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Pandit Nehru's speech, Gauhar Jaan's voice and yours too

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A unique exhibition of recording history is being held in Mumbai at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Vaastu Sanghalaya (formerly the Prince of Wales Museum). The exhibition tracks the changes in recording technology over the last hundred years, ever since music was recorded in India.

Jointly conceived by the Saregama Music Group and the museum, the idea for the exhibition was sown about nine months ago. Sabyasachi Mukherjee, museum director, says no other museum in India has organised this kind of an exhibition before. "We are happy with the enthusiastic response from the music industry and our regular visitors," he says.

Music aficionados can look forward to listening to rare recordings of India's first recorded artist Gauhar Jaan, who was adept in the dhrupad, thumri, khayal and ghazal styles, and who ended every recording by announcing her name, for copyright and identification purposes. Other recordings include Jawaharlal Nehru's Tryst with Destiny speech and an



Tejal Pandey

MUSICAL HISTORY: An exhibition tracing the origins of Indian film and classical music is being held at the Prince of Wales Museum

announcement of the time and date of the screening of *Alam Aara*, India's first movie with sound that released in 1931.

The range of recording instruments will be a treat for technology and sound buffs: there is a copy of Edison's phonograph which was used to record sound for the first time, open and closed gramophones, a Japanese portable gramophone, a wire recorder and a record-cutting lathe.

Visitors can enter a music booth to hear what their voice would sound like in the dif-

ferent eras of music—before the advent of microphones, after microphones were introduced and in the current digital age. "When you get to listen to yourself in three different versions, it changes the way you think about music. The music booth section is a huge draw," says curator Kushal Gopalika. Also on display are 300 album sleeves, from old movies such as *Kismet* and *Guide* to recent ones like *Omkaara* and *Fanaa*. Harsh Goenka, chairman of RPG Enterprises which owns Saregama, describes them as "works of art" which provide insights into how films were marketed, from the 1940s to the digital prints of today.

There are karaoke sessions and recording workshops conducted by experts in the field. Well-known names like Suresh Wadhkar, Sonu Nigam and Kavita Krishnamoorthy will provide inputs. Goenka says that today's digital revolution has marked the physical end of songs. "Earlier, there were magnetic tapes, LPs and cassettes. Some people prefer the noise and hiss of earlier records, which could not be erased digitally. Nehru's speech, for instance, has the whirring of fans in the background."

(On till September 30. Entry is free)