IIFA SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

DAY 1
Wednesday 23rd April

IIFA Stomp
Venue: Curtis Hixon Park
Free
Time: 7 p.m. onward

DAY 2
Thursday 24th April

IIFA Global Business Forum Day 1
Venue: Tampa Convention Center
Time: 8:30 a.m. onward

IIFA Expo
Venue: Tampa Convention Center
Time: 9 a.m. onward
Free

IIFA Rocks
Venue: Tampa Convention Center
Time:
Green Carpet: 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Main Event: 8 p.m.
(invite only)

DAY 3
Friday 25th April

IIFA Global Business Forum Day 2
Venue: Tampa Convention Center
Time: 8:30 a.m. onward

IIFA Expo
Venue: Tampa Convention Center
Time: 9 a.m. onward
Free

IIFA Magic of the Movies
Venue: MidFlorida Credit Union Amphitheatre
Time:
Green Carpet: 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.
Main Event: 7 p.m.
Tickets available at ticketmaster.com

DAY 4
Saturday 26th April

IIFA Master Class Panel
Venue: Raymond James Stadium
Time:
Green Carpet: 4:30 p.m.
Main Event: 7 p.m.
Tickets available at ticketmaster.com

IIFA Awards
Venue: Raymond James Stadium
Time:
Green Carpet: 4:30 p.m.
Main Event: 7 p.m.
Tickets available at ticketmaster.com

Details subject to change, check IIFA.com for updates

IIFA EVENT VENUES

A. IIFA EXPO
Tampa Convention Center
333 S Franklin St
Tampa, FL 33602

B. IIFA AWARDS
Raymond James Stadium
4201 N Dale Mabry Hwy
Tampa, FL 33607

C. IIFA ROCKS
Tampa Convention Center
333 S Franklin St
Tampa, FL 33602

D. MAGIC OF THE MOVIES
The MidFlorida Credit Union Amphitheatre
4802 N Us Highway 301
Tampa, FL 33610

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FAMILY AND FAITH DRIVE AWARD-WINNING VIDYA BALAN

By NITISH S. RELE – editor@khaasbaat.com

Within a decade of making debut in Hindi films with “Parineeta,” she has carved a niche in Bollywood like no other actress in recent memory. Just look at the varied roles she has portrayed: radio jockey and love of Munna in “Lage Raho Munna Bhai”; a gynecologist struggling with her son’s (portrayed by Amitabh Bachchan) progeria syndrome in “Paa”; sister with multiple sclerosis in “Guru”; real-life roles of Jessica Lal’s sister Sabrina in “No One Killed Jessica” and the bold actor Silk Smitha in “The Dirty Picture”; and the amazing brave pregnant woman looking for her missing husband in “Kahaani.”

All these and more have fetched Vidya Balan numerous awards from Filmfare, Screen and even a Padma Shri. During IIFA, the multitalented actress will be performing in IIFA Rocks on April 26. We met Balan for an in-depth interview during her visit to Tampa to promote IIFA. Here you go:

Q: Awards there are aplenty. Impossible to even name them all any more. In your opinion, what makes the IIFA Awards unique from the rest of the awards given annually?
A: The fact that IIFA takes Indian cinema to people across the globe, a new country, plus the film fraternity gets an opportunity to interact with local fans in that particular country, spend time with each other also is something we are extremely proud of. We as Indian people also believe in the one people, one world motto, which makes the world a smaller place. Besides, the IIFA awards are extremely credible. More important, the idea is bigger than anything else.

Q: You worked with Mani Ratnam in “Guru.” Any other movies in the near future.
A: In mid-June or early July, Bobby is going to give voice to a lot of people who have dreams. It is not just a detective film but a human story. Bobby is a girl raring to go, live her dream of being the best detective. It’s a simple story of a simple girl set in Hyderabad. As for Bengali film, I hope to do one in the near future.

Q: What should the audience expect from the female detective “Bobby Jasoos” in “Bobby Jasoos?” Any word on date for the film’s release?
A: You know, my choices are probably an extension of my beliefs, not intentional but some natural thing. I am an individual first before any other identity. That makes everything achievable. Parents brought us up as individuals and can conquer the world.

Q: “Shaadi Ke Side Effects” seems to have had good first week collections at the box-office. Are you personally happy with the film and the box-office results so far?
A: It’s doing very well abroad, in the U.S., U.K., U.A.E. and decently well in India. It’s not done as well as it should have. I am happy with the film. It shows a slice of life of a couple, lot of excitement. But a bit disheartening about box-office results.

Q: They call you “India’s hottest vegetarian.” Have you always been a vegetarian or is it something you took up recently?
A: I come from a Tamil Brahmin family and we don’t really eat meat. But hey, I am not complaining if I am known as ‘India’s hottest vegetarian!’

Q: You have promoted numerous causes such as nutrition in India, empowering women, improving sanitation, etc. Any thoughts on involving the Indian American community to aid in these causes?
A: I haven’t thought of it. I am still in talks with Wizcraft about what and when they do the green carpet. I would be happy if I am able to mobilize interest toward that. Even if I can integrate one of the causes, that would be good.

DANCE TO THE HIGH-OCTANE ENERGY OF RAVI DRUMS!

By NITISH S. RELE – editor@khaasbaat.com

He brings a high-octane, in-your-face energy to Bollywood songs, hip-hop, rock, funk, house, Latin, Brazilian and reggaeton. And if you can keep up with his Indo mash-up, more power to you because you are going to need it!

Ravi Jakhotia, known as DJ Ravi Drums, returns home to perform at numerous IIFA events. “I’ve worked with Wizcraft in the past but this is the first time I will be performing in IIFA,” said the former Tampa resident and a graduate of Chamberlain High School. However, he has performed at the 2012 Indian Premier League (IPL) cricket opening ceremony, which was put together by Wizcraft. “It’s a great privilege to be among global actors. I have been remixing a bunch of songs for IIFA Rocks, getting deep into the music.”

Some of the songs such as “Shine like the Sun,” “Superhero,” “Whole world is dancing” and “Beat of the Drums” Ravi will present are from his new dance record releasing during IIFA week. “I will be doing a crossover, bridge-type act of songs from here intertwined with Bollywood,” he said. “It will be great to be back. My parents (Ram and Rashmi Jakhotia) are all pumped; it’s like redemption for them.”

Among Ravi Drums’ accomplishments are being music director and drummer on the NBC TV series “Howie Do It”; performing at the 2009 Oscars when two “Slumdog Millionaire” songs were nominated; performing with Tupac Shakur, Paula Abdul, Justin Timberlake, Ricky Martin, Will Smith and Black Eyed Peas; appearing on Paula Abdul’s “Live to Dance” on CBS; in a Gap commercial as well as playing a small role in “The Matrix Reloaded” and being the first Indian music director on Prime Time TV.

For more information on this talented drummer, visit www.ravidrums.com
By NITISH S. RELE – editor@khaasbaat.com

CHOREOGRAPHER SHIAMAK DAVAR: IIFA A MEDIUM TO EDUCATE PEOPLE ON BOLLYWOOD

Are you ready to dance Shiamak Style? You should by now since the entertainment guru of contemporary dance is the designer and choreographer for IIFA Awards, a feat Shiamak Davar pulled off from 2002 to 2011. Other notable achievements are acts with Jermaine Jackson, music director A.R. Rahman and “The Unforgettable Tour” with Amitabh Bachchan, Abhishek Bachchan and Aishwarya Rai. Of course, Davar has participated in several dance reality shows such as “Dance Ke Superstars,” “Jhalak Dikhla Ja,” “Dance Premier League” and “India’s Got Talent.” And who can forget the spellbinding dances for the superhot “Dil To Pagal Hai,” which received the highest rating of 998 Ball Choreographer National Awards and Zee Cine Awards? Though quite busy in Mumbai rehearsing for IIFA with film stars such as Hrithik Roshan, Madhuri Dixit-Nene and Bipasha Basu, Davar found time to answer a few questions for us. Here you go, dance away ‘Shiamak Style’:

Q: For you personally, how different is choreographing/designing for the IIFAs different from the other awards/shows for which you have choreographed?

The concept and thought process of The IIFA Awards is extremely unique and the conceptualization of choreography goes hand in hand with that. I approach each show with a new vision and it is this excitement to create something different that inspires my creativity. IIFA is a platform for showcasing Bollywood to a new international destination each year. Along with interpreting the story that the music brings, I bring inspiration from the place and their people. Here we prepare a show for fans that long to watch Bollywood on international shores and introduce it to a completely new audience at the same time. So in effect, I use this medium to educate people on Bollywood and empower them with the spirit of the performing arts.

A journey that started way back in 2002 with IIFA, it has been a beautiful experience sharing Incredible India with the world. With the creative freedom that the wonderful team at Wizcraft gives me, and super talented actors and actresses that perform, IIFA is something I look forward to working on each year!

Q: Have you been to Florida or Tampa before? What are you looking forward to besides work when you visit?

I have visited Florida many times before, my sister lives there! I’ve also done shows in Orlando.. so Florida is one a place I look forward to visiting. Though my time at Tampa will go mostly in rehearsals, but it is known as a popular dining destination so I’m definitely going to be eating out! If time permits I’d love to hear the Florida Orchestra and visit Tampa Museum of Art and the Salvador Dalí Museum! Another thing I’m looking forward to is his interacting with the locals and get a feel of their understanding of Bollywood!

Q: The renowned journalist Anil Dharke wrote about your show “Selcouth”: “Quite simply, it is the best exhibition of contemporary dance that an Indian group has done. Not just that — and how often can one say this — the show can take its place amongst the best shows anywhere in the world.” So our question is when do we fortunate folks in U.S. get to see the presentation in our towns? And tell us a little bit about it.

Selcouth is my new dance production. It started off as a graduation show for my One Year dance certification program. I have choreographed these shows for years for students and parents at my dance school, but when people saw Selcouth they said I must open it for public. I’ve developed this style of choreography over years and expresses who I am… it is very Indo contemporary and modern, incorporates elements of ballet and folk. With no other style to really define it, people started referring to it as the Shiamak Style! So with apprehension whether the public would appreciate the show which is more technical, and stripped down to just dance; I decided to go public. And today 2014 has been a busy year from the start, shows and movies! But what I’m the most excited about is that I’m starting my dance classes in New York this summer. So yet another destination to spread the joy of dance!

Q: Why do you think choreography in the movies of today doesn’t have the kind of magic that you created in, for example, “Dil To Pagal Hai”?

“Dil Toh Pagal Hai” introduced structure in Bollywood Dance and a breath of fresh air. Even back then I was very apprehensive about choreographing a Bollywood film as I thought my work was too western to fit into that framework. If it weren’t for Yash uncle’s insistence and Shah Rukh and Gauri’s belief in me, I wouldn’t have done it! Dance honestly has come a long way in Bollywood. There is glamor and the videos are stylized. I’m personally a fan of the stage for the rush you get performing in front of a live audience. In film today, there is more technology at play than choreography. There was more continuity in movement before, now with each step there is a cut and the editing puts together a pretty picture. But overall, the stars are fitter, they come well trained and this makes choreography fun. The misconception of dance being ‘running around trees’ in Bollywood has now become a distant memory.

Q: Do you think you could choreograph dances for songs with lyrics such as the Lungi Dance?

Dance is music made visible! So what the lyrics say, what the music conveys to me; I interpret that into movement. So why not, Bollywood dancing is expressive and fun, I just do it the way I visualize it!

Q: Future films (Bollywood or Hollywood), shows, albums in the making? Maybe a U.S. visit for a show down the road?

Abhishek Bachchan, left, dances with Shiamak Davar at a past IIFA.
Many people know that Tampa Bay's port is easily linked to rapidly expanding markets in Central and South America, but did you know that, in 2012, India was the Tampa Port Authority's largest export destination?

The establishment of commercial ties between India and the America began more than three centuries ago when items such as ice, tea, and spices were traded. Today, the commercial ties between the nations are multi-faceted and encompass a variety of goods, as well as foreign direct investments, joint ventures, and offshoring and service outsourcing.

The fact that India is one of the region's biggest markets is part of the reason that it makes perfect sense to discuss and celebrate commercial ties between India and the United States in Tampa. Add to that the depth of the Indian community in Tampa and the varied entrepreneurial opportunities in the area and it is easy to see why Tampa Bay is an important player when it comes to Indo-U.S. trade.

This month, the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the International Indian Film Academy will join with the University of South Florida College of Business to host a global business forum. On April 24-25, business and government leaders from India and America will head to the Tampa Convention Center to explore collaborative opportunities that align with the forum’s theme: "Indo-U.S. Partnership: A Catalyst for Economic Growth." Internationally respected business leaders will attend the forum, along with Bollywood stars who will be in town when the 15th annual IIFA Awards makes its American debut in Tampa.

The two-way trade in goods between India and America, which crossed the $60 billion mark in 2012, has the potential for reaching the $100 billion mark, given that India is the 10th largest economy in the world. The attainment of the $100 billion mark requires “out-of-box” thinking to explore new opportunities while overcoming barriers such as protectionist policies.

Thought leaders attending the forum will drive discussions on global sustainability, innovation, entrepreneurship, and general business. These thought leaders include N.R. Narayana Murthy, chairman of Infosys, one of the world’s large software consulting companies; Ranjit Yadav, president of Tata Motors, the largest Indian automobile manufacturer; Vivek Lall, president and CEO of Reliance Industries, India’s large private sector enterprise; Bharat Desai, chairman of business processing outsourcing firm Syntel; Sridharth Birla, chairman of Xpro India, a diversified company in the polymer processing industry; and Ron Somers, president of the U.S. India Business Council. R.K. Pachauri, who spearheads the Nobel Prize winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, will also participate.

Attendees will experience an intellectual discourse that will be at its best, be it on Indo-U.S. commercial ties or on global sustainability. This is a great opportunity to network with decision makers, educators, and entrepreneurial visionaries who can influence economic development for a better tomorrow in the Tampa Bay area.

For more information on the FICCI-IIFA Global Business Forum, visit http://www.usf.edu/business/iifa/

Kaushal Chari is an associate dean at the USF College of Business. He is co-chair of the program committee for the FICCI-IIFA Global Business Forum.