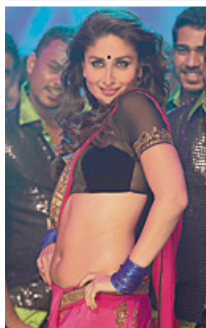


Things to do this week

By Pooja Chaudhary



Watch: The latest movie from multi-award-winning director Madhur Bhandarkar is this week's big Bollywood release *Heroine*, revolving around the rise and fall of a top actress. Lead star Kareena Kapoor stars alongside Arjun Rampal and Ran-deep Hooda.

Appreciate: Those who like literature or aspiring writers should head over to Asia House in London next Tuesday (25) for an evening with award-winning authors Kishwar Desai and Anjali Joseph. They will be discussing their second books and why they are driven to write about controversial subjects. Log onto www.asiahouse.org for more.

Buy: One of the biggest classical music festivals of the year starts next Thursday (27) and runs until next Sunday (30). The Darbar Festival in London will see established stars of the Indian classical music scene and up-and-coming talents take to the stage for four days of incredible music, illuminating discussions and interesting demonstrations. You can buy tickets for individual events or can get a festival pass. Visit www.southbankcentre.co.uk and www.darbar.org to find out more.

Sing-along: There will be a chance to sing along to some of the biggest Bollywood hits of the past few years this weekend with super singers Mohit Chauhan and Shafqat Amanat Ali's not-to-be-missed concerts. Mohit is the voice behind big anthems like the *Rockstar* songs and Shafqat has delivered songs for movies including *Ra.One* and *Jan-nat 2*. To find out more about the shows at DeMontfort Hall in Leicester on Friday (21) and Wembley Arena on Sunday (23), go to www.kehkashan.co.uk

Laugh: Fantastic comedy show *Fear Of A Brown Planet* concludes with shows at Soho Theatre in London on Friday (21), Mac Theatre in Birmingham next Monday (24) and Rear-don Smith Lecture Theatre in Cardiff next Wednesday (26). Award-winning Australian comedy duo Aamer Rahman and Nazeem Hussain use their razor-sharp wit to tackle subjects including Islam, immigration and racism. Log onto www.brownplanet.com.au to find out more.

Date: Single Muslims could meet someone special at a match-making event at Swadesh, The Piazza in Manchester on Sunday (23). There is a complimentary halal buffet and a chance to mingle afterwards. Log onto www.muslimandsingle.com to find out more.

Dance: If you love the brilliance of Punjabi dance then *balle balle* your way to Wolverhampton Civic Hall on Saturday (22) for Bhangra Wars. The explosive dance contest will see 10 brilliant bhangra dance teams competing for the first prize. The evening will also include live performances from Saini Surinder, Gypsy Aujla, Benny Dhaliwal, Dev Dhillon, Raju Dinehwal and a guest appearance from Sukshinder Shinda (pictured). See www.clevertickets.com to find out more and pick up tickets.



OUTTOP 10

By Gin and Rees

Musical inspirations



FROM a young age, our parents used to take us to the temple for worship where instruments were played for the congregation.

These instruments included the harmonium, tabla, dholak, sarangi and dhamru. It was here that we both learned we have a natural ability to understand music.

Since our mother's side were musicians and came from a musical and dance performing background, it was simple for us to learn from a young age. Our mother used to keep us up to date on all the late 1980s and early 90s bhangra tracks where we listened to DCS, Safri Boys, Alaap, Heera, Apna Sangeet and many others.

Our collection was the true inspiration and foundation for our musical ability today, as this was seen as the fusion era from folk Punjabi music crossing into British bhangra.

As we got older, a lot of weddings we were invited to had performers booked for the live entertainment,

and dhol players like Johnny Kalsi would always take our full attention. This was the true inspiration for our percussion journey.

When we were growing up, our parents used to listen to Ustad Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan – we used to watch live performances of the late great legend on national TV. All his performances were very touching where emotions would run out of control – from raagas to the use of scales, the percussion and the choir like his backing singers, everything was simply divine. It was more a spiritual experience that provided us with a milestone for setting ambitions, where one day we would want to be able to perform like that.

Being British born and bred, the colourful folk heritage of Punjab was also a massive inspiration to us, from singers like Chamkila, Kul-deep Manak, Surjit Bindrakhia to Malkit Singh. They taught us about our roots and heritage; this was our journey back in time to catch up

with our culture and our music. We gained knowledge of our traditional music, instruments used, how they are played, our culture and the massive part the accompanying traditional bhangra dance plays. This opened a door for us as teenagers and provided us the foundation for the birth of VP Entertainments.

Our appetite to perform the dhol and other instruments was so great that we began to learn the instruments ourselves. This caused a great deal of racket, to the extent that the neighbours complained. Practice would be about six hours a day, but we felt that even this wasn't enough time. It was an honour to watch percussionists like Sunil Kalyan play live and later we took lessons from his great father Guruji Tarsem Kalyan.

High-profile singers like Jazzy B, Sukshinder Shinda, Angrej Ali, Master Saleem and Nirmal Sidhu were always a thrill to watch and helped us to learn what makes British

bhangra. It was also an honour to take music lessons from Ustad Nirmal Sidhu.

Stars of the 1990s English pop and European music scene such as Michael Jackson and Timbaland are just the few artists who have inspired our music when it comes to grooves, bass lines and beats.

In terms of current bhangra music, Aman Hayer and Sukshinder Shinda are composition trend-setting gurus who have majorly influenced our music when it comes to the modern Punjabi sound.

When it comes to music production, our prime inspiration is the great AR Rahman, who has bought a new wave of music talent to the Bollywood music industry; this is something which we, Gin and Rees, want to achieve one day.

Sanu Teh Changa by Gin & Rees ft Aslam Ali is out now. Log onto www.ginandrees.com and www.twitter.com/Ginandrees to find out more.

Restaurant review THE CHISWELL STREET DINING ROOM



56 Chiswell Street, London, EC1Y 4SA. T: 020-7614 0177; www.chiswellstreetdining.com

PICTURE a quaint English countryside restaurant and that gives you an idea of what the Chiswell Street Dining Room is like.

But the restaurant is not in the country but in the City, so it is a chance to escape the hustle and bustle outside. It is part of the Montcalm London City five-star hotel, winner of this year's City Heritage Award.

The dining room looks like a traditional English tea room with elegant photos on the wall and a quiet atmosphere. The service is formal and attentive, the type where waiters will fill your glass of water every time you take a sip.

The menu offers classic British dishes including potted soused herrings and pan-fried tranche of wild Atlantic halibut.

My partner began with the duck liver pate pieces which were tender and complemented by the sweet blob of truffle meringue.

I had the Dorset crab spring onion

salad, a light starter, with the highlight being the refreshing avocado ice-cream.

For mains, I had another light dish of Scottish salmon with french fries, which is a must for seafood lovers.

In contrast, my partner had a 300g whitepark rump steak. The generous portion of tender, succulent meat went down a treat with the accompanying hand-cut chips and bearnaise sauce.

My partner was on a roll and opted for another huge course, the chocolate sundae. It was crammed with brownie chunks and a rich chocolate sauce. Despite the US-style large portion, chocoholics will have no trouble finishing it.

I ordered the lemon and raspberry meringue pie with raspberry sorbet which was smaller but had a nice range of flavours.

Overall, the Chiswell Street Dining Room is definitely one for those who like to dine in style.

Nadeem Badshah

