

Press release, October 2022

New music festival launched to celebrate India-UK connections through rhythm

Manchester Museum, part of The University of Manchester, and the Indian Music Experience Museum, Bangalore, are thrilled to announce *RhythmXchange*. This is a new collaborative project that seeks to explore rhythm as a shared language between East and West.

Four young people with musical skills from India and the UK have been selected to take part in this exciting artistic development programme. Starting in autumn 2022, the young musicians will each be supported by two mentors – one from India and one from the UK – to design and facilitate a percussion-based art project. This mentoring programme will culminate in youth-led international performances of their collaborative piece at two on-site festivals at Manchester Museum in the UK and the India Music Experience Museum in Bangalore.

- India Festival, India Music Experience Museum, 25-27 November 2022
- Manchester Festival, Manchester Museum, 17-19 March 2023

The idea of rhythm as a language can be dated back to antiquity. Vocal percussion is common in the East and West, but the styles differ considerably, as do the cultural contexts in which they evolved and are performed. The project seeks to understand how music traditions interact across borders. While this unique experience focuses on developing and giving autonomy to young musicians and growing their global networks, it also aims to create a collaborative cross-cultural artistic outcome.

This is an international partnership between Manchester Museum and the Indian Music Experience Museum funded by British Council's India/UK Together Season of Culture and [Our Shared Cultural Heritage](#) programme.

Skinder Hundal MBE, Global Director Arts at the British Council, said:

"We are excited to support the RhythmXchange festival through our India/UK Together Season of Culture to celebrate the power and the fusion of contrasting music traditions."

"This collaboration – between the Indian Music Experience Museum and Manchester Museum – showcases Indian Carnatic music alongside beatboxing and konnakkol to explore rhythm as a shared language to engage young people and artists beyond borders to improve how we understand our cultures."

"The festival will run at Manchester Museum in the UK and the Indian Music Experience Museum in Bangalore. It is curated by young people and is a fantastic opportunity for people seeking new experiences."

Deepikaa Sreenivasan, (mentor, India) said:

"The four young artists in this program are extremely talented, with such diverse skills that the music they create will certainly be refreshingly new! It is as much a journey of self-discovery for us mentors as it is for them, since we will all need to place our art and learnings in contexts very different from the norm. The possibilities for all of us are infinite and that, I think, is the most exciting aspect of this project!"

Balraj Singh Samrai (mentor, UK) said:

"I'm excited to be a part of this unique project to assist and mentor artists to explore sound, music and composition drawing inspiration from ancient South Asian practices as well as contemporary composition, production and performance techniques. I hope it can build further links and networks between Manchester and Bangalore informing inclusive and dynamic exchanges for years to come."

Manchester Museum is currently closed to the public for a £15 million transformation. When it reopens in February 2023 it will have a new South Asia Gallery, a British Museum partnership, which will present a compelling, contemporary take on South Asian and British Asian culture. This multilingual gallery is being designed and built with the South Asia Gallery Collective, an inspiring group of musicians, community leaders, educators, artists, historians, journalists, scientists, students and others from South Asian diaspora with a unique spirit of collaboration and co-production. At the heart of the gallery will be a room for performances, filmic experiences and participatory activities.

For more information on *RhythmXchange*:
<https://www.mmfromhome.com/rhythmxchange>

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Notes to editors

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About Manchester Museum

Manchester Museum, part of The University of Manchester, first opened in 1890. It is one of the UK's largest university museums with a collection of about 4.5 million objects. The museum's vision is to build understanding between cultures and a more sustainable world. Manchester Museum is working towards an exciting new £15 million project hello future, to transform and develop the Museum becoming more inclusive, imaginative and caring to the diverse communities it serves.

The hello future transformation includes:

- A new Exhibition Hall
- South Asia Gallery, a British Museum Partnership
- Lee Kai Hung Chinese Culture Gallery
- Belonging Gallery
- Dinosaur display
- New entrance and visitor facilities with focus on inclusive and accessible design

www.museum.manchester.ac.uk

@mcrcmuseum

About Indian Music Experience Museum

The Indian Music Experience Museum (IME) is India's first interactive music museum. Located in JP Nagar, Bengaluru, the IME is a non-profit initiative supported by the Brigade Group. The vision of the IME is to introduce the youth to the diversity of Indian music and to preserve India's rich musical heritage. The IME comprises hi-tech multimedia Exhibit Galleries, a Sound Garden, a Learning Centre for music education, and several performance spaces. Since opening in 2019, the IME has had over 45,000 visitors in-person and many thousands more online.

The IME's work spans Exhibition, Conservation, Audience Development, Education, and Community Outreach. Besides museum visits, the IME hosts a wide variety of public programs, both in-person and online. In 2020, the IME presented an important exhibition "Ravi Shankar@100: India's Global Musician" to commemorate the centennial of the sitar maestro. The IME's online activities include regular events, online exhibits on the Google Arts and Culture platform, regular online classes in various genres of music, and the curation of www.chowdiah.com, a digital archive on violin maestro Mysore T. Chowdiah. The IME is an institutional affiliate of the GRAMMY Museum in Los Angeles. The IME's community outreach projects include its flagship Project Svaritha, which engages children from socially disadvantaged and neurodivergent backgrounds, as well as #YuvaInCulture which engages the youth in leadership, creative work, and internships at the museum.

About the British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We build connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education and the English language. In 2019-2020 we reached over 75 million people directly and 758 million people overall including online, broadcasts and publications. Founded in 1934 we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body. We receive a 14.5 per cent core funding grant from the UK government. www.britishcouncil.org

About India/UK Together, a Season of Culture

India/UK Together, a Season of Culture, is a year-long celebration of the long-standing relationship between India and the UK. Marking India's 75th anniversary, it will see a vast programme of creative collaboration, education and cultural exchange take place online, and in cities across both countries. Working with a number of partners and institutions in the field of Arts, Education and English, the British Council is developing a programme of cultural activity which will bring together people in both countries, raise awareness around key real-world issues, and strengthen and celebrate the UK and India's educational and cultural ties. For more information on India/UK Together, a Season of Culture, please visit www.britishcouncil.in

About Our Shared Cultural Heritage

Our Shared Cultural Heritage (OSCH) experiments with new ways for museums and heritage organisations to work better for young people. The project is led by young people aged 11-25 and looks at how museums and heritage organisations can become more relevant and engaging places to explore identity, connect with others and create new opportunities for young people. Our focus is on working with young people from the South Asian diaspora in the UK and with young people in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The project is managed by the British Council in partnership with Glasgow Life, Manchester Museum and UK Youth. It is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund's Kick the Dust programme. In addition to our work in the UK, OSCH works in collaboration with museums, youth and heritage organisations in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.