

SOCIETY

Bohagi Bidaai celebration in Michigan



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Assam Association Of Michigan (AAMI) celebrated [\(/taxonomy/term/2092\)](#) Rongali Bihu/ Bohagi Bidaai on May 9th at the Kalakshetra Temple Of Arts in Farmington Hills, Michigan with lots of fun and fanfare. It was attended by close to 100 people, and included local as well as guests from nearby states and even couple of families from Ontario, Canada.

The evening started with a Meet and Greet with homemade traditional snacks consisting of sira-doi, pitha, laru, kordoi-xira, nimki etc.

The highlight of the festival was the varied cultural programs which featured out of town guests artists as well as local young and adult talents.

Among the Youth performances, AAMI kids ranging in age from 3-12 years presented a very entertaining Bihu dance. They also sang a chorus by Dr. Bhupen Hazarika ([/taxonomy/term/1841](#)) "We are in the same boat brother" with its Assamese and Bengali translation by the musical maestro. AAMI kids also presented some fabulous individual performances including Bharat Natyam, Bihu Dance, English and Assamese songs.

Adult Cultural program began with "Sreemoyee Axomi" sung by the AAMI ladies accompanied by live music by AAMI girls band members. This was followed by a series of performances by local talents who showcased their individual talents like group Bihu dances, Sattriya Nritya, a Rabindra Sangeet fusion based flamenco dance by local teens and individual Assamese, Bengali and Bollywood song performances. The AAMI boys band presented various songs including a choreographed version of "Pedal Mari Mari" in a very fun way that got the audience off their seats and dancing.

The function was graced by three guest artists from Columbus (Ohio) and Chicago (Illinois).

From Ohio there was Utpola Borah along with her Husband, Hans Utter, who presented an electrifying performance consisting of Hindustani Classical music as well as Assamese Folk fusion, including Jikir, Borgeet, Lokageet and Bihu. Utpola Borah is a post-doctoral research fellow at the "Advancing Interdisciplinary Research in Singing" project at the University of Prince Edward Island, Canada. She is an award-winning vocalist specializing in North Indian classical music, devotional songs, and the regional folk songs of India. Since her childhood, she has performed as a government-certified artist on All India Radio and on national television. She holds a Ph.D. in music from Delhi University, and has been recognized as one of the leading scholars of music and dance of Assam.

Hans Utter is multi-instrumentalist, ethnomusicologist and educator. Since 1993, he has studied sitar and tabla with India's top musicians, including Ustad Shujaat Khan. He holds a diploma in sitar from the Benares Hindu University, and a M.A. and Ph.D. in ethnomusicology from The Ohio State University. In his music, he aims to communicate the depth and beauty of North Indian music through the sitar, and to illuminate the varied world of Indian art, culture, and history. His background in jazz and Western Classical composition has been featured on the recent album from their ensemble Chakra, and he is currently working on a film soundtrack and a series of CD's featuring original compositions. He has taught music at The Ohio State University and Capital University.

Dr.Meelie Bordoloi Baruah from Chicago gave everyone goosebumps with her amazing presentation of a Xatriya dance and also presented a contemporary fusion dance. She is a physician by profession. Even as she has pursued her medical profession, she has always found [\(/taxonomy/term/1802\)](#) time to nurture her passion for dance. She started learning Bharatnatyam under guru Indira PP Bora [\(/taxonomy/term/1799\)](#) from the tender age of four, completed her training [\(/taxonomy/term/1605\)](#) and performed her Arangetram at the age of fourteen and has since then performed in various places in India. Continuing with her pursuit for learning dance, she trained under Shriman Pranab Bhuyan of Aoniyati xotro for Xatriya and continued that with training [\(/taxonomy/term/1605\)](#) under renowned choreographer Shiamak Davar of Bollywood fame, Terence Lewis for contemporary and Sandip Soparkar for Salsa.

The function also included a special felicitation of young Michigan based dance teacher Smti Dhanya Vani Rao, popularly known to all as Vani, for her dedication in promoting Indian arts and culture in the US ([/taxonomy/term/1702](#)). Vani, who was born and raised in Guwahati University campus, Assam, is a renowned Bharatnatyam dancer whose dance academy - Abhinaya School of Dance - recently completed its 10th year in 2015 and has over 200 students currently enrolled. Vani has been pursuing her journey in the dance form ever since she started learning as a child under Sangeet Natak Academy award winner Guru Indira P P Bora ([/taxonomy/term/1799](#)) in Guwahati, Assam. She has over the years performed in various prestigious programs and won numerous awards. The Assamese Community ([/taxonomy/term/2084](#)) of Michigan is very fortunate to call Vani as their own and expressed their gratitude to her for her dedicated involvement with the community ([/taxonomy/term/2084](#)) in spite of her busy schedule and especially for promoting Bihu dance in Michigan (with the help of the local Assamese ladies). It is because of her initiative Bihu dance has become an integral part of any major Indian celebration in the area. She was presented with a bouquet and a Bronze Japi as a symbol of respect and appreciation by AAMI.

The evening came to a close by everybody singing "Manuhe Manuhor Babe" (which has been adopted by AAMI as its Anthem) followed by the State Anthem "O Mur Apunar dex".

Guests and locals alike left with an overwhelming feeling that Assamese culture is alive and well and that this small Assamese community ([/taxonomy/term/2084](#)) in Michigan, USA is doing a satisfactory job of passing it down to the future generations.



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