

TD Mosaic 2019 - Setting the bar, even higher

The festival that invented Mississauga's Celebration Square not only maintained its status as the largest free South Asian art and culture festival of North America but also set the bar even higher for others to follow. This was the 14th annual edition of TD Mosaic festival (www.mosaicfest.com) that presented a 4 day film festival MISAFF (www.misaff.com), a two day independent music festival Rock the Coliseum (www.rockthecoliseum.net) . The festival opened on August 1st with red carpet and opening night film "Bangal" from Italy. The story of Bangal revolves around a second generation Bengali immigrant young man who was born in Rome and discusses the identity crisis of immigrants resonating much with the ones in Canada and that's why the opening night film. The director, producer, writer and star of the film was in attendance and stayed for the Q & A session. Mayor Bonnie Crombie announced the official opening of the festival accompanied by MPP Rudy Cuzzetto. MISAFF presented 14 films, shorts, docs and full length features during the 7th annual MISAFF between August 1st and 4th, 2019, many with sold out shows, including Baaji by Saqib Malik from Pakistan and Kamyab by Hardik Mehta from India, both directors and producers were present to speak with the audience. MISAFF also presented an Industry chat conducted by Mohit Rajhans and moderating a panel of 6 film directors and producers from India, Pakistan, USA and Canada. This year MISAFF also created opportunities for local film makers, especially the youth as the youngest film maker was Anaiya, a 15 years old film maker who was at CP 24 breakfast show a day before.

Rock the Coliseum, the independent music festival component founded by Bushra Mahmood and under the current Festival Director Demetrius Nath of Mississauga Music Awards is the longest running and biggest free all ages independent music festival of GTA catering to the 16 - 29 age group. RTC presented 18 bands and musicians in two days at the North Celebration Square Amphitheatre on August 9th and 10th.

TD Mosaic outdoor festival opened on August 9th with auditions for Mississauga Rising Star competition. This year the competition received 30 applications, from as far as Utah and Texas. The competition, funded through a grant from Ontario Trillium Foundation offered the unique opportunity for the winner to sing with the festival headliners in front of over 10,000 audiences on Saturday. The competition was judged by Nadeem Ali of Avengers Band, Ustad Anwer Khurshid (Oscar winner for best music in Life of Pi) and Clint Valladres, the Managing Director of Berklee Indian Ensemble. Sumita Bhogal was declared the winner of Mississauga Rising Star 2019.

Mosaic maintained its standards of presenting highest caliber of artists and performers this year as well, said Arshad Mahmood, founder of the festival, as it went into a partnership with world renowned Berklee College of Music, Boston MA (the one that awarded PhD to A R Rahman) to bring Berklee Indian Ensemble featuring Jai Ho fame Vijay Prakash who travelled from Mumbai for a unique full concert on Saturday night. This was a first ever BIE performance in Canada as they were featured on 91.9 Jazz FM as well.

Ali Sethi and his band from Pakistan headlined the Friday night line up for a full two hour concert. This was Ali's first ever performance in a festival in Canada since his rise to fame. Ali is a Harvard graduate and has written two books as well. He was received very well,

especially when two of his young fans went on stage with flags of India and Pakistan and danced to the tunes of Ali's popular numbers.

Kids enjoyed the pottery wheel workshops by Ishrat Suharwardy, a Mississauga potter who was invited by the festival again this year, providing young festival patrons a firsthand experience of making "stuff" on a potter's wheel. Free children's painting workshops, henna tattoos and the painting demonstration by Niam Jain in collaboration with the Canadian National Exhibition won the hearts of young and old alike.

The festival presented over 200 artists and performers from 1st of August to 10th of August including singers, dancers, actors, producers, musicians, directors and industry professionals. MISAFF remains the only film festival of Mississauga in its 7th year and RTC is the longest running independent music festival. Mainstage was live for 15+ hours and Amphitheatre stage remained live for another 12 hours. It is estimated that over 50,000 people attended the festival this year including visitors from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, USA, UK and many Canadian provinces.