



MATHUR ASSOCIATION BOMBAY

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September 10, 2015

NEWSLETTER

Mahesh C. Mathur, (President & Hon. Treasurer)
Ajit K, Mathur, (Sr. Vice President)
Shamsher B. Barellia (Gen. Secy.)
Krishna Murari, (Editor & Member -PR)
Vishwa Nath Mathur (Member, Finance)
Yogesh Mathur (Jt. Secy.)

Highlights:

1. Our Zonal Functions
2. Our Management
3. Distinctions & Achievements
4. “ Tradition of Music & Poetry in Mathur Community: An Amalgamation of Cultures”
(a contributed article by Anuj Mathur of Gurgaon)

Dear Member,

1. Last Year, 2014 – A Review

We are happy to state that MAB with its Zonal Committees had a number of activities during the year as already covered in our last two Newsletters dated August 6, 2015, and February 25, 2015, briefly summarized as follows:

a) Zones were active with holding their respective Zonal get togethers as follows:

- i) South & Central Zones (Zones-1 & 2) on 22-3-2014 at Hotel Sea Plaza, Colaba
- ii) North Zone (Zone-7) on 13-4-2014 at Royal Hills Resort, Vasai
- iii) East Zone (Zone-3) on 14-6-2014 at Anushaktinagar
- iv) North East Zone (Zone-5) on 7th December, 2014 at Thane

b) A total of 10 members took MAB's Life Membership during the year 2014, as per their names given below:

- i) Shri Sachindra Mathur, Dr. / Mrs. Meena (NW-175/Kandivli (E), - February, 2012 (inadvertently missed in our Directory and in the last Newsletter)
- ii) Shri Sanjay Mathur / Mrs. Anuradha, (NE-56 / Thane-W), on 26-12-2013
- iii) Shri Ashok Sinha / Mrs. Ranjana, (E-124 / Nerul) on 12-1-2014
- iv) Shri Anil Mathur / Mrs. Sangeeta, (NE-99 / Vikhroli) on 12-1-2014

- v) Shri Mathuresh Sherry / Mrs. Deepa, (NW-171 / Kandivili (W) on 12-1-2014
- vi) Shri Manoj Mathur /Mrs. Manisha (add . to be verified) on 12-1-2014
- vii) Shri Tushar Mathur /Mrs. Rakhi (E-127 /NRI Complex) on 14-7-2014
- viii) Shri Ankit Mathur /Mrs.Aditi (E-128 / Nerul) on 14-7-2014
- ix) Shri Sunil Mathur / Mrs.Renu (E-130 /Anushaktinagar) on 14-7-2014
- x) Shri Sudhir Mathur / Mrs. Amita (E-103 / Seawood Nerul) on 14-7-2014

We offer our thanks and appreciation to them for opting for Life Membership.

2, Our Zonal functions:

a) MAB's Zone-1 & 2 (covering Colaba, Churchgate, Malabar ill, Pedder Road, Worli, Mahim)

The two Zones jointly organized their **HOLI get together** (an evening function) on Saturday, 18th April, 2015 at Hotel Sea Palace, Colaba. It was attended by 54 guests, including quite a few from other Zones also.. It may be mentioned that it was a self financed function, without availing the usually available contribution from MAB for Zonal functions.

Live music, dance items by younger participants enthralled all guests. Neelam & Uday sponsored a music teacher and his accompaniment to render songs. Smt. Preeta, wife of Shri aduvandra Mathur, IAS was a new discovery as she enthralled the audience with a melodious song. Veg./Non-veg. snacks, cocktails, soft drinks and sumptuous dinner were enjoyed by all..

The entire function was ably organized by the following members in the two Zones:

1. Sangita / Rajnish, 2. Neelam / Uday , 3. Divya / Ambuj 4. Geetika / Gaurav 5. Archana / Jolly, & 6. Smt.Dolly Mathur.

Mr. Yaduvandra Mathur, IAS who has recently joined Exim Bank as its Chairman & Managing Director was felicitated.

Shri Ajit K. Mathur (Khar-W) was also felicitated for his brilliant, professional role in helping the Campa Cola Hsg. Socy., at Worli, (details in para 4(b) below)..

b) Our next function:

After a gap of about 4 years wherein the emphasis was concentrated more on development of Zonal activities and functions, we are now planning to hold a **Central Get together function** in around mid January, 2016 for which search is already on for a venue.

Suggestions about a suitable and conveniently located venue are welcome and may kindly be communicated to Shri Ajit K. Mathur (Khar-W), em id mathurakm_projects@rediffmail.com Ph: 2349 8673 / Mob; 9820132341 as early as possible to ensure timely booking.

Members from biradri (specially ladies and young children) desirous of participating in the function's Cultural programme may kindly contact our Member Incharge, Smt. Prabha Mathur . (em id: prabha_mat01@yahoo.co.in / Ph: 2832 4795 / Mob: 98201 94007)

In the meantime, our Zones are also separately planning to hold their usual Zonal functions in the near future, details of whom will be informed when finalized.

3. MAB Management:

It is hereby announced that Shri Krishna Murari, hitherto our President, has voluntarily opted to step down from the post.

It is recalled that Shri Murari has been an active member of the Mg. Committee for more than four decades (46 years, since 1969 to May, 2015) which includes him as its Vice President for 5 years (March, 1992-March, 1997) and as President for about 18 years (April, 1997 to May, 2015).

Consequently, MAB Managing Committee in its meeting held on 20th June, 2015 unanimously decided to marginally reconstitute the Committee with immediate effect as follows:

- a) Shri Mahesh C. Mathur, the senior most member, as President (in place of Shri Krishna Murari) as also to continue as Hon. Treasurer.
- b) Shri Ajit K. Mathur, as Sr. Vice president in place of Shri Mahesh C. Mathur.
- c) As Immediate Past President (IPP), Shri Krishna Murari to continue as a member of the Managing Committee, with an appropriate, functional designation as required.
- d) All other existing members, Office bearers and Advisers will continue to be in the Managing Committee as before.

With his acceptance of the Committee's request, Shri Krishna Murari has now been designated as Editor & Member (PR) in the Managing Committee, to look after MAB's documentation, editing, website and general correspondence.

Distinctions & Achievements:

a) With great pleasure and pride we note that **Shri Satish C. Mathur, IPS**, has been elevated to the status of Director General of Police. Our heartiest congratulations to Shri Satish Mathur Sahib for his rise to this prestigious position and best wishes for further loftier heights in his career..

b) MAB's Sr. Vice President **Shri Ajit K. Mathur** turned a crusader to save the homes of 102 families of Campa Cola Housing Society at Worli, Mumbai.

The above mentioned Society had 102 families in seven buildings, two of whom were high rise ones, having 19 and 22 floors respectively. In year 2013 the Supreme Court of India had ordered demolition of all floors above fifth considered unauthorized in these two buildings. Court's order was a sensational news in the city and a bolt from the blue for the Society residents. Demolition of the upper floors of the two buildings would have effected not only the inmates of the said buildings but in other ones too due to structural instability.

As the Society were too shocked to know how to proceed further and had almost given up all hopes, Shri Ajit K. Mathur, a Real Estate Development professional, (who had a few friends living in the Society) stepped in at this crucial juncture to provide the much needed help against the builder's and Municipality's apathy. After prolonged fighting legal battles with them got orders for the retention of all floors of the two said buildings and also obtained Deemed Conveyance of the entire Land holding of Campa Cola Society from the "Competent Authority" concerned.

The Society members now consider Shri Ajit a Savior of the entire Campa Cola Compound working tirelessly behind the scene along with Mr. Ajay Mehta and other Society members, ultimately succeeding in bringing the Society out of troubled waters.

It may be specifically mentioned here that Shri Ajit K. Mathur rendered the whole of this service to the beleaguered Society totally free of cost, on humanitarian grounds and purely as an act of Philanthropy.

4. MAB Welfare Trust:

As members are aware, in May, 2005 MAB had established a charitable Trust named as "MAB Welfare Trust]" with the main aim of providing financial assistance for medical purposes to our members in distress, educational assistance and other charitable activities. It is funded by contributions from the general public, our members and other well wishers. Being registered under the Charitable Public Trusts Act, its donors are entitled to Tax exemption under Section 80G of the Income Tax Act., for which the Trust is authorized to issue necessary certificate.

Total contributions received so far comes to Rs. 2,51,359 only which need to be further augmented to make our Trust a viable one to meet our objective effectively.

We appeal to our members to generously contribute to this noble cause and also to try getting contributions from other well wishers, Corporate houses, etc. For processing contributions, kindly contact any member of the MAB Managing / Zonal Committee.

5. General:

a) **Shri Sushil Kumar / Mrs. Renu**, one of our veteran community members and Advisers to the Mg. Committee are, as members are already aware, sponsors of two Academic Awards (Smt. Gunno Devi Award and Ganpat Sahai Award (mentioned in para 6 below) which are continuing for the last more than 20 years. These awards (in cash) are regularly offered each year, as and when there are applications from qualifying and eligible candidates for the same.

Shri Sushil Kumar, in view of long passage of time since its initiation, has graciously raised the value of both these awards from the present Rs. 500 to Rs. 1000, applicable from the last Academic Session, i.e., for the session ending March/April, 2015.

. MAB appreciates their thoughtful gesture which would motivate our children to excel in studies and to try to achieve good grades in the said examinations..

b) **MAB Directory:** Members (including new comers) who have not yet received our Directory may please get their name listed with Shri S.B. Barellia, our Gen. Secretary. Efforts will be made to supply the Directory to them through the concerned Zonal Committees / during Zonal functions, etc.

*(Add. of Shri Barellia: Block 10B, Flat No. 3, Navjivan Socy, Mori Road, Mahim (W), Mumbai -400 016. Tel: 2446 7212 / Mob: 98204 27290)
em id: barellia@yahoo.com)*

c) It is seen that a number of our Newsletters and other communications sent by post come back undelivered as the addressee has shifted from the address listed with us. Similarly, many emails to members also get bounced as the concerned member may have changed his/her em id.

Members are therefore requested to please promptly inform us by email or phone of any change in their postal address, phone nos. and em id to enable us to update our record, website and mailing list.

d) For publishing the weddings and deaths in our Newsletters we generally depend upon information received from stray sources by word of mouth or, in some cases from information if received directly by a Mg. Comm., member.. It is likely that some such events may not come to our knowledge and hence regretfully missed in our Newsletter.

It is therefore requested that members of the concerned families may kindly inform us directly about all such events so that the information is included in our Newsletter.

Note: *For both (c) and (d) above, kindly contact Shri Barellia at address is given in para (b) above.*

d) An interesting article, “**Tradition of Music & Poetry in Mathur Community: An Amalgamation of Cultures**” received from its author, Shri Anuj Mathur of Gurgaon is attached herewith for your information and reading pleasure. It may be mentioned here that the contents are the author’s own work and views, and it is being published here with the author’s permission.

e) Already announced, it is once again mentioned to refresh member’s memory that a new Mandha, donated by Smt. Anuradha & Capt. Deepak Lal of Powai for use by Mumbai Mathurs is kept at the residence of Smt. Prabha Mathur (add; Chandan Vihar, Charan Singh Colony, M.V. Cross Road, Andheri (E), Mumbai – 400 093, Ph: 28324795 / Mob: 9820194007) and can be availed of by our members in need by prior appointment with her..

6. Academic Awards:

Following Academic awards sponsored through MAB are available for Mumbai based Mathur boys/girls

:

- (a) GUNNO DEVI AWARD - Rs. 1000 for the highest marks obtained in SSC Exam
- (b) GANPAT SAHAI AWARD - Rs. 1000 for the highest marks obtained in HSC Exam
- (c) MADHO LAL AWARD - Rs. 1500 for a boy and / or girl securing admission in MBBS course in a recognized Medical College anywhere in India.

NOTES:

- 1) For item under (a & b) above, minimum qualifying total marks are 80% or equivalent grading.
- 2) Applicant's parents (other than Life members) should have paid their annual Membership for the concerned Academic Year as well as for the year of application.
- 3) Applications for awards pertaining to the last Academic Session 2014-15 along with attested copy of Marks sheet be sent to Shri Barellia (add: in para above) latest by 30th October, 2015. Applications received later may not be considered.

7. Wedding bells (*since issue of our last Newsletter of February, 2015*)

*Happy marriages begin when we marry the one we love
And they blossom when we love the one we married*

Our heartiest congrats and best wishes to the newlyweds and their families for the wedding of **Kum. Neha**, d/o Smt. Rashmi & Shri Alok Mathur, (E-81 / Anushaktinagar) to **Rohit**, s/o Smt. Anjila & Shri Prem Prakash at Jaipur on 29-1-2015.

8. Obituaries: (*since issue of our last Newsletter of February, 2015*)

Kahee(n) jab din dhal jaye

Our heartfelt condolences to the members of the bereaved families and prayers for peace for the departed soul of Smt. Beena Mathur, beloved wife of Shri Ishwar Dayal Mathur (NW-43 / Kandivili-E) and loving mother of Shri Suvarat Dayal.

For and on behalf of MAB Managing Committee

Mahesh C. Mathur
(President)

Attch: Article: (4 pages)

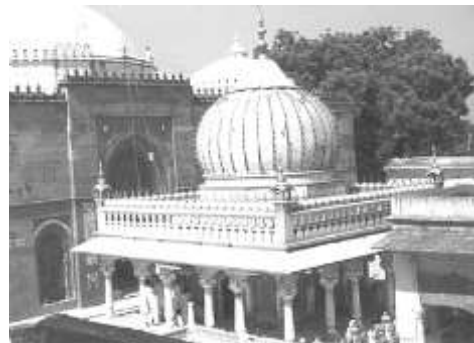
TRADITION OF MUSIC & POETRY IN THE MATHUR COMMUNITY: AN AMALGAMATION OF CULTURES

The *Samveda*, believed to be composed around two thousand years before the start of the Georgian calendar is considered to be the root of Indian classical music. *Gandharvaveda* with 36,0000 verses, an *Upveda* originating from the *Samveda*, was the ultimate authority on music and dance. Unfortunately no written copy of the *Gandharvaveda* existed. However *Natya Shastra*, a written summary of the *Gandharvaveda*, continued to be the foundation of Indian classical music and dance for over a thousand years. It was not until the twelfth century when *Hindustani* and *Carnatik* forms of Indian classical music as we know today began to take form. Sanskrit and the *Vedas* were never popular among the common masses and were restricted to the learned few, in accordance to the doctrines laid out by the *Brahmins*. Local forms of music therefore were equally popular and evolved over the centuries to be known as folk music.

Shabuddin Muhammad Ghauri, after his conquest of north-west India established the Delhi *Sultanat* and introduced the Islamic culture to India. For several centuries, however the Islamic culture was considered alien and was restricted to the royal quarters of Delhi and Lahore. Sufism, a more popular form of Islam made its way to India with the advent of *Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti* at Ajmer and due to its startling similarities with the concepts of *Vedanta*, spread like wild fire among the masses.



Dargah of Sufi Saint Moinuddin Chisti at Ajmer



Dargah of Nizamuddin Auliya at Delhi

Sufism preached the abandonment of all notions of dualism or multiplicity, the existence of an individual self and the need to realize unity with the divine. This resonated with the concept of *Advait* or non-duality from the *Upanishadas*. The Sufi practice of *Dhikr* [repeating the names of God] was no different from *Jaap* and *Kirtan* and the state of *Fitra* to be attained by a Sufi saint was equated to that of *Samadhi*. A strong cultural amalgamation has begun.

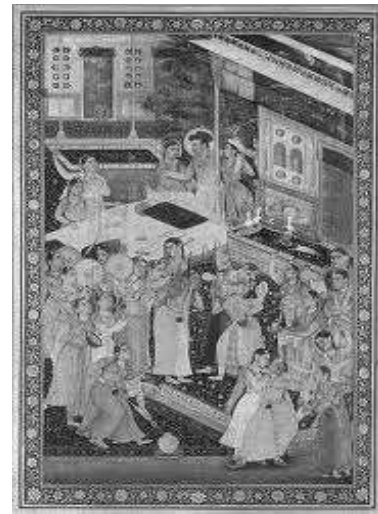
Not much is known about the musical and poetic traditions of our ancestors as they lived around the ancient kingdom of Mathura. It can at best be assumed that it would have been no different from the rest of communities prevalent around a thousand years back. *Zaban-e-Hindavi*, a predecessor to modern Hindi is what was spoken in the area around the kingdom of Mathura as is evident from the work of *Chand Bardoi* the court poet of *Prithviraj Chauhan*. The folk music of the *Braj-Bhoomi* would be

something very close to the music prevalent in those times. By the thirteenth century, *Kayasths* had begun to learn Persian, the court language of the Islamic kings and were holding positions of *Munshis* (account writers) and other literary positions in the then governments. With a strong Persian influence as part of the working class of the government and with the age old ties with the *Sanaatan Dharma* a new culture began to evolve amongst our community. It is therefore not a surprise that *Swami Haridas*, an ardent devotee of *Shri Banke Beharaji* at Vindraban who enjoys the status similar to a *Kul Devta* in the Mathur community today, was the *Ustad* of the legendary *Mian Tansen* in the court of *Mughal* emperor *Akbar*.

With the passage of time the *mehfils* and *dawats* of the *Mughal* courts transformed themselves into musical and culinary talents in our community.



Left to Right: Emp. Akbar, Mian Tansen, Swami Haridas



Emp. Jahangir Celebrating Aab-i-Passhi

Till date even the simplest *Rang Passhi* [which originated as *Aab-i-Passhi* in the Mughal palaces] ceremony, on the eve of *Holi* festival remains incomplete in a Mathur family without the recitation of couplets and the singing of *Holi* songs. *Buzurgs* of our community would still recall the *mehfils* and *mushairas* held inside the *baithaks* of the old world *havelis* and *kothies* at Delhi, Agra, Lucknow and other cities. This music was not exactly the same as that of other communities but had a distinct Persian influence. The lyrics were heavily borrowed from *Farsi* and the rendering was associated with a lot of *nazakat* and *tehzeeb*. Womenfolk would sing from inside the veil [*purda*] and would spend days preparing for the event. In fact young girls were trained by their mothers, aunts and grandmothers into classical and folk singing for such occasions. Such was the fascination with music that a newlywed bride would not pass the *Ruh-Numai* ceremony without presenting a sample or two of her musical capabilities. The *taanpura* was used extensively to support the singer, until the advent of the *harmonium* a century ago. This was accompanied by the *dhol* or *tabla* played by an elderly lady of the family. Remnants of these ceremonies still continue till date, though are now dying a slow death at the hands of rampant modernization. The classical forms of *Thumri*, *Dadra* and *Tarana* were customized to accommodate the lyrics of the prevalent Persian poets. Interestingly the lyrics were almost always oriented to refer to the eternal colors of *Holi* being played by *Radha Krishna* or the respected family members, very unlike the *ishq* and *shayari* of the royal quarters. In accordance with the culture at those

times, at no time could a reference to one's husband be made in any such songs. Despite these norms the tradition of music among the *Kayasth* ladies was considered a taboo for centuries and was looked down upon by other communities.

Young boys and men would also compose couplets narrating the colorful vibes around the festival of Holi. Mathur communities in some cities still continue this tradition by organizing *Hasya Kavi Sammelans* on the occasion of *Holi*. The words of *Mazru Lakhnavi* give a vivid example of the kind of Holi the *Ganga-Jamuni tezeeb* of our community enjoyed:

गुलज़ार खिलें हों परियों के, और मजलिस की तैयारी हो ।

कपड़ो पर रंग के छीटे से, खुश रंग अजब गुलकारी हों ।

The immortal composition of *Amir Khusro* believed to be the father of the *sitar* and *tabla* and one of the most devoted *shagirds* of *Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya*, “आज रंग है, हे मन रंग है री” and “सकल बन फूल रही सरसों” continue to be sung in our families in praise of *Radha-Krishna* as it is at the *dargah* of *Nizamuddin* in Delhi.



Amir Khusro was a shagird of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya. The advent of Sitar and Tabla is popularly attributed to him. His compositions are popular till date across communities and religions.

No wedding ceremony in our community is complete without the traditional “*Banna-Banni*” songs. Manifestations of the joy of the occasion these songs are composed and sung by almost all communities of the Hindi belt. What makes these songs unique to our community is once again the strong Persian influence that makes these compositions stand out. Months before a wedding, the women of the household would compose couplets to be sung at various ceremonies as part of the wedding. After centuries of amalgamation, we take pride to call our grooms as *Nausha* and the singing of *mubarakbadi* continues as a common tradition between the Mohamaddans and our community. The *sehra* songs sung bear strong similarity to the Islamic and Sufi worlds. “गूँधो री मालन फूलों का सेहरा” works for a *Mathur* groom as much as it did for *Hazrat Amir Khusro* centuries back. The *suhaag* songs sung in the by lanes of the Urdu speaking communities in Lahore or Faisalabad and the ones sung at the *Dholki* ceremony before *Nikah* in Hyderabad are no different from what our mothers and grandmothers sang for the long lasting *suhaag* for the *Bannis* of our community. “नजरिया लग जाएगी, मोरे हरियाले को कोई मत देखो” and “रञ्ची री तेरी मेहँदी लाल गुलाल” still reverberates in the streets of Pakistan and much as it does in our

wedding ceremonies. Similar synergies exist in the *Ghori*, *Kajal*, *Mehndi* and other *mehfil* songs. The *Jai Mala* compositions till date have been the pinnacle of our community's music. Based on hard core classical ragas, mostly *Bahaar*, *Desh* and *Kedaar*, these were sung at entry gate of the wedding site, with the bride waiting with a garland of beautiful handpicked flowers. The sweet scents of the flowers, the sprinkling of *gulab jal*, the serving of *Paan* and swabs of *attar*, accompanied with *bandishes* and *tuk-bandi* such as "सज रही जय माल आज सखी, मंगल बेला पिया मिलन की, पुलकित हर्षित गाये रही" are seldom to be found today.

While the strong Persian influence is evident here, there were some ceremonies and the associated music that has remained untouched even after centuries of amalgamation with the Islamic world. The ceremonies of "*Ganeshji Nyotna*, *Tel*, *Mandha*, *Bhaat* etc. continue to be purely traditional and the songs sung have a deep rooted Hindu folk influence. *Mathur* families that migrated to the *Rajputana* states several centuries back, families settled in parts of Madhya Pradesh and Bihar do not demonstrate the strong Persian influence and are closer in customs and music to the local communities. The music and traditions of the *Mathur Gotras* originating in Ajmer, Alwar, Jodpur, Jhalawar and Bundi are a lustrous manifestation of what we know today as the *Marwari/Rajasthani* culture. The tradition of folk dance, by women is very popular here till date and is the hallmark of every *Mathur* wedding. The composition and music here is more liberal with touches of humor and gives more flexibility to women.

The creative genius was not just restricted to oratory skills but also manifested in couplets or *dohas* that were recited by the bridegroom before the *vida* ceremony in a wedding. These *dohas* were also written along with the *Tihals* (Saris/dresses for the bride or family members) each one unique, with loads of blessings and auspicious wishes. Various forms of poetry also flourished as part of the *farishtas* (lists), *srja* (family trees) and *isabnabisi* shared before the *lagan/sagai* ceremony in marriages. Male members would often compose couplets or *shayari* that would steal the limelight of the *mehfils*. Music and poetry adorned all important ceremonies and not just marriages. Singing of *Deviyan* during *Navratras* and *jacchas* on *Chati* and *Masoran* ceremonies etc. continued across the year.

In the changed world order where community boundaries are diminishing, the all pervasive media greying the boundaries across cultures and the engulfing western influences, there is work at hand for all of us. Centuries of traditions in music and poetry not only need to be preserved but also enriched further to be handed over to the generations to come as a rich cultural heritage of our community.

ANUJ MATHUR