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MUSIC

KCC CELEBRATED THE GENIUS OF MYSTIC SUFI POET AMIR KHUSRAU WITH AN IMMERSIVE DASTANGOI



Ajitesh Gupta and Mohit Agarwal lead *Jo Dooba So Paar* performed at GD Birla Sabhagar

On World Music Day, Kolkata Centre for Creativity paid tribute to 13th-century Sufi poet, scholar and musician Amir Khusrau with an enchanting *dastangoi* titled *Jo Dooba So Paar—A Mystical Musical Journey*. The GD Birla Sabhagar came alive with the traditional form of storytelling, and the audience joined in to remember and celebrate Khusrau and his Sufi mysticism.

Produced by actor Manav

Kaul, *Jo Dooba So Paar* is written and directed by Ajitesh Gupta, a classically trained singer and seasoned theatre actor from Mumbai. With over a decade of theatre experience, Ajitesh has worked with some of India's most acclaimed directors including Gulzar, Arul Kumar, and Manav Kaul, and he led the production with his powerful voice and presence. Joining him was co-director Mohit Agarwal, a Sangeet Visharad and accomplished theatre artiste whose musical prowess and

emotional depth added a resonant dimension to the show. With years of experience in the Mumbai theatre scene and collaborations with directors like Sunil Shanbag and Danish Hussain, Mohit brought both versatility and soul to this musical odyssey. With an ensemble cast of vocalists and musicians that included Mrunmay Chavan, Rattan Deep Singh, Manasi Bhawalkar, Abhishek Srivastava, Shalaka Redkar, Amita Ghugari, Sonakshi Singh, Ridved Singh, Snigdha Plous, Viraj Chavan and Ashish

Mishra, the production was a feast for the eyes, ears and the soul. *Jo Dooba So Paar* sheds light on the human side of the Sufi poet, his deep and spiritual relationship with Nizamuddin Auliya, and the advent of Qawwali through their sacred bond. Dotted with interesting anecdotes and tales woven in a traditional *daastan*, and accompanied by live Qawwali singing, the production offered a profound insight into the essence of Sufism and highlighted the eternally relevant message of love

among humankind. Immortal compositions of Khusrau like *Chaap tlaak* and *Aaj rang hai*, among others, and original compositions by Mohit Agarwal, who also served as music director of the show, sent the audience into a trance. The combined symphony of tabla, *dholak*, harmonium and tambourine added a very different flavour to *dastangoi*. True to the *dastangoi* tradition, the production had humour and wit, never once forgetting to provide depth to their respective roles. What made the experience worthwhile was the explanation that the artistes provided of profound Urdu poetry, making it an unforgettable evening. The folks at the backstage deserve credit for adding drama and theatrical visual effects with an excellent play of lights on a simple stage setting. It only aided in elevating the performance of the artistes on the stage.

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Pictures: KCC