

Woodford folk festival

most ambitious so far

by Phyl Illids

THE Queensland Folk Federation has launched its most ambitious Woodford Folk Festival program, executive director Bill Hauritz claims. More than 400 acts will appear on 20 stages during the five days and six nights of the festival, beginning on December 27 and continuing until midnight, January 1.

Mr Hauritz said there was now no other cultural event in Australia with the depth and breadth of the Woodford festival, and this year's event would surpass anything QFF had done before by a long way.

Annie Deller-Petersen, now in her second year as program director for the festival, said she was excited about the new big picture direction.

"Obviously, we have the big, big name acts such as musician of the year and singer-songwriter Paul Kelly, the wonderful indigenous group Yothu Yindi and the Whitlams," Ms Deller-Petersen said. "But while the feast of top performers is incredible, I think the theatrical events will really blow the audiences away."

"There is the Sydney-based international theatre troupe Stalker performing each evening, and Lindsay Pollack's film, 'Bambooz' is sensational."

She said she had received 800 applications from all over Australia and overseas this year from bands and performers wanting to be part of the

program. As a change from last year, when there was one main headline performer on one night, it had been decided to feature the three main performers over three nights.

Festival general manager Amanda Jackes said it would be a truly international event.

Spanish, Celtic, Morris dancers, a kypsy circus, Scottish country dancing, an African dance workshop, Hungarian musicians and dancers, an Irish song and dance session, a Chilean poet, artists from India and Bangladesh and Latin American music will be part of it.

The Murrumbidgee community would play a major role in the program, with traditional music and dance, a reconciliation forum and an introduction to Aboriginal culture.

All age groups had been catered for and children would have their own special festival program.

Mr Hauritz said that since moving the festival to the Woodrow site, QFF had experienced problems funding necessary infrastructure for what was now a major festival.

But this year the State Government had provided strong support.

SAHAJA YOGIS SHOULD NOT THINK ONLY THWIM.

A Glad Farewell to all those yogis leaving for India tour tomorrow. The force is with you.

If you are coming along on this excellent trip and have not received payment details need a lift up or need to know any other details, contact Jessica Miller (Wollongong) on 042 297630 or speak to Max before Sunday (30th Nov)

Woodford Global Festival

Reports on Diwali Puja in Portugal

"Portugal is now definitely the country for Diwali..."

It felt like a miniature India Tour, especially for those who were privileged to be able to stay in Portugal for most or all of the five-day event. Shri Mataji arrived on Thursday afternoon at Lisbon International Airport. She was welcomed by an intimate crowd of approximately fifty Sahaja Yogis, most notably twenty-eight from Benin (in West Africa). As her chair was wheeled out through the arrivals door, the Benin yogis rushed forward and formed a circle around Shri Mataji, singing songs of praise in French and in their own language. Shri Mataji had tears of joy for her "newfound" children, and she listened happily to all of their songs as the rest of us presented our flowers one by one. Most touching was the sweet and respectful regard of the airport employee who had been pushing Shri Mataji's wheelchair. He was neither impatient nor ruffled as the small crowd pressed forward expressing its devotion. He stood quietly behind Mother's chair with a reverent glance and seemed to enjoy the vibrations as much as anyone there. Shri Mataji was then escorted to her car, where a "bolo Shri Adi Shakti.....ki jai" erupted followed by a Beninois traditional salute which aroused cheers and claps from all present as well as chuckles of enjoyment from our holy Mother. She told them how happy she was that so many of them were able to come to Portugal, and how there was at least ONE advantage to French colonization in Africa (i.e. that they received Sahaja Yoga through the French).

Shri Mataji was then driven to the Setais ("seven breaths") hotel in

NEW ZEALAND

Geoff Platford has informed us that, following Shri Mataji's advice, they are in the process of selling the current ashram abode in which there will be plenty of space for all the yogis migrating to New Zealand.

Apologies to Muri Marshall of Titahi Bay for the editors re-christening her in last week's newsletter. It must have been Geoff's accent.

ADELAIDE

Congratulations to Greg and Sungceta Noone on the birth of their second child and second daughter on Friday, 28th November. All hail and healthy.

nearby Sintra. A few words must be said about this hotel, which is supported by UNESCO because of its historic and artistic value. It is a palace, formerly the summer residence of the king of Portugal because of its ideal microclimate making it cool in the summer and mild in the winter. It is high in the hills, with a fine view over the surrounding villages and countryside, as well as its own gardens with lemon trees and sculpted bushes. Upon entering, one has the feeling of entering an old place, but not with the usual accompanying heaviness. Instead it is a past rich with beauty, the marble floors, high ceilings, and most astonishing hand-painted wallpaper Throughout. When you see the magnitude of it, and how each room, corridor and landing has been entirely handpainted with detailed floral and landscape designs, the effect is breathtaking. A gracious location indeed for Shri Mahalakshmi to spend Diwali weekend.

Friday found most yogis arriving, settling in, going to the beach or preparing the pendal for the first entertainment program. The evening with Shri Mataji began with some songs and dances by the Benin and Ivory Coast yogis. They had had very little time to rehearse, but we were all moved by their uncomplicated, heartfelt devotion and deep rhythm. It is hard to describe how their presence made such a difference in our feeling of world collectivity - like a missing piece of the puzzle at last put into place. In fact every inhabited continent was represented at the puja - Asia, America, Africa, Australia, Europe.

There was also bhajans and qawwalis by the Nirmal Band from France, which Shri Mataji greatly enjoyed.

The Saturday evening program began with impressive fireworks, followed by a traditional Portuguese dance, a South African play, and a French drama about the life of Dyaneshwara. The drama was accompanied by exquisite musical compositions, the words of which were based on the writings of Dyaneshwara. Shri Mataji was so moved that She translated one of the songs line by line for all of us to understand. She emphasized Dyaneshwara's descriptions of Sahaja Yoga and Sahaja Yogis and said that we still don't realize how great we are. Also that we MUST talk about Her and about Sahaja Yoga. She said that best is to wear Her badge and that way people will ask about Her - "Will you promise Me you'll do that?" We promised, some aloud, some silently, all with bowed heads. It was one of the strongest moments of the weekend. Strong winds and rain did not distract the attention too much, and we all enjoyed a sitar recital by - I'm sorry to forget the name of this sweet and humble Indian - accompanied by Sandesh Popatkar on the tablas.

Sunday was devoted to drying out the soaked carpets of the pendal, an afternoon havan, and puja preparations. Shri Mataji arrived sometime after eight o'clock. Her speech was strong but full of humor - one thing that sticks in mind is Her concern for the people who eat stinking cheese -- "I mean where will they go" because even in the Hell they will be thrown out because of their smell!! She emphasized the powers of Lakshmi that must be awakened and used by Sahaja Yogis, also what prevents them from being used properly.

continued inside...

Mother Arrives in India (10th November 1997) - Grand and Rousing Welcome

Shri Mataji arrived in India today by Air India Flight (Paris-Milan-Delhi) at 5.05 A.M. She was accompanied with her husband Sir C. P. Srivastava and her daughter. She was welcomed at Delhi airport by around 1200-1500 Sahaja Yogis singing bhajans in her praise and devotion. She was looking radiant like SUN in her Orange Silk Saree, Smiling and blessing all her children (Sahaja Yogis) present at the airport. She was very happy to see so many people at the airport standing on both sides of the passage through which she went to her car. While going through the passage of Sahaja Yogis everybody could see the happiness and surprise on her face and could receive her blessings. Everybody felt like seeing the Radiant Glowing Sun giving Cool vibrations while she was passing among the Sahaja Yogis.

Sahaja Yogis had started gathering from early morning (4.00 A.M) at the Indira Gandhi International Airport of Delhi for her arrival. They were singing Bhajans till the time she left from the airport.

Sarvesh Prakash Singh,

EMAIL - spsingh@hss.hns.com

Date: 9 Nov 97 09:54:57 +0100

From: "Richard Payment" <rpymt@unixg.ubc.ca>

Mark: for broadcast worldwide.

After the puja, presents were offered to Shri Mataji and there were beautiful bhajans sung by Gaby (named Govind by Mother) as well as Deepak

Verma. We danced and enjoyed endless prasad, followed by Shri Mataji offering presents to all of the yogis from the hosting countries. Even after Shri Mataji left the pendal, the dancing and music continued, with African drums and rhythm predominating.

As if that wasn't enough, we felt incredibly blessed to be able to see Shri Mataji yet again the following evening at the Lisbon public program. There was a strong crowd of yogis and around 300 new people, all very respectful and silent, and virtually all of them receiving their realization quickly and easily. After realization, Shri Mataji encouraged them to continue their yoga, so that She would see "real Portuguese Sahaja Yogis from Portugal and not from Brazil."

We left early the following morning, so were not able to bid farewell to Shri Mataji as She left for Cabella. But for all of us it was a strong and deep weekend, and we hope to be there for the next Diwali in Portugal, as Shri Mataji had announced that "Portugal is now definitely the country for Diwali."

Jai Shri Mataji.

From: Amit Gupta, USA, Sahajyogi@aol.com
Date: Sat, 8 Nov 1997 01:23:26 -0500 (EST)
Subject: Diwali Puja '97

My dear sisters and brothers,

Jai Shri Mataji!

Here is a brief report on the Portugal Diwali puja seminar

Her Holiness Shri Mataji arrived in Lisbon, Portugal on the Thursday before the puja weekend and was received by all the collectives from Portugal, France, Spain, Ivory Coast and Romania. From the airport She went to this beautiful hotel in Sintra located on a hill top which was formerly a palace of a Portuguese princess!

The following day she had a meeting with the leaders of the organising countries and stayed up till 4 am on both nights working out various projects for these countries! There was a musical program on Friday night which was a grand success.

On Saturday evening the much awaited sitar and tabla duo from Nagpur (under Baba Mama's guidance) rendered soul stirring ragas for over three hours in the background of very heavy rain and storms..... and the whole atmosphere was just charged with vibrations. The other highlight of the evening was a mime show by a French yogi and beautiful African music and dance from the yogis of Ivory Coast and Beyning most of whom were seeing Shri Mataji for the first time in their life!

Also Shri Mataji mentioned that it was the day of Bhaubeej when we celebrate the pure relationship between a brother and a sister. There was the most spectacular display of fireworks in the sky organised by the local yogis!!!

There was a havan the following morning that created the necessary atmosphere needed for the pujathere was a light drizzle during the end of the havan which further cleared the vibrations!

The puja began early in the evening and the Goddess Shri Mahalakshmi sakshaat Shri Mataji whose face was shining like the moon spoke first about the significance of Diwali.....as to how it marks the birth of Shri Laxmi who came out of the churning of the ocean. It was also the time when the devil Narakasura was killed by the Goddess.

Then She spoke about the qualities of Shri Laxmi that she is the one who when awakened in a human grants wealth, prosperity and contentment. She stands on a lotus signifying that She is extremely light because of Her humility and also She holds a lotus in each hand signifying balance. So when the Laxmi principle is awakened one gets money, prosperity, good fortune..... however if the man loses his humility and balance, he can no longer stand on the lotus and he then falls into this ocean where all these dangerous creatures are waiting to attack him!

Then She talked about some false ideas that we humans have..... here in She gave the example of Americans..... saying that nobody is rich in America..... they all want to have three Mercedes and big houses but they live under tremendous debt they live beyond their means..... this problem also affects the Indians who live there. Next was the effect of consumerism on the mind of people She gave the example of a lady who was given the money to buy two shirts but ended up buying five skirts because they were on sale and she could get a bargain with it!!

Then it was about the English who wore their designer labels on the outside of their formal suits to show that they had spent thousands of pounds to buy it!

Lastly She made fun of the French who were so boastful of their manners where the culture was nothing but alcoholism and prostitution. Also their table manners and the way they spent hours together just to decide what wine to drink and what food to eat..... and the smelly cheeses and the rotten wines that they consumed were just too much!!

Then She told how the nabhi chakra was located at such an important spot in the center of the body..... and there are these ten Dharmas that surround the Laxmi principle..... dharma of humanity, stree(woman), patni(wife), pati(husband), creativity, truth, politics, education..... and if one projects the Laxmi principle within the boundaries of these dharmas then there are no problems..... it is when we use the money irresponsibly and go against any of these dharmas with respect to the Laxmi or lose our humility and balance, then the Laxmi becomes a negative force and actually goes against a human being She is all powerful and then it is She who destroys you by becoming "ALAKSHMI"!!!

It is very important for us to have our grounding in the Lakshmi tatwa if not then we cannot ascent to the higher level of the Mahalakshmi tatwa (which is the principle where we evolve and go higher spiritually).

She also talked about the value and auspiciousness of money..... and how She would keep money in different packets labelled for specific tasks..... and use the money to buy things for others..... for other yogis..... and be very spontaneous while buying gifts..... and that we should buy things that have some artistic value for example the saree that She was wearing today had been made by artists in "Paithan" which was the capital of the Kingdom of Her forefathers..... the Shalivahanas!

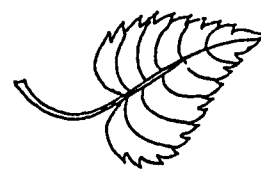
Also the sahaja yogis should definitely have the Lakshmi's qualities of..... protecting the one's that are dependant..... have a giving nature..... be in balance..... and be humble!

On the American gift she commented that the face of the quinion was of sakshaat Lakshmi!!..... After the pooja before Shri Mataji was about to leave She asked a Romanian yogi to sing a song..... he began with a Marathi bhajan with a fast pace and immediately the everyone got up to dance and then there was no stopping..... nonstop dancing, joy and ecstasy for the next hour or so! She was very happy at the end of the puja and told us next day that the vibrations were just tremendous and that all the yogis enjoyed them very much!..... and the proof of that we saw in the public program on the following day in Lisbon where about 700 people came and the moment Shri Mataji entered the hall..... most people achieved their realization!!..... and vibrations were even more stronger after the program!! and all the Portuguese people had a constant smile on their faces after the program!

The following day we were over 100 yogis who were able to see off Shri Mataji at the airport and thank Her ever so much for giving us the chance to worship Her as the goddess Mahalakshmi and for this most joy giving puja ever!!!!

I really do not have the right words to express the joy that we all experienced during this puja..... but I have tried to share some of the things with you all. Please forgive me for any errors or omissions against the Divine protocol. Hope you enjoy reading this!!

With love and much respect.....amit!



>From Surgeet/Hari:

INDIA TOUR 1997

1ST & 2ND DEC 1997 ARRIVAL & REGISTER DELHI
4 DEC SIGHT SEEING AGRA - TAJ MAHAL
4 DEC PUBLIC PROGRAMME DELHI
5 DEC LEAVE FOR NAGPUR
6 TO 9 NAGPUR
10 TO 14 DEC HYDERABAD
15 TO 17 DEC MADRAS (CHENNAI)
18 & 19 DEC COCHIN
20 & 21 DEC BANGALORE
22 TO 29 DEC GANAPATIPULE
30 DEC KALWE (THANE)

