

Ananda Mela 2017: Message from the Artistic Director

Greetings! On July 29th and 30th, Redmond City Hall campus will be brimming with gaiety of festival-goers partaking in Ananda Mela: Joyful Festival of India. Vedic Cultural Center (VCC) of Sammamish collaborates with the City of Redmond to bring the 8th edition of this popular attraction. The founder and visionary leader of Ananda Mela, Harry Terhanian, and dozens of dedicated volunteers of VCC have worked year-round to offer this beautiful festival to Redmond's residents and visitors this weekend.

Ananda Mela strives to present the immense breadth and depth of Indian arts and culture. We realize this goal with intricately crafted displays, entertainment on multiple stages, participatory activities involving attendees of all ages and cultural backgrounds, and other experiences including tasty food and irresistible shopping.

Festival grounds open at 12 noon on July 29th and 30th. Programs on the *Ganga Stage* and *Yamuna Stage* feature dances and music by groups as well as individual artists. The program items cover a wide range of classical-, folk- and popular dance and music traditions from different parts of India, as well as yoga demonstration and magic shows.

On Saturday, **The Mayapuris**, musicians and dancers from Utah, will be performing from 6 to 9 pm. On Sunday, audiences will be treated to an assortment of folk dances (including bhangra) and ever-popular tunes by **DJ Anjali and the Incredible Kid** from Portland, from 5 to 7 pm. There will also be the **Aloha Bhangra Dance Contest** for audience members dancing during this show! The grand prize is a free two-night vacation for two to Hawaii. The Mayapuris will perform again from 7 to 8:30 p.m. on Sunday.

You will love the extensive array of colorful visual treats and traditional decorations. A must-see special display is that of a *Vedic village*, a model of a fully self-sustaining and environmentally-friendly traditional Indian community. As well, please be sure to say hello to the endearing **Indian Gyr cows**, and to visit the display on *Ganges (Ganga)*, the best-known holy river of India.

Ananda Mela is not complete without the plethora of participatory events. Roti making, making your own spices, incense stick making, puppet making, and decorating cup cakes are some of the activities awaiting your involvement. Cooking contest, chess contest, quiz contests, henna contest, clay Ganesha making contest, and rangoli contest have been designed to engage you keenly.

And with delicious food from diverse regions of India, bouncies for children, and other attractions, Ananda Mela is bound to be a pleasant, immersive, and memorable cultural experience for people of all ages and national origins. We thank **4Culture** and **ExperienceRedmond.com** for grant support.

Welcome to Ananda Mela!

Latha Sambamurti
Artistic Director, Ananda Mela