

International Day of Non-Violence

Bhavan Australia commemorates 2 October by a special program consisting of Music for Peace and Presentations at Wynyard Park Sydney 5:00pm - 7:00pm

As Mahatma Gandhi's banner fluttered in the light spring breeze, the sound of drums resonated through the Wynyard Park in the heart of Sydney, heralding the first United Nations International Day of Non-Violence celebrations Tuesday to mark the birth anniversary of the apostle of peace and non-violence. Master drummers and professional percussionists led by director of The Drum Cafe, Maxine Radus, encouraged people to join in creating the music that rose above the din of traffic. 'We wanted to support this special day as Gandhi's teachings are the essence of what we primarily believe,' said Maxine, who migrated here from South Africa and had launched The Drum Cafe just prior to Nelson Mandela's release from prison.

The Drum Cafe has organised 2,000 events in 19 countries and promotes interactive drumming as a powerful way to create unity and bonding. The peace drums set the tone for the evening, a befitting tribute to the Mahatma on his 138th birth anniversary. Emphasising the relevance of Gandhi's teachings and way of life in today's world, torn with strife and war, Consul General of India in Sydney, Sujan Chinoy, said: 'Today, when global peace, security and development are increasingly threatened by violence and intolerance and the scourge of terrorism, it is the practice of Gandhi-ji's eternally valid principles of truth and non-violence that could act as a salve for people and societies across the world. By adopting his teachings, we can make the world a better place to live in'.

Curious office-goers returning home, stopped to hear the messages of peace and non-violence. Director of Sydney Peace Foundation, Professor Stuart Rees, urged everyone to extend support to Myanmar peace activist Aung San Suu Kyi. He said, 'Hers is an example of Gandhian way of life in the face of brutality and so have been all the non-violent protests in Myanmar.'

A 10-year-old girl Alessandra stood up to say, 'Non-violence should be taught in our schools and our governments need to be guided by it. So join me in fostering non-violence in our hearts.' The function was organised by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia. Its president Gambhir Watts said: 'We wanted to commemorate this day with music for harmony and peace.' As darkness descended, Australian music legend, Kamahl enthralled the audience with peace songs. A Tamil Hindu, he migrated from Malaysia as a teenager in 1953 and is one of the most sensational recording stars in the country.

- Neena Bhandari, Foreign Correspondent

