

Press Release

Recent Virtual Session Of Sur Aur Saaz Featured Padma Bhusan, Carnatic Singer Bombay Jayashri Ramnath Indulging In A Conversation With Ace Vocalist Ms. Kaushiki Chakraborty

Kolkata, 22nd February, 2021: Prabha Khaitan Foundation hosted a hearty and delightful conversation between **Bombay Jayashri** and **Kaushiki Chakraborty**, as a part of their initiative named **Sur aur Saaz**. They were welcomed to the conversation by **Ehsaas Woman Shubh Singhvi**.

Bombay Jayashri has been one of the most sought-after Indian musicians for over three decades now. She has the rare privilege of being the first Carnatic classical performer in the Opera House in Durban and the Russian Opera House in Helsinki, Finland. Drawing from this exposure Jayashri has been collaborating extensively with Western classical music groups in creating what could truly be described as world music, which opens up new vistas of music appreciation. Truly, she is an artist who has boldly soared in her diverse musical experiments.

Kaushiki Chakraborty is an Indian classical vocalist, one of the exponents of Patiala gharana. Her repertoire covers Khyals and semi-classical Thumris.

The conversation started with Chakraborty asking Jayashri what the reference of Bombay in her name was even though she was born in Kolkata. Jayashri stated that in the Southern part of India there is a tradition of associating musicians with a place, to describe the personality of the music and the musician. In a review once she was referred to as 'Bombay Jayashri' and hence the name stuck.

She said that as a vocalist it is difficult for one to visualise the notes that they are harmonising on, thus it is important that every vocalist must have knowledge of playing an instrument which would help in grasping the notes better and thus in turn help in vocalising better. Her journey as a singer had changed when she started playing the Veena, it became a visual journey which aided her in harmonising the notes in songs. She advocates that every vocalist must learn to play an instrument that will help in internalising the notes.

Jayashri grew up in a house where there was music all throughout the day. Both her parents were music teachers and there were students coming since the start of the day. Her mornings started with somebody practicing music and her days would end in the same way. Her initial love for music started because of the music overflowing in her house. She then later learned from Balamani Amma, who was one of the finest poets of India. After moving to Chennai, she learnt from Lalgudi Jayaraman, who was a violinist, vocalist and a composer. Lalgudi Jayaraman impacted her the most and his teachings have been a part of her even after many years. She said that the person and vocalist that she is because of the teachings of all the Gurus that she had in her life. The gurus in her life introduced her to the rich diversity that India has and helped her in appreciating the different notes that each part carry.

She exclaimed that whatever she sung reflected her personality and the music she had heard while growing up. The sounds of nature, other people practising music and the teachings of one's gurus is what assimilates to be the personality of the music that one sings. The way she was taught also helped her in looking at music in an emotional and sensitive way, something that would impact others when they would listen to it.

According to Jayashri, there is always a difference in way of teaching music in each generation. The only constant thing in the continuity of music through the generations is that it is different and is ever changing. She said that she would never be able to match the standard of selflessness that her mother had in putting her children and students before herself. She said that whenever she shares music with a student and in whatever manner the student understands or visualises music has always ended in making her richer in terms of music and compositions. She stated that she was grateful that she has an offspring that understood music and wanted to be a part of the

tradition of learning and practicing music, however there is a conflict between being a mother and a teacher and knowing when what role is necessary and demands more importance. There are times when she feels burdened and scared by the responsibility of being a mother and a teacher, she thinks of her motto, 'Music will guide the way', which helps her in releasing some of the burden.

When talking about the collaborations and the work that she chooses, Jayashri said that it was not her that choose the work, she was lucky that it came her way. She said that sharing a space with a musician that was taught in a different manner and followed a different 'Gharana' and yet was beautiful as they could then create a space that co-existed for both of them in their minds and in the minds of the audience. The sharing of space with different musicians and learning from them was something that kept her keen and interested and made her collaborate with many musicians.

The conversation ended with Ehsaas Woman, **Vandana Singh** thanking Jayashri and Kaushiki for a musical conversation on the life that Jayashri has led.

About Sur Aur Saaz:

"**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 / online platforms.

About Prabha Khaitan Foundation:

Prabha Khaitan Foundation is a Kolkata based non- profit trust. The Foundation promotes culture and literature; performing arts and collaborates with various likeminded institutions and people committed to the spread of cultural, educational and social welfare initiatives all over India.

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