

Celebrating 75 years of India's independence – Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

On Saturday evening at Usher Hall the dominant colours used to decorate inside and out were green, orange and white – the tricolour of India's flag.

The evening was staged by the Consulate General of India in Edinburgh along with the Indian Council for Cultural Relations as part of the 75-week-long celebrations. Shri Bijay Selvaraj, Consul General of India, Edinburgh opened proceedings by reiterating the words of India's Prime Minister who hopes that in the next 25 years India will become a fully developed country.

But each and every group of performers who took to the stage

depicting the journey of the last 75 years was colourful in its own right. There were reenactments of hockey and cricket victories with much cheering and clapping from the audience who filled the hall right up to the domed roof.

Families gathered in their best clothes with young and old watching the entertainment set out in seven chapters reflecting the seven and a half decades of independence, with equally huge cheers for both the winner of the Nobel prize for literature Rabindranath Tagore, born in Bengal and the cricketer Sachin Tendulkar who was born in the Maharashtra state. Maharashtra is also the home of Bollywood and we learned that India is known for the largest film production business in the world.

The quote of the night was "Go East, Go West, my India is the best", and the dance performances then took place in order of a state's geography within the continent of 1.3 billion people. Noting that many people in the west today talk of mindfulness and practice yoga, one of the dances reflected some yoga moves, as India is the birthplace of yoga.

All of the hundreds of performers were beautifully dressed and performed with a great deal of passion and enjoyment.

Some photos are included here but there are more galleries shown on our [Facebook](#) page.



Shri Bijay Selvaraj Consul General of India, Edinburgh Photo:
© 2022, Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com

One of the speakers, Dr Bashabi Fraser, CBE, who is Professor Emeritus at Edinburgh Napier University in English and Creative writing, and was chosen as Outstanding Woman of Scotland by the Saltire Society in 2015, read a poem she had specially written for the occasion.



Dr Bashabi Fraser CBE Photo: © 2022, Martin P. McAdam
www.martinmcadam.com

Dignitaries from all over Scotland were in attendance, with our own Depute Lord Provost, Cllr Lezley Marion Cameron addressing the audience and welcoming all to the event. The two previous Lord Provosts, Donald Wilson and Frank Ross were also in the audience argon with several councillors.

The Depute Lord Provost said: “Consul General Selvaraj, Consul Singh, ministers, members of the UK Parliament, members of The Scottish Parliament, Lord Provosts, Depute Lord Provosts, Provosts, elected members, distinguished guests, on behalf of the Lord Provost and the citizens of Edinburgh, it is my pleasure to be with you here this evening and welcome you officially to our historic Usher Hal as you continue celebrations marking the 75th Independence Day of India with today’s cultural programme.



Depute Lord Provost Lezley Marion Cameron and Deputy Provost of Aberdeenshire, Ron McKail. Photo: © 2022, Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com

“We have much to be joyful about in our fantastic city, as we are returning to gatherings and traditional cultural celebrations. And Edinburgh have a long and common heritage with India and the wider Indian diaspora, whether residing studying or visiting the capital. Edinburgh also has an international reputation as a welcoming, inclusive and respectful city with a strong ethnic mix reflecting a broad range of nations and faiths, and which collectively form an important component in our capital city’s social fabric.

This is reflected in a number of accolades including Britain’s best city to visit, the world’s best city for well being, best city for students to live and learn, the most charitable and giving city in the UK, and most recently, Scotland’s best place to raise a family and finally, the best city in the world.

“Edinburgh’s Indian population, those of Indian heritage and the wider Indian diaspora will continue to provide a strong

and much valued contribution to the very high quality of life that our city aspires to provide, and which is measured internationally.

The Indian and diaspora community also contributes in so many other ways, for instance, in promoting traditional music and dance as part of our recent 2022 festivals, and with return of our annual colourful Indian festivals, and other local civil society events.

Edinburgh University is continuing to welcome many hundreds of Indian students to courses whilst improving ties with Gujarat Biotech University. Indian workers returning to form a key employee group for the city's substantial retail, leisure and service sectors. It was wonderful to hear the national anthem earlier and it is also worth remembering that over the last seven and a half decades, we have witnessed the great nation of India grow, improving as a community as a society, and as an economy and emerging as a world power house and a leader in so many fields.

"May I congratulate you all in this regard, and we in the city of Edinburgh look forward to continuing to build upon our current strong foundation of inclusion, cooperation, engagement and partnership. Together with a newfound sense of pace on joint initiatives which contribute to our collective recovery and well being. I wish you all great happiness in your cultural celebrations this evening, and those are going to continue in the months ahead."



L-R Hitesh Mehta, Mrs Fiona Vine, Major Stuart Vine, Scottish and North Irish Yeomanry. Photo: © 2022, Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com



Photo: © 2022, Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com



Photo: © 2022, Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com



Photo: © 2022, Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com



Photo: © 2022, Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com



Photo: © 2022, Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com



One of the performers who danced a folk dance of Uttarakhand State. Photo: © 2022, Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com



Photo: © 2022, Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com



Photo: © 2022, Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com



Photo: © 2022, Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com



Photo: © 2022, Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com