What a year to mark our 10th anniversary!

Instead of packed theatres, teeming parties and what was to be our most ambitious year of programming yet, the urgent new reality of COVID-19 demanded that we reinvent ourselves. Year 10 took us back full circle and reignited that start-up energy in us again.

I’m immensely proud of our amazing team who — with the unwavering support of our board, sponsors and funders — took the challenge head on and transformed a 10-day July festival into a 10-week digital season featuring 10 stellar mega-events in celebration of our 10th anniversary.

In the process, we learned new ways of working together, new formats, new modes of delivery, new revenue models; we redrew our budgets, calendars and timelines. Looking back now on all that we did, I feel disbelief and accomplishment, and also pride that we held true to who we are as an organization. Now more than ever, the arts play an invaluable role in our physical and mental wellbeing, and in creatively imagining our futures.

For the past 10 years, the festival really has been about a vision for a healthy community. We have built strong and lasting relationships with an ever-widening circle of people and institutions. And when our organization faced a steep challenge, that community held us. There’s work to be done ahead, and we’re committed to doing it. But for now I just wanted to say an immense thank you!

This past year was truly unexpected for all of us. For Indian summer Arts Society, the global pandemic swiftly impacted plans for our 10th Anniversary edition. It was clear we needed to quickly adapt in order to ensure both the safety of our team and audience and also ensure we could both survive and thrive through this period.

For our organization it meant a quick response and evolution to a new mostly digital format and enormous flexibility, collaboration and commitment from our staff and board. With a fierce devotion to our mission, entrepreneurial spirit, and ability to dive into the deep end of change, the team produced digital events that represented our values and vision.

We were also able to achieve key deliverables related to board governance. We have continued and strengthened a new process for strategic planning for the coming year, finalized new human resource policies and strengthened board committees. Much of this work has been a multi-year process and as we approach the end of 2020, the organization’s governance structure is stronger than ever.

For an event-based arts organization to end a year such as this one in such a strong position is an extraordinary accomplishment. The partnerships, cross-collaboration and creativity of our artists, funders, audience members, volunteers, staff and board have been fundamental to the success we have achieved amidst so much uncertainty this past year. With appreciation to the extended team for all your support and commitment.
Just as we were preparing to announce our 2020 lineup, it became clear that the COVID-19 crisis was going to change the way humans gather. We swiftly chose to undertake a difficult but exciting reinvention (or re-birth) into a digital festival, and to continue to serve our community in the way we know best. One thing the crisis only strengthened is our belief in the transformative power of the arts. And it was clear right from the early days of the pandemic that people have turned once more to the arts, for levity, for solace, and to make sense of our predicament and imagine our futures.

So we presented a series of carefully curated events to help our audience feel a sense of solidarity and purpose in creating a post-pandemic world that is not a return to normalcy as we knew it, but as we can reimagine and remake it. We were able to pull together a stunning global cast of talent applying its creative power to address this unsettling time. From Grammy Award-winning musicians to emerging poets, Nobel Prize-winning economists, to visionary environmental warriors, this year’s programming spanned literary dialogues, intellectual debates, musical performances, and interactive visual arts and culinary experiences.

We miss our in-person gathering, but we were excited to bring people together in digital community when we need it more than ever, to remove more barriers to accessibility, and to reach and engage an international audience. My deepest thanks to our generous and creative artists, audience members, sponsors, funders and donors, who each in their own way, have assured us that they will be there with us as we find new shape for our work.

“As a long-standing partner to witness how ISF quickly adapted to the Covid reality offering a multilayered experience cleverly presented in a progressive sequence of ten varied events is nothing short of remarkable. To jump into the digital online mode bypassing traditional Presentation metrics reliant on box office outcomes to one of greater accessibility inclusive of diverse communities and art forms, all enveloped in rich discourse allowed a tenfold increase in audiences along with ISF being a new national and global platform of cultural opportunities.”

— Michael Boucher
SFUW Director Cultural Programs & Partnerships

2020 PIVOT

As artists as important voices in the larger community, allowing us to step into the worlds they create, while also addressing the pressing questions of the one we inhabit. We present acclaimed international and local artists, connecting Vancouver to itself and the world. Curating through a South Asian lens, we center the exciting work of culturally diverse artists.

As the world builds more and more walls and as people get more suspicious and afraid of those who don’t like them and think like them, we offer a model for dialogue, a possibility for an inclusive community that is unafraid of striking up conversations - both cheerful and difficult. We connect rich and complex pasts with the emerging future. We strive to be loving and fierce, with a curatorial punch that dismantles walls, plays with ideas and provokes necessary dialogue and debate.

In a way, we confound the typical idea of an arts festival, balancing the cerebral with the sensual, arguing for a culture of openness and curiosity.

Our programming is rigorous yet quirky, with an appetite for experimentation and innovation. We see artists as important voices in the larger community, allowing us to step into the worlds they create, while addressing the pressing questions of the one we inhabit. We present acclaimed international and local artists, connecting Vancouver to itself and the world. Curating through a South Asian lens, we center the exciting work of culturally diverse artists.

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“‘That the ISF morphed into its own unique online festival (before most others had thought of it, while others just cancelled) was admirable. As artists it kept us engaged and as audience members it was something we looked forward to each weekend.’”

— Curtis Andrews, Musician
TRANSLATED FROM THE GIBBERISH
Anosh Irani, described by Quill and Quire as ‘one of CanLit’s most innovative chameleons,’ launched his delightful collection of short stories.

A DELHI OBSESSION
M.G. Vassanji, the celebrated novelist and two-time winner of the Giller Prize with his latest novel.

WAYFINDER
Award-winning sitar player and composer Mohamed Assani’s launched his latest album.

BEGINNINGS - SONIC TRIBUTES
Some of Vancouver’s brightest musical treasures brought us together virtually in a special event to kick off ISF’s 10th anniversary season.

VANDANA SHIVA & DAVID SUZUKI: THE VIRUS IS A WAKE UP CALL
Amidst a global pandemic, environmental warriors Vandana Shiva and David Suzuki invited us to consider the opportunity we have to change our ways of living as a species.

IT COULD BE VERSE: POETRY FOR A PANDEMIC
A special reading season by outstanding poets from around the world, offered us literature as shelter, medicine and mirror.

JOSEPH STIGLITZ: PEOPLE, POWER, & PROFITS
Joseph E. Stiglitz, winner of the Nobel Prize for Economics, and one of the world’s most renowned thinkers spoke with economist Arjun Jayadev about a more humane economic future.

MY SEDITIOUS HEART
Arundhati Roy, winner of the Booker Prize, and one of the most celebrated writers in the world launched her anthology of essays at ISF+.

NIGHT OF THE RAGA
Some of the most outstanding classical musicians in India dug deep into their repertoires to offer us songs of solace, inspiration and empathy.

BOONOOONOOUNOUS HAIR!
A special read-along session for kids with some of Canada’s best loved children’s book authors, starring diverse little humans.

MAY 30

JUNE 9

JUNE 27

JULY 4

SEPTEMBER 7

SEPTEMBER 30

NOVEMBER 7

NOVEMBER 16

NOVEMBER 17

MAY 16

MAY 23

JUNE 20

JUNE 21

JUNE 23

JUNE 24

MAY 24

JUNE 30

JULY 11

JULY 13

JULY 15

JULY 19

JULY 20

JULY 21

JULY 23

JULY 24

JULY 25

JULY 26

JULY 27

JULY 28

JULY 29

JULY 30

JULY 31

A special ISF global edition of the London-based speaker series, bridging five countries and presenting a stellar lineup of thinkers.

TIFFIN TALKS
Writer Shoushna Singh Baldwin, filmmaker Baljit Sngara, and visual artist Sandeep Johal, spoke to the Surrey Art Gallery’s Suvi Bains about feminist art, place and society.

JAALI - PATTERNS OF SPEECH
Creative duo Minahil Bukhari and Mustaali Raj spoke about and launched “JAALI,” their special digital public art commission for ISF 2020.
2020 ARTISTS

Over the years, Indian Summer Festival has featured some of the world’s finest artists and thinkers, playing our part in ensuring that Vancouver is a site of important local and global conversations. Our 10th anniversary saw Nobel, Booker and Pulitzer prize-winning artists alongside some of the most exciting emerging talent.

“ISF is one of the few wonderful organizations in the city doing actionable programming towards diversity and inclusion. They are especially loved in the arts community as they promote different local artists each year. Being this year’s featured artists was an honour and working with a great team made the experience truly memorable.”
— Mustaali Raj & Minahil Bukhari

MUSIC

Amarjeet Singh
Amaan Ali Khan
Amjad Ali Khan
Aneesh Pradhan
Ayaan Ali Khan
Ashwin Sood
Bajit Singh
Chin Injeti
Chugge Khan
Curis Andrews
Dj Lil India
Gird Govinda
Gune Khan
Hamin Hanani
Hidayat Honari
Horsepowar
Inuksuk Mackay

VISUAL ART

Minahil Bukhari
Mustaali Raj
Sheniz Janmohamed

IDEAS

Aja Monet
Ajmer Rode
Anita Anand
Anjlika Solomon
Anosh Irani
Arundhati Roy
Ayad Akhtar
Aza Raskin
Baljit Sajja
Ben Okri
Bit Naked
Chelene Knight
Christie Lee Charles
David Suzuki
Ivan Coyote
Jeev Thayil

HOSTS, MODERATORS, & GUEST CURATORS

Agam Darshi
Anjaliça Solomon
Arjun Jayadev
David Basaniam
Eleanor O’Keefe
Jarret Martineau
Michelle Eliot
Minelle Mahtani
Sirish Rao
Suvi Bains

Jeanette Bernal-Singh
Jillian Christmas
Kavita Krishnamurti
Kethe Khan
L Subramaniam
Lasya Vankayala
Madison McFerrin
Mohamed Assani
Neela
Neelamjot Dhillon
Ruby Singh
Sejal Lal
Sunny Matharu
Salim Khan
Shubha Mudgal
Tanun Nayar
Tiffany Aylak

Minahil Bukhari
Mustaali Raj
Sheniz Janmohamed

47 artists from 27 cities

48% cis-women

47% cis-men

5% non-binary

84% BIPOC artists

47% BIPOC artists

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47% cis-men

5% non-binary

84% BIPOC artists
VOLUNTEERS

As the in-person dimensions of our programming fell away, it was important to us that we continue to engage our volunteers in meaningful ways. We wanted to create multi-sensory and creative ways for volunteers to build something collective, together, while not contributing to more screen time in an already saturated digital sphere. This new campaign allowed people to stay in their homes, be physically creative without being strenuous, and it was inclusive to multi-generational families - children and elders living with our volunteers were encouraged to participate.

And so the #ISFMandalaProject was born, a digital community-arts-meets-volunteerism campaign. Led by Mandala artist Sheniz Janmohamed, volunteers created, shared, and trained each other on mandala making in homes and yards across Metro Vancouver.

The results were documented through a photo series, organized by hashtag on Instagram, and shared in a final volunteer appreciation video and slideshow with music by Mohamad Assani, sent to all participating volunteers, in lieu of a volunteer appreciation party.
ACCESSIBLE INDIAN SUMMER

At the heart of Indian Summer is a desire for an inclusive, diverse, and culturally-rich society. We aim to not only remove barriers to access our events, but to also celebrate and normalize diverse entry-points to enrich the festival programming as a space for everyone. We strive to meet access requests, particularly online in this digital season, and continue to reflect on and develop our accessible programming.

An online festival has opened up new ways of accessing our events for our audiences. We made two decisions for this year’s festival, and invested in ensuring that 100% of events had a free-to-attend option. And 100% of Indian Summer Festival’s 2020 Digital Events were live captioned on all streaming platforms.

PARTNERSHIP

Indian Summer Festival & VocalEye Watch Party!
This watch party centred the experiences of Blind and partially sighted audiences, and included a sampling from various Indian Summer Festival 2020 productions.

During this watch party, visual artworks and performances were described by VocalEye and Indian Summer Festival staff with plenty of time for pausing, asking questions, and adding context and background information.

The event was very well attended - there were over 35 blind and partially sighted people on the zoom call, all from the lower mainland. This was a successful event by every measure.
CULTIVATING A DIVERSE AUDIENCE

One of the strengths of the Indian Summer Festival is our ability to bring together an incredibly diverse audience, in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, who would not otherwise be in a room together.

We achieve this by featuring a multiplicity of artistic voices in our programming, by speaking to the interests of diverse groups, and leading from our core values of inclusion and accessibility. The festival invites people from all walks of life into a shared experience and offers a welcoming space for dialogue and interaction. Our audience continues to grow and our surveys tell us that we welcome as many new faces as loyal ones who come back year after year.

“ISF is one of our favourite events every year. It makes me proud to be an Indian and see the rich culture and heritage of my homeland represented so beautifully. Thank you for all of the hard work you do every year, and especially this year.”
– Angie and Steven Osachoff

“Indian Summer Festival, your streamed events have been some of the best that I’ve watched in recent months! No head games. No phony baloney promo. Just straight up, everything is exactly what and how you promote it to be! No scrambling or challenges to watch or find some obscure link. No hidden fees. (None of that crap that I’m getting pretty tired of over the past few months.) Super world class, beautifully presented and hosted, and featuring exceptional people! Well done, Indian Summer Festival people! I really appreciate it! (I’m still raving about the amazing Vandana Shiva from months ago to anyone who will listen.)”
– Lillian Van Weelden

“Thanks for amplifying South Asian voices. I can’t wait for my toddler daughter to be old enough for me to bring to your events and enjoy this representation together.”
– Sambriddhi Nepal

FINANCIAL RESILIENCE

2020 tested our financial sustainability. For nine years straight, we saw steady annual growth, year on year, balanced across four distinct revenue sources. In our tenth year, due to the pandemic and the massive hit to live event ticket sales models worldwide, our earned income stream disappeared almost entirely overnight. This was a great test of our financial resilience, and proved the importance of always managing multiple revenue sources.

Donations from our incredible community went up, government bodies quickly rolled out support programs, and sponsors stood by and stepped up. We managed to end a most challenging year with just a 10% overall decrease in revenues.

We remained well positioned to navigate the uncertainty of the period ahead.
32.4 million overall advertising, media, & social media impressions*

$300,000 ad campaign value

*Note: This number is actually much higher as we are not supplied estimates for the assuredly millions of other impressions

1.08 million organic social media impressions

248 featured media stories

MEDIA COVERAGE

"Actually, that was the best couple of hours I think I have *ever* spent online. Congrats again!"
— John Maxwell, Publishing, Simon Fraser University

"The Indian Summer Festival promotes tremendous cross-cultural dialogue and music, bringing together Indigenous, South Asian, and East Asian artists, comedians, and writers in a smorgasbord of events... It's not fusion; it's interculturalism in which artists do not give up their identity. And it's helping to promote an appreciation for other cultures."
— Charlie Smith, Georgia Straight
OUR PATRONS

“ISF is a one-of-a-kind experience that must be felt. It has the power to transform your understanding of yourself and this beautifully mixed-up world we live in.”
— Zena Henriquez, Festival Patron

VISIONARIES
Asha Fraser & Ravi Sidhoo, East India Carpets

CURATOR
Zena Henriquez

LUMINARIES
Arran & Ratana Stephens

BENEFACTORS
Michael Alexander & Dianna Waggoner
Asha Fraser
Sukesh & Sunita Kumar
The Harweg Foundation

CHAMPIONS
Alix Brown
Buschlen Mowatt Nichol Foundation
Cynnie Woodward
Dr Arun and Lori Garg
Linda and Mario Pinto
Lynn & Ash Katey
Michael Stevenson & Jan Whitford
Randy & Monika Garg
Pankaj & Rita Agarwal
Praveen & Anuva Varshney
Steven & Angie Osachoff
Tracey & Anibal Valente
Varshney Family Charitable Foundation

FRIENDS
Garth McAulster
Inji Islam
Jason Boudreau
Leonard Schein
Neera Soni
Padam Misri
Rakesh & Archna Anand
Rupa Gopinath
Shahin Virji
William Raserfeld

VISIONARIES
Allan Diamond
Amal Johal
Anil Parate
Anthony Phillips
Ashwin Sood
Bobby Bysbekko
Charlie Smith
Hitesh Kathary
Joel Salomon
Karyn Garossino
Katherine Hacker

SUSTainers
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Anil Parate
Anthony Phillips
Ashwin Sood
Bobby Bysbekko
Charlie Smith
Hitesh Kathary
Joel Salomon
Karyn Garossino
Katherine Hacker

LUMINARIES
Arran & Ratana Stephens

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Prinder Dulai
Renee & Adrian Dix
Ritu Khanna
Ruth Wilson
TradeWind Books
Vinod Khasla
Vishal Hirai
Asmin Dhani
“As Founding Partner of the Indian Summer Festival, Simon Fraser University is proud of the special relationship we have formed with the festival over the past nine years. This year’s event was better than ever with a program that included a wonderful array of creators, performers, thinkers. Congratulations and thanks to the organizers for once again providing SFU the opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to being Canada’s engaged university.”
— SFU President and Vice Chancellor Joy Johnson
Indian Summer Arts Society is a Vancouver-based charitable, not-for-profit secular arts organization.

Our mandate is to offer daring multi-arts events that catalyze and inspire audiences and artists in a spirit of dialogue and global citizenship. To achieve our mandate, in 2011 we founded the annual Indian Summer Festival.

Our curatorial practice is to center and amplify South Asian voices in conversation with other artistic communities. Each year, the festival presents provocative arts events that feature some of the best artists and visionaries from Canada, South Asia and beyond. From novelists to DJs, social entrepreneurs to Bollywood stars, Indian Summer Festival has presented emerging artists as well as Nobel, Booker, Grammy and Oscar prize nominees on its stages.

OUR TEAM
Sirish Rao Co-Founder & Artistic Director
Laura Byyspalko Co-Founder & Managing Director
Almira Bhardwaj Communications & Development Manager
Gillian Cafsky Finance & Operations Manager
Laura June Albert Grants & Community Initiatives Manager
Pawan Dhall Festival Producer
Mimi Abrahams Production Manager
Julia Prazotto Digital Content Specialist
Carmel Tanaka Audience Services & Administrative Coordinator
Rob Eccles Communications Designer
Neemay Li Communications Assistant

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Neeta Soni Chair
Am Johal Vice Chair
Vishal Hiralal Treasurer
Meena Dhillon Secretary
Abhishek Rawal Director
Joti Dhesi Director

2020 ADVISORY COUNCIL
Deepsa Mehta
Jas Sandhu
Michael Stevenson
Aradhana Seth
Prem Gill
Ratana Stephens
Sandy Ganrossino
Sukesh Kumar
Vikram Vij

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
In addition to our fabulous artists, partners, patrons, sponsors, advisors and team, the festival has been made possible with the support of many well-wishers whom we acknowledge with deep gratitude.

INDIVIDUALS
Allan Dawe
Alvina Yeung
Amanda Burrows
Barrie Mowatt
Cate Simpson
Charlie Smith
Debra Sparrow
Eleanor O’Keefe
Guy Oullette
Howard Jang
Jannine Currie
Jordan Sham
Michael Tabin
Michael Vidler
Renu Chapiolin
Ruhmah Buchanan
Sarah Ast
Shushma Datt
Steph Kirkland / VocalEye
Teneille Lewis
Tom Yim
Tushar Tondwalkar

PHOTOGRAPHER
Caleigh Mayer

MEDIA RELATIONS
Fawn Mulcahy

BOX OFFICE
EventBrite

TECHNICAL PRODUCTION
Bespoke Audio Visual
Prashow Audio Visual

TECHNICAL SUPPORT
Tech Buriers Support Ltd.

VIDEOGRAPHY TEAMS
Soulfood Productions Inc.
Pool Service Productions
Third Eye Productions
Your gifts go towards enabling us to provide free participation in our digital season, offering exceptional programming and fairly paying our artists. We couldn’t do this work without you. Thank you!

For ten years Indian Summer has been bringing people together to model the kind of society we’d like to see. A society that is creative, diverse, inclusive and connected. Like so many of our friends in the arts sector, COVID-19 has created disruptions in our programming, but you embraced our new format.

Over 150,000 people, in 45 countries across 6 continents have participated in ISF2020’s digital season. From Vancouver to Brazil to the UK and to India, we have shared music, ideas, poetry, dance and food.

We know we need to continue offering transformative experiences and reflect on the power of the arts as the connecting thread where worlds meet. There has never been a more urgent time to bring communities together and create spaces where we cultivate curiosity.

We’ve been able to bring some joyous art and critical conversations to people when they need it most, and at no charge, recognizing that this is a tough time for many. We’ve also been able to pay artists fairly - without artists, there is no art. And we’re thrilled that our digital edition has reached more than 75,000 unique viewers across six continents.

SUPPORT ISF

Become a Supporter, for as little as $25.
www.indiansummerfestival.ca/supporter

Join our Patron’s Circle, with fabulous benefits and engagement.
www.indiansummerfestival.ca/patrons

We are proud to be a patron and supporter-powered festival, made possible largely because of the generosity and support of a community of individuals who share our vision for a diverse, inclusive and culturally-rich society. We are deeply grateful.
Mark your calendars for November 4—14, 2020 - we’ll be holding our first ever digital auction! It’s full of jaw-dropping items, including works from ISF artists Bhaju Shyam, Sandeep Johal and Sara Khan, treasures from East India Carpets, exquisite meals from celebrity chef Vikram Vij and Tushar Tendulkar, art and gallery tickets, dinners at some of Vancouver’s top restaurants - and much much more!

Support Indian Summer Festival and bring home something special (or perhaps get in some early holiday shopping)!

Watch out for ISF’s newsletter with all the announcements and reveals.
Indian Summer Festival takes place on the unceded Coast Salish territories of the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Sél’ίlwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh), and x̕wməθkwəy’əm (Musqueam) Nations. As a festival celebrating diverse perspectives, Indian Summer Arts Society offers our gratitude to the Coast Salish people who continue to steward these lands and waters.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION
#ISF2020
#WHEREWORLDSMEET
IndianSummerCND
IndianSummerCanada
IndianSummerFestival
Indian Summer Festival Canada

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