

Brisbane Celebrates the Cultural Evening

Amateur Performance Rivals the Professionals



The evening of 22nd September 2013 will be a memorable one for the Punjabi Brisbanites and drama lovers. I have been hearing rumours for a while, of and on, that something 'interesting' was in the brew; but scale and quality of what unfolded was truly amazing.

For the starters, the programme commenced right on time – 6 pm, which is no mean feat, as late-start is a feature of all such functions. The evening can be divided into three courses – music, dance, and of course the main feature – a stage play.

The musical performances, mostly by amateur singers, were very engaging, in particular Harlene, who rendered a solid and mature performance for her age and experience. Devinder 'Sunny' and co, belted out the celebrated number of NFK, complete with subtle classical nuances. Not to forget, the local cultural stalwart – Baldev Nijjar, who also formally released his latest album 'Punjab' on this occasion.

The dance performances were the standard Punjabi fare of Bhangra teams. It does not matter how many times you have seen them before, although IndoZ team was a new entrant in the arena, they never fail to thrill. The colour, the rhythm, the vigour – it is all part of modern choreographed Bhangra performance (but how do I long for the old-style with live Dhol!)

Let us now examine the main feature of the evening, a stage play - 'Chatra Chor'. The curtain raiser act was a truly 'wow' event. The quality of set, the attention to detail, was absolutely remarkable. That also goes for the second set, 'king's court' too, which presented a very lavish setting. Given that all the actors were amateurs and many 'first-timers' on the stage, I was hard pressed to spot any bloopers. My best pick will be the character of 'wazir' who portrayed the character with the right balance and posture. There was a bit of 'over acting'

but that is par for the course – heck our role model is Bollywood, the benchmark for all aspirants. The plot was typically period-traditional, at times predictable, but no less enjoyable. The sound quality, at times, was less than perfect, however I fully appreciate the fact that managing eight or so radio mikes is a complex and cumbersome job. In summary, to stage this play was a mammoth and complex task, and I take my hat off to Rashpal Hayer who pulled it through wearing many hats of writer, director and producer.

Last but not least, I applaud all the ‘behind the scenes’ organisers, facilitators, and supporters, who added a real professional touch to the evening. I, and I am sure my fellow art lovers, shall look forward to the next instalment. Yes, Brisbane we have got talent!

-Sarvjit Goraya

(Photo courtesy of Dalvir Halwarvi)