To the beats of janggu

The contrasting musical cultures of India and Korea were on display at this multi-genre performance.

:: CHITRADEEP A NANTHARAM

On a Monday evening at Bharata Kalakshetra Auditorium, the beats from the traditional Korean drum, janggu, set the mood for what was to follow. A concert series titled Same Same But Different, conceived and produced by the Korean music group, Noseum NohChil since 2013, to introduce its international collaborations with artists across the world, was underway.

In this edition, which premiered in Chennai, they worked in tandem with renowned contemporary dancer and choreographer Astad Deboo, and Trayam, an ensemble of three Indian musicians, featuring percussionist BC Manjunath, singer and multi-instrumentalist Varjilakkere Venugopal and percussionist and composer Praveen D Rao.

The concert began with the percussionist-trio of Noseum NohChil, playing the traditional drum, janggu (shaped like an hourglass), which is emblematic of Korean music. Led by Ju Hong Kim, artistic director of Noseum NohChil, the percussionists impressed the audience with their dynamic beats.

Trayam, then presented a musical performance – a battle of rhythm and melody, dominated by konnakol by Manjunath and Carnatic vocals by Varjilakkere. Speaking of the collaboration, Praveen said, “We understood what is different, and what is similar between Indian and Korean music. The two traditions are like two banks of a river, that never meet, but this musical experiment has made even that possible.”

Blending the rhythm of the tabla with the ritualistic musical instrument piri (a double reed musical instrument, a type of cylindrical oboe) was the greatest challenge,” Pra- veen said.

Seventy-two-year-old Astad Deboo made a poetic entry, when Trayam was performing. His introspective, minimalist choreography for the rendition of ‘Om Pur-namadha Puranam’ rendered a trance-like quality. The concert was divided into eight segments. The most anticipated moment was when the entire team of Korean and Indian musicians joined Deboo on stage. A seamless marriage of kayakum and flute, culminated the evening on a high note.
An Indo-Korean performance leaves city folk mesmerised

By - TNN | Updated: Feb 24, 2020, 10:12 IST

Titled ‘Same Same But Different’, the exciting collaboration brought together Noreum Machi, a Korean percussionist group, Indian dancer Astad Deboo, an ensemble of three Indian musicians, Tarayam, percussionist BC Manjunath, singer and flautist Varjashree Venugopal and percussionist, composer and music director, Praveen D Rao.

Music and dance connoisseurs were in for a treat as an enviable list of artists from India and Korea came together to put up an electrifying performance at Shilpakala Vedika recently.

Those in attendance, including guest of honour, HE Joel Reifman, US Consul General, Hyderabad, were pleasantly surprised by how the different strands and styles still managed to complement each other and converge well. The artists performed here as part of a four city tour.
Same same but different

DECCAN CHRONICLE | JAYWANT NAIDU
Published Feb 21, 2020, 12:57 am IST
Updated Feb 21, 2020, 12:57 am IST

This was followed by ‘konnakol’ rhythms by Praveen Rao, Varijashree Venugopal and Manjunath.

Shilpakala Vedika in Hyderabad presented “Same Same But Different”, an out-of-the-box Indo–Korean collaboration between dance and music.

The programme started with a traditional Korean percussion ensemble followed by a musical composition sung by Varijashree Venugopal, supported by Praveen Rao on the harmonium and Manjunath on mridangam. As the vocalist started singing an invocation for peace in Sanskrit language, with musical support from the instrumental accompanists, internationally acclaimed contemporary dancer Astad Deboo made an entry bringing in ‘expressions’ and ‘mudras’, which connected the ‘inner world’ of humanity with the outside existence.

This was followed ‘konnakol’ rhythms by Praveen Rao, Varijashree Venugopal and Manjunath. After a brief performance on the ‘pin’i, a musical instrument by Gyeongsik Kim, and then on the ‘gayageum’, musical instrument by Oh Hyeyeong, all performers including percussionists Howan Lee and Ju Hyun created a beautiful musical ensemble for a grand finale of dervish-like dance movements by Astad Deboo. It was a beautiful melange of world culture, well appreciated by the mix of senior art connoisseurs and young audience.

Ju Hong Kim, artistic director of this production, spoke about promoting ‘freedom and peace’ by combining traditional music with contemporary dance movements.
LETTING ART SPEAK: Contemporary dancer & choreographer Astad Deboo performs along with Trayam, an ensemble of three Indian musicians — percussionist B C Manjunath, singer-flautist Varjashree Venugopal and percussionist, composer and music director Praveen D Rao — at the Kalakshetra campus on Monday. The "Same Same But Different" event, produced by Korean New Wave Music Group Koreum Wachi, was organised by InKo Centre with The Korean Foundation, Arts Council Korea and Kalakshetra Foundation.
Across cultures

February 17 | Thiruvananthapuram

Created to collaborate with international artistes across the globe, the acclaimed concert series *Same Same But Different* comes to the city. Produced by Korean music group Noreum Machi, this edition of *SSBD* will feature renowned dancer-choreographer Astad Deboo and Trayam, an ensemble featuring musicians BC Manjunath, Varijashree Venugopal and Praveen D Rao. Entry free. 7 pm at Bharata Kalakshetra Auditorium. Details: 2436-1224.
THE HINDU

SOCIETY > HISTORY & CULTURE

SAME SAME BUT DIFFERENT WAS A CONFLUENCE KOREAN AND INDIAN MUSIC TRADITIONS

HISTORY & CULTURE

To the beats of janggu

Chitradeep Anatharam
FEBRUARY 18, 2020 15:17 IST
UPDATED: FEBRUARY 18, 2020 15:17 IST

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Speaking of the collaboration, Praveen said, "We understood what is different and what is similar between Indian and Korean music. The two traditions are like two banks of a river, that never meet, but this musical experiment has made even that possible. Blending the rhythm of the tabla with the ritualistic musical instrument piri (a double-reed musical instrument, a type of cylindrical oboe) was the greatest challenge," Praveen said.

Seventy-two-year-old Astad Deboo made a poetic entry, when Trayam was performing. His introspective, minimalistic choreography for the rendition of ‘Om Purnamadah Purnamidam’ rendered a trance-like quality. The concert was divided into eight segments. The most anticipated moment was when the entire team of Korean and Indian musicians joined Deboo on stage. A seamless marriage of kayagum and flute, culminated the evening on a high note.

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'Same same but different' - the phrase is not the most original, having been used variously as Thailand's tourist catchphrase, a film title for a German love story, and even featuring in the lyrics of a song from Bollywood flick Bombay To Bangkok.

Now it pops up again, and fittingly so, as the title of a unique Indo-Korean collaboration that brings together and showcases music and dance traditions from both countries.

Same Same But Different (SSBD) is a concert series produced by Korean New Wave Music Group Noreum Machi since 2013, to introduce its international collaborations with artistes around the globe.

This concert features world-renowned Contemporary dancer and choreographer Astad Deboo, a pioneer of modern dance in India and Trayam, an ensemble of three critically acclaimed Indian musicians featuring percussionist BC Manjunath, singer and flutist Vairishree Venugopal and percussionist, composer and music director, Praveen D. Rao.
Together with Noreum Machi, these artistes perform in harmony to present an experimental and eclectic soundscape that merges traditional Korean sounds with Classical Indian music, complemented with the stillness and flow of contemporary dance.

In its fifth iteration, SSBD makes its exciting Indian debut across four cities - Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Mumbai. It is an exciting time for the legendary Deboo as well, who tells FPJ about his involvement with SSBD. "In 2015 I was in Korea working with a Korean theatre director on Hamlet.

Then when the concept for SSBD came about in 2017, the Indo-Korean cultural centre in Chennai, Director Rati Jaffer asked me if I would be interested in working on this project."

Deboo met with the head of the group, Noreum Machi and even suggested the work of his drummers. While that didn't work out, as they already had another Indian musician in mind, Deboo himself was warmly invited on board as a solo artist.

How challenging was it, creating this Indo-Korean fusion? He's quick to point out, "Just because two cultures have come together, it doesn't become fusion.

The word fusion has become passe. The terminality is music, with dances added on. Collaboration does come with its share of teething problems and grey areas which need to be sorted out. It is part of the process, and looking at the response, I think it has worked very well."

Deboo is involved in three specific musical compositions. The first one is about Surrender – about surrendering to the Almighty – performed with the Carnatic musicians; something he is fairly familiar with.

The second piece, he informs, was more of a challenge: "It is a work that I chose to create and it wasn't part of the original picture by the head of Noreum Machi. In Seoul I
added another flute instrument, and I had to explain to them what I was looking for from their sound."

This piece embodies the present situation of depression, the tumultuous political scene. "These are just thoughts; you don’t really see them when I perform but you can feel the feeling of what I am expressing with the help of the music which is being played."

The last piece has all the musicians uniting to play an entire ensemble. "The theme is about coming together," he smiles. Indeed something we need more of, the world over.

InKo Centre, The Korea Foundation, Arts Council Korea, Royal Opera House, Mumbai and Avid Learning presented Same Same But Different on February 21, 2020

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Korean artistes of Noreum Machi on the inspiration behind their ‘Same Same But Different’ series

“Oh! You are from The Hindu paper; I have seen it,” beams Ju-Hong Kim, the artistic director-percussionist-vocalist of Korean group Noreum Machi. His group’s first visit to Hyderabad was for the ‘Same Same But Different season 5 series’ (The concert was held at Shilpakala Vedika recently). Besides Noreum’s artistes, Howon Lee and Hyun-ju Oh (traditional percussionists and performers), Gyeongsik Kim (saenghwang and piri player), Hyeyeong Oh (gayageum player), the Indian artistes included dancer Astad Deboo, percussionist B C Manjunath, singer and flautist Varijashree Venugopal and percussionist, music director and composer Praveen D Rao. Korean artistes played percussion instrument like samaluri, and wind instruments like piri and saenghwang. They also introduced to the audience gayageum, a string and classical instrument.
The group Noreum Machi (referring a ‘skilled performer that no one would dare to follow on stage’) was formed in ’93 and became popular for its elements of music and dance. In the five-member team, four sing and play percussion and Ju Hong plays the traditional folk instrument — an hour glass shaped drum called janggu. With more than 20-year experience, the team has been part of various projects, competitions and festivals. “The members have been to different countries to collaborate and perform with other musicians,” shares Ju-Hong adding the experience encouraged them to start a series. “We wanted this project to be an experience for music lovers; The idea led us to Same Same But Different (SSBD) series.” He explains the concept behind SSBD, “When different musicians share the stage, blend and perform together, they produce unique sounds.” The four editions of SSBD has collaborations between Korean artistes and artistes from Turkey, Australia, Japan and Germany. He says, “A few purists might not like to collaborate for the fear of art getting diluted but contemporary musicians want to create diverse music. Collaborations is one way of achieving it; Travelling to other countries and performing is a learning experience. We learn, adapt and experience their lifestyle and culture.”

Ju-Hong is in a poetic mood and calls Korea, the moon and India, the stars. “Their love and music is spread out like the sky.”
Ju-Hong has an eye for talent and selects younger members for their artistic steak. Some youngsters started off as students in the music group and after graduation have even become its members. Speaking about the role of social media in promoting their music, he says, “Social media does help in promoting the event but it doesn’t always serve the purpose. We realised we get more people to our concerts by word of mouth.”

A collaborative SSBD series — six in Mangolia and percussion through voice are their future plans. “Like India’s *thom thom thadigana thom*, we plan to do a Korean *ghum ghum tha*,” adds Ju-Hong.