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HMM's Gudi Padwa: A Reflection on Love

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"Artists of Prem Dhara, Left to Right, Tejas Kolhatkar, Amit Bhagwat, Varsha Halabe, Veena Watve (concept), Sujata Desai, Anjali Pandit, Sucheta Karandikar, Dipti Kanhere, Vivek Chitale, Ravi Kolhatkar, Viju Bhadkamkar, Rugwed Damle, Varad Gaikwad, Nitish Kulkarni, Mandar Phadke. Photos: Rajesh Thatte.

By Neeta Patwardhan

HOUSTON: As Texas waits for its hill country to be painted by wildflowers that mark spring, Houston Maharashtra Mandal (HMM) celebrated Gudi Padwa on Saturday March 21st with its own vibrant bouquet, "Prem Dhara," a musical concert strung together by the universal theme of love.

Gudi Padwa signifies the first day of the bright phase of the moon, the New Year and the arrival of spring. Many civilizations have celebrated it. In ancient Egypt it was known as Nowruz (new day). It also symbolizes the day Lord Brahma created the world after the deluge. In Maharashtrian homes, a "Gudi" is raised high to represent victory and reminds us that we can all triumph over personal daemons.

After Bhagyashree Dixit's warm welcome, students from HMM's Marathi School gave the event an invigorating start with their delightful rendition of prayers.

The poetry of spring splashes gentle color onto the white canvas of winter. Its shades and sounds are subtle but hold within them, the promise of new beginnings. "Prem Dhara" explored the nuanced palette of human love, from the rush of puppy love, to a mother's unconditional love for her child, to

the purity of spiritual love and ended with patriotic love. Hints of buds peeking through half frozen stems, the gurgle of streams from melting snow and the chirping of birds are not just renewed affirmations of life but also of enduring love.



HMM's 2015 Committee Members

Seeds of an idea and countless nutrients, too many to list, come together in the flowers we enjoy briefly. The multimedia presentation took the audience on a stroll through the ages and included timeless favorites as well as an original composition. Stringing the songs together like a garland of blooms, the narrative script resonated with its own signature flourishes. Spring holds many secrets in a tight fist revealing them slowly. New voices, budding young artists and the sweet sounds of guitar and flute in the lineup further enhanced the show with a refreshing touch.

Taking us back to the poet for the first song, the program came full circle and ended on a high note with Arati Kolhatkar's creative and insightful version of Marathi poet Padgaonkar's poem on love.

Dinner was served with a smile by enthusiastic audience members giving the evening a more personal feel and adding flavor to the food.

An event of this nature cannot be successful without the tireless efforts of volunteers who weather the unexpected storms behind the scenes. HMM's 2015 committee consists of Bhagyashree Dixit (President), Hemraj Gaidhani (VP), Arati Kolhatkar (Secretary), Swati Joshi (Treasurer), Savita Kale (Cultural, Food), Amit Godbole (Cultural, Audiovisual), Koushik Gumaste (Cultural, Audio), Pradnya Borikar (Food),Yogesh Kondaskar, Sanjay Gurav and Piyush Sawant (Web Admin) and Yogesh Patil (Marketing).

Like many good things in life, spring in Texas is all too momentary. HMM's Gudi Padwa left its audience yearning for more while making us pause for a fleeting instance, to reflect and be thankful for all the different incarnations of love that make our lives complete.