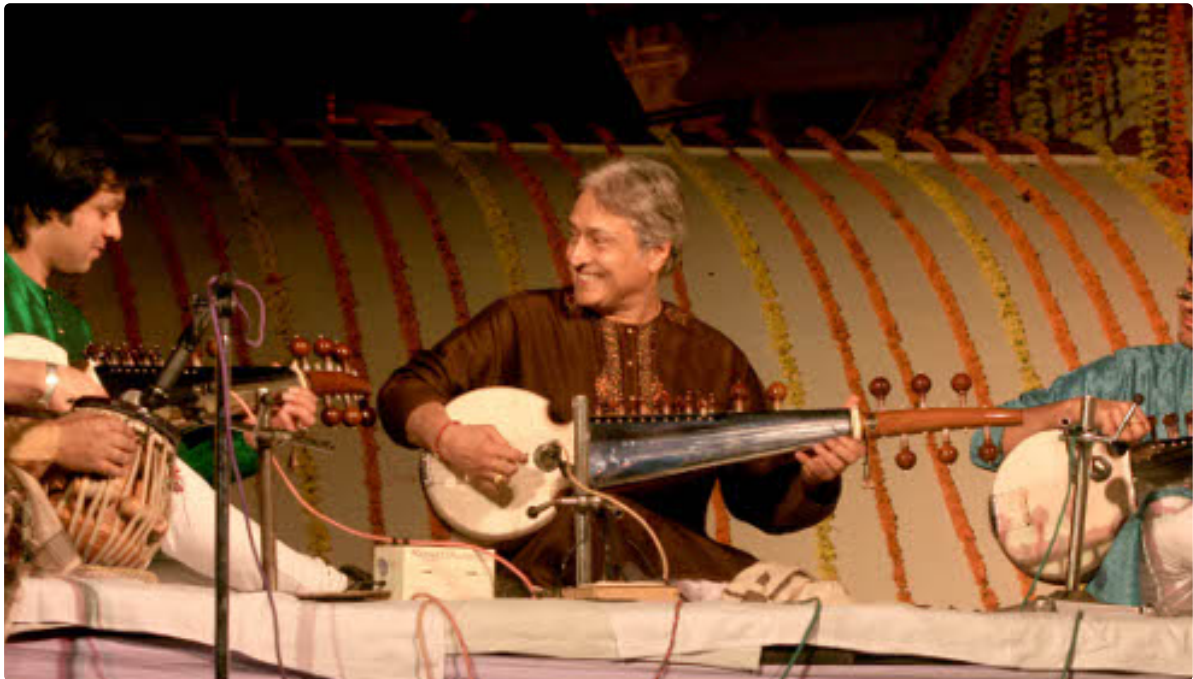


## Kameswari festival in Kamakhya



Comments 4



Rituparna Goswami Pande 16 March 2010 27723 views

The mellifluous tinkle of the Sarod permeated the atmosphere under a canopy of twinkling stars and a soft breeze that emanated from the somber Nilachal hill. Ustaad Amjad Ali Khan and his sons Amaan and Ayaan performed at the open amphitheatre in the Kamakhya temple premises striking a divine chord in all our hearts. The setting couldn't have been more striking. The silhouette of the sanctuary at the backdrop and the stupendous performances of maestros were the perfect mode of the two day Kameshwari Music and Dance festival 2010.

Dance and music have been an inherent part of temples in India since times immemorial. In order to appease the gods these art forms have always been entwined with religion. Dance and music in India is steeped in religion for coupled with bhakti or devotion are gitam and vadyam or music which make these art forms inseparable.

Like other parts of the country Kamakhya too dance and music have played an important part. The people rendering these services are known as shebais. Two such families associated with dance and music are the Gayons and Bayons and there are innumerable tales and myths lining the Kamakhya temple with dance and music. Mentionably, the performing of dance and music were common during the erstwhile regimes. King Rajeswar Singha and others had patronized these traditions and even grants were offered by them in such occasions. However, political upheavals and numerous invasions later these traditions have been lost in antiquity. Now the kamakhya Debutter Board has taken upon the task of reviving these lost traditions of the temple.

Brainchild of the Kamakhya Debutter Board the festival celebrates the traditional classical dance and music of our rich culture. The festival was first launched in the year 2007 and has seen the participation of cultural stalwarts like Pt Hari Prasad Chaurasia, Pt. Rajen Mishra, Pt Sajan Mishra, Padma Bhushan Raja Radha Reddi, Sonal Maan Singh etc over the years. This year it was held on February 19 and 20.

This cultural festival is one of its kind in our part of the world with internationally acclaimed artistes participating in the event. This year the event was graced by Ustad Amjad Ali Khan, Dr. Saroja Vaidyanathan, Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan, Sri Nityananda Das and Minoti Khound.

Ustad Amjad Ali Khan needs no introduction to music lovers. Honoured with the Padma Vibhushan and tons of other awards he has the distinction of creating many ragas.

His sons are also well known names in the music scene and are the seventh generation of musicians in the family.

Dr. Saroja Vaidyanathan and her troupe performed the Bharatnatyam portraying various aspects of Shakti. Saroja is one of India's prominent Bharatnatyam exponents. She has been awarded the Padmashree apart from many other prestigious awards. It was a feast to the eyes to watch their performances especially the killing of mahisasura in the final performance Mahisasura mardini. Eminent classical vocalist Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan belonging to the Sahaswan Rampur Gwalior Gharana is a living embodiment of the legacy of Indian classical music.

Sri Nityananda Das is an accomplished Odissi dancer. Despite losing one limb in an accident he never lost his zeal for dance. He went on to establish Kalashrama, a dance school where he trained disabled students as well. It was not only a remarkable performance but it was an honour and inspiration to watch him rule the stage.

Assam's pride violinist Minoti Khound and her daughter Sunita Bhuyan kept the audience spell bound for about an hour with their musical jugalbandi. Minoti khound is an award winning violin master whose musical career has spanned over 50 years. She had been awarded the prestigious Silpi Bata this year by the government of Assam.

The two-day festival saw a huge attendance of not only the local people but other dignitaries as well. The temple was lit up in soothing lights and was decorated like a bride. A visit to the temple at dusk is in itself a divine experience, throw in some world-renowned performers and the experience transcends many levels. A souvenir was also launched on the occasion. Moderately publicized the festival attracts classical music and dance connoisseurs from every part of Assam. After a generous dose of spiritual music we all left with uplifted souls and a thirst to come back for more next year.

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Rituparna Goswami Pande

Journalist, writer

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**BY RITUPARNA GOSWAMI PANDE**

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My Waxen Wings

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I, Kaziranga

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A day for Women!

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Assam - a killing field for the wild

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