

## Welcome address at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Convention of SPIC MACAY on June 16<sup>th</sup> 2008.

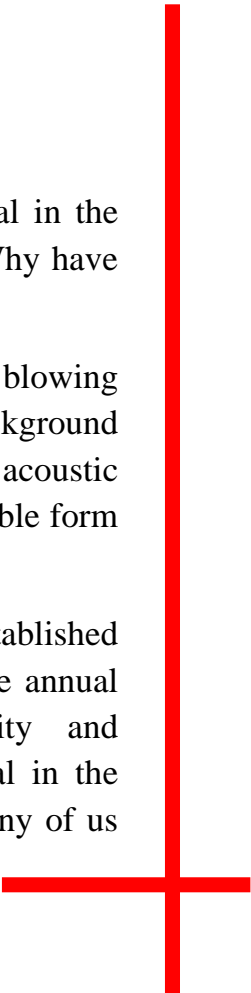
On behalf of the Nagaland University it gives me immense pleasure to welcome the august audience who have taken this difficult journey to reach Kohima. We have the honour of having Shri Mani Shankar Aiyer amongst us to not only inaugurate the program but also be the pillar of this event at Kohima. Thank you sir for making it possible to have this event in Kohima. Such a mega event would not have been possible without the personal initiative of His Excellency the Governor Shri Kateekal Sankaranarayanan, and Honourable Shri Nephui Rio, the Chief Minister Nagaland. The team under the chief secretary Luluhma, Govt of Nagaland and the team from students, teachers, Non teaching faculty and officers of Nagaland University are the driving force behind this mega event becoming a reality. It is a pleasure to have the presence of great maestros Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia, Mrs Anjolie Ela Menon, Dadi Padumjee, Shri Fahimuddin Dagar , Guruppa Shetty, Raghu Rai, Dadi Padumjee, Guru Ghanakantha Bora, Sentila Yanger at the inauguration. Host of Dignitaries like Mr P S Rao, Secretary, DONER, Shri Rajendra Mishra , Jt. Sec. DONER, Shri Vanwla, PS to Mani Shankar Iyer, Mr R S Shah, former secretary, Planning Commission, Maj Gen Nehra have certainly made this function a gala function. Presence of media and press and will certainly help us to give the beautiful side of Nagaland.

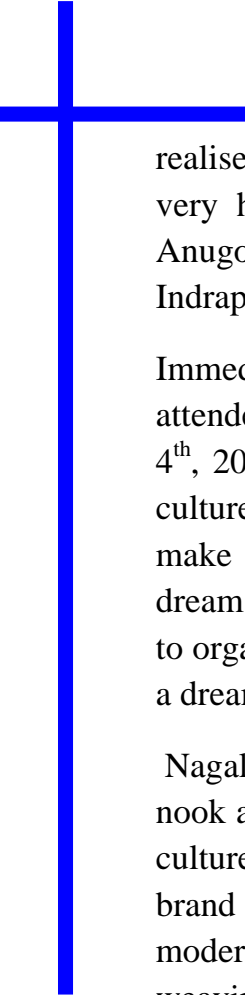
I had the honour of inviting the Man who beats with Passion

Siva Mani, in the year 2000 to perform for the first time at a festival in the Indraprastha University, Delhi. Many were very critical and asked, “Why have you invited a drummer and not a rock star?”

Of course needless to say Siva Mani created History with that mind blowing performance where the whole crowd sang and Siva Mani played the background music using about 400 musical instruments. This would have made any acoustic professor realise that translating theory of music into usable and enjoyable form is in itself an art and technology.

In the year 1999 June, as Dean of students welfare of newly established Indraprastha university in Delhi, I had the opportunity to initiate the annual cultural festival of Anugoonj where all the students of the university and affiliated colleges could get together in a three day cultural festival in the university campus and exhibit their talents. This experiment made many of us



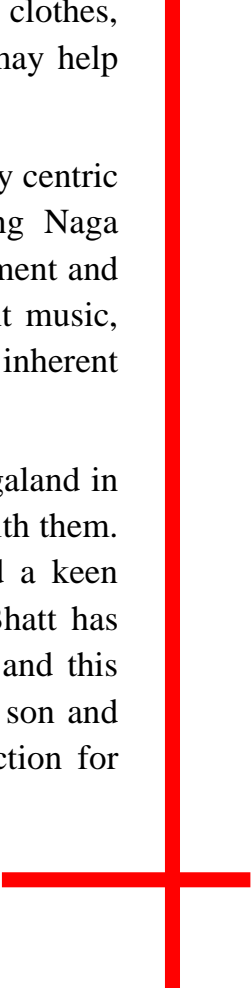


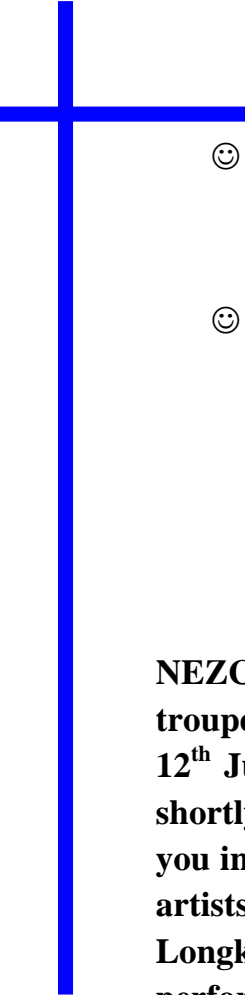
realise that Music, Art and Culture have no barriers and can unite students in a very humane way and make them as an active participant in any society. Anugoonj has become an integral part of the major annual popular feature of Indraprastha University.

Immediately after becoming the Vice Chancellor of Nagaland University, I attended a PGSU literary festival of Nagaland University at Lumami on August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2006. It dawned on me at that very instant that the music, art and unique culture of Nagaland should be popularized not only throughout the country but make it international by the efforts of youth of Nagaland. To achieve this dream, it was necessary that every university student should get an opportunity to organise a national level cultural festival. What you are all about to witness is a dream come true, on this day 16<sup>th</sup> June 2008.

Nagaland may be an enigmatic place for many who have come from every nook and corner of the country carrying their own perceptions of music, art and culture. Nagaland has at least 16 major tribes and each tribe has its own unique brand identity. Though a modern Naga youth has been able to blend with modernity like rest of the world, yet they have not forgotten their roots in music, weaving, arts and agriculture to this date. You will have occasion to watch different traditional dressing attires and designs on their hand weaved clothes, reflective of their diversity in culture. We hope that this interaction may help you gain an insight on the varied culture and heritage of the North East.

The indigenous Educational system of Nagaland is based on Community centric inclusive model. Morungs worked as educational institutions among Naga tribes. Boys and girls were trained independently in both skill development and education from the ages of 12 to 25. In the Morung they were taught music, dance, martial arts, hunting, agriculture and self defence. Music is an inherent part of their life and now it has become an industry.

- © Grammy award winner Pandit Vishwa Mohan Bhatt visited Nagaland in 2006 and he sang with some of the students and played music with them. He was so charmed by their musical talent that he expressed a keen desire to make an album with them. Pandit Vishwa Mohan Bhatt has made a place in the hearts of every music lover of Nagaland and this time it will be his third visit. That he is coming with his wife, son and daughter in law this time, a true expression of love and affection for nurturing the Naga voice and taking it internationally.
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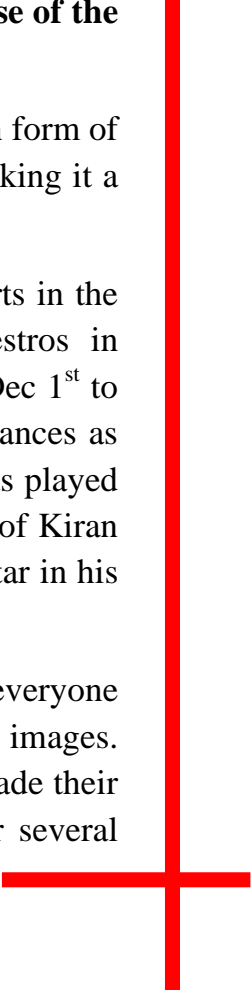
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- ☺ Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia was amazed to know during his last visit to Nagaland six months back, that there are nearly 200 varieties of bamboo whereas he has played the flute with 4 varieties only!
  - ☺ Su Kapila Venu mesmerized the audience of Kohima and Dimapur in 2006 with the oldest miming tradition and communication the world has known through Kudiyattam. These events became possible due to support from SPIC MACAY. We hope the other maestros, artists and other exponents whom we are proud to have here with us, will also look forward to future opportunities to visit Nagaland and share their expertise with the ever eager youth of Nagaland.

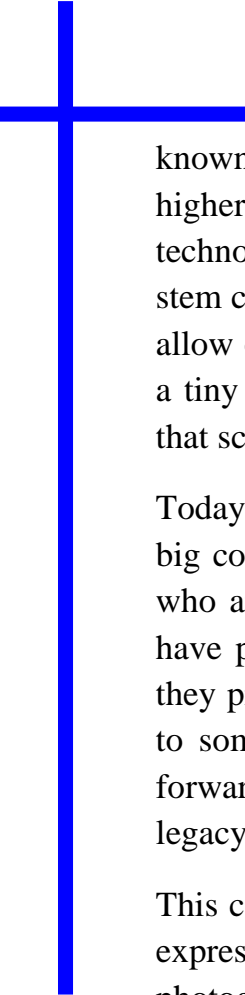
**NEZCC through Hekali Zhimomi has taken special effort to get dance troupes representing all the eight North East states. They are all here from 12<sup>th</sup> June and rehearsing to give all of you all a spectacular performance shortly. Also another special light and sound show has been organised for you in the evening by NEZCC. You will have chance to see few of the great artists of Nagaland including Padmashree Sentila Yanger and Alem Longkumer in the intensive sessions besides watching Sumi dance performers. Each tribe has their own group dance, choir group and musicians and we will need at least another one week to get a glimpse of the great traditions of Nagaland.**

The value of art is obvious, but it is also puzzling which makes it a keen form of academic study in the form of philosophy of art or aesthetics. Thus making it a social phenomenon.

The University is keen to set up a School of Music and Performing Arts in the near future and we look forward to support from the great maestros in establishing such a centre. The state organizes Hornbill festival from Dec 1<sup>st</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> every year and there one can see a glimpse of all forms of Naga dances as well as attend the Rock bands playing in the evening. In 2006, 41 bands played and it was inaugurated by Pandit Vishwa Mohan Bhatt. Incidentally Prof Kiran Seth, the force behind SPIC MACAY movement wanted to be a rock star in his youth days. I am sure he will be telling more about this.

Artistic achievement is a lifelong goal for some people and almost everyone values listening and dancing to music, reading stories, and looking at images. We are fortunate to have amidst us over 20 great maestros who have made their art their lifetime goal. They have undergone intensive training under several





known and unknown teachers and blend the best in their teachers and produce a higher order quality work of art. It is a process of mental evolution aided by technological revolutions. I am tempted to compare these maestros to the true stem cells which have the amazing ability to not only create another maestro but allow others to differentiate and appreciate their work of art. In turn they create a tiny pool of great maestros in that school of art and several keen patrons of that school of thought.

Today music and other forms of arts have become livelihood generators and a big commercial business. Be it rock, film music, the successful ones are those who are trained in classical music. Many of the music maestros present here, have produced some of the best albums which we hum without realising that they produced these original master pieces for us to enjoy. I am sure exposure to some of these maestros will create a whole new breed of youth to carry forward, preserve and enrich these art forms which have been handed over as a legacy down through generations of great thinkers.

This convention is unique in that we are all going to witness different forms of expression during the next week , be it vocal, instrumental, painting, photography, puppetry, gestures, dances, craft, weaving, yoga to name a few.

One would be failing to acknowledge the Visionary Prof Kiran Seth who has been doing translational research for the last four decades to bring about participative experiences – the undivided and sustained attention to diversity in art forms among youth. Without him this unique vision would have remained a dream.

Participative experiences in the next one week should be transforming many of us in ways which we will realise slowly but certainly as we grow. Please do visit our website [www.nagauniv.org.in](http://www.nagauniv.org.in)

Prof K Kannan

Vice Chancellor

Nagaland University.

