Malhar Mania!

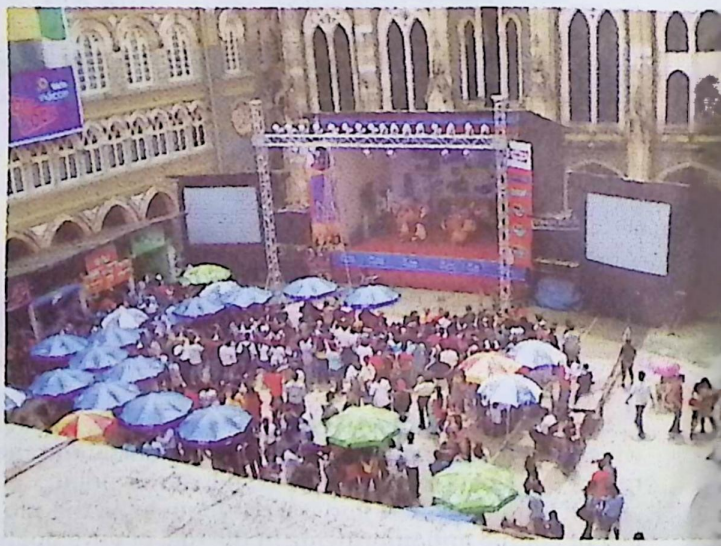
Rabeya Rowshin & Samia Tamrin Ahmed

Malhar, meaning a raga in classical music, is India's 2nd largest college festival, celebrated its 30th year this year. It is arranged by St. Xavier's college where the song "Aditi" of the movie Jaane tu ya janey na was shot. The participants come from different institutions throughout India and this year there were more than 60 colleges from India with 2 international institutions joining Malhar for the very first time, Lahore School of Management Sciences and University of Dhaka. This added aspect had attracted more media attention towards Malhar this time. The main sponsor TATA Indicom along with several other co-sponsors and partners financed the huge event.

The arrangement for this program begins every year around April and continued from or the following four months until it was inaugurated on 15th August and ended by the following day on 16th. There were so many things to settle, the participants list, visa formalities, etc. We reached Mumbai on 14th of August with a team comprised of four students from the Economics department of DU, - Samir Ashraf and Abir A. Chowdhury from the 4th year and Rabeya Rowshin and Samia Tamrin Ahmed from the 2nd year. It was truly remarkable that the entire event was handled by the students without any faculty involvement. The management was composed of 19 departments, namely assistance, security, administration, PR, literary arts, workshops inc. etc.

The theme for 2008 Malhar was Street Sprit, and street art, dance and culture was widely highlighted by many of the fun events. The street dance was one of the most popular events drawing the most number of audience. Malhar is a festival that includes wide range of cultural events that were categorized under literary arts, fine arts, workshops inc., ETC, raga, Indian performing arts and few others. Besides it arranged for fine arts exhibition, book exhibition, Malhar museum, Amateur night (a concert), Yes we Cannes! (a short film making competition which had Kunal Kohli and Tara Sharma as judges) and many other intriguing events. All these categories had variety of events, such as, literary arts included creative writing to word games, fine arts included wall painting to shoe design and etc had an interesting event for outstation students named Food For Thought. We involved ourselves in several events of literary arts that were in fact enjoyable; few events like the word game and Quo Lateral events were actually tricky, requiring intricate brainwork. The workshops of Art Appreciation showed the techniques of graffiti, Pimp My Stride expressed the impression enhancement tactics and Brandtastic was all about branding products. For the fitness freaks, there was the Malkhamb workshop as well as Tai Chi training. Basically, there was something for everyone. Those who did not participate could hang around and watch any event, be them the salsa swings, Qawwali or shadow theatre!

Throughout the event, security was strictly maintained and the total event was well administered. We really appreciate the firm sincerity of the organizers that was vivid right through the event. The enthusiasm of participants to give their best and working together with students over there during workshops was really an experience to cherish.



Journey to Mumbai....

It is easy enough to visit Mumbai, takes less than a day if you fly. Yet we ventured out the long way- by road! After the overnight bus ride to Kolkata, it was a matter of catching the train to Mumbai, which takes more than 30 hours to reach. In fact, in the week we went for Malhar, about 4 nights were spent on the trains itself. I had no clue how my time would pass, but it was alright, with my friends in the compartment, munching on snacks and enjoying the scenery. We had a map of India and we traced all the stations we crossed along our way. The route we passed in each journey from Kolkata to Mumbai covers Bangladesh three times! It was interesting watching how the arid regions gave way to hills along the way. There were teams going to Malhar on our very sleeper coach, and we talked to some of them.

Upon reaching Mumbai, it was Surprising to see that the team from Xavier College was there to greet us at 5 am at the station. They settled a place for us to stay and took us to visit their campus in the morning.