

## Listeners' Festival of Oral Literature, Curtain Raiser - New Delhi (2022)

The Imasi Foundation joins hands with UNESCO and Sangeet Natak Akademi to celebrate MK Binodini Devi Centenary in New Delhi on 16 November 2022.

Cultural luminaries, political and corporate leaders, and invitees from the northeast Indian community gathered at the UNESCO auditorium in Chanakyapuri, New Delhi, to highlight the contributions and legacy of the late Manipuri writer.

Dr. Hezekiel Dlamini, Officer-in-Charge of UNESCO New Delhi, Imasi Foundation's collaborating partner for The Listener Festival of literature that will be held in early February 2023, spoke on the importance of the festival. Recalling UNESCO New Delhi's past work with the Imasi Foundation and IGNCA on training archivists from NER of India, he encouraged the Imasi Foundation to continue this vital work.

Guest of Honor Aneish Rajan, Director of the Ministry of Culture and Secretary-in-charge of Sangeet Natak Akademi, a collaborating partner on The Listener, spoke about performance heritage, specifically oral literature, and the unique concept of the festival that places the audience - the listener - at the centre stage.



The Guest of Honor, Professor Dr. Ramesh Gaur, Director of the National School of Drama and Head of Kala Nidhi at IGNCA, urged the Imasi Foundation to consider establishing a literary museum along the lines of the resolution of the Paris conference he had just returned from. He promised support for both the literary museum and the festival of oral literature.

Guest of Honor Dr. Lorho S. Pfoze movingly described the small linguistic tribes in Manipur and the North Eastern Region (NER). He discussed his conversations on the subject with fellow MPs from Sikkim and Assam. The Honorable Minister of State for Culture and External Affairs, Smt. Meenakshi Lekhi, sent her message as the Chief Guest, as she was running late. The message served as a well-rounded eulogy for the work and legacy of MK Binodini Devi.

MK Binodini Devi's contribution to dance, while serving as the Secretary of the Jawaharlal Nehru Manipur Dance Academy, was paid tribute to by Mr Oja M. Mangangsana, who performed traditional oral ballads accompanied by his Pena, a musical instrument. Later, he was joined by dancers and drummers from the Panthoibi Jagoi Marup for a Maibi shaman dance performance.

L. Somi Roy, Founder and Chairman of Imasi Foundation, spoke about his mother's work and his involvement in it. All VIPs were given copies of Penguin's special 35th-anniversary hardback edition of 'THE PRINCESS AND THE POLITICAL AGENT,' Roy's translation of MK Binodini Devi's Sahitya Akademi Award-winning historical novel, as well as the monograph on MK Binodini Devi written for the Sahitya Akademi. He was joined by L. Radhakanta Roy, Trustee, and Satyajit Aribam, Advisory Council member of Imasi Foundation. Consulting Advisers Mr Atul Dev Sarmah of partner organisation MMGLD, and Mr Sanjeev Behari were instrumental in organizing the event. The Media Management Group for Literacy and Development (MMGLD) serves as the Financial Partner for the Listeners' Festival. Mr Behari delivered the vote of thanks.

