

Holi Mahotsav 2009

3-5 April Darling Harbour

The City of Sydney came alive in a spectacular festival of colours to celebrate friendship and harmony at the 7th annual Holi Mahotsav, organised by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia at the Tumbalong Park and Chinese Garden Forecourt precinct at Darling Harbour in Sydney. Unlike the other six years the event was spread over three days starting from Friday evening to Sunday evening. More than 180,000 people are estimated to have passed through Darling Harbour over the period of Holi Mahotsav.

Friday was a mesmerizing evening with the band Mahmood Khan Funk playing beautiful melodies. Mahmood Khan is a master from the Indian subcontinent and known for his work with the legendary Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and his group is a set of brilliant Australian musicians who together create a new universal sound. This group is a tasteful combination of cultures, catchy melodies and spiritual lyrics that slips into trance and Sufi music highlighting the governing principals of like such as karma. Their music left a sweet and lasting flavour for all the people who heard them perform that night.

This flow of melodious music was followed up by an energizing Bhangra dance performance by Folk N Fun Entertainment group at Darling Harbour. This group has performed in movies like Veer Zara and is a very popular Bhangra group. The group's energy was unmatched and they were applauded for their very charming and entertaining performance.

Saturday morning the festival began with the traditional Rath Yatra, the holy procession of the chariot of Lord Jagannath from Hyde Park to Darling Harbour. The Rath was devotionally hand drawn by ISKCON devotees and fervently joined by Sydneysiders, followed by devotional prayers and chants to invoke the blessings of the Almighty for a joyous and peaceful festival.

The Blaqseedz Dancers performed the traditional Aboriginal dance that marked the beginning of the festival. This important gesture where traditional Indian chants filled the air along with the characteristic aboriginal tunes underpinned one of the basic philosophies of Bhavan Australia – let noble thoughts come to us from every side.

Over the weekend, the grand festival attracted tens of thousands of visitors who absorbed in the colourful fusion of Indian music, dance, food and exhibitions. Saturday evening witnessed the symbolic Holika Dahan (Holi Fire). The sacred fire ceremony symbolises the emergence of good over evil. Unlike in India where it is done in an open space where devotees walk around the fire and chant prayers, in Sydney it was observed by lighting a symbolic bonfire within a designated fenced area. The color throwing session



on the second day was enjoyed by children and adults from various communities alike. Boys and girls with color smeared faces and clothes enthusiastically wished a Happy Holi to everyone and looked forward to a colorful and bright new year. With chaos, laughter and thrill, it was interesting to see everyone enjoying and throwing colours in the designated area, whilst the rest looked on with delight, and perhaps even envy.

Seeing the fruition of his six years of dedication to uniting cultural diversity through arts, Mr. Gambhir Watts, president of Bhavan Australia, said, "I am immensely grateful to those who have traveled with me in the past six years turning Holi Mahotsav, the celebration of triumph over evil and the commemoration of truth peace and harmony, into mainstream grand Australian festival of harmony of today."

He vehemently extended his appreciation to the support given by various organisations and government bodies, including: Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority; India Tourism Sydney; Community Relations Commission for Multicultural New South Wales; ISKCON; City of Sydney; Sgt. Stewart Lockery of NSW Police, the City Central Command of NSW Police and many others. We had the honour of receiving a message from our Prime Minister Hon. Kevin Rudd saying "The much-anticipated Holi Mahotsav is a celebration of friendship, colour and harmony. It provides an excellent opportunity for the wider community to celebrate Indian culture through performances, music and food. It is also an occasion to reflect on the contributions the Indian Australian community has made to Australia's rich social and cultural landscape."

The Consul General of India Hon. Amit Dasgupta congratulated Bhavan Australia in his message and said "A festival is actually an occasion to put aside past misunderstandings, to bring families and friends together, to begin life anew. Wonderful legends surround each Indian festival and they are invariably about choosing compassion over indifference, tolerance over bigotry and decency over cruelty. They reside no longer within the confines of religion but have become social and cultural events that celebrate what brings us together rather than what keeps us apart. It is fascinating, therefore, to see how the Holi Mahotsav organised by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia, has become a landmark annual event in Sydney."

The Premier of New South Wales Hon. Nathan Rees congratulated Bhavan Australia and in her message said "The colour at this festival doesn't just come from splendid costumes, handicrafts and food but from the clouds of iridescent powders in pink, green, purple and yellow thrown about by exuberant young people of all



backgrounds who have really taken to this free-spirited celebration.”

Hon Laurie Ferguson MP equally extends his enthusiasm and support in the event which he has attended several times previously. “We are fortunate that the Indian and Hindu Australian community has made Holi part of our evolving cultural calendar. Community celebrations like Holi encourage people to participate and take advantage of the many opportunities Australia has to offer. They not only promote a sense of belonging by bringing people together, but more importantly exemplify the values of respect and understanding for the diversity within our communities.” Dr Stepan Kerkyasharian, Chair, Community Relations Commission For a Multicultural NSW while congratulating Bhavan Australia “for providing this major event for the enjoyment and education of the people of Sydney” said: “Holi, with its sense of unbridled fun, is a very practical form of harmony and community interaction... “It is a festival where unfamiliar cultural traditions would seem to be very accessible... ”This festival continues to grow and attract more and more attention from the broader community and is now firmly establishing itself on Sydney’s cultural calendar.”

As the SHFA chief executive officer Dr. Robert Lang wrote in a message published in the 2008 Holi Souvenir magazine released during the event, “It is fitting that the Holi Festival – the colour of friendship and harmony - is being held at Darling Harbour which has long been a meeting place for Sydneysiders, Australians from many cultural backgrounds and visitors from all over the world... Holi Festival holds a special place in Darling Harbour’s annual calendar and offers a wonderful opportunity to increase the vibrancy and diversity of the precinct.”

Holi Mahotsav 2009 witnessed the presence of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, the founder of Art of Living Foundation who graced the occasion and blessed the festival. The VIP session was graced by: Hon. Amit Das Gupta, Consulate General of India; Hon. Amanda Ruth Fazio representing the Premier of NSW, Hon. Laurie Ferguson, MP; Dr Stepan Kerkyasharian, Chairperson of the Community Relations Commission; Hon. Henry Tsang, Parliamentary Secretary; Raj Natrajan President, United India Association Vish Viswanathan, President- Federation of Australian Indian Associations Inc (FAIA), Nihal Agar, President of Hindu Council of Australia and Harmohan Singh Walia, President GOPIO North West Sydney.

Inspirational and motivational exhibition at the Tumbalong Park was the temple of Lord Jagannath by ISKCON had regular devotional prayer sessions providing a spiritual insight and offered workshops and techniques on the Art of Happiness which were taught by Yogic masters.

A variety of delectable Indian vegetarian favorites,



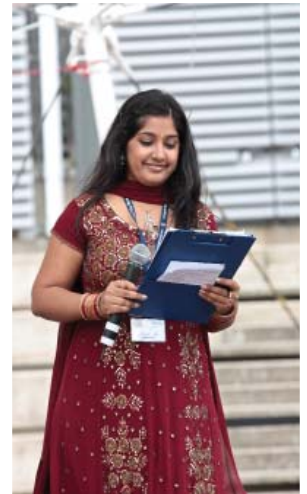
beverages and sweets were on offer by renowned Indian restaurants such as Indian Chaat House; Curries India; Taza Tandoori, Taj Indian Sweets and others. Traditional Indian drinks such as the staple Holi beverage - Thandai, the ever popular - sugarcane juice and the refreshing and nutritious yoghurt drink - lassi proved to be the perfect thirst quenchers. Stay Cool Tropical Sno brought the cooling and calming coconut water and fresh sweet corns. There also was Coffee Dreams that provided a variety of masala teas & coffees to warm up the cool day.

Meanwhile, merchandise stands offered great bargains such as traditional dresses, tops, fashion accessories and fancy bangles from Saileen Fashions, latest DVDs and CDs from Bollywoodlollywood.com, and artistic Henna art tattoos. Vision Asia had put up a mini theater to screen some popular Indian movies and also gave out discounted prices for their popular Indian channels package. Other stalls such as IDT Telecom, India Tourism Sydney, SCX Global, UAE Exchange, The Indian Link and The Indian added variety to the festival.

The event was full of activity and fun with four young masters of ceremonies Sophil Raja, Veena Sashikumar, Aswathi Nair and Soiam Raja providing with direction to the cultural shows. The crowd passionately sang and tirelessly danced to a mix of recent Indian favourites and dances, classical performances and high-energy numbers by the Kerry Johnson's Blaqseedz Dances, Bhangra and folk songs by Platinum Bhangra, Astha & group, The Mexican Dance group of Australia, Namarata Karve's dance group, Priyanka Ray, Momo (a Japanese artist), Aaja Nachle Dance School, The Divas and The Dons group, Priya Dewan Dance Academy, Geetanjali School of Dance and Performing Arts, Sisca Hunt Dance Group, Akriti Gupta's Stepzz1, and Nupur Dance School. Damodararati's group performed a spiritual fusion dance "Shyam Dance". Adding glitz and Bollywood glamour to the event were performances by Mango Dance Studio artists choreographed by the famous Bollywood choreographer Farah Shah. High energy performance by the Indian Dance center's group. Stunning tribal belly dance performances by Ghawazi Caravan & Aziff Tribal Belly dancers. The Scottish Highland Dancers complimented the event with their dance spreading the Scottish cheer. Whilst all the professional performers kept the audience grooving; the real stars of the show were the talented little girls as young as four, giving their version of Bollywood hits.

There were short workshops that were conducted by some of the groups on the stage which was enjoyed by the participants and the audience a fun learning curve within the festivities.

The festival also saw some singing sensations like Gurjot Singh, Vijay Jogia, Sonali Mukherjee, Mohit Kumar and



Sanjay Raina who entertained the crowd with Bollywood & Punjabi songs. The crowd swayed to the music of the singers and then to the orchestra that played for the evening.

Performances 3 April 2009

» Mahmood Khan Funk

Group Coordinator: Mahmood Khan

Performers : Alex (flute), Anthony (acoustic guitar), Grace (vocals), Joe(bass), Maharshi (tabla), Mahmood (vocals and acoustic guitar), Mike (acoustic guitar), Naomi (vocals), Phil (piano), Ron (electric guitar), Shaun (drums), Tamasin (vocals).

Performance Description

Mahmood Khan a master musician from the Indian Subcontinent and known for his work with the legendary Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan has gathered brilliant Australian musicians to create a new universal sound by forming the group called Mahmood Khan Funk. A tasteful combination of cultures, catchy melodies and spiritual lyrics that slips into trance and Sufi music highlighting the governing principles of life such as Karma.

» Folk N Fun Entertainment group

Group Coordinator: Raju Sarai

Performers: Happy, Manjinder, Manjit, Pankaj, Raju, Tejinder

Performance Description: Bhangra Dance

Performances 4 April 2009

» Songs by Gurjot Singh

» Songs by Mohit Kumar

» Nikhil and Friends

Group Coordinator: Nikhil Chitale

» Namrata's Group

Group Coordinator: Namrata Karve

Performers : Mohar, Nupur, Sachi and Sonvi

Performance Description

- Bhajan (Semi Classical) - Ja ga me Sunder Hai to Naam
- Bollywood - Dola re Dola



» **Blaqseedz Dances**

Group Coordinator: Kerry Johnson

Performance Description: Aboriginal Music & Dance in Contemporary and Traditional Styles

» **Aaja Nachale Dance School**

Group Coordinator: Pavana Rajan Patel

Performers : Aaanchal, Amita, Shobana, Tanya and Vidhushi

Performance Description : Bollywood Dance

» **Sisca Hunt Dance Group**

Group Coordinator: Sisca Hunt

Performers : Iis, Lia, Nuni and Sisca

Performance Description :

Traditional Indonesian dance. The dance represents the culture influences within Indonesian community.

» **Stepzz1**

Group Coordinator: Akriti Gupta

Performers : Akriti Gupta, Abhishek, Akaash Sharma, Akanksha Sharma, Ashna Gupta, Ashvitha

Performance Description : Medley of Bollywood's latest catchy tracks.

» **The Mexican Dance Group of Australia**

Group Coordinator: Rebecca Gomez

Performers : Adelina Kouros, Anthony Castillo, Daniel Feint, Edward McGowan, Emilia Gomez, Isabel Gomez, Jeanette Singh, Kenneth Feint, Lucy Skillen, Maree-Christene mcGowan, Memo Gomez, Miguel Gomez, Natasha Singh, Nripendra Singh, Rebecca Gomez and Veronica Castillo

Performance Description : Traditional Mexican Dance with colourful costumes.

» **Speeches by Religious Leaders**

» **Platinum Bhangra**

Group Coordinator: Harinder Kaur and Mansi

Performers: Angle, Arushi, Ashreena, Harnoor, Harsharan, JoJo, Krishma, Lucky Singh, Manbir Miglani, Mansi, Manu preet Singh, Nafisa, Nikki Harnoor, Patrisa, Pramesh Singh, Prince Butter, Raj, Sareena and Varinder Rai Patrisa, Raj and Sareena

Performance Description : Bollywood dances and children's Bhangra.

» **Highland Dancers**



Group Coordinator: Karen McPhillips

Performers : Abby Gillon-Smith, Emily Carr, Karen McPhillips, Lauren Caunter and Sophie Lucas

Performance Description : Highland dancing from Scotland

- » **Songs by Vijay Jogia**
- » **Songs by Sonali Roy**
- » **Ghawazi Caravan**

Group Coordinator: Devi Mamak

Performers: Catherine Obrien, Kate Obrien, Cristie Fuller, Devi Mamak

Performance Description :

Innovative tribal belly dancing. It's a mix of Middle Eastern Dance fused together with stylistic influences from East India, North Africa, Flamenco dance and contemporary dance, presenting together as one, using exciting props and compelling formations and choreographies.

- » **Shyam Dance**

Group Coordinator: Damodara-rati

Performers : Alisha, Amshu, Carmella, Damodara-rati, Manjulali, Nina, Prema-shakti Priya-darsani, and Radha-shalini

Performance Description : Shyam Dance - Fusion dance performance

Performances 5 April 2009

- » **Platinum Dholis**

Group Coordinator: Rupi Hothi

Performers : Rupi and Rej Singh

- » **Shyam Dance**

Group Coordinator: Damodara-rati

Performers : Alisha, Amshu, Carmella, Damodara-rati, Manjulali, Nina, Prema-shakti Priya-darsani, and Radha-shalini

Performance Description : Shyam Dance - Fusion dance performance

- » **Astha Singh & Group**

Group Coordinator: Astha Singh

Performers : Astha Singh, Gunjan Wadhwa, Preetz Maggo and Ridhuna Ziauddin



Performance Description : Bollywood medley of Aaja Nachle & Beedi Jalaiyle

» **Songs by Vijay Jogia**

» **Songs by Sonali Roy**

» **Indo-Aust Bal Bharathi Vidyalaya Hindi School**

Group Coordinator: Mala Mehta

Performers : Alisha Saini, Alisha Vij, Anjali Warriar, Annanya Gulati, Anousha, Anuj Rajput, Anuradha Narayan, Arzoi Singh, Ayush Vij, Bhavya Nanchahal, Kanav Bhama, Karan Mason, Lakshya Bhatt, Manan Luthra, Manraj Saini, Mansha Kapur, Meryl Lingham, Namita Parmeshwar, Neha Saini, Paarth Rathore, Pranav Rathore, Ria Bhambry, Ria Chanana, Saira Gugnani, Sankalp Kapur, Shagun Panwar, Shirali Garga, Shreya Bhatt, Shriya Kamboj, Simone Sethi, Sneha Arora, Vanshika Virmani and Vedant Virmani

Performance Description : Bollywood medley and Bhangra

» **Aziff Tribal Belly Dancers**

Group Coordinator: Sandy Burrow

Performers : Karen Kelly, Kelly Mills, Merylyn Hyde, Ruza Ladyani, Sandy Burrow and Sharrie Hannan

Performance Description : Tribal belly dancing

» **Priyanka Ray**

Performance Description : Fusion dance choreographed by Priyanka Ray with the instrumental piece named rhythm Speaks- composed by Vikram Ghosh

» **The Divas and the Dons**

Group Coordinator: Shruti Bose

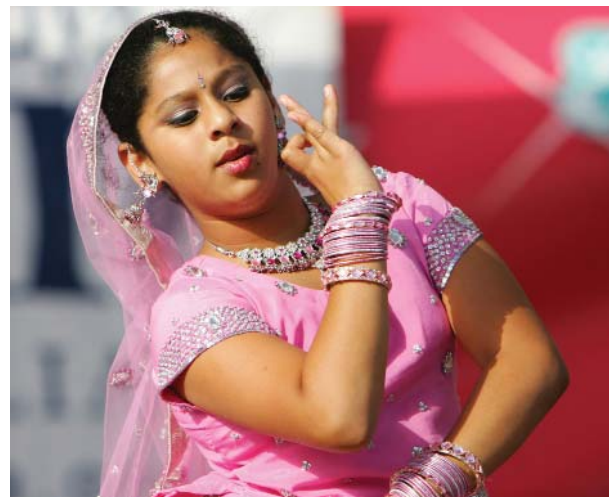
Performers : Shruti Bose, Lopa Majumdar, Manjit Gill, Rani Khan, Rupa Nair, Salim Khan and Shrinkha Vinod

Performance Description : Bollywood dance

» **Geetanjali School of Dance and Performing Arts**

Group Coordinator: Sharmila Maitra

Performers : Alisha DasGupta, Anika DasGupta, Anisha Krishnasamy, Cheenu Sharma, Debolina Chowdhury, Eesha Chitale, Emil, Erika, Erina Rayhan, Esha Arora, Kanika Chaudhri, Medha Gupta,



Moumita Chowdhury, Priya Basu, Ragini Sood, Ria Danwer, Shruti Yardi, Shuchi Gupta and Sonali Yardi.

Performance Description : Semi-classical devotional dance inspired by Odds and Bharatnatyam dance forms and Bollywood dance numbers

» **Mango Dance Studio**

Group Coordinator: Farah Shah

Performers : Alpa Gupta, Amanda Lovegreen, Ameer Ormaechea, Amita Salvi, Angharad Davis, Annika Karan, Anurag Kanwar, Claudine Haber, Daksha Dhanji, Daniella Mansour, Dhara Karunaratne, Dipali Goel, Divya Saxena, Farah Shah, Isabella Polgar, Kanika Nanda, Kartika Dubey, Kavary Dubey, Ketaki Kale, Kirsty Archer, Krithika Hariharan, Leoni Wishart, Lesley Branagan, Lesley Louchnan, Louise Reily, Maimoonah Ahmed, Manisha Prasad, Mathilda Luister, Mehnaaz Khan, Nerissa Jayasingha, ilusha Guruge, Raghav Handa, Rajnita Kumar, Ronis Kumar, Sajna Shukla, Siksha Singha, Simran Hingorani, Stephanie Bauche, Sureyya Alkan, Tahlia Dias, Uzma Rayani, Valentina Angelovska, Vanessa Skipp, Viksha Muthanna, Vishal Prasad, Vivienne Cabraja and Zoe Wakelin-King



Performance Description :

- o Bollywood SPICE - 5 dancers x 2 dance acts
- o Bollywood Beginners Adults - 20 dancers
- o Bollywood and Semi-Classical Adults - 20 dancers
- o Bollywood Kids - 8 dancers
- o Classical Indian solo

» **VIP Session**

» **Momo (Japanese Artist)**

Performance Description : Indian classical dance



» **Nupur Dance School**

Group Coordinator: Manjusha De

Performers : Aditi, Anika, Anisha, Arrianna, Arushi, Jerestene, Jinnie, Junita, Mala, Parisa, Parvati, Sarah, Shareen, Shylvana, Soumia, Suhani, Tarneet Kaur, Tina and Vani.

Performance Description : Bollywood dances

» **Indian Dance Centre**

Group Coordinator: Poornima Sharma

Performers : Akshara Prasad, Anil Sharma, Ashishna



Sharma, Bhim Raj Singh, Deepak Sharma, Ginney, Kamal Khinda, Keerat Mann, Keerat, Pooja, Poornima Sharma, Priyanka, Rakhi Birla, Ravi Sharma, Sandeep Khinda, Sanushka Seomangal, Sukhpal Singh and Urvashi Seomangal

Performance Description : Bollywood and Bhangra dances

» **Priya Dewan Dance Academy**

Group Coordinator: Priya Dewan

Performers : Kavisha, Nikita, Priyanka, Rhea, Shivani, Sohana and Vani

Performance Description :

Fusion of western and eastern dance moves to latest Bollywood numbers

» **Vijay Jogia and Orchestra**

Group Coordinator: Vijay Jogia

Performers : Alok Patel (Octopad), Amritra Joshi (Vocals), Deepak (Vocals), Naaz (Vocals), Neal Rae (Base guitar), Nirbhay (Lead guitar), Shyam (Keyboard), Vijay Jogia (Vocals) and Vishal (Drummer)

Performance Description : Live Orchestra

» **Master of Ceremonies**

Sophil Raja, Soiam Raja, Veena Sashikumar, Aswathi Nair

» **Stage Managers**

Bhoji Watts, Manju Chand, Reena Doshi, Rajesh Katakdhond

» **Staff & Volunteers**

Utkarsh Doshi, Jaydeep Munshi, Jenny Ren, Saketh Podiseetty, Gautam Sehgal

Food Stall Holders

Coffee Dreams

Curries India

Indian Chat House

Meet And Treat

Krishna Food (Iskcon Sydney)

Stay Cool Tropical Sno

Taj Indian Sweets

Taza Tandoori Restaurant

Merchandise Stall Holders

Bollywoodlollywood.Com

Go Cool Sugarcane Juicery

Idt Telecom

Saileen Fashions

India Tourism Sydney

Indian Link

Scx Global

The Indian

Uae Exchange

Sponsors



Media Partners



www.zeetv.com
1300 797 012

Media Supporters

