

Indian
music
EXPERIENCE
MUSEUM



EXHIBITION SOUVENIR

Indian Music Experience Museum
J.P. Nagar 7th Phase, Bengaluru

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Phone: +91 80 61771500

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Malabar Whistling Thrush
Picture Courtesy: Hemant Kumar



ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

For long, birds have enthralled us with their ability to take to the skies, and have inspired our cultural wealth – our music, poetry, art and more. These sentinel species are crucial to our ecosystems and the sustenance of our natural habitats. 'Birdsong' is an exhibition curated by the Indian Music Experience Museum that spotlights the contribution of birds to our ecological and cultural wealth. The exhibition features stunning photographs and illustrations, a display of musical instruments inspired by birds, audio-visual kiosks showcasing bird calls, computer interactives, and graphic panels that highlight the connections between birds and humans, and the significance of coexistence.

Opening on April 1st at IME, the exhibition will be accompanied by a range of public programs and educational activities. The opening weekend will feature an inaugural concert by the JISR ensemble from Germany on April 1st, and, a contemporary dance piece 'Bird', choreographed by Preeti Atreya on April 2nd. An online version of the exhibition will open in June. This exhibition is for everyone, especially families with children, school groups, young adults, nature enthusiasts and ornithologists, who are curious to know more about what the notes in bird songs have to say to us about the world we live in.



Indian Golden Oriole
Picture Courtesy: Garima Bhatia

OPENING WEEKEND INAUGURAL PROGRAMS

From Isar to the Ganges: Modern Afro -Jazz Ensemble

JISR // BRÜCKE:Music ensemble from Germany

April 1st, 2022 at 7 pm @ MLR Convention Centre (adjacent to IME)

From Isar to the Ganges: Modern Afro -Jazz Ensemble

Enjoy listening to a collective of internationally-acclaimed musicians from Germany, who play unique instruments like the Arabic Oud and the North African Gembri, along with the unique rhythms and melodic structures of jazz. The tour of the Munich ensemble JISR in South Asia is about the exchange of musical cultures. Mohcine Ramdan's music project is a melting pot of diverse musical styles and traditions. The repertoire and musical influences are considerable: from Arabic classical music and poetry, African Gnawa grooves to German Krautrock, Balkan, Jazz, Tango and Andalusian Flamenco. It is an ethnographic snapshot of polycultural music that breaks the boundaries between different musical genres. For this performance the ensemble will collaborate with Karthik Mani, renowned percussionist and overall versatile musician RA Ramamani, a reputed ground breaking Carnatic vocalist who has performed worldwide pioneering the Indo-Jazz fusion in Asia.

About JISR:

JISR جيسر is a collective from Munich led by the charismatic linguist, singer, percussionist and Gembri player Dr. Mohcine Ramdan. He gathered some of Bavaria's finest musicians to share his vision of an emotional pan-Oriental sound that is deeply rooted in the tradition of his family of musicians. Their live performance offers a unique fusion and sets a new landmark in how to unite the diversity of diasporic music in Europe in a one stage set. Truly mesmerizing & a must see. JISR جيسر Band leader Dr. Mohcine Ramdan follows the path of musical exchange like a post-modern Ibn Battuta of sound.

Credits:

Dr. Mohcine Ramdan (Gembri, vocal) | Roman Bunka (Oud, Guitar) | Severin Rauch (Drums) | Marwan Fakir (Violin) | Marja Burchard (Vibraphon, Keys, Trombone) | Niko Schabel (Musician, composer and producer) | Gergely Lukacs (Trumpet)



'BIRD': Contemporary dance

Preethi Athreya and team

April 2nd, 2022, at 6 pm @ MLR Convention Centre (adjacent to IME)

'BIRD': A contemporary dance performance

'BIRD' is a contemporary dance exploration choreographed by the innovative dancer-choreographer Preethi Athreya. It is a series of solo movement propositions where we see the quirky bridging of two anatomies – that of human rootedness and of avian flight. Inspired by a Garcia Marquez short story, and performed by four male soloists, 'BIRD' seeks to question our very conception of the human form and proposes a reorganising of how we may understand our bodily selves.

Preethi Athreya is an Indian contemporary dance performer, choreographer and facilitator based out of Chennai. She started her journey as a Bharatnatyam dancer but unlearned the strictures of the classical form to join a league of dance-makers in India who use dance as an agent of change. Between 1999 and 2011, she worked with Padmini Chettur from whom she inherited the evolving legacy of Chandralekha and a strong commitment to constantly redefine the Indian body.

Deepak Kurki Shivaswamy is a contemporary performing artist from Bangalore. He has been engaged in artistic work as a performer, creator, teacher and mentor since 2000.

Vikram Iyengar is a dancer-choreographer-director and curator-presenter based in Kolkata, India. He is a co-founder of the kathak-based performance company, Ranan and initiator of the Pickle Factory Dance Foundation – a hub for dance and movement practice, discourse and presentation.

Surjit Nongmeikapam is an Imphal-based choreographer and mover. He is the founder and artistic director of Nachom Arts Foundation. He was trained in traditional Indian dance and martial art forms before developing an interest in interdisciplinary arts and experimental works.

Joshua Sailo is a Bangalore based dancer with a passion for movement research and improvisation. Joshua has toured and performed with Toronto Dance Theatre, Cirque du Soleil, Martz Contemporary Dance Company (Evan Sanchez) amongst others.

Credits:

Preethi Athreya (Conceptualization and choreography) | Deepak Kurki Shivaswamy (performance) | Jeong Hee Kang (lightning design) | Pravin Kannanur (technical direction / dramaturgy) | Tobias Sturmer (music) | Vikram Iyengar (performance) | Surjit Nongmeikapam (performance) | Joshua Sailo (performance) | Sharan Devkar Shankar (Film) | T. Balasaravanan (Design interpretation)



EXHIBITION CREDITS

Curatorial Team

Manasi Prasad
Sahana Mohan
Krithika Sreenivasan
Mahalakshmi Prabhakaran

Partners

Early Bird
Amar Chitra Katha
PNLIT

Content Consultant

Samira Agnihotri, PhD

Art consultant and illustrator

Hemant Kumar

Exhibition Design and Build

Aditi Dhamija and Pradeep Naik (Fuel India)

Media and Interactives

CSD Technologies
Indian Sonic Research Organisation
Chayant Gonsalves
Snovel India

Events and Public Programs

Sarvar Kahlon

Outreach

Rakesh C

Facility Coordination

Sridhara

Special thanks to

Yellappa Reddy
Garima Bhatia
Abhisheka Gopal
Rutuja Dhamale

EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS

We invite schools in Bangalore for educational interactive field trips to the Indian Music Experience Museum's 'Birdsong' exhibition. We offer a galore of fun and educative bird-inspired activities to select from that cater to students of different age groups.

Grade Categorization:

1. Grade 3 and under
2. Grade 4-6
3. Grade 7 and above

Tour Structure:

1. Age-appropriate guided tour of Sound Garden and 'Birdsong' exhibition - 1.15 hours
2. One bird-inspired cultural activity - 30 minutes
 - * Bird Origami
 - * BirdYoga
 - * Best out of waste - make your own bird feeder
 - * Contemporary dance and movement workshop
 - * Song learning
3. After-tour engagement through activity sheets - 20 minutes

**The school can select one bird-inspired cultural activity from the above list.

Ideal group size per day: 80 students

These tours are offered in both onsite (at the IME) and online(webinar) formats. We recommend the children visit the exhibition in-person to have an experience of a lifetime!

Write to krithika@indianmusicexperience.org to book your slot or call 9686603825 for more details.

Testimonials:

"I liked the fun and engaging aspect about it, while also learning".

- Canadian International School

"Wonderful experience. First of its kind children and we really enjoyed it. Thanks to the whole team".

-Deens Academy, Whitefield



PARTNERS



Early Bird (early-bird.in) is an initiative by the Education and Public Engagement Programme of NCF to develop content, provide training, and conduct outreach related to promoting bird-related knowledge and awareness among children and young people.



Amar Chitra Katha celebrates India and loves to tell tales about India through a powerful medium of storytelling. We have covered the length and breadth of storytelling from Indian mythology to history to famous personalities who built India as a nation.



Puttenahalli Neighbourhood Lake Improvement Trust (PNLIT) is a not-for-profit, charitable trust that has been actively working with the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), towards the rejuvenation and maintenance of Puttenahalli Lake, JP Nagar 7th Phase, Bangalore. Apart from Puttenahalli Lake, the trust is also involved with other activities related to the betterment of the neighbourhood.



Goethe – Institut / Max Muller Bhavan is a non-profit German cultural association operational worldwide with 159 institutes, promoting the study of the German language abroad and encouraging international cultural exchange and relations. It offers language courses, organises cultural events and has a library. Working with partners across the fields of art, science and media, Goethe develops appropriate programmes and projects.



Kempegowda International Airport is an international airport serving Bangalore, the capital of Karnataka, in the southern part of India. It is named after the founder of the City – Hiriya Kempegowda and has the unique distinction of being the first Greenfield Airport in India, established on a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model. This heralded a revolution in Indian aviation, as more airports in the Country were privatised, thereafter.

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75
Azadi Ka
Amrit Mahotsav

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Indian Peafowl Male
Picture Courtesy: Gururaj Moorching



MUSINGS >

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Manasi Prasad

Classical vocalist and
Museum Director, IME



Human beings and birds have more in common than what is obvious at first glance. Besides being two-legged, human beings and birds are connected via a strong and visceral bond – of music.

Birds and their songs have fascinated humans since time immemorial. The ancient treatise, *Naradiya Shiksha*, speaks of the 7 notes of Indian music (sa, ri, ga, ma, pa, dha, ni) being inspired by the sounds of various creatures; of these, three notes are said to be from the calls of birds (sa from the peacock, ma from the heron and pa from the cuckoo in spring). While one cannot interpret this literally, it certainly shows how much our music has been inspired by the calls and songs of birds. Indeed, anthropologists and musicologists both opine that the earliest human attempts at music were imitations of what they heard around them in nature. Further on, Tansen was said to be an expert mimic in reproducing the sounds of birds and animals, and it was this uncanny ability that was noticed by his guru Swami Haridas, who took him under his tutelage and moulded him into the legendary singer that he became.

Over time, music and the arts have been inspired by birds in countless ways. In the world of Indian classical music, several ragas take their names from that of birds - Hamsanada, Hamsadhwani, Kokilavarali being a few examples. Many musical instrument designs are inspired by the aesthetic and sinuous form of

birds. Birds have found their way into mythology as well as popular culture – Bollywood songs are replete with references to the sweet voice and graceful gait of birds, usually as a metaphor for a heroine's attributes!

While we are aware of some of these links, what is even more fascinating is the complexity of the songs - the process by which these songs are created, sung, and learnt; and the information they convey. I was surprised to learn that some birds know hundreds of unique 'songs', and these are learnt not necessarily from the parent, as one would assume, but from an older tutor bird in the group!

So why is it important for us to understand this world of birds better? Well, music can express more than any lengthy explanation. It is undeniable that the world is heading towards environmental and ecological disasters. Unless we do the hard work of educating and creating awareness among young people now, we are at risk of losing ecological biodiversity which is essential to our survival. Our cities are noisy, but the birds have fallen silent. Deforestation, uncontrolled urbanization, noise pollution, have all contributed to this reduction in urban bird biodiversity. Birds are an indicator of our ecological health, and birds falling silent is bad news for all of us.

It is with this intention of raising greater awareness about the importance of

birds to our environment, that the curatorial team at the Indian Music Experience Museum embarked on a journey to bring this exhibition to life. Exactly two years ago, we opened an exhibition to commemorate the centennial of sitar maestro Pandit Ravi Shankar; soon after, the world changed. Our cities fell silent due to lockdowns, and we moved to an online way of life. It was during these periods of silence that the sounds of birds were once again heard in the cities – it was almost as if the birds were giving us a message: we are the original inhabitants of your spaces, treat us and your surroundings well, or else....

Through this exhibition and its associated programs and educational

activities, we hope to bring the community together to engage with issues pertaining to birds, ecology, environment and culture. After its display at IME for a period of four months, we hope to travel the exhibition to other parts of the country over the course of this year and next.

We are extremely grateful to all those who have made this exhibition possible – the subject matter experts, exhibit developers, donors, sponsors, booklet advertisers, artistes, partners and others – thank you for your belief and support.

"If we want children to flourish, let us allow them to love the earth before we ask them to save it".

CURATORIAL NOTE



Sahana Mohan
Head - Curation, IME

The natural world is an incredible wonder that inspires all of us. It is the foundation of our very existence. This beautiful world is home not just for us but for many other species. Nature is an intricate weave of the natural elements and millions of plant and animal species, and we are braided into its very fabric-making it all interconnected and interdependent.

Yet, we often take nature for granted and exploit it. We clear forests, pollute lakes and rivers, build over wetlands, and senselessly encroach on the habitats of other species in the name of progress, threatening our own existence. Isn't it time we reimagined the way we interact with our environment?

The 'Birdsong' exhibition is an attempt to raise awareness and appreciate the world around us. I believe music has the ability to greatly enhance our understanding of the natural world and to deepen our empathy for nature. We explore the connection between music and environment through nature's most talented singers- the songbirds. The exhibition unravels the significance of birds in our ecosystem and their role in our cultural identity and the congruence of music between birds and humans.

We often believe our language skills, our ability to learn and communicate are what make us unique. Did you know the young ones of songbirds, parrots, and hummingbirds hear sounds, form

memories, learn, practice, and improve as they grow up in a manner that is very similar to our infants? This ability to sing and communicate is what helps them to survive and procreate.

The idea that birds have been singing since the beginning of their existence on this planet, leads to the thought that birds pursued the musical art form, centuries before humans took to it for recreational inspiration. Our music today contains elements that have been established through the birdsongs in far-dated ancient times - from rhythm and pitch to tempo and amplification. Birdsongs have been an inspiration to many great musicians including Mozart whose pet starling influenced his work and served as a companion and muse.

Nature's influence runs through the fabric of our culture, its creations are woven into myth and legend, prose and poetry. Birds have been revered in every age. This has been abundantly reflected in a variety of arts, folklore, and traditional practices from time immemorial. Many Hindu gods and goddesses are shown to use animals and birds as mounts.

Traditional Indian music contains references to birds and their qualities- appreciating them through concepts of great virtues, love, divinity, and the supernatural. A popular Hindustani bandish (composition) describes the papiha (common hawk-cuckoo), koel

(cuckoo), mor (peacock), crying aloud, almost in delight because the lovers are going to be together again. The Indian peafowl, parakeets, even the common crow finds a place in the folksongs, along with the exotic migratory birds like demoiselle crane, amur falcon, and others. Hindi film music is replete with references to pigeons, swans, peacocks, and bulbuls.

Birds can be a soothing balm to today's stressful lifestyles. They connect us to nature with ease – Just being there, pausing a little bit, enjoying their play of vocalizations, wondering about their complex communication can bring in a

calm and renewal, especially for those of us in urban and sensory-filled environments.

The exhibition will be a guided walk through the wonder of the songbird, the instruments and music they inspire, their prominence in Indian mythology and history, and the backyard birds we can observe in everyday life. It concludes with an engaging presentation on the importance of birds to our livelihood today and reminds us to be alive to the moment and to be mindful of the message that mother nature is putting out. Are we listening?

Sustainable real estate development



Pavitra Shankar

Executive Director, Brigade Enterprises
Trustee, IME Trust

We at the Brigade Group are extremely proud of the Indian Music Experience (IME), a brainchild of our Founder and Chairman, M.R. Jaishankar. IME is only in its third year and has already become a unique music and culture spot in the city of Bangalore. A space that is immersive, interactive and experiential.

I would like to congratulate the team at IME for curating 'Birdsong'. Bringing awareness and attention to environmental issues through this event is refreshing, in a sense. It is also close to our heart because it is in line with the importance we at Brigade give to the environment and in turn sustainability. In fact, sustainable development and being mindful of the environment go hand-in-hand with Brigade's core value of being 'socially responsible'.

As a developer we understand the significant role green initiatives play in offsetting the damage done to the environment. For this reason, sustainability is at the core of all our design and development. We incorporate a lot of green spaces and natural light into our design. Over the past decade, all our office buildings have been Platinum or Gold LEED certified buildings and we are committed to ensuring that our future projects have similar or higher levels of sustainability incorporated in them.

Apart from the sustainable design of our projects, we are creating urban forests by planting native species of trees at a high density in our more recent, large projects. While urban forests are not a replacement for traditional forests, they offer the best alternative to traditional

landscape solutions and create much-needed lung space for our residents. The most amazing part of this is that our residents have spotted many species of birds and butterflies in these spaces which happen to be in the heart of urban development. For example, our mixed-use project, Brigade Cornerstone Utopia has six parks and we have planted over 16,000 trees throughout the property, approximately 30 times more than you would see through conventional techniques.

We also feel strongly about giving back to our cities through our many environmentally friendly CSR efforts - from planting trees and creating green lung spaces in and around our projects, rejuvenating lakes, redeveloping parks and playgrounds, and the preservation of ancient trees are some of the initiatives we undertake.

We had pledged to plant trees across the cities we are present in and have reached a significant milestone of planting 50,000 trees across various project sites. In the last few years, we have undertaken important CSR initiatives to restore and maintain lakes and parks. For example, we rejuvenated the 23.37 acres Sitharampalya Lake in Whitefield. We planted over 1,500 trees in the bund area to encourage flora and fauna to thrive and a separate area created within the lake premises to encourage visiting birds. These are just a few of our initiatives as we continue to give back to Mother Earth.

I hope 'Birdsong' resonates with the community and visitors as intended.

Good luck Team IME!

Why do birds matter?

Dr. A N Yellappa Reddy

Former Secretary,
Department of Ecology and Environment



Mother earth is abound with beauty - in her lofty mountains, fertile riverines, verdant grasslands, beautiful shoals, pristine waters and more. It is no surprise that she is innately nurturing and has room for all of us to coexist in peace. The question is how much do each of us respect her and give back to her? Of the many species that thrive on this planet, birds and arboreal species play a crucial role in being bellwethers of our ecological wealth - indicators of our mother nature's integrity, upon which all of us human beings depend on for practically everything.

Birds are virtually part of every ecosystem on this planet. For instance, take a clump of trees - leaf warblers would dwell in the tree canopies; fly catchers, drongos, owlets and many others would thrive in the forest understory; babblers, mynas and hoopoes on the ground and woodpeckers on tree trunks.

The avian community's invaluable contribution to our ecological and cultural wealth is often taken for granted and/or overlooked. Apart from inspiring us to take to the skies and influencing our visual and performing arts, birds play a critical role in maintaining the delicate balance of various ecosystems, in a way that has direct influence on our food production, health and economy. Birds are architects, engineers, material scientists and much more as they help with pollination, seed dispersal, scavenging, pest control and nourishing the soil. As Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore recommended, true education is

dependent on mankind's tryst with his surroundings and living in harmony with nature. Anecdotes that are testimony to the inimitable relation humans can nurture with birds and with nature in general are plenty in our mythology and everyday life. For instance, acclaimed philosopher, speaker and writer, J. Krishnamurti's endearing relation with a hoopoe in the last days of his life brought him solace and prepared him for his spiritual journey. There is also mention of King Solomon who recognised a friend and teacher figure in a hoopoe bird. Apart from providing us with intangible aesthetic pleasure with their many songs, colours and forms – birds have plenty of life lessons for us. Kannada poet, writer and researcher, Prof. Shivarudrappa's poems encapsulate the selfless, mindful, empathetic and gentle way birds go about their way in building strong homes, both literally and figuratively.

Unfortunately, mankind has wiped out several rich ecosystems with his reckless and mindless thirst for progress by building dams, mining, and encroaching virgin forest for agriculture and other anthropo-centric activities especially since the rise of the industrial era in the 15th and 16th centuries. As renowned Kannada poet Dr. Kuvempu mentioned in his poems, mankind has been distancing itself from nature. Rarely, in our chase for materialistic pleasures, do we realize that we are dependent on mother nature as much as other creatures sharing this planet with us. The debilitating effects of climate change, rampant urbanization and erasure of

ecosystems – all contribute to dwindling bird populations. A diminishing avian population is a clear indicator of our deteriorating environment. Whether an ecosystem is maintained for agricultural production, or water conservation or wildlife or tourism or for any other purpose – bird populations and behaviour pattern function as a barometer to determine that ecosystem's health and the success of the purpose the ecosystem is designated for.

Being an intellectually superior species, it is our collective responsibility to restore degraded habitats and protect leftover remnants of existing ecosystems. An understanding that human survival is deeply ingrained and interwoven into the fabric of our natural environment is imperative. While every creature on this planet including organisms invisible to the naked eye are crucial and play a significant role in rendering various ecological services, birds hold a special place. This is attributed to the innate cognitive abilities of birds and their migratory behaviour that connects the globe and acts as an index of our ecological health.

Renowned ornithologist Salim Ali was one of the few who got to experience up-close the delight of listening to birdsongs and watching them going about their day in their natural habitats. He called for the attention of the governments as early as 1957 towards the vanishing species of birds like the pink-headed duck, mountain quail, great Indian bustard, and white-winged wood duck and several others. No one took heed of his plea to help the avian community and nothing concrete has been done about it to date.

Though many of us are aware of our deteriorating ecological health and wish to improve the situation, we often are unaware where to start from and how we can help our avian friends. An easy way of contributing to this cause is to plant two to five different species of plants in degraded areas that will promote the proliferation of the keystone species. This will help regenerate and restore bird habitats thereby promoting the conservation of existing bird populations. It is a no-brainer that places that make good homes for birds and other forms of life also make good homes for us human beings.

What does birdsong convey?

Dr. Samira Agnihotri
PhD in Ecology, IISc



The melodies of the feathered creatures we share the earth with have enthralled and intrigued us since time immemorial. Birds and their songs continue to play important roles in the everyday lives and traditional lore of diverse communities across the planet.

The chorus of birds signals the dawn of a new day, and their calls indicate the changing seasons. Birds sing to proclaim their territories and to impress mates. They also use sound to talk to each other – to signal the presence of danger, or to keep in touch with each other. Some species engage in complex jugalbandis with their mates. Their vocal gymnastics make them the envy of human singers everywhere. Their unique voice box allows them to produce unrelated pitches simultaneously and sweep through multiple notes in a tenth of a second.

Just like human babies learn to speak, bird chicks learn to sing from tutors – their parents and others of their own species. And just like human languages,

bird species can have dialects in their songs specific to a geographical area.

Studies have shown that listening to birdsong has multiple positive effects on our hearts and minds. It relaxes us physically and stimulates us cognitively. Watching a bird sing is one of the most mindful experiences one can have.

And yet, we continue to pollute these soundscapes with artificial noise – traffic, heavy machinery, loudspeakers. Studies have shown that birds in noisy areas are having to change their songs to be able to hear each other over this din created by us.

As David Haskell, biologist and prize-winning author says, “Sound is a generative force, and so the erasure of sonic diversity makes the world less creative, just, and beautiful.”

So come, let us strive to be a bit quieter, and listen to what our feathered friends are trying to say, to each other and to us.

Dr. Samira Agnihotri follows racket-tailed drongos in the Biligiri Rangan Hills in south India. Since 2005, she has worked closely with the Solega people who reside there. In collaboration with the community and Dr Aung Si, a linguist, she continues to document their traditional ecological knowledge.

Birds in mythology



Komal Narwani
Senior Sub-Editor,
Amar Chitra Katha



Kayva Gokhale
Junior Sub-Editor,
Amar Chitra Katha

Garuda, the Divine Eagle

Garuda, the divine eagle, is widely known as Vishnu's mount. However, he is no ordinary vahana and is a powerful divine being capable of fantastic feats. The story of Garuda's birth is an interesting one. According to some legends, Sage Kashyap conferred a boon to his wives Vinata and Kadru. While Kadru asked to be the mother of a thousand mighty snakes, Vinata asked for only two sons, who would surpass Kadru's children in strength. Soon, a yagna was conducted to grant the wives their wishes. During the preparation of this yagna, the sages were angered by Lord Indra's arrogance. They were determined to make Vinata's son stronger than Indra, in order to humble him. Frightened, Indra requested Sage Kashyap to help him. The great sage then requested the others to change their decision. 'Let the Indra you create be the Lord of all winged creatures', he suggested instead. The sages agreed and that is how Garuda came to be born with tremendous strength, the ability to change his form at will as well as the ability to increase his size and soar across the blue skies.

Hanshansali and Marangbonga

According to the Santhal tribe's mythology, birds play an important role in the creation of the world. It is believed that when the Earth was covered with water, Marangbonga, the divine crow, was flying through the sky one day when he decided to create living creatures. He then created a pair of swans, called the

Hanshansali, who became the first living beings on the earth. This swan couple eventually laid two eggs, out of which a man called Pilchuharam and a woman called Pilchuayo were born. These were the first humans for whom the earth was made habitable by the Gods. Thus, the crow and swans are seen as imperative for the beginning of mankind.

Navagunjara

This fascinating mythical being finds its mention in Oriya folklore based on the Mahabharata. It is believed that once when Arjuna was out hunting, he came across a creature beyond his imagination. It was made up of nine animals! This magnificent creature had the head of a rooster, the neck of a peacock, the hump of a bull, the waist of a lion, legs of a human, an elephant, a deer and a tiger, and with a snake as its tail. Though initially frightened of Navagunjara, Arjuna soon realised that such a being could only be a manifestation of the divine. Arjuna laid down his weapons and saluted the wondrous creature.

Peacock, Crow and Swan

Long ago, the king of Usheerabeeja, Marutta was performing a Mahesvarayajna. Many gods including Indra, Yama, Varuna and Kubera, were present at the yajna. Suddenly, Ravana, the king of Lanka, who had received the boon of near-invincibility from Brahma, arrived at the yajna. Scared of Ravana's presence, all the demi-gods assumed the form of different animals and birds.

Indra became a peacock, Yama transformed into a crow, Varuna took the form of a swan and Kubera turned into a chameleon. The animals had saved the demi-gods from Ravana's wrath. Hence, when Ravana left the place, each of them blessed the animals and birds they took the form of. Indra made the peacock's feathers iridescent. Yama gave crows the right to have Pitru Bali Rice/ Pinda, a ritual to leave food outside the house for the dead as an offering to Yama. Varuna blessed the swan with pure white colour. Kubera gifted the chameleon the capability to change its colour.

Sampati and Jatayu

The great vultures, Sampati and Jatayu, were brothers. Both of them were fond of flying at dizzying heights. They would often fly up to meet their father, Aruna, the sun god's charioteer. Although proud of his mighty sons, Aruna would advise them not to get too close to the sun god. Unfortunately, his advice went unheeded. One blazing afternoon, the two brothers unknowingly ended up flying extremely close to the sun. Their bodies were burning but Jatayu continued to fly higher. It was Sampati who noticed the sun god approaching them. Sampati flew over Jatayu and spread his wings wide to shield his brother. The flames ate up Sampati's wings and he hurtled to the ground in pain, sacrificing himself for his beloved brother.

Jatayu was the second son of Aruna, the sun god's charioteer, and nephew of Garuda, the mount of Vishnu. He was the great vulture who dedicated his life to saving Dasharatha, the king of Ayodhya, and his family. When Ravana, the king of Lanka, abducted Sita, the princess of Mithila and the wife of King Rama,

during their exile. Jatayu was the first to notice. Upon hearing Sita's cry for help, Jatayu speeded his way to face the deadly foe with all his might. Though Jatayu was a mighty vulture, his strength couldn't match up to Ravana's, who mercilessly cut off Jatayu's wings and talons. Even after Jatayu was severely injured he held on to life until he broke the terrible news about Sita's abduction to Rama. He breathed his last only after uttering Sita's location to Rama and Lakshmana.

Gandaberunda and Sharabha

When Vishnu descended to earth as Narasimha to destroy the evil king, Hiranyakashapu, he lost sight of his true purpose and started to wreak havoc on earth. Even the gods feared him and turned to Shiva for help. Shiva took the form of Sharabha, a half-bird and half-lion being. Sharabha tried to calm Narasimha under his wings but instead, got him furious. From his body emerged Gandaberunda, a two-headed bird of unimaginable strength. The two divine beings fought a fierce battle that lasted for eighteen days. At the end of the eighteenth day, Gandaberunda stopped to look around. Realizing the enormous devastation the battle had caused, he split into two and Vishnu emerged from the centre of the fearsome beast. Shiva too resumed his form. The two returned to the heavenly abode and peace was restored.

Balcony Birding

Garima Bhatia

Birder, photographer, writer and
Head, Early Bird



One morning in early September, I jump awake with a start. I've heard an unusual and unmistakable bird call. My heart pounding, I race to the balcony to confirm what I instantly know - the Grey Wagtails are back in town! A feeling of intense happiness washes over me to see 4 of them chasing each other, tail a-wagging, frolicking in the puddles from last night's downpour. Grey Wagtails are among the earliest winter visitors that we see down south, travelling all the way from the Himalaya. Indeed, school programmes in Tamil Nadu have encouraged children to record and celebrate their arrival. To a non-birder, this might seem inexplicable. Why would a nondescript grey-and-yellow bird inspire such enthusiasm?

The ubiquity of birds is one of the reasons why birdwatching is a very popular hobby, enjoyed by millions of people worldwide. Birds are everywhere, in every habitat you can think of, from the highest mountains in the Himalaya to the deserts of Rajasthan. But more importantly they are also present in our cities and around our homes, enriching our lives with their beautiful colours and their enchanting songs. The diversity in the avian world also makes it particularly interesting. Birds come in a mind-boggling variety of shapes, sizes and colours, and India is lucky to have around 1300 species of birds, 12% of the roughly 10,000+ species in the world. They are also part of our culture and our heritage. Birds feature in our ancient texts, our myths and folktales, art and literature, right

from the Indus Valley civilization to modern times.

Birds excite our curiosity and our imagination. We wonder how they live, what they eat, how they communicate. They inspire us with their flight and their remarkable endurance. Bar-headed Geese are known to fly nearly as high as the highest peaks in the Himalaya, while the Arctic Tern flies twice the circumference of the planet every year, clocking up to 3 million miles over its lifetime, an equivalent of four round-trips to the moon!

Many birds undertake heroic feats of migration annually, but even their everyday behaviours can provide an endless source of enjoyment and wonder to us all. There are many features of bird behaviour that we can relate to as humans - birds sing and dance, they court their partners, display affection and competition, defend their territories, build homes and care for their young. Indeed, birdwatching is like a lifetime ticket to the theatre of nature!

Watching birds also has many tangible and intangible benefits. There is a growing body of research indicating that direct exposure to nature is essential for healthy childhood development and for the physical, mental and emotional health of children and adults. Watching birds is an easy way to get children outdoors, whether it is to a neighbourhood park or lake, or just in the street outside their home. Recent studies have shown that having higher number of bird species around one's

home increases life satisfaction. When we watch birds, it gives us a sense of joy and peace. We pick up skills like focus and observation. We feel connected to the tapestry of life on earth. An interest in birds can lead us to a love and appreciation of the natural world, something that is sorely needed to heal us in this age of overwhelming loss - of natural habitats and unique species and ecosystems.

To get started with this hobby, you don't need much equipment, though a pair of

binoculars can greatly enhance the experience. All you need is to attune your eyes and ears to the avian sights and sounds around you, and a lot of patience and curiosity to decipher the secret life of birds! Once the birding bug has bitten you, it will be hard to shake off, but will guarantee you a lifelong source of joy and wonder. All it needs is a spark, and I hope this exhibit and the celebration of birds and birdsong will get you interested and curious enough to jump into the endlessly fascinating world of birds!



Green Bee-Eater

Picture Courtesy: Hemant Kumar





Sunbird
Picture Courtesy: Hemant Kumar

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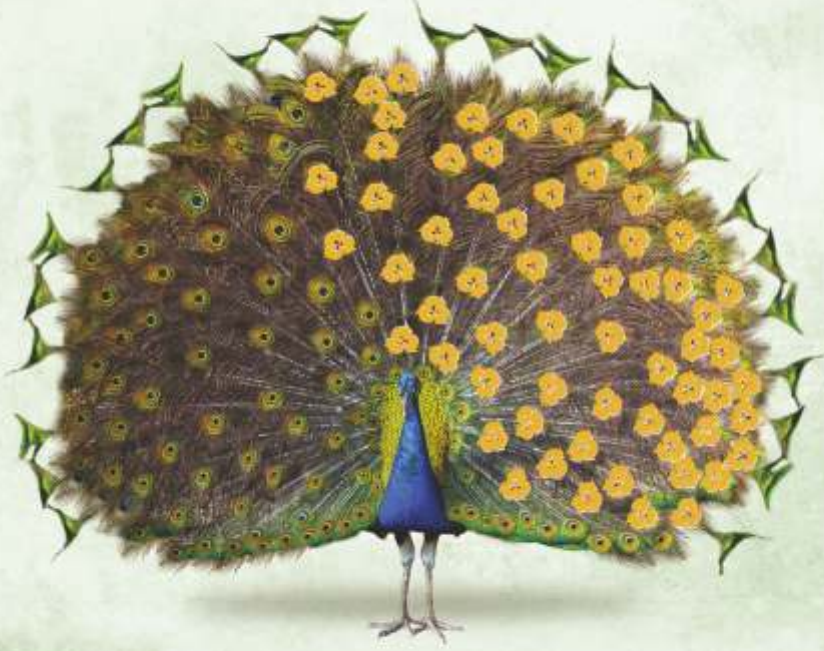
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THE INDIAN MUSIC EXPERIENCE MUSEUM

The Indian Music Experience Museum (IME) is India's first interactive music museum. IME is a non-profit initiative supported by the Brigade Group. The vision of the IME is to introduce the youth to the diversity of Indian music and to preserve India's rich musical heritage. The IME comprises hi-tech multimedia Exhibit Galleries, a Sound Garden, a Learning Centre for music education, and several performance spaces. Since opening in 2019, the IME has had over 45,000 visitors in-person and many thousands more online.

The IME's work spans across Exhibition, Conservation, Audience Development, Education and Community Outreach. Besides museum visits, the IME hosts a wide variety of public programs, both in-person and online. In 2020, the IME presented an important exhibition "Ravi Shankar@100:



India's Global Musician" to commemorate the centennial of the sitar maestro. The IME's online activities include regular events, online exhibits on the Google Arts and Culture platform, regular online classes in various genres of music, and the curation of www.chowdiah.com, a digital archive on violin maestro Mysore T. Chowdiah. The IME is an institutional affiliate of the GRAMMY Museum in Los Angeles. The IME's community outreach projects include its flagship Project Svaritha, which engages children from socially disadvantaged and neurodivergent backgrounds, as well as #YuvaInCulture that engages the youth in leadership, creative work, and internships at the museum.

IME timings and entry fee

- Open on Tuesdays to Sundays from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM
- Entry fee starts from Rs. 150
- Closed on Mondays.

Scan the QR code to
know more about IME



OTHER OFFERINGS



Work from Museum: Work from museum is a new concept at IME, where we welcome everyone to come and work from the museum. We believe the space is ideally suited for an inspiring and creative work environment, because it is part of a beautiful and aesthetically designed museum, with greenery and calmness all around. The spaces where you can work are the open-air café, and cubicles if you need an indoor space.

School Visits: World-over, museums offer the ideal environment for learning outside the classroom, by providing inspiration and stimulating young minds to think of the endless creative possibilities. In particular, the Indian Music Experience is, as the name, suggests, an experiential or interactive museum, where learning is self-guided, hands-on and a lot of fun.

Group Visits: The IME offers guided tours by trained staff and passionate volunteers that bring the hidden stories behind the exhibits to life. Walk through the museum with your friends, family members or special interest group members, for a shared experience of the power of music! Guided tour by pre-booking only.

Corporate Outings: Tired of the same environment at the office for meetings? Looking for a venue that stimulates fresh ideas and inspires conversations, yet offering the comforts of a meeting venue? The IME is the place for you. Kick-start your offsite or team building with a treasure hunt through the museum, host your talks at the seminar hall, and break out into the Learning Centre classrooms for discussion groups or activities. Several options for customization available.

Private Events: The newest and edgiest venue in the city may just be the place to host your next wine-and-cheese event, brand launch or customer engagement activity. Several spaces of the museum are available after hours for private events. We work with a host of experiences F&B and event partners to provide a complete experience.

Café: From South Indian classics to international fare, the museum's al fresco café is fast becoming a hub of creative people and artists. Providing a relaxed ambience that celebrates Bangalore's salubrious weather, under a canopy of mango trees, with the gentle sounds of the wind chime, the IME café provides generous helpings of music for the ears and food for the soul!

Gift Store: Want to take a piece of the museum experience home with you? Inspired by the museum exhibits, the STORE by Foley is stocked with a range of beautifully designed and crafted products, from stationery and knick knacks to lifestyle and apparel products, to a curated selection of music and books. Stop by to find the perfect and unique gift for a loved one, or for yourself.

HOST AN EVENT

If you are looking for a space that sets your event apart, providing an unforgettable experience to your guests, then do reach out to us. The Indian Music Experience Museum provides the ideal ambience to elevate any event, with a host of options available for customization. Kick-start your event with a guided tour of the museum for your group. From a special birthday or anniversary, to corporate meetings and offsites, to concerts, seminars and workshops, the IME is an ideal venue to make your event sing!

It features exhibit galleries, a sound garden, a learning centre as well as performance and rehearsal spaces. With a vision to share the magic of the arts with everyone and to inspire creativity, the IME is now an important cultural hub of Bangalore.

Please contact info@indianmusicexperience.org or 9686602366 for more details.

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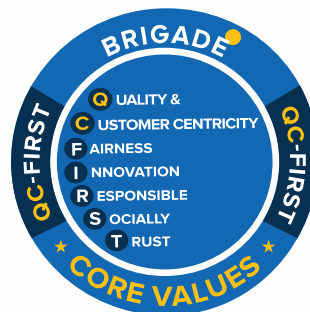
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