

# 56TH ANNUAL CLASSICAL MUSIC CONFERENCE 2012

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



THE TIMES OF INDIA



A CONSUMER CONNECT INITIATIVE

## Building Bonds

*Bengal Shriram believes in being part of the socio-cultural development of a place in order to build strong ties with its people*



**What has been the nature of Bengal Shriram's partnership with Uttarpara Sangeet Chakra?**

Bengal Shriram has been associated with Uttarpara Sangeet Chakra for the last three years as the principal sponsor i.e. since the inception of its township project in Uttarpara. In these years, the relationship has grown beyond a sponsor and we feel like part of the Sangeet Chakra Family.

**What has been the driving force for this association?**

Uttarpara Sangeet Chakra has been catering to the development of classical music in eastern India for a really long time. It has been a great pride for us to get a chance to be associated with this programme.

**How important is it for Bengal Shriram to be part of the socio-cultural development in the state?**

The Shriram group has always been part of the promotion of various social and cultural activities in different parts of the country. Socio-cultural development is one of the key objectives of any corporate. As a real estate developer, we cater to the long-term need of the people and our relationship with them is for a much longer term. This requires mutual faith amongst people, and partnering with them for the socio-cultural development of the area is a great idea to fulfil this objective. Bengal Shriram also plans to develop social infrastructure like schools, hospitals, etc in the project for the upliftment of the area.

**Is there any other such cultural programmes that Bengal Shriram is associated with?**

Yes, last year we organised Art Mela. We were also associated with other CSR activities. Notably among them was the Journalist Award in recent times.

**What made you choose Uttarpara for one of your premier projects, Sonar Bangla and what are your immediate plans here?**

Uttarpara has historically been the cultural hub of West Bengal. The town has a dense population of people from various social-economic backgrounds. However, this place lacks adequate infrastructure. As such, it has presented us with an excellent opportunity to develop a successful business model in the form of an integrated township and become part of the development of the place at the same time. We are awaiting the final clearances and expect to launch the project at the earliest.

Debashish Som, CEO, Bengal Shriram  
Hi Tech City private Limited

*The 56th Annual Music Classical Conference, the confluence of the biggest stars from the galaxy of music and dance, created memories of a lifetime for those present at this gala event*



**M**usic heals, music inspires and it is music that elevates the soul. Those who attended the Annual Music Conference at Uttarpara gained memories of a lifetime. Uttarpara Sangeet Chakra along with Bengal Shriram and in association with *The Times of India* organised the prestigious 56th Annual Music Classical Conference from January 22 to 25, 2012 at the Jaykrishna Library premises in Uttarpara. Uttarpara Sangeet Chakra, situated at the serene locale on the bank of river Ganges is one of the leading organisations truly affianced in propagating Indian classical music & dance for more than five decades.

Originally a three-day fiesta, the conference this time around added an extra inaugural day to mark the sesquicentennial birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore. The four-day classical extravaganza drew hundreds and thousands of music loving people. After hosting 55 colourful conferences of classical music and dance since its inception, Sangeet Chakra along with Bengal Shriram gifted the 56th Classical Conference.

With a line-up boasting of virtuosos like Mohan Singh Khangura, Rahul Sharma, Pandit Sanjeev Abhyankar, Swagatalakshmi Dasgupta, Ronu Majumdar, Ustad Shahid Pervez, Mom Ganguly, Pandit Venkatesh Kumar and Kaushiki Desikan, the four-day extravaganza struck all the right chords with the audience. The event was also graced by stalwarts from various fields.

The inaugural session began with the garlanding of a Tagore portrait on the podium. BK Chandra, the chief patron of Uttarpara Sangeet Chakra, launched the souvenir before moving on to speak about the amazing association that he has with the organisation. Other patrons such as Kalyan Bandopadhyay, MP Serampore and Samir Goswami, chief PRO, Eastern Railway also lauded the works of Uttarpara Sangeet Chakra and pledged support to their future ventures. "I feel honoured to be part of such an esteemed organisation. I will always try to be part of such an event," said Goswami. Kamal Kumar Mullick, associated with Uttarpara Sangeet Chakra for 20 years and former VP of the club lauded this year's effort and wished the event success in years to come. After the speeches, it was time for some spellbinding music.

First up was eminent vocalist Soumak Chattopadhyay, along with *tabla* maestro Biplab Mondol, *esraj* exponent Surajit Ray

# Magical Music

and keyboard player Subrata Mukherjee. His rendition of *raga* Kedar, *sandhyarag* and *taranas* with the perfect amalgamation of Rabindra Sangeet gave a fitting start to the programme. Thereafter, Mohan Singh Khangura came up to the stage. His soulful renditions of Rabindra Sangeet enthralled the audience.

Next up was a Rabindraalekhyia *Goponocharini*, a tribute to the bard by a star ensemble featuring Satyam Roychoudhuri, Promita mallick, Shaheb Chattopadhyay, Mou Roychoudhuri and Aishwarya Basu. Ranjan Bandopadhyay penned the script and Ramaditya Roy directed the song and elocution saga. "It is a unique production and we are proud to present it here in Uttarpara," said an elated Satyam Roy Chowdhury, MD Techno India. The last performer for the day, Swagatalakshmi Dasgupta started the night with the brilliant rendition of *Matri Bandana* and then went on to sing some popular Rabindra Sangeet.

The second day of the fest was dedicated to the legendary flute player Pannalal Ghosh's birth centenary. "We have tried to include one flute player each day to pay homage to the legend," said Anish Mukherjee, joint-secretary of Uttarpara Sangeet Chakra.

The first performer for the day was vocalist Kaushik Bhattacharya. Accompanied by Subhen Chatterjee on *tabla*, he mesmerised the audience first with the evening-*raga* Bhimpalasi, and then with *raga* Kirwani.

After his performance came flautist Ronu Majumdar's turn to captivate the audience, with Pradyut Mukherjee on *tabla*. Pandit Venkatesh Kumar of the

Gwalior *gharana* was the next performer, who with his magical voice bewitched everyone present in the hall. The last performer for the day was *sarod* player Sufi Aashish Khan accompanied by Subhankar Banerjee. He chose *raga* Lalita-Gouri to start his performance, named after the manifestations of the Divine Mother or Shakti. "Playing for Uttarpara Sangeet Chakra is like an *utsav* for me," said the man before playing *raga* Bageshri, which marked the end of the second day.

The penultimate day of the fest began with Sovan Chatterjee, the mayor of Kolkata, noted artist Ganesh Halo and Indranil Chatterjee, manager, marketing and sales, Bengal Shriram Group addressing the audience and stretching their arms to support Uttarpara Sangeet Chakra. "It feels really great to see such a cultural organisation which is doing so much to foster classical music," said an elated mayor: Indranil Chatterjee praised the organisers for staging such a spectacle. "Bengal Shriram is really proud to be associated with such an event," he said.

Capt Azizul Islam was the first performer for the day. He gifted the audience a beautiful piece based on *raga* Sindhura, ably accompanied by Samar Saha on *tabla*. Like every year, this year too the organisers brought fresh talents to the limelight. And among those talented performers was the next performer for the day, vocalist Darshana Dutta. She showed her prowess in the gamut of *tarana*, *tappa*, *bhajans*. "She is going to be one of the greats of Indian classical music," said educationist Dr Biman Mukherjee, who was also the compere for the event along with Joydip and Laily Mukherjee.

The last performer of the day was the crowd favourite *santoor*-player Rahul Sharma. The handsome maven had Subhankar Banerjee on *tabla*, which was enough to create magic. "My father has always spoken about the piousness of this stage and the warmth of the people of Uttarpara. It feels great to play here," he said. "I wish I could come here every year. It's amazing," he added with a smile.

The last day was a whole-night-gala of music and dances consisting of seven brilliant performances. The first performance for the night was a unique amalgamation of *sarod*, *tabla* and a virgin instrument in the classical arena—*srikhol*. The trioka consisted of Dr Avijit Ghosh in *sarod*, Partha Pratim Das in *tabla* and Harekrishna Halder in the *srikhol*. "This is the first time ever that *srikhol* has been used in a classical concert. We are really proud that we could present it on the auspicious stage of Uttarpara" said Dr Abhijit Ghosh.

Danceuse Mom Ganguly was the next performer to take stage for the night. An exponent of the Mohiniattayam dance form, she gave a glittering performance which was aided by Bharati Shivraj, Rajagopalan and Rohit Prasanna and a host of talented musicians.

Next up was vocal-sensation Sanjeev Abhyankar, who with his rendition of *raga* Jog set the tone for the rest of the evening. Every member of the crowd burst into applause when he, in his inimitable style presented *raga* Chandrakosh. "The high point for the evening was when he sang the *bhajan* based on Komal Bhopali. It was marvellous," said Ranjan Sengupta, an organiser of the event.

All other performers for the day delivered their best to win a place in the hearts of the audience. Flautist Rupak Kulkarni with his pieces in *Rupak taal*, vocalist Anjana Kushari with *raga* Malkosh, and Ustad Shahid Parvez with *raga* Bageshri on his *sitar*, charmed the audience throughout the night.

Coinciding with the sunrise, the last performer for the 56th Annual Conference, Kaushiki Desikan, rose to the stage. The elegant vocalist adorned her performance with two quintessential morning *ragas*, Bilaskhani Todi and Bhairavi. "It was like a dream to listen to her," said octogenarian Gurudas Chatterjee.

After the charismatic performance, the organisers thanked everyone for their support and promised that they would be back next year with a bigger and better carnival of music.

## Revered Voices

*Stalwarts from the world of classical music feel honoured to be part of Uttarpara Sangeet Chakra*



Uttarpara Sangeet Chakra is one of those events that I look forward to. So performing here is something really close to my heart. I am really proud to be a part of a magnificent phenomenon like the Sangeet Chakra classical music conference that is going on for 56 long years.

Pandit Venkatesh Kumar



The venue of the show, on the bank of river Ganga and the quality of the audience makes the event all the more special. And I believe that along with sponsors like Bengal Shriram and others, Sangeet Chakra can achieve the impossible.

Pandit Rahul Sharma



I have performed at almost all the major classical music conferences worldwide, but performing at the Sangeet Chakra confer-

ence has been extremely special to me. I think that it is our duty as a member of the classical music sorority to come and support the ardent effort of this cultural body and help it grow bigger and better in the coming years.

Pandit Ronu Majumdar



Uttarpara Sangeet Chakra has already reached the half-a-century mark and I wish that they continue with their good work and enrich the world of classical music. Now with the involvement of sponsors like Bengal Shriram and others, the entire event has got a touch of professionalism mixed with traditionalism, right from the decor to artist-management.

Dr Avijit Ghosh



Uttarpara Sangeet Chakra Classical Music Conference for me is one of the most prestigious events in the classical music calendar. It is a privilege on my part to come here and perform at the

prestigious stage which has even served as a launch-pad for many maestros.

Pandit Sanjeev Abhyankar



Throughout the years of my association with them I have witnessed the amount of effort and dedication that the organisers put in to organise a classical-fest like this. I have played here several times and each time I felt the purity and honesty of the people out here.

Ustad Shahid Pervez Khan



Other than the show, what Uttarpara Sangeet Chakra has been doing to promote and propagate Indian classical music is really laudable. I wish them all the best for all their future endeavours.

Saheb Chattopadhyay

— All text by Sourav Samadder  
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