

THE ASIAN AGE

Dancing To The Tunes Of International Folk

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An overtly passionate Flamenco dance with the very rustic and opulent tunes of Kalbeliya set against the majestic backdrop of the Mehrangarh fort at the Rajasthani International Folk Festival last week made it quite a memorable experience. The Spanish folk set along with the foot tapping Kalbeliya music made for a brilliant collaboration with some acts that simply brought the best of the two rustic tunes. Flamenco and Kalbeliya, both coming from the folk fabric of their respective regions, have a lot in common and that did come about in their dances. The synchronisation of the acts was outstanding but it was the dancers' swirls and twirls with an act of pride and conviction, that was most mesmerising. Flamenco dancers presented a fiery display of emotions along with their wooden shoes catalysing the act as they danced to the captivating music of the guitar.

Augustin Carvanell, guitarist and popularly known as "Bola", sounded excited about the collaboration. It was their first trip to India and he describes the experience to be fruitful professionally and personally. "It was an incredible experience and there was so much of warmth among the people of Rajasthan. We actually felt at home and didn't seem like we were 'foreigners' who have come here as tourists or on work purpose," says Carvanell.

The collaboration as he calls it was incredibly exciting and there wasn't any trouble at all relating to the sounds of folk music. "There were different types of rhythms and melodies which made it all the more fun to work on. Flamenco is a technique and this was more of a contemporary representation of the technique," explains Carnavell.

It wasn't surprising to see the rapturous audience break into a jig when the Flamenco and Kalbeliya dancers came together on stage. The ghungroos of the Kalbeliya dancer and wooden shoes of the Flamenco artists made sure that they spread their magic across the grandeur of the fort. It also made the Maharaja of Jodhpur Gaj Singh II, who is also the patron of the festival, join the dancers on stage along with the Ambassador of Spain for a small dance. The mood was delirious and people certainly wanted more of the collaboration. "We are looking forward to more programmes and shows in the country. We started off with the RIFF at Jodhpur which will remain our base and will travel to other parts of the country for many more shows. India is important for us as far as Flamenco is concerned and we are open to more such exciting collaborations," enthuses Carnavell.