



Contemporary Poets from India & Ireland: 'A NOTE LET GO'

20 November 2009 | Sahitya Akademi | New Delhi

Indian-Ireland connectivity can be traced back to 1786. This creative cultural event in India builds on the historic links that existed between Rabindranath Tagore and W.B. Yeats and through to Seamus Heaney.

The two cultures and traditions of India and Ireland are expressed here through the works of poets of eminence, where metaphors, idioms of the learned, and the unlearned, of emotions and of the romantic self are contrasted to the consciousness of the universal self, of the mutual interdependency with nature. Here poetic self, and the text interacts with the biographical self to provide a flight of imagination.

Poets from Northern Ireland

Introduced by Professor Edward Larrissy (Queen's University Belfast)

Michael Longley is one of the foremost poets in the English language, and the current Ireland Professor of Poetry, which entails residencies at Queen's University Belfast, Trinity College Dublin and University College Dublin. Among the awards he has won are the Whitbread Poetry Award, the Hawthornden Prize and the T. S. Eliot Prize. His *Collected Poems* was published in 2006.

Edna Longley, Professor Emerita at Queen's University, is one of the most influential critics writing on modern Irish and British poetry, and is one of the most powerful voices in contemporary Irish culture. Among other important writings, she has edited *The Living Stream: Literature and Revisionism in Ireland* (1994); *The Bloodaxe Book of 20th Century Poetry* (2000) and *Edward Thomas: The Annotated Collected Poems* (Bloodaxe, 2008). She is a Member of the Royal Irish Academy and a Fellow of the British Academy

Ed Larrissy is Professor of Poetry at the School of English at Queen's University. His work centres on Romantic poetry and twentieth century British, Irish and American poetry. Among his publications are *Yeats the Poet: The Measures of Difference* (1994) and *Blake and Modern Literature* (2006). He is the editor of *Romanticism and Postmodernism* (1999).

Ciaran Carson is Professor of Poetry and Director of the Seamus Heaney Centre for Poetry. He is the author of some ten collections of poetry. Among the awards he has won are the T. S. Eliot Prize, the *Irish Times* Literature Prize, and the Forward Prize. He is also plays the traditional Irish flute, and has been known to sing.

Pádraigín Ní Uallacháin is Traditional Singer in Residence at the Seamus Heaney Centre, and the author of the highly-praised *A Hidden Ulster: People, Songs and Traditions of Oriel* (Four Courts, Dublin, 2003). She has made extensive recordings of both traditional songs and her own compositions. She has spent a term in India studying the connections between the singing traditions of India and those of Ireland.



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Indian Poets

Introduced by Lady Shruti Rana

Dr. Karan Singh MP is an Indian politician, author and diplomat. In 1949 at the age of eighteen, he was appointed as the regent of Jammu and Kashmir State after his father stepped down as the king, following the state's accession to India. He served successively as regent, Sadr-i-Riyasat and Governor of the state of Jammu and Kashmir from 1965 – 1967. He was then Union Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation from 1967 – 1973, Minister of Health and Family Planning from 1973-1977, and Minister of Education and Culture in 1979 -80. In 1990-1991 he served as Indian Ambassador to the US. From 1967-1980, and in 1990, Karan Singh served as MP in the Lok Sabha; since 1996, he has been an MP in the Rajya Sabha. He served as Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University, Jammu and Kashmir University, and Jawaharlal Nehru University. He is an active member of several boards, organisations and foundations including the Author's Guild of India. Karan Singh's publications include: *'Towards a New India'* (1974), *'Essays on Hinduism'* (1987), *'Hymn to Shiva and Other Poems'* (1991)

Madan Gopal Singh is an Indian composer, lyricist, actor, screenwriter and film theorist. Singh's doctoral dissertation is the first known semiotic study of some of the seminal texts from Indian cinema. He has written extensively on cinema, art and cultural history. Madan Singh is also a scriptwriter, having written films like *Rasayatra* on the well-known Hindustani classical vocalist Mallikarjun Mansur – a film that won the National Award for the best short film in 1995. He wrote the screenplay (jointly with the Director of the film, Anup Singh), dialogue and lyrics for a feature length film, *'Name of a River'* (2002) based on the life of the late Ritwik Kumar Ghatak. The film won the **G. Arvindan Award** and the **Silver Dhow** at the Zanzibar International Film Festival 2002. Madan Singh is a singer of Sufi texts and has sung for films such as Kumar Shahani's *'Kasba'* and *'Khayalgatha'* and Mani Kaul's *'Idiot'*. Singh was invited to the Smithsonian Folklife Festival 2002, Washington, as a presenter-performer. In all, he was involved in 28 concerts, presentations and workshops.

Anamika: born in 1963, is a distinguished poet, fiction writer, critic and translator in Hindi, a critic and scholar in English and a Kathak dancer. She holds a Ph. D on Donne Criticism; a D.Litt on Post was Women poets and a Masters in Kathak. She is presently serving as Associate Professor at the Department of English in Satyawati College, Delhi.

Anamika is the author of six acclaimed collections of poetry in Hindi and six works of fiction and memoirs. She has also published half a dozen books of literary criticism both in English and Hindi. She has translated Rilke, Tagore, Octavio Paz, and Girish Karnad. Les Murray and Contemporary African and English poets and writes a column on English Classics in the National daily *Jansatta*. She is the recipient of **Rastrabhasha Parishad Award**, **Bharatbhushan Award**, **Girija Mathur Samman**, **Sahityakar Samman**, **Parampara Samman**, **Sahityasetu Samman**, **Firaq Samman** and **Kedar Samman**.



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Indian Poets (*continued*)

J.P. Das (Jagannath Prasad Das) b.1936, poet, playwright, fiction writer and art historian, did his Masters from Allahabad University, and Ph. D from Sambalpur University. He was a member of the Indian Administrative Service but left it to devote himself to full time research and writing.

He has published eleven volumes of poetry, eight collections of short stories, a novel and five plays, besides a number of books for children. His works have been widely translated into English, Hindi and other Indian languages. He is recipient of the **Sahitya Akademi Award** and the **Saraswati Samman**.



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Proposed running order:

Ciaran plays an aising ('dream vision') song on the flute and follows with some poems (10 minutes).
He introduces Pádraigín.

Pádraigín sings '*The Blackbird of Belfast Lough*' and some other songs (15 minutes).
She introduces Edna.

Edna gives a lecture on Irish poetry (15 minutes).
She introduces Michael.

Michael reads for 15 minutes.
He introduces Edward Larrissy.

Ed gives a lecture on Yeats (15 minutes)
He welcomes back Ciaran.

Ciaran reads some poems and ends with a flute tune (5 minutes).

Dr M. Satish Kumar

VENUE:

Sahitya Akademi
Rabindra Bhavan
35, Ferozeshah Road
New Delhi - 110 001

Refreshments at 5:30pm, followed by the main programme at 6pm
