

Mississauga South Asian festival celebrates 10-year anniversary

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When the TD Mosaic Festival got its start a decade ago, there was no Celebration Square to play host to the festivities.

Asma Mahmood, who co-founded the festival with her husband Arshad, remembers how they had to bring in a rental stage to the civic square outside the Central Library. What also sticks out in Mahmood's mind is how the weather was so bad that first year, they had to cancel the second day of the festival.

Lessons were learned, said Mahmood, and the festival persevered to become a staple in Mississauga each summer.

Mosaic, which draws thousands and thousands of people each year, celebrates its 10th anniversary the weekend of Aug. 14-15. While there will be two days of live performances in Celebration Square, there are a slew of other events being presented as part of the festival that are happening this week and next including a film festival, art exhibition, poetry recital and a youth music series.

Mahmood, meanwhile, said she and her husband got the idea to organize the festival as a way to highlight the best of South Asian culture. They wanted it to be a "very sophisticated" tribute to South Asian art and music.

Mosaic kicks off Friday, Aug. 14 in Celebration Square with an opening ceremony that will include a smudge ceremony performed by Garry Sault, an elder with the Mississaugas of the New Credit. Festival organizers are collaborating with the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto to bring First Nations dances and music to the festival.

Friday's part of the festival will feature performances by Spellz and other artists as well as a full concert performance by Mekall Hasan Band, which bills itself as combining elements of rock, jazz and Sufi and Punjabi poetry to create a sound they dub Punjabi prog-rock.

Saturday will feature a number of performances throughout the day culminating in the headlining performance by Delhi to Dublin. There will also be a special dance performance celebrating the festival's 10-year history that was choreographed by Shiamak Davar.

As well, the Mosaic International South Asian Film Festival opens Thursday (Aug. 6) and continues to Sunday (Aug. 9). An exhibition by Bangladesh visual artist Kalidas Karmaker opens Thursday, Aug. 13 at Promenade Gallery while Mosaic Mushaira – a poetry recital by poets and writers in English, Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi and Gujarati also happens that night at the Living Arts Centre.

Rock the Coliseum, a youth music series, happens Friday and Saturday at the Celebration Square amphitheatre.

There will also be a variety of vendors selling South Asian food, clothing, jewelry and other goods.

For more information, or to check out the full lineup of entertainment, visit www.mosaicfest.com.

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The TD Mosaic Festival, celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, happens Aug. 14-15 at Celebration Square.