

■ Nehru Centre

Electronic Concert: Subhash Dhunoochand & Group

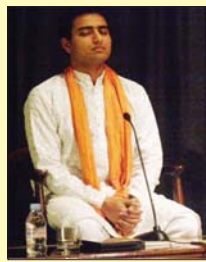


As part of his European tour, Subhash Dhunoochand performed at The Nehru Centre on February 24. He is one of France's most innovative sound artists, whose consis-

tently challenging albums and live performances have been central to the continued rise of Indian-influenced fusion music. A pivotal figure in Reunion Island, France, he has pursued his own audio explorations with his new project 'TABLATRONIC'.

He was accompanied by Nandkumaron tabla and Bharati on vocal. A dedicated fusionist with both an uncanny ear for melody and an innate talent for complex rhythms, Dhunoochand seems to be one step ahead of his electronic contemporaries.

Transform yourself with Ayurveda and Yoga



How can Ayurveda help each of us? What is your dosha (mind/body constitution)? Once we have knowledge of our own

dosha, we are then in a unique position to adopt Ayurvedic techniques following Yogic principles to promote our own well-being and adjust imbalances in mind/body. Yogi Dr. Amrit Raj, a fourth generation ayurvedic doctor and certified 500 yoga alliance teacher, gave a talk at The Nehru Centre on February 19 about various kriyas (cleansing techniques), pranayama (breathing techniques) asanas (postures), mudras (hand posturing) and meditation techniques.

In Pursuit of the Past: Christopher Penn



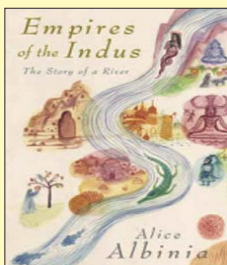
In July 2004, Christopher Penn talked to a packed house at The Nehru Centre about his research. He returned on February 25, 2009, to launch his finished book, *In Pursuit of the Past* at The Nehru Centre. It features his great-grandfather Albert Thomas Watson Penn, who was one of the pioneering photographers of South India. His photographs of South India and the people are now held in all the major photographic collections of the world

A Sense of Places and People: Runima Kakoty



A painting exhibition by Assam born artist, Runima Kakoty was inaugurated at The Nehru Centre. Her vibrant, spontaneous and rhythmic style depicts a range of subjects from figure painting to landscapes and still life and flowers. Her chosen media are watercolour, oil and acrylic. Runima divides her time between Yorkshire and London but travels widely abroad for inspiration.

Empire of the Indus: Alice Albinia



In association with David Godwin Associates, The Nehru Centre organised an Illustrated Talk by Alice Albinia on her award winning book, *Empires of the Indus*. The book follows river Indus, one of the largest rivers in the world, upstream and back in time, taking the reader on a voyage through two thousand miles of geography and more than five millennia of history redolent with contemporary importance. The evening was chaired by one of the BBC's most distinguished correspondents, Fergal Keane, OBE.

Slide Presentation: Communists Like Us, 2006

Anjalika Sagar and Kodwo Eshun, of the Otolith Group, spun a rich historical web prompted by Sagar's grandmother, whose voyages to Mao's China were the focal point in their slide presentation at The Nehru Centre on February 18, to a packed auditorium. Replaying a conversation as if it were taking place between the recto and verso sides of their documentary photographs, the artists staged a trans-cultural exchange,



inviting Godard's tete-a-tete to narrate Sagar's grandmother's roughly contemporaneous Asian voyage. The programme was in association with the Serpentine Gallery's Indian Highway exhibition.

Roddy Sale with Crispin Bates



It was a full-house at The Nehru Centre on February 13 when the enthusiastic amateur historian, based in India, Roddy Sale spoke on his recent book, *Lord Curzon — Speeches In India — A Selection from his Speeches as Viceroy & Governor-General of India 1898-1905*. The selection included speeches on the

problems of North West Frontier, Games Preservation, Indian arts, Preservation of Ancient Buildings, education, and other subjects — many of which are in fact still relevant and topical to the current day. Crispin Bates, Director of Edinburgh University's Centre for South Asian Studies and member of the modern and medieval history research panel of the UK Arts & Humanities Research Council, was the discussant that evening.

Music for Mind & Soul: Tala Vadya Kacheri



In association with MilapFest, a special concert evening, featuring a per-

cussion ensemble in a taal (rhythm) vadya (instrument) kacheri (musical session) was held at The Nehru Centre on February 20. It was led by one of the most sought after tabla artistes of his generation, Shahbaz Hussain, who began training at the age of 5 under his father, the late Ustad Mumtaz Hussain, a prominent vocalist. His accompanists were R.N. Prakash on the ghatam, R.R. Prathap on the Mridangam and Surjit Singh on the sarangi.

'Punjabi music is popular across the world'

Punjabi has made its presence felt in every corner of the world, says Britain-based music composer Rajinder Singh Rai aka Punjabi MC, who uses a lot of Punjabi folk and bhangra in his fusion music.

Rai, who visited Chandigarh to promote his new album 'Indian Timing', said: "Punjabi has become a cosmopolitan language that has made its presence felt in every corner of the world. Even my new album 'Indian Timing' features international artistes like Jay-Z and Ofra Haza. In fact, no Bollywood movie is complete without a Punjabi song."

Talking about his stint in European countries, he said: "The response is awesome and people there are mad after remix Punjabi music. Audience there



like the amalgamation of Punjabi and hip-hop tunes. They like fast rhythms and loud drum beats."

Rai says fusion is in his blood and there are no boundaries or set limits of music. "Fusion is in my blood as I was born and brought up in the U.K. in a Punjabi family. I love experimenting with music, like to mix urban club numbers with traditional folk music or

with modern bhangra beats," Rai said.

He became popular in 2003 in the U.S. and European music circuit when his single "Mundian to bach ke rahi" was remixed by American rapper Jay-Z.

Rai said he wanted to "stay connected" with his roots, adding, "That is why I have made it a compulsory point to visit Punjab at least once a year. This time I will also shoot here for my next album." 'Indian Timing' has 20 tracks and is produced by Universal Music Group. It has a remix version of Bappi Lahri's famous song "I am a disco dancer".

"I am late with this album because I was busy in my world tour. I believe that music knows no religion, caste or creed. It is indeed equal for everyone, I have seen Europeans enjoying on Punjabi

music equally vociferously as we hard core Punjabis do," Rai said.

Rai, who is also open to Bollywood, said: "I do not want to rush things and I am waiting for the right opportunity to come in my way. I am very impressed with A.R. Rahman and believe that he possesses a good chance to win an Oscar award." Giving a piece of advice to youngsters, he said: "There is immense talent in Punjab and I want to advise the youngsters here not to get carried away on seeing others." Rai said there are many cases of youngsters selling off their ancestral property to fund their albums. "This is not the right thing; rather they should keep on working hard and just wait for the right opportunity to come," he said.