

Lord Dholakia felicitate Minoti Sunita at the Nehru Centre, London



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On June 26th, 2008, **Nehru Centre**, the **cultural Wing of the High Commission of India** in London presented a stunning confluence of semi-classical of violin recital “**jugalbandi**” with **Minoti Khaund**, the award winning violin maestro whose musical career spanning 50 years and her daughter **Sunita Bhuyan**, the recipient of the **Indira Gandhi Priyadarshini** award for music and has been giving performances both solos and duets with her mother on the world stage.

Sunita is one of the few musicians who balances a full time HR career along with her inherited passion for music. She is the Head of Learning and Development at **Syntel**, a global ITES company which entails her to train managers on leadership and all round development.

The function was inaugurated by **Monika Kopil Mohta**, Director and Minister of Culture. She spoke highly about the art and culture of North-East and welcome the invited guest artists of Assam: Minoti Khaund & Sunita Bhuyan.

Sunita Bhuyan in her speech conveyed her gratitude to the Director for giving them the opportunity to perform at this prestigious venue. She also thanked Rini Kakati, a prominent lady of the Assamese community who is instrumental to make this possible.

Both mother & daughter held the audience in complete thrall with their performance of jugalbandi in what was a fitting finale to the long list of cultural activities at the Nehru Centre. Virtues of simplicity and grace that made both Minoti & Sunita the most enchanting artist of the musical world of Assam, showed up in ample evidence during the performance by the yesteryear Assamese sensation.

The evening was started by **raag Hanswadhani** in **Rupak** and **Teental**. The Teental composition was an old and popular Khyal “**Laagi Lagana**”.

This item resulted in the **jhala** crescendo which left audience spellbound. The next item was a scintillating light classical piece called **Bharat Darshan**. This had various folk tunes from different parts of India with a special piece of **Assamese Bihu**.

The grand finale was rendition of **Vande Matarm**: a superb vocal presentation of the powerful lyrics by Sunita. The audience were moved and became emotional. The duo were accompanied by well-known tablist from **Bangladesh: Yusuf Ali Khan**. The Asian & European audiences were overwhelmed by the performance and expressed that they had enjoyed the evening as a memorable one.

The invited guest of honour was **Lord Dholakia & Lady Ann, Madhava Chandra**, the minister representing the Indian High Commission, **Jahnu Barua**, the well-known film producer & director of Assam. In a traditional Assamese way, the dignitaries were felicitated with phulam gamosa.

In his closing speech Lord Dholakia mentioned about the richness of the north-east especially Assam and the importance of showcasing unity in cultural diversity. He mentioned his fruitful visit to Assam in the year 2005. As a state guest he was invited by **Tarun Gogoi, Hounr' ble Chief Minister of Assam** to inaugurate the North-East NRI Convention at Guwahati organised by NECCI (**North East Chamber of Commerce & Industry**). He praised Minoti & Sunita specially the mother for her tremendous effort to train Sunita not only in violin but also a vocalist. Their next performance surely will be at the **House of Lords**. Lord Dholakia promised.

The jugalbandi performance was given a standing ovation by the huge audience when they played at the **Hindu Cultural Centre**, London on 14th June, 2008

The **Milapfest of Manchester** and **Nottingham Arts Council** slot were on hold due to Sunita's busy schedule and other commitment. They have invited both artists to perform at the festival in the year 2009.

Minoti Khaund is an inspiration and her flawless performance is a silent but forceful message for all our upcoming violinist to follow.

- **Rini Kakati**

editor

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