

Building relationships between nations through music



Debashis Konar
Times News Network

The embassy of France and Alliance Française are making an effort to strengthen the friendship between India and France through music. They had even organised a show of French music at the Calcutta Music School on Tuesday, which was unfortunately cancelled at the last minute due to the attack on USIS, Kolkata. At a press conference at the Taj earlier, Alliance Française director, DANIEL KUHN had described how classical music can help to bond ties between the two nations and he hoped that the cultural exchange

programmes will help to flourish the relationship between India and France, both the nations being culturally rich.

FEDRICK LIZEIR, conductor of the French music group described the genesis of French music which were initially without notations and later how notations were put on paper. Two violinists ALAIN MARTINEZ and JULIET RIANDY played Mozart and also their new songs. The Mosquito dance was specially enjoyable.

Times of India (Calcutta)
23/01/02
Alliance Française

Lust for love

THE *Fakir Of Benares* is a love story in a different form. It's an opera. A love story with an Indian theme and a lyrical music score, it depicts the social and cultural environment of the early 1990s.

The story of Sundra, an ugly young woman rejected by society, who longs for love, the operatic dramatisation takes a happy turn when Sundra meets Kandour, a handsome but blind young man. The two fall in love, but then Alibeck, a fakir who claims to have special curative powers, arrives on the scene to give the story a new twist. While Kandour's hopes of being able to see his beloved are aroused, Sundra is terribly scared that he, too, will reject her. In the end, she does help him apply the magic balm on his eyes, but by the time he recovers his sight, she faints.

The Fakir Of Benares was composed by Leo Maunel in Paris in 1922, successfully performed and forgotten, only to be resurrected recently by Priya Wacziarg, who plays the lead role. Presented by Delhi Tourism under the Ganga-Jamni festival,



The Fakir Of Benares: still from an earlier production

the opera has been produced by Francis Wacziarg and directed by Muzaffar Ali. The costumes are by Meera Ali, and the sets by Nissar Elana. The conductor of the orchestra and director of the musical score is Frederic Ligier. He will be leading teams from the Delhi Symphony Orchestra and the Capital City Minstrels.

The opera will premier in the Capital on February 27, and will be followed by two public shows on March 1 and 2.

—Rajiv Tikoo

The Financial Express
24/02/02