



For immediate release

## **The Neemrana Music Foundation 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary Opera Gala rolls out the red carpet to Indian Audiences**

~In association with the European Union, The Neemrana Music Foundation presents  
a best-of the nine operas produced over the past decade~

**Delhi, November 2014:** Do you remember "The Fakir of Benares", the first opera ever staged in Delhi? Or "If I were King", the most spectacular of The Neemrana Music Foundation productions? Were you among the laughing crowd that attended "Don Pasquale", or those who cried on witnessing Violetta's death in "La Traviata"?

The Neemrana Music Foundation, which brought Opera to India, was born in the year of 2002 when a young singer still pursuing her studies, **Aude-Priya Wacziarg, now Managing Trustee of The Neemrana Foundation**, came across the old score of an unknown opera set in India, "The Fakir of Benares". A couple of years later, it was the first ever opera to be produced and staged in India.

It was the dream of the **late Francis Wacziarg**, founder The Neemrana Music Foundation, to put India on the world map of Western and Indian classical music. The Gala event on **6<sup>th</sup> December 2014** will be a tribute to his achievements. The journey of one of the most popular art forms to India from across the world is encapsulated in excerpts from the nine operas that The Neemrana Music Foundation has produced over the past years.

**The Fakir of Benares**- 2002: Delhi and 2003 Mumbai,

**The Pearl Fishers**- September 2005, Delhi and December 2007, Colombo

**Carmen**–April 2008: Delhi

**La Traviata**–November 2008: Delhi, Mumbai and Calcutta

**If I were King**–January 2010: Delhi

**Magic Mozart** – January 2012: Delhi

**Don Pasquale** – December 2012: Delhi

**Orfeo Crossing the Ganges**–September 2013: Delhi and Paris

**Romeo and Juliet**- March 2014: Delhi

Opera was never a genre for the elite, but actually a popular art form. It entertains with music, song, drama, dance, with spectacular costumes and sets, as does Bollywood. The Opera Gala will take the audience through the most famous songs of Mozart and Verdi, among others – romantic arias, moving songs, fun ones, some from centuries ago, others from yesterday only, portraying all the various emotions of the human heart.

A choir of fifty adults and forty children - including children from the Blind Relief Association and children from underprivileged families from the NGO Khushii - will perform along with ten soloists and dancers from three different dance styles - Kathak, modern ballet and Kalaripayattu), displaying over 500 costumes made by the designers Muzaffar and Meera Ali, and Parvesh & Jai. The music will be played by a full orchestra of fifty musicians from across India and Europe.

The Foundation is proud to present for the first time a cast of solo singers who are all Indians and have been trained directly or indirectly by The Neemrana Music Foundation.

Three of the main singers - Amar Muchhala, Ramya Roy and Vikrant Subramanian –as well as leading instrumentalists have been sponsored by the European Union to travel to India from their bases in Europe, to share their expertise and experience with artistes aspiring to become professionals.

**The Weight Lifting Auditorium**, in the premises of **the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium**, has a capacity of 2000 for this event.

**Anjolie Ela Menon**, one of the leading contemporary artists, has created paintings to form a spectacular backdrop for ‘Carmen’ depicting a corrida in Seville.

***On this occasion, Managing Trustee of The Neemrana Music Foundation said,*** “All Indians speak two or three languages, so we were not surprised that our young singers of Delhi showed great talent in learning music. Music is just another language, one that speaks to the heart! We always thought that Western Classical Music could grow in India, instead of being imported, and after ten years of training through workshops and scholarships, we hope to prove that India deserves to be on the Opera map just as much (or more!) than China.”

H.E. Dr João Cravinho, Ambassador of the European Union while referring to Opera as a step to bring European and Indian cultures together said, "Opera was always intended to be a popular art, something for and of the people, as music enhances very simple and universal emotions - love, hate and jealousy. We are proud to play a part in nurturing and supporting the Indian talent in this field and excited to see that a typically European tradition is finding a natural partner in India, the land of Bollywood and of so many indigenous traditions of musical theatre." "It is an honor to be associated with this event and support the inheritance of Francis Wacziarg, whose life and work was such an inspirational bridge between Europe and India," he further added.

The show is being presented jointly with the European Union, main sponsor of the Gala as well as of all the training workshops carried out by the Foundation in the year 2014. The support provided by the EU is part of its work to promote a wider and deeper understanding and awareness of what the European Union represents, of its multifaceted nature, its guiding principles, and its values.

The show will be held on December 6<sup>th</sup> at 7pm at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, Delhi.

Tickets priced at 500, 350 and 200 rupees are available at The Neemrana Shop, Khan Market and on [bookmyshow](#).

Refreshment and snacks from the patisserie “L’Opéra” will be available at venue.

## **The Neemrana Music Foundation**

Situated in New Delhi, The Neemrana Music Foundation is a non-profit organization which focuses on training young musicians and singers from India to acquire professional skills in the field of Western Classical Music. Through the means of this Foundation, Francis Wacziarg took further his commitment to preserving heritage and promoting cultural exchanges between the East and the West through the universal power of music. In light of its mission to teach Western Classical Music, the Foundation has created several vocal groups and choirs. Every year it offers scholarships to young Indian individuals to enable them to study abroad. This training culminates in grand Opera performances that have received many accolades from audiences across India.

## **About the European Union (EU):**

The EU which consists of 28 countries has the world's largest economy and its third largest population, after China and India. Though richly diverse, the countries that make up the EU (its 'Member States') are all committed to the same basic values: peace, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights. They have set up common institutions so that decisions on matters of common interest can be made democratically at European level. The EU promotes cultural projects to celebrate Europe's rich heritage in the visual arts as well as music, dance, theatre and cinema.

For over 50 years the EU and India have worked together to reduce poverty, deliver education and skills, prevent disasters, expand trade, and promote joint research in energy, health, agriculture and many other fields of mutual interest. Please see <http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/india>

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