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LEISURE LISTINGS

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The writer and his muse



■ Wolfram Fleischhauer was in Chennai recently to research his new book

as he calls it, is that of an interpreter for the European Union. He was in Chennai recently as part of his research for his next book that's partly set in India. He spoke to a small but interested audience at the Max Mueller Bhavan on Monday evening, on his books, his method of writing, his research and his new venture that will feature India and spirituality in big parts.

Armed with a slide presentation, lucid thought process and a story to tell – his own and the one in his book – Fleischhauer floored the handful of listeners with his search for documents to support his theory in his book *Die Purpurlinie* (*The Purple Line*), with his love for iconography and codes and with his immense knowledge on European history.

Spending most of the evening speaking of

how his book *Die Purpurlinie* came about, Fleischhauer laid bare his effort to recreate and slightly fictionalise a certain part of Henry IV's life. The intrigues, the passions, the heartbreaks and the lives of the royals in Europe – France and Italy especially.

His other passion is the tango. The dance form. Ask him about it and he'll tell you he first heard the music for it when he was at University and fell in love. And then went on to learn it. "There's a whole language in there," he says. "The whole sequence – every gesture, every turn – has something to say." And talks about his book on the tango. This book took him to Argentina. "There's a terrible past there – of dictatorship and autocracy. And I was ashamed to learn there was a German involvement in it. Perhaps my book was an effort to do

something about that," he says.

The story on tango is about a ballet dancer who falls in love with a tango dancer and the language of the tango becomes their means of survival in a time of fear and uncertainty. "I am passionate about the dance and I felt I had to do something about it, so the book," he says.

"I would love to have my books translated in English," he says. Which is why during the lecture, he left the end of the book hidden. "Who knows? Someday you might read it in English and if I tell you the end now, it would kill the surprise element," he says.

And while you are tempted to sit there and ask him about the craft of his art, the method of his intense research and his perseverance to find what he is looking for, you realise he is a born storyteller and there's no other explanation for what makes him as impressive as he is. So I end up asking him something simple and straightforward – why is love a common thread in his books? What he candidly says, encapsulates him – that there is no other way but love. "Nothing moves or changes people as much as love," he says.

– Sandhya G Menon

YOU must meet Wolfram Fleischhauer. Why? Because he has a world of things to tell you. As he has a beautiful story, a lovely tale to bewitch you with. Just one thing though – knowledge of German would help a whole lot.

Fleischhauer is a writer for pleasure and his "bread job"