Cultural Calendar - February 2018

7
Wednesday
7.30 pm

Music Beyond Borders
A concert transcending barriers bringing together musicians from India and Sri Lanka
Pianist featuring Marilena Fernandes
Conductor Viswa Subburaman
Venue: Ladies’ College Hall, Colombo 07
(Tickets and box plan at Lionel Wendt from 22nd January 2018)

16
Friday
5.00 pm

Sri Thyagaraja Aaradhana
- Festival of Carnatic Music
Venue: Saraswathie Hall, No.75, Lorenz Road, Bambalapitiya, Colombo 04
All musicians are welcome to participate
Rehearsals will be held on 14th & 15th February 2018 at 4.00 p.m.

23
Friday
3.00 pm

Talk on Vaastu Sastra
- “Home décor for prosperity”
By S.B.S. Surendran from India
Venue: ICC Auditorium

27
Tuesday
6.00 pm

Friday matinee
Hindi Film - Jolly LLB
(with English subtitles. Duration: 2hrs 10 mins)
Director & Writer: Mr. Subhash Kapoor
Cast: Arshad Warsi, Boman Irani, Amrita Rao & Saurabh Shukla
Venue: ICC Auditorium

Programmes subject to change
Admission to all programmes are on first come first serve basis. Except 7th of Jan.
All are cordially invited
At the 2003 UNESCO Convention, an important observation was provided- a platform- the elements of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH). These were identified as “the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated, with- that- communities, groups and in some cases, individuals recognised as part of their cultural heritage”. To preserve these oral traditions, meant an active participation of various states and countries, communities, groups and relevant non-governmental organisations. Over the years, this has helped to create not only a platform of international recognition on a global platform, but also been a great source for safeguarding the ICH even at regional and local levels to help in creating and encourage cultural entrepreneurship and jobs. Over the last decade, India has successfully featured on the ICH UNESCO list.

Kumbh Mela (2017)
The festival of the Sacred Pitcher- this is the largest peaceable congregation of pilgrims in the world- comprising of ascetics, saints, aspirants-kalpavasis and visitors- without any barriers of caste, creed or religion. Held every four years by rotation at Allahabad, Haridwar, Ujjain and Nashik- it witnesses the congregation taking a dip or bathing in the waters of the Holy Ganga (Ganges) with a believe to cleanse off mortal sins and obtain releive from the cycle of birth and death. The event encapsulates specific knowledge about oral traditions and history and the science of astronomy, astrology, spirituality, ritualistic traditions, and social and cultural customs and practices.

Yoga (2016)
A well-known practice today and the world over- the concept of Yoga cuts across all geographical, race, age, religious, political, gender barriers. It is considered that its formation took place through the 196 sutras (aphorisms) of the Yoga Sutra Sankrit text of the ancient Indian scholar- Patanjali (prior to 400 BCE). Having been translated across many languages all over the world, this is considered to be one of the principal foundations of classical Yoga philosophy. Indian Yoga ideals have also been influenced by The Bhagavad Gita, Yoga Vasishta texts attributed to Valmikikya and Haryayagibana, as well as literature on Hatha Yoga, Tantric Yoga and Rpushupata Yoga.

Traditional brass and copper craft of utensil making- among the Thatheras (14/15). It incorporates folk dances, mock combat techniques, stylised gats of animals and birds, movements of village houseswes.

Sankirtana - ritual singing drumming and dancing (Manipur) (2013)- These are ritualistic dance performances amidst the Vaishnavi community of the Manipur plains of North-east India that narrates the mythological stories of Krishna and his deeds as a human on earth. The long performances involve rigorous training and are considered very sacrosanct and are deeply moving.

Recitation of Buddhist texts (Ladakh region, Jammu and Kashmir) (2012)- This represents the sacred texts, spirit, philosophy and teachings of Lord Buddha. The forms of Buddhism practiced in Ladakh are- Mahayana and Vajrayana. This has four major sects- Nyirmga, Kagyu, Shaka and Geluk. Several ritual chanting are performed on important days in the Buddhist and agrarian calendars and the process follows the include special budha, drums, cymbals, trumpets, special robes, maintaining rhythm.

- Chhau dance (West Bengal) (2010),
- Kabella folk songs, dances (Rajasthan) (2010),
- Mudiyettu - ritual theatre, dance drama (Kerala) (2010),
- Chhau dance (West Bengal) (2010),

A masked dance, it is traditionally performed by men- enacting episodes from the life of the great Indian epic- The Ramayana (hand- which are exported to various temples and Gurdwaras all over the world. The manual labour-intensive manufacturing process involves working under very high heat from the very first stage of moulding the metal plates to the final stages of polishing with tamarind juice and sand.

Kalbelia folk songs, dances (Rajasthan)
This is also known as the snake charmers dance- performed traditionally by the women in flowing skirts, accompanied by musical instruments- pholongi (wind instrument) and thariyan (hand-held cymbals). The music has evolved to express their everyday life, environments around them, happiness.

Mudiyettu - ritual theatre, dance drama (Kerala)
The performance celebrates the victory of Goddess Kali over demon Danka and seeks blessings of the Goddess after summer harvest is completed. It begins with the drawing of a massive image of Goddess Kali on the floor (rangal/Adalam or design on the floor using powdered color) before performance and incorporates the sense of a collective participation. Keralite theatre along with other countries like- Azerbaijan, Iran, Khyrgystan, Pakistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan (2009),

Kalbelia folk songs, dances (Rajasthan) (2009),

Novruz- India- along with other countries like- Azerbaijan, Iran, Khyrgystan, Pakistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan
Celebrated as a spring festival to welcome a new year, the play Nav mean New and Roz means Day. It marks the 1st day of the Spring Equinox and the beginning of the traditional New Year (around March 21 every year). It is believed to have its roots in ancient Persia (550-330 BCE) since Achameedans and pays respect to nature in return.

Ramlama- festival & ritual theatre (Garhwal-Himalayas)
Also a spring festival- this is performed annually in April in Saloor Village in Uttarakhand (North India) - honouing Bhagavad Gita. It witnessed the productive powers of the earth through the performance of The Ramayana through masked dances. Local legends are performed called as ‘Jagar’ which includes the participation of the entire society.

- Kutiyattam - Sanskrit theatre (across India) (2008),
- Ramila- the traditional performance of The Ramayana, (across India) (2008),
- Tradition of Vedic chanting (across India) (2008)

Kutiyattam - Sanskrit theatre (across India)
Considered the oldest surviving theatre performance (having its origin more than 2000 yrs ago), this synthesises Sanskrit and local traditions. The eye gestures (netra abhinaya) and hand gestures (hast abhinaya) are very prominent- coupled with sophisticated breathing techniques for swift muscle movements of face and body. Qualified actors undergo 10-15 yrs of rigorous training and the elaborate play lasts upto even 40 days. It begins by lighting a lamp to signify the divine presence.

Ramila- the traditional performance of The Ramayana, (across India)
A ritualistic performance of the story of the great indian Epic- The Ramayana- it follows the final draft of the play- "Ramcharitmanas"- from 16th century by poet Tulsidas. The play is performed without any props, set design and mostly in open air. Over the years, Ramila performances have been incorporated in various countries all over the world- including various parts of South Asia- e.g. Thailand, Cambodia, etc...

-Novruz- India-

Visual Anthropologist (specialisation in Intangible Cultural Heritage, history and popular culture) By Dr. Lopamudra Haitra Bajpai