

The 5th edition of Mahindra Kabira Festival ends with hope & optimism

After two days of celebrating Kabir and his teachings through a wide range of performances, the Mahindra Kabira Festival 2021 ended on an exuberant note. The concluding day explored the glorious simplicity of Kabir's philosophy through mystic melodies and music. The performances showcased the coexistence of art and spirituality.

Sharing his thoughts on the Festival, **Jay Shah, Vice President, Head – Cultural Outreach, Mahindra Group** said, *"The Mahindra Group is proud to be able to revive the Mahindra Kabira Festival and give artists and audiences a chance to interact again in a physical setting. This joy and a sense of relief was palpable throughout the course of the Festival and we are happy to once again be the frontrunners of such a revival. We hope to continue to bring moments filled with bliss and reflection as we plan for the future."*

Sanjoy K. Roy, Managing Director, Teamwork Arts said, *"As we bade adieu to Varanasi at the end of yet another immersive Mahindra Kabira experience in 2019, who would have known that the world as we knew it would change forever? Old paradigms have given way to new avenues of renewed energy in the face of all odds. What has remained constant is the ability of human beings to adapt and move forward as reflected by Kabir's philosophy."*

Opening the Morning Music, Varanasi-based classical vocalist and teacher **Prateek Narsimha** presented devotional bhajans of Kabir about Kabir's wisdom, namely: *Nar Te Kya Puraan Padh Keenha* and *Maaya Maha Thageenee Ham Jaanee*. His performance also included *Raag Nut Bhairav* and *Drut Khayal*. This breathtaking performance was followed by some vibrant numbers by **The Aahvaan Project**. The artists created conversations around Kabir promoting the philosophy of love, humanity and kindness through stories of everyday lives based on Kabir's words. **Vedi Sinha** of Aahvaan Project said, *"The reason I sing is so that I can share stories with others through my music. 'Kabir, Tum Kahan Ho' is a conversation that a little girl is having with elders around her. In the conversation, the girl is trying to ask the elders about love, and why we are unable to find it in our everyday lives."* Speaking on Kabir, Sinha said, *"Be it whichever time or era in any society, the philosophy of Kabir always resonates as it is a universal philosophy."*

In the afternoon session, musician, storyteller and author **Raman Iyer** presented his reflections on a few verses of Kabir to understand work-life balance. Alongside **Anjali Singh Padiyar** and **Labansh Bhardwaj** from the Delhi-based band **Mantash**. Iyer used stories and &

songs to discuss modern-day work pressure. He said, *"Kabir's verses helped me in finding answers to many questions like: How to give 100% without over-working? How do we differentiate dedication from a workaholic lifestyle? What's the difference between ambition and greed?"* They also paid a tribute to the late musician Valentine Shipley by performing a medley composed by him.

In the following session, **Tarannum Se Kabir, Askari Naqvi** showcased a unique style of musical rendition. 'Kabir in Tarannum' (Tarannum means composition) was a mixed bag of the well-known poems of Kabir and some rarely performed musical pieces. *"Kabir is free of everything and did not believe in any structure. My singing style of Kabir's words is also without any structure and absolutely free-flowing."* Naqvi said. Starting his performance with Kabir's *doha*, *Pinjar Prem Prakasiya*, Naqvi included *Dhuns* and *Ragas* belonging to Varanasi that explained what Kabir thought of Ram, life and death, love and knowledge.

Evening sessions commenced with **Niranjali by DPS Varanasi Choir**. A musical performance by school children from all age-groups was presented in the form of a medley of the original *dohas* of Kabir. **Mukesh Shelar, Principal, DPS Varanasi** said, *"The name Niranjali for the session was chosen because its suits the philosophy of Kabir. Our teachers and students chose such dohas of Kabir which have not been available to the audience. The choir composition is totally self-composed and we have chosen various styles for it. The performance included traditional dohas of Kabir, fusion and Sufi style music."*

As the glorious sun set into the Ganga, the Festival moved towards the Evening Music programme with musical pieces showcasing songs from *'Kabira Khada Bazaar Mein'*, a masterpiece by **M.K. Raina** and a modern reinterpretation of Kabir's poetry. Sharing his thoughts on the session, Raina said, *"To present the music of the play Kabira Khada Bazar Mein in a new form is a matter of pride for all of us in the city of Kabir, that too on the banks of the Ganges. These verses of Kabir, which Kabir wrote in the 14th century, are still alive and meaningful and give us solace. It was presented in a new form of Dastangoi. It was very difficult to do this play in a new way. We worked on it morning and evening for one month. We have paid full attention in our performance so that Kabir's dohas do not get suppressed and have tried to bring them alive."* Commenting on the musical piece, **Arainanirban Ghosh of art-rock project Dastaan Live** said, *"The Mahindra Kabira Festival held immense importance with regard to the celebration and reinterpretation of the works of Kabir. The performance concentrated on few of the songs from the act by M K Raina and was delivered it in a modern and contemporary way. The few songs that were chosen for the evening were*

Sadhu Dekho Re Jab Maurana; Jab Bhula Re Bhaj; Naam Hai Dharmi Adharmi; Moko Kaha Dhunde Re Bande; Humar Ram Raheem Kareema.”

The grand finale of the Festival was a performance by Hindustani classical vocalist **Kalapini Komkali**. Performing in style of Zikr, she introduced the audience to how the people of Malwa view and love Kabir. She performed *Kaun Thagwa Nagariya Lutal Ho*, and *Sunta Hai Guru Gyani*, two of Kabir’s very famous *bhajans*. Komkali said, “*I am very thankful to the Festival for inviting and giving me this opportunity and what can be better than sitting in front of Ganga Ma and sing and listen to Kabir.*”

With a song in its heart, the 5th edition of Mahindra Kabira Festival concluded with performances and memories to be cherished. The Festival bade us adieu, promising to return to the ancient city of Varanasi with its next edition and bring Kabir even closer.

For media queries, please contact:

Teamwork Arts

Manash Pratim Dekka: manash@teamworkarts.com

Zimisha Communications

Imitaz Alam: imtiaz@zimisha.com / 9810227818

Santosh Kumar: santosh@zimisha.com / 9990937676

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.

Learn more about Mahindra on www.mahindra.com / Twitter and Facebook: @MahindraRise/ For updates subscribe to <https://www.mahindra.com/news-room>

About Teamwork Arts:

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