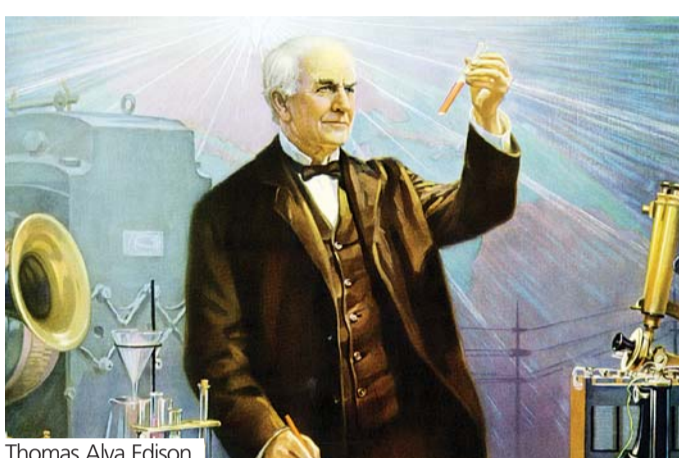


#HISTORY

How Thomas Edison Tricked the Press

A year before he developed a working bulb, the "Wizard of Menlo Park" created the illusion that his prototype burned for more than a few minutes at a time.



Thomas Alva Edison.

In the autumn of 1878, Thomas Alva Edison had a problem. He hadn't invented the light bulb yet. Or, to put it more precisely, he had invented a light bulb, but he couldn't keep it lit for more than a few minutes at a time. He still hadn't figured out how to regulate the temperature of the light bulb's internal filament, meaning the incandescent bulb would immediately overheat, and the filament would promptly melt down.

Unfortunately, Edison was running out of time. All over North America and Europe, inventors like him were working on-and patenting-their own electric projects. Sooner or later, somebody would wind up harnessing electricity. The English chemist Joseph Swan, Edison knew, was hard at work on a rival light bulb. Two Canadians, Henry Woodward and Matthew Evans, had already patented an inefficient design four years before.



Electricity, to the Gilded Age mind, wasn't just a technology. Rather, it was a mysterious, thrilling, invisible, quasi-magical force that had become synonymous with scientific discovery and the whole arc of human progress.

It was, as one glibbook put it, that "subtle and vivifying current," the source not just of light but of life itself.

If electricity was magic, then Edison was its chief magician. He was the "Wizard of Menlo Park," a reference to his New Jersey laboratory, as well as the "Napoleon of Science," the "Genius of Menlo Park" and the "New Jersey Columbus."

Edison understood that success in the Gilded Age was a matter of hard work and carefully managing public expectations. Sure, he had come up with the phonograph, but when asked by some guests which historical figure's voice he'd most like to hear, he shocked them by naming onetime French political upstart Napoleon. As he explained to his audience, who had apparently expected him to name Jesus Christ, "I like a hustler."

Just one year prior, Edison had invented the phonograph to great fanfare. Restless, he'd at once promised reporters that he would "produce something at least as good as the



Shailaza Singh
Published author, poet and a YouTuber

#MEETING GOD

How do I stop the thoughts in my mind?

By compassion. Karuna. When you have karuna, you no longer have thoughts about others. The Chinese took away my land from me but I don't have anything against them. Have compassion.

These words were no ordinary words; the speaker was not an ordinary man. He was Jetsun Jamphel Ngawang Lobsang Yeshe Tenzin Gyatso, also known as His Holiness, The Dalai Lama XIV. My daughter and I were meeting him at his residence in McLeod Ganj. The meeting itself was serendipitous.

My daughter and I had been to McLeod Ganj before too. Each time, we used to stare at his photograph and my daughter used to ask me, "Mom, does he live here?"

I used to nod. "Why can't we meet him?" "Because he does not meet everybody."

"Why not. I want to meet him!" "When we had last visited McLeod Ganj in 2022, she had actually prayed to his photograph."

"I really want to meet you. I feel as if you are my grandfather. Please."

At that time, I didn't pay much heed to her conversation with his photograph. After we came back to Jaipur, she never mentioned this incident and I too had forgotten about it. But this time when we were getting ready to visit Dharamshala again for her summer holidays, I saw a photograph of Dalai Lama on the internet. "What if I could meet him?" I wondered. I visited his site and tried to look up his public program. There wasn't much there except the email address of his office. I emailed his office but wasn't really expecting a reply especially because his official website had categorically mentioned that in view of his old age, his meetings

There is something about His Holiness The Dalai Lama that disarms you the moment you meet him. Thoughts fly out of your mind, you forget what you had to say and become as happy as a toddler who is given his favourite toy. Without lifting a finger, this man creates some powerful magic- his key ingredient is compassion.

Dalai Lama & I



looked genuine enough. I tried the numbers mentioned on the email but no one picked up. Finally, I wrote back confirming my availability on the schedule and requested an acknowledgement to the mail. The acknowledgement took 24 hours in coming; a day that was plagued with all kinds of doubts. What if it was some elaborate plan to trap me? But my worries were laid to rest when I received a very simple "Thanks, I have received it." I could hardly believe my luck!

I was finally going to meet not just the man who had received the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize or the man who has given China sleepless nights by simply being him but someone who is considered a living God, the revered reincarnation of the Buddha of Compassion (Avalokitesvara), by Tibetans and Buddhists all over the world, the former spiritual and temporal ruler of Tibet! When I told my daughter about it, she was ecstatic!

Though Dharamshala is said to be the headquarters of The Dalai Lama, he actually resides in McLeod Ganj, a little suburb of Dharamshala, which was about 5 kilometres from where we were staying. I was so excited that I could not sleep the night before. It had rained throughout the night.

Thankfully, the rains had stopped just before the dawn.

Compassion & Patience

It was a beautiful morning. We reached the Dalai Lama temple, which serves as the residence of the Dalai Lama. It has a beautiful garden that surrounds the courtyard, which is decked by trees and lined by pathways on either side and ends at a large pagoda like structure which serves as a verandah. I could see a long line of people already waiting for His Holiness. These were mostly Tibetans who were settled in Dharamshala or McLeod Ganj. The Tibetans were sitting in a line and chatting away happily. They were all dressed in their Sunday best. After all, they were going to meet their beloved God. There were also a lot of Indians like us and a couple of foreigners who had perhaps come for the first time to meet the Dalai Lama.

The guards told us to wait but I kept having doubts. What if the Dalai Lama doesn't come? What if the event is cancelled? What if it rains? There were many like me who could not wait quietly. Every two minutes, there was some one or the other from the group who had to



walk to the guards with a new query. But the guards had also compassion and patience that the Dalai Lama is famous for. They answered all the questions patiently. After a while, someone from the office came with a sheet of paper and called out our names. Once that process was over, all the Indians were asked to sit in a well-lit and ventilated sitting room which was adorned with photographs and posters of Dalai Lama.



Soon, all the Indians were called and requested to queue up for the security check. And boy! What a security check it was. Everything was checked. We had women security guards and they thoroughly frisked us. Our bags, wallets, belts, mobiles and everything else was marked and coded with yellow paper tokens and kept aside. We were given a corresponding token to help us to recognize our bags during collection. But what about the photographs? my daughter protested. "The photographs will be taken and sent to you," said the security guard.

The Whispering of the Prayer

Once the security check was done, we were again asked to stand in a line in the veranda with our masks on our faces. We waited with baited breath. Soon, the Dalai Lama entered the veranda. He couldn't walk much so he was supported by two monks who helped him to sit down on his chair.

The guards requested us to come one by one. We had diligently worn our masks because the email and the guards had asked us to. But the Dalai Lama had perhaps not paid any attention to these instructions. In his audience was a little girl, about 10 years old. He asked her to pull down her mask so that he could see her properly. He held her hand and whispered a prayer for her. But it was not just for her. Each person that he met received the same treatment. The same warm smile, the holding of the hands, the whispering of the prayer. A lady who was waiting ahead of us remarked to her husband, "this is why they say that the climate in Dharamshala is always pleasant. It is his aura that makes everything so beautiful here."

As we walked out of the sprawling premises of the Dalai Lama temple, I couldn't help marvel at the simplicity of this man who was a world leader and a God for millions. After walking in silence for some time, my daughter said, "He doesn't seem like my grandfather; he is my fairy godfather!"

The performance was a testament to the enduring power of women musicians in preserving and evolving folk cultures. Through their performances, they illuminated the resilience, beauty, and artistic identity woven into their stories and music. The collaboration between artists from different communities and the unconventional approach taken during the workshop as well as the performance marked a significant milestone in celebrating women in folk and redefining the boundaries of artistic expression.

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nalist. My daughter asked him, "How do I stop all these negative thoughts in my mind?" He looked at the interpreter who translated her question into Tibetan language. He smiled, held our hands and replied in English, "You stop these thoughts through compassion, through 'karuna'. When you have compassion towards yourself, your friends, family and even people who don't like you, the negative thoughts stop. With compassion, you start understanding that the people who hurt you or trouble you are too are bound by their own destiny, circumstances and problems. Sometimes, things don't happen the way we want them to. Then we start blaming ourselves, people around us or our country or the world. Compassion helps us. Even though the Chinese have taken away my motherland from me, I can only bless them with compassion. I have nothing against them. Have 'karuna' towards people and yourself and you will not think any negative thoughts." Tears of joy filled my eyes as he blessed us and we moved forward. We were given the customary red thread and the prasadam by some senior monks.

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#EVENT

Harmonizing heritage and architecture, women folk musicians from Rajasthan intertwined their voices and stories, weaving a mesmerizing tapestry of folk music and theatrical expression. Celebrating resilience and reclaiming the feminine in folk, this innovative event showcased the power of women in preserving cultural legacies.



Tusharika Singh
Freelancer writer and city blogger

In a captivating display of artistry and architectural brilliance, a unique folk musical evening was recently organized at Jawahar Kala Kendra that celebrated the invaluable role of women musicians in preserving and enriching folk cultures. The event, entitled "Main Jo Karti Kyu Karti," brought together five talented women folk musicians - Hanifa Khan Manganiyar, Kamla Devi Bhatt, Mamta Sapera, Mewa Sapera, and Prem Kanwar Dangl - from diverse communities and regions of Rajasthan. Through their enchanting voices, they shared their journeys, stories, and artistic identities, creating an immersive experience that transcended traditional performance boundaries. This one-of-its-kind event was the culmination of a four-day residential workshop organized by the Jaipur Virasat Foundation in col-



laboration with Arya Niwas Hospitality, Studio Ainak, and Alliance Francaise Jaipur.

Preserving Tradition and Legacy

Women musicians have played a vital role in folk cultures, carrying forward the legacy of their communities through generations. Unlike their male counterparts, their engagement with the art form is driven purely by joy and a deep connection to their heritage, rather than a competitive space. They have been instrumental in passing forward traditions, ensuring the continuity of folk music. This event sought to appreciate and celebrate their significant contributions, shining a spotlight on their invaluable role in keeping the art form alive.

A Collaborative Journey

The workshop preceding the performance brought together women folk musicians and theater practitioners from

Celebrating Women in Folk



A Mesmerizing Musical Theater Show

The culminating performance at JKK was nothing short of extraordinary. Through a combination of music, theater, and storytelling, the artists shared their journeys, memories, and emotions with the audience. The songs performed evoked powerful nostalgia, reflecting the artists' experiences of childhood, friendship, family, and love. The program, aptly titled "Main Jo Karti Kyu Karti," aimed to celebrate womanhood and artistic identities.

Rajasthan. This convergence of diverse voices, experiences, and communities fostered an atmosphere of creativity and exploration. Collaborating with theater practitioners enabled the artists to delve deeper into their personal narratives, meditate on the intrinsic beauty of their stories, and reimagine their music in a fresh and innovative light. The workshop provided a platform for self-expression and experimentation, transcending the boundaries of conventional performance.

A Unique Perspective

The program attempted to showcase women in a unique light, highlighting their comical, notorious, yet innocent side. The performances revealed the multifaceted nature of these women, challenging stereotypes and reclaiming the feminine in folk. Notably, this was the first time that women folk artists from different communities and regions of Rajasthan collaborated for a musical theater production. Their collective efforts resulted in a poetic and boundary-pushing experience.

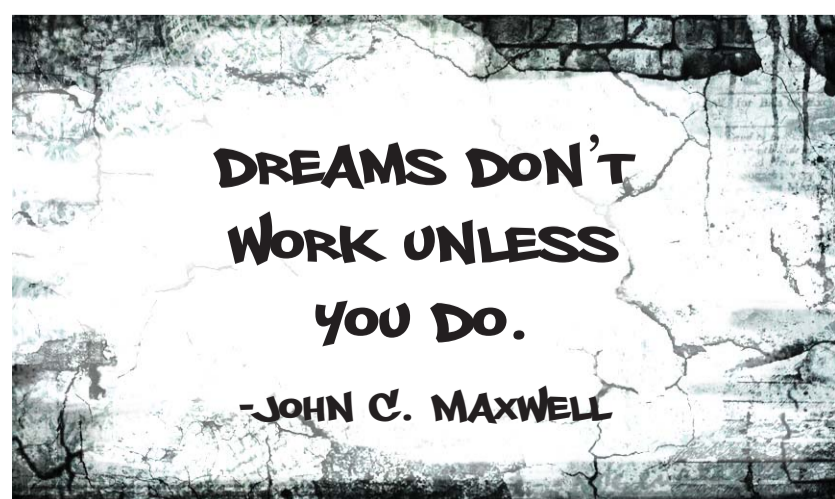
Artistry Beyond Performance

The performance at JKK defied traditional staging conventions by utilizing unconventional spaces like the terrace and staircase. By doing so, it embraced the notion that folk is not limited to exotic performances but is a way of life. With no direction or flow per se, the performance flowed organically, embodying the essence of folk as a boundless art form. The distinctive fusion of music, theater, and architecture created an immersive experience that transported the audience into the world of these talented women musicians.



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

THE WALL



BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS

