



panchajanya

# PANCAJANYA

2022

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# Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II



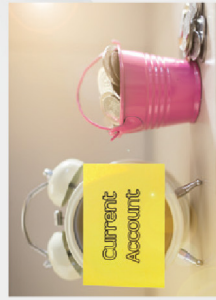
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**A Message From  
The Worshipful The Mayor of Harrow  
Councillor Janet Mote**



**May I take this opportunity to congratulate Panchamukhee for its excellent efforts to foster cultural diversity, community harmony and goodwill in Harrow, and in London.**

**I wish Panchamukhee Durga Utsav 2022 every success!**

**I am delighted to be able to join you on this special occasion.**

**September 2022**

*J. Mote*  
**Mayor**

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## Panchamukhee - 17 years and the journey continues...

Saikat Barman

21st May 2022, Saturday, 5pm- As I was driving from my home in north-east London 40 miles to attend the first Durga Puja meeting of Panchamukhee for 2022, 17 years of Panchamukhee's journey was being replayed in different snippets constantly in my mind. My first connection with Panchamukhee was quite interesting. It was in 2006 when we first came to this country and just as all Bengalis do, my wife and I were searching for Durga Pujas in London and came across Panchamukhee doing their first Puja. We established that one of the founding members of Panchamukhee and my wife were actually working for the same employer, so she connected the next day and was very cordially invited to come along to the first Puja in 2006 at BSNL building in North Harrow, where the journey began. In 2007, Panchamukhee moved to Harrow Arts Centre in Hatch End, Harrow which was a much bigger venue with auditorium style arrangements. This was Panchamukhee's home for Durga Puja for next 15 years until 2021.

Panchamukhee has evolved, innovated and largely reshaped the make up and organisation of Durga Pujas in London tremendously in the 17 years of journey so far. What started as a drawing room discussion between 5 friends, has today transformed and established itself as a model for how Durga Pujas in and around London are being organised. Panchamukhee is the first Durga Puja to have won Arts Council grant for the promotion of multiculturalism, it's the first organisation to have actively engaged the Corporate Sector with community through innovative event planning, it's the first organisation to have promoted, hosted and celebrated many new talents in the field of music, dance and drama from UK and the Indian subcontinent. I am the farthest residing member of Panchamukhee with its base location in Harrow, but I have seen many from all over the UK, whose London visit during Durga Puja is synonymous to participation in Panchamukhee Durga Puja, an event which has continued to enthrall the audience with high quality, innovative and well engaged cultural programs, competitive and community engagement events.

Panchamukhee's contribution to community and society extends well beyond Durga Puja into organising many other multicultural events with mainstream media houses from India and the UK. Panchamukhee has been collaborating with several UK and international charities to support various noble causes such as girl's education, mental health support children's health and so on. As Panchamukhee continues to evolve, improve, and flourish, the support that it has received from audience, well-wishers, corporate houses, and the communities have been astounding.

This year, Panchamukhee has ventured into a new initiative, for the first time in its history Panchamukhee will be organising Durga Puja in a marquee to give its audience a unique experience of pandal in the UK which is a trademark of Durga Pujas in India. At the same time, Panchamukhee will be celebrating 75 years of India's Independence and will be organising several events to mark this great milestone in India's history. With its army of dedicated, enterprising and energetic members, Panchamukhee seeks the blessings and best wishes of all as the journey of 17 years continues.

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# My Durga

Adrita Majumdar

Loud noises float in through the cracks of my tiny hut.

Oh, God!! Have my neighbours already started creating a ruckus once again? I mean, come on!! Can't a man ask for at least five hours of sound sleep?

But that doesn't sound like the annoying voices of my neighbours. No, the sound has a distinct beat, it has a rhythm.

My eyes spring open instantaneously. I look at my broken Nokia phone screen. I realize that it's already 6:10 a.m.

I nearly fall off my bed. I have overslept and now I'm an hour late to work. For the first time in my life, my body clock betrayed me. I guess, since I went to bed very late last night, I was dead tired. I did not have the energy to wake up early.

The loud sound that I have been hearing, is the sound of the dhakis (drum players) beating their dhaks (drums) to their heart's content. If that is not a clear sign that it is Durga Pujo in Kolkata, I do not know what is.

I have been working as a taxi driver in this city for the past seven years. I came to the city from a small village in Bihar. I came here with a dream of making a lot of money so that I can go back home and start my own transport business. Since then, I have been pushing myself hard to make that dream a reality.

But today, I have started my morning late. I quickly get ready and put on my worn dark grey uniform. I take the keys to my old yellow ambassador and leave the house. As I push it into the key slot below the steering wheel, the engine roars to life. I touch the photos of the Gods and Goddesses I pasted on my dashboard and seek their blessings.

I drive through the streets. I look outside the taxi window and see that the crowd has thickened to such an extent that people have spilled over from the footpaths and are now walking on the streets. The cars are moving at a snail's pace because of the massive crowd. People are pushing each other; little children are blowing their bhenpu (small flutes), and the roadside hawkers and food stalls have long queues in front of them. The scene is one of chaos and it's only around 7:30 a.m. But I have long since learned that during Pujo, Kolkata never sleeps.

In Selimpur, I pick up my first customer of the day, a young couple. They seem to be arguing about where they want to eat their breakfast.

The woman says, "Come on Pritam we always have breakfast at Flurys. Why can't we eat somewhere else this time, especially during Pujo?"

To that Pritam replies, "Because Shalini do you know any other place which will serve you a meal which is as wholesome as the English Breakfast?? No right? So Flurys it is..."

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Shalini huffs and says in return, “Fine let’s go.”

I smile at their squabbling and drive them all the way to Park Street. After they get down and enter Flurys the door opens wide for hardly a second. But the whiff of the good food does not fail to reach my nostrils. Straight away I was transported back to my village hut and my wife is cooking my favourite dish – puri (deep-fried bread) and sabzi (vegetable curry). The flavours are still lingering on the tip of my tongue. My dream bubble is burst open by the honks of the cars behind me. I start to drive again.

After a few more rides here and there, an old lady hails my taxi. She has many bags in her hands. She tells me that she wants to go to Southern Avenue which is at least a one-and-a-half-hour journey from where I am right now. But I don’t have the heart to turn her down. The old lady is pretty chatty. Nevertheless, I am enjoying the conversation. She tells me that she is going to her son’s place and how every year they celebrate Durga Puja in their complex, she talks about her grandkids for whom she has bought all these fancy gifts. She keeps on bragging about how she loves to give people surprise gifts. I am getting engrossed in her stories. Her kindness and simplicity remind me of my own mother.

The old lady guides me near the front gate of a luxury apartment. As her eyes are searching for her grandkids to escort her to their apartment, a small slum girl peeps through the window. In her hands, she is holding a couple of colourful balloons. She is begging the lady to buy a balloon. But the lady shoves her aside. The girl stumbles and struggles to keep her balance. She loses her grip on the strings of the balloons. As the balloons start floating away, she begins to chase them. The old lady starts cursing the little girl without showing a hint of guilt or sympathy. In front of me, her mask of kindness just falls apart.

Lost in her misery as the little girl is wandering off. I feel a tight lump in my throat. I run towards her and take out a hundred rupees note. I see a flash of happiness in her teary eyes. She gives me a wobbly smile. In her expressive eyes and sweet smile, I have met my very own Durga Ma today.



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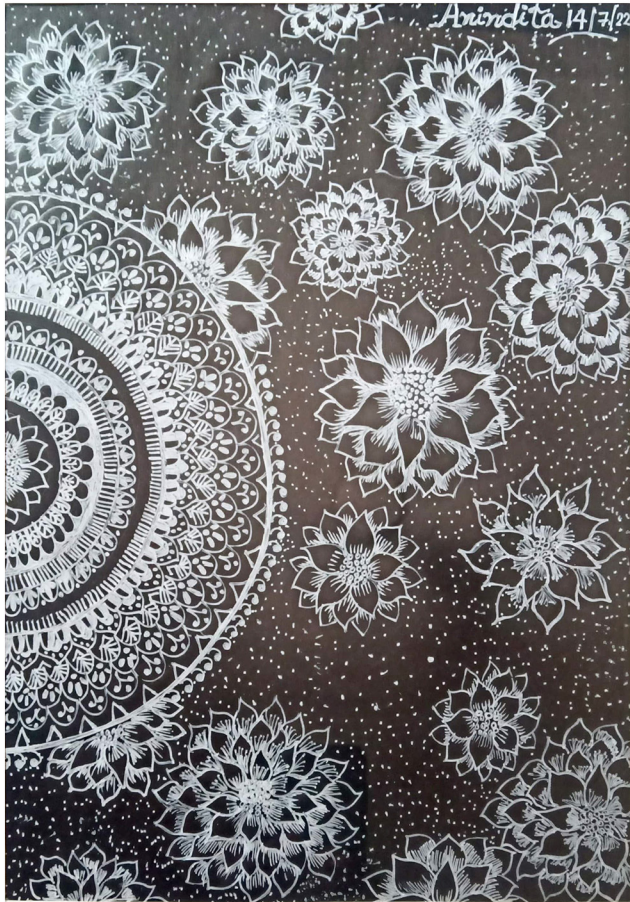


**Taal** (*Asmita Banerjee*)



**Strength of Unity** - Madhubani Art (*Deepti Dharwadkar*)





**Half Mandala**  
(Anindita Saha)



**Autumn**  
(Anindita Saha)





**Imagination**  
(Ishas Dharwadkar)



**London Skyline**  
(Suhali Pandey)





**Ma Durga**  
(Avirup Panja)



**Arrival of Ma Durga** (Aditri Mallick)





## স্বপ্ন সুন্দরী

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মনে আছে সাদা দস্তানাকে।  
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হাত তুলে সবাইকে অভিবাদনে ব্যস্ত।  
স্বপ্নের রাণীকে নিজের চোখে দেখে  
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সেদিনের স্বপ্নের রাণী  
আজও আছে নয়ন জুড়ে।  
শয়নে স্বপনে বা জাগরণে  
আমার চোখে আজও তিনি  
পঁয়ত্রিশের সেই স্বপ্ন সুন্দরী।

(১৯৬১ সালের স্মৃতি থেকে লেখা। লিখেছেন -- জয়শ্রী ধর।)





## Shadows in the distance

Esraaj Sarkar Gupta

15 years

Chennai, India

A clear sky painted a vibrant orange loomed over Sumy, the little city in Eastern Europe. A dense fog engulfed the surroundings, but the sun was still clearly visible, just above the horizon: a deep red. Of course Artem noticed the red on the ground much more than the red sky, the red that, along with fallen helmets and torn rags, marked places where many breathed their last. Their bodies had already been removed.

The war was coming to an end and the Russian troops had moved out of Sumy, presumably once and for all. They left the glorious city in ruins. They invaded a lively city and left a ghost town. Its streets were covered in rubble, its walls were dotted with bullet holes, and its people were in exile. Many of its imposing buildings had collapsed, leaving just bricks and dust; bricks and dust that Artem stood on, surveying the place he had spent the last few months fighting for his life, and for his country. The blue and yellow patch on his left shoulder was dusty and he held his gun loosely by the sling, allowing it to lightly scrape against the ground as he walked, wandering further and further away from his platoon. He knew that they were masked somewhere behind the fog, he could still hear their murmurs in the distance as they packed and prepared to depart.

As he walked along, he peered into houses and buildings. He walked over to the gate of what looked to be a school. The gate stood wide open and there were notebooks and pens on the floor, as if dropped in haste. Peering into the building, he saw empty classrooms on the first floor. In one of them, an open water bottle still stood upright on the teacher's table, the cap left next to it. The room was littered with upturned chairs, and there was still writing on the blackboard. The war hardened soldier paused for a minute, building up in his mind a picture of bubbly children in happier times, before moving on.

Just as he continued to walk he noticed a dark figure a few metres ahead of him. It vaguely resembled a human figure, slowly walking across the road Artem stood on. Instinctively he raised his gun and slowly walked towards it. He hesitated to shoot before identifying the figure, not wanting to end up killing comrades. As he approached the spot where he had seen the shadow within the mist, he saw nothing. He looked around frantically, but the figure was gone. Suddenly, he heard someone call out "Artem! You there? We're leaving now!" He recognised the voice, it was Ivan. Ivan wasn't a particularly close friend of Artem's, but he was one of the only friends he had, whom he hadn't lost to the war.

Artem walked towards where the voice came from. "Yeah, I'm coming, give me a minute." he screamed back.

"I don't see you, where are you?"

"Close enough! Stand still, I'm walking towards you."





Artem eventually strode into Ivan. "There you are, finally. Let's go! We have to be out of the city before sundown. Why'd you wander off anyway?"

"I was curious."

"This curiosity of yours will get you killed one day, just stick with the group."

"I saw someone in the distance."

"Enemy troop?"

"I'm not sure, whatever it was it disappeared as I tried to walk up to it. I was looking for it when you called me. Are we sure all the Russian troops moved back today?"

"Yeah they are reported to have pulled back most of their men and vehicles, except a few stationed a few metres away from the border. Maybe it was just a guy they left behind and forgot. He'll succumb to the cold anyway, I wouldn't worry about him."

Artem nodded. As they headed back, walking slowly, Artem looked back, and there was the shadowy figure back again. It was limping slowly towards them, but it was not alone. Artem noticed two more a little to the right of the first one. They seemed to be further away, one of them was limping slightly, slouched over the other: as if a soldier was helping his comrade walk.

Ivan noticed his friend looking back and asked "What're you looking at, Artem? We need to go faster!"

"Don't you see them?" Artem half whispered.

"See who?"

Artem turned to Ivan and pointed at the limping figures. "Look!"

Ivan followed the extended pointer, "...at WHAT?". Artem looked to his side once more. He saw nothing more than a deserted, desolate, quiet and unchanging expanse. The confused soldier tried to explain, but with every word, Ivan just became more and more convinced that Artem was going insane, driven to hallucinations by many sleepless nights.

Momentarily, they were back with the rest of the platoon. There was a little bit of a clamour, as tired men hurriedly packed up tents and weapons, loading them into armoured vehicles and jeeps. And although they were all severely sleep deprived and fatigued from the last few months, they were all cheerful; they were going back home. Artem, however, remained indifferent to this joyous occasion, he was going back - not to a home, but to an empty apartment. His old parents were two of the many thousand casualties of the Russian bombing; and only a few weeks prior, he received a letter that informed him that his young family- his wife, four year old son and baby daughter were also dead.





Soon all the vehicles were loaded, and the uniformed men took their seats. The convoy departed just as the sun set. Everyone seemed very talkative and jovial, while the least cheerful of the lot, he sat in silence at the back of his jeep, his eyes fixed on the floor. He recalled the day many months ago, when he was deployed. He remembered his wife, in tears and distraught at Artem's leaving. She knew that he had to go, but she still clung to him. As he was leaving, she came out to the front door, holding her son with her left hand, and carrying her baby daughter with her right. Her hair, messy, with curls at the ends; she wore a pale white dress, barefeet. Unclasping her left hand, she held it out and said "We will be together again soon, very soon, I will be waiting."

The eyes fixed on the floor now filled up with tears, but the man wouldn't allow himself to cry. He tried to think of other things, his happy childhood, his school and friends, but despite desperate attempts, he couldn't get the picture of his wife and children out of his head! It was burned into his thoughts, playing on repeat. Suddenly, the jeep stopped. "Oy we're stopping here for a minute, the tail of the convoy got left behind, we'll be off in a minute; as soon as they catch up."

Artem lifted his head and peered out of the window to his right. The mist was clearing up and the sky was still partially lit, despite the sun having set some time back. And against the red, red horizon, Artem could see hundreds, if not thousands of silhouettes. Shadowy figures of men, women, even children, wandering aimlessly through the fields that ran along their roadway, on the outskirts of Sumy. His comrades didn't react at all, it seemed like he was the only one who could see them.

He looked at the shadowy figures, examined each one, until he saw something, someone familiar. The figure he was staring at started to walk towards him, stopping at the edge of the road, barely a metre or two away from the jeep. It was holding a little child with its left hand, a little baby with its right. Its hair was messy, with curls at the ends, it was barefoot and wore a pale white dress. From the edge of the road, it disentangled its left hand from that of the little child, held it out and said "We'll meet soon; I will be waiting."







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# Voyager Mission and voice of Indian Classical Music

Achintya Pal

Centuries ago, man thought he was at the centre of the ‘universe’ that was limited to what he could observe around him and up in the sky. Gradually, as scientific ideas about locations of the Sun, the planets, the stars and their relative distances evolved, he realized that his earth was only a tiny speck in the vast expanse of the universe of innumerable galaxies and stars. As it dawned on him that there were millions of stars like the Sun his ancestors once worshipped, he started thinking whether there

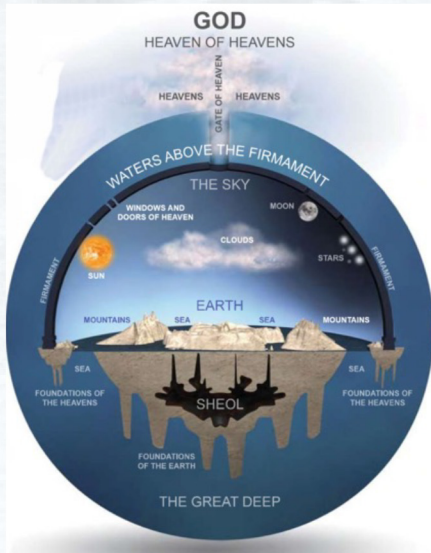


Fig. 1: The belief that Earth was the centre of the ‘Universe’

were other stellar systems like the solar system and other ‘civilizations’ like his own. Just as one looks for like-minded companions in one’s neighbourhood, mankind as a whole wondered whether he was alone in this vast unfathomable universe or there were other intelligent beings flourishing somewhere out there! From another point of view, there was the apprehension that if ever planet Earth were to get destroyed in some catastrophic event, some memory of it should be saved. Thoughts like these prompted NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) of USA to plan sending of unmanned spacecrafts to explore the solar system beyond the neighborhood of the outer planets to the outer limits of the Sun's sphere of influence, and possibly even beyond that. It started with launching of Pioneer-10 and 11 in early seventies followed by spacecrafts (appropriately named) Voyager 1 and 2 in quick succession in 1977. As a matter of fact, launch of Voyager 2 preceded that of Voyager 1. They were launched in to take advantage of a favorable alignment of Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune (Fig. 2) and are now exploring the outer boundary of the heliosphere (the region of influence of the Sun) in interstellar space. The twin Voyager 1 and 2 spacecraft are exploring where nothing from Earth has flown before. Continuing on their 45-year journey since their 1977 launches, both of them are much farther away from the Sun than Pluto. In August 2012, Voyager 1 made the historic entry into interstellar space, the region between stars, filled with material ejected by the death of nearby stars millions of years ago. Scientists hope to learn more about this region when Voyager 2 also reaches interstellar space.

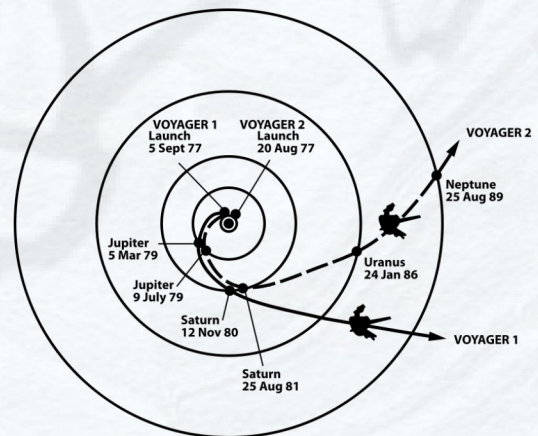


Fig. 2: The timelines and the trajectories of Voyager 1 and 2

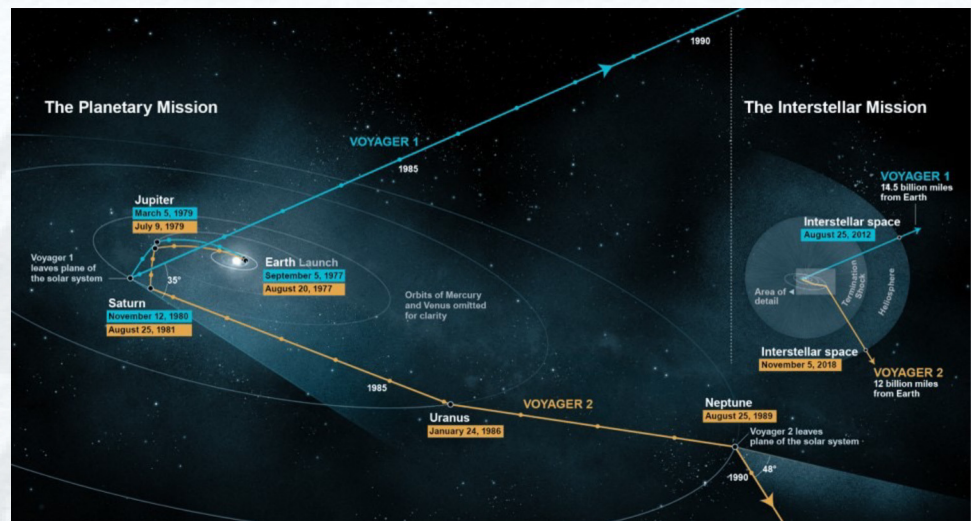
The primary mission was the exploration of Jupiter and Saturn. After making a string of discoveries there such as active volcanoes on Jupiter's moon ‘Io’ and intricacies of Saturn's rings, the mission was extended. Voyager 2 went on to explore Uranus





and Neptune, and is still the only spacecraft to have visited those outer planets. The adventurers' current mission, the Voyager Interstellar Mission (VIM), will explore the outermost edge of the Sun's sphere of influence and beyond.

As of September 2022, Voyager spacecrafts are at about 14 billion miles from the sun. Their current status is shown in Fig. 3.



*Fig. 3: Three-dimensional view of the trajectories with respect to the ecliptic plane*

## Connection with Indian classical music

The details about the design, functioning and scientific objectives of the Voyager Mission may be found on webpages of NASA. The primary emphasis of this article is on the efforts made to communicate to any 'intelligent' being that may be encountered by the spacecrafts during their voyage. For this purpose, NASA placed ambitious messages aboard Voyager 1 and 2 a kind of time capsule, intended to communicate a story of our world to extra-terrestrials. The Voyager message is carried by a phonograph record a 12



*Fig. 4: The Golden record*

inch gold-plated copper disk containing sounds and images selected to portray the diversity of life and culture on Earth. The contents of the record were selected for NASA by a committee chaired by Carl Sagan of Cornell University, et al. Dr. Sagan and his associates assembled 115 images and a variety of natural sounds, such as those made by surf, wind and thunder, birds, whales, and other animals. To this they added musical selections from different cultures and eras, and spoken greetings from Earth people in fifty-five languages, and printed messages from President Jimmy Carter and the then U.N. Secretary General Kurt Waldheim. Each record is encased in a protective aluminum jacket, together with a cartridge and a needle.

Instructions, in symbolic language, explain the origin of the spacecraft and indicate how the record is to be played. The 115 images are encoded in analog form. The remainder of the record is in audio, designed to be played at 16-2/3 revolutions per minute. It contains the spoken greetings, beginning with Akkadian, which was spoken in Sumer about six thousand years ago, and ending with Wu, a modern Chinese dialect. Following the





section on the sounds of Earth, there is an eclectic 90-minute selection of music, including both Eastern and Western classics and a variety of ethnic music. The Voyager spacecrafts left the solar system (beyond Pluto) in 1990 and they now find themselves in empty space. It will be at least forty thousand years before they make a close approach to any other planetary system. As Carl Sagan has noted, "The spacecraft will be encountered and the record played only if there are advanced space-faring civilizations in interstellar space. But the launching of this bottle into the cosmic ocean says something very hopeful about life on this planet." About the apprehension of the earth getting destroyed he said "A billion years from now, when everything on Earth we've ever made has crumbled into dust, when continents have changed beyond recognition and our species is unimaginably altered or extinct, the Voyager record will speak for us."



*Fig. 5: Kesarbai*

It may not be known to many Indians that their country occupies a proud position in the selection of music among 27 compositions in diverse languages spanning over different regions of the earth. The selection, understandably biased toward Western Classical music to some extent, covers a satisfactorily wide range of global expressions including an ethereal three-and-a-half minute piece "Jaat Kahan Ho" in Raga Bhairavi sung by Surashri Kesarbai Kerkar (1892-1977).

How did Kesarbai's music actually get selected? There were probably selection panels featuring musicologists from multiple genres, including an ethnomusicologist or two. According to reliable sources, the recording was recommended for inclusion on the Voyager disc by the ethnomusicologist Robert E. Brown, who found it to be the finest recorded example of Indian classical music.

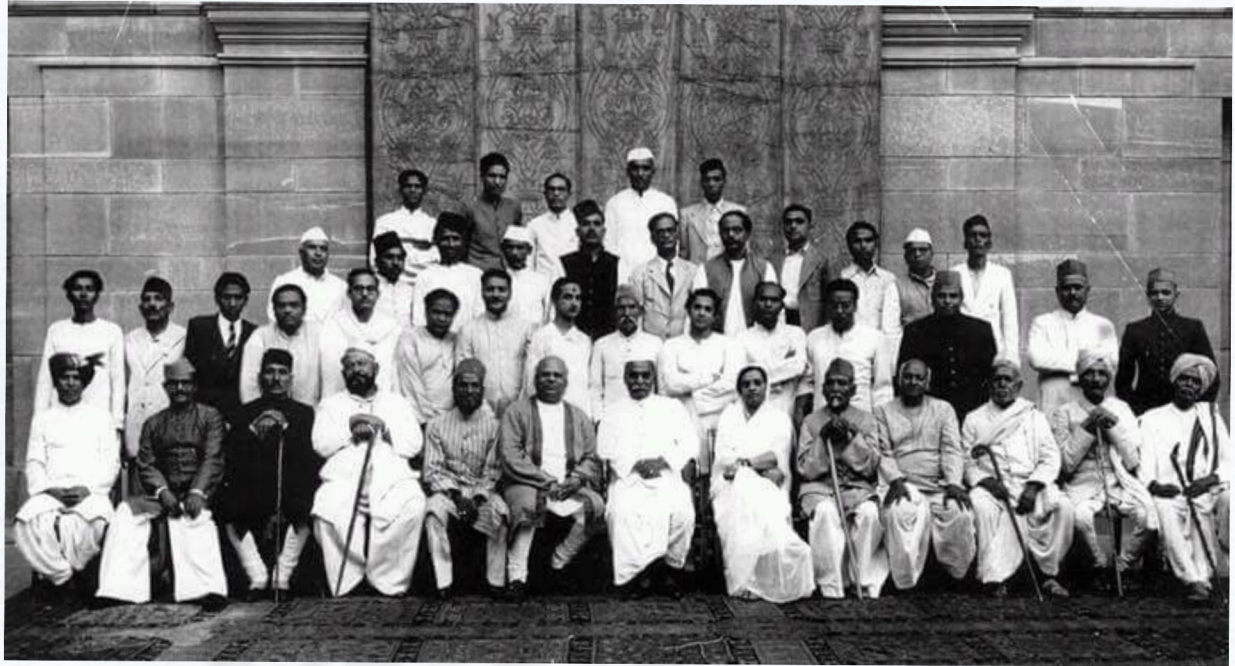
While opinions may differ on hailing the classical piece as 'the finest recorded example of Indian classical music', the incomparable mood of spiritual renunciation embedded in the notes of Kesarbai's Bhairavi indeed resonates and lingers in the mind of a discerning listener.

Kesarbai Kerkar, from the village of Keri in Goa, finally settled in erstwhile Bombay after a brief stay in Kolhapur. Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore honoured her with the title 'Surashri' at a ceremony in Calcutta. The Indian government awarded her the Padmabhushan, and Maharashtra conferred on her the title Maharashtra Rajya Gayika. She was the disciple of such eminent gurus as Pandit Ramkrishnabuva Vaze, Bhaskarbuva Bakhale and Ustad Alladiya Khan. She studied music under these masters for no less than 25 years, and became a proficient exponent of the gayaki of the Atrauli-Jaipur gharana.

She became known through the length and breadth of India for her unique style of presentation. Kesarbai had a very dignified and regal personality and she was fully aware of her talents and abilities and she always performed with self-confidence. She held out honourably on her own in an otherwise male-dominated music circle. While there were several eminent female singers such as Begum Akhtar, Siddheshwari Devi, Mogubai Kurdikar (mother of Kishori Amonkar) of her time, only Kesarbai is seen to



feature among a galaxy of male musicians honoured by President Dr. Rajendra Prasad at Rashtrapati Bhavan around 1950 (Fig. 6).



*Fig. 6: The bright star in a galaxy of renowned musicians  
honoured by Dr. Rajendra Prasad*

Isn't it a great pride for all of us that 45 years of space travel and 14 billion celestial miles later, the haunting Hindustani classical rendition 'Jaat kahaan ho akeli gori ...' has been immortalized alongside the greatness of Chuck Berry, Mozart, Bach and Beethoven on the fateful Golden record? Coincidentally, Voyager 1 was launched in September 1977, the same month and year of Kesarbai's demise. The great singer that she was, it is entirely appropriate that her immortal voice has been wandering through unexplored terrains of outer space till perhaps the end of time! The lyrics of the song literally translate to 'Where are you going alone, fair maiden ...'

#### References:

1. Voyager Mission related website of NASA: [voyager.jpl.nasa.gov](http://voyager.jpl.nasa.gov)
2. Fig. 3 taken from [www.scientificamerican.com/article/record-breaking-voyager-spacecraft-begin-to-power-down/](http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/record-breaking-voyager-spacecraft-begin-to-power-down/)
3. 'The Music Room', book by Namita Devidyal (Random House, India)
4. Rest of figures and photographs are taken from different sources on the internet







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DESIGN BY SAMEER DHAWAN





**Central Avenue**  
(Abir)



**Esplanade**  
(Abir)





**Reef** (*Sophie Wright*)





# “Panchamukhee” - A Journey Through The Prism of Time

Smitangshu Mukherjee & Panchamukhee Team

‘Panchamukhee’ is a Sanskrit word meaning five-faced. As the legend goes, Lord Hanuman had to take up the five-faced form to protect Lord Rama and Lakshmana from the demon Abiraha. It can be viewed as a metaphorical representation of the five ways to pray to the Lord, namely naman, smaran, keertan, yachanam and arpanam. Like its name suggests, the activities of Panchamukhee are also mounted on five pillars.

Panchamukhee as an organisation started in 2006 in London to promote the art and culture of the Indian subcontinent and explore how we can work together in the multicultural milieu of the United Kingdom. Durga Puja provided the perfect platform to achieve these goals. This multiculturalism has been embodied in the way this nation has recently risen together over their differences to overwhelmingly mourn the passing and celebrate the life of our beloved Queen Elizabeth II.

On the 75th year of Indian independence, we in Panchamukhee acknowledge India’s past struggle for freedom and raise a toast for the thriving, free India we see today. India’s contribution to the world through spirituality is acknowledged and practiced by many in the modern world globally. Durga Puja symbolises the victory of good over evil and is a time to unite with love and renewed hope.

Panchamukhee aims to uphold these values within the community. In us, you will find a group of people who challenge and inspire each other to achieve and celebrate the very notion of love and triumph of good. Our selfless volunteers, through their hard work and camaraderie, foster the very essence of this community spirit.

## 1) Cultural activities:

Panchamukhee is a group of family and friends with creative minds and a shared dream to change the landscape of the Durga Puja festivals in the UK and promote an open, cross-cultural ambience, while keeping Bengali culture and traditions at the core. Due to the inclusive nature and culturally-rich minds in this group, Panchamukhee have been integrating and working with the people from all walks of life.

The next generation from the community is encouraged to participate in this cultural festival. Amongst many others, our ‘Little Champs’ event is a red-letter event in the London cultural calendar, bringing up the very best talent among the younger generation.

Panchamukhee has provided platform to many talented individuals and groups from the UK and beyond where singers, dancers, instrumentalists, thespians, writers, and journalists have graced the Panchamukhee stage and have mesmerised the audience over the last 16 years.

The dance group of Panchamukhee have showcased high-class performances on the stage over the years. They have enthralled with the amazing repertoire of Tagore dance





dramas such as Chitrangada, Shyama, Chandalika, Shapmochon, Bhanu Singher podabali and Tasher desh. The more modern versions included Bombay talkies, apni khoj mein, malhar, a journey through India and a unique folk presentation madol er taal e.

The drama group, consisting of amateur performers, have rendered captivating performances which can be put at par with professionals. Our dramas have been mostly of the comedic genre, but some also had a social theme with occasional thrillers thrown into the mix.

One of the highlights of a Panchamukhee cultural presentation is the annual rendition of the Mahishashur Mardini which marks the genesis of the Durga Puja. The team consists of musicians, singers, dancers and the baritone of the gorgeous Chandi path every year gives goosebumps and nostalgia to the audience. It is certainly a sensory treat.

Talented in-house musicians in Panchamukhee perform every year with their musical extravaganza and are one of the show-stopper events. They culminate with dance-tapping numbers making the audience crave for more every time.

## **2) Bringing the community together:**

Bringing people together in the community. Under One Sky, Chelsea Football camp, Health Camps, Montessori, Screening of movies, art and other cultural workshops, Junior Champs and above all, our flagship event, The Durga Utsav, which has been instrumental in promoting community cohesion with people of all ages and backgrounds in multi-cultural Britain.

## **3) Bridging the gap between corporate and community interests:**

Panchamukhee are proudly the first to introduce this model, which is now replicated across London, in allowing corporate sponsorship to further contribute towards providing value when bringing the festival to the community. We have worked closely with leading corporate sponsors from UK and India in successfully delivering our cultural events over the years.

## **4) Panchamukhee is a registered charity and raises funds for other charitable causes:**

Every year funds are raised and donated to various local and global charities which have benefitted from the proceeds. Some of these include, Great Ormond Street Hospital, Bharat Sevashram Sangha, NHS Charities Together, Kishalay Foundation (Sonarpur, West Bengal), Vikahar Paribar Bikash Kendra, London Air Ambulance, Shooting Star Chase and many more.

Panchamukhee members also dedicate their time to other challenging tasks throughout the year to raise awareness and funds which the group provides exceptionally generous support. These include SkandaVale Hospice, Bucks Search and Rescue, Prostate Cancer





Research and Hope for Children to name a few.

### 5) Uniting the next generation with their cultural roots:

While our event focuses on the Puja of the Goddess Durga, held in the most traditional way possible with perfectly conducted ritual, the organisation prides itself in also nurturing the cultural music, dance and drama. It has been instrumental in teaching the next generation about its cultural roots and we are watching those early shoots in full bloom in recent years. The tiny tots who started performing on stage 16 years ago are now stars in their own rights. They are now contributing not only on stage but their infectious enthusiasm is now making a difference to the organisational aspect of this mega event. They are the future of this organisation and more than ready to pick up the mantle.

Today we as a group, pause to reflect and pledge to continue our inspired journey in making Panchamukhee a humble but effective conduit towards spreading the cultural ethos of our motherland with social responsibility at the very heart of it.



### Cover Art by: Millie Basu Roy

Artist and Secondary School Art Teacher in London, Millie graduated in visual art from Rabindra Bharati University India and completed her Post Graduate in Fine Art and Ceramics from Central St Martin's Institute of Art in London. She has had several solo and group exhibitions in India, UK, France, Bahrain. She was awarded First prize by the Apthorpe Fund for Young Artists of Borough of Barnet, London in 1995. Her painting 'Fiery Night' was published by The Bridgeman Art Library, London 1997. In Millie's paintings a cursive lines leads the eye and mind through a leitmotiv of love life and myth. A combination of luminous colours upon the surface of the works continually invites interaction in an intense and endlessly rewarding manner. She considers her



practice of Art as a process of discovery of the relationship between abstraction and the representation of life and continues to create new pictorial possibilities.













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