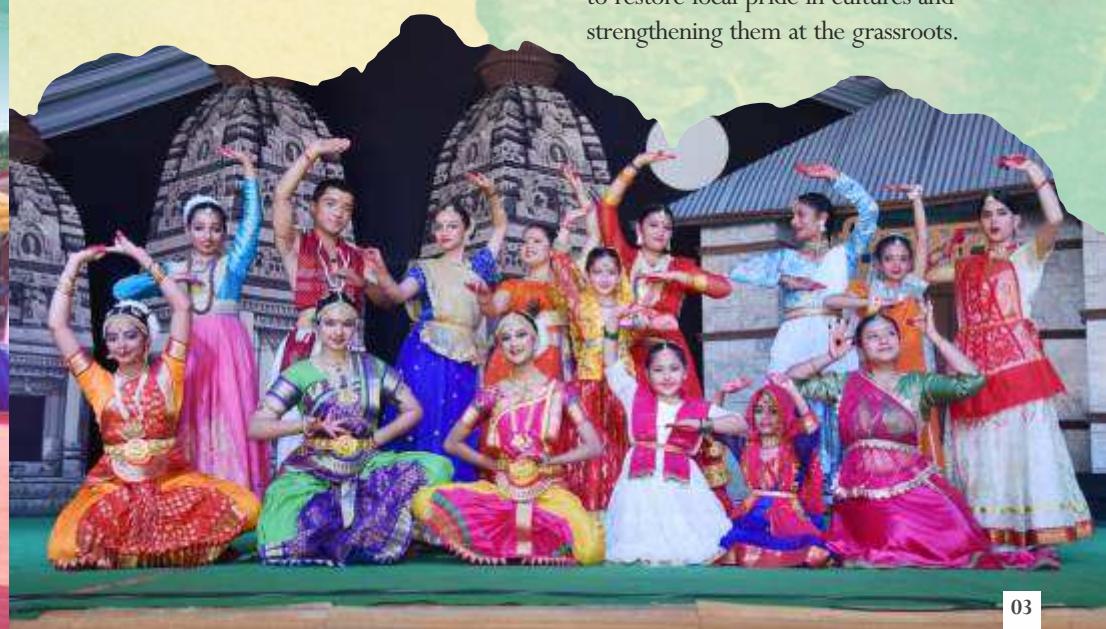


THE ORGANIZERS



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
27 October to 10 November '23
Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Stadium

The 27th Virasat Arts' and Heritage festival, for the year 2023, 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.

For the last 28 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 since 1996. 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 lack of a platform. At this festival, programs for students from schools, and colleges in Uttarakhand are also organised under the aegis of Virasat 'Saadhana'. In addition to this, heritage walks youth-centric activities are also organised during the festival.

Virasat this year was held from 27th October 2023 to 10th November'23 at Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Stadium, Kaulagarh Road, Dehradun.



Here is a run-down of all the events at the Virasat Arts' and Heritage Festival:

The Vibrance of Folk & Classical Arts of India on Display

The renowned cultural event of Uttarakhand, Virasat 'Arts and Heritage Festival 2023' was inaugurated by MLA of Dehradun Cantt Area, Smt. Savita Kapoor at the Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Stadium on Kaulagarh Road in Dehradun. The lighting of the lamp marked the commencement of the event. The occasion was marked by the release of a special First Day Cover on the Virasat Festival, released by the Department of Posts, Government of India. The evening was graced by esteemed guests including former CEO of Petronet LNG and Director (Human Resource), ONGC Dr. A.K. Balyan, Prominent person of Dehradun Shri Suryakant Dhasmana, Director Postal Service, Shri Anasuya Prasad, former Chairman of HAL Shri R. Madhavan and General Secretary of REACH Shri R.K. Singh.

Day 01
27 October, 2023



Chholiya Dance from the Kumaon Himalayas

The Festival commenced with the captivating Chholiya dance, a traditional folk dance originating from the Kumaon division of Uttarakhand and the Western Province of Nepal. This centuries old sword dance, once associated with wedding processions, has evolved into a symbol of Kumaoni and Far-

Western culture. Accompanied by martial music, the sword-wielding performers engaged in a synchronized dance, simulating mock combat. The historical roots of Chholiya 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 Chholiya 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," "Chhola Yudh," and "Minar." The main artists in this Chholiya dance included

Gopal Ram on Dhol, Deepak Ram performing Chholiya, Dinesh Kumar on Casio, Anand Ram as the singer, Diwan Ram on Tuturi, Bachiram on Masakbeen, Bhardu Ram on Bean Baja, Prem Prakash with Ranasingha, Amit Kumar showcasing Taal, Shankar Ram playing Damo, Jayal Arya performing Chholiya, and Inder Ram on Damau.

Flute Recital by Rakesh Chaurasia

The inaugural programme featured a mesmerizing flute performance by Shri Rakesh Chaurasia who enthralled the audience with Rag Merubihag followed by Kirwani and ended the concert with Rag Bhairavi. His was a spellbinding performance well appreciated by the audience.

Rakesh, a prodigy from a distinguished musical lineage, is a prominent disciple of the legendary flute player, Padma Bhushan Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia. Rakesh Chaurasia has showcased his prowess on the global stage, enthralling audiences at classical and semi-classical music festivals worldwide,

including Japan, Australia, Europe, South Africa, and the United States.

Notably, Rakesh Chaurasia was also invited to conclude a twenty-four-hour live music broadcast on BBC Radio, celebrating the Silver Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, signifying his stature on the international stage. While he has ventured into experimental genres, Rakesh Chaurasia remains dedicated to his primary goal of becoming a complete classical musician. His performances at prominent festivals like the WOMAD Festival in Athens, 'Festivals of India' across Russia, Japan, the USA, and Europe, attest to his growing maturity and recognition in the music world. Rakesh Chaurasia continues to acknowledge the need for learning from his uncle, Padma

Bhushan Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia, and other maestros in this art. He possesses the potential to establish a unique identity within the realm of Indian classical music.

He was accompanied on Tabla by Shri Mithilesh Kumar Jha.

A village for Crafts Bazaar having more than 200 stalls for various crafts, handloom items, artwork, potteries, metal showpieces, and a dedicated section of Indian traditional cuisine was also established for entire festival period.

The inaugural was also marked by a band performance by the Indo-Tibetan Border Police.





Virasat Saadhana and Virasat Heritage Quest gives an opportunity to youth

Virasat Heritage Quest Quiz Contest

The second day of the Virasat Arts' and Heritage Festival 2023 commenced with the Quiz programme. Under the programme, eight prominent schools from Dehradun showcased their talent. The participating schools included Philpot Public School Dehradun, Doon International School, SGRR Public School Balawala, SGRR Public School Sahastradhara Road, Doon Sarala Academy, Hope Way Public School, Touch Wood School, and Aasra Trust. During the elimination round, teams had 20 minutes to complete written tasks, and the following students advanced to the final round: Vardaan Singhal and Aishwarya Rawat from Doon International, Om Bijalwan and Gargi Dhasmana from Hope Ways Public School, Manav Saka and Prakhar Bahuguna from

Day 02
28 October, 2023

Touch Wood School, and Ananya Singh and Siddhant Solanki from Doon International.

The Virasat Heritage Quest is a unique quiz based on Indian heritage and its inherent values, where several prestigious schools vie for top honours. The quiz consists of a written round as well as audio-visual final round. The Quiz was hosted by Dr. Sargam Mehra supported by Ghanshyam, Shushanshu Thapa and Sana Mehra.



One unique aspect of the quiz was that two rounds of questions focused on the festival sponsors, acquainting young people and the large audience of the values to supporters of arts and culture.

Heritage Quiz winners were Ananya Singh

Raas by Rana Sidaa of Porbandar, Gujarat

The day's cultural program commenced with an inaugural ceremony with Dehradun's Mayor, Shri Sunil Uniyal Gama as the Chief Guest.

Gujarat's Raas performed by Rana Sidaa of Porbandar, and his troupe, took the stage and left the audience spellbound with their sword dance, Dhal Talwar, Maniara, and Raas performances. The artists, including Rana Bhai Sida (Leader), Mohan, Ramesh, Niles, Bhoja Bhai, Khoda, Nitesh, Lakhu, Ram, Niles, Manoj, Arjun, Nitin, Sagar, Harish,

and Siddhant Solanki from Doon International School, followed by Vardaan Singhal and Aishwarya Rawat from Doon International School in the second position. All participants received certificates and prizes.

Musical instruments like Dhol, Sarnai (clarinet), and Harmonium accompany their performances, and their costumes consist of

plain white clothing, turbans, red bands across the chest and back, and a red and gold-plated bead necklace.



In addition to the sword dance, the following Raas performances were featured:

- Dhal Talwar Raas: Performed with real swords and shields, depicting war and victory.
- Maniyaro Raas: Utilizing small wooden sticks called Dandiya while singing religious songs.
- Athingo Raas: Performed with Dandiya and coloured strings, forming diamond-shaped patterns during the dance.
- Ashiyad Raas and Gowar Raas: Utilizing small coloured wooden sticks for a lively and colourful performance.

Dhrupad by Prashant Mallik and Nishant Mallik

Dhrupad is arguably the oldest form of Indian Music tracing its origins from the Sam Veda. The singing of this form depends greatly on breath control.

Mallik Brothers presented a soulful Dhrupad performance that captivated the audience.

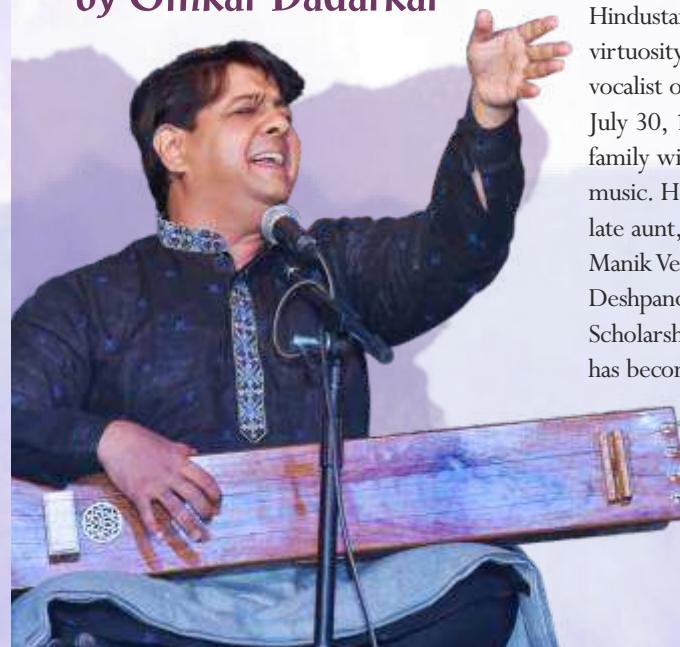
They began with "Dhrupad Char Taal Bandiya" and moved on to "Tero Hi Gyan Dhyan, Tero Hi Sumiran" in Raga Saraswati, creating a mesmerizing musical ambience. The performance concluded with "Dis Matra, Sur Taal Bandiya" in Raag Shivaranjani.



The Mallik Brothers, Shri Prashant Mallik and Shri Nishant Mallik, represent the 13th generation of the Darbhanga Dhrupad tradition, with a lineage dating back 500 years. They have received three National

Awards, hold a Top grade in Dhrupad singing (duet) from All India Radio and Doordarshan, and have preserved the rich tradition of Dhrupad music.

Hindustani Vocal Recital by Omkar Dadarkar



In the final presentation of the day's cultural program, Omkar Dadarkar presented Hindustani vocal singing with great virtuosity. He is a renowned upcoming vocalist of India. Omkar Dadarkar, born on July 30, 1977, in Mumbai, hails from a family with deep roots in Marathi theatre music. He received early guidance from his late aunt, the renowned classical singer Manik Verma, and later studied under Ram Deshpande after being awarded the CCRT Scholarship for classical music in Delhi. He has become a recognized concert artist across India, the US, Canada, and the UK, with accolades such as the Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar and the Aditya Vikram Birla Award.

REACH Vintage & Classic Car and Bike Rally meets the Tradition of Thumri

REACH Vintage and Classic Car & Bike Rally

The third day of the Virasat Arts' and Heritage Festival 2023 commenced with the eagerly awaited REACH Vintage and Classic Car and Bike Rally. The event kicked off from the Ambedkar Stadium, with the honour of flagging it off bestowed upon Chief Guest Shri Jai Raj, Former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests.



journey back at Ambedkar Stadium, passing through Dilaram Bazaar via Dehradun Cantt. The rally was a vibrant fusion of enthusiastic vehicle owners, skilled drivers, and captivated onlookers who thronged in large

numbers to admire these classic automobiles, motorcycles, and jeeps.

Notable vehicles in the rally included a 1926 Chevrolet and a Matchless Motorcycle from

Day 03
29 October,
2023

This spectacular rally witnessed the participation of more than 40 vintage and classical cars and bikes. The rally began from Dr. Ambedkar Stadium, proceeded along Rajpur Road, and concluded its exhilarating

1942, owned by Dr. S. Farooq. The winners of this enthralling rally were Dr S. Farooq for the car category and Balbir Sembhi for the bike category. Additionally, several awards were presented, with Shreyas Verma

and Hrithik Sharma winning the Volunteers' Choice, Kunal Arora and Sagir Ahmed taking home the REACH's Choice, and Noor Mohammed and Anupam Suden securing the Audience's Choice awards.

Hindustani Classical Guitar by Debashish Bhattacharya

The day's cultural program was inaugurated by Raja Randhir Singh, Interim President of the Olympic Council of Asia and Patron of REACH Virasat.

Debashish Bhattacharya, the celebrated Indian classical musician and teacher, commenced his performance by enthralling the audience with the mesmerizing tunes of Shuddha Kalyan played on his guitar, followed by a captivating rendition of Raga

Jaijawanti. Debashish Bhattacharya, born on January 12, 1963, in Kolkata, has made a significant mark in the world of Indian classical music. He is renowned for introducing the world's first slide guitar syllabus and has redefined Indian classical music through a fusion of traditional and contemporary styles. His innovative playing techniques and sound have earned him a Grammy nomination, several World Music Awards, and a place of honour at numerous



concerts and workshops. Notably, his latest creation, the Pushpa Veena, is possibly the world's first slide-instrument with an animal skin top. His contributions to Hindustani raga music include three new ragas for evening melodies: Raga Palash Priya, Raga

Shankar Dhvani, and Raga Chandra Malika. Recognitions include the World Music Hall of Fame 2022, Grammy Nominee 2009, BBC Award 2007, Asiatic Society Gold Medal 2005, and President of India Gold Medal 1984.

Thumri by Kumud Jha Diwan

The evening programme continued with a soul-stirring performance by Kumud Jha Diwan, a PhD holder in Business Studies and

a renowned semi-classical singer specializing in Thumri.



Her captivating renditions included the thumri "Maine man re kiya, tune tikuli ke beech badha kahe ko diya" in Kaushik Dhvani, a Dadra known as "Sidhi ka Dadra," and a Bandish in Raag Bhairavi. Her performance culminated with "Saawariya Pyara Re Mori Guiyan" and "Jiya Mora Kaampe. Kumud Jha Diwan's melodious

voice, reminiscent of the late Siddheshwari Devi and Rasoolan Bai of Banaras Gharana, has earned her the prestigious 'Indira Gandhi Priyadarshini Award' in 2010. She holds the title of 'Sangeet Prabhakar' in singing from Prayag Sangeet Samiti, Allahabad, and is a graded artiste of All India Radio, as well as a listed artiste of ICCR.



Sufi Music of Punjab by Jasbir Jassi

The evening reached its pinnacle with a scintillating performance by Jasbir Singh Jassi, "Aayo Ni Saiyan" composed by Sufi saint Baba Bulleshah, then he performed Chhap Tilak... Naina Milai Ke, he also presented Mera Piya Ghar Aaya O Ram Ji and other songs. Jasbir Singh Jassi also known as Jasbir Jassi, a versatile Indian lyricist, artist, and actor. Jasbir Jassi, with a prolific music career, has released more than thirteen song albums, beginning with his pop album Dil Le Gayi Hai in 1998. His enchanting voice and compositions have graced films like Patiala House and Kesari, where he sang and composed the soul-stirring "Ek Omkar." He also released a Sufi song titled Bol, O Lal Ni Hain, written by Baba Bulleshah, and made a mark in Punjabi cinema as the lead in 'Khushiyen' in the

Punjabi film 'Heer Ranjha.' Beyond his musical contributions, he has been an ardent philanthropist, emphasizing the unifying power of music. His single track 'Azadi - The Independence' has garnered immense love and appreciation from the public.

The festival continued with its crafts village, culinary delights, an art fair, folk music, Bollywood-style performances, heritage walks, and more. This festival serves as a window into the profound cultural heritage of India, enriching the knowledge and experience of visitors from across the country. Each aspect of the festival, from art exhibitions to musical performances, culinary offerings, and heritage walks, reflects the traditional values intertwined with India's rich heritage.

A Jugalbandi followed by Contemporary Dance from Russia as Highlights

Virasat Saadhana

The fourth day of the Virasat Art and Heritage Festival 2023 commenced with the captivating Virasat Saadhana program, featuring outstanding performances by Dehradun's school students in classical singing and music.

Nineteen schools from Dehradun participated in the singing category, showcasing their remarkable talent. Anirudh Nautiyal and Mayank Sundarwal from Social Baluni Public School delivered a mesmerizing rendition of Madhuban Mein Radhika Naache. Ritkriti Negi and Shubham Dhyani from Hill Foundation School presented the enchanting "Raga Yaman." Aditi Verma and Yogesh Khetwal from Feelphot Public School



**Day 04
30 October,
2023**

performed "Raga Yaman," while Ojasvi Panuli and Vibushit from Doon International School presented "Raga Duryodharaksha." Krishnajay Mohan Das, Kuldeep Pant and Tarash Sethi from The Tomsbridge School presented "Raga Aheer Bhairav." Pradyumna Nautiyal and Sachin Maithali from SGRR University performed "Raaga Rashtreyaag." Pragati Rana and Swara Ahuja from Glee Music Academy delivered a captivating rendition of "Brindavani Sarang." Archana and Rajesh Kaloni from SGRR Public School Sahastradhara Road presented "Bhairavi Raga."

Vansh Thapa, Paritosh Sharma, and Sparsh Sethi from Saraswati Sangeet Mandir presented "Raag Bhairav." Latika, Anil Nautiyal, and Naveen Uniyal from Hopeway Public School enchanted the audience with "Jyoti Kalash Chalka." Anushree Pokhriyal, Yogesh Khetwal, and Saurav Ahuja from St. Jude's School presented "Raag Bihaag." Aaradhy Rawat, Yogesh Khetwal, and Saurav Ahuja from Hilton School performed "Raag Bhopali." Adhipriya Nautiyal, Yogesh Khetwal, and Saurav Ahuja from Shamrock

Nakrondha presented "Bandish and Tarana" in Raag Malkosh. Drishti Kanojia, Yogesh Khetwal, and Saurav Ahuja presented "Raga Megh" from the Banyan Tree. Devansh Awasthi, Yogesh Khetwal, and Saurav Ahuja from Tarun Sangeet and Vichar Manch performed "Raag Bhopali." Vartika Singh, Yogesh Khetwal, and Saurav Ahuja from Universal Academy delivered "Bada Khayal" from Raag Yaman. The organizer of Virasat Sadhana, Smt. Sadhna, distributed certificates to the participants.

Jugalbandi – Flute by Pt. Ronu Majumdar and Mandolin by U. Rajesh

The cultural programme of the day was inaugurated by Dr. B.V.R.C. Purushottam, IAS, Secretary, Animal Husbandry, Fisheries, and Dairy, Government of Uttarakhand, who lit the ceremonial lamp.

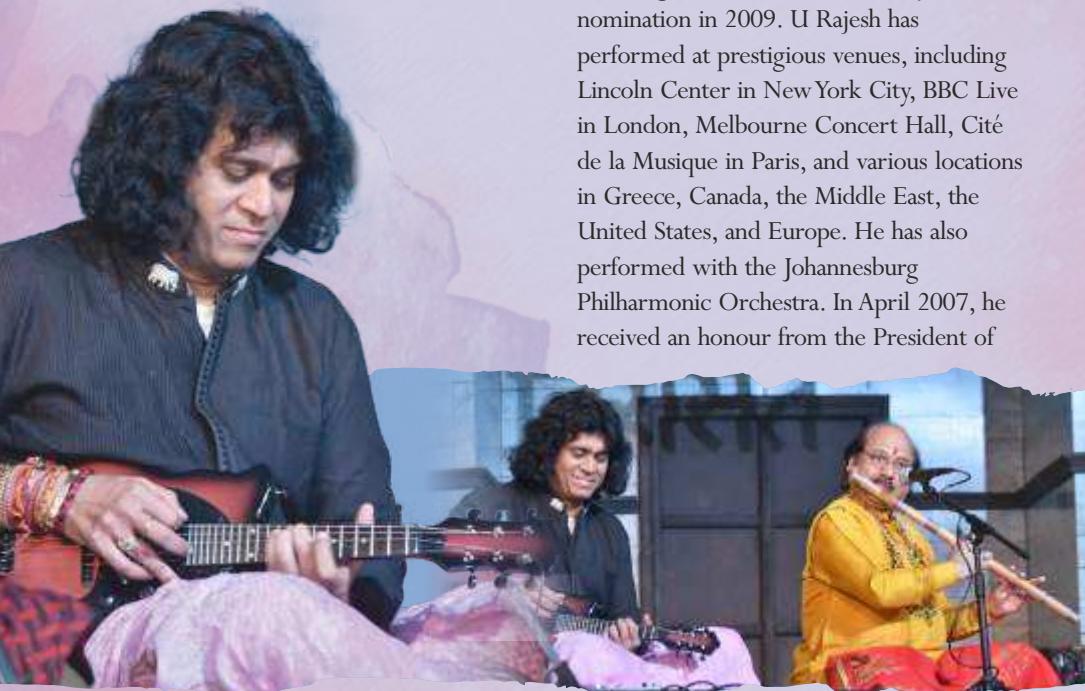
The cultural programme's first presentation featured a Jugalbandi performance on the flute and mandolin by renowned artists Ronu Majumdar and U Rajesh. They began with a mesmerizing rendition of Carnatic music, starting with Raga Mohanam, which shares similarities with Raga Bhupali. Sri Srinivasan accompanied their performance on the Mridangam, creating a harmonious musical experience. Their presentation continued with Ragamala, captivating the audience with their musical finesse.

Ronu Majumdar's musical journey began under the tutelage of his father, who had received training from the legendary Pandit

Pannalal Ghosh, a pioneer in flute playing. Ronu Majumdar later became a disciple of the iconic flautist, the late Pandit Vijay Raghav Rao. He also received vocal music training from Pandit Laxman Prasad of Jaipur and had the privilege of meeting the Bharat Ratna Pandit Ravi Shankar during the recording of the renowned song "Athah Swagatam, Shubh Swagatam."



His exceptional musical abilities impressed Shri Ravi Shankar, leading to their collaboration. Ronu Majumdar has received numerous accolades, including the Aditya Vikram Birla Award, Sangeet Natak Akademi Award 2014, the Lifetime Achievement Award by Navbharat Times, and the National Kumar Gandharva Award 2006. He was also nominated for a Grammy Award for the album "Tabula Rasa" alongside Bela Fleck and others. Ronu Majumdar's Bollywood journey commenced in 1981 with R.D. Burman, and he has contributed to many memorable songs with Lata Mangeshkar. His association with Vishal Bhardwaj for the film



"Maachis" has left an indelible mark in the music industry.

U Rajesh, a maestro of Carnatic music on

the mandolin, received his musical education at an early age from his father and brother, U. Srinivasan. He started performing Carnatic classical music on the mandolin at the age of six and presented his first concert at Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham in the presence of Sri Chandrashekarendra Saraswati. He and his brother collaborated on concerts and released music albums together. U Rajesh is affiliated with the Srinivas Institute of World Music, which provides free music tuition to students.

His work on John McLaughlin's album "Floating Point" earned a Grammy nomination in 2009. U Rajesh has performed at prestigious venues, including Lincoln Center in New York City, BBC Live in London, Melbourne Concert Hall, Cité de la Musique in Paris, and various locations in Greece, Canada, the Middle East, the United States, and Europe. He has also performed with the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra. In April 2007, he received an honour from the President of

India. U Rajesh has released numerous solo albums and collaborated with other prominent artists, such as Zakir Hussain and George Brook.

Carnatic Vocal by Sudha Raghunathan

The second presentation of the cultural program featured the renowned singer Sudha Raghunathan, who began her performance with "Mathe Ek Varnam" in Raaga Khamaj, dedicated to the Universal Mother. She followed this with a Raaga dedicated to 'Kashi Ramkriya' by music composer Shri Muthuswami Dikshitar, invoking Lord Ganesha. Sudha Raghunathan also presented "Pantuvarali" and concluded the programme with a selection of devotional folk compositions.

Sudha Raghunathan is one of the brightest stars of Carnatic music in India, known for her mesmerizing voice. She has received prestigious awards, including the Padma Bhushan and Sangeeta Kalanidhi. Sudha Raghunathan's mastery of singing techniques, complex styles, and her authentic renditions of 'Kriti,' 'Raaga,' and 'Kalpana Swara' make her a supreme artist. She has performed at numerous concerts worldwide, captivating millions with her voice. Sudha Raghunathan has released over 200 albums with major recording companies and holds a top ranking in Prasar Bharati, All India Radio, and Doordarshan. She had the unique honour of presenting Vande Mataram in the

Central Hall of Parliament, New Delhi, on January 27, 2000, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of independent Indian Republic.

Sudha Raghunathan's musical journey began under the guidance of her mother, Mrs. Chudamani, and she received a scholarship from the Central Government in 1977, enabling her to study under Padma Bhushan Sangeet Kalanidhi Dr. M.L. Vartak. Beyond her musical success, Sudha Raghunathan established the "Community Foundation" in 1999, a charitable organization that has contributed to numerous social and educational causes, including palliative care. She has brought Carnatic music to corporation schools, remote villages, and even prisons, preserving and promoting the rich cultural heritage of India.



Contemporary Dance by Raketa, Russia

Last presentation of the cultural program featured the Raketa team, a group of international artists from Russia. Russian dances were sheer poetry in motion. All the dancers were moving in one fluid motion telling a story full of energy and rhythm. The Raketa team included Anastasia Parkova, Elizaveta Busygina, Yulianna Darman, Ekaterina Rizhova, Yulia Tcheryakova, Christina Karamysheva, Daniil Vereshchagin, Maksim Kokanov, Sergei Tupik, Artem Salon, Andrey Bazin, and Polina Koroleva.



The Raketa Team, a modern dance group, was established in 1995 and comprises students from various universities in Nizhny Novgorod. Under the direction of Danila Vereshchagin, the group utilizes innovative methods and techniques to create productions that blend the Chmvetsya folk dance of Russia with contemporary and traditional choreographic styles. The ensemble presents captivating stories from people's lives, making it one of the brightest representatives of this genre in Russia.

The group's stage costumes are a reflection of national characteristics and the soul of Russian culture, with vivid imagination and dramatic developments in form, movement, and texture. The Raketa team has gained recognition not only in Nizhny Novgorod but also in various regions of Russia and abroad. They have participated in international festivals and competitions in countries such as the Czech Republic, Turkey, Poland, Bulgaria, Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Serbia, Slovakia, Germany, Algeria,

and Abkhazia, earning high praise from organizers and audiences. For their artistic skills and concert activities, the modern dance group received the title of Honoured Group of Folk Art. The artistic directors of the group are Danila Vereshchagin and Natalya Vereshchagin. In 2022, choreographer and dance director Danila Vereshchagin was awarded the title of Honoured Worker of Culture of the Russian Federation by the Order of the President of Russia.

Sitar, Sanjeev Abhyankar and the Music of the Youth

Virasat Saadhana

The fifth day of the Virasat Arts' and Heritage Festival 2023 dawned with the enchanting Virasat Saadhana programme. This event, a celebration of art and tradition, featured captivating performances by Dehradun's talented students, showcasing classical dance and instrumental music.

Students from 12 schools participated in the instrumental music category, treating the audience to a symphony of melodies.

Highlights included Samik Kalyan of Indian Academy School displaying his tabla prowess, Riya Rawat of PYDS Learning Academy enchanting the crowd with a classical raga on the Bansuri, and Om Bhardwaj of Doon Valley Public School skilfully presenting ragas through tabla. The rhythmic beats of tabla also reverberated in the performances of Shivam Lohia from Ghungru Kathak Music College, Antas Solanki of Doon International School, and Mayank Dhiman of Guru Smriti Sangeet Shiksha Kendra. Additionally, Samarth Sharma of Madhukar Kala Sansthan, Harjot Singh of SGRR Public School Balawala,



Abhinav Pokhriyal of St. Jude's School, and Adhya Anand of Gyananda School for Girls displayed their musical talents. Hasjas Singh Bawa of Asian School closed the instrumental segment with a captivating rendition of Raga Bhairav on the Sitar.



In the dance category, five schools participated, featuring remarkable performances that showcased the richness of Indian culture. Sneha Agarwal from DAV PG College graced the stage with a Bharatnatyam performance dedicated to Saraswati Vandana. Shalini of Lakshmi Etram Cultural Society performed a Devi Stuti through Bharatnatyam, while Rakshita Joshi of Convent of Jesus Mary danced to Shiva Panchakshara. Gauri Chiller of Oberoi School of Integrated Studies paid homage to Nav Durga with a Bharatnatyam performance, and Manasa Sharma of St. Joseph Academy enthralled the audience with a Kathak performance set to the music of Sab Ban Than Aayi.

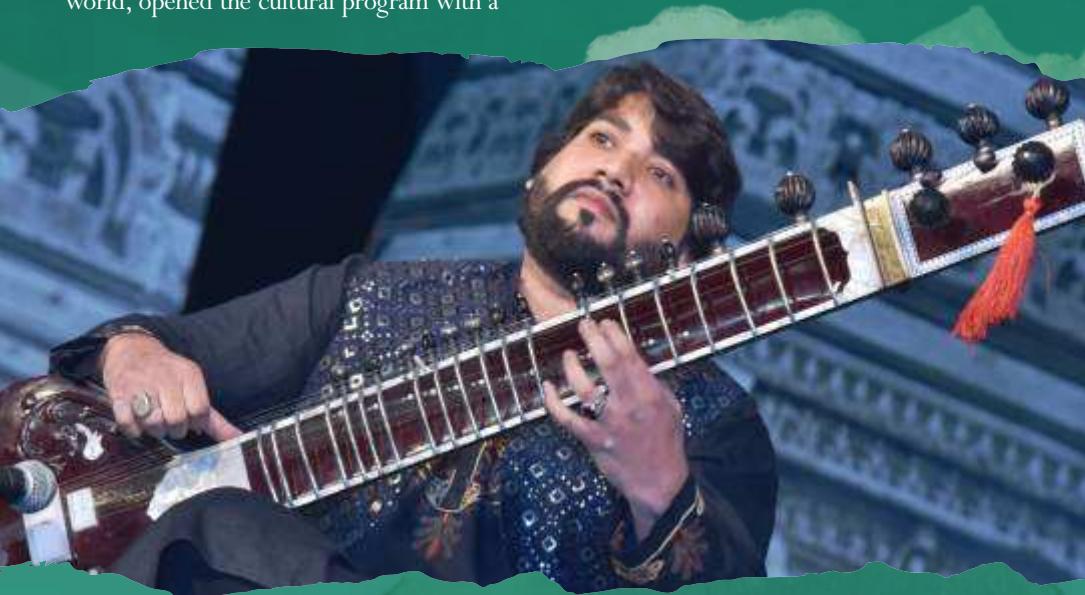
Day 05
31 October, 2023

Sitar Recital by Adnan Khan

The cultural programme commenced with the inauguration by Shri Bipin Gupta, President of CII, and Shri R.K. Singh, General Secretary of REACH, along with other distinguished members, who lit the ceremonial lamp.

Adnan Khan, a rising star in the music world, opened the cultural program with a

captivating sitar performance, showcasing the classical tunes of Raga Rajeshree and concluding with a melodious Mishra Khamaj dhun. Adnan Khan, the son of renowned sitar maestro Ustad Saeed Khan, has performed at prestigious events across India and continues to mesmerize audiences with his dedication to music.



Hindustani Classical Vocal by Sanjeev Abhyankar

The second performance featured Sanjeev Abhyankar, a well-known artist of Mewati Gharana, presenting the soulful bandish in Raga Bhoop Kalyan, Bolan Lagi Batiyaan. Accompanied by harmonium artist Pandit Dharmanath Mishra, Sanjeev Abhyankar's singing transcended boundaries, attracting the younger generation to the world of Indian classical music. His illustrious career

spanning over three decades has earned him numerous awards, including the National Film Award for Best Male Playback Singer in 1999.

He was born into a musical family, and his exceptional talent first surfaced at the tender age of three, when he effortlessly sang the songs his grandmother used to serenade him

with. Recognizing his prodigious gift, his parents resolved to nurture it.

His mother, Dr. Shobha Abhyankar, a talented singer in her own right, assumed the role of Sanjeev ji's first guru when he was just 8 years old. This marked the inception of Sanjeev's journey into the realm of music. Furthermore, Sanjeev ji commenced training under the tutelage of Pandit Gangadharbua Pimpalkhare, who also happened to be the guru of Sanjeev's mother. At the age of 11, he took the stage for the first time, stunning the audience with a two-hour performance. This remarkable debut earned him the moniker 'Wonder Boy' and reverberated throughout the nation.

Sanjeev adhered to the time-honoured Indian tradition of 'Guru Shishya Parampara.' He became an integral part of Pandit Jasraj ji's family, staying with him and accompanying him on his musical journeys. Over a decade from 1984 to 1994, he

tirelessly honed his skills in this manner. His unwavering commitment to excellence led to a plethora of prestigious awards, including the Pandit Kumar Gandharva National Award in 2008 from the Government of Madhya Pradesh, the coveted F.I.E. Foundation National Award in 1996, the 'Sur Ratna' title in 1996, the Pandit Jasraj Gaurav Award in 1991, and the All India President's Award. His versatility and expertise in diverse musical genres also culminated in the prestigious National Award for Best Male Playback Singer in 1998. Sanjeev has taken his extraordinary talents to over 200 different cities across India and worldwide, including the USA, Canada, Australia, Europe, and the Middle East.

The festival also witnessed the festive spirit of Karva Chauth, with the people of Dehradun enjoying musical performances and shopping from the stalls offering exquisite jewellery and decorations.



Kathak, Kaushiki and Dance from South Africa Entrall

Virasat Saadhana

The sixth day of the Virasat Arts' and Heritage Festival 2023 dawned with the captivating Virasat Saadhana program, marking a day of rich cultural experiences and artistic brilliance. In the dance category, school and university students showcased their talents, wowing the audience with a variety of classical and contemporary performances. Notable participants included Kriti Yadav of Graphic Era University, Shrishti Joshi of Doon University, Pakshila Verma of Ghunghru Kathak Music College, Ritvi Arya of Doon International, Nandani Bisht of New Doon Blossoms School, Ananya Singh of Kendriya Vidyalaya ONGC, Samridhi Nautiyal of Dehradun National Academy of Defense, Aishwarya Pokhriyal of Heritage School North Campus, Tamanna Rawat of Scholars Hub Defense Institute, Arpita Thapli of PYDS Learning Academy,

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Preksha Mittal of Doon Global School, Devyanshi Chauhan of Modern Public School, Avni Gupta of Delhi Public School Dehradun, Himanshi of The Dun Presidency School Premnagar, Ojaswini Bhatt of Social Baluni Public School, Anushka Chauhan of Hill Foundation School, and Molashree Rana of Philpot Public School Dehradun.

The Virasat Arts' and Heritage Festival 2023 has proven to be a significant platform for school children to exhibit their talents. Today, participants enthralled the audience with their exceptional dance performances.



Crafts' Workshops for the Physically Challenged

Crafts' Workshops were organized for school students as well as differently abled groups of students. 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,



Kathak by Abhyas, Pt. Krishna Mohan Maharaj & Troupe



The cultural program for the day commenced with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp, graced by esteemed guests, including; Shri Anand Bardhan, IAS, Additonal Chief Secretary, Uttarakhand; Raja Randhir Singh, Interim President of the Olympic Council of Asia; and Dr. Nishat Mishra, Dean, UPES along with other distinguished members.

The first presentation featured the Abhyas Group, who enthralled the audience with a delightful performance. The presentation

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.

included Ganpati Vandana by Krishna Mohan Maharaj Ji, Darbari Kathak dance in a royal court setting, a dance performance on Ghazal, a Tarana, and a Sufi Kalam, featuring Ameer Khusrao's Chhap Tilak. Meenu Garu, Heena Bhasin, Jaya Pathak, Nidhi Bhardwaj, Neha Bhagat, Devika Dixit, and Akshika Syal showcased their remarkable skills. Pandit Krishna Mohan Maharaj, belonging to the prestigious Kalka Bindadin Gharana of Lucknow, led the Abhyas group, an association dedicated to art, culture, and social welfare.

Tribhangi Dance Theatre, South Africa

The second performance of the day featured the Tribhangi Dance Theatre, a dance ensemble hailing from South Africa. Their energetic performance celebrated the long-standing African-Indian cultural relationship, with Priya Naidu, Teamletso Khalane, Caroline Govender, Montusi Motsekoe, Tibaho Mogotsi, and Solomon Skosana, skillfully choreographed by event director Jaysperi Moopen.

creating new work and nurturing the talents of dancers and collaborators in the creative process. The company firmly believes that art significantly contributes to human, social, and economic development, and their artists are actively defining their identity within the South African context, blending elements of Bharatanatyam, African, and contemporary dance.



The work of Tribhangi Dance Theatre continues to challenge preconceived notions of Indian dance in the South African context, blending various dance styles in an intercultural dialogue that promotes nation-building and social cohesion while respecting and showcasing diverse cultures. Under the visionary leadership of Jaysperi Moopen, Tribhangi Dance Theatre is a contemporary dance company committed to creating and performing original South African choreography. Their primary focus is on

Despite secondary migration to Britain from newly independent countries such as Uganda and Kenya, many South Asians chose to make South Africa their home, with approximately 1.3 million people of South Asian heritage now residing in the country. The fusion of these cultural influences, as exemplified by Tribhangi Dance Theatre, goes beyond mere entertainment, leaving a lasting impact and positive energy.

Artistic Director Jaysperi Moopen views

the company's mission as an exploration and reimagining of what Indian dance can be. The artists, rooted in both Indian and

African heritages, bring their mastery of traditional and contemporary dance forms to the stage.

Hindustani Classical Vocal by Kaushiki Chakraborty

The third presentation of the cultural program featured Kaushiki Chakraborty, who began her performance with Raga Yaman Kalyan. Accompanied by Murad Ali on Sarangi, Ishan Ghosh on Tabla, Paromita Mukherjee on Harmonium, and Aditi Bacheti and Srishti Kala on Tanpura, Kaushiki Ji delivered a captivating rendition of Indian classical music.

Kaushiki Chakraborty, a celebrated Indian classical singer and composer, boasts a rich musical background and repertoire, including pure classical, khayal, dadra, thumri, and various other forms of Indian music. Kaushiki is the daughter of the esteemed Hindustani classical singer, Pt. Ajoy Chakraborty, and has also collaborated with her husband, Parthasarathy Desikan. In 2020, she was honored with the Nari Shakti Award.

Kaushiki's journey into the world of music began at a young age, and her remarkable talents were evident when she sang her first public tarana at the age of 7. Under the guidance of her father and eminent music scholars, Kaushiki honed her skills at various music academies and schools, excelling in both Khayal and Thumri forms of music. Her career has seen her perform at prestigious events such as the Dover Lane Music

Conference, Sawai Gandharva Bhimsen Music Festival, and Parampara Program, earning her recognition as a torchbearer of the Patiala tradition.

Kaushiki has received numerous accolades throughout her career, including the Jadoo Bhatt Award in 1995, the Outstanding Young Person Award in 2000, and the prestigious BBC Award for Outstanding Achievement in Music in 2005. Her contribution to Hindustani Vocal Music earned her the Sangeet Natak Akademi's Ustad Bismillah Khan Award in 2010 and the Aditya Birla Kalakiran Award in 2013.



From Hindustani Music to Sitar to Graceful Movements of the Young

Virasat Saadhana

The seventh day of the Virasat Arts' and Heritage Festival 2023 commenced with Virasat Saadhana, a platform designed to showcase the remarkable talents of schoolchildren. This festival has become a vital opportunity for budding artists to exhibit their skills. Today's program featured a captivating array of classical dance performances by young students representing 17 different schools. Notable participants included Sajpreet Kaur Kalra



The talent continued to shine with performances from Vishal Singh of Shri Hans Institute of Management and Technology, Deepanshi Bhatt, Tarsh Sethi, Hemant Kantha from Ashima Dance and Arts Academy, Ayushi Chhetri from Jhankar Nritya Vatika, Divisha from St. Tara Academy, Muskaan Aggarwal, Yogesh Raghav, and Deepak from Madhukar Kala Sansthan. Bhatt, Tejaswani from Hill Queen Public School, Devanshi Rana from Rajhans Public

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from Graphic Era University, Harsita Aggarwal from Natyarambh, Kesar Kapil from Aryan School, Mrigana Nautiyal from Doon Defense International School, and Barthwal from Doon Blossoms School, all presenting the mesmerizing art of Bharatanatyam.

School, Divyana Kothiyal from Eddu Villa Institute, Ritika Gulati from Government College for Girls Patiala, Priyanka Badola from SGRR Public School Balawala, Khushi Kulhan, and Vinhil from SGRR Public School, Sahastradhara Road, along with Ekakshi Chauhan from Public School, who presented the captivating art of Kathak. Saadhna was organised by Radha Chatterjee, Kalpana Sharma and Ghanshyam.

Sitar Recital by Subhendra Rao

The cultural program of the day was inaugurated by Shri Anand Bardhan, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary, Government of Uttarakhand, who, along with other esteemed dignitaries, lit the ceremonial lamp.

The inaugural presentation of the cultural program featured the eminent sitar virtuoso, Subhendra Rao ji, who skilfully graced the audience with exquisite compositions in Raga Hemant and Raga Peelu. Subhendra ji concluded his spellbinding performance with Raga Jogeshwari, a harmonious amalgamation of Raga Jog and Raga Rajeshri, thoughtfully composed by the revered Pt. Ravi Shankar.

A disciple of the legendary Ravi Shankarji, Shri Subhendra Rao has garnered acclaim from critics and connoisseurs worldwide,

carrying forward the rich tradition of his Guru. He is known not only as a classical musician but also as a versatile collaborator, having worked with musicians from diverse genres across the globe. His illustrious career includes performances at esteemed venues such as the Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, Broadway, Sydney Opera House, National Arts Festival, Theater de la Ville, Dover Lane Music Conference, and St. Xavier's College Ahmedabad. His journey into the world of music began in Mysore, where he displayed remarkable talent from an early age, nurtured by his father, N.R. Rama Rao, a close disciple of Ravi Shankarji, and his mother, Nagaratna, a trained Saraswati Veena player. Shri Subhendra Rao's extensive experience includes assisting Ravi Shankar Ji in solo concerts and orchestras



and performing with him on numerous occasions. He even graced the stage in Russia with the orchestra 'Live in the Kremlin,' an event that was later released as a CD. Shri Subhendra Rao's global footprint extends to his tours in the UK and India with the production 'Ghanshyam' in 1989 and 1990.

Since his debut solo concert in Bangalore in 1987, Shri Subhendra Rao has established himself as one of the leading instrumentalists of his generation. His performances have graced renowned venues such as Carnegie Hall and Broadway in New York, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington DC, Walker Arts Center in Minneapolis, Des Moines Arts Center, and the Maui Arts and Cultural Center in Hawaii. He has taken center stage at the Sydney Opera House in Sydney, the Edinburgh Festival in Scotland, Theater de la Ville in Paris, Guernsey England Festival, National Arts Festival in South Africa, Fajr International Music Festival in Tehran, and

the Esplanade in Singapore, among others. In India, Shri Subhendra Rao has left an indelible mark on major music festivals, including the Dover Lane Music Conference, ITC Music Conference in Kolkata, Baba Harballabh Sangeet Mahasabha in Jalandhar, Shankarlal Mahotsav, Gunidas Sammelan in New Delhi, T.J.Gya Mahotsav in Ahmedabad, and Vasanthalabha Mahotsav in Bangalore.

His musical prowess has earned him 'Grade A' status on All India Radio, and he is recognized as an artist and guru by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR). Shri Subhendra Rao has also shared his expertise as a guest teacher at leading universities around the world, offering enlightening 'lecture-demonstrations' on Indian music. He is a distinguished empaneled Guru of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. He has made numerous appearances on national television, presenting his musical artistry.

Hindustani Classical Vocal by Sunanda Sharma

The second segment of the cultural program showcased the remarkable Indian classical singing talents of Sunanda Sharma. Sunanda commenced her recital with the evocative Chhota Khayal, followed by the soulful rendition of the Bada Khayal. In this captivating performance, she introduced the enchanting Bandish in Raga Purvi, followed by a melodious presentation of Raga Tappa, featuring the poignant composition, Satave Jani Yaar.... Her next offering was a Thumri

in the enchanting Raga Khamaj, mesmerising the audience with the emotive Thadhe Raho Banke Shyam... She concluded her performance with a traditional Dadra composition, leaving the audience enthralled. Sunanda Sharma was accompanied by the skilled musicians Mithilesh Jha on tabla, Paromita Mukherjee on harmonium, and Nitin Sharma and Amit Raturi on tanpura.



Her journey took an extraordinary turn when the renowned singer Girija Devi witnessed her exceptional skills at the Hariballabh Sangeet Sammelan in Jalandhar and took her under her guidance. Over the next nine years, Guru Girija Devi nurtured Sunanda Sharma into a versatile artist, imparting a perfect blend of Shastra and Bhava Paksha in her singing. Girija Devi recognized that Sunanda ji's legacy would be carried forward through her performances of Thumri, Chaiti, and Kajri, as she exhibited remarkable control over her taans.

During her time in Banaras and Kolkata, Sunanda ji sought guidance from luminaries such as Pandit Kishan Maharaj and Ustad Bismillah Khan, further enriching her artistry. While excelling in Khayal, Tappa, Thumri, Dadra, and Chaiti, her repertoire

extends to encompass Punjabi and Himachali folk music, as well as various devotional styles. Sunanda ji's collaborative spirit shone through in her jugalbandi performances alongside sarod maestro Ustad Amjad Ali Khan and the renowned Kathak dancer Shaswati Sen.

Her musical journey has graced prestigious festivals in India, including the Thumri Mahotsav in New Delhi and Mumbai. Beyond India, she has enthralled audiences worldwide, participating in the World Music Festival in Germany and twice in Belgium, and offering captivating performances in the UK, USA, Norway, Finland, Denmark, and Sweden. Her solo albums, namely Dharohar, Swar Sanchay, and Sur Ganga, reflect her profound musical depth.

Day 08

29 October,
2023



From the journey of Thumri in Indian Cinema to the abandon of Sufi Music

Talk on Journey of Thumri in Indian Cinema by K.L. Pandey

The eighth day of the Virasat Arts' and Heritage Festival 2023 commenced with a profound discourse on the evolution of Thumri held at the Doon Library. Renowned scholar K.L. Pandey elucidated the intricate journey of Thumri from 1902 to 2023, underscoring the significant role of Hindi music in propagating the Hindi language across the nation. During the enlightening session at the Doon Library, Mr.

Pandey shared his personal life narrative, transitioning from a senior officer in the railways to a poet. To date, K.L. Pandey has conducted 92 conferences on Thumri at both national and international levels.

Khayal Gayaki by Rahul and Rohit Mishra

The cultural programme commenced with a splendid rendition of Khayal Gayaki

presented by Rahul and Rohit Mishraji. They commenced with a Bandish in Raga



Puriya Dhanashree and later presented a Thumri and a Dadra, skilfully accompanied by Sumit Mishra on the harmonium and Mithilesh Jha on the tabla.

Rahul and Rohit Mishraji hail from illustrious musical families, boasting a lineage

Sufi Music by the Wadalis

The **Wadalis**, legendary Padma Shree Ustad Puran Chand Wadali and his talented Son and able student Lakwinder took the stage for the second presentation of the evening, enchanting the audience with their soul-stirring performance. Performing a diverse

rich in tradition, with influences from the Banaras Gharana. Trained in various forms of Hindustani classical music typical of the Banaras Gharana, including Khayal, Thumri, Tappa, Dadra, Chaiti, Kajri, Hori, Bhajan, and more.

iconic songs such as "Jab Teri Deed Hui, Meri Eid Hui" and the Sufi Kalam of Baba Farid Shah, "Tera Naam," among others.

The accompanying artists for Wadals included Munish Mannu on the keyboard,



repertoire of Sufi, romantic folk songs, ghazals, bhajans, and Bhangra, they captivated the audience at Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Stadium. The performance commenced with a Sufi Bandish, featuring

Rajinder Kumar on the sampler pad, Aslam on tabla, Rakesh Kumar on dholak, Ashwani on dhol, Ajay Negi on guitar, and vocalists Jaikaran, Subhash, Gagandeep, Mausam, and Ajay Kumar

Wadali Brothers, Ustad Puran Chand and Late Pyare Lal Wadali, an illustrious name in the music world, carried forward the legacy of Sufi singing and composition. Now, the tradition continues with Lakhwinder joining his father Padmashree Puranchand Ji Wadali after the untimely demise of Pyarelal Wadali.

The Wadalis, now in their fifth generation of musicians, have been prominent figures in Indian Sufi, folk, and popular music. They are deeply rooted in the Sufi tradition and consider themselves conduits for the

From Uttarakhand's Pandava Theatre to Hindustani Classical of Banaras

Chakravyuh, Pandava Theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas



teachings of great saints. Their dedication to preserving the purity of their music is reflected in their minimal use of electronic gadgets and emphasis on Aalap and Taan.

Ustad Puran Chand Wadali was honoured with the Padma Shri Award by the Government of India and received the Life Time Achievement Award at the PTC in Jalandhar. Lakhwinder, has forged a path of his own, combining classical and contemporary music trends in his compositions.

Day 09
04 November,
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The ninth day of the Virasat Arts' and Heritage Festival 2023 featured the staging of Chakravyuh by the Pandava Folk Theatre of Garhwal, Uttarakhand. This performance, depicting a scene of battle from the Mahabharata, was directed by Prof. D.R.Purohit, The play featured Mr. Abhishek Bahuguna, with contributions from Dr. Sanjay Pandey, Gokarn Bamrada, Manish Khalli, Shailendra Methani, Mrs. Rekha, and Mrs. Babita. The traditional instruments, Dhol-Damau, and Hudka were played by Akhilesh and friends, as part of the performance.

The culture of the Garhwal region is deeply influenced by religious beliefs, and the Pandava dance, known as Pandava Leela, is a valuable part of its heritage. This ceremonial dance commemorates the journey of the Pandavas, bringing joy to the homes and villages of Uttarakhand during the harsh winter months. The dance signifies the commitment of the sons of Manu to preserve their culture by recognizing the difference between Dharma and Adharma.

Pandava Nritya narrates the story of the Pandava brothers, including their birth and their journey towards Swargarohini Yatra, the 'Journey to Heaven.' The performance encompasses various episodes from the Mahabharata, such as Keechak Vad, Narayan Vivah, Chakravyuh, and Genda Vadha. The Pandava dance culminates in a grand feast for the villagers, with the sacred weapons used in the play safely stored in a quiver.

Local artists portray the Pandava brothers, and symbolic figures known as 'Nishans' represent deities like Lord Shiva, Maa Rajeshwari, Nagaraja, and Lord Narayana. These artists dance to the rhythmic beats of Dhol-Damau, traditional Pahari musical instruments. It is believed that while performing the Pandava Leela, the cosmic energy of the Pandavas enters the bodies of the performers. The Kauravas' clever war strategy, leading to the killing of Abhimanyu, is also depicted in the performance. It was one of the most scintillating and captivating performances.

Dhrupad by Sumeet Anand

The evening events for the day commenced with the lighting of the lamp by the chief guest, Mr. A.K. Wahal, Trustee of REACH and other members.

Sumeet Anand presented Dhrupad singing, beginning with an Aalap in Raga Yaman, followed by three verses. He also sang Chaital Devi Stuti, "Anandi Jagabandi, Tripura Sundari Mata,"

in Dhamar Tal, and "Krishna Pad Lal Rangeele Khele Holi" in Sool Tal. Pt. Radhe Shyam Sharma played Pakhawaj, and Ritika Pandey played Tanpura to accompany him. Sumeet Anand, hails from the Darbhanga tradition and has received extensive training from renowned Dhrupad singers in his family. He strives to present Dhrupad singing in a contemporary yet traditional form, emphasizing both melodic elaboration (alaap) and composition (pada). Sumeet has

Hindustani Vocal by Padma Bhushan Pt. Sajan Misra and Swaransh Misra

The third presentation of the cultural program featured Hindustani classical music performed by Pt. Sajan Misra and Swaransh Misra. They commenced with Raga Jog, a khayal composition in Vilambit, Madhya, and Drut taal, accompanied by Pandit Dharmanath Misra on harmonium, Shubh

broadcasted on All India Radio (AIR) New Delhi, performed Dhrupad recitals across India, and is an empaneled artist of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR). He has also showcased Dhrupad in international cities like Berlin, London, Prague, Budapest, and Paris. In addition to his Dhrupad singing, Sumeet collaborates with artists from various genres and shares his expertise in organizing and curating festivals.

Maharaj on tabla, and Nitin and Yogesh on tanpura.

Pt. Sajan Misra, known for his Khayal style of singing, is part of the Banaras Gharana. He has a long history of showcasing his singing skills in India and abroad,



performing in countries like Germany, France, the USA, the UK, Switzerland, Austria, Muscat, the Netherlands, the USSR, Qatar, and Singapore. The Misra brothers have released about 20 music albums in the Khayal genre, semi-classical tappa, and various bhajans.

Swaransh Misra represents the Banaras Gharana, a classical music tradition dating back 350 years. He received his training

The Taj Food Court, offering authentic Mountain Food

The festival highlighted the positive reception of millet-based food and street food offerings from the mountains.

The Taj Food Court, set up by the renowned Taj Group of Hotels was ably served by



from his father, Padmabhushan Pandit Sajan Misra, and has performed at various classical events and music festivals.

Apart from Hindustani classical music, Swaransh enjoys playing western instruments and composing music. He plans to release an album containing his compositions in the near future. He is also involved in writing, screenwriting, and music production.

Arun Nainwal, Manager of Taj Anand Kashi; General Manager, Nividen Kukreti; Chef Jitendra Upadhyay; Chef Ashwin; Vikas Nagar Hotel Manager from Taj Pilibhit; and Chef Harish from Taj Corbett.

From the villages of Goa to
the notes of the Violin

Super Bike Rally

The tenth day of the Virasat Arts' and Heritage Festival 2023 commenced with the exhilarating Super Bike Rally featuring over 30 participants who displayed their biking skills. The rally commenced at the BR Ambedkar Stadium. The route spanned from Ambedkar Stadium to Garhi Cantt, passing through Centrio Mall, Dilaram Chowk, Silver City, NIVH, Jakhan, and Mussoorie Road, making a stop at Cafe Marigold in Rajpur for refreshments. On the return journey, they passed through various landmarks before concluding back at B.R. Ambedkar Stadium. Some Virasat volunteers also joined the rally.



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The participants showcased an array of impressive bikes, including Neeti Raj with his Ninja 650, S Vouraj with Z 900, Vinay with Versus 650, Piyush with H2 SX, and several others, each riding different models. Awards were presented to the bikers, with Neeti Raj Rawat receiving the Most Stylish Rider award, Rahul obtaining the REACH'S Choice Award for Bike, and Piyush securing the Audience's Choice Bike Award. All the riders were from Dehradun, and the rally was a collaborative effort between Virasat and Kawasaki.

Talgaadi Folk Dance from Goa

The first performance of the day showcased the Goan folk dance Talgaadi presented by the Indreshwar Youth Club, a folk dance group from Goa. Talgadi, a popular folk dance in Goa, is typically performed during spring festivals and rituals.



The dance involves colorful attire, flowers, and performances to the accompaniment of musical instruments like Zanj, Shamel, and Ghumat. The 16-member group showcased the dance, led by Bhalesh, performing traditional Goan songs. Their instruments included Gumat, Shamel, and Kasal, and Bhalesh adorned a cap made of paper, garland, T-shirt, dhoti, handkerchief, and ghungroo.

Hindustani Vocal Recital by Sawani Shende

The second performance featured Hindustani vocal singing by Sawani Shende, who began with Raga Yaman and continued

with Bandiyas, a Tarana in Druta Laya, Dadra in Raga Madhukaunsa, and Mishra Shivranjani. Sawani Shende, known for her



melodious voice and expertise in khayal singing in various Hindustani classical music forms, was introduced to Indian classical singing at a young age by her grandmother,

Classical Violin by Sangeeta Shankar

The third performance showcased a violin recital by Sangeeta Shankar ji, who started with Raga Malkauns and progressed through different Taals, concluding with a Dadra in Raag Khamaj.

Sangeeta Shankar, an Indian classical violinist, follows the Gaiki Ang technique and is

Late Mrs. Kusum Shende. She furthered her training under the guidance of Dr. Mrs. Veena Sahasrabuddhe of the Gwalior Gharana.

recognized for her improvisation and left-handed technique. Accompanied by Shubh Maharaj on the tabla, her performance was an enthralling display of musical expertise.

Virasat 2023 aims to captivate and engage audiences on an enchanting musical and cultural journey.



From Literature, Mask Theatre, Kathak Dance to Vocal

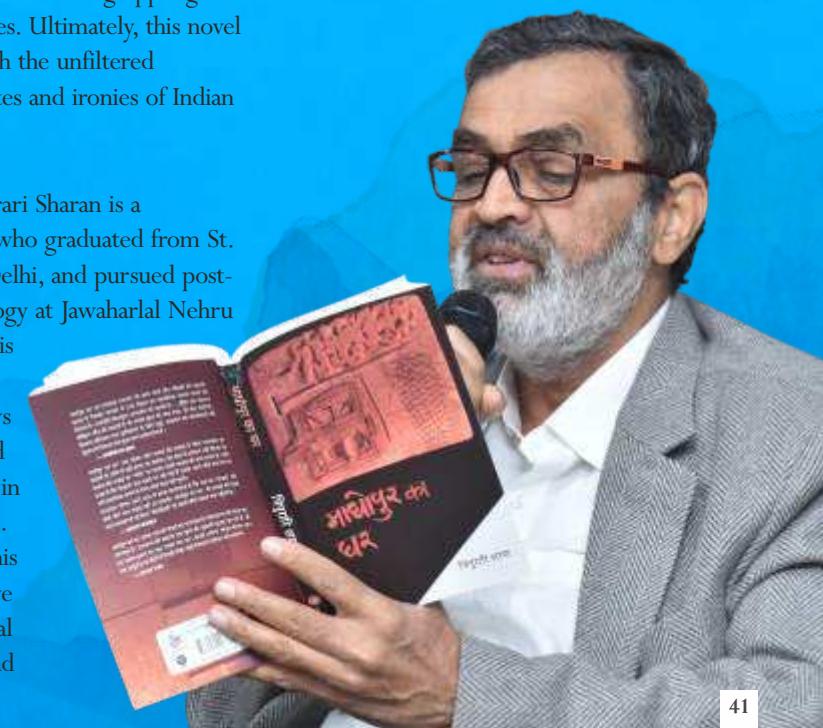
Discussion on the book *Madhopur ka Ghar* by Tripurari Sharan

The 11th day of the Virasat Art and Heritage Festival 2023 opened with a stimulating discussion about the book *Madhopur Ka Ghar*, authored by Tripurari Sharan. The book is housed at the Doon Library in Dehradun, and in this program, Tripurari Sharan spoke about his literary creation. *Madhopur Ka Ghar*, penned by Tripurari Sharan, is a profoundly imaginative and touching narrative that delves into the trials and tribulations of a family in Bihar. It also explores the concept of a man grappling with life's peculiarities. Ultimately, this novel astounds readers with the unfiltered strangeness of the fates and ironies of Indian rural life.

Born in 1961, Tripurari Sharan is a distinguished figure who graduated from St. Stephen's College, Delhi, and pursued post-graduation in Sociology at Jawaharlal Nehru University. During his college days, he authored film reviews for *Dinmaan* and had his poems published in numerous magazines. Over the course of his lengthy administrative career, he held pivotal roles in both state and

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central governments. His professional journey included serving as the Director of the Indian Film and Television Institute in Pune and as the Director General of Doordarshan. During his tenure in Pune, he scripted and produced two distinct feature films in collaboration with his students, ultimately retiring as the Chief Secretary of Bihar.



Ramman, Uttarakhand's Mask Theatre, listed in UNESCO's Intangible Heritage of Humanity



The first segment of the cultural program showcased Ramman, an iconic cultural heritage of Uttarakhand. In the picturesque valleys of Joshimath, Chamoli, a group of twenty-seven enthusiastic and talented individuals assembled under the banner of World Cultural Heritage to present Ramman. These artists, including Dr. Khushal Bhandari, Jagdish Chauhan, Rajendra Singh Bhandari, and others, left the audience spellbound with their performance. The presentation featured masked dances and resonated with the beats of Dhol and Damaun. The artists performed with masks made from pure wood called Bhojpatra,

providing a captivating portrayal of the Mahabharata Garudeva dance, Krishna Leela with Radhika, and the mesmerizing Mor Marin dance. This group's presentation was more than an event; it was a celebration of cultural richness that continues for a fortnight.

Ramman, a religious festival and ritual theatre unique to the Garhwal region in India, is at risk of fading over time. However, in 2009, UNESCO recognized it on its Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The festival, specific to the Salur Dungra village in

Chamoli district, Uttarakhand, is organized as an offering to the village deity, Bhumichetrapala (Bhumiyal Devta). It is celebrated every year after Baisakhi, a harvest festival that marks the new year's beginning. The Ramman Festival takes place on the ninth or eleventh day of Baisakhi, with villagers offering hariyali (sprouted barley plants) to the deity in exchange for prosperity. The festival spans ten days and includes the recitation of the local Ramkatha and performances by masked dancers depicting various aspects of life in the courtyard of the Bhumiyal deity's temple.

Ramman's performances commence with the invocation of Ganesha, followed by the dance of Ganesha and Parvati. This is succeeded by the Sun God's dance,

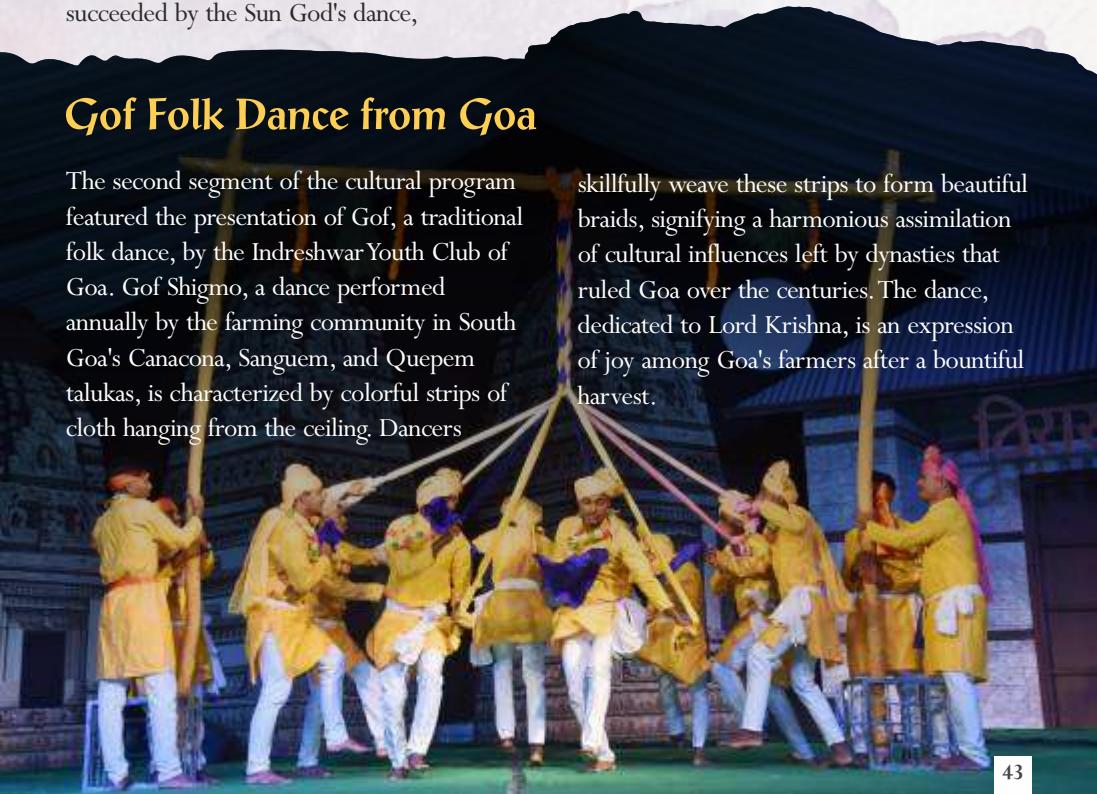
symbolizing the creation myth of Brahma and Ganesha's birth. Subsequently, the local Ramkatha is enacted, encompassing episodes from Rama's life, from his visit to Janakpur to his coronation upon returning from exile, sung in a total of 324 talas and stanzas. The performances also feature Jaagar Gayan, a musical rendition of local legends. The festival is sustained by the villagers of Salur-Dungra, serving as the successors, organizers, and financiers.

Ramman harmoniously combines the sacred and social aspects, portraying the history, beliefs, lifestyle, fears, and hopes of Salur Dungra villagers through various art forms, including oral, literary, visual, and traditional craft.

Gof Folk Dance from Goa

The second segment of the cultural program featured the presentation of Gof, a traditional folk dance, by the Indreshwar Youth Club of Goa. Gof Shigmo, a dance performed annually by the farming community in South Goa's Canacona, Sanguem, and Quepem talukas, is characterized by colorful strips of cloth hanging from the ceiling. Dancers

skillfully weave these strips to form beautiful braids, signifying a harmonious assimilation of cultural influences left by dynasties that ruled Goa over the centuries. The dance, dedicated to Lord Krishna, is an expression of joy among Goa's farmers after a bountiful harvest.



Namrata Shah & Troupe, Gujarat

The third presentation showcased Kathak and semi-classical dances, performed by Namrata Shah and her group of 14 members. Their enchanting performance included Ganesh Stuti, a portrayal of Gujarat's pride in Sanskrit, the song 'Gopi' written by Pandit Shri Sundar Lal Ganjani, and the presentation of 'Hori' and 'Narmada Ashtakam.' Their

dance style seamlessly blended semi-classical steps with the Kathak tradition of the Jaipur Gharana. They have previously performed in front of dignitaries such as Prime Minister Narendra Modi, former Japanese President Shinzo Abe, delegations from Uzbekistan and China, and Chief Ministers and Governors of various states.



Hindustani Classical Vocal by Arati Anklikar

The final segment of the cultural program featured Hindustani classical singing by the renowned artist Arati Anklikar. She mesmerised the audience with three bandishes in Raag Bageshwari in Taal Rupak, Madhya Lai Pancham Sawari which is in 15 Matra and in Drut Teen Taal. Her mellifluous rendition

left the audience spellbound. She presented a beautiful composition Jhoola as the final presentation. It was her singing magic which will be remembered for long.

Arati's musical journey began under the guidance of Pt. Vasantrao Kulkarni in the



Agra-Gwalior Gharana and was further honed by Gaan Saraswati Kishori Amonkar, a maestro of the Jaipur Atrauli Gharana. Her unique style combines elements from both gharanas and is characterized by distinctive swara bhava, rhythm, layakari, and intricate taan patterns. She has a career spanning over

35 years and has performed at prestigious festivals and venues both in India and internationally. Arati has also received two National Film Awards for Best Female Playback Singer and has sung extensively in Marathi, Konkani, and Hindi film industries.

Mastering Crafts to Geet and Ghazal

Workshops by Master Craftsmen

The 12th day of the Virasat Arts and Heritage Festival 2023 kicked off with the Master Craftsmen Workshop, an event tailored for school and college students, thoughtfully organized by Kalpana Sharma, Radha Chatterjee and Ghanshyam. This educational endeavour saw the participation of three

Day 12
07 November,
2023

schools, one college, and one trust: SGRR Public School BalaWala, Doon International School, Latika Foundation, Aasra Trust, and BS Negi Technical Training Institute for Women.



A total of 110 students immersed themselves in creative exploration, learning pottery making, natural and synthetic tie and

Gabarghichor, a play by Bhikari Thakur Rangamandal

The day's cultural festivities began with ceremonial lamp lighting, graced by Shri Anil Kumar Punetha, IAS, CIC, Uttarakhand, Dehradun, Ms. C S Radhika, GM, United India Insurance and REACH General Secretary, Shri R.K. Singh along with other distinguished members.

The first cultural presentation featured Gabarghichor, a captivating play from Bihar's renowned Bhikari Thakur Rangamandal. The talented cast included Jainendra Dost as Panch, Rahul Kumar as Gabarghichor, Galij Bahu in a crucial staging role, Sunil Gavaskar as Galij, Naman Mishra as Ghadali, Dharamraj as Hangman, Ramlakhan as Fuhri and Samaj, Brijnath Singh as a versatile performer in both Dance and Samaj, Ravindra Patel, who also contributed to

dye, mask making, hill art, and cubic solving, all under the guidance of expert instructors.

Dance and Samaj, and Gauri Shankar showcased his mastery of the Harmonium. Sandeep Kumar handled the Dholak, Shiv Kumar managed the Sound and Light Arrangement, Ranjit Bhojpuria was responsible for the Stage Arrangement, and Sarita Saaz provided the enchanting Music and Appearance. The play was brilliantly directed by Dr. Jainendra Dost.

Gabarghichor is a celebrated folk play by Bhikari Thakur, serving as a sequel to "Bidesiya." It unfolds as a musical drama, delving into themes of displacement, particularly the challenge of a husband who forgets his wife due to displacement. Significantly, the play champions women's rights, focusing on a mother's influence over her son, challenging male-dominated norms.

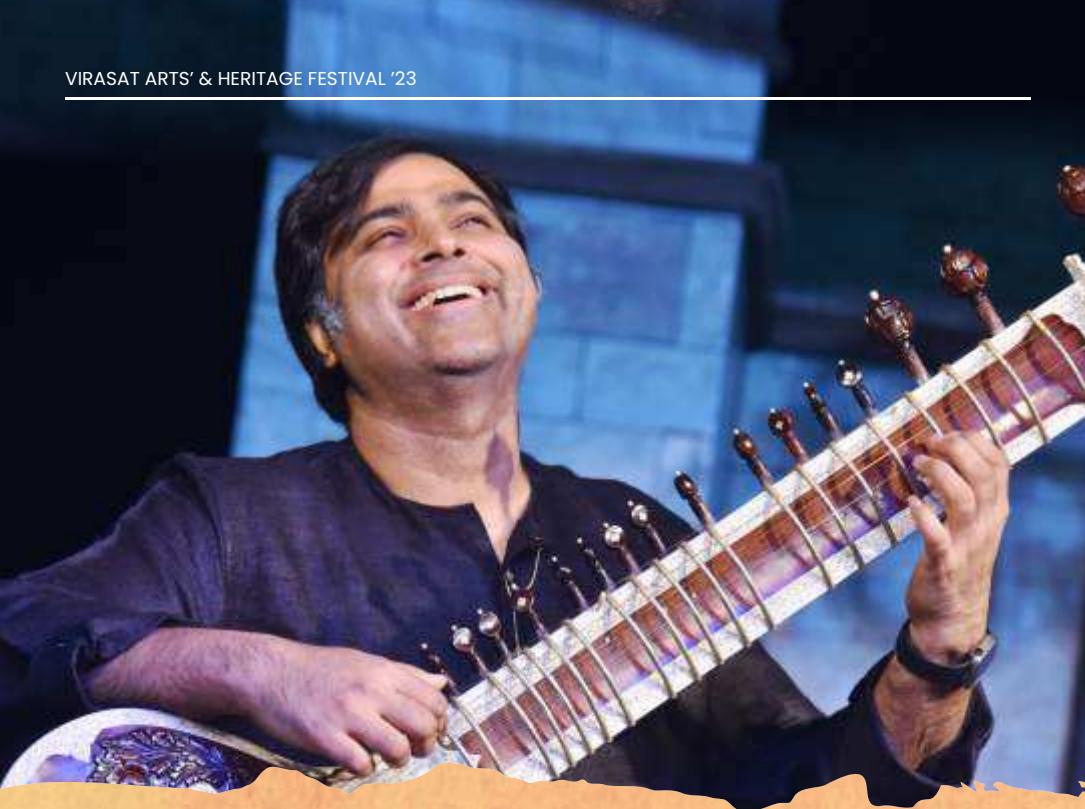
The performance incorporates various dance and singing styles from the Purvanchal region, such as Janghiya dance, Eastern song, Doha, Chaupai, Vilap Geet, Nirgun Geet, and more.

Dr. Jainendra Dost is the visionary founder director of the Bhikari Thakur Rangamandal Training and Research Centre, dedicated to revitalizing the theatre, music, dance, and instruments associated with Bhikari Thakur, a folk artist and Bihar's cultural treasure. His relentless efforts have breathed life into the plays of Bhikhari Thakur's former dance troupe. Jainendra Dost's academic background includes theater studies at the Theater and Film Department of Hindi University, a Ph.D. on Launda Naach and Bhikari Thakur in the Department of Art and Aesthetics at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Delhi, and valuable insights gained from Bhikhari Thakur's stage partner, Padmashree Ramchandra Manjhi. He has directed over 15 plays and showcased his dramatic and

musical creations not only at esteemed national theatre festivals but also on international stages in countries like Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bhutan. Most recently, he achieved international recognition with the film Nach Bhikhari Naach, celebrating Bhikhari Thakur's theatrical legacy.

Bhikari Thakur Rangamandal is more than a professional theater; it represents a cultural institution dedicated to the preservation, training, and research of Bhikhari Thakur's theatrical traditions. It serves as a home for all living artists who were mentored by Bhikari Thakur and were part of his troupe. This institution strives to rekindle Bhikhari Thakur's theatrical legacy in its entirety. With a repertoire that includes plays like Bhikhari Nama, Bidesiya, Gabarghichor, Betibechawa, Piya Nisil, Ganga Snan, and more, the center remains committed to ensuring the continuity of Bhikhari Thakur's theatrical traditions across generations.





Sitar Recital by Purbayan Chatterjee

The day's second presentation featured sitar virtuoso Purbayan Chatterjee, who embarked on a soul-stirring journey with Raga Manoranjani, expertly exploring Madhya and Drut Jhap Taal, seamlessly blending traditional Indian classical music with contemporary world music influences.

Purbayan Chatterjee, a renowned Indian sitar player, is celebrated for his innovative approach, fusing traditional Indian classical

Geets and Ghazals by Radhika Chopra

The third presentation featured a ghazal performance by Radhika Chopra, enchanting the audience with the timeless verses of poets like Ghalib, Faiz, and Iqbal. Radhika's

music with global influences. He is a multifaceted artist who not only excels as an instrumentalist but also as a singer and performer. Purbayan Chatterjee's prodigious talents earned him accolades such as the President of India Award, the Aditya Vikram Birla Award, and the Kitchen Award by Rotary International, establishing him as a respected figure in the realm of Indian classical music.

soulful renditions included Ghalib's poignant Ghazal in Raag Nand, followed by Allama Iqbal's passionate "Tere ishq ki intiha chahta hoon" in Raag Desh. Sahir Ludhianvi's

evocative "Tum Apna ranj gham" in Raag Pahadi, Ali Ahmed Jalil's mesmerizing ghazal "Khushi Mein Mujhko Thukraya" in Raag

Malhar and Raag Malkauns, and Faiz Ahmed Faiz Sahab's reflective "Raaz e Ulfat Chupa Ke Dekh Liyakri" were performed, accompanied by Murad Ali on Sarangi, Amjad Khan on Tabla, and Nafees Ahmed on Harmonium.



Art, Treasure Hunt and the Unconditional Love of Quawwali

Virasat Sit and Paint

The 13th day of the Virasat Art and Heritage Festival 2023 commenced with a vibrant painting competition and an engaging treasure hunt. The theme for the painting competition was "My City, My Heritage," which sparked enthusiasm and joy among the participating children. Numerous schools, including Kendriya Vidyalaya ONGC, Doon Presidency School Premnagar, Hill Foundation School, Sun Valley School, St. Jude's School, Doon

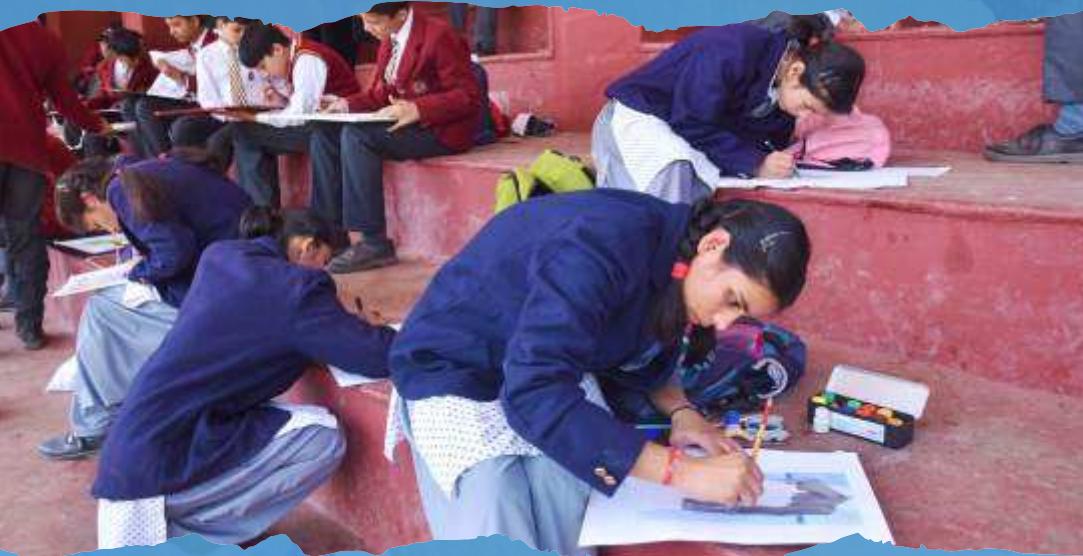
Radhika Chopra, a renowned Indian ghazal singer, holds a Master's degree in Hindustani Music and has been recognized for her excellence and melodious voice. With a crisp and clear vocal style and proficiency in both Hindi and Urdu, Radhika has earned the admiration of audiences worldwide.

Day 13
08 November,
2023

International School, SGRR Public School Balawala, Doon Sarala Academy, Touch Wood School, Whizkid International Senior Secondary School, Asra Trust, and Philpot, actively participated in the program. Over 400 children from various schools, such as Public School, Latika Foundation, Treasurer Shikar, Hill Foundation School, Doon International School, SGRR Public School

Balawala, and Whizzkid International Senior Secondary School, participated with great enthusiasm. At the conclusion of the

program winners were honoured with prizes and all participants were presented with certificates.



Virasat Crafts' Treasure Hunt

This is a popular activity where student teams are given clues to reach the treasure of various crafts of India. Through an

entertaining game, students get to know more about the crafts' heritage of India. Winning team was presented with prizes.



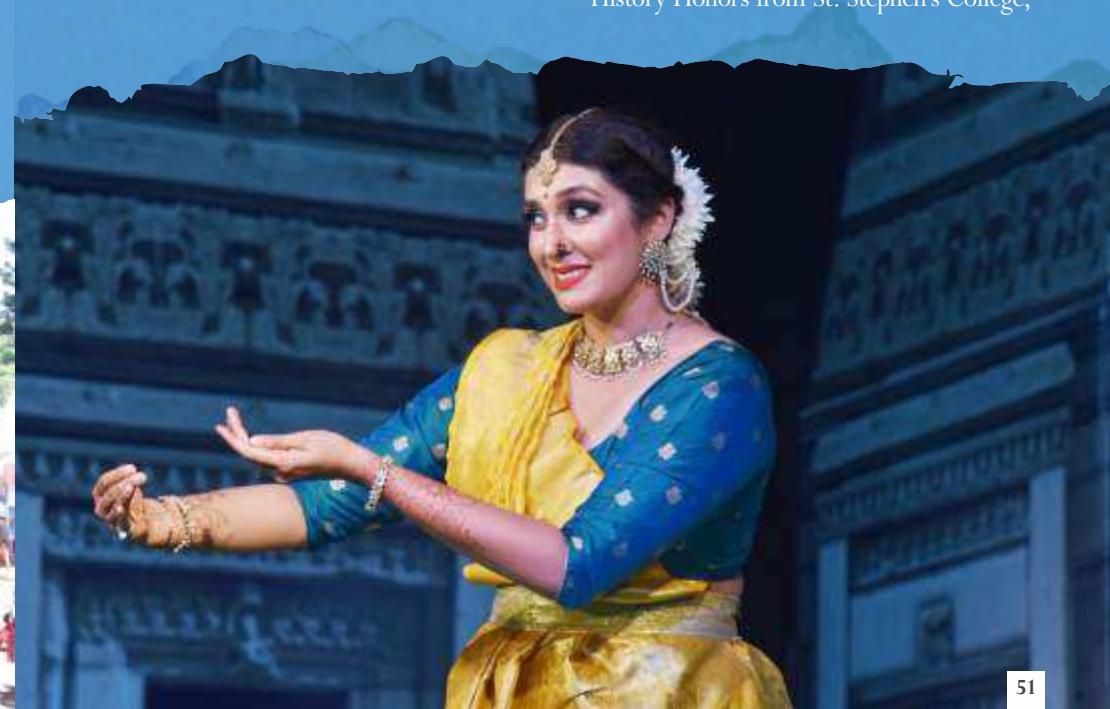
Kathak by Shinjini Kulkarni

The cultural festivities of the day were inaugurated by Shri Rajeev Kumar Singh, AG (A&E), Dehradun, along with other dignitaries, who lit the ceremonial lamp.

The first performance of the evening featured a spellbinding Kathak dance by Shinjini Kulkarni. She began her performance with a mesmerizing rendition of Shiva Vandana, followed by traditional shuddha dances in 3 taal and 4 taal, and a Dadra composition from her gharana, composed by her great-grandfather, Pandit Bingari Maharaj. Shubh Maharaj accompanied her on the tabla, Zoheb Haseen on vocals, Vishal Mishra on sitar, Sameer Khana on the flute, and Siya Verma in singing.

Shinjini Kulkarni, born into the illustrious Kalka Bindadin dynasty's ninth generation, is the granddaughter of the Kathak legend Pandit Birju Maharaj. She embarked on her Kathak journey at the tender age of three, receiving initial training from her aunt, Mamta Maharaj, who imparted the basics to all family children. Later, Birju Maharaj became her guru, and subsequently, her elder brother, Pt. Jaikishan Ji Maharaj, continued her training. Shinjini gracefully carries the weight of this rich legacy, emphasizing that the entire Kathak community shares in this cultural heritage.

In addition to her impressive dancing skills, Shinjini is a distinguished academic, having recently completed her graduation in History Honors from St. Stephen's College,



Delhi University. While excelling in her studies, she has maintained her commitment to Kathak and has graced prestigious festivals like the Khajuraho Dance Festival, Sankat Mochan Festival, Taj Mahotsav, Chakradhar Festival, Kalidas Mahotsav, and Kathak Mahotsav, among others. She has performed both solo and in group shows across various cities in India and abroad, including New York, San Francisco, Houston, Minneapolis, Bangkok, and Tehran. Throughout her brief career, Shinjini has received warm appreciation and blessings from her audiences.

Her association with Bollywood, like her maternal grandfather, has been notable. She has appeared in films such as Muzaffar Ali's Jaanisaar, the Bengali film Har Har Byomkesh, and a Bhojpuri film alongside

Ravi Kishan. Notably, Shinjini has spoken at two TEDx events, where her powerful thoughts and speeches have inspired many. She is also a member of the pure classical-based percussion band Layakari. Shinjini has had the privilege of being a part of her grandfather's choreography in productions like Nritya Kelly, Editing, Holi Utsav, Krishnayana, and Loha. Her accolades include the 2018 Young Talent Award from the Tarana Foundation in New Delhi, the title of Nritya Shiromani at the International Cuttack Dance Festival in 2017, and the Parampara Samman from Kala Niketan, Jaipur, among others. In 2015, she was honoured with the prestigious Smt. Krishna Hangal Memorial Award, recognizing her as an emerging talent in the realm of Indian classical music and dance.

Hindustani Vocal by Brajeshwar Mukherjee

The second segment of the cultural program showcased Hindustani classical music by Brajeshwar Mukherjee. He opened his performance with Raga Bhupali, followed by Raga Kamod and two enchanting thumris, "Yaad Piya Ki Aye" and "Ka Karoon Sajni Piya Na Aaye."

Brajeshwar Mukherjee, a renowned Hindustani classical singer from Kolkata,

India, received his early music education from his parents and further honed his skills under the guidance of Asit Roy from the Bishnupur Gharana. He currently studies under the tutelage of the renowned Pt. Ajay Chakraborty. Brajeshwar has made significant contributions to radio programs, stage performances, and album releases. His accolades include the 'Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar' from the Sangeet Natak Akademi, the 'Dhananjay Smriti Puraskar' from the University of Calcutta, the 'Shrutiandan' Award from the Shrutiandan

Institute, and the 'Gana Vardhan' from Pune. Brajeshwar Mukherjee is a B-High grade regular artist of All India Radio, Kolkata. He has shared his musical knowledge, leaving a lasting impact on many lives. He serves as a junior guru at the ITC Sangeet Research Academy and Shrutiandan, two highly reputed institutions known as temples of music in India. His efforts have been instrumental in promoting the universal appeal of music, transcending borders and reaching the hearts of people worldwide.

Quawwali by Niazi Bandhu

The third segment of the cultural program featured a captivating Quawwali performance by the Niazi Bandhu. They opened with Qawwali written by Amir Khusro, followed by soul-stirring renditions of "Kripa Karo Maharaj," "Sanson Ki Mala," "Chhaap Tilak,"

"Ishq Mein Tere Kohe Ghamb," and a lively performance of "Rang Ha Reema." The Niazi Bandhu were accompanied by Majid Niazi, Mukram Niazi, and Hamid Niazi on chorus and main vocals, Bosin on keyboard, Wasif on dholak, and Vijay on tabla.



Hailing from the renowned Rampur Gharana, the Niazi Brothers, Shahid Niazi and Sami Niazi, have earned international acclaim for their versatile musical talents, spanning Qawwali, Naat, Ghazal, Bhajan, Geet, Folk, and more. They proudly carry on the 250-year-old tradition of Qawwali

From Classical to the tunes of the Naval Band

The cultural festivities of the day were inaugurated by Shri Mukesh Singh, IPS, IG, ITBP and along with other dignitaries, who lit the ceremonial lamp.

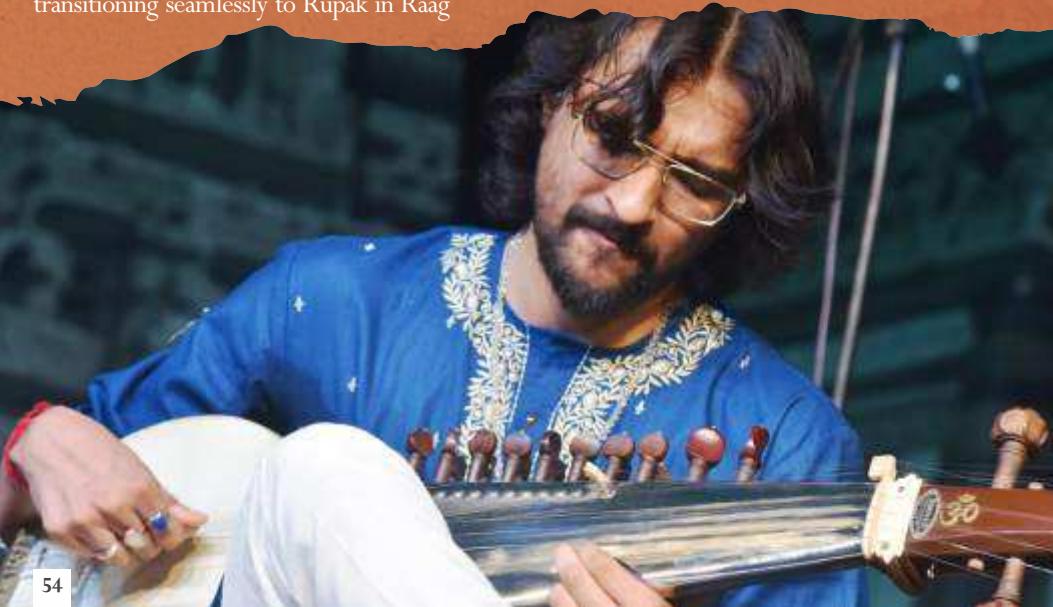
Sarod Recital by Abhishek Borkar

The cultural programme unfolded with Abhishek Borkar's soulful Sarod performance, beginning with Raag Bihag and transitioning seamlessly to Rupak in Raag

from the Rampur Gharana, emphasizing Qawwali as "Rooh-e-Ghiza" (food for the soul), a form of music created in the 13th century by Amir Khusro Dehlavi. Their performances transcend boundaries, fusing Indian, Persian, Turkish, and Arabic musical traditions.

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2023

Todi, accompanied by a Teen Taal Bandish. Pandit Shubh Maharaj ji skilfully played the tabla in harmony with Abhishek's melodies.



Abhishek Borkar, born in Pune, immersed himself in music from a young age. Trained in singing and tabla at four, he later mastered the sarod under his father and guru, Pandit Shekhar Borkar Ji. Abhishek's musical journey, marked by discipline and dedication, took a significant turn at the age of ten when he showcased his talent in his debut concert. His stellar performance earned him recognition, leading to accolades

such as the C.C.R.T. Award, National Talent Scholarship, and the Gaan Saraswati Kishori Amonkar Youth Award in 2019.

A versatile musician, Abhishek has been enchanting audiences since 2002, showcasing a unique blend of sarod, sitar, and Hindustani music. His debut album, "Pratibha," released in 2009, further solidified his place in the world of classical music.

Hindustani Vocal by Piu Mukherjee

The second presentation featured the enchanting Hindustani classical music of Piu Mukherjee. With a captivating performance in various ragas and compositions, Piu started with Raag Jog, weaving through Taal Bandish and presenting further Bandishes in

three Taals. Accompanied by Mithilesh Jha on tabla, Dharmanath Mishra on harmonium, and Shubham ji on tanpura, Piu Mukherjee ji, born in Howrah, West Bengal, carried forward the legacy of her musical lineage.



Piu's musical journey began under the guidance of her mother, Mrs. Pradipta Mukherjee, and her grandfather, Late Bireswar Mukherjee, a disciple of music maestro Vishwadev Chatterjee. Her education continued under Professor Nihar

Ranjan Bandopadhyay and Padmavibhushan Smt. Girija Devi. With accolades such as the Pt. Krishna Kumar Ganguly Award for Khayal and the Girija Devi Award, Piu has earned fame as a distinguished singer in Khayal and Thumri.

The INS Naval Band

The third presentation featured the Indian Navy Band, led by Master Chief Petty Officer in Charge Dev Raj. The band's diverse repertoire, including patriotic tunes and popular songs, showcased their musical prowess. The Indian Naval Band, originating in 1945, has evolved into a symbol of musical excellence for the Navy, participating in various ceremonial functions and goodwill tours.



From the Piano to the magic of Lounge

On the last day of the Virasat Arts' and Heritage Festival 2023, the people of Dehradun were treated to mesmerizing musical performances that left an indelible mark. The cultural program opened with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp by distinguished guests, including Shri Ranjan Prakash Thakur, CVO, ONGC, and other esteemed members.

Day 15
10 November,
2023

The INS Naval Band, comprising 30 musician sailors under the baton of Dev Raj, MCPO MUS II, played a crucial role in complementing Naval/Tri-Service ceremonial functions. Their recent performances include the Amrit Ratna'23 awards ceremony, Independence Day Parade'23 at Red Fort, and the Hornbill Festival in Nagaland.

Piano Recital by Brian Silas

The first presentation featured the exceptional pianist, Brian Silas. He enraptured the audience with a piano recital that included melodies such as 'Phool Tumhe Bheja Hai Khat Mein,' 'Lag Ja Gale Ki Phir Kahin,' 'Hothon Par Aisi Baat,' 'Aa Chal Ke Tujhe Main,' 'Le Chalun,' and many more. Accompanying Brian Silas were Tulsiram Madhwa on tabla and Jaideep Lakhtakia on guitar, loyal collaborators for over two decades.



Brian Silas has graced stages across the world, including the UN Hall in New York on India's 51st Independence Day, the Indo-American Society at the Rockefeller Center in New York in the presence of Mr. Bill Clinton, and numerous successful events in America, Canada, the UK, Middle East, Europe, and Mauritius. With over 20 albums

Brian Silas, a recipient of the prestigious Yash Bharti Award for excellence in music, is celebrated for his unwavering passion for mastering the piano. Born into a musically rich family in Kanpur, he chose not to pursue formal music training. Over the years, Brian's dedication to the piano has earned him acclaim from audiences in India and abroad.

to his name, Brian Silas's music resonates with themes of romance, philosophy, happiness, and sorrow. He also actively supports various causes, including raising awareness about HIV/AIDS through the NGO "CORE" and contributing to Tamanna, an organization for special children.

Earth Concert by Ricky Kej

The second cultural presentation was the Earth Concert conducted by the three-time Grammy Award-winning Indian musician and environmentalist, Ricky Kej. His performance included songs like Mere Desh Mein Raha, Jai Kisan, Longing, and Banje Honamma, showcasing his commitment to both music and environmental causes. Ricky Kej was joined by an ensemble of talented musicians, including vocalists, guitarists, percussionists, and a sound engineer.

Ricky Kej's illustrious career includes performing in over 30 countries, including

the United Nations Headquarters in New York and Geneva. He was appointed as a UNHCR "Goodwill Ambassador" in December 2022. Ricky Kej's musical journey began as the keyboardist of the Bengaluru-based progressive rock band Angel Dust. He later established his own studio, Revolution, in 2003, and composed music for thousands of advertisement jingles and Kannada films. The Government of Rajasthan has honored him as a Goodwill Ambassador for Save the Children's global campaign, "Every Last Child."



In 2016, Ricky Kej was bestowed with the Excellence and Leadership Award as a Global Humanitarian Artist at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, where he performed excerpts from "Shanti Samsara" in the United Nations General Assembly Hall. Kej emphasized the urgency of addressing climate change on a global scale.

Ricky Kej's work is a fusion of various styles, rooted in Hindustani classical music with influences from Carnatic music. He remains self-taught and has drawn inspiration from Pakistani Qawwal Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and

British singer Peter Gabriel.

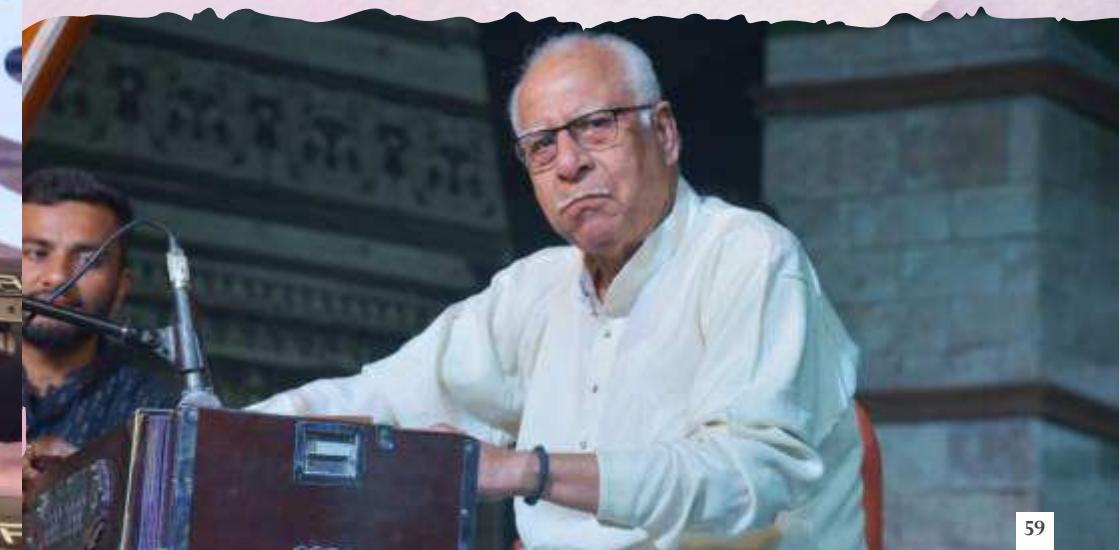
During the closing ceremony, Mr. R.K. Singh, General Secretary of REACH Heritage, expressed his gratitude to all sponsors, participants, volunteers, sponsors, guests, and artists, acknowledging their contributions to the success of the Virasat Arts' and Heritage Festival 2023. He also extended his appreciation to the media for their integral role in promoting the event. Singh emphasized the festival's mission of preserving heritage and promoting culture to attract tourists to Uttarakhand from around the world.

Accompanying Artistes

Pt. Dharam Nath Mishra

Pandit Dharam Nath Mishra ji is a fine musician, a versatile singer of thumri gayaki, hailing from banaras gharana he received his training from legendary Pandit Bade Ramdas

Mishra Ji. Not only this, he is a very profound harmonium player and the most loved musician amongst the top names of Hindustani Classical Musicians.



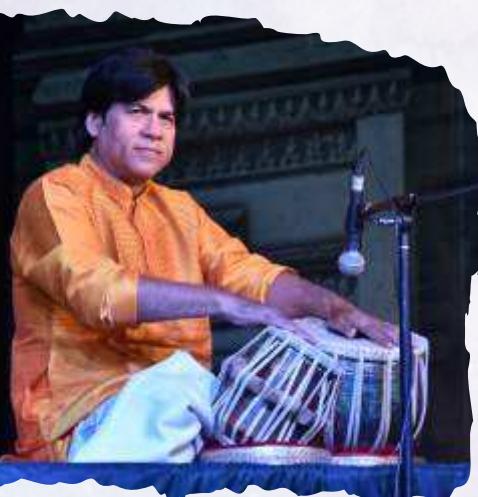
Paromita

Paromita Mukherjee is a well-known harmonium player. She learnt her music from Padma Bhushan Pandit V.G.Jog and Mr. Ashish Khan son of Ustad Ali Akbar Khan and Ameena. She is an A-grade artiste on Harmonium of All India Radio and Doordarshan as well as a graded artiste of violin and has performed with stalwarts in more than twenty countries.



Mithilesh Jha

Mithilesh Kumar Jha received his early training from his father and guru, late shri Gopi Kant Jha at the tender age of six, after which he continued to gain guidance under the late Pt. Bulbul Maharaj of Benaras Gharana. He continued his learning under Ustad Amjad Ali khan. Mithilesh has given various performances, solo and accompaniment, with world renowned artists in India and abroad.



Shubh Maharaj

Shubh was born in a musical family. He is the grandson of tabla maestro Pt. Kishan Maharaj and son of Pt. Vijay Shankar, a renowned kathak dancer. Shubh got music in his blood from both families. From a very young age Shubh was trained under the guidance of his maternal grandfather Pt Kishan Maharaj and joined the traditional family chain of Pt. Kanthe Maharaj. In 2000,

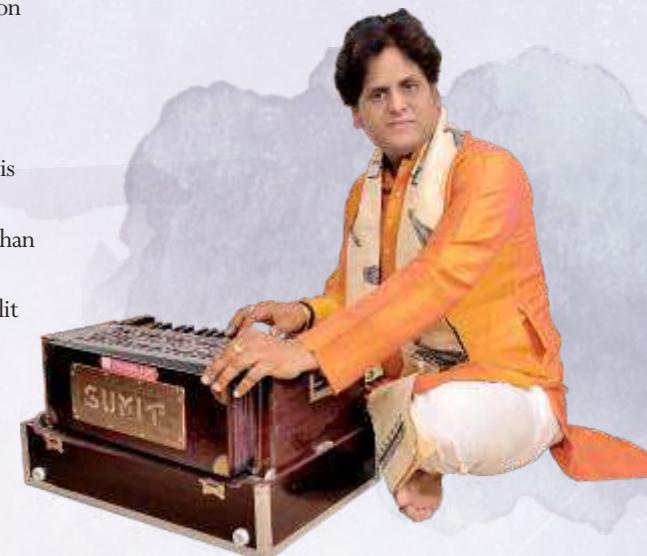


at the tender age of 12, Shubh gave his first tabla solo performance and later on

he toured across India for performances.

Sumit Mishra

Mr. Sumit Mishra of Banaras Gharana is from a family of musicians which has been associated with music for more than ten generations. He received his education in tabla from his father Pandit Sohan Lal Mishra and his uncle Pandit Mohan Lal Mishra. Sumit has collaborated with many stalwarts of music in the country and abroad.



Efforts to Promote Crafts and Artisans at Virasat Festival

As always, 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 to promote crafts and craftsmen during the Virasat '23 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 half 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, 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 Afghanistan also participated.



2. The festival also included displays of certain crafts where the artisans not only sold 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.

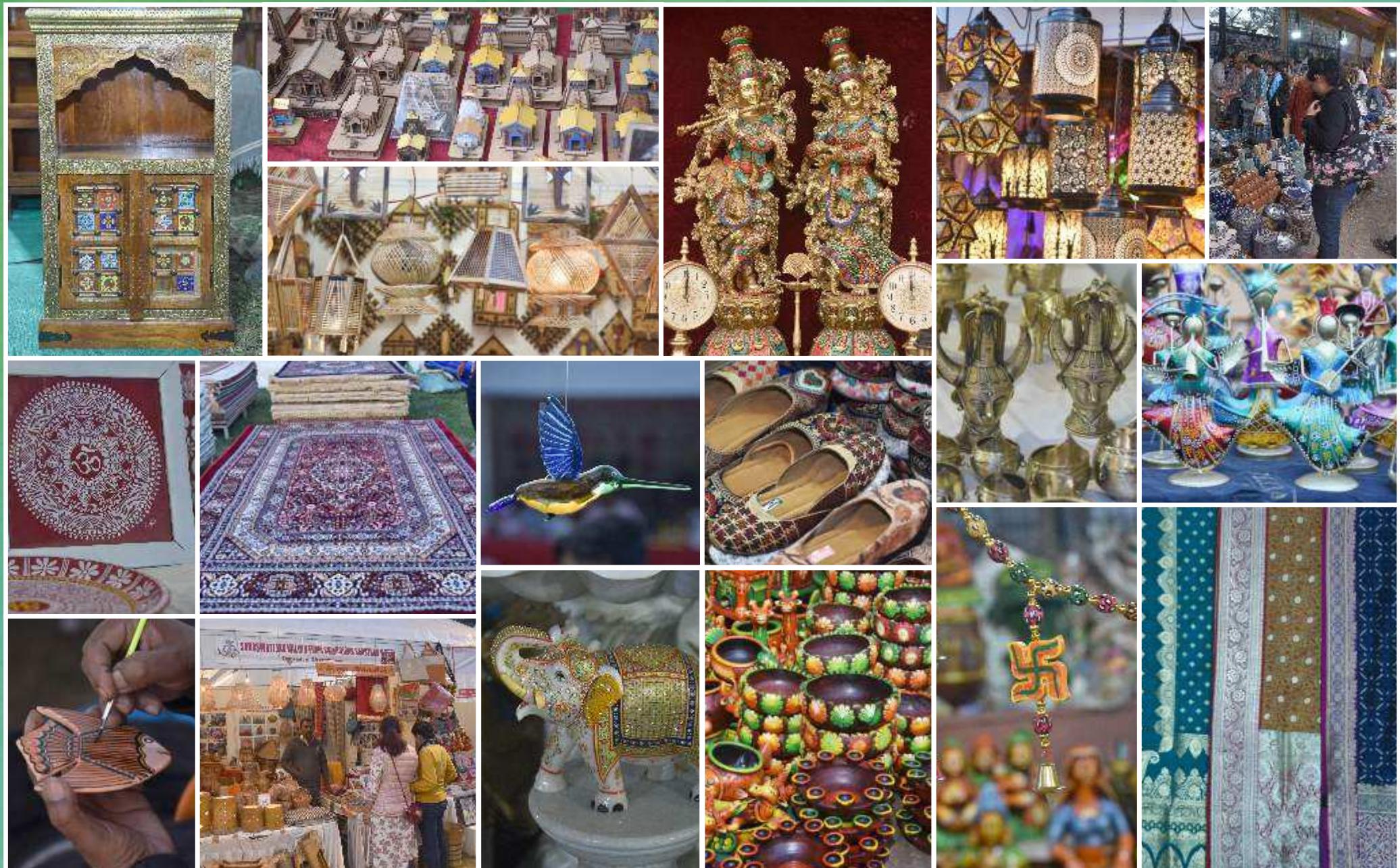
The festival has been a magnet for artisans ever since it was established and this was underlined this year too, at the Virasat Arts' and Heritage Festival.

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

Our Special Thanks to:

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Crafts



Taj Culinary Area



Food Stalls





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