

## **A Six-day Cultural Potpourri during SPICMACAY 25<sup>th</sup> National Convention 2010**

1<sup>st</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> June 2010

At a time when the youth of this country is drifting away from its rich cultural heritage, the SpicMacay society is playing a vital role in preserving and promoting Indian classical music and culture amongst youth. It has 200 Chapters across the world and organizes over 1500 events annually. Every year this society holds a national convention in the month of May/June during which a large range of programs is held including organizational discussions, talks, films, crafts, yoga, and classical and folk performances by the maestros. The convention serves as a common platform to bring together members from all over the country. This year, as part of the Golden Jubilee celebrations, IIT Kanpur hosted the **25<sup>th</sup> National Convention of SPICMACAY** from 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> June 2010.

The entire show was graced by the presence of a vast array of eminent personalities of music, dance and other art domains. People of all ages and professions descended upon the campus to witness and participate in the mega-events. The 25<sup>th</sup> National Convention 2010 was dedicated to the memories of seven stalwarts of Indian classical music who died last year leaving behind their rich and unique legacy - Ustad Ali Akbar Khan, Smt. D. K. Pattamal, Smt. Gangubai Hangal, Shri. Habib Tanvir, Shri Vishnu Prabhakar, Shri Tyeb Mehta and Shri Palghat Raghu.

The inaugural ceremony was on 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2010 and began with a vocal recital by the renowned classical vocalist Padma Bhushan Vidhushi Smt. Girija Devi followed by a Carnatic violin recital by Prof. T. N. Krishnan and a Hindustani vocal recital by Pt. Rajan and Pt. Sajan Mishra.

The following days saw some spectacular performances by other legendary artistes including the Warsi Brothers (Qawwali), Shri Ram Kailash Yadav (Biraha), Padam Shri Guru Gangadhar Pradhan, Guru Ghankanta Bora (Sattriya Dance), Ustad Fariduddin Dagar (Dhrupad), Padma Bhushan Ustad Asad Ali Khan (Rudra Veena), Padma Shri Pt. Ulhas Kashalkar (Hindustani Vocal), Smt. Priyadarshini Govind (Bharatnatyam) and Shri Margi Madhu (Kutiyattam). The audience was exposed to such a rich variety of Indian classical music and dance styles that they couldn't have asked for more!

Although it takes years to perfect an art form, 5-day sessions are surely enough to ignite interests some of which might translate into a lifelong passion. With this intention every

year NATCON (National Conference) hosts several workshops and intensives for participants to provide them with hands-on experience in a variety of art forms.

Staying true to its tradition this year also NATCON organized several workshops from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> of June on the campus premises. Each day began with early morning yoga sessions for the large gathering of participants who had come from all over the country. Hatha Yoga and Prana Yoga were followed by a long session of Nada Yoga, the yoga of sound. The Hatha Yoga sessions were handled by Shri Dhirendracharya and the Naad Yoga sessions by Ustad Fariduddin Dagar.

NATCON also hosted a Crafts workshop and a Crafts Mela from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> of June. The event was sponsored by the Development Commissioner, Handicrafts, Ministry of Textiles, Government of India. Several artists from all over the country shared their distinct art forms with the enthusiastic learners. One could see the eager learners switching from one workshop to the other trying to acquire skills in more than one art form. Some of the artists who participated were Ms. Jamini Peyeng (Artistic Weaving) Jorhat, Assam; Kala Raksha Kendra (Kutch Embroidery) Bhuj, Gujarat; Rehana Begum (Chikan Embroidery) Lucknow, UP; Sardar Hussain (Wood Carving) Pilkhuwa, UP; Shri Jaiprakash (Miniature Painting) Delhi; Shri Ram Kishore Chippa (Bagru Block Printing) Jaipur; Shri Amit Dhawan (Wood Inlay) Delhi, and many more.

Participants were also provided with the rare opportunity of learning the various art forms through intensives. Intensives have been the most enjoyed aspect of the previous national conventions. Legendary artists spend 3 - 4 hours every day with a small group of participants giving them personalized coaching. The gurus for this year's intensives included Ustad Fariduddin Dagar (Dhrupad), Shri. J. Gurappa Chetty (Kalamkari), Smt. Karuna Chitrakar (Patua painting), Guru Mayadhar Raut (Odissi) and Shri. Margi Madhu (Koodiyattam).

Other activities held during the convention included a talk by Shri K.G. Subramaniam (Painter), a movie retrospective on "Throne of blood" a film by Akira Kurosawa and a panel discussion on "The Role of Heritage in Nation Building" where the speakers were Prof. Kamlesh Dutt Tripathi (BHU), Prof. S. G. Dhande (IIT Kanpur), Smt. Anjolie Ela Menon and Smt. Jaya Jaitley. The discussion was moderated by Sh. Yatindra Mishra.

On the closing night of the 5<sup>th</sup> of June a classical music extravaganza was organized with performances from stalwarts like Padma Bhushan Dr. N. Rajam (Violin), Ustad Shahid Parvez (Sitar), Padma Bhushan Shri T. N. Seshagopalan (Carnatic Vocal), Padma Shri Pt. Vishwa Mohan Bhatt (Mohan Veena) and Ustad Abdul Rashid Khan (Hindustani Vocal).

It was a unique and a rare event of its own kind that saw a wide spectrum of artists perform for the widest possible variety of audience. For six days music flowed through the corridors and the leafy alleys of the campus enwrapping it in youthful enthusiasm and cultural awakening.