

Exhibition featured work of 10 illustrators from across the UK

British Council Kuwait concludes 'Drawing Words' exhibition

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: "Drawing Words" is an exhibition that is curated by the Waterstones UK Children's Laureate, Lauren Child and was commissioned by the British Council Kuwait for display at the Kuwait International Book Fair. It features the work of ten illustrators from across the UK whose work makes an important and original contribution to contemporary British picture book illustration.

This exhibition was in partnership with National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters and was a part of the celebration of the 120 years anniversary of the Kuwait-British friendship treaty (protection agreement) which was signed by the governor of Kuwait Sheikh Mubarak bin Sabah Al Sabah, with the British government in 1899.

As a reflection of this 120-year friendship, the UK was also the Guest of Honour at the Kuwait International Book Fair, where the exhibition was on display from Nov 20 - 30.

Michael Gordon, Country Director of British Council Kuwait stated that "We are honored to participate in Kuwait Book Fair 2019, and we are delighted to collaborate with the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters in bringing Drawing Words to Kuwait. I am a strong believer in the importance of reading books, and I know that children are motivated from a young age by the illustrations that catch their attentions and make them what to discover the story. They get the habit



A photo from the event.

of hearing the stories and will later want to read them. When they are older readers, they will form their own mental pictures of stories, as their imaginations are stimulated by the written word. But it all starts with the children's book illustrations - the better they are, the more easily they start the children on the journey of reading. So that is why I particu-

larly wanted to bring Drawing Words to Kuwait."

Through Drawing Words, the British Council examined the role that literature plays in bringing people and communities together across cultures and borders, an important aspect of British Council's work.

The British Council also partnered with

Takween (a creative writing platform), Imaginitq8, the American University of Kuwait and Gulf University for Science and Technology to put together an engaging Programme that complemented the displayed illustrations and allowed the public to interact with the literature. Two of the exhibiting UK artists; Yasmeen Ismail - an award-winning author, illustrator and animator as well as David Mackintosh - graphic designer, illustrator and author visited Kuwait as part of these activities which brought together children, novelists, illustrators, publishers, teachers, academics and other educators to learn about and explore issues of common concern, challenges and opportunities as well as best practices both in Kuwait and the United Kingdom.

The comprehensive schedule of events included: **Storytelling sessions:** Yasmeen and David individually delivered a total of six interactive storytelling sessions that engaged with and inspired up to 110 young students. The participating children had a wonderful time and the sessions also received excellent reviews from their teachers and parents.

Panel discussion: Zahra Al-Mahdi, an artist, writer and filmmaker and Nusaiba Almunayes, artist and children's books illustrator joined David Mackintosh on a panel that was moderated by Dr Lavinia Davenport to encourage a dialogue on the opportunities and challenges within the literature sector, both in

the UK and in Kuwait. This interesting discussion created awareness about a sector that is often overlooked and was attended by more than 40 people. With the aim to be inclusive and reach out to a wider audience, the discussion was in English and Arabic with headsets available for those who weren't bilingual.

Workshop: Yasmeen Ismail delivered a workshop "Making Picture Books, an introduction to stories, illustration and publishing for children" to over 30 University students studying art, specifically children's illustrations. The students were introduced to the industry and the process of creating a children's picture book from start to finish. It also included a talk about Yasmeen's journey into becoming an author/illustrator and picture book critique. All of this was punctuated with relevant exercises and a chance at the end to ask questions and learn from her experiences.

Talk: David Mackintosh presented a talk to almost 100 University students on "Making Book: My Picture Book Practice" which was an informal presentation about his work and how he makes his books and a living as an artist/author. It provided an overview of his practice and an insight into book publishing and he also discussed the publishing process from idea to printed book.

Follow the British Council Kuwait on Instagram (@KWBritish) for more details on all our upcoming activities and events.

Music

click

Latest

Continued from Page 14

Idukki Association Kuwait President Thomas Chacko Vezhambasseril together with Women's Forum Chairperson Lancy Babu Parayanickal released the flier of the program. Secretary Akhila Sijo, Joint Secretary Anny Ivy and Executive committee member Jijimol Thomas were present. The program named 'Walk The Talk' shall be open and free for all the parents and children. For further details, kindly contact 65939951/99072575

WKK painting competition: Welfare Kerala Kuwait (WKK) Salmiya zone is conducting a painting competition with a theme 'My India My Canvas, a Painting against Hatred', in connection with the 6th anniversary celebration of the organization in Kuwait. Using oil paints or acrylic colours Indians from all states living in Kuwait under the age group 25-38 can participate. The competition shall be held on Dec 6 at Najath School, Salmiya from 2 pm onwards. The organizers are also arranging an exhibition of art works and paintings of renowned artists and these items are available for sale for the visitors. The winners (1st, 2nd and 3rd) of the competition shall be awarded with gold coins as prizes. There will be a separate motivational training session on painting technics arranged for pre-registered children (100 seats only) on the same day at the venue. For more details and registration please call Contact Number: +965-95514174, +965-99354375 or use the link : <https://forms.gle/GB6JmQBJRq9pToUN6>.

Dec 13

St Paul's Church events: Welcome and consider being part of our upcoming festivity events at the St Paul's Anglican Church, Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf.

● Friday, Dec 13: The Nativity Play and Christmas at 10.30 am led by Children and Youth & the Ladies Fellowship.

● Sunday, Dec 15: "Christmas Carols by Candlelight" at 6 pm followed by fellowship refreshments. Guest choirs will perform.

● Friday, Dec 20: Dedication of the New Chapel by Archbishop Michael Lewis at 10 am. Celebration and refreshments will follow.

● Tuesday, Dec 24: Christmas Eve service at 6.30 pm.

● Wednesday, Dec 25: Christmas Day service at 6.30 pm.

● Tuesday, Dec 31: New Year's Day Vigil at 11.30 pm.

Our church is home to Christians from Western Europe, North and South America, Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and India. Members from the Protestant, Reformed, Anglican/Episcopal, Evangelical and other traditions make up a warm and dynamic St Paul's Church family.

Visit our website or contact Revd Michael Mbona (Chaplain and Rector)
Mobile: 65960781 or Email: mmbona@gmail.com

Church location: Cnr 9th Ave & 6th St North, Block 14, Ahmadi, Kuwait.

General

AWL registration: If you were interested in joining the American Women's League (AWL) please check out their website, www.awlkuwait.org, or email them at awl@awlkuwait.org. American women over the age of 17 or wives of Americans are able to join. All other nationalities are welcome as associate members.

IEI Centenary Engineers Day: The Institution of Engineers India, Kuwait Chapter (IEI Kuwait Chapter) will be celebrating the "The Centenary Engineer's day" and "The second international Conference on Engineering Challenges in Gulf countries" on Nov 29 and 30, 2019 at Radisson Blu, Salwa, Kuwait respectively. Apart from HE the Ambassador of India to State of Kuwait, many distinguished guests from Ministries, Universities, KSE, KISR, Engineers, technocrats, consultants, decision makers and business leaders shall be attending this program.

To commemorate the occasion, we shall bring out a souvenir that will include materials of keynote addresses from eminent speakers on different engineering fields and abstracts/articles related to International Conference topics. The conference will cover the engineering challenges and innovative solutions in the area of Oil and gas exploration and exploitation, Water desalination, Food security, Infrastructure development, dust storm issues, Conventional and renewable Energy production, climate change and environmental degradation of land, water and air, Coastal infrastructure and marine facility developments, Waste disposal and management and Other engineering disciplines which affects the socioeconomic development of Kuwait and Gulf countries.

An engineering quiz related to the themes of the conference will be organized with attractive

Continued on Page 18

Carnatic vocals merge with Western notation

East meets West in Raag N Rhythm concert

By Chaitali B. Roy
Special to the Arab Times

Music is a universal language that communicates across cultural and linguistic boundaries in ways that one cannot with ordinary languages. One does not have to speak French to enjoy a composition by Debussy nor Hindi to enjoy an Indian Raaga. But despite the universality and commonness, each school of music has its own grammar and dialect that is formed and moulded by the culture in which it is rooted. So despite being a universal feature of human experience, the music varies at times so much so that in some cultures, it does not even sound like music. In Kuwait, home to a multicultural community, one does get to hear music from different parts of the world.

On Dec 4, Raag N Rhythm, an ensemble created by Malini Viswanath to propagate the universality of musical forms and genres will present 'East Meets West': Abhedha (That which is Non Divisive) in Adan. Featuring Malini Viswanath (Carnatic vocals), Harriet Bushman (piano), Marius Rusanu (clarinet), Alexandru Spatarelu (cello), Vinita Prakash (Bharatnatyam) and Suryaprakash Samudrala, the concert will celebrate the coming together of Carnatic vocals with the Western trio of piano, cello and the clarinet.

Indian classical music is one of the oldest musical traditions in the world. It can be divided into two large traditions, namely, Hindustani and Carnatic music. The Hindustani classical music which is predominant in the northern part of the Indian subcontinent originates from the ancient Vedic, Persian, and many folk traditions. While the Carnatic classical music, prevalent in the southern parts of the Indian subcontinent, is one of the purest forms of music. Carnatic music is generally homophonic with emphasis on vocal music. There are many differences between Indian classical music and Western tradition. Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian Nobel Laureate and an accomplished music composer while speaking of the difference between the Indian and Western school of music notes, "For us, music has above all a transcendental significance. It disengages the spiritual from the happenings of life; it sings of the relationships of the human soul with the soul of things beyond. The world by day is like European music; a flowing concourse of vast harmony, composed of concord and discord and many disconnected fragments. And the night world is our Indian music; one pure, deep and tender raga. They both stir us, yet the two are contradictory in spirit....Our music draws the listener away beyond the limits of everyday human joys and sorrows, and takes us to that lonely region of renunciation which lies at the root of the universe, while European music leads us a variegated dance through the endless rise and fall of human grief and joy."

Here, in this interview, the artists speak to Arab Times about their experience of collaboration.

Malini Viswanath (an accomplished exponent of Carnatic music, teacher and founder of Raag N Rhythm)

Arab Times: What led to the concert and how have you designed it?

Malini: Over the years, looking at how "giving and unconditional" music has been, the concert was born with the thought of bringing the 'non-divisiveness' nature of music to the fore. For long, I wished to put forth some predominantly Carnatic classical compositions into western notations and perform Carnatic vocals with non-conventional Western Orchestra. I put forward the proposal to my good friend, Marius Rusanu the Romanian Clarinetist, with whom I had collaborated for Dar's Cultural season. We sat down and very painstakingly went through the composition, and he notated it with a lot of dedication.

The event will begin with Sanskrit hymns set to the evening Raga Yaman which will flow seamlessly into the Gregorian chant - "The Rose". This will be followed by the composition Kakarla Vamshodbhavaya which explains the lineage of Thyagaraja in a difficult Raga Kambhoji. For the first time, this work will be played by a western trio of piano, clarinet and the cello. The concert will feature a thillana and a segment on the 'empowered woman'. For the first piece, the dancer will emote the words of the Gregorian chant through abhinaya. So, there will be art in its 'Abhedha' form. More information on www.eventat.com.

AT: How easy is it for Carnatic vocals being one of the purest forms of music to



Malini Viswanath

merge with western notation?

Malini: Yes, it is a challenge, but the versatility of our music gives allowance to render the swaras without the 'meends: and the 'gamakas'.

AT: How did you reach a meeting ground with two different traditions of music?

Malini: Western music is notated, while classical Indian music is an improvised form. After a few sessions with the musicians, we were able to understand how the western musicians could still manage and allow my singing to flow with improvisation while still looking at the notation. This has been possible mainly because the three musicians are immensely talented and can adapt to Carnatic music, a very new style with a lot of openness and willingness to collaborate.

AT: You have spent a lot of time in India lately. How vibrant is the classical music scene there?

Malini: Undoubtedly India is intellectually stimulating, and for fine art such as our classical music, it's the place to be. We need to find our engaging space and carve out a niche. Relocating to India has given me immense opportunity to publish, write, interact with senior scholars, organise and perform thematic events, and brainstorm with the most knowledgeable people in the field. It is immensely satisfying to learn and give back to society at the same time.

Harriet Petherick Bushman (An award-winning composer of instrumental and vocal music for theatre and the concert stage, pianist and teacher)

AT: India has two schools of classical music - Hindustani and Carnatic and two are very different in sound - how easy or difficult do you find playing western notations to Carnatic music?

Harriet: I grew up in a mixed musical household - that is to say that my mother

could read music very well but did not have an improvisational note in her being, whereas my father couldn't read a note of music but played like an angel by ear. My mother tried everything she could think of to teach me to read, but I was stubbornly resistant; it wasn't until I started accompanying choirs (where under no circumstances can you stop or mislead the choir) that my music reading became truly fluent. My natural way was to play by ear and to make up the music, so the Indian tradition of improvisation feels very familiar to me. I am finding the whole Raga system interesting with its different scales and modes, and the vocal techniques are fascinating, so completely different from anything we do in the west. I feel that is not really possible to accurately notate Carnatic in western style because the singer is of course expected to improvise in the wonderfully decorative style that is the tradition. It is not always easy to follow, but it is certainly thrilling to listen to.

AT: Have you played with Indian music before?

Harriet: I have never played Indian music before, but a studio manager who produced some of my pop songs was a sarod player. A huge and powerfully beautiful instrument, which he played in the band when his guru came to preach in London, made me listen to music differently. It was the stillness and strange variations of themes that captured my imagination and made me keen to hear more. Working with Malini has helped me to understand a little better how Indian music works and that there are clear structures along with the improvisation, we have to learn them and then be very much on our toes in performance.

AT: Western classical music is fixed whereas Indian classical music lends itself to and encourages improvisation - how do you reach a meeting ground?

Harriet: The word 'fusion' explains what we

have done in our mixed group of musicians. One of our players notated Malini's songs - in as far as he could - and we are playing along trying to support, rather than get in the way. The singer is the star here, and we are trying to do our best to make a beautiful concert mixing the different west and east styles. Malini has been very patient with us, and we are delighted to collaborate on this concert.

Alexandru Spatarelu (cello)

AT: India has two schools of classical music - Hindustani and Carnatic and two are very different in sound - how easy or difficult do you find playing western notations to Carnatic music?

Alexandru: I have never studied this type of music before, and I have gained a lot from my brief time collaborating with Malini. It has been a great opportunity for me to interpret a new style of music using a notation that I am so familiar with.

AT: Western classical music is fixed whereas Indian classical music lends itself to and encourages improvisation - how do you reach a meeting ground?

Alexandru: I believe that there are always ways for people who have different cultural experiences to meet and find commonalities, and we should always take these opportunities when they come. In this situation, Marius was able to build our cultural bridge with his extraordinary adaptation of the eastern compositions... Through our technique, string players have the freedom to try to imitate the improvisations of the singer and manipulate our sound to produce one similar to the voice.

AT: How do you look at this collaboration?

Alexandru: I have really enjoyed the process of collaborating with Malini and the others. This is one of the most interesting projects that I have been a part of, and I hope I will have the opportunity to engage with Indian music again in this way.