

# LSE Celebrates the Party of the Centenary

by Lamis Hossain

THE London School of Economics and Political Science is celebrating what it modestly calls 'the Birthday Party of the Centenary'. Lest anyone should forget the institution's hundred years of existence, the school has organised a grand list of events to cover the week from July 6-12: a dinner at the House of Commons with Lord Callaghan and Sir Edward Heath, a dinner at Guildhall with HRH the Princess Royal, a reception at the House of Lords, a Thames cruise, a younger alumni ball at the Cafe Royal, lectures by leading academics and countless reunions of different classes, departments, and clubs.

Even those LSE graduates who are either too cynical, poor or indifferent to attend this self-congratulatory fanfare are likely to wonder out loud: how has the LSE come so far?

The school was established in 1895 by Beatrice and Sidney Webb as a 'high powered think tank specialising in the social sciences'. The LSE motto declares simply, 'Rerum Cognoscere Causas' — 'to know the causes of things'.

The institution's magic, though, is difficult to pinpoint. For those who have studied there, it is easier to define the place in terms of negatives: it's not beautiful, it's too cramped, and there's no school spirit. The fees are too high, there is no housing guaranteed, you have to struggle through a sea of humanity everyday to make it to lunch, and the canteen looks like the inside of a bus. The school authorities never bother enquiring about your welfare and the only letters you're likely to get are about fees and loans due (and the centenary invitation you can't afford).

If you dream of church spires, Frisian cows and rolling hills then forget the LSE. A back street off the Aldwych in central London is an unexpected location for this so-called intellectual hotbed. The architectural clashes which constitute the LSE have often been described as a 'rabbit warren', where you can get lost even after a good three years. Classrooms are tucked away in little corners where you wouldn't think a broom would fit in. The well-stocked library used to be a warehouse, and still looks like one, and another newly acquired building spent its past life as a hospital.

Even the school's leftist image is not all that it's thought to be. There are more accountant and yuppie types than you could possibly wish for and the radical elements are now confined to a small egg-throwing lot who are proud of the yolk stains inflicted on visiting government personalities such as MPs Peter Lilley and Virginia Bottomley (LSE alumna).

If it weren't for the gun battles, Dhaka University's green surroundings would place it miles ahead of the LSE environment.

Why then does the LSE evoke expressions of awe and attract students from all over the world? It's not just big city excitement which draws



The LSE on the Aldwych—the new Clement House building

them. According to the Times of London, the LSE has a 'sheer hard edged glamour', especially for foreign observers. The International Herald Tribune observed that despite the 'miserable clump of buildings', the LSE has 'more energy, more passion to discover what makes the world tick in one shabby corner than Oxford has in a hundred manicured quadrangles'.

The place certainly has a stellar academic record. LSE is among the top three universities in England and it doesn't just excel in teaching economics. The Anthropology, Law, So-

cial Work, and Management Studies departments have already been rated 'excellent' in an ongoing external review. The fact that 60 percent of the graduating class of 1994 was composed of overseas students demonstrates the LSE's reputation abroad.

Although the school has not turned out to be as 'Socialist' as the Fabian founders may have hoped, LSE's history is nevertheless peppered by famous personalities such as Frederick Hayek, Michael Oakeshott, Harold Laski and Karl Popper. There is no dearth of renowned academics

in its more recent history and present — Lord Wedderburn, David Starkey, Michael Zander, Meghnad Desai, Fred Italikday and Rosalyn Higgins to name a few. These names contribute in part to the LSE's reputation. Students bask in the knowledge that many of the relevant books are written by their professors, even though for some of them watching their prof on the BBC or from half way across the lecture room may be as close as it gets.

The students themselves are an essential part of the LSE appeal. The fee-paying learners at the LSE are not pampered at all after the perfunctory orientation, it's sink or swim in big old London. Although there are approximately only 5,600 students, divided evenly between undergraduates and graduate students, the densely packed campus makes you feel like part of a large, pulsating breeding ground for new ideas. LSE students may throw paper airplanes during student council meetings, but they were also the first ones to believe in the wrongly convicted Tottenham Three's innocence.

Although there are visible student groupings at the LSE, they are not necessarily insular: the Indian posse, the Malaysian and Singaporean crowd, the Greeks, the Italians, the 'Let's See Europe' Americans who come for a year, the Germans, the student council hawks, the Three Tuns (campus pub) lager lads, the Geography drossers, the trendy clubbers, the alternative crowd, and the potheads to name a few.

With its centenary celebrations, the LSE is proclaiming that this combination of students and academics produces a heady intellectual atmosphere indeed. Happy Birthday and party on.



The LSE on the Houghton Street



LSE: At the forefront of the funding debate

## The Old Man and the Temple in the Sea

Sadhu warned Gunn, "just as you break that temple with that bulldozer, so you, too, will be broken." Others say he just pleaded quietly with him. Whatever the truth, within one month Gunn was dead. As he was bulldozing a tree some distance away, it fell on him and broke his back. Gemini News Service correspondent Niala Maharaj recounts a story of tenacity, from Waterloo, Trinidad and Tobago.

A quarter mile off the coast of central Trinidad stands an extraordinary monument to the human spirit. For over 30 years, a Hindu temple, built into the Caribbean Sea, has withstood tides, breezes and neglect. It was the creation of one man — alone, unaided and ridiculed, his largest tool an ordinary bicycle.

"Engineers does want to know how he did it," says Roshan Koodrath, a resident of the nearby village of Waterloo. "He got oil drums from Lever Brothers, filled them up with concrete and tied them together with steel. That was how he made the foundation."

But the real foundation was tenacity. A tenacity which led Seudass Sadhu, a poor, indentured labourer from India, to defy not only the elements but the authorities in colonial Trinidad in order to create a place of worship.

"That man went to jail for that temple," points out Sheik, a fellow villager. Sadhu was the last jail-going type in the village, a hardworking sugar-worker born in 1901 in the holy city of Benares on the river Ganges.

"He was not a talker," Sheik recalls. "If you and he stay together for hours you would hardly hear him talk. You had to do all the talking. He neither smoked nor drank."

The one thing that made Sadhu noticeable was that he saved his meagre wages and went back to India every few years to worship at the holy shrines there.

"I once asked him why he went back so often," says Sheik. "He said he had made a promise to Bhagwan (God) to return."

But as the years passed, the cost of the trip rose. It became more difficult for a labourer working for \$20 per month to keep up this regular pilgrimage. So he decided to create a holy place in Trinidad instead.

"I believe the sea here was like the Ganges to him," Koodrath says, for he chose a piece of unused swamp land close to the shore and began construction, month after month.

"Seven days a week he used to

pass my house on his bicycle," Sheik relates. "I used to call out to him 'Salaam, Salaam,' and he used to reply, 'Ram, Ram.' He wasn't the kind of man to stop and blag, you know."

The result was a place of renowned beauty.

"You know that flower, *gundar Kapoor?*" Sheik asks. "He planted so much of it that you could smell the temple from a distance. He planted 11 kinds of flowers, and vegetables too. And that garden used to be full of the most beautiful butterflies. All kinds of butterflies that you didn't see anywhere else. You didn't have to be one of the Hindu faith to feel the beauty of the place."

"Especially for *Kartik* (the festival of the sea), we used to have crowds of people here," Koodrath remembers. "They used to have three-day festivals. They used to come and stay and cook and sing."

Sadhu had finally created a place of pilgrimage for Hindus in Trinidad, which had few public temples at the time.

But then the management of the sugar company, which owned all the land in that area, noticed that a building had been constructed on their property. Though the swampy ground had no commercial value, they demanded that Sadhu demolish the temple. That was asking him to commit a sin.

No matter what threats they used, Sheik relates, "all he would say was, 'I cannot break down that. They took the matter to the Assizes,' he says, pointing in the direction of Port of Spain, where the law courts were."

Sadhu was fined \$500, the equivalent of two years' wages, which he had to pay in instalments over a long period, and sentenced to 14 days in prison for trespassing.

"He make an honourable jail," Sheik bursts into sudden tears. "Sadhu was such a soft man, and he make an honourable jail rather than break the temple."

And the sugar company received a court order to demolish the temple. But since they could not persuade any local person to undertake this

task, a British overseer named Gunn, "a large, red-faced man," according to Sheik, drove the bulldozer that finally erased Sadhu's creation from the face of the earth.

Sadhu warned Gunn, "just as you break that temple with that bulldozer, so you, too, will be broken." Others say he just pleaded quietly with him. Whatever the truth, within one month Gunn was dead. As he was bulldozing a tree some distance away, it fell on him and broke his back.

In addition, states Ramnarine Binda, a former local government councillor for the area and sugar company official, the Englishman who had given the order for the demolition also died suddenly of disease soon after.

As soon as Sadhu was released from prison, say village reports, he was back at the site of his former temple, looking dejected. But not broken.

He immediately set about purchasing a truck. Then he began to collect broken bricks from a nearby brick factory and dump them on the shore, day after day, load after load, in a straight line out to sea.

Flattening them down by hand, he inched his way into the ocean with the truck. After some weeks of labour, he had created an extended walkway, which intrigued the villagers.

"I used to have two fishing trawlers," Sheik says. "And I used to be at the same spot in the evening waiting for them to come in. I used to watch Sadhu working for three-four hours out there in the sea."

One day the tide came up while he was working. The truck was stuck and couldn't be removed till the next morning. By then, it was so badly damaged it couldn't be repaired.

"You would have thought that would stop Sadhu," Sheik raises his eyebrows. "But no. He just continued working. He would put two buckets on the handlebars of his bicycle. In one, he would have cement; in the other, sand. And he would wheel

those buckets out along the walkway he had made, day after day. That is how he built that *mandir*. I talking about one man, not six men. He did that for more than a year."

For Sadhu was building not just a temple, but an entire prayer complex, with three *mandirs*, a kitchen, dining room, restroom and another room. A verandah ran round the whole construction.

"We used to say the sea will wash away everything," Binda states. "Sometimes I used to pass and see him, up to his waist in water, building. We all laughed at him, I included."

But once the project was completed it became the focus of admiration for visitors from far and wide. Hundreds of people came for days and weeks at a time, especially at Hindu festivals. The sea rang with music and prayer.

"I used to go down the islands with my trawlers," says Sheik. "And quite from the Bocas I could see Sadhu's *Koostak*, white and beautiful in the distance. You could use it as a guide to go home."

Sadhu, too, finally went home, on his last pilgrimage in India before he died of a heart attack. But before that, the villagers say, he spent many happy hours in his temple.

Now, the fruit of his faith has been left in the hands of the sea, a fact that grieves Waterloo villagers of all religions and races, who want the place to be restored as a place of worship, shrine and memento to the spirit of their now-beloved Sadhu. Funds were collected for this purpose by a well-known politician during one election year, but nothing was ever done.

"I am a Muslim," Sheik thunders at any opportunity, "and this is a Hindu business. But it hurting me to see the destruction. A man make an honourable jail for that temple. You mean to say we can't keep it up?"

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THE first glimmerings of opera in history can be seen as early as in the culture of ancient Greece where much of Greek tragedies are said to have been chanted and sung. But opera as we know it now, first developed in Italy during the Renaissance. In Florence in 1580, the Camerata Group was founded by Count Giovanni Bardi. The members of this group were scholars who were also amateur poets, singers and musicians, much infused by the new spirit of the age that glorified things Greek. In discussing the ancient Greek forms of musical drama, the group soon articulated its own theory of musical theatre combining serious drama with serious music. Then, Count Giovanni Bardi commissioned some of the Camerata Group to produce its own musical play, Jacopo Peri wrote *Dafne* which was staged in the Bardi's home in 1597. This was called 'an opera in musica'. In Italian opera simply means a work and this innovative musical work became a new art-form — the first modern opera in history. This novel form of entertainment was instantly successful. In the beginning, the music was secondary to the drama. But as it flourished it kept evolving and changing. In Venice in 1637, the first opera house, San Cassiano opened. Now the audience was larger and the public taste demanded more music. Monteverdi wrote a great many operas where the emphasis now shifted from dramatic action to music. Soon musical and vocal displays had become more important than the text.

By 1670, public opera houses had opened in many cities of Italy but Venice remained the operatic capital. And it was here that the terms 'aria and recitativo' developed. An aria, as we all know, is a song to be sung solo often studded with elaborate vocal ornamentations. Sometimes people remember an opera, or an opera singer is made legendary, on the strength of an aria. A recitativo narates the story often with only harpsichord or basso continuo accompaniment. By now opera had become a series of arias interrupted by recitativo, often as quickly as possible and at the cost of the dramatic. But what emerged from this was the rise and importance of the singer. This prompted the grand entry onto the arena of musical history and into the operatic stage, of the famous Castrati. Most castrati began their career as choir boys with unusually beautiful voices who underwent castration so their voice would not change and they could then aspire to becoming famous singers for female parts. At this time, Italian laws forbade women from appearing on stage! This barbaric practice of castration was mostly engendered by the deadly combination of poverty and ambition.

However popular and important opera singers were during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the real course of opera history was laid by its great composers. Some of the most famous of these are as follows: HANDEL: One of the most successful writers of Italian opera seria or serious opera was the German born Handel. He was one of those composers who wrote not just to showcase the virtuosity of the singer but created well characterized roles and sustained dramaturgy. He made elegant music and stage spectacle a prime factor in opera.

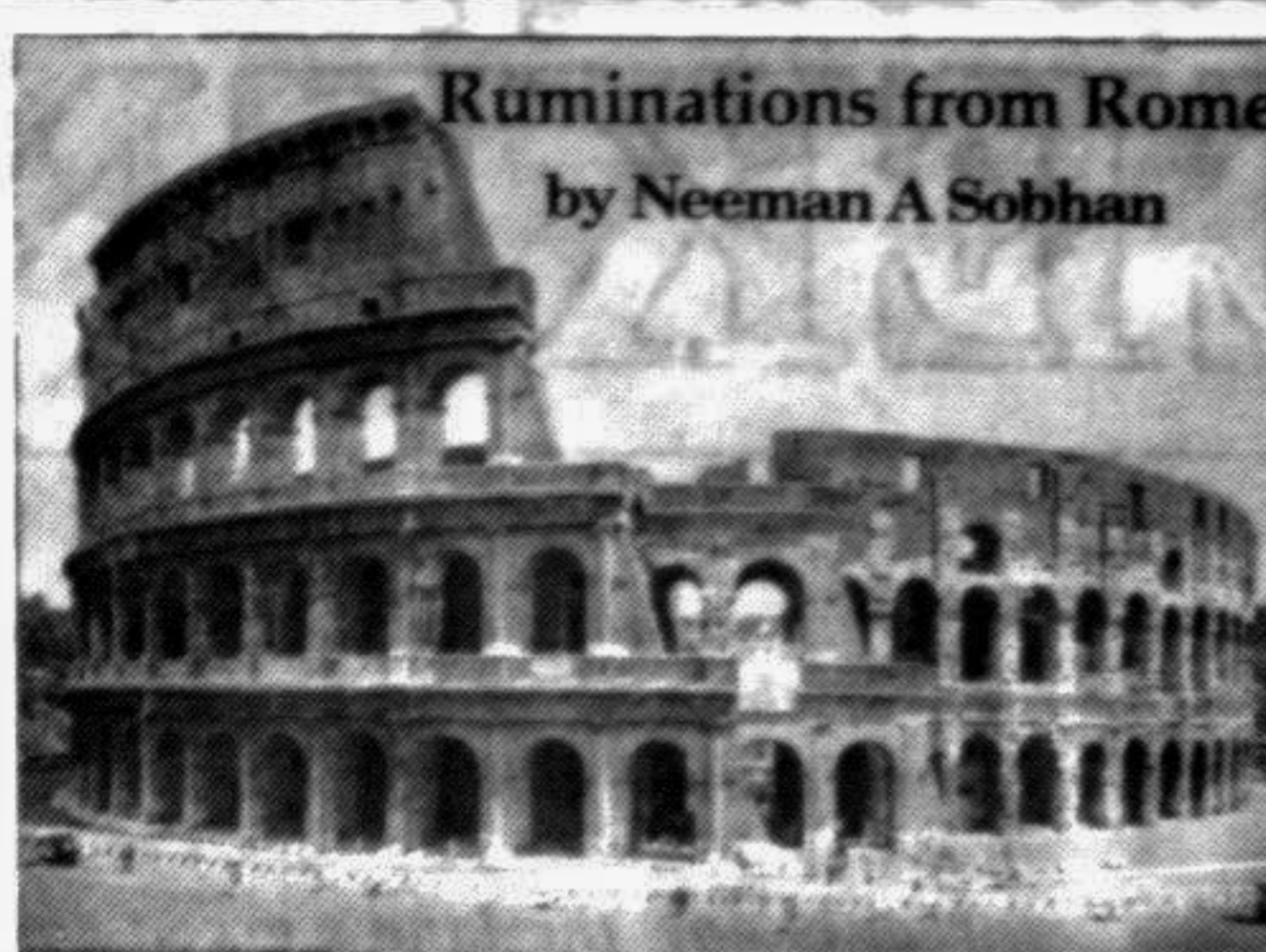
MOZART: This famous Austrian, one of the greatest composers of operas, was not as well appreciated in his native Vienna as he should have been. This was purely due to the court politics of the day. The Austrian emperor Josef II preferred his court composer Antonio Salieri over Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. (The Salieri — Mozart rivalry that emerged

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## OPERA-II

has been popularized by Peter Shaffer's play, and later film, *Amadeus*) Royal patronage and material prosperity notwithstanding, it was not Salieri but Amadeus Mozart who triumphed and remains the most popular composer of opera. Although he wrote opera seria too, he is remembered and loved best for his opera buffa, or comedies. The Marriage of Figaro, Don Giovanni and Così Fan Tutte, and The Magic Flute which is really another form called the singspiel, a little different from the traditional Italian opera. In his work, Mozart introduced duets, choruses as well as arias, and he employed pairs of contrasting characters to explore human psychology.

The nineteenth century is called the golden age of opera and the standard repertory works performed today are mostly from this period. The two most outstanding composers of this period are also the most noteworthy in the annals of this art — Verdi and Wagner, who revolutionised, enriched and shaped opera as we know it today. But before them came three other composers who laid the groundwork for the Italian style which has been the hallmark of most operas since. To music lovers, Italy is the land of 'bel canto' (beautiful singing) and the 19th century was the age when this special method of singing was developed, mainly by the three great bel canto composers Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti. Much of present day operatic vocal training is based on this technique. In their works, these composers gave priority to melody and vocal artistry. They also changed the recitativo aspect greatly by eliminating the harpsichord only accompaniment. Instead full scale orchestral compositions were introduced which made opera more melodically entertaining. (Who can forget Rossini's overture to 'William Tell' — much abused as it has been since becoming the theme tune for the old TV serial The Lone Ranger?)

Rossini, also called 'little Mozart' for his melodic genius, wrote much serious opera too, but he is more renowned for his comedies like, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* or *The Barber of Seville* and *L'Italiana in Algeri*.

Donizetti's service to opera is more in the dramatic aspect. He was much influenced by the realistic theatre of the 19th century, and this is apparent in his masterpiece 'Lucia di Lammermoor'.

Bellini, often called the Chopin of opera, was not as prolific as his other two contemporaries but his work was perhaps the most poetic and majestic. Certainly, his famous 'Norma' is still today considered the acid test for many great female singers, it has the most challenging and demanding role for the Soprano voice.

VERDI: Giuseppe Verdi was perhaps, along with Wagner, the most

outstanding composer in the entire history of the art. Combining the tradition of bel canto with his individual genius he revolutionized the operatic form and from his prolific compositions, has to date, kept the opera industry well supplied. It is said that some opera companies could subsist solely by performances of this famous *Rigoletto*, *Il Trovatore* and *La Traviata*. And living in Rome, I can add that, till recently, during summer evenings even the great ruins of the Baths of Caracalla subsumed its majesty to become merely a backdrop to Verdi's *Aida*, and as the 'Ritorna vincitor' aria would rise through the vanished ceilings of the Baths, it was Verdi who filled and dominated the velvety night sky, and the powerful emperor in whose building we were sitting was forgotten. Unlike politics, Music conquers not temporarily but eternally.

WAGNER: Richard Wagner was an influential figure not only for German opera but for opera in general. A most innovative and revolutionary figure, modern music and opera both have a lot to be grateful for to Wagner's creative ideas. In dramatic aspects he is known for the deeply complex and fascinating characters he wrote. In musical terms he is considered a pioneer of modern harmonics and famous for the use of chromaticism to illustrate the action on stage. The term 'leitmotive' was used for his revival of the tradition of using melody to present a character or idea and for generally using orchestra like the Greek chorus. In other ways too, Wagner brought innovations in operatic practice and production. Some of these we now take for granted, not realising that it is Wagner we owe thanks. For example, the dimming of the house lights during a performance. (Earlier, the lights were kept on so the ladies could display their jewellery and wardrobe and the men could exchange gossip!) Also the practice of placing the orchestra below stage level so as not to distract attention from the stage was due to Wagner. These are merely some interesting facets of this great creative spirit, he could be immortalised on the strength of his operatic achievements alone: 'Tannhauser', 'Lohengrin', 'The Flying Dutchman' and 'Tristan and Isolde'.

French opera has had a different kind of history from the Italian and German. The French loved opera instantly and Paris became the opera capital of Europe. Many composers from different countries made their fortunes in Paris. But the French preferred a style called 'Grand Opera' with emphasis on spectacle, elaborate ballet and plenty of stage effects. Thus serious composers like Verdi and Wagner were not successful in Paris. The constant pressure for creating visual and scenic effects and artifices to entertain the masses resulted in much second rate operas. Verdi called the French opera of his time 'La boutique.' At one point, French literary Naturalism of Zola and Merimee influenced opera too. Bizet's work 'Carmen' is a famous example.

In Italy Naturalism was called *verismo* and a noteworthy example of this style is a short work performed even today called 'Cavalleria Rusticana,' now almost always staged with another short work 'Pagliacci'. The music continues to be traditional but the story concerns the poor. *Verismo* opera calls for much intensity of emotion and powerful singing, thereby making for successful opera entertainment. The operetta is a simpler, less sophisticated form of comic opera. By the late 19th century Gilbert and Sullivan did much to make this form popular. My own favourite is 'The Pirates of Penzance'. In Vienna, operetta became the vehicle for the ever popular waltzes of the family Strauss. Among the French operettas my favourite is Offenbach's 'Tales of Hoffmann.' But it was in America that the operetta found its true form — the Broadway Musical. The pioneers of this new entertainment were Cole Porter, Rodgers and Hammerstein (*Carousel*, *South Pacific*), Lerner and Loewe (*My Fair Lady*), Leonard Bernstein (*West Side Story*), as well as some real opera like Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, I. Bernstein's *Candide* and Stephen Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd*. The Broadway Musical rarely requires operatic voices but has established the operetta tradition securely on American grounds.

In the present century, the opera scene and standard repertory has been dominated by Richard Strauss and Giacomo Puccini. Puccini's work was a judicious mix of the Italian style of Rossini and Verdi with many of the innovations of Wagner. Among the works of Puccini are, 'La Boheme', 'Tosca', 'Madama Butterfly' and 'Turandot'.

Strauss was a radical character and his music is starkly modern, atonal and expressionistic in style. His most popular works are, 'Die Rosenkavalier', 'Ariadne auf Naxos' and 'Arabella'.

Modern opera is not just written, composed and performed. It is sung, and the operatic voice is, in my opinion, the best part of opera. The operatic voice is classified as follows: The female voice ranges from Soprano, mezzo-soprano and contralto; the male voice is divided into tenor, baritone and basso. Some famous Sopranos of the past and present are Maria Callas, Montserrat Caballe, Brigit Nilsson, Renata Scotta, Jessye Norman, Mirella Freni, Beverly Sills, Joan Sutherland, and my favourite Kiri Te Kanawa. Some famous male singers ranging from the legendary Caruso to the present are: Gigli, Franco Corelli, Mario del Monaco, Hans Hotter, Nicolai Ghiaurov, Tito Gobbi, Richard Tucker and many more. But today, even among non-opera fans, the names of Luciano Pavarotti and Placido Domingo have become familiar as the renowned tenors of the day.

Perhaps this is the right place to stop. On a night of full moon, 7 July 1990, at the Baths of Caracalla in Rome, three giants of opera, Pavarotti, Domingo and Jose Carreras gave a joint concert, conducted by Zubin Mehta, and created an evening of musical history in this city of countless histories. As I listen to a recording of that concert, I feel as if the arias are still steeped in the moonlight radiating from the ruins, and I know that the crumbling Baths are now forever haunted by Pavarotti's 'Nessun dorma' or no one sleeps — at least, not the ancient stones of Caracalla.

## Asian diary BY ARJUNA

### Is it Goodbye to the Big Top?

The future of the circus as an entertainment medium in India is — at best — uncertain.

Hopelessly eclipsed by television and relegated to the sidelines by the magic of cinema, India's circus industry has been drastically reduced to just a couple of big names: the Gemini and Maharaja.

All the smaller ones, numbering less than a dozen, believe that their days are numbered.

The cinema initially gave the circus formidable competition with moviegoers forcing the live entertainment act to move from one city to another in search of an audience. Then TV arrived, posing a more serious challenge.

TV companies actually tried to breathe new life to the circus business by beaming special live performances to millions of children watching in the comfort of their homes.

But the myriad of problems which plague the circus industry, foremost of which of course is the cost of admission, make its continued success a very uncertain proposition. The average Indian could hardly afford a circus ticket while it takes just a few rupees to enter the moviehouse. Television, needless to say, is free.

Analysts say even the Russian Circus, renewed the world over for its magnificent feats and breathtaking attractions, is facing the same problems. Russians also do not have the money to visit circus shows. And it costs millions of roubles to feed and maintain the circus animals.

Some Indian circus performers also say theirs is a dying art. Young artists are hard to come by and even old circus hands now resent the idea of handing down their skills and expertise to their children.

Industry analysts say, in places like Kerala, because of growing literacy and better economy the children of circus performers are studying getting their degrees and doing white-collar jobs.

Contending the Indian circuses woes is a court order putting a temporary ban on the buying and selling of animals by circus companies. The order was issued at the request of animal protection sections who argued that animals are badly treated during circus training. Animals, which are often bought at low prices, are compelled to perform under tough conditions. They are whipped, punished and generally treated in a cruel manner by trainers.

Circus people deny such allegations. They say: 'Unless we love these animals, how can they obey to perform the tricks children love to watch. If you are cruel to an elephant or a tiger, it would not just obey you.'

There are other problems as well. Like in other industries, there have been accidents, such as when a ring master was attacked by a lion and killed. Once a circus company caught fire and a few people died. And recently, a 16-year-old trapeze artist died following a fall.

Many artists complain, however, that they are not paid proper compensation in case of accident nor are they, apparently, insured.

To begin with, circus artists are poorly paid. Sudarshan, clown of Gemini and one of the better known circus artists, for instance, earns barely Rs 2,000 (US\$64) a month although his board and lodging are free. While the Nepali, who joined the circus in 1952 when he was 11, would not want to do anything else, he does not like his children to join the circus but would rather that they become civil servants.

Sanjeev Kumar, who has been a circus performer for 17 years, earns a respectable Rs 4,500 a month (US\$143) and loves his job but still would not want his children to follow in his footsteps. He wants his children to have an easier and more comfortable life.

Circus, according to folklore, came to India in the previous century when an Italian circus producer

named Wielen Chirne came to Bombay with his troupe. A challenge from the ring master for the audience to imitate a number with trained horses resulted in a dazzling performance from Hari Chhatry, an expert horse trainer and stable superintendent. The Italian was so impressed that he sold his entire circus to Mr Chhatry which became India's first circus.

Today, however, circus performances and artists do not seem to generate as much awe. E Ravindra, the 45-year-old chief instructor at Gemini who is from Tellicherry, Mr Chhatry's old hometown, is dismayed at the flippant attitude with which circus artists are treated. He said: 'Why don't we have circus festivals? Why don't we get any national awards? The circus is also an art.'

Pointing out that the local films Mera Naam Joker and Apni Raja were both made at the Gemini Circus, he asks: 'Kamal Hasan got a National Award for the film, what did we get?'

He laments the lack of any pension schemes and government aid to circus personnel. 'We do not even have voting rights, for we are always on the move,' he says.

The Gemini circus is 45 years old and the largest in the country but proprietor Sabharwal reveals that the running expenditures per day amount to Rs 50,000 (US \$ 1,594). The circus has a range of animals to feed — lions, elephants, horses, camels even an African hippopotamus.

When all shows go full, gate collections amount to Rs 100,000 (US \$ 3,188). Normally they just manage to break even.

The question in everyone's mind — circus performers and proprietors alike — is: How much longer can they survive?

Some help has come from the government. The Delhi state government, has now abolished tax on this kind of entertainment, a long-standing demand to boost the circus' sagging earnings.

Depthnews Asia

