

AUROVILLE TODAY

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

In *The Human Cycle*, Sri Aurobindo points out that, just as the primal purpose of individual life is to seek its own self-development, so "the primal law and purpose of a society, community or nation is to seek its own self-fulfilment... to realise all its potentialities, to live its own self-revealing life". Why? Because "the nation or society, like the individual has a body, an organic life, a moral and aesthetic temperament, a developing mind and a soul behind all these signs and powers for the sake of which they exist. One may even say that, like the individual, it is essentially a soul rather than has one; it is a group-soul that, once having attained to a separate distinctness, must become more and more self-conscious and find itself more and more fully as it develops its corporate action and mentality and its organic self-expressive life."

One year ago, Auroville Today participated in this process of nation discovery through articles which explored what we understood by the essence of India, America, Spain and England. In this issue we continue that exploration by focusing upon Russia and The Netherlands.

In the same way that each nation has its own distinct soul, so each individual, the practitioners of Nada Yoga believe, has his or her true note, the sound which expresses the individual most fully and integrally. In this issue we feature an interview with Aurelio whose interest in music has led him to pursue this path of self-discovery.

And, this being July, how could we fail to make at least a passing reference to that unique experience—the South Indian summer?!

SWEET MOTHER ROUSS

"Just as an individual has a psychic being which is his true self and which governs his destiny more or less overtly, so too each nation has a psychic being which is its true being and moulds its destiny from behind the veil: it is the soul of the country, the national genius, the spirit of the people, the centre of national aspiration, the fountainhead of all that is beautiful, noble, great and generous in the life of the country." (The Mother)

"Motherland is a sacred mystery of each human being along with his birth into this world of existence. Motherland is a link that ties together an individual with the mother earth and with all the Divine creation in a mysterious and hidden way just as our physical mother links us to our ancestors and to the whole of the human genus." S. Boulgakov

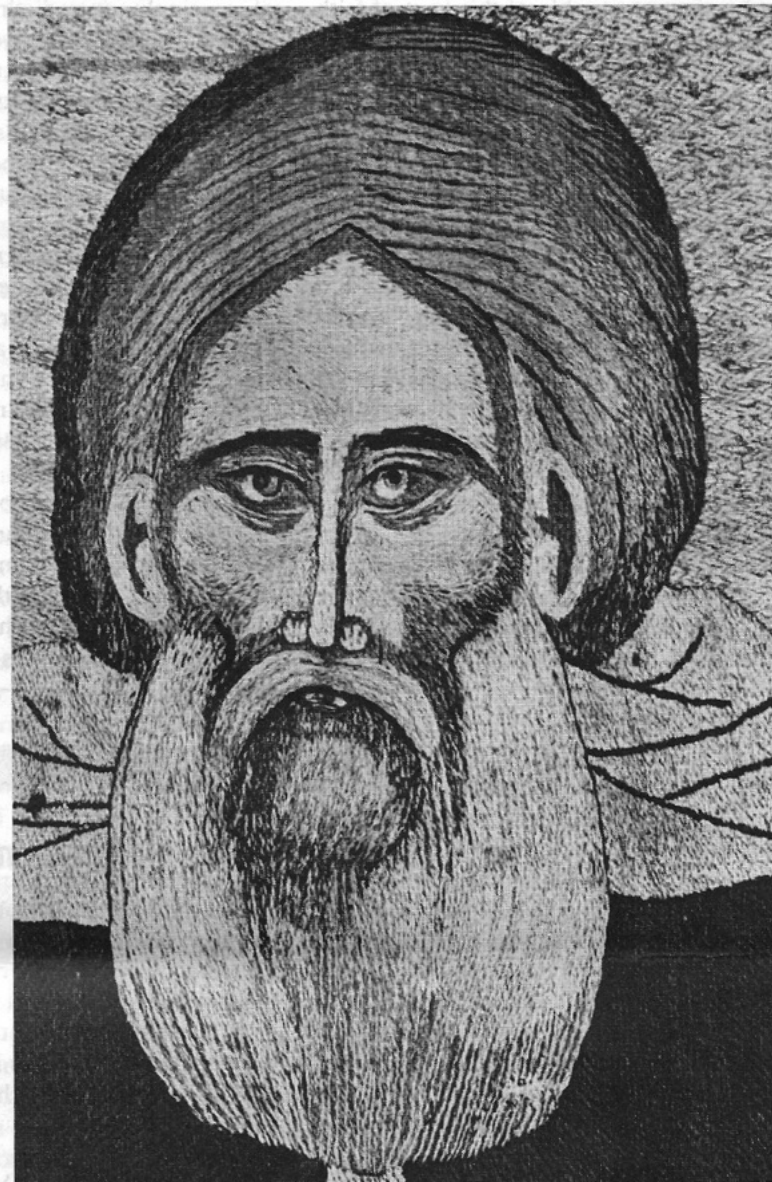
In an attempt to grasp the meaning of the mission Russia and Russian culture are destined to play in the creation of human unity, let us try to highlight the most vividly expressed features of the Russian national character and to make clear what the soul of Russia is and what its place in the future of human unity is.

One should bear in mind that there are actually two Russias—on the one hand, there is the Russian state, the Russian Empire, later the imperial Soviet Union, Russia of outer state formations with its own laws and history; and on the other hand, "Holy Rouss", "Sweet Mother Rouss" (Matoushaka Rouss) whose forms and laws nobody is aware of and whose role and action in history one can only vaguely feel. The latter should be known as the real hidden soul of Russia, the Russia of true life and boundless faith where all that happens and manifests is based not on mechanical laws of outer appearances, but on the innate self-power of its inner being. And the true Russian character is the one which is inseparably linked with all its flesh and blood to the soul of Russia, to Sweet Mother Rouss.

The source of the Russian national character should be traced back to such factors as natural surroundings, and the climatic conditions which appear in the landscape of Russia, its flora and fauna. Russian nature, severe and lyrical in its beauty, with the clearly marked distinctions of nature's extremes with its rains and frosts and snowstorms favours the development of a mystical and dreamy character endowed with a rich imagination. The vast steppes and forests, free and spacious streams of full-flowing rivers, endless chains of clouds reaching remote horizons, all these contribute to the moulding of a wide, open and passionate human character.

These geographical and climatic peculiarities result in one of the most typical Russian traits—the ability first and foremost to view and perceive the world with the heart.

The Russian character is the character of a contemplating heart. This is the main source and power of



St. Sergius of Radonezh, patron saint of Russia.
(detail of embroidered pall, 1420s)

Russian originality, its faith and culture. Spiritual traditions in Russia are inseparable from Christianity and from the Russian Orthodox Church with its religious traditions. This is due to the fact that Russians have found the means of their self-expression in orthodoxy, in its peculiar forms of spiritual search, in God-seeking that has at its foundation the ineradicable yearning of the Russian soul for the kingdom of justice on earth, for the victory of light and good, the ideal of truth and human brotherhood on earth. And it is not by chance that the main religious feast in Russian orthodoxy is the Resurrection of Christ, for the creative power of Resurrection and revival gain victory over death and evil. The Resurrection force is inherent in the Russian soul.

THE Russian national character has an inherent inclination to contemplation, a striving for self-examination and introspection, the absence of a petty pragmatic approach to whatever it may concern, a religious and moral whole-heartedness, an open-mindedness, generosity and at the same time an inclination to go from one extreme to another. The Russian is not familiar with moderation and the middle way and this makes him a playground of most violent and contradictory forces and human passions. He suffers from that and suffers the more so as he is not capable of simultaneously dividing his soul into two; he gives himself entirely and whole-heartedly to the subject of his faith and service. The image of a loving Christ suffering for humanity is alive in the heart of every Russian because every true Russian soul is suffering from the excess of inner soul-power, from the yearning for self-expression in the rigid framework of fixed limitations

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(continued from page 1)

and laws of existence and the impossibility to realize its potential. But the Russian soul meets the brute and gross facts of existence with the spiritual power of faith in the Truth and the Good. And a leap of faith containing in itself all the force of the human being consists in the ability not to renounce the unseen good when confronted with all-powerful and triumphant evil. Those who are not capable of this leap of faith have nothing to say to mankind and can do nothing for it. Life is created by the people of faith whom we call dreamers and utopians, they are the real prophets and leaders of humanity, its true elite.

This excess of inner soul-power, open-mindedness and whole-heartedness of the Russian nation that has not yet learnt to control its inner force has often caused Russia to run headlong to extremes with the reckless light-heartedness of youth, and to surrender to such risky adventures as the communist experiment leading to a period of apostasy and oblivion of its spiritual, national and historic foundation.

ANOTHER Russian trait should be mentioned which results from the geographical position of Russia between East and West. Occupying a

huge territory lying between Europe and Asia, Russia has absorbed many traits peculiar to both the Western and Eastern turn of mind and character. It has combined within itself the dreamy laziness and mysticism of the East, ignoring frequently the outward for the sake of the inward, with the insistent, inquisitive, self-supporting, practical mind and perseverance of the West accustomed to self-reliance and to questioning and doubting all around. This combination of seemingly contradicting and opposing qualities renders universality to the Russian soul and character and makes it possible for it to adapt itself to any external circumstances. This ability of the Russian soul to combine and reconcile within itself opposing qualities of human nature was often highlighted by Russian thinkers and philosophers. Thus V. Rosanov wrote: "An intermediate, binding link between clearly marked and clearly dividing Europe and dark, entangled, hardened Asia can be traced in every Russian artisan and petty tradesman." The great Russian writer and thinker Dostoyevski believed that Russians were selected by God for a special purpose—he was sure that that "special purpose" would manifest itself not in quarrels and rivalry with other nations and domination over them, but in free service to all the peoples of the world for

"EVERYTHING IS PLUNDERED . . ."

Everything is plundered, betrayed, sold,
Death's great black wing scrapes the air,
Misery gnaws to the bone.
Why then do we not despair?

By day, from the surrounding woods,
cherries blow summer into town;
at night the deep transparent skies
glitter with new galaxies.

And the miraculous comes so close
to the ruined, dirty houses—
something not known to anyone at all,
but wild in our breast for centuries.

Anna Akhmatova, 1921

the sake of the creation of human unity together with them. Two national traits were especially dear to Dostoyevski: first, the outstanding capability of the Russian character to assimilate the spirit and ideas of other nations, and second, the awareness of its own sinfulness with the resulting thirst for purification and spiritual exploit and a demand for perfect forms of life.

At its best the Russian national character is turned not only to creation and to the active transformation of the sur-

rounding existence. It sees and believes that all its activities as well as all around it are determined by the Divine Providence that it tries to grasp and comprehend and to become its active instrument. The Russian character is not satisfied with petty objectives and aims, and its thoughts aspiring to the highest ideals never fail to encompass the whole of humanity and do not reduce themselves to the interests of its own nation. Russia has to learn to command and deal properly with the force given to her by the Divine and that will require from her a concentrated immersion into the depths of her national Spirit as well as a careful study of accumulated historical experience. Her own future and her contribution to the world and human unity will depend greatly on how well she will be able to do that. The weak sides of Russians—unbalanced temperament, immaturity and unstable character—make them vulnerable in the face of their numerous external and internal enemies. But the purpose of the Russian soul will always be to serve humanity. To become a true Russian, pointed out Dostoyevski, means to feel one's brotherhood towards all the people and to become human.

Andrei Klimov

Thinking of Holland

An attempt to characterize the Dutch soul

THE NETHERLANDS is a small country, situated in the north-west corner of the European continent. Geographically, the Low Countries are little more than the delta of a few large rivers: the Rhine which originates in Switzerland and passes through Germany; the Meuse which has its source in France and flows through Belgium; and the Scheldt from Belgium. In the Netherlands the Meuse and the Rhine fork out into a large number of rivers that finally empty into the North Sea.

At the beginning of this millennium, the landscape was that of a wide plain, interspersed with lakes and inland seas, exposed to wind and regularly flooded by the rivers and the North Sea. This environment has marked the Dutch. Already well before 500 BC the Frisians in the north of Holland lived on heightened earth mounds, the so-called terps. The northern border of the Roman empire was guarded by garrisons encamped on strengthened banks along the river Rhine. The first dikes were built in the early Middle Ages, and somewhat later windmills were used to create the first polders: pieces of land, surrounded by dikes, reclaimed by drainage, on a level lower than the water outside the dikes. Centuries later steam pumping stations enabled the impoldering of larger lakes, and in the 20th century the Dutch started reclaiming land from an inland sea, thus creating over 410,000 acres of new land. The struggle against

the sea continues even today, with the creation of flood barriers in estuaries in the south-western part of the country and in the mouth of the river Rhine. Dunes, dams and dikes in a coastline of 280 km. now protect the country from the sea.

"GOD CREATED HEAVEN AND EARTH WITH THE EXCEPTION OF HOLLAND, WHICH WAS CREATED BY THE DUTCH." (DUTCH JOKE)

The Dutch landscape is thus to a large extent artificial. A large part of the western country lies below sea level (up to minus seven meters), and continues to sink while the sea level con-

tinues to rise. Thus a people of dike builders and canal diggers came into existence, whose main task it was to ensure that the water was kept out, or drained off the reclaimed lands. This constant struggle against the water has marked the Dutch more than anything else. Continuous care to maintain the dikes and the artificial polders is necessary, if the sea is not to reclaim its ancient realms as happened in 1953 and many times before. Though the impoldering and maintenance of a reclaimed area is a matter for the Dutch state, everyone is expected to participate. Each farmer has to maintain the drainage canals on his land, and each citizen is automatically a member of a polder

society to which tax has to be paid. One could say that the Dutch have created and continue to maintain their own environment, which has necessitated an extremely efficient organisation.

This artificial re-organisation of the environment has definitely influenced the Dutch character. The pragmatic approach to the daily problems and the tendency to plan life in the smallest detail find herein their origin. Good examples are the Dutch town planning and public housing projects. The Netherlands is the most densely populated country in Europe: it has a population of about 14.5 million people, with an average of 426 people, and in the western part over 750 people, per square



Cyclist on a dike
in a snowy
polder landscape

kilometre. In comparison the United States average 20 people per sq. km. and Japan, 310. Towns are meticulously planned, up to and including the smallest detail, such as cycle paths and which trees are to be planted where. The centralised planning also determines the shape and layout of apartment buildings, row-houses, duplex houses, and flats, thus as it were avoiding too much individualisation of houses. The inhabitants later modify this by adding small embellishments: the shape of an outside lamp, a well-maintained front garden. But most of all one finds individual characteristics inside. Interior design is an important art form. Furniture, wall paper decoration, perhaps even the famous 16th and 17th century Dutch paintings which were primarily made for in-house exhibition are based on this.

CULTURE

Whenever people speak about the Dutch culture, they invariably refer to the art of painting in which Dutch masters have excelled throughout the centuries. Great names abound in plenty. In the 15th century for example there were Jan van Eyck and Rogier van der Weyden. The list of great names of painters of subsequent ages is too long to be mentioned here, so we mention a few only. In the 16th century: Hieronymus Bosch and Lucas van Leyden. During the so-called Golden Age (17th century): Pieter Breughel, Frans Hals, Rembrandt van Rijn, Albert Cuyp, Jacob van Ruysdael, Jan Steen and Johannes Vermeer. Later there are Van Gogh, Mondriaan, painters belonging to the Cobra group, and Escher. This form of art has exceeded any other art form to which the Dutch have contributed, though also in the field of architecture the Netherlands has a rich history and the country boasts beautiful buildings from many style periods. The musical contribution is limited to 15th century composer Obrecht and the 16th century organist Sweelinck, though in the pre-

sent century a number of good composers have come to the forefront, as well as a number of orchestras of world standard. International Dutch standing in the field of theatre and poetry is equally limited, which is also due to the fact that these art forms are necessarily linked with the small language area. Sri Aurobindo, however, gave another reason. He observes that "Holland, another

trade has to be mentioned here: the trade in flowers. At the end of the 16th century the tulip came from Turkey to The Netherlands, and from that time onwards a flourishing floriculture—a large part in greenhouses—and large international flower trade has developed.

How has commerce influenced the national character?

A first observation is that the Dutch, who from an early age are taught foreign languages, easily feel at home in foreign countries and equally easily mix with other cultures. A second one is that the contact with foreign nations and cultures widens the mental perceptions and creates a base for openness and tolerance. A third consequence is that there is a tendency towards cautious conservatism and a high standard of reliability, necessary as a commercial partner.

TOLERANCE AND CARE

Tolerance is an important feature of Dutch society and has been so for a long time. In the 16th century Erasmus, a champion of humanism, was allowed to remain in Holland notwithstanding heavy pressure from other nations. From the early days of its independence it was possible to have books printed in the Netherlands that couldn't be printed elsewhere. The love of one's own freedom demonstrated in its struggles for independence formed the basis for sympathy for people that suffered from persecution elsewhere in Europe. The Netherlands became a relief centre for groups such as Portuguese Jews, Belgian Protestants, and French Huguenots. Freedom of religion was accepted from an early date. Evidently, the assimilation of other groups into Dutch society was not experienced as a threat to the autochthonous population, which, however, had a tendency to compartmentalise those other groups. Also today the Dutch harbour many refugees from all over the world. Its liberal approach regarding homosexuality and many problems such as drugs, abortion and euthanasia is often commented upon or criticised as 'too tolerant' by other nations.

There is one other aspect which flows from the tolerance: the care for the fellow citizen. The Dutch have created an impressive welfare society, which guarantees a lifelong minimum income to every citizen, also to the elderly and those who cannot work. This caring

aspect also comes to the front whenever national campaigns for the homeless, the poor and the hungry the world over, are held. The Dutch are known to delve deep into their purses at those occasions.

SMALLNESS

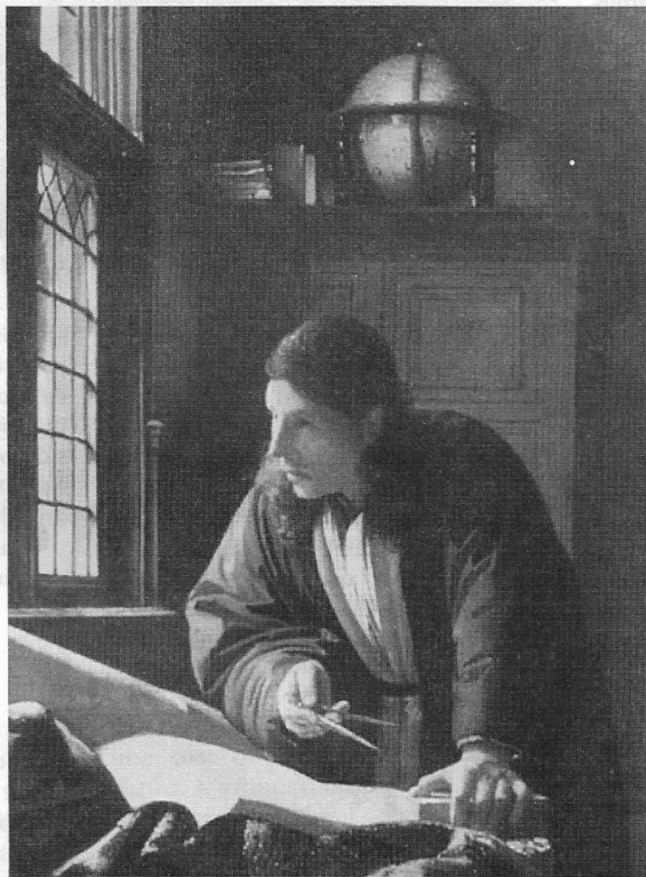
There is another feature that characterises the Dutch. It is that everything happens on a small scale. "Small" is a word which fits the Dutch. It expresses itself in many ways. For example, the Dutch are not only allergic to monumentalising, but consider it ridiculous. It does not fit with their mentality. Things are easily overdone, as confirms the Dutch maxim: "Just act normal, then you act already crazy enough." There is a tendency to bring things down to a 'normal' level, and one finds this levelling in many aspects of Dutch society, such as the progressively high levels of income tax that prevent people from becoming 'super-rich' as in other countries, and in a special form of culture called 'small art,' a type of cabaret where monologues, witty dialogues, music and dance are used to criticise society. The aversion towards monumentalising can also be witnessed in the Dutch language with its manifold usage of diminutives and in its architecture. Large palaces and monuments do not exist.

But the sense of smallness has also its shadow side: it can easily turn into a sense of narrow-mindedness. An independent observer would see, for example, a tendency to raise the index finger to denounce the evil doers of this world, including other nations. Here the Dutch are saved from over-doing it by the sense of their own relativity—Holland is after all a small country—and their sense of humour. Related to the narrow-mindedness is the tendency to stinginess, which is a topic of many jokes. "The Dutch come to look, not to buy" is an often heard complaint from shop keepers in tourist resorts the world over.

In conclusion we could describe the Dutch as well organised, freedom loving, tolerant, caring, and commonsensical with a great sense of the relativity of things. The material reality is their field of work. Practically oriented people as they are, the Dutch emphasise action, not vision. They are masters of the 'here and now', pragmatic, but therefore necessarily limited. Elevated by the large vision of other cultures, the Dutch can play an important role translating high ideals into the realities of daily life. This typical Dutch characteristic can be called the Dutch Dharma.

Jan Lohman of AVI Netherlands; with contributions from Wil van Vliet, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry and Carel, Auroville

(1) Sri Aurobindo, *The Future Poetry*, SABCL vol. 9. p 49



The Geographer (detail), painting by Johannes Vermeer, 1632-1673

Teutonic country which developed art of a considerable but a wholly objective power (we assume he speaks about the art of painting) is mute in poetry. It would almost seem that there is still something too thick and heavy in the strength and depth of the Teutonic composition for the ethereal light and fire of the poetic word to make its way freely through the intellectual and vital envelope." (1)

COMMERCE

Commerce has been a major part of Dutch activity ever since the famous "United East Indian Company" was founded in the 17th century by the merchants of Amsterdam. Fortified trading posts were founded in Indonesia (present day Jakarta), Ceylon, India (nearby Pondicherry), USA (present-day New York), and in South America such as the north-eastern part of Brazil and present-day Surinam, laying the basis for the later colonies. Commerce has intensified ever since. Today the share of the Dutch in the world trade is comparatively large. For example, after the USA and France, it is the world's largest exporter of agricultural products and foodstuffs. The Dutch can boast of having one of the largest sea ports in the world, and being the seat for many highly developed industries, amongst which are a number of large multinationals such as Shell, Unilever and Philips.

A special form of



New storm-surge barrier in the New Waterway near Europoort, consisting of two enormous hinged gates spanning a width of 360 m.

MEMORY OF HOLLAND

Thinking of Holland
I see broad rivers
slowly flow through
endless lowlands,
rows of unbelievably
wispy poplars
as high reaching plumes
line the horizon;
and in the enormous space
sunken, the farmsteads
dispersed over the land,
clumps of trees, villages,
truncated towers,
churches and elms
in a grand conjunction.
The sky there hangs low
and the sun is slowly smothered
by a greyish haze of many colours,
and in all the provinces
the voice of the water
with its perpetual disasters
is dreaded and hearkened to.

H. Marsman, Dutch poet
(transl. from the Dutch)

Aurospirul

The saga of spirulina in Auroville took a decisive turn last year with the initiation of "Aurospirul," a pilot-project for the manufacture of spirulina by the Health Center. This is one of very few spirulina production units in India.

Spirulina, a microscopic, unicellular, blue-green algae, is one of the best sources of nutrition known to man. It is the world's richest source of protein containing 18 essential amino-acids as well as high amounts of many other vitamins and elements. Moreover, spirulina is easily and almost totally assimilated by the body as it is single-celled and its cell walls are devoid of cellulose. This simple life-form, declared by the World Health Organization as "the best food for tomorrow," is reputed to be the oldest inhabitant of the planet having existed some 600 million years ago. It grows naturally in only a few places in the world as it requires certain very specific conditions to exist and multiply. Almost all the spirulina available commercially today is produced in man-made facilities.

Some Aurovilians experimented with the cultivation of spirulina in the early years of Auroville. Bob and Deborah

Lawlor built one of the first algae ponds in Forecomers with "Cow John" sending cans of cow urine from Aurodairy to enrich the pond. Later, Jim Devries set up an elaborate water-harvest cum spirulina project in La Ferme. There also seem to have been some unrecorded attempts to mass cultivate other types of edible algae such as Chlorella, as good if not as acclaimed as Spirulina. The late Bonaventure Chanson was the first Aurovilian who gave concentrated energy and time to studying possibilities for spirulina production and supply. He was also the first to stock the shelves of Pour Tous with a regular supply of spirulina that he bought from a small women's NGO in Madras.

Aurospirul, managed by Tejas and Hendrik, is located on the beach at Simplicity. The spirulina is produced in three open-air tanks with a total area of 80 sq m. and a depth of 4 m. The high alkalinity of the culture in the tanks prevents the growth of other harmful bacteria. The spirulina multiplies at an exponential rate over time and the tanks are regularly stirred with brushes attached to long handles to expose all the algae in the pond to sunlight. The algae is harvested daily with fishing nets and then dried for three to four hours in the shade. The unit also comprises a small



Harvesting spirulina

lab where a culture is kept alive and experiments to enrich the pond and simultaneously reduce the costs of production are carried out. Since February 1998, Aurospirul has been producing 25-30 kg. of dry spirulina a month, most of which is sold in raw form at Pour Tous. Besides that, KOFPU, the organic food processing unit, uses the spirulina to make spirulina-enriched noodles, and the Health Center intends to distribute

spirulina in nutrition schemes for children and pregnant women in the villages to combat malnutrition. Tejas is exploring the possibilities of new markets outside of Auroville while Hendrik concentrates on the quality-control and streamlining of the production process.

For more information e-mail: spirulina@auroville.org.in

Bindu

The Common Account

The failure of an uncommon experiment

About four years ago, a group of Aurovilians got together to form a shared maintenance* system called the "Common Account." It is one of the ideals of Auroville that all Aurovilians would contribute in cash, kind, or work to the community, according to abilities and capacities, and the community would meet the basic needs of everyone. The Common Account was an attempt to move closer to this ideal.

This April that account closed. The "failure" of an experiment is often a great learning experience and that is how the members of this experiment have taken it. There were about forty accounts representing about eighty people. When the account was first opened the monthly maintenance allowance of the members was credited to the Common Account along with a percentage of any other

income they might have or receive. At the end of each month the total of Pour Tous accounts of each one was debited from the Common Account. The Common Account absorbed the excess and made up the deficit so that all personal accounts would then return to zero.

The assumption of the system was that people would take according to their basic living needs and because of the sharing, the needs of all could be met. In the beginning, there was enthusiasm and everything seemed to go well. There was even a development account to which participants contributed with the idea of making certain developments such as buying collective washing machines. But it quickly became clear that this idea was beyond the means of the group.

The group met together from time to

time to discuss about spending patterns and policies and a core group was set up to monitor the account on a monthly basis. As the years went by, most of the members came to take the balancing of the account for granted. After sometime it became necessary to change the functioning so that the monthly incomes were credited to the individual Pour Tous accounts to help members to stay aware of the balance between contribution and expenditure. Gradually a negative balance began to grow in the main account and all attempts to turn it around did not meet with success. The system tended to hide problems rather than have them faced openly and consciously. Quite a few people joined the account partially because they did not want to think about money any more. Members had a certain security that

could keep them from seriously keeping track of their financial position and managing their lives accordingly. Because people were supported financially, some did not actively seek maintenance or other financial return from their work, relying on the account to meet their needs rather than contributing to the account from their productive activities. This effectively meant that the Common Account was subsidising their work or service rather than their basic needs. In addition, people with financial problems were attracted to the system and some remained in minus throughout their participation. The role of the core group became increasingly paternalistic

as the necessity to talk to members, about their lack of contribution or excess of expenditure, grew.

When the group met for the last time to decide what to do, the turnout for the meeting was so low that it was quite clear it was time to close down. Since then, the deficits have been partially recovered by going to the people who made them and some others have volunteered to help cover the shortfall.

Initially there were certain general expectations that trying to help or support through sharing at this level would lead to more human unity or less tensions in the community or a greater sense of community spirit. There were no very noticeable results in this respect though the collective progress is difficult to measure or trace to particular developments. In the meantime, some directions emerged about what would be necessary to re-start the system, which is something the group is considering.

Generally this would mean a change of approach, going away from cash transactions toward more exchanges in kind. How this could be organised is another question. In addition, all the members of the group account would have to take responsibility for a close monitoring of the system.

There was general regret at the need to close the Common Account though some of the people involved in the core group expressed relief because the struggle at the end to keep it going had become a real burden in terms of time and energy. Now they felt they could step back and take a close look at it and appreciate the accomplishment and plan for a new approach.

B

* Aurovilians who have no personal resources receive a monthly "maintenance" (usually via their field of work) in the form of cash to meet their basic living expenses.



The new Bharat Nivas Guest-house

An Auroville Farms News Update

by Isha

May is finally here again and, though hotter every day, a breeze blows in off the Bay of Bengal to cool us down, in the shade of the ever-larger tree canopy. No shortage of water yet, and the summer crops are producing fine... beans and corn and gourd and spinach. When the early rains come in July it will again be time to plow. Many residents will be away for a month or so, and the Solar Kitchen has a reduced workload—also reduced demand for produce. Still, local grains are proving increasingly popular, as AV residents realize the importance of supporting our local environment, and our local economy at the same time.

Happy news: Windarra Pannae, a new farming project, has begun preliminary work on a new 25-acre piece of land at the back of Kottakarai. David and Karen, newly Aurovilian, are keen to settle and cultivate the entire plot, with help from a few partial and full-time community members. A lot of land and a lot of work,

they have been collaborating with the Farm Group for stewardship of the area, and look forward to continued support and advice as things proceed.

Auroville's largest commercial activity, Maroma (formerly Encens d'Auroville), called for a review session with Farm Group members to assess the results of their funding input of the past year, and declared themselves well pleased with the experiment. As a result Maroma pledges continued support for development of farming infrastructure, to be directed towards the Farm Group's two largest developing farm projects, Annapurna and Siddhartha Farms. As an additional bonus to last year's funding, Maroma released an additional 2 lakh rupees at the close of the financial year. They also hinted at the possibility of making funds available in the future for small-scale farming projects, a pressing need in creating new farms. The promise of ongoing community-based support is much appreciated by those hard at work to make our increasing self-reliance a realizable goal.

Efforts continue, with the help of the office of the Secretary of the Auroville Foundation and the AV Funds and Assets Management Committee (FAMC), to find alternatives to the substantial increase in the cost of electricity charges to AV farms. A proposal has been made to the Chairman of Tamil Nadu Electricity Board which, if found acceptable, could effect a 25% reduction on the amounts now being charged. The community itself, through the Economy Group, is being asked to consider making an ongoing contribution towards the rest. Some individuals in AV have generously given to the cause of helping farmers cover

BOOK REVIEW

By Jivatman

TARA: A JOURNEY INTO FORGETFULNESS
by Pavitra. 1997, 248 pp. Rs. 160.
Printed at Auroville Press

RIGHT from the beginning this narrative of Pavitra's—a kind of notebook describing the experiences of an imaginary or symbolic journey—reveals its deep and very intimate purpose: the main characters of the story—the "voyager" and his guide—are an allegory of the partnership between the soul and the human personality in this incredible adventure of our existence and incarnation on earth.

The relation, as long as we still live in the forgetfulness of the source of our being (having necessarily to undertake the *Voyage dans l'Oubli*) is the division and contradiction which assails the human experience, which can only cease with the discovery of the psychic being (symbolised in the book by the guide, Icare).

Within this context, Pavitra—a French cello player and painter who has been living in Auroville since 1984—takes us on a trip through the different regions of our being, amidst the wilderness but also the sweetness (the meeting with Mother, for instance) which we can come across on the way. In the middle of all the difficulties through which the "voyager" has to pass in order to recover his true being, there are some humorous passages—the most charming in the book, perhaps—like that one of the police of the sky or the meeting with the god.

We could say that the book reveals an author in his endeavour to find his own way to deal with an abundant and complex material whose mastery and mature expression can come only with the experience—and Tara is Pavitra's first book. Nonetheless, one can already appreciate the vigour of his expression, the search for beauty permeating the whole narrative and a very fine sense of humour. Undoubtedly a promising start.

PAINTING AWAY WITH EGG YOLKS

For two months Marika Popovits, a visiting artist, has been giving classes to a small group of Aurovilians. She has been teaching her students the Renaissance glaze technique (tempera), which was created by the Dutch brothers Jan and Hugo Van Eyck around 1420. It is a mixture of egg tempera and oil glazes.

An accomplished artist, Marika who was born in Hungary, emigrated with her parents at an early age first to Germany, then to Australia. Later the family moved to the USA. She studied art at three American universities, financing her studies through exhibitions of her work in New York galleries.

In recent years she divided her painting and teaching time between a small village in Tuscany, Italy, and the Baca Grande community at Crestone, Colorado. Marika has been greatly influenced by Sri Aurobindo's Integral yoga.

This is Marika's third visit to Auroville. She has been thinking about

creating an art and design school, incorporating a rotating faculty of professionals interested in the Auroville experiment and teaching particular skills in exchange for the Auroville experience. She is thinking of inviting people involved in visual arts, interior design, architectures, textiles, fashion. The school will be open to everyone—Aurovilians, local people, young people, guests.

With the help of Canadian architect Dominic, the designs are taking shape. When she returns to Auroville next winter, the construction will begin. But the school has already started this winter with Marika teaching the glazing technique, water colours, and the basics of drawing.

Before her departure, a small exhibition of her students' work was held in the above three categories. "I'm quite proud of the results of my students after such a short time," Marika remarked at the opening of the exhibition.

Ann and Tineke

their expenses, but the summer months will prove to be the most costly and as yet no long-term solution has been found.

During the 10-week visit of GeoCommons a dream project evolved out of the interest of one student's commitment to her strict vegetarian (vegan) diet. With the artistic input of two other girls and guidance from Dr Beena of the AV Health Centre, April researched and formatted a 125-page vegetarian cookbook for Auroville, which uses a combination of Indian and Western style

recipes to deliciously prepare local and indigenous foods. *Yum Yum Connection* has caught the eye of Auroville Press and Maroma, who have agreed to finance the first printing, complete with colour illustrations. April has also specified that any profits will go to the AV Farm Group! (May 1998)

For more information on AV Farms contact us at isha@auroville.org.in or see our website (Auroville / Ecological Agriculture) at [HTTP://www.auroville-india.org](http://www.auroville-india.org)

COMMENTARY

LINE OF FORCE—A Critique

by Ajit

WHILE I appreciate the work put in by the "Line of Force" team (AVT no.113, June 1998), I also get an uneasy feeling that this is nothing but being obsessed with a particular form and coming up with elegant and clever presentations to win over supporters. This kind of presentation and the "convincing" arguments are standard repertoire for architects. Part of the architectural curriculum is learning how to "sell" one's ideas.

I have no objection to the principles behind the "LoF" project like "a green building", "a collective building", "an ecological building", "a flexible building" etc. But instead of fixing oneself on a form and then trying to fit in these criteria, one should have asked what form or building or architectural language materializes these qualities. Had this been the "line of enquiry" the results could have been quite interesting. The authors of this concept also do not tell us why this particular form is more appropriate for achieving these qualities than other traditional forms, like for example, courtyard houses around down-to-earth streets, parks and plazas.

A most important "line of thinking" that is conspicuous by its absence is that there is absolutely no concept of how such buildings relate to one another and to other existing buildings in the neighborhood. The tragedy of the "Galaxy" concept is that its proponents vainly cherish the hope that if space is kept free for "LoFs", while allowing all kinds of other development to happen in between, then the concept will "somehow" take shape. Nothing can be further from the truth than this wishful thinking. At least in the original concept (looking at the model), whether one approves of it or not, there was an apparently coherent connectivity between the "LoFs". (By the way, if this "galactic city" is ever built in that form it can only be appreciated from the sky. Luckily a Pondy entrepreneur is already offering airplane joy-rides over Auroville!)

To quote Roger, "Apart from these Lines of Force, everything is flexible, nothing is fixed." This statement proves that the "LoFs" are an end in themselves and not elements of a workable city.

In fact the essence of a town, a beautiful town, are the public spaces created by buildings: streets, squares, plazas etc. These are the elements that made traditional towns, in east or west, beautiful and human. If we are to dump these elements as "belonging to past" or "old", then what are you replacing them with? A building in isolation, however beautiful, cannot make a town.

Another fallacious opinion seems to be that one needs high rise buildings to house the "famous fifty thousand". Statistically speaking, if we follow the low-rise (3-5 floors) and high density (50-70 dwelling units per hectare) housing pattern, like in the traditional towns, we can comfortably house the 50 thousand (if ever) in half the land Auroville is supposed to have within the magic circle.

A few practical questions:

1. Won't the "green wall" cut off all the breeze? 2. "A participatory building"—as long as one doesn't question the pre-fixed form? 3. "An economical building"—are you so sure? 4. How much land is required for this project—what is the density per hectare? 5. What about the arrangement of the individual flats and their connectivity? From what I could figure out the proposal is nothing but a series of modular flats strung out in a curve at varying levels with an access corridor on one side—is that right?

Such "habitat-saurs" (the present scheme, one of the minis, is 250 m long, the others will be up to 900m) have failed in many countries in terms of social and ecological desirability. Will they succeed here?

When all is said and done it would have been more honest if the proponents of this project had simply said: "We like this form so we want to build it".

The Youth Centre

The pile of bricks and sand at the side of the road is the clue for the entrance of the Youth Centre on the wild fringes of the Cultural Zone. The Youth Centre is not to be confused with the Youth Camp which is a guest house for students in Fraternity. You can also recognize the Youth Centre by the interesting jumble of vehicles that are always parked in front of it—one-wheel, two-wheel, three-wheel and four-wheel kinds.

The Youth Centre started so long ago that everyone has forgotten just when. It has been talked about for about twenty years, and every coordinating body in Auroville has said: "Yes, we have to do something for the young people. Yes, somewhere but not there, well, when there is some funding, we'll see!"

So, not so many months ago, it did happen. Of course, there was controversy, lots of meetings, misunderstandings, and various "processes". Today there is an almost windmill but the water tank is ready, the temporary kitchen is slowly moving into the permanent kitchen so the latter can become a mechanical workshop. Three houses are built in the trees, three on the ground and more planned. Enea, Kartik, Savitri, Simon, and Samya are more or less living there and everyone else drops by whenever so moved. The solar electrical system is ready to go as the battery house is now ready. A Canadian sculptor is planning a mud/cement master-



piece. Musical happenings are scheduled. Funding is a problem. Enthusiasm is not. It looks like a Youth Centre is happening. . .

Photo above: "Interesting jumble of vehicles" at the Youth Centre

B

Sometimes when it's hot and quite boring, let's say around noon, when we all feel rather hungry and in need of company, then we jump on our charlers and move to one of the meeting points. This time it will be Pour Tous Snack Bar. You walk in and sit down with some guys that already ordered.

A: What's up Man?

B: Cool scene! I'm clipping from Fertile, nearly hit a double-bubble near Djaima. Green-belters had that agenda about cutting Realization. It was real heavy stuff. But the other guys were really lapai.

C: Hey, look at that guy on the Bullet!

A: He's clipping, da! He really juiced that Ambassador!!

C: Man, but that croc is always doing mopo driving (Noisy bikes come to park, and everyone's attention diverts...)

A: The club's arrived!

D: Hey Brother Jones, get us a cheese bun too.

A: What're you guys up to?

D: We ripped down to NCC 100 miles an hour, and got ripped off there, so decided to clip here.

A: What're you doing after this?

D: Donno, should we move to the YC?

C: How can you be so rustic! I can't believe it! You told me that we had to clip to Pondy!

D: Man, I'm so juiced! My crowsnest was leaking the whole night, so I couldn't grab any snooze. We got rollofied last night, and I've no lojo.

B: Look at those coconuts, da!

C: Barushka, clip this way. You wanna chip in?

F: You guys are hanging around here for a long time?

B: Quite a while. What have you been up to?

G: Oh, we went to Repos, and got a bit fried; now we're thinking of some action.

C: Did you go for shooting?

F: Yeah, it was so rustic, and boring.

A: You wanna come to the YC after?

F: Where is it?

C: Just before the Transformation curve.

F: Oh, I don't know, maybe.

G: We were thinking of going to Eukies, to Paul's tea-cadai this afternoon.

A: That's disco! Hey, pass me some sugar, da, this lassi tastes lapai.

D: Should we adventure on?

A: Yeah, let's groove!

C: Did you shell out?

B: Yeah, do you want to come with us?

F: Both on one charler?

A: No chance, brothers share!

F: OK, pola mal!! (And again you hear loud exhaust pipes, but this time ripping down the highway away from the PTSB.)

AV YOOFSPEAK

by Lena



Cool scene at the PTSB

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, THIS IS OUR TALK. IN CASE YOU DIDN'T CATCH OUR SMOKE, HERE IS A DICTIONARY, SO CHILL OUT AND READ ALOUD. CHEERS!!!! LENA

CHARLER

ORIGINALLY CAME FROM CHARLIE'S VINTAGE MOTORCYCLE, NOW ANY BIKE CAN BE CALLED A CHARLER.

CLIPPING

DRIVING OR WALKING AT QUITE A FAST PACE.

DOUBLE-BUBBLE GREENBELTERS

TWO PEOPLE ON A CYCLE FUN CROWD THAT LIVES IN THE GREEN BELT AREA OF AV NAME OF A TREE, DELONIX REGIA

REALISATION

USELESS

LAPAI BULLET

NAME OF A MOTORCYCLE, ORIGINALLY MADE IN ENGLAND.

JUICED MOPO

FINISHED, LOST CRAZY

BROTHER JONES RIPPED

ANYBODY AROUND YOU WENT REALLY FAST & SPIRITED

NCC

NEW CREATION CORNER—QUITE A CREATIVE CAFE BESIDE THE MAIN ROAD FRUSTRATED

RIPPED OFF YC

YOUTH CENTRE

RUSTIC

SILLY

ROLLOFIED

TIRED

LOJO

CASH

BARUSHKA

TEENAGE GIRL

COCONUT

SPICY-LOOKING GIRL WHEN YOU SHARE A PLATE OF CHIPS THAT ARE ALREADY ON THE TABLE WHILE WAITING FOR YOUR ORDER

CHIP IN

SUNBURNED, BUT MAY BE USED ALSO FOR TIRED

FRIED

VERY RECENT WORD, CAME IN AFTER SOME A'VILIANS WENT FOR TAMIL MOVIE SHOOTING. QUITE FAMOUS NOW.

SHOOTING

EUCALYPTUS TREES PAUL'S BULLOCK-DRAWN TEA STALL—TEA, COFFEE, BLAH-BLAH ETC...

EUKIES

GOOD, COOL

TEA CADAI

(TAMIL) LET'S GO!

DISCO

MOVE ON, ADVENTURE ON

PO-LA-MA GROOVE

Seeking one's true note

Aurelio on his exploration of sound

BORN in Austria, Aurelio has been on a continuous search for harmony with his surroundings. His quest initially led him and his partner Kaya to travel all over the world for four years: to the forests of Papua New Guinea and Indonesia, to the islands of South Pacific, to the deserts of Australia, to New Zealand, Afghanistan, Mongolia, and China. Then they returned to Austria to rediscover their roots, and for seven years they led a simple farming life, growing their own food, spinning and weaving their own cloth, and bartering items that they had hand-crafted for other essential goods. It was the inner need for a spiritual community and an experience that brought them to Auroville.

One of the things they learnt from their contact with the aboriginal races of the world and from leading a life close to nature was the power of music, of sound and its ability to express the inherent nature of things to communicate without the semantics of language. And this led Aurelio, trained as a classical guitarist, to plunge into an exploration of music and sound in the context of the evolution of consciousness.

Aurelio: "During our travels we had heard of Auroville, but it was only in 1985 that we had the opportunity to visit Pondicherry and Auroville. It was during this visit that we came in contact with some members of Vérité. We also visited Matrimandir. It touched us deeply. For us it really was the *House of the Third Millennium* as Ruud Lohman eloquently put it. It was a vision of the future—something which we had lacked in Austria, though our life style was simple and in harmony with nature. It was Matrimandir that eventually brought us back to Auroville. We went back to our farm in Austria, not to return for seven more years.

"Coming back in 1992, on the bus from Chennai, we were still not yet sure whether to settle at the Ashram or Auroville, but then as we crossed Auroville, glimpsing Matrimandir from the highway, we knew we had to come here. We got down at the Ganesh Temple in Morattandi at the entrance to Auroville.

"We had prepared ourselves for life in a spiritual community—we even had done an intensive Vipassana course in Bombay upon landing in India—so we were quite surprised that many Aurovilians smoked cigarettes and ate meat! It was a rough landing.

"When we moved to Vérité, things were still challenging in many ways. I had expected to lead a peaceful life, concentrating on my music and teaching it. Instead, I had to supervise construction work, keep accounts and manage workers. Sometimes I had to be aggressive in order to get work done. It disturbed me greatly, but it also showed me the necessity of establishing a complete inner equanimity and peace.

"Here in Auroville I practice what to me is my path or my approach to the Divine, 'Nada yoga' or 'Swara Sadhana', the growth towards and union with the Divine through sound. In India, it is

believed that in 'Swara Sadhana', the sadhak or seeker searches for that one note which is an expression of his self, and if one finds that, one finds one's inner self. I realized that in Auroville I no longer could separate my spiritual life from the physical life. This work to tune myself had to incorporate not just my meditations and my explorations in music, but also my struggles with the workers and so on. It took me years to maintain and act from an inner equilibrium to be centred even in adverse circumstances.

"Regarding music, I do not so much compose it, it comes to me. In our first week in Auroville the first song that came to me was a prayer to Mother and it was called 'Adoration'. Since then I composed something like 150-180 songs, which I haven't really sung much or shared with people. In these songs I mostly use words of the Mother as lyrics—prayers, mantras—or passages from Savitri. Sometimes it is the melody that comes to me, and I look for the words to accompany it. At other times, the words that I am reading, lead me to set them to music.

"But I must say, I don't see myself so much as a musician as a 'seeker' exploring sound. I have been concentrating on this for fourteen years, but it is only now, since half a year, that I feel my search coming to a fruition. For many years, I forced myself to sing two hours a day. To search, to meditate, to listen, to practice 'nada'. It was not easy. There were days when I did not feel in the least like doing it. And all the time it felt like I was knocking on a door. Then, one day, as I sat down as usual to practice my knocking, I suddenly realized that there was no door! I just flowed into the experience of pure universal sound or 'nada'. And that happened a few times now in the last six months. I flow more easily and naturally into experiences in the realms of sound now.

"The Western musical system is built up on the polarity of two modes, the major and the minor. But originally there were seven modes as can be noted in ancient Greek music and in Gregorian chant. I first encountered this system when I heard a monk sing Gregorian music, and it fascinated me. I then wanted to sing and experience all of the seven modes, which took me more than seven years.

"I started to compose in all of them and even now, I sing a different mode every day and so move in cycles of these seven modes. At first, I sang for practice and for personal unfolding, but then there were periods where I sang purely for Auroville. Each of the seven modes touches a different node or chakra. There was a period where for months I only did this 'bioregional meditation on Auroville' where I sang for half an hour for the dif-



AURELIO

"What I mean by tuning is coming to that point of understanding or complete harmony where one is in union with oneself, with others, or with one's surroundings."

ferent levels of Auroville—the geology, the water system, and the plant kingdom, the animals and the energy resource, the human beings, the aspiration and communication between them through the heart, the organization and the structure of Auroville, our spiritual focus and finally our connection with the Divine.

"Now I am at a point where I feel my main work is 'tuning'. To tune myself, to tune myself with different people and to tune the environment. I tune through the voice because it is the primal instrument that contains the sound of all the instruments. What I mean by tuning is coming to that point of understanding or complete harmony where one is in union with oneself, with others, or with one's surroundings.

"Mother talks about the special gift that each individual has to offer, and often in Auroville instead of recognizing that gift in oneself or in others, we hit on each other's weaknesses. So I am trying to invoke and focus on the gift that each one of us is carrying.

For half of the year I teach music and I try to make clear to my students that when they are centered and true to themselves, there is no wrong note. Whatever they sing will be in harmony, even though there may be periods of chaos and apparently disharmony.

"This is also reflected in my attitude towards Auroville. I have come to connect to a very beautiful side of it. Auroville—the Auroville to be. I know people are likely to scoff at this and to say that I am a dreamer, but this experience of the yet unmanifest Auroville is so beautiful and so concrete that this so called 'real' one seems unreal!

Interview by Bindu

MUSIC CD:

"CELEBRATION"

Nadaka's new CD, "Celebration", is quite different from "Straight to Your Heart" which he released three years ago. Instrumentally it is much richer, drawing upon a larger spectrum of instruments and musical traditions, and the tone is, somehow, more assured than that earlier production. This is most obvious in the opening track, "Celebration", where the music builds from tambourine, through driving acoustic guitar to the runs and plunges of Ganesh's unique violin, seamlessly meshing in electric guitar and diverse styles of percussion on the way. This is music which knows where it's going... and it's enjoying the journey. As Nadaka sings (in Tamil), "Come! Let us dance and let us sing and celebrate, for everywhere, anywhere, anytime beauty surrounds us".

The next track, "Inner Dawn", is far more interiorised. It begins with a wistful awakening section where the violin stretches after sleep, then searches, searches, before a new kind of understanding breaks through. The middle section, sung by Nadaka, is a call, a beautiful invocation to Narayana, the supreme Lord. As the final "OM" of the invocation expands and resonates, the density of the musical texture increases, and the violin is suddenly released, liberated, soaring far above the first tentative steps of dawn.

The third track, "Oceania", is for me the most interesting and innovative. The theme (familiar to those who have seen the AV video, "The City the Earth Needs") is introduced with solo acoustic guitar, and is then repeated throughout as a kind of template or foundation firstly for Ganesh's questing violin and then for a wonderful extended guitar solo by Nadaka, his first deep notes sliding high and expanding, evoking a sense of the Oceanic. Above, below, in between, there is marvellous percussion work from Shivamani, the cymbals flittering, the rhythms and textures changing almost by the second as Indian and Western musical modes play off each other and intertwine.

"Celebration" is a journey. If the first three tracks represent a progressive deepening, a progressively greater sense of space and intensity of musical exploration, the final track, "Amrita", returns us to the more achieved tone of the first track, but at a quieter, deeper level. Now there is no longer any need to shout. The "Santosham" of which Nadaka sings is the quiet happiness of the soul in tune with all. As the violin, guitar and drums fade away they are seamlessly replaced by the inevitable music of the natural world, of the night chorus of cicadas, birds and frogs.

"The music in this album has unfolded over many years and is a synthesis of many musical moments in my life", writes Nadaka. But, at its best, this is more than just a synthesis. It is a celebration of how different types of musical expression can approach and, through working together, evoke the "true note", the unsung essence, which is the Grail of every serious musician.

Alan

"Celebration". Produced by Nadaka, engineered by Didier Weiss at Rain Tree Studio, Auroville. Available at AVI Centres. For more details, contact Nadaka at Shamga, Auroville or email: Raintree@auroville.org.in

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July 1998
Number 114



Cooling off at a swimming pool at Transition

Humour

Summertime, and the living is...

... different. "Agninatchathiram," the Tamils call it. The period of the greatest heat when every self-respecting life form in this part of the world burrows deep underground, emigrates or acquires a sudden urge to meditate all day in the airconditioned chamber of the Matrimandir. It's so hot, so hellish hot, that fish fry in the sea, birds wear Ray-Bans, bullocks are into sunblock, snakes snoooze and Aurovilians... well, Aurovilians slide even further into left field as their last synapses suffer meltdown. The symptoms of incipient summer madness are unmistakable: uncontrollable smiling, attending general meetings, reading the letters section of the AVNews. Just being here.

This is the time of year when the prosperous members of the community retire to their a/c cocoons, only to reemerge, pallid and blinking, in late September; when a shopping trip to Pour Tous is preceded by the issuing of survival rations and the making out of one's Last Will and Testament ("To Brian, my stuffed bandicoot"); when the biggest decision of the day is whether or not to get out of bed; when a certain unclarity develops about the distinction between one's left and one's right hand; when a puncture makes strong men break down and weep.

This is the time when half the community goes comatose while the other half suddenly discovers conspiracies being hatched under every bush. It is the time of burgeoning factions, fictions, caucuses and coalitions, of cold shoulders or secret handshakes in the queue at Pour Tous, of "Meetings you must attend because the future of Auroville is at stake", of inquisitions, colourful character assassinations and pot-luck auto-da-fes.

It is the time of mysterious maladies, of "ze preekly 'eat'", and of imaginative cures—gleaned from ancient palm leaf manuscripts or old men waiting for the bus—including the application of Orissan leeches (why Orissan? nobody knows), and consuming three kilos a day of the ground-up bark of the aptly-named acacia inamorata.

It is the time of the onset of the south-west wind, a wind so dry, so virulent, that lungs turn to leather, faces wither into simian masks, hair acquires the texture of wire wool, and everywhere there is the faint susurrant of dry skin rustling against bone. It is the time of the bald truth when normally sane Aurovilians shave their heads, their partners, their dogs, parrots, and anything else within reach, thus ensuring the max-

imum possibility of sunstroke for all concerned. This sudden appearance of acres and acres of newly-shaven flesh, not to mention the accompanying protuberances, is somehow profoundly unsettling, particularly at meal-times.

Which reminds me. As if summertime in Tamil Nadu didn't bring enough problems of its own, this year the Solar Kitchen team decided to give the shattered nerves of the dessicated Aurovilians a further playful tweak. Now, the Solar Kitchen has never been a place for the intellectually-challenged. Think about it. First you have to keep your place in the queue while trying to decipher the multi-lingual menu of the day. Then, at the counter, you must decide instantaneously if you want red rice or white rice, tofu or potato, sprouts or raw carrot, Indonesian or Greek salad dressing, curd or apple puree. It's enough to reduce anybody to tears. But the hardest part comes later, when you have finished your meal and the world is slowly regaining its axis. Because then you have to dispose of your plate, bowls, tumbler, cutlery and waste food in a strictly designated order and in strictly designated places.

This was the really hard part, particularly for those Aurovilians used to navigating the day in an intuitive haze ("I just want to be spontaneous, man"). For weeks they could be seen huddled in corners or on the roadside, repeating to each other the sacred mantra, "Food waste in the first container, bowls and cutlery in the next, then tumblers..." Finally, after five months of special classes, mantras and mnemonics, almost everybody seemed to have mastered it.

But then came May 9th. The day that the Solar Kitchen team, without warning or announcement, and, seemingly, without qualms, decided to switch around the containers for the disposal of tumblers and bowls...

It was not a pretty sight. When I arrived the disposal room was already full of seriously confused Aurovilians, milling around helplessly like the legions of the damned in Dante's *Inferno*. Some sat stupefied on the floor; others were gently beating their heads against the wall and crying, "We didn't come here for this". Still others, the maddest of the lot, were trying to convene a Residents Assembly meeting among the human detritus.

I left quickly, my own sanity in the balance. Fortunately I managed to ddrrwwnw gry sllewkyppe ce dqmmcd fjss km;z sssssssssssssss....

Alan

Subscription Information

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