

Virtual Session Of Sur Aur Saaz

Kolkata, 28th July, 2020:She has made us fall in love with the rhythm of the rain and the magic of the monsoon all over and over again. 'Ab ke savaan' is one song that has enchanted the old and the young with the same fervour.**Hindustani Classical Exponent and Padma Shri Recipient Shubha Mudgal** has redefined the rendition of the classical gharana to blend in the contemporary without distorting the archetype.Her repertoire is thumri, khayal and dadra but she belts out an Indipop number with equal passion and intensity. Attendees of the Kolkata chapter of **Sur Aur Saaz** got a double whammy, as in conversation with the doyen was another **Very Talented Popular Classical Diva, Singer Kaushiki Chakraborty**, daughter of Pt Ajoy Chakraborty.

Kaushiki could do little to contain her excitement on interviewing someone from the music fraternity she had always idolised. Shubhaji talked about her parents and her academician family who had encouraged her to follow her calling with equal respect and dedication. Though scholars, her parents had given her sibling and her adequate exposure to performing arts and literature. She spoke about the deep reverence for art that had been imbibed in her, with absolutely no performance pressure. Shubhaji revealed that it was actually her mother who had 'discovered' her calling and guided her to follow her passion.

The 'Guru shishya parampara' is an integral part of the tradition of classical music, stated the eminent virtuoso. 'A Guru is not just a teacher' she stated. The Guru customises his or teaching according to the disciple's competence and skill. She further elucidated that the guru is like the potter who moulds the soft clay to it's desired shape. Shubhaji shared that she too had experienced the same kind of relation with her revered gurus Ramashreya Jhaji, Vinay Chandra Maudgalya, Jitendra Abhisheki, Naina Devi and Kumar Gandharva. The ethos of 'Taleem' is transmitted from the guru to the shishya. She believes that though there is a shift in the training process the ethos has remained the same and digital media has definitely made a positive difference to the learning process.Selecting a particular gharana is very important for a student of music. Shubhaji explained that the 'gayiki' can be similar yet rendition different. She cited the examples of contemporarymusicians who have retained the foundation of their 'gharanas' and yet created new forms.

A true artiste is defined by his or her humility and Shubha Mudgal is the epitome of such breed of performers who do not measure their success by popularity but by appreciation only. On being asked about the many hats that she dons as a blogger, musician, music crusader, composer and now an author (Looking for Miss Sargam) she humbly replied that she is not doing anything extraordinary and there have been many before her. She mentions that music is more democratic nowadays and first generation musicians are is given the same welcome. 'Ticketed concerts' lend value to the craft and she feels truly blessed to have been bestowed with the gift of music in her life.

Reflecting on 'Nepotism' in the music arena she states that unless a person is really talented just backing will not help survive in the long run. Merit and talent go hand in hand in order to prosper. She defined 'Nepotism' as a human failing. Shubhaji spoke cheekily about how her

rich baritone was a misfit in mainstream cinema and was considered mostly for the tragic 'alaaps' or folk renditions. The singer grimaced over the current scenario within the music fraternity, referring to it as "lonely times for the musicians." The New Normal has introduced new formats but not all musicians stand to be technologically sound, hence there is inhibition. She explains that musicians need reassurance from the audience and their participation in paid concerts can help resolve that. The New platform she adds is not really meant for music and issue of durations need to be addressed. When questioned about the of women performers being less in the classical instrument domain she stressed that one should look at the enormous talent that is already there and not look into numbers. 'Crosspollination' of music may either result in some terrible outcome or result in masterpieces but this eclectic approach is very much needed. She shared her sadness over the closure of "Baajagaaja" a platform that provided talents and musicians with great impetus and opportunity.

The enthralling conversation left the attendees absolutely mesmerised and enraptured. A bedazzled Kaushiki rounded off the session with her thank you note.

About:

"**Sur aur Saaz**" is an initiative of **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** in association with **Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre - Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India**. The initiative is designed to showcase the diverse performing art and culture of India. Renowned artists from all over India have performed in this endeavor.

Due to the worldwide pandemic and lockdown we have transformed this initiative into a conversation session through Zoom / on line platforms.

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