



Meera Shankar
Ambassador of India



AMBASSADOR OF INDIA

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April 4, 2011.

The 'maximum INDIA' festival hosted by the John F. Kennedy Centre for the Performing Arts in cooperation with the Indian Council of Cultural Relations and the Embassy from March 1-20, 2011 was a resounding success. As a co-sponsor of the festival, the Embassy was proud to be associated with 'maximum INDIA'.

A festival of this magnitude to present India's arts and culture in the U.S. was held after a gap of twenty five years. Our American friends were able to see and experience the rich diversity of art and culture from different parts of India under one roof — Indian dance, music, theatre, crafts, cuisine, literature and cinema. The milling crowds and sold out performances were a testimony to the tremendous interest and goodwill that Indian culture enjoys in the United States. 'maximum INDIA' also served as a unique opportunity for the people of India and the United States to rejoice in the steadily strengthening partnership between our two great democracies.

I would like to congratulate Chairman David Rubenstein, President Michael Kaiser, Vice-President Alicia Adams and their entire team at the Kennedy Centre for their flawless execution of this large-scale project. It not only required hard work, but also a great deal of imagination and creativity. This was evident, not only in the way the programme was conceived but also in the way the Kennedy Centre was transformed into a magical piece of India, with all its colour and energy.

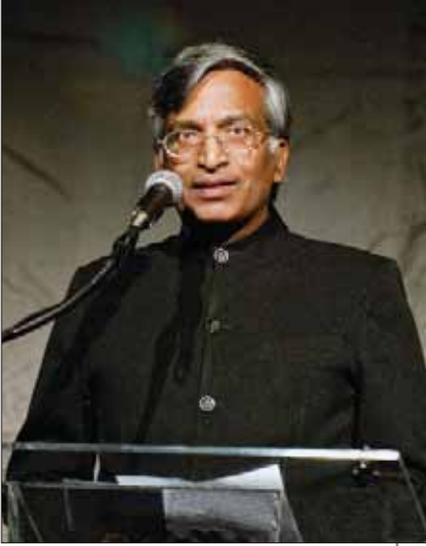
Meera Shankar
Ambassador of India



ADDITIONAL SECRETARY
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS



DIRECTOR GENERAL
INDIAN COUNCIL FOR
CULTURAL RELATIONS
(ICCR)



Suresh K Goel
Director General
Indian Council for Cultural
Relations (ICCR)

The “Maximum India” at the Kennedy Center from 1-20 March 2011 has, according to every indication and report, exceeded all expectations both in terms of the response of the discriminating art connoisseurs of not just Washington but other parts of the USA and the range of Indian cultural forms on display.

It was particularly an outstanding moment for me to be present at the opening ceremony of the event on March 1. The presence of a large number of eminent Americans, the distinctive format of performances and the rich presentation of various aspects of the Indian culture added a new dimension to the interaction between Indian culture and the American audience.

It is not very often that so many well known artistes from India gather under one roof and provide a continuum of performances across the spectrum of genres. ICCR was particularly delighted to be a partner in this effort. Some of the groups sponsored by the ICCR did manage to travel to other cities thus expanding their footprints.

“Maximum India” succeeded beyond all imagination in charting a new journey of American mind into Indian culture. It demonstrated in a unique manner the interest which the people of the USA have in interacting with India at a cultural and intellectual level. Both these are important in enhancing our relations which have gathered considerable strength during the recent years.

I convey my best compliments to the President of the Kennedy Center, Mr. Michael M. Kaiser and more particularly Ms. Alicia Adams, the festival curator for this gigantic and most elegant project.

Suresh K Goel
Director General

Message from Michael M. Kaiser

The *maximum INDIA* festival raised the bar for successful international festivals at the Kennedy Center. We saw on a daily basis for three weeks, lines that snaked around the building as people waited to get into theaters for performances. The enthusiasm and response were beyond what we had imagined but I suppose with a country with an arts and culture heritage so rich, we should have expected that all of the performances would play to capacity and sometimes more than capacity audiences.

Over the three-week period of the festival, the Kennedy Center hosted 530 artists participating in 65 performances. There were a total of 77 offerings including film and literature and more than 300,000 people came through our doors for the festival. Wonderful exhibitions lined our grand halls and public spaces and there were nearly 4,000 meals provided to the artists by the 12 Taj chefs who were here for the duration of the festival.

Our education programs are vital to any of our festivals and for *maximum INDIA*, we had a full array of programs to offer to schools, teachers, students including those that were online and interactive. Also, there were special performances for the festival that were part of our Theater for Young Audiences series. Twenty-one of the free performances remain, in their entirety, archived on our website for future viewing by anyone who wishes to experience the vibrancy of Indian culture. It is through our education programs that we are able to provide context for the performances on our stages and to increase the knowledge about the country and the culture for all learners both students and adults.

As a non-profit organization we must raise money to present performers on our stages and volunteers are a very important part of the equation to balancing our budgets. For *maximum INDIA*, the Kennedy Center relied on the assistance of 323 volunteers, of which almost 100 were of Indian descent. I think that this speaks volumes to the engagement by the Indian American community in the festival and the Center's embrace of its local community.

We are grateful to the Embassy and Ambassador Shankar for her support and for our partnership with ICCR, which enhanced our programming offerings with eight talented groups. The American Embassy in Delhi under the stewardship of Ambassador Tim Roemer was also an important partner and advocate for the festival.

We look forward to continuing our relationship with Indian artists and to including them in the future in our ongoing series.



Michael M. Kaiser,
President
The John F. Kennedy Center
for the Performing Arts

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael M. Kaiser'.

Michael M. Kaiser, President
The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts



Alicia Adams,
Vice President
 The John F. Kennedy Center
 for the Performing Arts

The Making of a Festival: “Maximum India”

The idea for this festival germinated almost a decade ago, when the Kennedy Center decided to focus its festivals on Asia. As we made plans to pursue this artistic course — which included China, Japan, the Middle East and the Arab World — it became clear that India would be the jewel at the end of our Silk Road journey. In 2006, discussions began with the Indian Embassy in Washington, DC, and with the Director General of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) in Delhi. Then in 2007, the National School of Drama extended an invitation to their festival in Delhi, and I was able to send a member of my staff; thus began our travel, research and connection to the sub-continent.

We made many trips during the following years, discovering India through performances, meetings with various cultural entities and seeking advice and information. This of course led us to many more performers and cultural agents in cities including Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Chennai, Jaipur, Agra, Bengaluru and Kochi. Ultimately, I made a selection of artists and participants that I felt would be representative and reflective of the art and culture of India in the areas of the performing arts (music, dance and theater), visual and literary arts, film, fashion, food and crafts. As I traveled to different regions of the country, I discovered India’s rich cultural diversity, and it became imperative to reflect that variety in my choices in order for them to constitute a representative portrayal of India’s arts and culture. Given that India is a vast country with many, many talented and deserving artists, it was difficult to pare the selection down to the 530 who were ultimately chosen.

My background and interest in dance led me to include more dance artists in “Maximum India” than in previous festivals I have curated. I was so moved by the artistry of the dancers and wanted our audiences to see the best representation of Indian classical dance in many of its forms including Bharatanatyam, Kathakali, Kuchipudi and Odissi. Performances by such great dancers as Madhavi Mudgal, Alarmel Valli, Malavika Sarukkai, Priyadarsini Govind, Nriyagram, Shantala Shivalingappa and Daksha Sheth generated a response and enthusiasm that led to sold-out performances. My hope was to have American audiences deepen their experience and appreciation of Indian classical dance, and I believe that happened.

Musicians such as Zakir Hussain, L. Subramaniam, Kailash Kher and the

Manganiyar; theater and film artists Naseeruddin Shah, Shabana Azmi, Nandita Das and Sharmila Tagore; literary giants Salman Rushdie, Suketu Mehta and Nayantara Sahgal; visual artists Jatin Das, Jitish and Rena Kallat, Bharti Kher and the jewels of the Gem Palace made for a stellar line up that individually and collectively contributed mightily to the festival's success.

The food, the food, the food! It was our great fortune to have twelve chefs from the Taj hotel in residence for the three weeks of the festival. Led by Chefs Oberoi and Anando, these culinary masters presented cuisine from all regions of the Indian sub-continent, feeding all who came to the Kennedy Center. Indian cuisine was available in our main restaurant, café and staff canteen. Families and individuals often came just for the glorious food. The response was overwhelming, and workshops conducted by Chef Oberoi were among the first to sell out for the festival. The Kennedy Center chefs and the Taj chefs worked together to provide an authentic Indian cuisine that was hailed by our audiences and staff as superb.

Our partnership with the ICCR in Delhi brought a complement of eight groups of artists to the festival; these programs drew audiences in the thousands to our Millennium Stage performances, which are free to the public. These performances were staged on both the Millennium Stage as well as in the Eisenhower Theater. Having to turn people away for performances of L. Subramaniam, Ticket to Bollywood and Parikrama was difficult, but we had no choice as we were beyond capacity. The Millennium Stage performances drew the largest audiences we have ever had for festival performances.

Many organizations and people were essential to creating this festival, including Dr. Karan Singh, President of the ICCR; Ambassador Meera Shankar and the Embassy of India in Washington, DC; Ambassador Tim Roemer and the American Embassy in Delhi; Studio Adrien Gardere; the Asia Society; Teamwork Productions; the Crafts Museum in Delhi; Martand Singh; Ritu Menon; Little Theater Foundation and Earth20rbit. Without their contributions and support, work and ideas, it would not have been possible to have created "Maximum India."

Just a note about the title. Suketu Mehta's *Maximum City* was recommended to me as a "must read." When I finished it, it was clear to me that I needed to borrow from this title to capture the essence of the festival I wanted to create. It is so true that the brilliance of India is that it is a country of extremes — intellect, innovation, survival and experimentation. This book taught me so much about Mumbai and even more about the country, and convinced me to choose "Maximum India" as the title.

For years, we traveled, researched and scoured the country for the best in the arts of India to create this festival. The Kennedy Center is proud to have hosted a celebration of the arts and culture of such a vibrant country as India and to have presented a festival called "Maximum India".



Alicia Adams, Vice President
The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

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An Extraordinary CULTURAL VOYAGE ...

INDIA IS a maximum nation... Of colors, cultures and cuisines, of dialects, dialectics and dances, of spirituality, serenity and serendipity, of music, *mimansa* and memories, of faiths, fables and forethought... The land of a billion people, India is where tradition and modernity, where the classic and the contemporary, where similarity and dissimilarity, where contradictions and resolutions, populate every mile of an extraordinarily diverse civilizational landscape. It was no wonder then that 'maximum INDIA', a very special exposition staged at the iconic Kennedy Center in Washington DC, sought to present India to the world in all its magnificent diversity.

The exposition was a remarkable success and helped chart a new journey for both American and Indian-American minds into Indian culture. The festival, lasting for all of three weeks, demonstrated in a unique manner the abundant interest that the American people have in interacting with India and Indians, at a cultural and intellectual level.

Most importantly, the festival reinforced India-U.S. relations, which have now gathered tremendous strength and momentum during recent years and are on the path to transforming the global landscape of international relations.

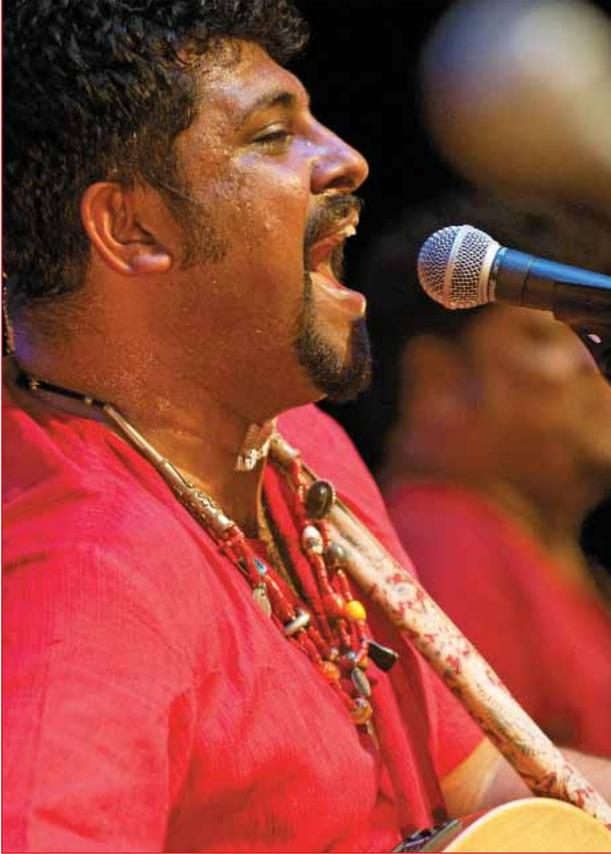
The story of India presents an amazing kaleidoscope of diversity. Her history, religions, languages, literature, music, dance, painting, architecture, festivals, customs, and cuisine root back to several millennia. India's innate brilliance also emanates from its versatility — in intellect, innovation, and experimentation. To be able to capture this unique Indian story of art and culture required raising the bar of hosting a successful international festival at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

And this, in fact, happened.

For three weeks, on a daily basis, the Center witnessed snaking lines of people all agog and enthusiastic to get into the theaters for performances which showcased a country with an arts and cultural heritage so rich that all the performances played to capacity, and sometimes, more than capacity. To put it simply, for maximum INDIA, the Kennedy Center hosted 530 artistes, participating in 65 performances. There were a total of 77 offerings, including films and literature, and more than

Photo by **Margot Schulman**





Photos by **Margot Schulman**

300,000 people came through the doors of the Center to attend the festival. Magnificent exhibitions lined the public spaces and halls, and there were nearly 4,000 meals provided to the artistes by the 12 Indian master chefs who had come all the way from India for the duration of the festival.

Thus, from Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Chennai, Jaipur, Agra, Bengaluru, Kochi and other parts of India, a selection of artistes and participants, best representative and reflective of the art and culture of India in the areas of performing arts, the visual and literary arts, film, fashion, food and crafts came together to present India's cultural and artistic diversity.

The Indian classical dance performances were particularly well received by the audiences. American audiences saw the finest representation of this genre in many of its forms, including Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Kuchipudi, Odissi and Kathakali. Performances by renowned dancers, such as Madhavi Mudgal, Alarmel Valli, Malavika Sarukkai, Priyadarshini Govind, Shantala Shivalingappa, and Isha Sharvani of the Daksha Sheth Dance Company; and dance academies like Nrityagram Dance Ensemble, Natyalakshana and Kerala Kalamandalam, not only evoked a huge response and enthusiasm at maximum INDIA, but also led to sell-out shows.

But it was not dance alone. A stellar line-up that included musicians such as Zakir Hussain (tabla), L. Subramaniam (violin) and U. Shrinivas (mandolin); theater and film artistes Naseeruddin Shah, Shabana Azmi, Girish Karnad, Alyque Padamsee, Ratan Thiyam, Amal Allana, Nandita Das and Sharmila Tagore; literary giants Salman Rushdie, Suketu Mehta and Nayantara Sehgal; visual artists Jatin Das, Jitish and Rena Kallat, Bharti Kher and the Jewels of the Gem Palace — dating back to the era of the Mughals and the Maharajas — both individually and collectively, contributed mightily to the festival's success and led to a delectable art and culture experience for American audiences.

maximum INDIA had twelve master chefs coming all the way from Mumbai's iconic Taj Hotel who were present in residence at the Kennedy Center for the three weeks of the festival. Led by Chefs Hemant Oberoi and Ananda Solomon, these culinary masters presented cuisines from all regions of India at the Kennedy Center's main restaurant, café and staff canteen. The food was splendid, the response overwhelming, and the culinary workshops conducted were among the first to sell out at the festival. The authentic Indian cuisine, provided by the Taj Chefs and the Kennedy Center chefs, was hailed lavishly by audiences and staff.

Another dimension to the maximum INDIA festival was its full array of offerings to the Kennedy Center's educational programs, which are still available to schools, teachers, and students, including those that are online and interactive. Additionally, there were special performances for the festival that were part of the Center's "Theater for Young Audiences" series. And for important future and archival reference, 21 of maximum INDIA's free performances have been retained in their entirety on the Center's website for future viewing by anyone who wishes to experience the vibrancy of Indian culture as presented during maximum INDIA.

maximum INDIA also brought in a unique and vital ele-

ment to local and community involvement in a project, which encompassed and forged art and cultural relations between two major countries on a pan-international scale. During the course of the festival, the Kennedy Center relied on the assistance of 323 volunteers, of which 100 were of Indian descent. This surely speaks volumes about the engagement and participation of the local and Indian-American community at the maximum INDIA festival.

All this no doubt also confirms and reiterates what the ICCR (Indian Council for Cultural Relations — and a major sponsor of the maximum India Festival) Director General, Suresh K. Goel, felt and shared with a media representative in an interview in Washington during the Festival, “I think there is a much better appreciation of India now... a better understanding of our cultural ethos, a better understanding of our thinking, the way we act and what we do, which is clearly indicated in the fact that several American institutions are now approaching India to broaden the economic and intellectual interactions. (American) universities and institutions are all coming together to see how we can broaden our understanding in fundamental areas, intellectually and academically.”

A small word of acknowledgement must definitely be made for the many organizations and people who were absolutely essential to creating maximum INDIA. This included Dr. Karan Singh, President of the ICCR, Indian Ambassador to the United States of America Meera Shankar, and the Embassy of India in Washington, DC. In New Delhi, of course, were U.S. Ambassador Tim Roemer and the American Embassy. In terms of organizations and institutions were the Studio Adrien Gardere, the Asia Society, Teamwork Productions, the Crafts Museum in Delhi, Little Theater Foundation and Earth2Orbit. Without the support and contribution, and work and ideas of these organizations and individuals it would not have been possible to create maximum INDIA.

maximum INDIA did not happen overnight. For years, senior representatives of the Kennedy Center traveled, researched and scoured a country so vibrant as India for the best in its arts to create this festival. To have taken the idea of this festival, which had germinated almost a decade ago when the Kennedy Center had decided to focus its festivals on Asia, to its ultimate fruition as the festival of maximum INDIA, marked the fulfillment of a remarkably ambitious and artistic journey. ■■

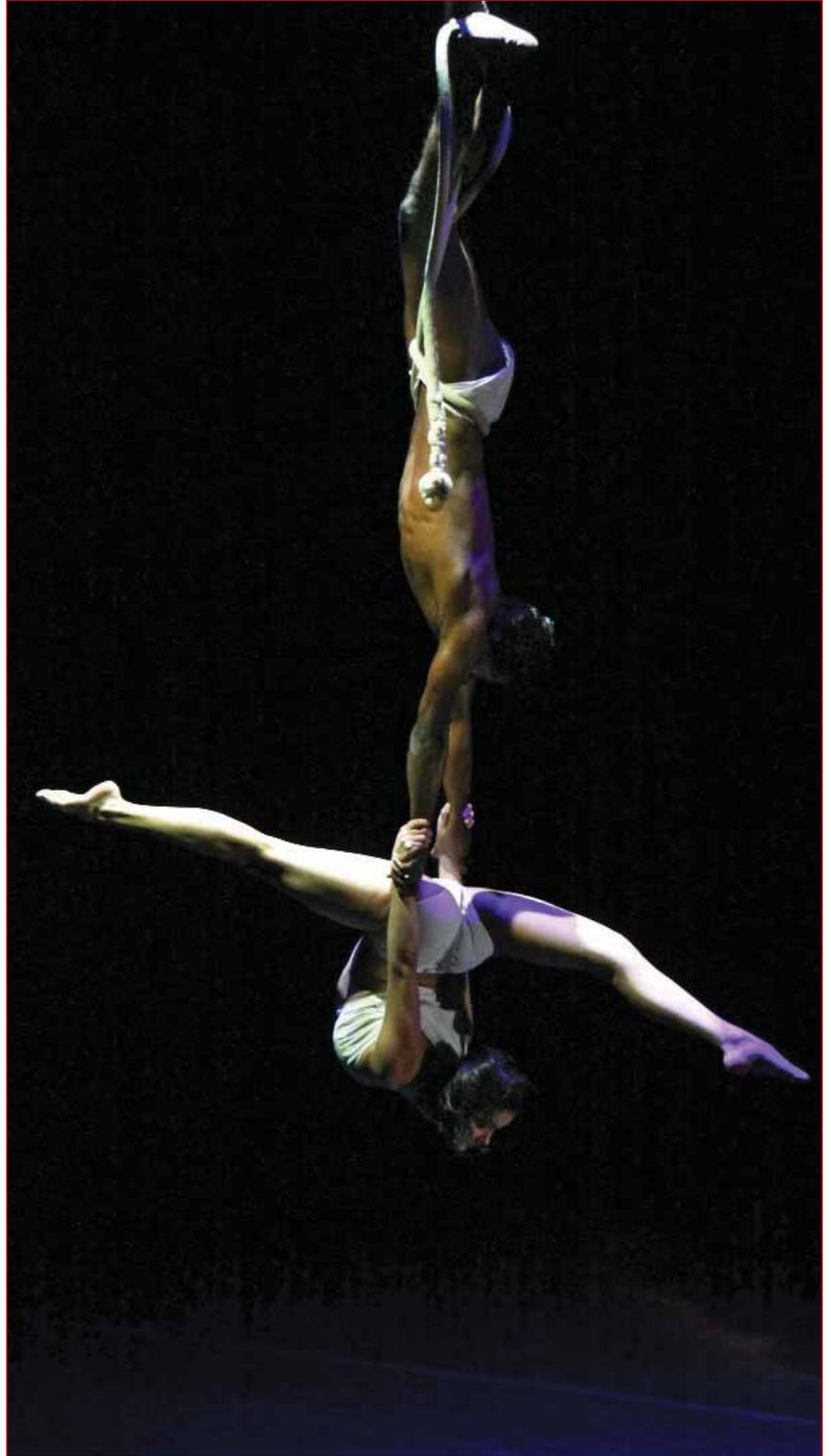


Photo by Carol Pratt

Presenting India...

The Opening Gala on March 1, 2011 set the tone and the tenor of maximum India with the unveiling of one of the world's oldest civilizations.

India is not one culture, but several, it isn't one language, but several, it isn't one religion, but several, it isn't one philosophy, but several...

It is this diversity that binds it all into the nation called India.

The Opening Night presented a taste of this extraordinary fusion of variety in all its abundance...



■ Ambassador Meera Shankar speaks at the Opening Gala. In her address, she described India as “a confluence of civilizations with diversity and tolerance as its hallmarks”.

Photo by **Margot Schulman**

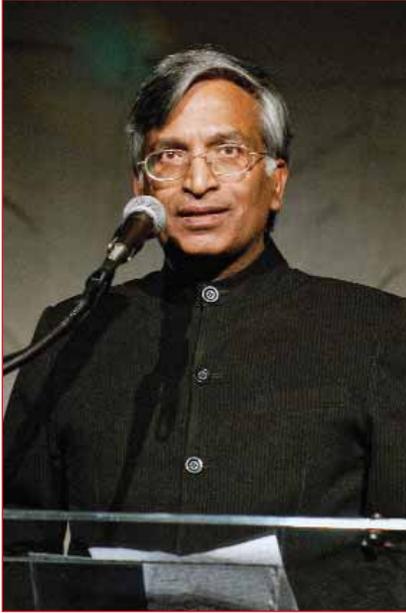


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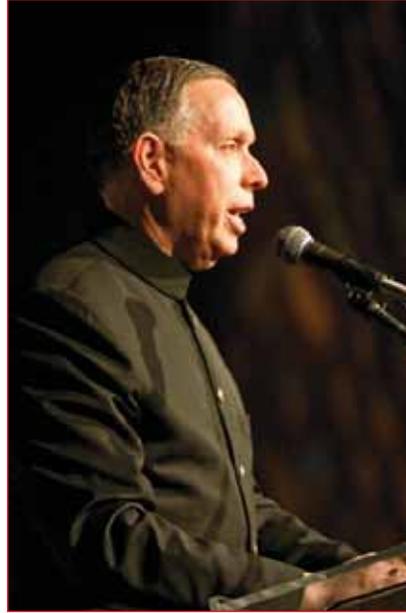


Photo by **Scott Suchman**



Photo by **Scott Suchman**

■ A number of distinguished speakers addressed the Opening Night. (Clockwise from Left): Suresh K. Goel, Director General, Indian Council for Cultural Relations; Michael M. Kaiser, President, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts; Senator Mark Warner, Co-Chair of the Senate's US-India Caucus; Author Suketu Mehta; and, David Rubenstein, Chairman, Kennedy Center. In some memorable comments, Mehta referred to the "flow of ideas between India and the United States... at important moments in their history, from Thoreau to Mahatma Gandhi to Martin Luther King". Kaiser observed: "India amazes with the majesty and mystery of its culture. Its brilliance is that it is a country of extremes — intellect, innovation, survival, and experimentation. India offers the maximum."

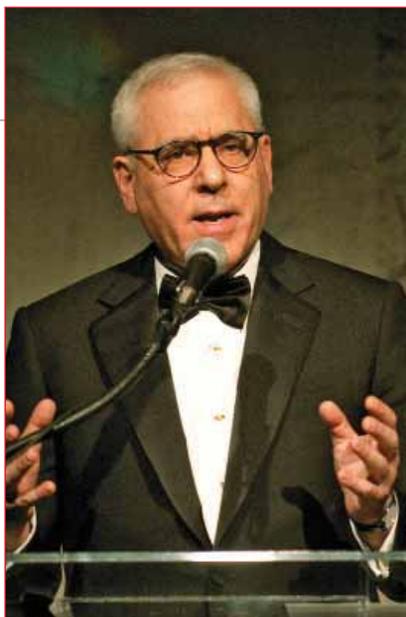


Photo by **Margot Schulman**



Photo by **Scott Suchman**



■ Internationally known dancers Alarmel Valli and Madhavi Mudgal enthrall through their special offering 'Nrittalahari'.

Photo by **Scott Suchman**



■ Dancers perform 'Jai Dev', a prayer, at the Opening Gala. The dance was choreographed by Rujuta Vaidya.

Photo by **Margot Schulman**



■ Alarmel Valli continues to enthrall with 'Nrittalahari'.
Photo by **Scott Suchman**



■ The legendary maestro of the tabla unleashes his genius at the Gala.
Photo by **Scott Suchman**



■ The Tent at the Opening gala.
Photo by **Margot Schulman**



■ 'Dholnation' joins Rujuta Vaidya's dancers on stage for a thrilling finale act to the night.

Photo by **Margot Schulman**



The Power of the Mudra...

The second day of maximum INDIA witnessed the unfurling of the mudra, the abhinaya, the lasya, the bhaava... in sum, the aesthetic universe of the Indian dance forms, from the classical Bharatanatyam, the Odissi, the Kuchipudi to contemporary dance theater to folk to Bhangra...



■ **Madhavi Mudgal (extreme right) and Alarmel Valli (above) in Samanvaya:**

A Coming Together. On March 2, 2011, two of India's foremost exponents of classical dance, Madhavi Mudgal and Alarmel Valli, blend Odissi and Bharatanatyam to present a superlative fusion of creative experience.

Photos by **Carol Pratt**





■ **The abhinaya maestros, March 6, 2011:** Priyadarsini Govind (L) leads the stunning Nrityagram Dance Ensemble.
Photos by **Margot Schulman**





■ **Natyalakshana, March 7, 2011:** The Bangalore-based Institute of Choreography and Innovative Dance interpreting and rendering with élan classical dance forms in a contemporary format.

Photos by **Carol Pratt**



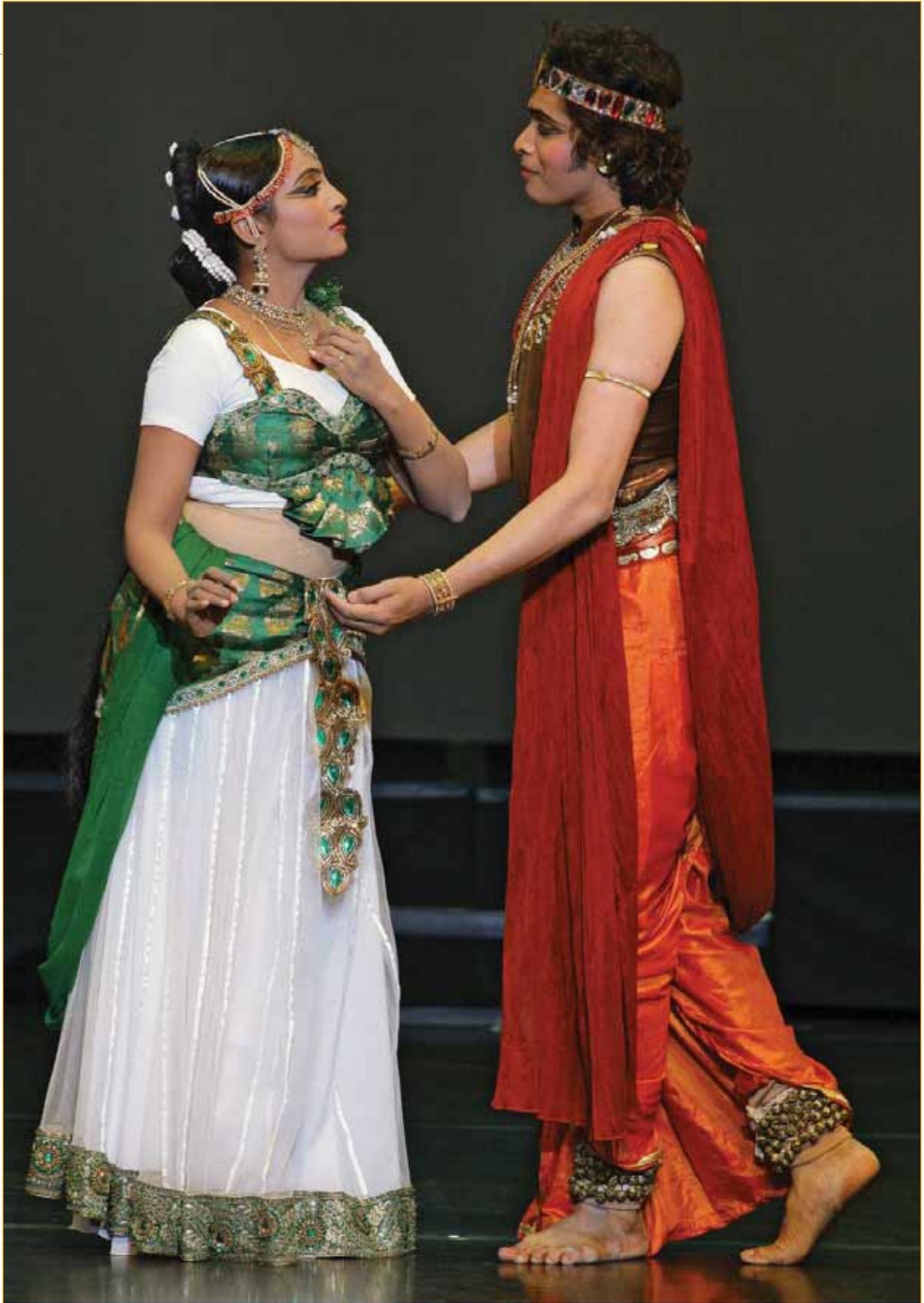


Photo by **Carol Pratt**



Photos by **Margot Schulman**



ATTIRED in a long flowing costume and veil, Gulabo Sopera and her troupe offered a mesmeric evening, as they bent over backwards from the waist, twirled, and mimicked the slithering snake. Accompanied by high-pitched, coarse and throaty vocals, and the hypnotic pungli, the performance irrevocably transformed the Millenium Stage...



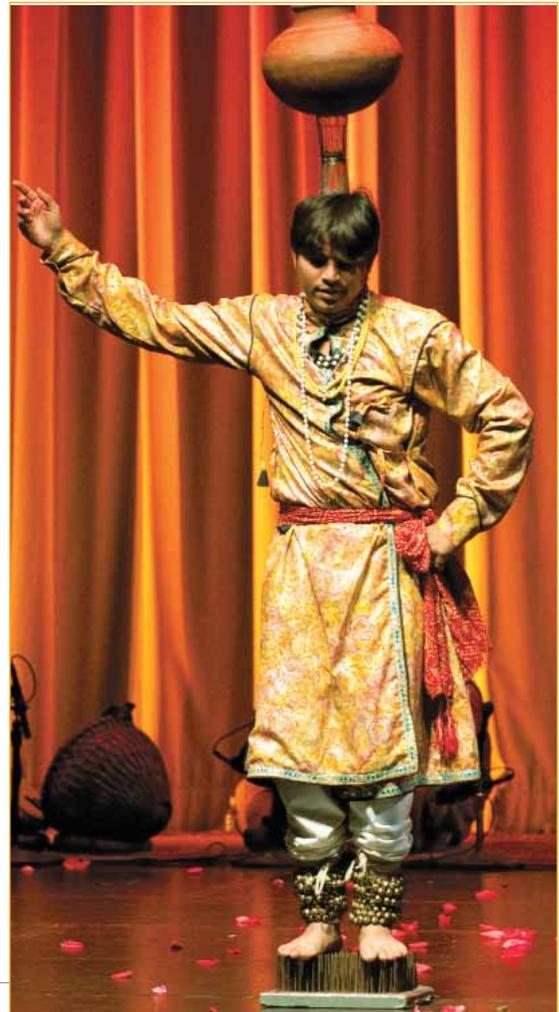
Photos by **Margot Schulman**





■ Gulabo Sapera and party, March 8, 2011: Yet another sensation — a celebratory dance of the snake charmers... Its proponent Gulabo Sapera, born and raised in a family of snake charmers, is one of India's foremost performers in the 'Kalbeliya' style, named thus after the community itself who have traditionally been snake charmers in Rajasthan. The dance is an integral part of their heritage. Seen here is the Gulabo Sapera party in a variety of fascinating and dynamic interplay of balance and grace.

Photos by **Margot Schulman**





■ **Tanusree Shankar Dance Company, March 9, 2011:** Continuing the amazing run, internationally acclaimed dancer and choreographer Tanusree Shankar presented an exquisite sequence of contemporary Indian choreography, Set to music by her late husband Ananda Shankar. The melodies created by Ananda, who was an internationally known music composer himself, ably complemented Tanusree's dynamic choreography. Photos by **Carol Pratt**



"I want to give our audiences varying windows upon which to gaze at the culture of the country so that people can enter many, many doors..."

Alicia Adams

*Vice President,
International Programming & Curator,
maximum INDIA, Kennedy Center
(In an interview to AFP)*



Photo by **Carol Pratt**



Photo by Carol Pratt



■ **Ragamala Dance & Dakshina, March 9, 2011:** It was the day of building bridges... Drawing on the fount of Pandanallur Bharatanatyam, Ragamala Dance's séance-like dance movements sought a synthesis of cultures, both ancient and modern.

Photo by **Carol Pratt**



“No sooner had Ragamala Dance... begun, than every moment seemed precise, specific, focussed. From those sharply defined beginnings arose complexities both rapturous and profound. The Ragamala musical instruments were actually an excellent example of fusion... Every change of focus registers keenly. The swaying pliancy of the torso becomes deeply sensuous. A simple, bouncing walk toward the audience and back is delivered with a subtlety that made it far from simple in its effect...”

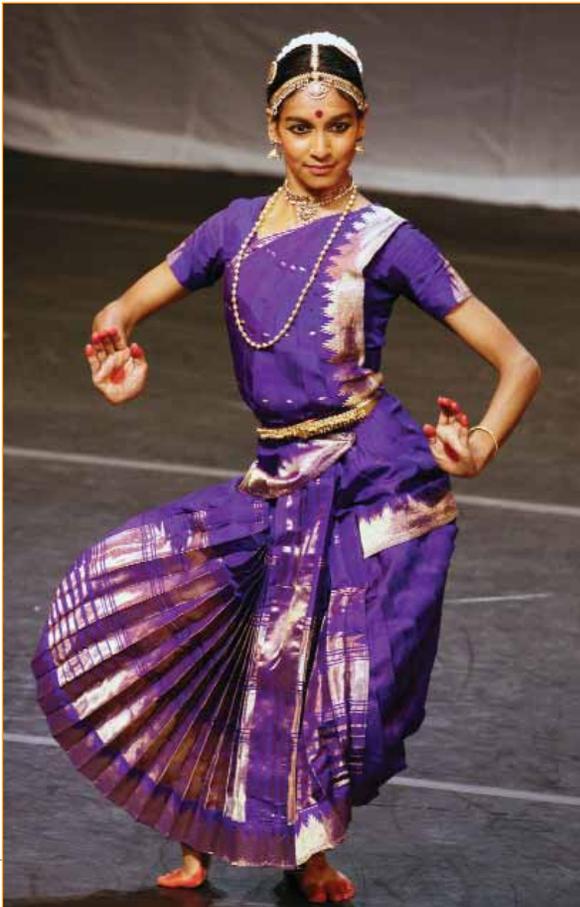
Alastair Macaulay
The New York Times



Photos by **Carol Pratt**

Malavika Sarukkai: Sakthi Sakthimaan — Energies Auspicious and Fearsome, March 10, 2011: While rooted in the continuity of Indian classical tradition, Chennai-based choreographer and dancer Malavika Sarukkai's "dancing seem to arise primarily out of the intense contrasts she makes between different facets of dance itself... Stillness or motion; gesture or rhythm; legato or staccato; left or right; open or closed; aggressive or benign — these and other oppositions became thrilling in Sarukkai's extraordinarily long solos. After a complex series of phrases around the stage, she will suddenly hold a pose on one leg that becomes a statement of heroic tranquility...", said Alastair Macaulay of the New York Times.

Photo by **Carol Pratt**



Shantala Shivalingappa: Swayambhu, March 12, 2011: Shantala Shivalingappa, an acclaimed dancer and choreographer of Kuchipudi, based in Paris and much loved in India and Europe, interpreted the 2,000-year-old classical dance form, based on the Natya Shastra, in a power-packed and compelling rendition.

Photo by **Carol Pratt**

Odissi Vision & Movement Centre: On March 14, 2011, Sharmila Biswas, founder and artistic director of the Odissi Vision and Movement Centre, led her troupe in a display of amazing versatility, performing the classical Odissi with experimental choreographic work...

Photos by **Carol Pratt**





■ On March 13, 2011, DJ Rekha (on the turntables behind) belted out a bhangra learning session, with a rapturous crowd of young and old, men and women swaying to her beats.

Photos by **Carol Pratt**





BOLLYWOOD is the quintessential world of ‘maximum showbiz’... It’s a fascinating world of riotous extravaganza — of color, spectacle, music, dance, and, most importantly, emotion. Ticket to Bollywood presented an extraordinary synthesis of the spectacle...



■ **Ticket to Bollywood, March 17, 2011:** Artistic Director Shubhra Bhardwaj took a mesmerized audience on a tour of India’s sensational song and dance movie genre, presenting music from among several of Bollywood’s best-loved hits. Ticket to Bollywood also included a fun-filled rendition of A. R. Rahman’s Oscar-winning “Jai Ho!” from *Slumdog Millionaire*. The event drew massive crowds and a queue that ran the length of the Kennedy Center’s Grand Foyer, filling the 1,100-seat Eisenhower Theater.

Photos by **Scott Suchman**





■ **Kerala Kalamandalam Kathakali Troupe, March 19, 2011:** The public institution of Kerala Kalamandalam, which is dedicated to the preservation and propagation of the iconic and classical dance-drama form of Kathakali, entranced the crowds at the Millennium Stage of the Kennedy Center, enunciating stories with a series of finely nuanced, structured, and gripping expressions and gestures. Seen here are vignettes from the show.

Photos by **Margot Schulman**





Photo by Margot Schulman

The Rhythms of a Civilization...

Presenting a civilization through music was no mean challenge... Yet music, of a wide, eclectic variety was of the essence at maximum INDIA. Carnatic, Hindustani, jugalbandi, folk, the violin, the mandolin, the sitar, the tabla... and a stellar gallery of the maestros themselves... L. Subramaniam, Zakir Hussain, Hariharan, Shankar Mahadevan, Raghu Dixit...



■ **U. Shrinivas, March 1, 2011:** One of India's most well-known exponents of Carnatic music, U. Shrinivas, who plays the mandolin, gave the festival an awe-inspiring start. His music was a tribute to the rich repository of tradition and modernity that marks India's fount of culture.

Photo by **Carol Pratt**



■ **Rhythm of Rajasthan, March 2, 2011:** Featuring percussion and 'hypnotic' instruments such as the sarangi (bowed lute) and algoza (double flute), a group of five musicians and one dancer, making up what was called 'Rhythm of Rajasthan' entranced the audience with a layered presentation — from pulsating and joyous folk music to rapturous Sufi songs.

Photo by **Carol Pratt**

■ **Anando Mukerjee, March 2, 2011:**

A gifted lirico-spinto tenor born and raised in India, but presently living in London, the young Mukerjee presented a unique bouquet of notes — a fascinating repertoire inspired by traditions back home in India.

Photo by **Margot Schulman**





■ **National Symphony Orchestra:**

Christoph Eschenbach, conductor; Zakir Hussain, tabla; Kelley O'Connor, mezzo-soprano, March 3-5, 2011: At a well-received concert, Christoph

Eschenbach conducted an NSO-commissioned world premiere from one of contemporary India's most brilliant tabla players and composers Zakir Hussain and excerpts from Roussel's opera *Padmâvatî*.

Accompanied by vocalists Hariharan and Shankar Mahadevan, the NSO commission written in honor of Kennedy Center's celebration of India, it combined elements of various ragas, talas, Sufia kalam and Christian church music, Hussain described it as "A Concerto for Four Soloists". Seen (L-R) in the picture are Zakir Hussain, Hariharan, Kelly O'Connor, Shankar Mahadevan and NSO director Eschenbach.

Photos by **Margot Schulman**



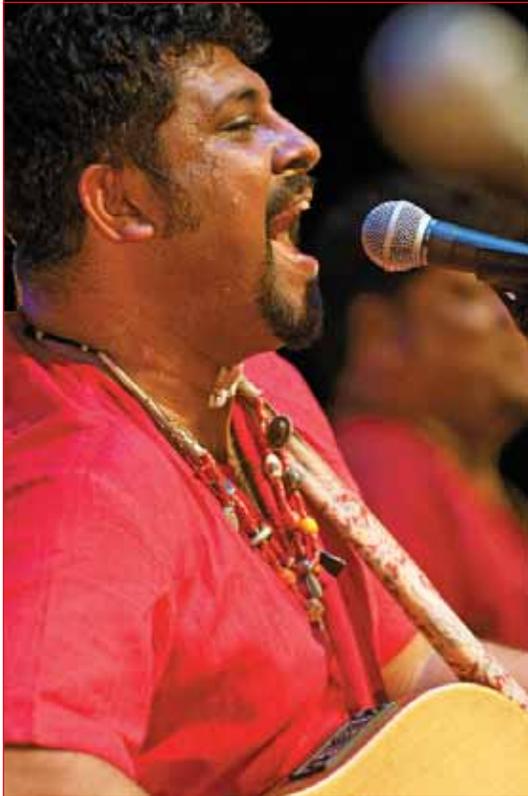


Photos by Margot Schulman

"An Islamic sufi, a Hindu priest, and a Biblical preacher embark on a journey together..."

Zakir Hussain
on the concerto he had
composed for
the festival
(Washington Post)





■ **Raghu Dixit, March 4, 2011:** Raghu Dixit, a soulful maestro, and his band rocked with a seamless fusion of Indian music, rock and roll, and other international styles.

Photos by Margot Schulman





■ **Kailash Kher's Kailasa, March 5, 2011:** A fusion of Kailash Kher's powerful folk sensibilities and lyrics, invoking strands of Sufi mysticism, with Naresh and Paresh Kamath's rock, electronic, and funk influences, Kailasa has been a big hit with audiences around the world.

Photos by **Margot Schulman**





■ L. Subramaniam, March 6, 2011: Legendary violinist L. Subramaniam rendered another virtuoso performance in both the traditional Carnatic and Western classical styles. His own compositions combine these Eastern and Western traditions. Of the influence of Indian musicians, the maestro said: “Many great composers and artists in the west have started seriously collaborating (with Indian musicians). They use a lot of our rhythmic structure, melodic structure, or our theme. And they have created major compositions...”

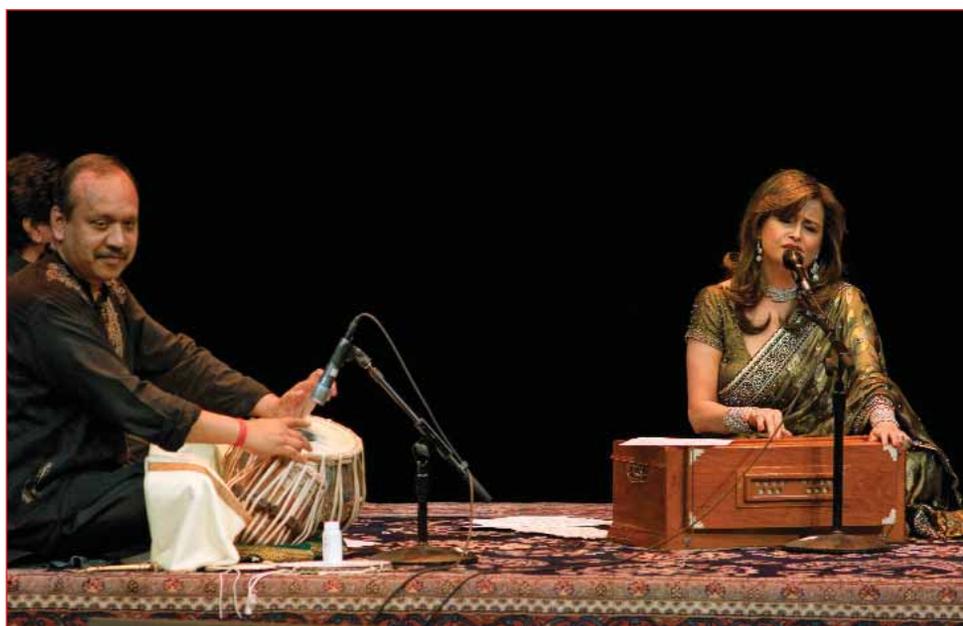
Photos by **Margot Schulman**





■ **Vatsala Mehra: An Evening of Ghazals, Sufi, Thumri and Geet, March 8, 2011:** Vatsala Mehra enthralled her audience with some soul-rivetting music, lending the ambience a moving and deeply inspiring spiritual touch.

Photos by **Margot Schulman**





■ National Symphony Orchestra: Christoph Eschenbach, conductor/Messiaen's Turangalila-Symphonie, March 10-12: Two guest artistes, pianist Cédric Tiberghien and ondes Martenot soloist, Tristan Murail, illustrated Messiaen's musical philosophy on their respective instruments. Christoph Eschenbach conducted Messiaen's Turangalila-Symphonie.

Photo by **Margot Schulman**



Photo by **Margot Schulman**

"Cédric Tiberghien's mastery of Messiaen's piano part was passionate and impressive, at times dominating the orchestra, at other times weaving in and out of the orchestral fabric, adding life and color to the finished piece. Likewise, Murail's clear expertise with the ondes Martenot added a kind of "Outer Limits" dash to the performance."

Terry Ponick
Washington Times



■ **March 11, 2011:** Parikrama performing at Kennedy Center, Washington, DC. The event was hosted by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. Formed in 1991, Parikrama is one of India's original Rock n' Roll bands. Often producing a fusion of Indian classical music instruments like mridangam, tabla and flute with instruments like guitar, drums and keyboards, Parikrama is experimental and daring in their musical vision.

Photos by **Carol Pratt**

■ **Shubhendra Rao & Saskia Rao-de Haas, March 11, 2011:**

The husband-and-wife team of the masterful sitarist Shubhendra Rao and cellist Saskia Rao-de Haas wove European and Indian folk music to produce some original compositions.

Photo by **Margot Schulman**





Spectral Variety...

Phantasmal diversity was of the essence... from Emergence's soothing textural notes of guitar and potent lyrics blending with sublime Carnatic melodies, to Soulmate, that spunky rock group from India's North East, to Suphala's accomplished improvisational performances traveling through Western classical, Indian classical, jazz, folk, and soul, to DJ Rekha's Bhangra party, to sessions on Indian cinema...



■ Krishna McKenzie & Karthick Srinivasan of Emergence.
Photos by **Daniel Schwartz**

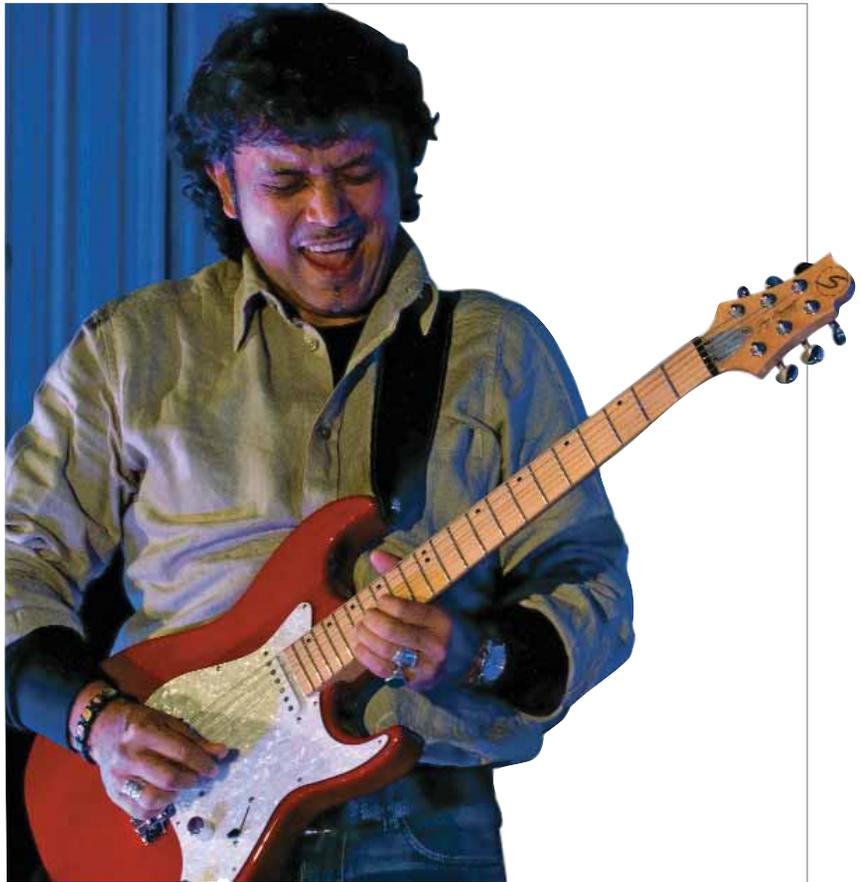


■ **Emergence, March 3, 2011:** The group unfurled a variety of harmonic textures through the guitar with vibrant lyrics deftly blended with sublime Carnatic melodies played out on the violin backed by Tamil vocals. Underlying their aesthetics were evocative notes of rock, funk, and a variety of ethnic rhythms.

Photo by **Daniel Schwartz**



■ **The Monsoon Club at the Terrace Gallery:** Soulmate, March 4, 2011: The band hailing from Shillong made extraordinary impact. Led by guitarist Rudy Wallang, who is steeped in the Blues tradition, Soulmate is one of India's authentic rockbands. Vocalist Tipriti Kharbangar's passionate performance, couched in an earthy, powerful voice, was memorable, drawing comparisons to the likes of Janis Joplin.



Photos by Margot Schulman



■ **The Monsoon Club at the Terrace Gallery: DJ Rekha Bhangra Dance Party, March 12, 2011:** London-born musician, DJ, curator, producer, and activist DJ Rekha hosted a bhangra dance party that unleashed hits by Jay-Z and Missy Elliot to a rapturous sell-out crowd.

Photo by **Margot Schulman**

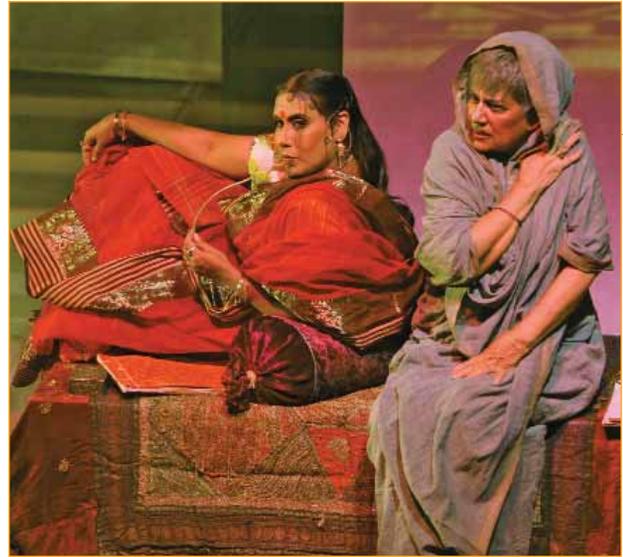


■ A dancer at DJ Rekha's dance party.

Photo by **Margot Schulman**

The Theater of Life...

The stage came to life with a series of life-mimicking experiences through bhaava, abhinaya and natya... and through powerful symbolism and the theatrics of the puppet, and indeed the power of the rendered word...



■ **Theatre & Television Associates: Nati Binodini, March 2-3, 2011:** A powerful rendition of defying the odds amidst trying circumstances... Born into a system that can oppress and bend even the most fiercely ambitious, Nati Binodini turned the tables to become one of India's top actresses. Five actresses came together to portray Nati's eventful life, illustrating it all through life-changing moments.

Photos by **Carol Pratt**



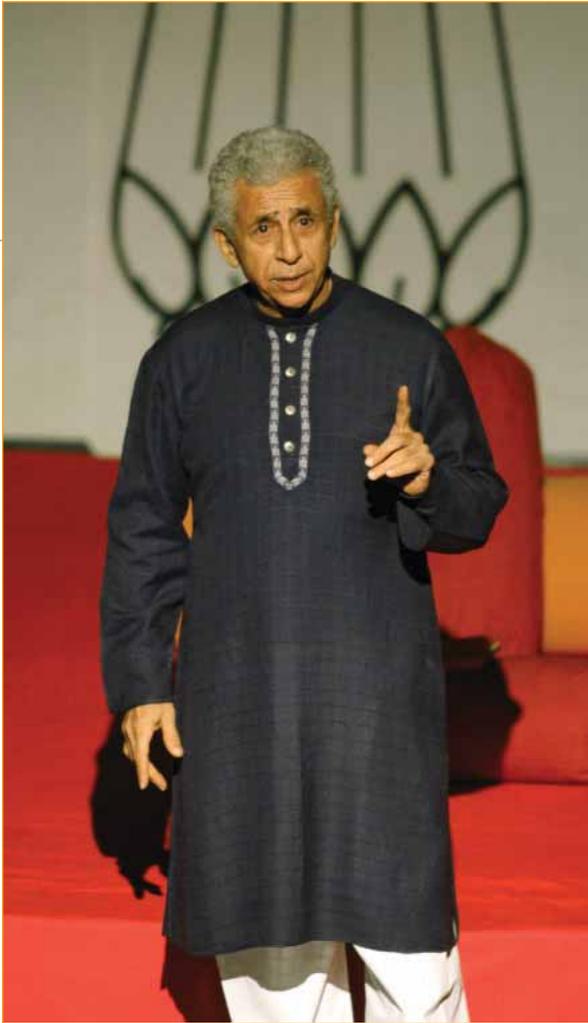
■ **Chorus Repertory Theatre: When We Dead Awaken, March 4-5, 2011:** Based on Henrik Ibsen’s final play, this finely crafted yet “enigmatic” play centered on the deeply embedded symbolism in names and occupations, essentially saying that when we awaken to our reality, there could be potentially little around to recognize!

Photos by **Carol Pratt**

“When We Dead Awaken is a symbolic lament about an aging sculptor who agrees to split from his free-spirited young wife once the shade of his old muse glides onto the scene. Creativity, regret and independence are the themes, and Ibsen ends it all with an avalanche wiping his characters off their idealized heights.”

Nelson Pressley
The Washington Post





|||||

NASEERUDDIN SHAH (L), one of India's most acclaimed actors, and best known in the West for film roles in "The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen" and "Monsoon Wedding", was lustily cheered as he came on stage before the show to explain that Chughtai's stories had become triggers of controversy during her long career in the 20th Century. Shah rendered an impish yet charismatic performance.

■ **Motley Theatre Group: Ismat Apa Ke Naam, March 5-6, 2011:** Celebrating Indian writer Ismat Khanum Chughtai, acclaimed theater and film actor Naseeruddin Shah and his Motley Theatre Group mounted three short stories that sought to challenge gender biases, the caste system, and preconceived notions about a woman's worth. Rendered in Hindustani, the performance drew a riot of laughter from an appreciative crowd.
Photos by **Carol Pratt**





Target Family Night: The Ishara Puppet Theatre Trust: Images of Truth, March 12, 2011: In a virtuoso performance, the group, in addition to using the traditional marionettes and hand puppets, took recourse to giant puppets to tell stories that sought to entertain and educate at once. Leading puppeteer Dadi Pudumjee tackled Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy through a series of momentous vignettes from the Mahatma's life. The act was set to contemporary music plucked from around the world.

Photo by **Margot Schulman**

Broken Images, Starring Shabana Azmi, March 16, 2011: One of India's most celebrated actors, Shabana Azmi anchored this psychological thriller about a little-known Hindi short-story writer who becomes amazingly wealthy and famous by crafting a best-seller in English! Shabana's genius morphed an intriguing story into a compelling rendition.

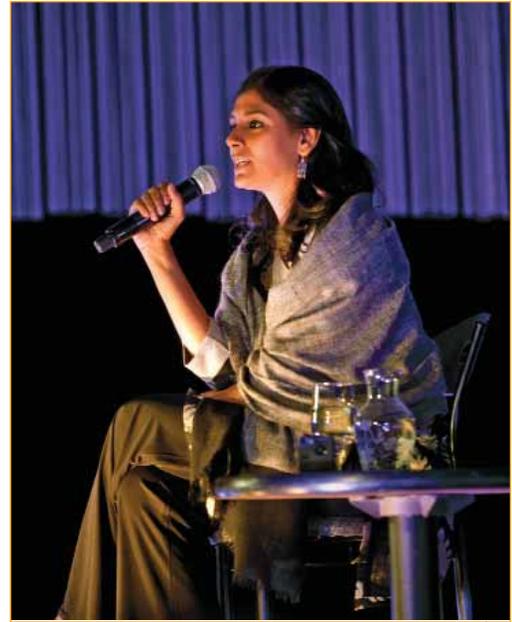
Photo by **Carol Pratt**





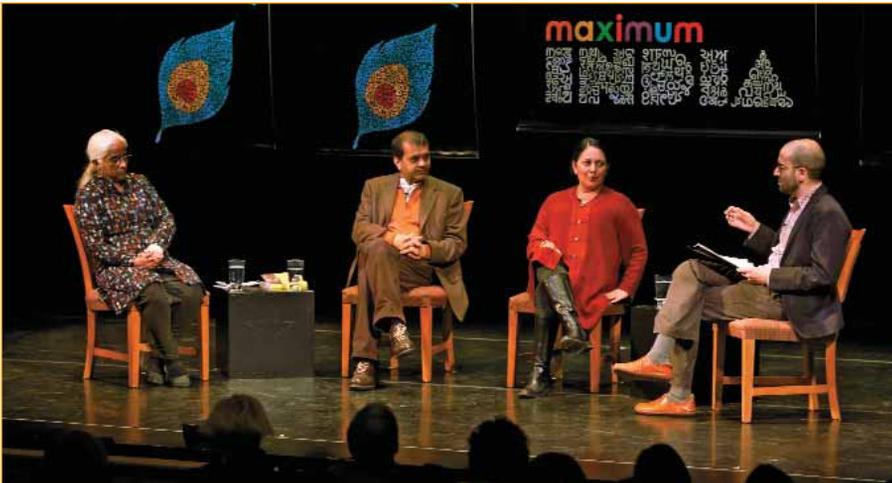
Story Behind the Images...

What goes into the story behind the moving image... It was a coming together of some of the most brilliant minds in Indian cinema, reflecting on a variety of perspectives...



■ Bollywood and Beyond with Nandita Das: Award-winning actor and director Nandita Das led an engaging discussion of the Indian film industry, from Bollywood to regional cinema. She took her audience through a series of seminal and celebrated Indian films, including 'Fire', in which she had starred.

Photo by **Daniel Schwartz**



■ Panel Discussion: Imagining the City: March 13, 2011: In a discussion, moderated by writer and literary critic Hirsh Sawhney (extreme right), panelists (from L-R) Maya K. Rao, Suketu Mehta and Sunetra Gupta presented a lively discussion on the cities of India. The panelists reflected on the transformational story of India's urban dreams. Increasingly, and more than ever, India's rural young are moving to the cities in search of independence and social mobility. Rao is one of India's leading practitioners of contemporary theater. Mehta is the author of "Maximum City", a classic study on the city of Mumbai, and Gupta is the author of the highly regarded "Good in Black", a tribute to the city of Kolkata.

Photo by **Daniel Schwartz**



■ **Panel Discussion: Portrayal of Indian Women in Film, March 15, 2011:** Moderator Nandita Das (C) led a gripping and stimulating discussion on the question of how Indian women are portrayed in Indian cinema. Panelists included (from L-R) Shabana Azmi, Adoor Gopalakrishnan, Ketan Mehta, and Dilip Basu.

Photo by **Daniel Schwartz**



The Warp & the Weft

Textiles, pottery, jewelry, handicraft...

the splendid variety of India's creativity rooted in several millennia of original imagination came to the fore at a well attended exposition of India's visual arts and traditions at work...



Jitish Kallat: Public Notice 2: This exhibit, put together using over 4,500 bone-shaped letters, was a tribute to the historic speech delivered by Mahatma Gandhi as he embarked on the epic Salt March to Dandi in the early 1930s as a novel form of protest against the salt tax instituted by the imperial British government.

Photo by Margot Schulman



Photos by Margot Schulman



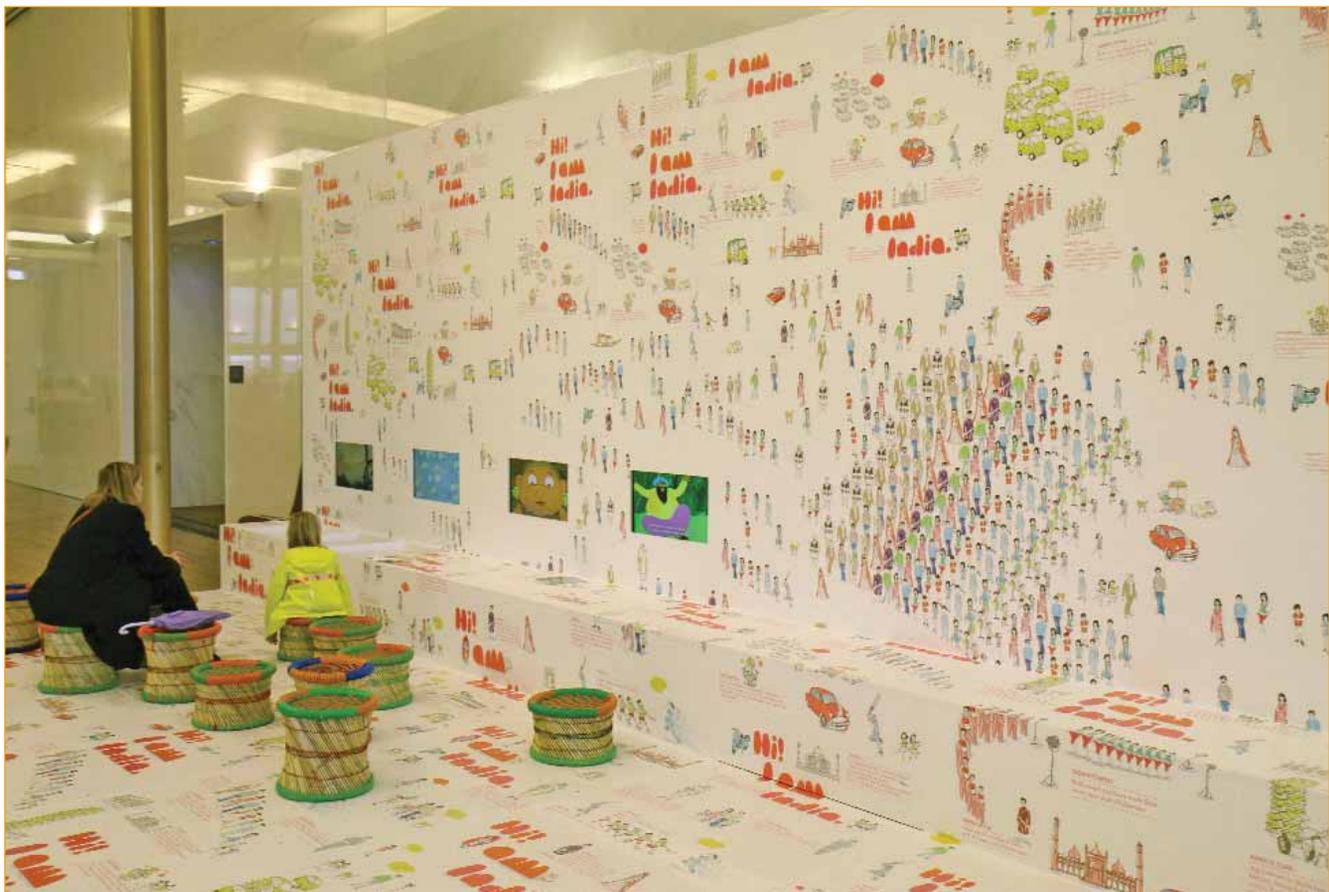
■ **Reena Saini Kallat: Falling Fables, March 1-20:** A representation of architectural ruins in a state of disintegration and collapse. Kallat created a grand illusion of historic ruins made out of 23,000 rubber stamps.

Photo by **Daniel Schwartz**



■ **SARI, March 1-20:** The most representative and visually dramatic of apparels of India, the Sari presented a visual dimension that stimulated and intrigued its beholders at the Hall of States. Several unique exhibits of this amazing garment made for some spectacular display of creativity and fashion.

Photos by **Margot Schulman**



■ **Thukral & Tagra: Hi! I am India, March 1-20:** A brilliantly conceived interactive playspace for children, the exhibit presented a range of interesting facts about life in modern, contemporary India while dispelling stereotypes through a creative sticker activity station. It also featured a number of books and videos.

Photos by **Carol Pratt**



CRAFT and its practice is central to the warp and weft of India's civilization... Pottery, weaving, embroidery, handicraft and a variety of highly evolved body of aesthetics define India's tradition of craft...



■ **Craft Demonstrations:** J. Niranjana, Satya Narayan Lal Karn and Moti Karn, March 1-20: A visual and creative delight, some of the world's most creative artisans displayed their skills at work...

Photo by **Margot Schulman**



Soul Food

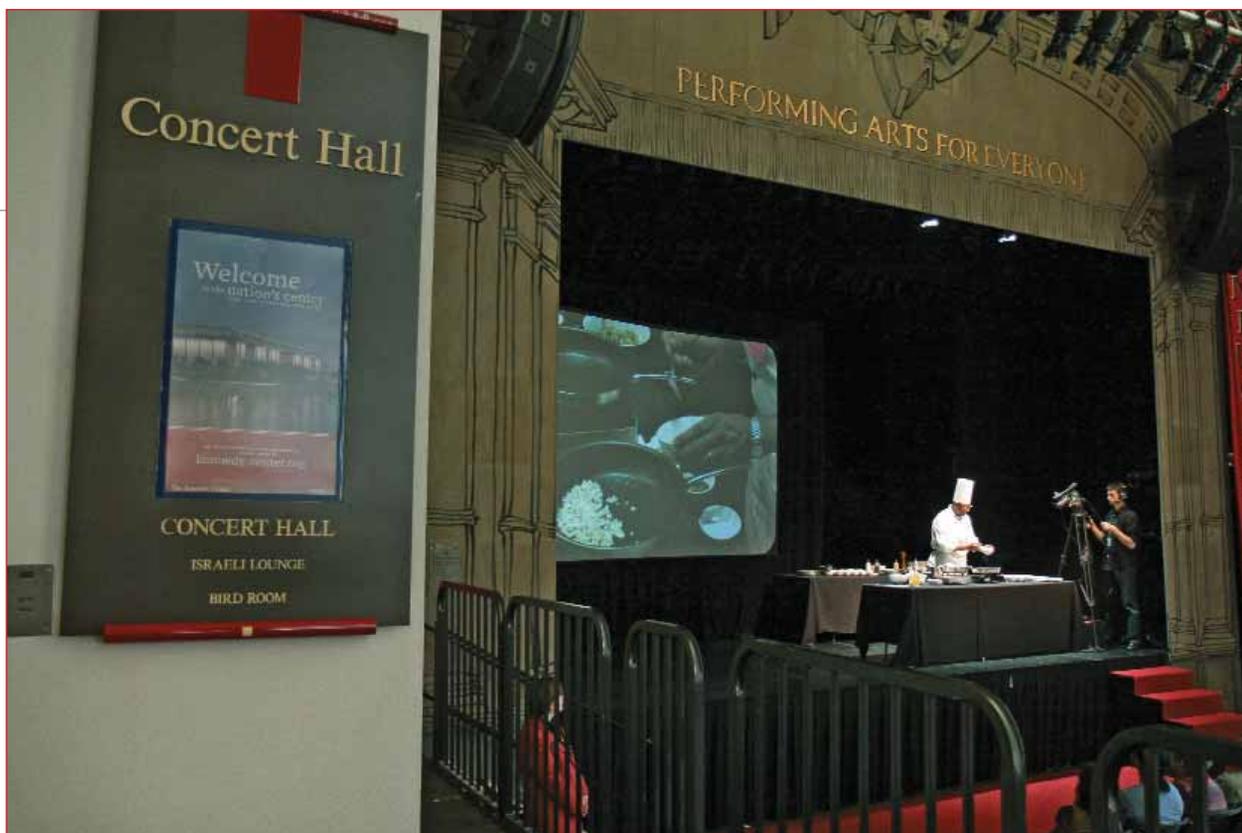
Food was of the essence... And where would it have been better to look for that ultimate experience of satisfying your soul. During the festival, the KC Café and the Roof Terrace Restaurant presented visitors and diners cuisine rarely ever found in restaurants anywhere in the world. Special menus prepared by 12 master chefs brought from the four corners of India

delighted and tickled the taste buds of the thousands who came chasing the aromas...



Photos by **Scott Suchman**





■ **Indian Culinary Demonstration, March 13, 2011:** Chef Ananda Solomon, Executive Chef of the Taj President, displayed his masterful techniques while introducing and demonstrating the preparation of one of his signature dishes.

Photo by **Carol Pratt**

■ **A Taste of India, March 5, 2011:** In a compelling lecture demonstration, Chef Hemant Oberoi, one of India's top chefs, talked about the evolution of the food cultures in India's North and South. He followed it up by a specially prepared tasting menu.

Photo by **Carol Pratt**



Media/India

A Confluence of CIVILIZATIONS...

► EXOTIC INDIA COMES ALIVE IN WASHINGTON

HINDUSTAN Times/ANI

Washington, February 26, 2011: Now you can visit a street market in bustling Mumbai, a silk shop in Chennai or an airy palace in Rajasthan — all at once. You need only trek to the Kennedy Center in Washington to experience Maximum India, soon-to start three-week long Indian festival. Alicia Adams, curator of the festival, said India is about maximum. A place, she said, with “the maximum number of people, the maximum number of possibilities, the maximum heat you could ever tolerate”. The festival would be an incredible blend of Indian music, cuisine, exhibits and other art forms like dance and theatre. So, just before the festival begins, what can be seen and eaten at the festival:



Photo by Margot Schulman

Cuisine

Oberoi, a career chef, will lead the festival’s major culinary component, transforming the Kennedy Center’s two eateries into full-fledged Indian restaurants. To perform this task, 12 chefs from India’s Taj Hotel restaurants have been selected for their expertise in Parsi, Maharashtrian, Bengali, South Indian, Gujarati and other regional cuisines.

Music

Roysten Abel, the Indian-born director of ‘The Manganiyar Seduction,’ bristles a bit when someone refers to his masterwork as a ‘concert.’ Though it features 43 musicians and a conductor, ‘Manganiyar’ is very much the eye-popping spectacle: Every musician — the dhol drummers, the singers, the men playing the accordion-like harmonium — performs in a lighted, red-walled cubicle. When a note rings out, the lights on that musician’s box come to life, creating an effect that at once recalls ‘Hollywood Squares’...

Exhibits

Forty incredible examples of India’s insatiable lust for gems — cuffs covered in countless polished rubies, a bird-shaped flask blanketed in diamonds, a diamond wedding necklace that hangs from head to knees — are headed to Washington.

Dance and Theater

During the next month, dozens of dancers are preparing to descend on the Kennedy Center, tradition bearers who “represent the top echelon” of the Indian dance world.

► INCREDIBLE INDIA COMES TO WASHINGTON

TIMES OF INDIA/IANs

February 27, 2011: Incredible India in its myriad wondrous colors is all set to make a splash in this American capital with “Maximum India”, a mega 20-day cultural extravaganza opening Tuesday at the prestigious John F Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts here, on the Potomac river. “Maximum India may not be on the same scale as the Festival of India, but it is a major effort to

display the creativity, ferment, and dynamism that characterizes Indian arts,” India’s Ambassador Meera Shankar said, unveiling the program.

Being held in cooperation with the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and the Embassy of India, “Maximum India” will feature many wonderful and unusual aspects of the country’s diverse arts and culture, from folkloric to classical and contemporary,” the center says. It will feature dance, music, and theatre performed by India’s most acclaimed artists as also film selections from the world’s most robust movie industry, featuring both Indie and Bollywood films.

The show stealer is expected to be “The Manganiyar Seduction,” an eye-popping spectacle created by Indian-born director Roysten Abel, featuring 43 Manganiars, a Sufi clan of folk musicians. Every musician — the dhol drummers, the singers, the men playing the accordion-like harmonium — performs in a lighted, red-walled cubicle. Prize-winning authors reading, debating, conversing, and sharing their insights; exhibitions that astonish and confront; incredible and unimaginable crafts from exquisite collections; jewels that dazzle from the princely era of the Mughals and Maharajas, will be another feature. And, to top it all, there will be feasts of Indian food for the entire three-week period of the festival, prepared by 12 world-class, award-winning Indian chefs, representing all regions of the country.

Washington’s Kennedy Center showcasing India’s top talent for 3-weeks
SIFY NEWS

March 2, 2011: The prestigious Kennedy Center in Washington DC is hosting three-week long “Maximum India” festival ending March 20, showcasing India focused events involving dance, music, theater, literature, film, exhibitions, and cuisine. Prominent festival participants include Javed Akhtar, Shabana Azmi, Dilip Basu, Shyam Benegal, Nandita Das, Adoor Gopalakrishnan, Hariharan, Zakir Hussain, Girish Karnad, Shankar Mahadevan, Deepa Mehta, Ketan Mehta, Salman Rushdie, Nayantara Sahgal and Sharmila Tagore.

Special menus are being prepared by 12 master chefs brought from the four corners of India for the entire period of the festival. Various events / performances at the festival include Odissi, Bharatanatyam, Abhinaya, Chhau, Kuchipudi, Bhangra, Bollywood, Kathakali dances; Rajasthani folk, tabla, Carnatic, violin, ghazal, Sufi, thumri and geet renderings.

Organizations and individuals who helped in

making this festival possible include: the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Embassy of India in Washington DC, Indra K. Nooyi, David M. Rubenstein, Stephen A. Schwarzman, Dr. Romesh and Kathleen Wadhvani, HRH Foundation, Pepsico, Tata, Tata Consultancy Services, Alice Rubenstein, Trehan Foundation, Amway Corporation, AT&T, and State Plaza Hotel.

Three-week long India festival kicks off in Washington

MSN INDIA NEWS/LALIT K JHA

Washington, March 3: The three-week long India festival — “maximum INDIA” kicked off at the prestigious Kennedy Center here with a glittering ceremony attended by who’s who of the U.S. capital and eminent Indian Americans.

Author Suketu Mehta in an opening address talked of the flow of ideas between India and the US that had influenced each other at important moments in their history — from Thoreau to Mahatma Gandhi to Martin Luther King.

The festival, from March 1 to 20, showcases the rich, cultural and diverse performing arts of India. Addressing the gathering, Indian Ambassador to the US Meera Shankar described India as “a confluence of civilizations with diversity and tolerance as its hallmarks”. She said the economic transformation, which India is currently undergoing, has also led to enormous creative ferment that is finding reflection in literature, dance, music, theatre, cinema and the arts. She thanked the Kennedy Center for their hard work over the past several years in developing this festival, the ICCR, for supporting this festival and all the Indian artists who would over the course of the next 20 days provide a window into India’s soul.

Michael Kaiser, President of the Kennedy Center, said, “India amazes with the majesty and mystery of its culture. Its brilliance is that it is a country of extremes — intellect, innovation, survival, and experimentation. India offers the maximum.”

MAXIMUM INDIA ON VIEW IN WASHINGTON

BENGAL POST/SEEMA SIROHI

March 13, 2011: It is ambitious, audacious and adventurous; a cultural tour de force that leaps from the ancient to the modern and delivers India to the American capital on a platter, as it were. It is “Maximum India,” a celebration of the country’s vast and varied arts, dance, theatre and music in a concentrated dose. The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, arguably the most

“India amazes with the majesty and mystery of its culture. Its brilliance is that it is a country of extremes — intellect, innovation, survival, and experimentation. India offers the maximum”

Michael Kaiser
President, Kennedy Center
(MSN India News)

prestigious cultural address in the United States, has mounted an impressive festival of India, treating audiences to a once-in-a-lifetime feast of the very best. The \$7 million extravaganza of culture has brought Naseeruddin Shah, Zakir Hussain, Alarmel Valli, L. Subramaniam alongside the new, younger representatives who drink from a different well — Punjabi MC, Parikrama and Raghu Dixit.

The frenzy for tickets is intense and the critics are awed — for the most part. In all the years in Washington, this correspondent has never seen so many Indian performances reviewed in the city's main newspaper in ten days. It is as if other theaters were dark. So what gives? It is partly that India is 'in' these days and American elites want a taste. Incidentally, Taj Mahal Palace's Executive Chef Hemant Oberoi's two \$100-lunches were one of the first events to sell out. And partly that Kennedy Center simply has smart curators who chose well. Alicia Adams, vice-president for international programming at the Center, said she wanted to "bring the best of India to American audiences" and is thrilled at the way people have taken to the festival. Adams and her team has put together a tableaux of 65 shows with more than 500 performers and carried the bulk of the burden.

Suketu Mehta, whose 'Maximum City' was the inspiration for the festival's title, spoke eloquently at the opening gala about the "ping-pong game of ideas" between his country of birth and his country of citizenship. Indian cinema and literature are also showcased to provide substance and perspective on India.

**▶ INDIA UNLIMITED
THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS/
SUNIL KOTHARI**

March 20, 2011: Truly Maximum India! Stuffing India's diverse culture into three weeks is an impossibility, but the Kennedy Center has taken its best shot with the ambitious Maximum India festival (March 1-20). They have managed to enable the Americans and the Indian diaspora to explore a plethora of all things Indian, including film screenings, music, theatre performances, author readings, and exhibitions of modern art and traditional crafts.

Those of us, who have participated in and grown up with festivals of India in the UK, the US, France, Russia, Germany and other countries, had some idea of the 'dimensions' and also, the 'limitations' of the Maximum India festival. I also knew that since it was organized as part of the international programming agenda of the Kennedy Center, it was bound to have a character of 'their version' of India. But we were in for a surprise.

A staggering variety — rock band, music, Bhangra, Bollywood performers, visual installations, painting and jewelry exhibition, display of saris, food festival, an Indian market place, which saw a brisk sale of goods, videos, books — has never been seen at the Kennedy Center. The divas from classical dance forms included Alarmel Valli, Priyadarsini Govind and Malavika Sarukkai (Bharatanatyam); Madhavi Mudgal, Surupa Sen and Bijiyani Satpathy (Odissi), the last two have almost become household names in the US as they perform regularly as mainstream dancers in the country.

Other attractions included Manganiyar Seductions, mesmerizing Rajasthani singers, young musicians like Raghu Dixit, the Asima band from Kerala, the Parikrama band, screening of films like Dhobi Ghat (Mumbai Diaries), Fire, Mandi, Mirch Masala and Devi. Naseeruddin Shah performed in Ismat Chughtai's short stories and Shabana Azami in Girish Karnad's play Bikhare Bimb.

Tickets were sold out online four months ago and there was a clamor for more tickets, crowds wanting extra seats, and the Indian diaspora sitting on the floor at the Grand Foyer of the Kennedy Center is a sight that will linger on for long in memory!

**▶ 'MAXIMUM INDIA' EMBRACES AMERICANS
OUTLOOK INDIA**

March 28, 2011: Americans are beginning to "get" India in all its maddening contradictions and dizzying contrasts — and they want more. Maximum India, a cultural extravaganza showcasing Indian art and culture, is so sold out here, it has left vast armies of the disappointed. Organised by the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the festival is testimony to India's soft power that spreads easily, and conquers without colonizing.

Some of the best and the brightest gathered, leaving American audiences awed and critics charmed. From Zakir Hussain to Naseeruddin Shah and Shabana Azmi, from Alarmel Valli to Daksha Seth, from Punjabi MC to L. Subramaniam, the parade of Indian stars was impressive. Through much of March, the Kennedy Center resonated with Indian art — dance, theatre, music, literature, cuisine, films. This tour de force glided between the classical and the modern, between raga and rock, between DJ Rekha and Ratan Thiyam, bringing the ferment that is India under one roof.

Zakir Hussain composed a 'Concerto for Four Soloists' for the festival and performed it with the National Symphony Orchestra in a grand coming together of two traditions.



Zakir Hussain composed a 'Concerto for Four Soloists' especially for the festival and performed it with the National Symphony Orchestra in a grand coming together of two traditions

Media/US

A Cornucopia OF CULTURE...



Photo by Margot Schulman

PRE-EVENT COVERAGE

► KENNEDY CENTER SHIFTS TO CULTURAL OVERDRIVE FOR "MAXIMUM INDIA"

AMERICA.GOV/HOWARD CINCOTTA

Washington, 17 February: Many of those planning to attend the "maximum INDIA" festival, a cornucopia of cultural events celebrating India at Washington's Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts from March 1 to 20, may find they share the same mixed emotions of delight and despair.

The reason: It would be virtually impossible to experience every one of the dance, musical and theatrical performances, film showings, panel discussions, and exhibitions of a vast array of visual arts, textiles, pottery,

jewelry and even cuisine. The Kennedy Center will present more than 50 separate performances, events and exhibitions by 500 artists in cooperation with the Indian Council for Cultural Relations.

"maximum INDIA" will be the center's biggest program of the year.

Worlds of Dance

The showstoppers at maximum INDIA promise to be its remarkable lineup of dance performances. Two stars of very different traditions of Indian classical dance — Madhavi Mudgal in the ancient dance art of Odissi from eastern India and Alarmel Valli one of India's best-known dancers and choreographers in the Bharatanatyam tradition, will perform together.

Theater and Music

Washington's National Symphony Orchestra will

give three performances as part of maximum INDIA. One is a composition written especially for the festival by composer and tabla player Zakir Hussain who will perform with the National Symphony Orchestra under conductor Christoph Eschenbach

Film, Literature, Exhibits

Along with film showings, well-known Indian actors and filmmakers from Bollywood and elsewhere will appear for panel discussions on the Indian film industry and will include actors Nandita Das, Shabana Azmi, Sharmila Tagore; film directors Adoor Gopalakrishnan and Ketan Mehta; and film scholar Dilip Basu. Indian film star Naseeruddin Shah and his Motley Theatre Group will perform three theater pieces based on short stories. The tension between literature and politics will bring together three very different writers: novelist Salman Rushdie, commentator and novelist Nayantara Sahgal and British-born journalist and writer William Dalrymple. Exhibitions of contemporary art will abound throughout the Kennedy Center's halls and galleries. Announcing the maximum INDIA festival in New Delhi, U.S. Ambassador to India Timothy Roemer said, "These people-to-people ties are what bind our two countries together."

▶ TOP INDIAN CHEFS CREATE AUTHENTIC MENUS FOR MAXIMUM INDIA

WASHINGTON EXAMINER

Washington, February 2011: East meets West in Washington this March when 12 chefs from India, led by Chef Hemant Oberoi, Executive Grand Chef of the Taj Mahal Palace & Tower in Mumbai, fly in for a culinary collaboration with Roof Terrace Restaurant and Kennedy Center Café's Executive Chef Joe Gurner. As part of the Kennedy Center's maximum INDIA festival, special menu items will be available in the restaurant and café throughout the month to coincide with several exhibitions and performances. With each bite of the authentic Indian dishes, guests will be transported on a gastronomic journey that explores the country's varied regional cuisine.

▶ WASHINGTON GEARING UP FOR INDIAN CULTURAL EXTRAVAGANZA

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS TIMES/ASIF ISMAIL

For nearly three weeks next month, America's most famed and busiest performing arts facility will be transformed into a high temple of India's varied culture. The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, will celebrate India with an extraordinary fare of classical, folkloric

and contemporary masterpieces from the country.

The maximum India festival, which begins on March 1, will have nearly 70 performances, exhibitions and other events, featuring some 500 artistes will include a number of dance, music and theater performances, art and traditional crafts exhibitions, panel discussions on literature and cinema, and a feast of exquisite Indian cuisine. "I want our audience to experience the beauty and magnificence of India," Alicia Adams, the curator of the festival, said.

▶ KENNEDY CENTER'S INDIA FESTIVAL PUTS ON A MAXIMUM DISPLAY

WASHINGTON POST/LAVANYA RAMANATHAN

February 24, 2011: The Kennedy Center might have dubbed next month's massive, three-week India celebration Incredible India or Wondrous India. But would either begin to describe the blur of action, color, tastes and sounds of a nation with 1.17 billion people, 15 official languages and myriad beliefs, forms of dress and cuisine?

No, India might be incredible, but it is so much more, explains Alicia Adams, curator of the festival, which begins Tuesday. It's maximum. A place, she says, with "the maximum number of people, the maximum number of possibilities, the maximum heat you could ever tolerate." "It is one country," adds Gilda Almeida, director of international programming, "but it is like 50 countries." You need only trek to the Kennedy Center to experience Maximum India, a festival that's a trip to the East at maximum speed. You'll be transported to a street market in bustling Mumbai, a silk shop in Chennai, an airy palace in Rajasthan — all with the Potomac River still in view.

▶ TOP 5 MUST-SEES AT THE KENNEDY CENTER'S MAXIMUM INDIA FESTIVAL

WASHINGTON POST/EMILY WAX

February 27, 2011: The Kennedy Center's Maximum India festival, which opens Tuesday and runs through March 20, offers a broad sampling of Indian culture, entertainment, arts, crafts and cuisine. Emily Wax, *The Washington Post's* outgoing India bureau chief, looked over the festival's schedule and offered these recommendations.

Music

The Manganiyar Seduction

Three-dozen Muslim musicians, performing a blend of sultry Sufi and Hindu mystic songs in one continuous one-hour piece.

"maximum INDIA is the place with the maximum number of people, the maximum number of possibilities, the maximum heat you could ever tolerate. It is one country but it is like 50 countries"

Gilda Almeida

Director, International Programming, Kennedy Center
(Washington Post)



Photo by Margot Schulman

Dance

Madhavi Mudgal and Alarmel Valli in “Samanvaya: A Coming Together”. They are known as India’s divas of dance and these two of India’s foremost dancing queens, are keeping classical dance relevant and exciting.

Literature Panel

Imagining the City: More than ever, India’s youths are abandoning the country’s rural areas for the promise of independence and social mobility in cities such as New Delhi and Mumbai. Few people know the innards of an Indian city as well as Suketu Mehta, author of *Maximum City*. Mehta and other panelists will share the energizing story of India’s urban dreams. March 13.

Film

“Does Gandhi Matter?”: The festival’s film series highlights the artists and activists who shaped India’s self-image. The documentary “Does Gandhi Matter?” promises to be a provocative exploration of attitudes among present-day Indian youths toward Mahatma Gandhi, India’s founding father.

Kaleidoscope

Mapping India’s Crafts: For my money, India has the best shopping in the world. Each region produces its own delicious fun. From the North’s renderings of hand-painted Indian trucks to the South’s elegant brass oil lamps, all of India’s crafts are infused with their

own history and meaning.

EVENT COVERAGE

► KENNEDY CENTER’S MAXIMUM INDIA FESTIVAL STARTS TODAY

WASHINGTON CITY PAPER/STEVE KIVIAT

March 1, 2011: The Kennedy Center’s Maximum India Festival opens today with just one performance, a free U. Shrinivas concert from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. on the Millennium Stage, but over the next 20 days it will feature 73 events involving music, dance, theater, literature, comedy, visual art, cuisine, and film. While the celebration may not include events in all of India’s 24 tongues, or cover every aspect of culture of the country, it offers a pretty impressive variety — with 13 master chefs, bhangra dance lessons, a panel discussion on the portrayal of Indian women in film, artists producing paintings, rapper Panjabi MC, and a number of collaborations with the National Symphony Orchestra.

► ‘Maximum India,’ in Full Bling

WASHINGTON POST

Thursday, March 3, 2011: The reward for sitting through a three-hour, five-course dinner on a school night? An infectious jolt of Bollywood, the finale of the Kennedy Center’s opening celebration for “Maximum India.”

The three-week festival kicked off Tuesday with a black-tie reception and gourmet meal (prepared by 12 Indian chefs) with music, dance and readings from India's top talents. White House Chief Technology Officer Aneesh Chopra told us he was thrilled to see tabla drummer Zakir Hussain perform for the crowd. "He's a living legend," said the first-generation Indian American.

A few VIPs slipped out between the third and fourth courses (we lost track – there was lots of food), but most went the distance and were rewarded with the blinding rush of sequins in the final number of the night: a bouncy, feel-good salute to Bollywood dance and song. Even all those sequins couldn't compete with the bling on KenCen President Michael Kaiser, who sported a custom-made Nehru suit with big, sparkly diamond and ruby buttons borrowed from the festival's fabulous gem display. "I keep the suit," Kaiser said with a grin. "I have to give back the buttons tomorrow."

▶ NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA HELPS LAUNCH 'MAXIMUM INDIA'
WASHINGTON TIMES/TERRY PONICK

Washington, March 5, 2011: The National Symphony Orchestra (NSO) joined in with the Kennedy Center's "Maximum India" festival Thursday evening unveiling two very interesting works, one of which was a world premiere that focused on Indian themes. French composer Albert Roussel's rarely performed *Pâdmavati Suite No.1* led the bill, the first time this work has been performed by the orchestra. The Roussel was followed by the first-ever performance of Indian composer-soloist of Zakir Hussain's *Concerto for Four Soloists*, a brand new cross-cultural composition, commissioned by the NSO.

Pâdmavati is a hybrid work, combining full ballet numbers with a largely operatic format. The opera tells the story of a proud Indian Queen who flings herself on her husband's funeral, rather than offer herself to an invading Mongol Sultan. The *Pâdmavati Suite* excerpts the most dramatic material from both Acts I and II and the concluding immolation scene, which builds to a tremendous orchestral climax before fading to black. Following the intermission, Maestro Eschenbach returned to conduct Mr. Hussain's "Concerto for Four Soloists." As a tabla virtuoso-composer, Mr. Hussain is a bit of a rock star in India, but also has a decent reputation in this hemisphere. He performed, for example, on the wide-ranging film soundtrack for "Apocalypse Now."

▶ THOUSANDS FLOCK TO KENNEDY CENTER FOR MAXIMUM INDIA
DCIST

March 7, 2011: The Nrityagram Dance Ensemble, which performed on Sunday evening at the Kennedy Center's 'maximum INDIA' festival had a sell-out show. Nrityagram presented a trio of dancers whose gestures and movements were so fluid and synchronized that it appeared as though they were telepathically linked. The emotional effect of the performance was uplifting and powerful...

Thousands of people and sold out performances have been the norm for the past several days at the Kennedy Center. Like the country for which it is named, the festival's opening week was a feast for the senses, giving attendees an explosion of color and energy to close this dreary winter and welcome spring.

▶ TRANSCENDENCE AND MYSTERY IN TINY GESTURES
THE NEW YORK TIMES/ALASTAIR MACAULAY

Washington, March 11, 2011: For the first 20 days of March, India is to be found in many parts of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts here. Cuisine, fabric, visual art, music, film, literature and theater, as well as dance, are all part of its Maximum India festival. The foyers of the building have been unusually full. Audiences have included American women in saris and Indian men wearing sports jackets.

I'm sorry that I was able to catch only four companies in three evening performances. These presented only a small range of what Indian dance can cover. Three of them — though widely divergent in style — offered examples of Bharatanatyam, the multidimensional performance form deriving from the southeastern province of Tamil Nadu. The fourth, the Daksha Sheth's company "Sarpagati — Way of the Serpent" (on Tuesday), was an example of fusion, combining elements from Kathak (the complex classical dance from north India), Mayurbhanj Chhau (the martial/tribal dance from east India), Kalaripayattu (the martial art from Kerala in the deep south) and Mallakhamb (aerial techniques from western India). Some of these showed how Indian forms can provide some of the most transcendent experiences that dance has to offer.

▶ Dancer Malavika Sarukkai wows with 'Maximum' artistry
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON POST/PAMELA SQUIRES

March 13, 2011: Bharatanatyam dancer

Malavika Sarukkai, who wowed Washington audiences at the Freer Gallery in 2002, did it again on Thursday night at the Kennedy Center's Terrace Theater. Sarukkai is a Padma Shri, an honor bestowed by the Indian government to recognize achievement in the arts and other disciplines. She has always defined contemporary Bharatanatyam as anything that resonates with modern audiences.

At the "Maximum India" festival, she performed a work with a conventional subject, "Sakthi Sakthimaan," which takes the goddess Sakthi and the god Siva as its subjects. As a performer, Sarukkai is phenomenally precise. Her arms slice the air like rapiers and her feet strike the ground with a unique sound that could be likened to the hard ping of raindrops on a tin roof. As an actress, she is a chameleon: She is also a master of coordinating movement and music.

**▶ MAXIMUM INDIA FESTIVAL:
HOW TO SPEND THE FINAL DAYS**
WASHINGTON POST/LAVANYA
RAMANATHAN

The Kennedy Center's Maximum India festival is winding down to its last few days. After Sunday, there will be no more intricately fashioned bling to covet, no more snakelike dancers, no more tabla, dhol drums or ankle bells ringing out across the center. But the next few days are some of the most exciting of the whole festival, with some of the best free offerings, from a high-energy show channeling Bollywood's hip-shaking song-and-dance culture, to a closing party on the Millennium Stage helmed by rapper Panjabi MC.

The party atmosphere really gets going Thursday, when Ticket to Bollywood, a show that was conceived to spotlight the Indian movie industry's glitzy dance numbers at the World Expo 2010 in Shanghai. This week's hot performance is the sold-out musical spectacle "Manganiyar Seduction," Check out another thumping musical ensemble, Taal India. The drum ensemble members, who dress in traditional garb, use nine kinds of drums, and they perform for free on Friday evening.

Saturday evening brings a rare opportunity to see the unusual art of Kathakali; covered in elaborate makeup and costumes, dancers re-enact religious stories. See it performed by the Kerala Kalamandalam Kathakali Troupe, a company that hails from South India's Kerala state. Strange, moving and verging on tribal, it should make the must-do lists of modern dance fans and the culturally curious.

**▶ KNOWING A NATION'S CULTURE
ENABLES BETTER UNDERSTANDING:
ICCR CHIEF**

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS TIMES/ASIF ISMAIL

Wednesday, March 23, 2011: The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) an autonomous entity within the Government of India responsible for promoting India's cultural exchanges with other countries was a major sponsor of the Kennedy Center's "maximum India" festival, which concluded in Washington, DC, on Sunday, March 20, 2011. Global India Newswire spoke to ICCR Director General Suresh Goel during his recent visit to Washington. Excerpts:i

▶ These days, there is a renewed interest in India, especially in the West. How much of it has to do with India's growing economic might?

◀ I think there is a much better appreciation of India now. Doubtless, our growing international stature and economic power have got something to do with it. Yes, the world is looking at India in a whole new perspective. Of course, they were always interested in India — we have always been an ideological force in the world.

▶ Do you think the world understands India and the Indian culture better now than, say 20 years ago?

◀ Yes... there is a better understanding of our cultural ethos, there is a better understanding of our thinking, the way we act and what we do, which is clearly indicated in the fact that several American institutions are approaching India now to broaden the economic and intellectual interactions. Universities and institutions such as Georgetown, Smithsonian and Johns Hopkins are all coming together to see how we can broaden our understanding in those fundamental areas, intellectually and academically.

▶ You attended the opening ceremony of 'maximum India' festival. It seems to be a new kind of India festival, with a lot of American aspects...

◀ The idea of 'maximum India' is to show India in an American way to the American public. I think the opening ceremony was an Americanization of Indian culture so that people in the U.S. could understand what India is all about. If that was the objective, then they (the Kennedy Center) have succeeded in it entirely.

BEYOND maximum

INDIA

In addition to the performances at the Kennedy Center, the Embassy of India also organized performances of groups sponsored by ICCR at other venues/cities in collaboration with local organizations. Violin maestro Dr. L. Subramaniam performed in Houston, Texas on March 4. He also gave a performance at the United Nations in New York on March 8 under the auspices of the Permanent Mission of India to the UN and the United Nations.

The Bengali Association of the Greater Washington Metro Area, 'Sanskriti DC', and the Indian Embassy co-hosted a performance by the dance troupe of Tanusree Shankar on March 10 in Rockville, Maryland. Later that week, Parikrama performed in Washington, DC on March 12 in collaboration with the Network of South Asian Professionals, while Sharmila Biswas's Odissi Vision and Movement Center conducted a lecture demonstration organized by the Embassy and India International School in Chantilly, Virginia.

The Indian Consulate General of Chicago hosted performances of the Tanusree Shankar Dance Company in Chicago on March 12 and 13 in collaboration with the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign and Hindu Temple for Greater Chicago respectively. The Ticket to Bollywood troupe performed for the second time in Washington, DC on March 18 with the Indian Embassy and Georgetown University's South Asian Society as co-hosts. On March 18, 2011, the Tanusree Shankar Dance Company presented a concert organized by Consulate General of India, Houston, in cooperation with University of Houston at Cullen Performance Hall, UH Main Campus .

The Kerala Association of Greater Washington partnered with the Embassy to host a performance of The Kathakali troupe of Kerala Kalamandalam on March 20. The India International School, Durga Mandir, and the Embassy co-hosted another performance of The Kathakali troupe in Fairfax, Virginia on March 22.

The Consulate General of Chicago also hosted Kathakali performances on March 26 and 28 in association with the Art Institute of Chicago and the Federation of Kerala Associations of North America...



Photo by **Nalin Jain**



■ **Kerala Kalamandalam's** Kathakali troupe performing at Durga Mandir, Fairfax, Virginia on March 22. The event was hosted by the Embassy of India in association with India International School and Durga Mandir.

Photos by **Nalin Jain**





■ **Ticket to Bollywood** at Leavey Ballroom, Georgetown University, Washington, DC on March 18. The event was hosted by the Embassy of India in association with the Georgetown University South, Washington, DC.

Photo by **Silky Kadakia**



■ **Sharmila Biswas** conducts a lecture demonstration at India International School, Chantilly, Virginia, on March 12. The event was hosted by the Indian Embassy and India International School.

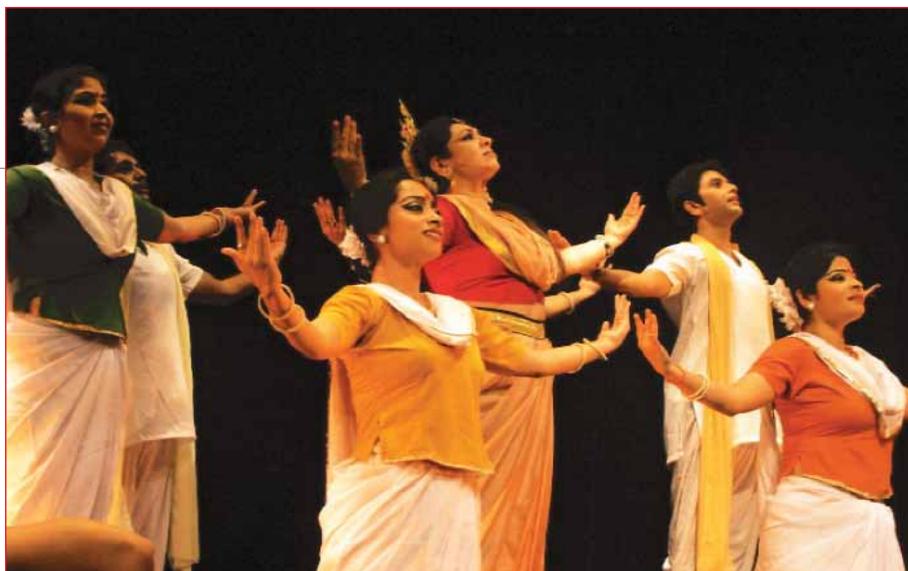
Photo by **Manorma Rani**



■ **Parikrama performing** at Ultrabar, Washington, DC on March 12. The event was hosted by the Embassy of India in association with the Network of South Asian Professionals, Washington DC.

Photos by **Kiran Meegada**





■ **The Tanusree Shankar Dance Company** at Kreeger Auditorium, Rockville, Maryland, on March 10. Hosted by the Indian Embassy in association with the Sanskriti DC (Bengali Association of Greater Washington).

Photo by **Tapan Bera**



■ **The Tanusree Shankar Dance Company** gave a captivating performance at a free public concert organized by the Consulate General of India, Houston, in cooperation with the University of Houston (UH), at Cullen Performance Hall, UH Main Campus on March 18.



■ **Dr. L. Subramaniam's** concert at the United Nations in New York on March 8. The event was co-hosted by the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations and the United Nations.



■ **Kerala Kalamandalam's** Kathakali troupe at the University of Shady Grove, Rockville, Maryland on March 20. The event was hosted by the Embassy of India in association with the Kerala Association of Greater Washington.
Photos by Shyam Menon



PANEL DISCUSSION ON INDIAN DIASPORA IN THE U.S.

On the sidelines of the maximum India festival, the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, New Delhi, in collaboration with the Kennedy Center and Migration Policy Institute, Washington, DC, hosted diaspora panel discussions on “Science & Technology, Entrepreneurship and Innovation” on March 18, 2011, and “Forms and Accomplishments of Diaspora Philanthropy” on March 19 at the Kennedy Center. The panel discussions brought into focus the role of the Indian American diaspora as an emerging force in driving innovations in technology and business and in making social investments in India through philanthropy. It afforded an excellent opportunity to the participants to learn about the socio-economic bridges that the Indian American community was building between India and the USA.

The first panel discussion featured Ambassador Meera Shankar as the keynote speaker where she highlighted the valued presence of Indian

Americans in transnational business networks.

Dr. A. Didar Singh, Secretary, Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, chaired the panel while Dr. Maina Chawla Singh, Associate Professor at University of Delhi, moderated the discussion. Alicia Adams, Vice-President of International Programming at the Kennedy Center, concluded the event with a vote of thanks.

The panel discussion on the second day focussed on the accomplishments of Indian Americans in the field of philanthropy and explored the challenges faced by the diaspora while pursuing their philanthropic initiatives. The keynote address was delivered by Dr. A. Didar Singh, and G. Gurucharan, CEO, India Development Foundation, chaired the panel. Kathleen Newland of the Migration Policy Institute moderated the panel, and Demetrios Papademetriou from MPI proposed the vote of thanks.



■ Ambassador Meera Shankar delivering the keynote address at the discussion on “Science & Technology, Entrepreneurship and Innovation” on March 18 at the Kennedy Center.



■ Dr. A. Didar Singh (C), Secretary, Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, chairing the panel on "Science & Technology, Entrepreneurship and Innovation" on March 18, 2011.

THE discussions brought into focus the role of the Indian American diaspora as an emerging force in driving innovations in technology and business and in making social investments in India through philanthropy



■ G. Gurucharan (C), CEO, India Development Foundation, chairing the panel on "Forms and Accomplishments of Diaspora Philanthropy" on March 19, 2011 at the Kennedy Center.



■ A cross-section of the audience at the panel discussions.

maximum



Presented in cooperation with
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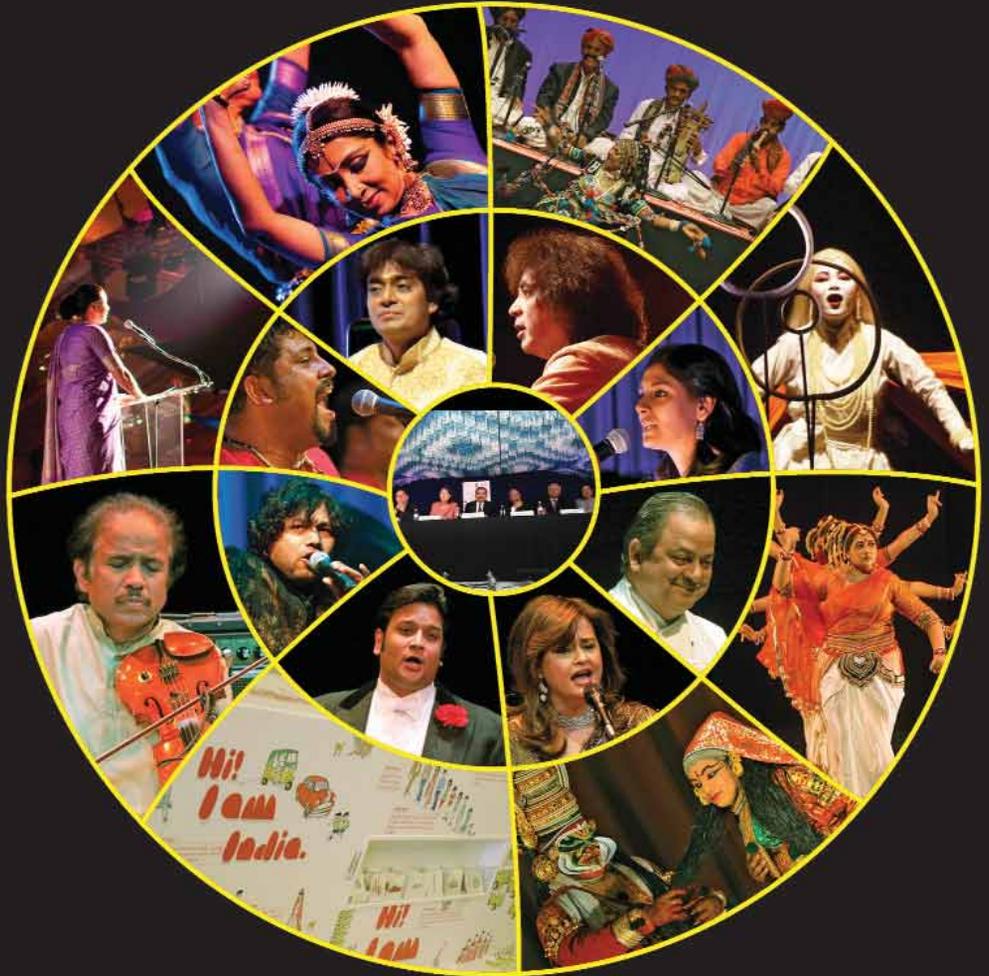
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