

CULTURAL

DIARY

APRIL

A troupe of Indian classical dancers and musicians, who toured Japan for a month, made their debut in Tokyo on

Indian Artistes In Japan April 1 and were applauded by an appreciative audience, including members of the Japanese Royal family. The visit was sponsored by Radio Tokyo and the newspaper, *Tokyo Shimbun*, and was in pursuance of India's cultural agreement with Japan signed in October 1956. The troupe consisted of Shri Ravi Shankar (Sitar player), Smt. Damyanti Joshi (Kathak dancer), Smt. Kamla Laxman (Bharata Natyam dancer) and other accompanists.

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The fourth death anniversary of Khan Sahib Fateh Ali Khan was observed in Bombay on

Musicians' Anniversary

April 4 with a programme of classical and film music. Shri Vasant Desai, film music director, who presided over the function, said that Khan Sahib was one of the greatest exponents of the Patiala Gharana style of singing. Several prominent artistes, including Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, Khan Sahib Amir Khan, Khan Sahib Rahman Khan and others participated in the concert.

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Shri Chembai Vaidyanath Bhagwat, who received the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for Ka natic vocal music this year, was felicitated

Musicians Felicitated

in Bombay on April 5 by the Bharatiya Music and Art Society. Dr. S.R. Ramchandran, President of the Society, welcomed Shri Chembai and presented him a

silver bowl as a token of the Society's regard for his services to the cause of Karnatic music. The function ended with a music concert by Shri Bhagwat and party.

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The 113th birth anniversary of the father of Bengali stage, Shri Girish Chandra Ghose, was celebrated in New Delhi on April 5 by the Baisakhi Mahal. Swami Ranganathananda, Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission, presided over the function. *Prafulla*, a play written by the late Shri G.C. Ghose, was staged on the occasion by the cultural organisation.

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Maharashtrian residents of the Capital as well as some non-Maharashtrians witnessed two interesting *Tamashas* staged

Maharashtrian Folk Dances by the Rashtra Seva Dal troupe in New Delhi on April 6. The shows gave a prismatic view of the Maharashtrian folk-art, songs and dances with all their vigour, colour and humour. The *Tamashas* consisted of *gan* (prayer in the beginning), *gowlan* (romantic song based on Krishna-Gopi love) and a playlet based on a popular theme.

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The Delhi University Music Society, in co-operation with the American National Theatre and Academy and the

Jazz Concert In Delhi

U.S.I.S., presented for nearly two hours a delightful jazz concert by the celebrated U.S. group, the Dave Brubeck Quartet, featuring Dave Brubeck (piano), Paul Desmond (saxophone), Joe

Morello (drums) and Gene Wright (double-bass). The concert, first of its kind in Delhi, was held on April 8 on an improvised platform in the open and was attended by thousands of jazz enthusiasts.

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The 60th birthday of Paul Robeson, world-famous Negro singer and humanist, was celebrated in several Indian cities on April 9. In

Paul Robeson's Birthday

Delhi, tape-recorded songs of Paul Robeson, along with a message from him to India, were played at a function held in honour of the Negro singer.

In Bombay, Shri M.C. Chagla, Chief Justice of Bombay, paid tributes at a public meeting to Paul Robeson as a "great singer with a divine voice". A meeting presided over by Shri P.B. Chakravarty, Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court, in Calcutta adopted a message to be cabled to Robeson wishing him long life so that he can "enrich the world with his great art and uphold the dignity of humanity".

The Prime Minister, Shri Nehru, in a message on the occasion, said: "This is an occasion which deserves celebration not only because Paul Robeson is one of the greatest artistes of our generation but also because it reminds us that art and human dignity are above difference of race, nationality and colour. I send all my good wishes to Paul Robeson on this occasion and I trust that he will have many long years before him to enrich the world with his great art."

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The fourth Malayalee Art Festival, under the auspices of the Delhi Malayalee Association, was inaugurated in New

Malayalee Art Festival

Delhi on April 11 by Shri K.L. Shrimali, Union Education Minister. Welcoming cultural and art festivals which helped to disseminate the various regional cultures of India, the Union Minister said no society could consider itself dynamic unless the majority of the people,

both in the region from which the art and culture hailed and also outside, got opportunities to share the cultural values.

Smt. Kamala Devi Chattopadhyaya, Vice-Chairman, Sangeet Natak Akademi, complimenting the Association for staging an art festival, said efforts should be made to present the Indian arts in their traditional entirety without taking any liberties with their presentation to suit modern methods.

The highlights of the three-day festival, which ended on April 13 (Kerala's traditional Vishu-Baisakhi Day) included several pieces of Kathakali like *Poothana Moksham* and *Bali Vijayam* by well-known Kerala artistes, selected items of Kerala folk songs and dances and a drama, *This Our Country*.

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A festival of music and dance organised by the Bharat Sangeet Sabha was inaugurated in Bombay on April 12.

Music Festival in Bombay

Among the artistes who took part in the festival were Kesarbai Kerkar, Rahimuddin Khan Dagar, Pannalal Ghosh, Begum Akhtar, Amir Khan and Sharan Rani. Kumari Chandralkha, who was the inaugural artiste of the festival, presented a series of Bharata Natyam items.

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The Rangmandal of Ahmedabad gave a number of shows in Delhi on April 12 and 13 in aid of the Gujarati Education Society of Delhi. There

Three One-Act Plays

were two Gujarati and one Hindi plays on the second day. *Jo to Futi Nikale* by Shri Keki Siganporia was in the rather separate style of Parsi comedies with a Parsi brand of humour, while *Ek Man Sat* by Shri Dhansukhlal Mehta was a pleasant comedy. The Hindi play staged was *Pagal* by Shri Prabodh Joshi.

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The President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, presented

State Awards for the best films of 1957 at a function held in New Delhi on April 16. Among the large gathering present at the function were the

**State Awards
For Films**

Prime Minister, Shri Nehru, film producers, directors, actors, actresses and film fans.

The feature film in Hindi, "Do Ankhen Barah Haath", won the President's gold medal, a cash prize of Rs. 20,000 for the producer and a cash prize of Rs. 5,000 to the director.

The documentary film, "A Himalayan Tapestry", claimed the President's gold medal, a cash prize of Rs. 4,000 for the producer and Rs. 1,000 for the director.

The Prime Minister's gold medal for the children's film went to "Hum Panchhi Ek Dal Ke" in Hindi. The producer received Rs. 20,000 and the director, Rs. 5,000 in cash.

Besides these, five other films received All-India awards. These were the two feature films, "Andhare-Alo" in Bengali, awarded a certificate of merit, Rs. 10,000 for the producer and Rs. 2,500 for the director; "Mother India" in Hindi given a certificate of merit; the documentary "Mandu", received a certificate of merit, a cash prize of Rs. 2,000 for the producer and Rs. 500 for the director; another documentary, "Dharti Ki Jhankar", awarded a certificate of merit and a children's film, "Janmatithi", in Bengali, received a certificate of merit, Rs. 10,000 in cash for the producer and Rs. 2,500 for the director.

In the regional award group, "Do Ankhen Barah Haath" also annexed the President's silver medal for the best feature film in Hindi. Other winners of the President's silver medal were "Grihadevata", the best feature film in Marathi, "Andhare-Alo", the best feature film in Bengali, "Premada Puthri", the best feature film in Kannada, and "Padatha Painkili", the best feature film in Malayalam.

Films which were awarded certificates of merit were "Mother India" in Hindi, "Musafir" in Hindi, "Louhakapat" in Bengali, "Harano

Sur" in Bengali, "Maak-Aru-Moram" in Assamese, "Mudhalali" in Tamil, "Bhagya Rekha" in Telugu and "Todi Kodallu" in Telugu.

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Troupes belonging to different parts of the country and playwrights took part in the third Summer Drama Festival organised by All India Radio in New Delhi. The festival began on April 17 and continued till

**A.I.R. Drama
Festival**

May 10.

During the festival, six plays and two dance-dramas in half a dozen major Indian languages were presented. Among the languages in which the dramas were staged were Bengali, Hindi, Tamil, Marathi, Gujarati and Malayalam. Unlike the last two years, the majority of the troupes participating in the festival were either professionals or troupes of professional standards.

Important among those who participated in the festival, were Prithvi Theatres, Natya Niketan of Bombay and Bohurupee of Calcutta.

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The UKCOM Amateur Dramatic Club presented Robert Morley's *Hippo Dancing* in New Delhi on April 17. The play, which was produced by Alfred Hall, was a brisk and breezy comedy with a fine plot centring round a nuts merchant as its hero. Robert Morley's characterisation of this eccentric and cynical person was firm, penetrating and human.

"Hippo Dancing" Staged

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The Theatre Group of Bombay presented Alexander Ostrovsky's "The Diary of a Scoundrel" in New Delhi on April 21.

**"The Diary of
A Scoundrel"**

The group staged "The Little Hut" and "Six Characters in Search of an Author" last year. The new production was competent and captured the flavour of Ostrovsky's social satire, which

was wise and witty, fanciful and yet profound in its implied comments on the human scene. It was an amusing play which sought to depict life satirically, yet with infinite sympathy.

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Encouraged by the Bombay State Government's policy to exempt theatrical plays and dramas from the purview of entertainment tax, some of the leading enthusiasts and artistes of Kannada stage met in Bombay on April 22 and decided to form a dramatic group known as 'Natya Bharati'. Shri N.V. Ballal, a reputed novelist, was unanimously elected as the President of the new group and Smt. Lucy Simons was elected General Secretary.

'Natya Bharati' Formed

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The Punjabi Theatre's latest production presented in Calcutta in the third week of April provided an authentic portrait of life in a village. The play, written by Balwant Gargi, was named after its principal character, Kesro—a young woman who had to cope single-handed with the greed of a money-lender and the spite of her neighbours.

Punjabi Play Staged

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For research and instruction in Hindustani, Karnatic and Western music, the University Grants Commission has agreed to provide funds for the recurring expenditure of the Delhi University Department of Music. This announcement was made by Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao, Vice-Chancellor, Delhi University, at the annual meeting of the Delhi University Court on April 26. Dr. Rao also revealed that a donation of Rs. 10 lakhs had been promised by the Sir Shanker Lall Charitable Trust Society towards the establishment of an Institute of Music to be started in the University.

Music Research in Delhi Varsity

An audition of new military band music compositions was held near Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on April 26. The Composers were Prof. Antsher Lobo, Officer on Special Duty, Ministry of Defence, and Shri Reid, Director of Military Music, Army Educational Corps Centre and School, Panchmarhi. The band was provided by the Rajputana Rifles Regimental Centre.

Audition of New Martial Music

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The Kerala Government has constituted a Sangeet Natak Akademi with Shrimati Manku Thampuratti as President to foster and develop Kerala dance, drama and music and through these to promote the cultural unity of Kerala. The Akademi will have a General Council consisting of 43 members including the Chairman. The Akademi, whose headquarters will be at Trichur will also have an Executive Board. The first Executive Board has been nominated by the State Government.

Kerala Sangeet Natak Akademi

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The Madras State Sangita Nataka Sangam instituted two years ago a scheme of grant-in-aid whereby aged artistes, composers and authors of outstanding merit, who had done appreciable service in the field of art but were now in indigent circumstances, were given Rs. 50 each per month for one year to help their livelihood. This grant-in-aid was given last year also.

Financial Aid To Artistes

The State Sangam has resolved to continue the scheme for the financial year 1958-59 also and has selected 16 artistes to benefit by the grant-in-aid. Among the prominent recipients are Karaikudi S. Srinivasa Iyengar (Vocalist) and Mylapore Gowri Amma (Bharata Natyam expert).

MAY

An interesting programme of dance and music was organised by the Ladies Theatre Group,

Ladies Theatre Group

Calcutta, on May 2 on the occasion of its third anniversary celebrations. The group, an association mainly of housewives, was formed in November, 1954, with the object of affording an opportunity to women to develop and give expression to their theatrical talents. Besides a number of dance and musical items, the Group also presented two playlets, *Vai*, a skit in Tamil, and *Ashoker Chirattro*, a farce in Bengali.

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Shri P. Bhagat, General Manager of the Rourkela Steel Project, inaugurated in Rourkela

All-Orissa Dance Festival

on May 3, the All-Orissa Dance and Drama Festival sponsored by the State Sangeet Natak Akademi. The function was highlighted by the masterly recital of Odissi and South Indian classical dances performed by several dancers of Orissa and Kerala.

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The two-day Tamil Drama Festival of the Matunga Dramatic Society, Bombay, concluded in Bombay on May 4. On this occasion, *Dial Mr. Sanjeevi* and *Kalathu Medu*

Tamil Drama Festival

were staged.

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A three-day *Urs* began in New Delhi on May 7 to commemorate the 652nd death anniversary

Death Anniversary Of Amir Khusro

of Amir Khusro, India's renowned poet, musician and religious leader. At a meeting held in this connection in the Capital, speakers paid glowing tributes to the many-sided genius of Amir Khusro.

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To celebrate its tenth anniversary, *Rangbhoomi*

organised a five-day Gujerati Drama Festival which was inaugurated in Bombay on May 8.

'Rangbhoomi' Drama Festival

Pallavi Parni Gai, a Gujerati play directed by Dr. B. K. Shah, was one of the best performed dramas during the festival. Among the other plays staged were *Sanskar Murti* and *Rani No Baug*. A *Natya Pradarshan*, also organised by *Rangbhoomi* on the occasion, depicted the growth of the theatre movement in the country.

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On the occasion of the birth anniversary of poet Tagore, Shri Sailajaranjan Majumdar,

Lecture on Tagore Music

Principal of the Sangeet Bhawan, Santiniketan, gave a discourse on Tagore music in Patna on May 9. The lecture was accompanied by demonstrations in music and dance.

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The seventh anniversary of the Children's Little Theatre was celebrated in Calcutta on May 11. Unlike other

C.L.T's Anniversary Show

years, this year's anniversary programme took a novel form. Most of the items were new and the object in presenting them was to show how C. L. T. technique was applied and developed with each group.

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Under the auspices of the Bharatiya Kala Kendra, artistes of the P. S. V. Natyasangham

Kathakali Dances In Delhi

of Kottakal Malabar, gave Kathakali performances in New Delhi on May 14, 15 and 16 in aid of the Kendra's building fund. On the first day, there were two pieces, one *Ramba Pravesham* from *Ravana Vijayam*, and the other *Dussasana Vadham*, an episode from the Mahabharata.

On the second day, it was Kamalakshi who excelled in the art of expression. Kamalakshi appeared as Lalitha in the sequence, *Krimeera*

Vadham. On the last day of their Kathakali performances under the auspices of the Bharatiya Kala Kendra, the artistes of the P. S. V. Natyasangham presented the story of Krishna Sudhama and *Kalyana Sangandhikam.*

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Shri Rasiklal Parikh, Bombay's Minister for Revenue, was the chief guest at a function organised in Bombay on May 16 by the Gujarati Natya Mandal to congratulate the State Government on its decision to remit the entertainment duty in respect of dramatic performances.

Speaking on the occasion Shri Parikh expressed the hope that the withdrawal of duty would help the growth of dramatic art. Dr. D. G. Vyas, who also spoke on the occasion, expressed his gratitude to the Government for its interest in the promotion of various arts.

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Sixteen rare musical instruments were demonstrated before a gathering of music lovers in Madras on May 17 by Prof. P. Sambamurthi, Head of the Department of Music, University of Madras. The function was organised by the Triplicane Cultural Academy. Prof. Sambamurthi said that India had a rich heritage in the realm of musical instruments. There were as many as 500 varieties representative of the chordophonic, aerophonic, membranophonic and autophonic groups.

It was India, he said, that gave to the world the now widely-accepted system of classification of musical instruments into *tata* (chordophones), *sushira* (aerophones), *avanaddha* (membranophones) and *ghana* (autophones) and added that this classification had been mentioned in such an early work as Bharata's *Natya Sastra.*

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The Mysore State Sangeetha Natak Academy

has selected Shrimati A. R. Vijaya for awarding a scholarship for higher training in Veena. Kumari R. Chitrlekha of Shankarapur has been awarded a scholarship for

Natak Academy Selections

Bharata Natyam.

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A decision to convert the Akhil Bharatiya Gandharva Mahavidyalya Mandal into a University of Music was taken at a meeting of the Management Council on May 25. At present the Mandal annually examines 10,000 students from all over India at its 75 centres and has 200 music institutions affiliated to it.

University of Music

The Music University, besides other things, would also afford facilities for research in music.

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The Government of Bombay has decided to extend the scheme of financial assistance to close theatres. Shri N.K. Tirpude, State Minister for Social Welfare, said in Bombay on May 26 that so far the Government gave fiscal aid only to open-air theatres.

State Aid for Close Theatres

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Shri N. K. Tirpude, Bombay's Minister for Social Welfare, announced at a Press Conference in Bombay on May 26 that the State Government had decided to hold the final competition of the State Natya Mahotsava at convenient centres in Marathi and Gujarati-speaking areas of the State, outside Greater Bombay. The Minister expressed the hope that such a step would bring about an all round and even growth of the stage and also raise the standard of dramatic art throughout the State.

Bombay Natya Mahotsava

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Twenty-four plays in different Indian languages

have been adjudged for the award of prizes at the second Radio Play Competition, 1957. The languages in which awards have been won are Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Oriya, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu. An official press release issued on May 27 said that no prizes were awarded in Kashmiri, Marathi and Punjabi as none of the plays entered for these languages could come up to the required standard.

Radio Play Contest

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The Government of Madras has appointed Shrimati Rukmini Devi as the Chairman of the State Sangita Nataka Sangam for a further term of three months, according to an announcement made in Madras on May 31. Twenty-six other persons have also been nominated as members of the General Council of the Sangam.

Sangita Nataka Sangam

JUNE

The two-day session of the Andhra Nataka Kala Parishad Conference ended in Gudiwada on June 3. The proceedings commenced with a lecture on *Vachuka Abhinayanam* by Shri V. Raja Ramadoss of Hyderabad. Prof. V. Chandrasekhar of Madras spoke on "Actors, Acting and the Audience". Shri Y. Satyanarayana Rao spoke on *Nataka Patanam*.

Andhra Nataka Kala Parishad

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The fourth All-India Dramatic Competition, organised by the Himachal Theatres, began in Simla in the first week of June. On the opening night, three plays, *Mujrim*, *Moti Raqam* and *Interview*, were staged. In all, nine teams entered the competition.

Drama Competition in Simla

The Union Ministry of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs has planned to bring out a quarterly journal on cultural affairs in Hindi and English. It would be in the nature of a forum in which current and contemporary cultural questions will be discussed. The first issue of the journal is expected to be published by the end of September this year.

New Cultural Journal

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A Natya Academy to train professional producers and actors of the Indian stage has been sponsored in Bombay. It will start functioning from August 1, 1958. This was announced at a Press Conference in Bombay on June 21 by Shri J. C. Jain, the chairman of the Academy. A batch of 20 candidates will be trained in the initial phase. The students will have to pay a fee of Rs. 180 for an annual term. The Academy will award scholarships to deserving candidates.

Natya Academy in Bombay

Mr. Herbert Marshall, the British stage producer now settled in India, will be the Principal and Chief Producer of the Academy. He will be assisted by Shri Mansukh Joshi.

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Shri S. K. Patil, Union Minister for Transport and Communications, gave away the Delhi Natya Sangh's drama awards in New Delhi on June 26. The prize for the best play was won by Shri R. G. Anand for his *Dilli Jali*. Some of the other awards were:

Natya Sangh Awards

BEST ACTOR: Douglas Skinner; BEST ACTRESS: Preminda Premchand; BEST DIRECTION: Walter Gardner Stanbridge; BEST PRODUCTION: *The Remarkable Mr. Penny-packer* by the Little Theatre Group; BEST DECOR: *A View From The bridge* by the Unity Theatre and BEST CHILD ACTOR: Master Bachu.