

Telegraph

THE DUET OF DREAMS

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PANDIT BIRJU MAHARAJ AND SIVAMANI GIFTED A MAGICAL DUET AT EMAMI CULTURAL FIESTA, IN ASSOCIATION WITH t2

Pata nahin kabse jura hun aur kabtak jura rahunga... aisa asha kartia hun ki chhutey nahin bandhan. (I don't know since when I got involved with dance... I wish this bond is never severed)." On an introspective note, Pandit Birju Maharaj began his performance for Emami Cultural Fiesta, in association with t2, at Kala Mandir last Thursday.

"Kathak is all about storytelling... rhythm is God. There is rhythm in everything, so there is God everywhere," said the 76-year-old kathak maestro, mesmerising the audience with his footwork and movements. From a man's journey through life to the flight of birds, the gestures of two lovers to



making a garland and sewing, Birju Maharaj wove magic at every step.

Sivamani took over and set off a sonic blast. When his elaborate drum set-up wasn't enough, he drummed up a beat on a suitcase, a jar and even a steel container.

Team Birju Maharaj — sons Deepak Maharaj and Jai Kishan Maharaj, cousins Krishna Mohan Maharaj and Ram Mohan Maharaj, and disciple Saswati Sen — presented various sets. When they took the stage, Birju Maharaj played the tabla, only to join them all at the end. Sivamani played on, creating a seamless fusion of pure classical and contemporary music.



Ustad Sabir Khan and Birju Maharaj on the tabla. Chandrachur Bhattacharya (sitar), Debasish Sarkar (vocal) and Umesh Mishra (sarangi) made up the support team



Drums to suitcase, Sivamani showed his artistry with just two sticks



(L-R) Pandit Birju Maharaj joins Deepak Maharaj, Jai Kishan Maharaj, Saswati Sen, Krishna Mohan Maharaj and Ram Mohan Maharaj for the finale



Governor M.K. Narayanan and wife Padmini with R.S. Agarwal



(L-R) R.S. Goenka, Rituparna Sengupta, Birju Maharaj and Sivamani. "It was mesmerising! It was great to watch two legends on stage. I have seen Birju Maharaj perform before but I watched Sivamani play for the first time. It was an enthralling performance, a masterpiece," said the Tolly actress



Sivamani touched Pandit Birju Maharaj's feet and got a hug in return

WHAT THEY LOVED...

It was one of the unique events of Calcutta. We are very fond of Pandit Birju Maharaj. He has performed many a time in our house. I am a huge fan of kathak and Birju Maharaj. I hope they (Birju Maharaj and Sivamani) do more collaborations like this. It was a fusion of classical and contemporary, very creative, inventive and innovative

— Madhu Neotia

It was an experience of a lifetime. It was a wonderful combination. It was so culturally rich!

— Indrani Halder

As a dancer and choreographer, Pandit Birju Maharaj is a huge inspiration. If we can even achieve 10 per cent of what he did... Sivamani was brilliant too

— Sukalyann Bhattacharya



"I can't express my feelings.... It was a divine experience. It seemed that Pandit Birju Maharaj has a deep connection with God. Same goes for Sivamani" — Mamata Shankar, who attended the show with husband Chandroday Ghosh



"Birju Maharaj is a living legend. And he performed with another legend (Sivamani). So I and I makes 11!" — Sanjay Budhia, with father H.P. Budhia by his side

Text: Ratnalekha Mazumdar
Pictures: Pabitra Das

The Birju Maharaj-Sivamani evening was special because... Tell t2@abp.in