

# B4U Hosts 'Sangeet Sandhya & Dairo' In Atlanta

BY MAHADEV DESAI

Atlanta: Well-known B4U entrepreneur Nadir Jiwani organized the scintillating 'Sangeet Sandhya and Dairo', by Bhanubhai Vora and Tripti Chhaya's 's famed Mumbai based Swarkinnari Group, at the Berkmar High School Hall in

Vora cracked a few rib tickling jokes. Speaking about the ubiquitous cell phones, he joked that Sita would not have been kidnapped by Ravana if she and Ram had cell phones with them! Ahmedavadis have a reputation for being stingy—that's why they don't buy bananas, because the peels have to be discarded! "It is good to be a



*Nadirbhai Jiwani thanking the 'Swarkinnari Group'. Photo by Mahadev Desai.*

Lilburn, Georgia on Sunday August 30. The event was graced by the attendance of leading community dignitaries.

Nadirbhai welcomed all and introduced Swarkinnari Group's co-Founders Bhanu Vora, and Tripti Chhaya and five members of their troupe." Swarkinnari Group is no stranger to Atlanta. Memories of their scintillating 'Bapushahi Dairo' last year at the Sardar Patel Bhavan, Gujarati Samaj are still fresh in minds of many fans. The 21 year old Group has traveled to many parts of the world. The Group has been in the US since August 12 and will be performing shows till October 5. It has a wide ranging repertoire including raas-garba, Jain Stavans, bhajans, wedding songs, Gujarati and Hindi songs, ghazals and quawwali, and hasya-ras(jokes). It has also produced three CDs of uplifting bhajans. This year, the Group includes talented singer Mazhar who is proficient in singing not only both Gujarati and Hindi songs, but especially songs of famed Mohd. Rafi. After welcoming all and thanking Nadirbhai, Bhanubhai commented, "Through our 'Dairo', we try to give our audience a glimpse into the rich culture of Gujarat, known for its iconic poets like Meghani, Narsi Mehta, and Kalapi, to name a few, and it's hospitality, which can make even God forget his paradise!" We enjoy coming to Atlanta and performing here because the audience here is very warm-hearted, appreciative and receptive. We want to make the program full of fun and laughter, so please feel free to join in and also send in your requests."

Tripti Chhaya began with a beautiful recitation of 'vigneshwaraya vardaaya surapriyaya.' and with Bhanubhai and Mazhar sang 'ae malik tere bande hum'. Tripti sang an old time Gujarati favorite 'Chhanu re chhapnu' while Mazhar gave a foretaste of his singing talent with the vintage song 'pankhidaane aa pinjaroo'. The audience had warmed up by now and soon erupted into spontaneous rousing sing-along as the three singers and the musicians raised the tempo. Requests for more choice songs began pouring in from the audience. 'Dama Dam Masta Kalandar' rocked the audience. In between songs,

vegetarian because you don't catch Chikungunya fever! He also gave amusing examples of spoken Gujarati in different parts of Gujarat. It was hilarious to hear Bhanubhai mimicking Gujarati housewives arguing with servants, milkman and taxi drivers in broken Gujarati and Hindi!

After a brief interval, Nadirbhai thanked Bhanubhai Vora and Group for proving a very entertaining 'Dairo'. He thanked the sponsors, Mustafa Ajmeri, Kamrubhai, indefatigable volunteers Sanjay Patel, Kalpesh (Patel Bros.), Darshan Shah, Upendra Bhatt, media including TV Asia, Bhavesh Shah (Mumbai Masala), Sandeep Savla and Rohit Patel (Sound system) and the audience for making it an unforgettable evening.

With unbounding zest and joy, Vora, Tripti and Mazhar regaled the audience with old gems like 'kasumbi no rang', 'tari aankh no affini with Rafi's 'Chaudhvin ka chand ho', and famed Gujarati composer Avinash Vyas's song 'Tari vanki re paghaldinu'. Bhanubhai and Mazhar were so jazzed up, they got on their feet, clapped and waved their hands as they sang. Triptiben sang few more songs including popular 'jeete bhi lakdi, marte bhi lakdi' and a medley of bhajans. Mazhar sang a few more timeless songs; 'huye hum jinke liye barbad'; 'suhani raat dhal chuki' and 'yaad kiya dil ne kahaan ho tum'. At the insistent requests from the audience, Triptiben sang Jesal Toral song, 'Paap taru'. Moved by the song, a member of the audience got on stage and began singing the duet with Triptiben. The musicians too performed with gusto, displaying amazing teamwork. The audience was lapping it all up. Requests for more songs piled up.

Sadly the curtains had to come down. After four hours of exhilarating fun and journey down the memory lane, the captivating and inimitable show ended with one more request song, 'Chitthi aai hai'. Bhanubhai requested all to preserve and promote Gujarati culture and language. All stood up to sing in unison patriotic songs 'ye watan, mere watan', and 'mile sur mera tumhara'. A standing ovation greeted the troupe, as Vora introduced each member of the team; Deepak Bhavsar (keyboard); Sujit Vandur (tabla); Pramod More (Dholak); Bindesh Pande (Side rhythm), Mazhar (singer), and Group's co-founder and singer Tripti Chhaya.

# Ganesh Chaturthi Celebrations Bring Back Fond Memories

BY JYOTHSNA HEGDE

Atlanta: Ever feel nostalgic around the Ganesh Chaturthi time in US? Do you miss the decorated tents, blaring music, or simply a chance to visit Ganapathi Bappa in a public place? This August 23rd, the Ganesha

dusk. A special prayer called "Ganesh Vratam" was performed by Priest Suresh Kumar in addition to the regular Archanas (prayers) by Priest Seshu Puranam throughout the day. Evening came alive with devotional and movie song performances by

Ram Durvasula's 'Swaralahri'. Ganesh story recital by Latha Vedurupaka and Telugu-to-English Ganesh Story recital by Syamala Cherukumalli also entertained the audience. "People continued to pour in even after 10:30 in the night" Seshu Puranam tells us. The event had about 1000 visitors and free dinner was served to everyone by Amma Kitchen.

"It is interesting to see different people from all over India came together to celebrate" observed Raj Koduru, Festival Coordinator. Priest Seshu Puranam said the community really got into the festive spirit and it's brought back great memories for those involved. "We've had some really unique and interesting

festival and I am sure we will bring in more people next year" Srinivas Cherukumalli added.

Puranam and Raj Koduru are thankful to the City of Alpharetta, Fire & Police Department for their support. They also extend their gratitude to volunteers who decorated the tent, coordinated parking, served prasadam and helped clean up after the event. A Ganapathi open to public, regular and special poojas performed by priests, concluded by music and food, a clear concept to bring back fond memories associated with the Ganesha Chaturthi back home was truly a memorable experience to anyone who attended the event.



*Photo by Raja Photography.*

festivities in Alpharetta co-ordinated by Friends of Alpharetta, GA gave us the opportunity to be transported back in time and space to India. The event was sponsored by the Amma Kitchen Indian Restaurant, A1-Education Services, Sai Murali Indian Restaurant, India Plaza, Spice Hut, Virtue Group, RajaPhotography.com and other individual sponsors.

A sprawling white tent spread across the lawn festooned with bright and vibrant color decorations inside. A five ft tall stunning Ganapathi welcomed everyone. Priest Seshu Puranam tells us that the Ganapathi statue was ordered about 6 months ago and came all the way from Coimbatore, Tamilnadu. The day was filled with activities from dawn to



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