

FOCUS



Mera Dil...Mere Sapne — Indisa Night 2000 An insider's perspective

BY NEETI TOMAR

For some it took weeks, others months, and for many others, it took the entire year to prepare for "Mere Dil...Mere Sapna" (My heart...my dreams).

"Mere Dil...Mere Sapna" was the name of this year's Indisa show, the annual cultural show performed by members of the Dalhousie Indian Students' Association, on Saturday, March 4, in the McInnis room of the Dalhousie Student Union Building.

I was part of this year's show and I could hardly believe the day had come. Not only is the annual Indisa show the biggest fundraiser for the organization and the largest event they hold each year, but it's also an event that is much anticipated by the Indian community in the Metro area. It is an event where people from all sorts of backgrounds can eat, drink, socialize, and be entertained.

The day had finally come, and I was going to be a part of it. For months before the show, any students representing Indisa could be seen running around the SUB, whether it be in the rooms or in the hallways, practicing for various acts for the cultural show. The acts varied from singing and dancing, to skits and the much-anticipated fashion show. I was involved in a group dance and the fashion show, and I could be seen in the SUB almost on a daily basis for well over a month before the show.

This year's show was about a love story between two young people. This was a different approach from other years where emcee's introduced acts, told jokes and warm up the audience. Instead of having the emcee, short skits were played out in between acts, which was the glue that held the show together — it told the love story and linked the different performances.

People contributed by organ-

izing, preparing music, making arrangements for food, working with technical people, co-ordinating decorations, putting together programs and so on.

My personal pride and joy was the mural I designed and painted (with the help of a few generous people of course). I had one week to work on it, and that's exactly what I did! The mural, which had a man and a woman on a balcony with stars and the Earth in the background, was the backdrop for the stage.

When the night had finally arrived, the pressure was on. The tickets had sold out and the audience's expectations were high. I guessed that there were 300 people or more dressed

marvelously in their formal attire. As audience members walked into the McInnis room, they were greeted with extraordinarily detailed decorations on the walls, which were large paintings of men and women (who seemed to be in love) and designs resembling folk art of India. They sat at tables scattered with rose petals, with blue and white centrepieces.

Backstage, things were much more chaotic. The 60-70 performers were running all over the place. In the dressing room, one would see clothes, jewelry, safety pins, bobby pins, and make-up scattered about. Throughout the show, participants would be seen squeezing in their last minute practicing and frantically trying to change from one outfit to another for different acts. The sounds of jingling jewelry could be heard as people would run from one place to another, and at any given point someone could be heard yelling, "Where is so and so? They are supposed to be on stage RIGHT NOW!"

Onstage however, once people actually made it there, the lights would come up and things would run ever so smoothly and glamorously. Well, that is smoothly and glamorously for an amateur run

show. There were a few moments of entertainment that had not been anticipated previous to the show. One funny incident occurred during a boys group bhangra dance — a type of dance that is especially known in India for its accompanying drum beat — where dancers were wearing lungi's, a cloth that is worn around the lower body sort of like pants. But for one dancer, things didn't go quite to plan. His lungi came right off in the middle of the dance. The crowd laughed and cheered in amusement as he ran off the stage holding on to his lungi in attempt not to bear all. The crowd cheered even louder and welcomed the dancer back as he ran on stage a few moments later to finish the dance with the rest of the group, with his lungi tied properly and his shirt tucked in.

During the intermission, a delicious and spicy traditional Indian meal was served, catered by the Taj Mahal restaurant, which gave the audience a chance to eat and socialize.

I was impressed with how well "Mere Dil...Mere Sapna" went over. The audience seemed to enjoy it and the performers had fun too.

I look forward to taking part in it again next year.



photos by Neeti Tomar

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