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LASSI WITH LAVINA By LAVINA MELWANI

There is a lot happening here in the Big Apple, and we don't just mean the sad, bad news of the economic crisis. *The Indian Express* keeps an eye on all things that softly turned, while we rushed past, with this fortnightly column that carefully blends in the exclusive with the everyday

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# Innovation, art, outsourcing

## Drag the D!

**A** GRADUATE of IIT Bombay, Raj Jaswa is a serial entrepreneur who founded and took two previous companies, OPTi and Selectica, public on Nasdaq. In fact, Selectica had a peak market cap of \$5 billion. So how do you top that? The magic word may well be Ddyno!

As CEO and president of Ddyno, Jaswa predicts it will be his biggest company yet. So what is Ddyno? It's a tech innovation birthed by some superior minds at Stanford that could revolutionize video distribution on the web, by empowering big and small groups with their own video channel for live blogging.

This idea, conceptualized by a technical wiz team which includes key researchers from Stanford University Multimedia Labs, is an innovation which may well put video technology within the pockets of ordinary mortals



Raj Jaswa, CEO of Ddyno

with its web platform for instant sharing of video, audio and applications. Once Ddyno is installed, users only need to "drag the 'd'" — the Ddyno icon — onto the desktop application or stream they want to broadcast and then click "share" to instantly share their content, even in real time, on their own personal channel.

Ddyno already services

gaming portals such as Xfire, the live video game broadcasting portal with more than a million views monthly. There are also commercial deals with five other major gaming portals as with Cisco-Web Ex to use Ddyno as a plugin for web conferences.

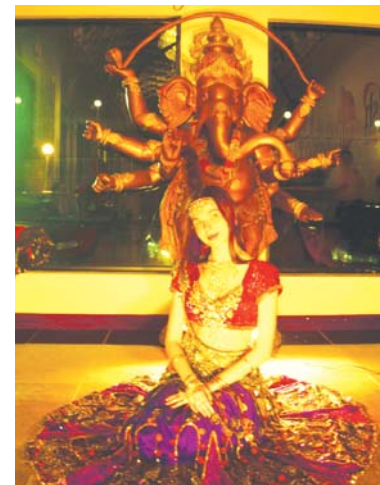
For Jaswa, the high comes from making this technology accessible to regular people — be it community groups or small business. Chinmaya Mission in India, for example, has used Ddyno for broadcasting the lectures of its gurus across the globe.

"To me, the biggest pleasure of Ddyno will be when ammas all over the world can watch their favorite gurus, when students can listen to professors at Stanford while sitting in a village in India," says Jaswa. "When that level of communication starts happening, and democratization of access starts happening, then I think we've done our job."

## Outsourcing bollywood dance

IS Bollywood entertainment getting outsourced? At a big Indian wedding there are the usual beaming uncles and aunts, lots of great Indian food, the latest Bollywood music. The dance floor clears and there's a bespangled dancer doing all the classic moves from Umrao Jaan as the appreciative crowd gathers around and claps.

The dancer is Russian and doesn't speak any Hindi! She is Inessa from Uzbekistan and is quite the star at Indian community events in New York, be it weddings, engagement parties or other celebrations. "In the former Soviet Union, Indian movies were so big I



Inessa, Bollywood dancer from Uzbekistan

watched them a lot. There were a lot of Raj Kapoor movies but the Disco Dancer was really popular!" she says. When she came to New York at the age of 15, she continued to watch Indian films. A ballet dancer, she pursued modern dance in college and took private lessons in Bollywood dancing on the side.

Here the story gets even more international — Inessa joined Dancing Princesses, a company specializing in dance performances for West Asian and Jewish celebrations, run by Ohr Sachar, whose roots are in the Indian Jewish community. The dancers bring a new zing to Bollywood dancing as they mix ballet, modern dance and belly dancing moves. Inessa, as the principal dancer, watches a lot of Bollywood movies, absorbing the choreography and the meaning of the lyrics for she lip-syncs. She certainly loves the homework and Bunty & Babli and Guru are her favorite movies.

Sachar points out that her dancers have been entertaining South Asians for 18 years and specialize in the preferences of Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani audiences. She says: "We're learning the differences as we go along! We bring the beauty of the culture; we're kind of like the ambassadors of happiness!"

## The secret world of art collectors

IF you can't own a piece of art by one of the masters of contemporary Indian art, perhaps you can settle for a copy of *Elite Collectors of Modern and Contemporary Art*, a limited edition of 2000 copies which sells for a hefty Rs 15,000 and is pretty hefty in size too. The book is by Purshottam Bhaggeria and Pavan Malhotra, who had earlier profiled the world of private clubs in India.

"We have now entered the elitist and esoteric private world of Collectors," says Malhotra. "This book salutes the pioneers and is a doorway into the mystical world of discerning collectors."

It's an exclusive peek into worlds which are generally very private, with images of Basant Kumar and Sarla Birla, in front of their art with Indira Gandhi, Lata Mangeskar and

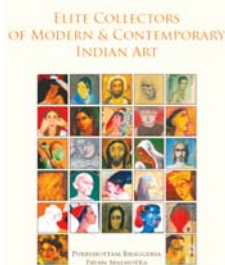
Amitabh Bachchan. There's one of the couple in front of their own portraits painted by Bikash Bhattacharjee, and even one of three generations of Birlas, son, grandson and great-grandson.

The book profiles 27 top-notch collectors and show-

cases many wonderful works from their collection. The collectors include Parmeshwar Godrej, Sangita Jindal, Malvinder Mohan Singh, Tina Ambani and the late Chester and Davida Herwitz. There is also Masanori Fukuoka, the Japanese food processing

tycoon whom the authors describe as a 'Virtual White Knight' for Indian art and who has over 5,000 works by major artists in his museum in Japan, the only one outside India to be devoted totally to Indian art.

Several US based collectors are also included such as Mahinder Tak, and Umesh and Sunanda Gaur, who have large collections of Indian contemporary art; Ravi and Virginia Akhoury who have an eclectic collection of which Ravi says, "The variety is stunning and I wanted to make sure people here in the US recognize the talent." Payal and Rajiv Jehangir Chaudhri, who also have a museum worthy collection, say: "Great art should ultimately belong to museums for the benefit of society at large. That's where our collection will end up."

Cover of *Elite Collectors of Modern and Contemporary Indian Art*

Ravi and Virginia Akhoury, collectors of Indian art

