

# GEETIKA AND MANTIKA – AN ARANGETRAM TO REMEMBER A Review by Suryakanthi Tripathi (Former DG ICCR)



*A Perfect Pair*

The two sisters, Geetika and Mantika Haryani, sixteen and thirteen years old respectively, had their Bharatanatyam Arangetram at the ISKON Auditorium in Delhi on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2009. For the young dancers, it was an evening to demonstrate how well they had learnt the classical dance over the past seven years.

Smt. Mala Murli of Nritya Geetanjali, who has distinguished herself as a Bharatanatyam guru, had instilled in both her students a level of confidence that allowed them to give of

their best. Her own sensibility and individuality was also very evident in the dances performed by the two sisters.

The accompanying musicians enhanced the dance performance, particularly Shri K. Venkateshwaran, who had a rich voice and proved to be an able and versatile singer for the recital.

The recital followed the traditional order beginning with the Alarippu, followed by a Jatiswaram, Shabdam, Varnam, Padams and finally the Tillana.

The Varnam, as expected, was the piece-de-resistance of the evening. The dance, set to the Sanskrit composition of Maharaja Swati Tirunal and describing the ten avatars of Lord Vishnu, required skill in abhinaya, tala and in the execution of intricate adavu jatis. With their graceful movements, neat footwork and good coordination, the dancers drew the spontaneous applause of the audience more than once.

Their recital concluded with a fast-paced Tillana, in Ragam Hindolam set to Adi Talam, in which the sisters performed the complicated adavus and tirmanam with joyful élan.

The Arangetram came together in all aspects – the guru, the dancers, the musicians and the dances. The dedicated enthusiasm of both the teacher and her talented disciples was very evident that Sunday evening. Their debut on stage is something both Geetika and Mantika can justifiably be proud of. If they continue to train and practice with the same degree of commitment, we will have, in the coming years, two very fine exponents of this great dance form.

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# The Sense of an Audience- Keval Arora's Kolumn



Most discussions – *and* demonstrations, now that the next edition of the Bharangam is upon us – of what ails contemporary theatre rarely take into account the role of the audience. In an environment where the audience's contribution to the making of meaning is barely acknowledged, it is unlikely that its responsibility for the state of the theatre will ever be admitted. Audiences do of course get noticed, but only in the context of dwindling attendance at plays, or strategies to entice spectators back to the theatre. Such 'concern' for the audience masks a worryingly patronising attitude. It sees spectators as little more than passive receptors of other people's intention, dry vessels waiting open-mouthed for the filling. One may as well not invoke the audience for all the insight that such invocations offer.

At first glance, it seems logical to exclude the audience from analyses of the theatre, for the audience does not concoct the brew being poured down its gullet. In fact, it often resists being bottle-fed and sometimes even resents the after-taste. So, on the face of it, no audience can be held *directly* responsible for the spectacle that theatre often makes of itself.

However, theatregoers cannot thereby wash their hands of the matter. The sense of an audience – an expectation of whom the play is being performed for – creeps into the decisions that performers make, both before and during the enactment, to such an extent that it shapes the final outcome as directly as if the audience had sat in on the creative process. This happens all the time, regardless of how accurate or credible the

group's idea of its target audience may be. There is, therefore, a point beyond which audiences can no longer claim 'innocence'. Spectators cannot escape responsibility for what is performed for them. Or, put more accurately, for what they accept as passable in performance. Complicity is structured into the relation between performers and spectators, even if the relation is a silent one.

Perhaps, the fact of complicity stems from such silence. No complicity is as demeaning as that in silent acquiescence. This is especially glaring in the theatre where performers and spectators inhabit the same physical space, and where exchange is immediate, tangible and therefore possible. It can be argued that it is naïve to expect a dialogue between patrons and performers when there is so little traffic between theatre groups themselves. Some groups attempt to reach out and 'talk' to its spectators beyond the footlights, but most are content or resigned to interpret their audience through ticket-sales and applause.

Nevertheless, I'd imagine that the responsibility for creating a stimulating theatre rests equally – if not finally – on those who dole out good money to see these performances. The failure of a play is often the failure of its audience, especially when spectators are unwilling, whether through politeness or indifference, to call a spade a spade. When was the last time a Delhi audience collectively protested against the quality of a production? In silently ingesting whatever is on offer – or, in protesting quietly and privately – spectators do a great disservice to those who have stopped going to the theatre, as also to those who stay away from it.

The argument that audiences are powerless to effect change is not as reasonable as it initially appears. Accomplices do not have power handed to them on a platter. What sullen accomplices do have is unlimited opportunity to seize power for change. 'Ticket-sales' and 'applause', for instance, are two vocabularies through which spectators can register their

protest. Theatre groups understand these vocabularies, for no group can afford to alienate that miniscule minority which still visits the theatre. Can you imagine any group churning out tripe, production after production, if nobody sat through it all? (As the old Sixties slogan ran: 'Suppose they gave a war and nobody came<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>'.) It is all very well for us high-minded types to have criticised Aamir Raza Husain and his theatre group Stagedoor for having inundated Delhi with a particular variety of prurient bedroom comedy a decade ago. The fact is that the Kamani auditorium had then run to full houses, and night after night, you couldn't get tickets half an hour before the show. Husain was merely giving the audience what it wanted; it's the spectators who turned out to be the idiots and the fools.

But Stagedoor is a soft target, one about which it is impossible to disagree. A less obvious arena of disaffection is the NSD Repertory. With most of its productions bearing the *chhap* of vintage years, several of the Repertory's productions today seem like museum pieces that are not noticeably different from the memories of past productions enshrined in its theatre museum. Yet, the Repertory manages an audience, an army of the faithful that sees nothing wrong about being caught in a time warp. So, the NSD Repertory blithely continues on its narcissistic path of self-imitation.

In both these cases, the audience's uncritical acceptance of the plays pre-empts self-evaluation. Surely the idea that theatre ought to reflect the aspirations of the people is not intended as a re-formulation within aesthetics of the law of supply and demand. But that is precisely how so much of so little worth gets by: after all, runs the argument, how can something be bad if the audience doesn't think it so? That old argument of supply & demand turns a contingent moment into a principle, and confers virtue upon the opportunist. Whenever there is a demand, there will always be somebody willing to supply the need. As to which is the cause and which the

effect, you can argue yourself blue in the face and remain none the wiser. One way out of the trap, as some do-gooders have tried, is to unilaterally decide what is beneficial for the audience, irrespective of what the audience thinks is good for itself, and sanguinely offer just that for the edification and pleasuring of a benighted public. And, in the process, move from undermining the theatre from below to corroding it from the top.

Why should a group of seemingly normal people lapse into appalling taste when assembled? What is the combustion that makes otherwise alert individuals metamorphose into an uncritical, slumbering mass that is content to be led by the nose? A common explanation is that Delhi's theatre-going fraternity is a large club; and it is difficult to be honest, even with oneself, within these spiralling circles of friendship.

But social niceties alone cannot explain an audience's generosity of spirit when confronted by a poverty of imagination and taste. Of the other reasons, the feel-good factor is surely relevant. In the peculiar arrangements of our mainstream theatre, it is remarkable how a public that is lukewarm about the prospect of taking plays seriously, actually finds its anxieties evaporating into a careless geniality once it walks through the auditorium doors. The reasons for such geniality may vary. It could be a media-fuelled expectation of a good time, the grapevine recommendation of a place where "it's happening", or simply a forced attendance with obligatory smiles in tow. The consequence, however, is always the same: a frame of mind conditioned by expectation or habit into evading any kind of alert and critical response.

Watching a play is not an autonomous activity. Peter Brook defines an act of theatre as, "A man walks across [an] empty space while someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged". But his

definition leaves out the vital dimension of community that characterises the theatrical experience. (Isn't that why watching a play all alone in an auditorium leaves you feeling so terribly lonely?) The act of collective viewing has its own rhythm, which is distinct from, say, the rhythm of watching the TV by oneself. We've all sensed, as part of an audience, how our responses have been imperceptibly but steadily shaped by the responses of others in the auditorium. This is exhilarating when you are one with everybody else, but it can become enormously repressive should you find yourself out of sync with the rest of the crowd.

In non-consensual situations, collective viewing constricts free response by jostling and eroding individual stances of resistance to the performance. The invidious push 'n' shove between people of different persuasions and profiles reduces an audience's collective potential for reading a performance against the grain. This is why the spectator, as a member of that amorphous collective, has less interpretative control over the text than the single reader engaged in a private act of reading. Sanity is restored only when the individual spectator withdraws into looking upon his neighbours as another kind of text.

Surprisingly, spectators are often unwilling to exercise even a minimal control: witness our readiness to vocalise our appreciation of plays but not our dissent. Laughing and applauding are okay, but booing is out. By a similar compact, spectators happily exchange evaluations of the performance's technical features – acting, costumes, etc – but are far more circumspect in reacting to the meaning of the play.

Nowhere do we find a better instance of such degradation of individual spectator response than in the mass hysteria evident now when an entire nation of TV-gazers has been turned into one huge audience of the grand theatre called Mumbai 26/11. Such is the pressure of the people's response (as selectively promoted through privately-owned media channels)

that the bloody, messy business of killing and revenge has been cleansed and glorified through the quavering rhetoric of patriotism and sacrifice into a superior civilisational activity. (Interestingly, the hawks talk of killing, while the doves talk of sacrifice. The distinction between the two remains blurred because for both, war as a routine response is here to stay.) There are a few sane voices that refuse to be swept up in this general feeling. But where are these to be heard in the clamour of the warmongers who glibly espouse counter-violence as a simple solution to complex problems?

Be it the larger theatre or the small play, failings in public discourse can usually be traced back to the failure of audiences – and, to our irresponsible habit of lapping up whatever is served. So much then for our audiences' ability to make sense.

An earlier version of this article was first published in FIRST CITY (July 1999)

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## News Flashes

### As they Happen

the following events at Habitat World, IHC this month have been cancelled:

Jan 24th |7:30pm|**THEATRE**|Theatre World & The Valaya Magic Foundation present Untitled, a solo performance by Lushin Dubey. Dir. Arvind Gaur. Music by Dr. Sangeeta Gaur.

Jan 29th |7:00pm|**DANCE**|Kuchipudi Dance Academy presents Omkaram Viswarupam.

IHC regrets the inconvenience caused.



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India International Centre, 40 Max Mueller Marg, New Delhi

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**Osian's launches the  
Publishing House with the  
release of Bachchanalia: The**

# Films and Memorabilia of Amitabh Bachchan



Osian's Connoisseurs of Art is announced the official launch of a full-fledged Publishing and Design House. The first publication to be launched post this announcement is Bhawana Somaaya's and Osian's Centre for Archiving, Research & Development's *Bachchanalia: The Films and Memorabilia of Amitabh Bachchan*, a book dedicated to the life and works of arguably one of the greatest personalities of Indian and world cinema – Mr. Amitabh Bachchan. The book is a collector's item and a unique documentation of the megastars filmography illustrated through rare and exclusive film posters from the Osian's Archive Collection.

The Osian's Archive & Library research team has put together this most comprehensive visual homage to the supreme energies of the actor by representing his aura through all the 150 odd films he has acted in, in the last forty years. Osian's archives hold the largest collection of Indian and world film

memorabilia as well as the largest collection of popular cultural art inspired by Mr. Bachchan.

An exclusive exhibition of film memorabilia associated with Mr. Bachchan will be on display at the launch. The experience of being in such close proximity to some of the finest original film posters, lobby cards and photographs of the legend will be unique and unparalleled.

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# **The Most Magnificent Palace in the East: The Red Fort of Shah Jahan, the King of the World – A lecture delivered at the ATTIC, New Delhi By Anisha Shekhar Mukherji**



Good Evening. I would like to begin my talk today on the Red Fort of Delhi, once called '*The Most Magnificent Palace in the East*', with an image, which most of us present here—if not *all* of us—will instantly recognize. In fact, so would four year old children across the country who have just entered formal school!

This image is a part of the Red Fort's outer walls. the Lahori Gate, to be precise, atop which the Indian Flag proudly waves. Each Independence Day, it is this view of the Fort that we salute, that is telecast through the country and routinely

printed on the front pages of our newspapers. Ironically, however, this overwhelming focus on the Red Fort as a *national icon* bound so inseparably with the identity of independent India and its struggle for freedom against British rule, has actually directed attention *away* from its unique design. A design which has inspired at different times and varying levels, all manner of art and architecture within and beyond the Mughal Empire. Sikh religious buildings, Rajput palaces, residences of noblemen and of ordinary people.

Nonetheless today, despite the fact that the '*Lal Quila*' is so deeply symbolic of not just Delhi but also of India, used to advertise products from Basmati rice to restaurants in Soho in London; for many of us the 15th August view is all there is to the Red Fort. We literally and figuratively stop short at its Lahori Gate, rarely bothering to proceed within it or wonder about its long and chequered historical existence. For instance, how many of us realise that even the familiar view with the mound and the ramparts from where the Prime Minister addresses the nation, is actually the *antithesis* of the Fort's original design?! The original entrance to the Lahori Gate built **three hundred and fifty years ago** in the reign of the 5th Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan, was straight and open to view. It was not hidden by a wall or by a mound, in keeping with Shah Jahan's actual and metaphorical accessibility to his people. The outer wall in front of the Lahori Gate which we see today in fact, reverses the very notion of the Fort's original function and appearance. This wall as well as that in front of the other main public Gateway into the Fort, the Delhi Gate was made on the orders of Shah Jahan's son, Aurangzeb, shortly after he defeated his brothers in the battle for the Mughal Throne, and imprisoned his ailing father at the Agra Fort. Shah Jahan is reported to have then written to him, "Dear Son, you have made the Fort a bride and put a veil upon her face.."



All representations of the Fort since then, whether in drawings of 19th century Delhi that we just saw, or the Delhi Tourism's official calendars in the 20th century, have been defined by this forbidding veil in front of its public Gateways, which was made even more opaque by the British during their takeover of the Fort. This occurred in 1857, a little more than two hundred years after the founding of the Fort. I would like to draw aside this veil, which has obscured not just the physical view of the Red Fort's interior, but also changed its relationship with its city of Shahjahanabad, and take you within the huge Fort today. To revisit the spaces in it and give you some idea of what it contained originally, what it symbolized in the Mughal way of life, why the pioneering British historian-explorer James Fergusson termed it the most magnificent palace in the East, what is its relevance today and how it should be regarded and conserved. This understanding of the Fort that I am going to present has been pieced together after sifting through the various depictions of its past existences available today including the Mughal dynasty's court routine recorded in official court chronicles and Mughal miniature paintings, and personal diaries of individuals associated with the Fort, European travelogues, photographs and drawings and after studying the original Mughal structures that presently exist in the Fort. Interestingly, a map dating from the eighteenth century exists in the Oriental and India Office Collection at the British Library manner in which they exist today, with the original configuration.



The built structures have been shaded black in the plans of the Fort, before and after the destruction. A photograph of the area from the top of Jama Masjid shortly after the demolition also shows the empty spaces around the Fort, making it an island severed of its connecting links to Shahjahanabad.

TO BE CONTINUED...

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# Are You an Open or Closed Book? by: Sharon Moist



Are you open to learning something you already know? They say that “you can’t teach an old dog new tricks.” But what about people? Do you think it’s possible to teach someone something new, even if they feel like they already know it?

My father is a voracious reader, reading the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal every day, along with the stacks of books he has by his bedside. You see, my dad’s of the belief that just one good idea is the worth the price of the book. That philosophy has now stuck with me; thus the stacks

of books alongside my own bed, as well! (In fact, I swear that between the two of us, we could open our own library!)

When I first started out in my career, I was always buying whatever acting book caught my eye. Yes, I probably had 2 or 3 others on the same subject already, but if I didn't have this particular book, I would add it to my collection. Why? Because a new book often gave me a different point of view – especially if it was written from a different author.

For example: Right now I have about 4 or 5 books in my library, from different casting directors, on the casting process. Now some people may say, "Well, wouldn't one book do the trick?" And my response would have to be "No" because there are hundreds of casting directors out there, all with different thoughts, opinions and processes they use in casting a project. Therefore, if I just read one book, from one casting director, I could (potentially) miss out on information from another casting director that may actually help me land a job. Make sense?

The same situation applies to workshops. I recently attended a workshop on marketing, and as I introduced myself to the two people sitting next to me, I experienced two very different conversations. The gentleman on my right told me that this was the third workshop he had attended this year on marketing, and that he was really enjoying these workshops because even though he knew most of this information already, he had gotten a couple of new ideas that he was now using in his business and these ideas had already doubled his rate of return – in effect more than covering the cost of the workshop and all of his travel expenses.

Next, I spoke with the woman on my left, and she, too, told me that she already knew all of this information. She also told me that the only reason she was there was because it was another tax deduction for her business and it was a great way to play hooky for a few days without having to do any work.



Two very different people with two very different mindsets, and I would be willing to bet that you could guess which of these two people had a successful career and which one did not.

Remember: All it takes is one really great idea to change your life, and when it comes to your acting career, the one question you need to ask yourself is this:

Am I open to learning something I think I already know?

Only you can answer that question.

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# The Spirit of the Running Spirit By Neville Tuli





We did it, I did it. Mind has overwhelmed matter, delusions outlasted reasons.

I completed the half marathon at 9:14am, 21km in 2.30hrs, having never run more than 10km in my life, so pushing oneself beyond oneself as have thousands of others. One imagined the lungs and breathe would collapse first but the legs turned out more wobbly, after all I am a 'veteran' according to the marathon category, and childhood football probably took a greater toll than imagined.

It is unlikely that many would be able to have run the half marathon and have the stamina or will to go and write a few words to share with strangers, within the hour, but this need to write a few words finally became my motivation to finish the race (at the 14km point I think).

So many times the body was packing up, the knees crying, yet we dug deeper, and the body moved forward, and the mind tried to motivate itself to plug on. Initially I thought the run would be a good time for quiet introspection, to think clearly about all the issues which constitute one's infrastructure-building responsibilities. Yet, after the motivational start with Rocky's 'Eye of the Tiger' the first two km seemed so very tough, as if even six will not be reached.

As we moved into the third km only Prithviraj from Osian's seemed capable of sustaining the journey. My Delhi staff seemed keen but had little clue about what 21km implies, but they came and competed with themselves, and are strengthened for the next challenge. After the first three km the breathe had already dried and there seemed to be no chance of completing this race by running, to walk seemed inevitable, but the mind naturally said not yet, at least reach six before your first walking step.

Then I saw a man pass me who was probably the age of what my

father would have been today, and I smiled, so receiving another dose of energy. Quietly the mind kept focused, recognizing that all the strength lies within, that one has pushed on a daily basis for the last fifteen years, and so it will automatically happen now. When the legs and lungs tire, the mind will shout: not now, there is so much within, stores of energy you cannot see,

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## MOBILE PHONES ENABLE HIGHER AND MORE INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH



Mobile Phone on Bike (L)



A Villager on Mobile (R)

**19 January 2009, Delhi:** A report on the socio-economic impact of mobile technology by a team of researchers led by Professor Rajat Kathuria of the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) has found clear evidence to suggest that mobile penetration facilitates economic growth. It shows that Indian states with 10% higher mobile phone penetration will enjoy an annual average growth

rate 1.2% higher than those with a lower teledensity.

Funded by Vodafone as part of a series of studies on the socio-economic impact of mobile (SIM), the report demonstrates that mobiles aid the process by which disadvantaged groups, including the low-skilled labour force, enjoy the fruits of economic growth.

Professor Kathuria, commented "We believe this analysis shows that telecommunications is a critical building block for the country's economic development. Our work also shows that the real benefits of telecommunications only start when a region passes a threshold penetration rate of about 25%. Many areas have still not attained that level, which indicates the importance of increasing teledensity as soon as possible. If Bihar's mobile penetration rates were similar to those of Punjab, for example, then it would enjoy a growth rate that is 4% higher than its current rate.

" A good example of the positive impact of mobile use is a henna artist who began by setting-up-shop on the pavement and now runs a successful and growing concern. He arranges his business via a mobile phone, using it to order products, take bookings and record his designs for marketing purposes.

The report also contains specific studies of how mobile devices benefit rural farmers, small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and the populations of urban slums. The research also showed that information via mobile, such as weather reports and market prices, has begun to have an impact on productivity for the agricultural sector. However, it also concludes that other infrastructure challenges, such as poor roads and lack of refrigerated transport, need to be addressed in parallel in order for farmers to realise the full potential of access to information via mobile.

Dr Rajiv Kumar, Director and Chief Executive of ICRIER, suggests that the research report should provide government

with the analytical and empirical content to refresh the policy environment for telecommunications. He believes that this is vital in order to attract investment to the sector and to ensure this investment is used to maximum effect. In particular, he recommends that more spectrum should be made available for civilian use and policy makers should consider changing the current caps on foreign investment and the criteria for mergers and acquisitions. These changes could stimulate greater investment in Indian telecommunications, improve access to communication in poorer areas and ultimately lead to increased economic growth.

“India has a lower teledensity than many other emerging economies including China, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. We also lag far behind in terms of internet access,” said Dr Kumar. “It is therefore particularly important that in these challenging times we step up to the mark and create the appropriate regulatory environment to attract investment and sustain a world class telecommunications service. Our global competitiveness depends on this.

” The research highlighted that while mobile connections were growing at rates exceeding 10 million per month in 2008, there is considerable penetration variation within India’s borders; Delhi’s penetration rate is in excess of 100% but states such as Bihar, Orissa, Assam and Madhya Pradesh have not yet reached the critical 25% threshold. In addition, access to the internet is only around 5% nationally and in some states, such as Bihar, this figure falls to 0.1%.

Neil Gough, Director of Public Policy – Emerging Markets at Vodafone Group said, “We are pleased to have been able to fund this important study. As a company, we believe that public debate of these issues is fundamental to the development of effective regulation.

The research demonstrates that access to telecommunications acts as a catalyst to realise productivity and efficiency

improvements, thereby making it possible for the benefits of economic growth to be shared amongst a greater proportion of the population.” This press release contains forward looking statements which are subject to uncertainty because they depend on circumstances that will occur in the future. No assurances can be given that these statements will be realised.

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## **Manjit Bawa, The Legend, No More A Neice Reminiscences by Dr. Seema Bawa**



**Bawa's Paintings**

It is strange to be writing about Manjit Bawa in his death for as a policy I did not write on him and his art. I have always felt that I would not have a discerning perspective when it came to his art because I was so close to him, for Manjit Bawa was my uncle, my father's younger and very dear brother.

We grew up in a joint family where he usually ate his dinner with us, and played games in the evening when we, that is my sister and I, were young. Later, he grew famous and successful

and took on a larger than life persona. But for us, he always had a bit of hero because my grandmother made up for her inadequacy as a story teller by relating a serial on the Exploits and Adventures of Manjit at bed time. In all these he was engaged in acts of valour, strength and downright foolhardiness that froze my grandmother's blood even years later. He never outgrew these traits and almost everyone reminisces about his great mental and physical strength. Perhaps that is the reason why we all clung to hope of his coming out of coma even after three years of the fateful stroke that struck him down on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2005. To see him lying comatose came as a great shock to me personally because my principal grouse was that he just could not be still and sit or stay in one place, except when he was playing chess or cards, games which I have known to last for days with very little sleep.

This restlessness however is rarely seen in work of his mature phase. There is a great deal of serenity and depth in his art. Often labeled a Sufi painter, he was that and much more. There is inclusiveness in his art derived from streams Indian tradition and philosophy which were decried by so-called avante garde artists and critics as being revivalist and pretty. He was inspired in part by the miniature tradition, especially the Pahari miniatures, but also by contemporary artists such as Krishan Khanna and J. Swaminathan.

He painted Krishna surrounded by cows but also dogs, because cherished divine melody could not be confined only to cows but is accessible to all. He painted acrobats and birds, and Lakshmi standing on a lotus in pink. He painted Ravi, his son, in a pensive mood. And he painted Narasimha killing the demon who was the primeval man himself. He painted his own personal and collective anguish against the devouring mobs of 1984 riots. He painted his Bharata with a lion and also Krishna and also the Devi. This iconographic eclecticism reflected the inclusiveness of his philosophy for his Krishna was his

Ranjha.

Manjit Bawa was born in Dhuri in Punjab, probably in late summer of 1941 in a place known as the Goshala. His parents moved to Delhi soon after where he was to stay for most of his life. Here his elder brother, marking his entire lack of interest in studies and inordinate love for playing pranks started taking him to art lessons at Abani Sen's studio with him. It is here that he developed a love for the arts and went onto study art at Delhi College of Art. At college he developed a strong friendship with Jagdish De, Umesh Verma and Gokul Deambi with whom, often under his brother's guidance and company, he traveled all over north India. He and his elder brother took up a hotel in Dalhousie to be near the mountains and to have a running business while they pursued painting and writing. Much of his work was done in Dalhousie where he went to get away from the brouhaha of the art world.

For us he was an uncle full of laughter and mischief who flashed in and out of our lives. He sang at weddings and family get togethers. He hated my cooking and taught me how to cook a few things so that he could eat in my house. As children he would make clay toys with us and paint them in bright colours and take us to the Yamuna on his very ramshackle blue scooter. He was always good for a tenner for an extra horse ride in Dalhousie. He was an artistic genius for the world. For us he was a beloved uncle with whom we could and did argue, fight and pummel. We will all miss him for many reasons. May his soul find what it was searching for in life.