

Mahindra Kabira 2021 opens with a musical extravaganza on the historic ghats of Varanasi

“Bringing back the concept of inclusivity, the Kabir way”

- *Khayal and semi-classical performance by Pandit Anoop Misra, and Kahat Kabir with Anirudh Varma Collective left the audience in awe, wanting for more*
- *On 27th and 28th November, there will be a plethora of classical and folk music, talks, live art demonstrations, the characteristic Kabira boat-rides, and a delectable local food journey.*

The fifth edition of the **Mahindra Kabira Festival** started with a musical medley on the 26th of November 2021 at the Guleria Kothi ghat in Varanasi. The opening evening was a soothing and ethereal experience in the calm within the chaos of the world’s oldest city.

A key part of the Mahindra Group's Cultural Outreach programs and produced by Teamwork Arts, the much-loved Festival hosted a gala reception to kickstart a magnificent ode to Kabir way against the backdrop of the majestic Ganges lit up with the glow of countless floating candles. The evening featured breathtaking performances by **Pandit Anoop Mishra** and the **Anirudh Varma Collective**.

Opening the evening, Pandit Anoop Misra performed *Khayal* and some magnificent classical performances. He conveyed his gratitude to the Festival for bringing live performances back to the ghats of Varanasi. He said, *“In these difficult times for the country and especially the artist community, Mahindra Kabira has brought back confidence and hope to artists.”* Mishra also remembered his uncle, renowned Hindustani classical vocalist, the Late Pandit Rajan Mishra, the great maestro of the Benares Gharana, who performed at the previous edition of the Festival and passed away during the 2nd wave of the COVID pandemic. *“The music, especially of Kabir, will help everyone in the present time of the pandemic and help ease the pain with its message,”* he added.

Anirudh Varma expressed his deep feeling of reverence for Kabir. He said, *“Kabir is love and love unites everyone including a diverse group of artists and musicians.”* The Anirudh Varma Collective, in its contemporary representation of Hindustani classical music, performed a unique rendition of *Naiharwa, Ghat Mai Panchi Bolta, Kaun Thagwa, Ram Nirajan Aaya Re* and *Udd Jayega Hans Akela*.

The performances revealed how this year, more than ever before, the world needs to come together to remember that the universe is infinite and the very existence of humanity has a

larger goal. Never before have Kabir's ideals of empathy, kindness, simplicity, equality and inclusiveness held more meaning than now and the first day of Mahindra Kabira 2021 was an affirmation of all these.

Sharing his thoughts on the opening evening **Jay Shah, Vice President, Head – Cultural Outreach, Mahindra Group** said, *“The Mahindra Group is elated to bring back the much loved Mahindra Kabira Festival back this year. Varanasi has been the rightful perch of this soulful event from its inception and we hope this auspicious beginning heralds better times for all of us. Attendees can look forward to two days of top notch programming in a controlled and safe environment. Our online attendees will also be able to view live streaming of the entire festival.”*

On the spectacular opening of the festival, **Sanjoy K. Roy, Managing Director, Teamwork Arts** said, *“As the world faces some of the greatest challenges it has ever known, it is time again to pause on the banks of the sacred Ganga at the timeless city of Varanasi. Join us in a celebration of life!”*

Mahindra Kabira Festival is committed to minimising our carbon footprint. As a 'Zero-Waste' event, the Festival has phased out single-use plastics and switched to reusable and compostable materials as much as possible. With sustainability partner Skrap, the Festival has implemented comprehensive waste management at all venues over the last few editions to divert over 90% of waste away from landfills. The Festival has also done away with the use of paper by making 90% of printing collaterals & all Festival material digital (i.e. letters, brochures, flyers and all other information-related material).

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About Mahindra:

Founded in 1945, the Mahindra Group is one of the largest and most admired multinational federation of companies with 260,000 employees in over 100 countries. It enjoys a leadership

position in farm equipment, utility vehicles, information technology and financial services in India and is the world's largest tractor company by volume. It has a strong presence in renewable energy, agriculture, logistics, hospitality and real estate.

The Mahindra Group has a clear focus on leading ESG globally, enabling rural prosperity and enhancing urban living, with a goal to drive positive change in the lives of communities and stakeholders to enable them to Rise.

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About Teamwork Arts:

For over 30 years, Teamwork Arts has taken India to the world and brought the world to India, presenting the finest of Indian performers, writers and visual artists in the cultural and art space in India and abroad.

Every year, we produce over 25 performing, visual arts and literary festivals in several countries including Australia, Egypt, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Italy, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, the UK and the USA as well as many eclectic festivals across India. We produce the world's largest literary gathering: the annual Jaipur Literature Festival; JLF international now travels to the US, UK, Canada, Qatar and Australia and we have recently launched several digital series - JLF Brave New World, JLF First Edition, JLF Voices of Faith and JLF WORDS ARE BRIDGES. Our musical extravaganza, Bollywood Love Story - A Musical, continues to tour the world with sold-out shows everywhere it is held.

More information at: www.teamworkarts.com