



PRESS RELEASE

Tuesday 21 July 2010

For immediate release

New Art Exchange and Nottingham Asian Arts Council's



Nottingham Mela breaks records!

It was a brilliant, record breaking weekend of art, culture, cuisine and communities - all coming together to share their passion and support for UK's premier Mela attracting toddlers, teenagers, families from all walks of life.

The two day event organised by New Art Exchange and Nottingham Asian Arts Council saw a record audience of just over 4000 people visiting and gracing the gallery with a 'world diaspora' event exploring Eastern European, Asian, African, Latin American and Western -Indo jazz musical traditions through a full on programme of film, music, dance, theatre, visual art workshops and gorgeous Indian and Caribbean cuisine.

On the Sunday, for the first time ever, Nottingham Mela was presented as a 'picnic in the park' at the Arboretum Park and surpassed all expectations with just over ten thousand mela festival fans. Even the weather held up as the sun smiled down on the romantic setting of the Arboretum bandstand and park as the Mela unleashed a quality programme of music and dance, which included the mighty Rizwaan Muazzam Qawwali troupe from Pakistan and rising star Raghu Dixit, from Bangalore, mesmerising Nottingham audiences. Headlining on the day was Canadian superstar Raghu, who after

many years of being off the music scene, made a first time appearance at Nottingham Mela, driving the audiences into a frenzy. The arts and yoga marquee attracted hundreds of families and the market stalls offered a rich variety of arts, crafts, clothing and information. The sweet aroma of Indian cuisine ensured the catering stalls were never quiet too!

Sundays Mela event was hosted by BBC Asian Network DJ's Murtz and Noreen Khan.

Background

Britain's premier Mela festival has consistently showcased live performances by national and international artists including the likes of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Nitin Sawhney, Anup Jalota, Najma Akhtar, Baluji Shrivastav, Aziz Mian Qawwaal, Alaap, DCS, Apna Sangeet, Golden Star and Apache Indian amongst others. The best in performances from the diverse artistic cultures of South Asia such as Bhangra, Ghazal, Qawwali, classical & folk dance and theatre.

Nottingham Mela has continually brought together young South Asian artists and visitors from around the country in an environment of creativity, tolerance and respect. The event has always provided a unique opportunity to experience and partake in a weekend of live performances, interactive workshops and something slightly different. In recent years it did condense from a two-day festival to a one day event, but the thoughts and spirit behind Mela remain the same, that of creativity, music, respect, and celebration in diversity.

Nottingham's Mela Weekend showcased the best of Pop, R'n'B, Bollywood, Bhangra, Dance, Qawwali and Fusion. It has been jointly produced by *New Art Exchange*, *Nottingham Asian Arts Council* and funded by *Nottingham City Council* and *Greater Nottingham Partnership*. Key sponsor for the event is *Lebara Mobile Communications* and media partner and hosts - *BBC Asian Network*.

Russell Atkinson, Managing Director, Lebara Mobile UK, said, "Our sponsorship of this year's Nottingham Mela is part of an ongoing programme of support and commitment to our customers within the South Asian community and we are proud to be associated with this event. As a vibrant and colourful celebration of Asian culture, UK Melas offer us an ideal platform to connect with our customers and we hope, through our participation and support, to build strong relationships with the community as well as offer opportunities for such events to continue to flourish."

- Ends -

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Notes to Editors

Event

- This event has been co-produced by New Art Exchange and Nottingham Asian Arts Council, with funding support from Nottingham City Council and Greater Nottingham Partnership.
- BBC Asian Network were the official media partners for the event
- Official sponsor: Lebara Mobile Communications

New Art Exchange

- **New Art Exchange was awarded £5 million** of funding from Arts Council England, Nottingham City Council, the Greater Nottingham Partnership, East Midlands Development Agency, Radford and Hyson Green New Deal for Communities, and European Regional Development Funding, and took 18 months to build. The organisation was a big winner in Arts Council England's January 2008 review of national arts funding gaining a 58% increase in its annual funding grant. The award was made in recognition of the organisation's vital role in supporting visual and performing arts.
- **Mission:** The New Art Exchange's ambition is to become a national centre of excellence promoting contemporary arts development within the cultural and creative industries, to deliver an innovative and exciting programme of activity to promote, support and advocate contemporary multi-cultural arts development in visual and performing arts and new media. To be a cultural centre led by African, African Caribbean and South Asian arts practice. To serve an international community from roots firmly embedded in the local area.

Nottingham Asian Arts Council

- Nottingham Asian Arts Council (NAAC) is a not-for-profit organisation which is dedicated to the promotion of South Asian Arts within the Nottinghamshire region. It is a voluntary organisation formed in October 1986 with the specific aim of promoting South Asian Arts in Nottinghamshire. NAAC began its work directly in Nottingham City with members of the resident Indian sub-continent communities, but later broadened out across the various boroughs of Nottingham. NAAC now works across the County, whilst also developing contacts nationally and internationally to support cultural activities and artists.
- NAAC is funded through a grant received from Nottingham City Council and Arts Council East Midlands. Various other grants are secured to deliver specific projects.
- The organisation has been instrumental in encouraging the promotion of cultural diversity through the education of the public in all areas of Asian Arts and culture. NAAC has successfully started up classes and workshops in Asian music and dance via liaison with Arts Council England East Midlands. It has also been instrumental in the promotion of various local artists in the Nottingham area.