

alumnus Sunit Tandon and Dr RP Jain in Operatic mode

A festival of ballet and opera films at the India International Centre, *La Fille Mal Gardée*, brings some of the popular classics to the Delhi audience.

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A poster of Giuseppe Verdi's 'Aida', circa 1872. (Wikimedia Commons)

Frederick Ashton's joyous comic ballet 'La Fille Mal Gardée' as performed by The Royal Ballet At The Royal Opera House (Corbis via Getty Images)

"Summer Sonata": the name of this series of programmes at the India International Centre in the capital is intriguing. It is the brainchild of the veteran aficionado and **promoter of western classical music in Delhi, Dr RP Jain**. "I came up with this name when I was asked by the programmes division of IIC to curate a series of screenings of music films for the lean summer months in 2007," says Dr Jain. "I put together a programme of three operas, three ballets and three concert films during June, the hottest month of the calendar." The name stuck, although strictly speaking, sonatas do not feature in the programming. More importantly, the series proved popular.

As Dr Jain says, "Viewers who attended were grateful for the chance to experience popular works from the western classical repertoire in the cool, air-conditioned comfort of the CD Deshmukh Auditorium of the IIC." This series plays out **every June at IIC**. Since 2014, it has been restricted to six screenings, concentrating on three operas and three ballets, mostly drawn from Dr Jain's personal collection, with a few borrowings from friends and music lovers.

Dr Jain is a **retired Professor of German from Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU)**. He has also been a **Professor of Indology at the University of Muenster in Germany**. His love of western classical music, opera and ballet is rooted in his **schooling in London and his student years in Germany**.

"I first started lecturing about music and **introducing opera films at the Max Mueller Bhavan MMB 40 years ago!**" he exclaims.

As a student at Delhi University in the late '70s, I recall his lectures on music appreciation and his introductions to opera films from the Hamburg Opera at MMB. He was a particularly apt choice to introduce these opera films. As he puts it, "I had seen most of the original productions on which they were based during my student days in Hamburg."

In many respects, Dr Jain (“**RP**” to friends) has been an inspiration to many of us .
He has inspired my own monthly “Opera at Habitat” series of screenings, which has been running throughout the year for more than four years at the India Habitat Centre. Dr Jain is also an active member of the Delhi Music Society, taking charge of the concerts organised by the Society.

The author (DU alumnus Sunit Tandon) retired as Director IIMC and is President of the Delhi Music Society .



Delhi Music Society



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