

## Bohemian Rhapsody

| [DNA. Sunday; Mumbai, Nov 07, 2010](#) | by [Soumya, Elizabeth](#)

Tamar Gonzalez elegantly gathers creases from her flaming red skirt in the grip of her hands and raises it just a bit, revealing her shoes. All eyes rapt on her red shoes. She first taps the floor with few deliberate slow steps, as if strolling down a road. Then she stomps a little brisker. Soon, she stamps her feet faster, quicker, with an urgency teasing and waving the frills of her skirt. Following her sensual Spanish swirls and purposeful steps is an ensemble of turbaned Indian musicians from Rajasthan. They sing in a language she doesn't understand and yet, she continues to gallop in the madness that is Flamenco.

◆Joining her is the graceful Asha Sapera, a gypsy dancer from the sands of the Thar desert covered in the audacious colours of Rajasthan. She moves her hands trapped in bangles and works her hips. Then she swirls and spins with abandon, her skirt encircling her as Spanish strains accompany her steps.

◆Tamar and Sapera were part of a recent unique collaboration that brought together Spanish and Indian Rajasthani artists for an entrancing performance. The concert even had the Maharaja of Jodhpur dancing with them at the Jodhpur Riff festival in Mehrangarh fort is the word around. A team of five Spanish artists including two Flamenco dancers and three musicians came together with a team of five Indian artists - one dancer and four musicians to prove a point - "Music doesn't have a language. The language of music is universal," says Agustin Carbonell, renowned Spanish guitarist◆ who is part of the team in a mixture of Spanish and English. Owing to the fact that none of the Spanish artists spoke in Hindi and the Indian artists didn't speak in Spanish, the success of their efforts might seem baffling.

◆But not quite argues Francesca Cassio, an Italian musician who is accompanying the Rajasthani group. They are somewhat connected traditions, she says: "The origins of Flamenco, can be traced back to the gypsies of India, likely from the Thar desert." And she is indeed right. The gypsy folk tradition of flamenco is indeed attributed to the influence of the 'Romanies' or gypsies from Sindh, Rajasthan and Punjab regions of West India. Between AD800 and 900 there was a◆ large exodus of these people◆ most likely due to raids by Mahmud of Ghazni.

Apart from this connection, there were a lot more factors that made the alliance a breeze, says Carbonell. "Our songs are about life, philosophy and love like Indian folklores." He also points out that improvisation is an important part of both the nomadic Rajasthani traditions and Flamenco. In the original traditional Flamenco fiesta there is no telling when it will begin or end, if the artists invited will even turn up, or at what hour they will perform. So in both the Indian artists and Spanish artists, while there is a basic premise for the performance, the artists are free to be free within that. Karen Lugo chips in and explains that the Flamenco dancers while they have a basic outline for their steps, they let inspiration and intuition lead them on. Among other connections, Carbonell says that both Flamenco and the Rajasthani nomadic folk traditions are oral, the rhythmic patterns are similar. "they have a common music code," he explains.

The climax of the performance has all the artists contribute to a trippy and memorable crescendo. The flamenco dancers join in with Asha Sapera, the Kalbeliya dancer from the Thar Desert, all dancing together. While Spanish songs (cante), the spanish guitar (toque) and handclapping (palmas) is united with the dhok (drum), Sarangi, Khartaal and singing by folk artist Abdul Rashid, all this accompanied by the sound of rhythmic feet stomping (zapateado). What's fascinating however is that the result of this invigorating union is not perplexity, but sheer harmony. [dnasunday@gmx.com](mailto:dnasunday@gmx.com)◆◆

Credit:Elizabeth Soumya

### Most Popular Articles

- 7 tips for effective listening: productive listening does not occur naturally. It requires hard work and practice - Back To Basics - effective listening is a crucial skill for internal auditors
- Top of the line: some of the world's most well-respected doctors practice in South Florida. A guide to choosing the best physician specialists - Top Doctors in South Florida
- Blue sky Red Earth: which are you? Mindex shows how your thinking style can help you get your ideas across better, understand others, and have more influence
- EQ vs. IQ - emotional intelligence, intelligence quotient
- Moneyball: A Business Perspective

### Most Recent Articles