

# BOLLYWOOD GHARANA Rocks New York City

By Mabel Pais

**B**OLLYWOOD GHARANA, a band with a mesmerizing, fresh sound of Music combining the ancient & the contemporary, extended to New Yorkers a rocking, heart-warming performance at the Elebash Recital Hall of the City University of New York, in Manhattan, New York City on Friday, June 7.

Bollywood Gharana is a crossover of Bollywood and classical music. The band performed Bollywood hits with a fresh twist of Indian classical music. This was a real treat for music lovers who were tapping to the music and dancing in the aisles during the concert!

The concert was presented by the Indo-American Arts Council (IAAC), one of the pioneering non-profit arts organization, passionately dedicated to promoting, showcasing and building an awareness of the arts and artists whose heritage lies in the Indian subcontinent in the performing arts, visual arts, literary arts and folk arts. The concert was co-presented by the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY).

Abhijit Pohankar, the son of classical vocalist Pandit Ajay Pohankar, is the master craftsman and creator of Fusion Music. He presented this unique sound of fusion of Bollywood hits with Indian Classical music with a foot tapping groove and romantic guitar sounds.

Bhavya Pandit, the lead vocalist of the band is a well-known playback singer. Bhavya's singing truly stole everyone's heart with her mellifluous singing, wit and charm. She spread cheer with her



*Bollywood Gharana team - L to R: Sourabh Joshi on Guitar, Gandhar Deshpande (vocalist), Abhijit Pohankar, Bhavya Pandit (vocalist), Rahul Deo on Bass & Keyur Barve on drums.*

*Photo/ Courtesy, IAAC.*

effervescent attitude on stage. Gandhar Deshpande was the classical vocalist of the band. One can tell he has had rigorous training because the compositions he performed were authentic but he also made them sound very cool. Keyur Barve on drums, Rahul Deo on Bass & Sourabh Joshi on Guitar added more magic to the evening.

The executive director of IAAC, Sunil Hali called this the "breaking boundaries" concert!

The band presented many popular Bollywood songs from the 80s and 90s along with old and new classical bandishes (compositions), set in similar ragas simultaneously. The perfect blending of the Bollywood and classical made it a joy to listen to for non classical listeners not

familiar with the music. The audience was dancing in ecstasy during the finale of the evening.

Shampa Chanda, a student of Indian classical music said she found the concert to be very entertaining and informative! She found how some of the ragas were juxtaposed with the Bollywood songs, very interesting.

Anurag Harsh, IAAC board member and classical vocalist said, "Bollywood Gharana is a refreshing introduction to what is possible when contemporary music is painstakingly weaved in with traditional classical music. Abhijit Pohankar is a wizard at this and the credit goes to his father the great Hindustani classical vocalist Pandit Ajay Pohankar. Much of Panditji's finesse has come into Bollywood

**(The) "breaking boundaries" concert!"**

**-Sunil Hali, Executive Director of IAAC**

**"The impact Bollywood Gharana had on our audience was mesmerizing"**

**- Anurag Harsh, IAAC Board Member**

Gharana through his son Abhijit and this band has shown how to do 'fusion' the right way. The impact Bollywood Gharana had on our audience was mesmerizing."

While introducing the artists, Sunny Thakkar, the Artistic Director of Music at IAAC told the audience that they were all in for a treat. This was certainly an understatement to many in the audience who could not stop singing the praises of the band.

The evening saw attendees from all parts of the tri-state (New York, New Jersey, Connecticut) area. Dr. Urvashi Kapoor, an avid music lover traveled from the far end of Long Island, NY with 6 of her friends to watch the live band. She was elated when they performed their signature number "Piya Tu Ab Toh Aja" along with the 100-year-old bandish "Dholan Mende Ghar Aa."

IAAC would like to continue this musical journey and continue bringing to New York City such magical musical evenings that are possible only with the support of music lovers and patrons of Indian Music.

*For more information on Bollywood Gharana, visit <https://www.bollywoodgharana.in/>*

## KULTURE KOOL 10 at NJPAC SHARES WISDOM OF INDIA

**K**ulture Kool 10's spectacular event: "An Indian Odyssey: A Journey Through India," showcasing the Folk, Classical and Contemporary Dances and Music of India, was presented on June 8 at 2 p.m. at the Victoria Theater, New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) by over 250 students of the Academy.

The event was a celebration of the Cultural Academy's 10th anniversary. Performances through various art forms from most regions of India were presented. The cultural program ended with special tribute to 80 years of contributions from Bollywood's iconic composers. The audience was in appreciation of the intense preparation that contributed to the success of the event!

"What an incredible journey these ten years have been. From the germ of an idea to this tight-knit family of students, teachers, patrons and well wishers, this is nothing short of a dream come true. A shout out to Kulture Kool's cofounders Urvashi Mishra and Vanessa Taneja. Without you, we wouldn't exist," said Archana Athalye, Founder-Director of Kulture Kool.

Kulture Kool is on a mission to spread the joy and wisdom of India by sharing different aspects of the grandmother of all cultures with youngsters and adults through the performing arts and

"Today's (June 8) recital is the culmination of 12 months of frenzied activity! All students, teachers, parents and staff have worked incredibly hard to bring this evening to you. We hope to showcase the art and culture of our beloved homeland in an entertaining format which can be enjoyed by all."

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**- Archana Athalye, Founder-Director of Kulture Kool**

language education, community events, cultural outreach programs in schools, museums and libraries and enrichment workshops across the tri-State (New Jersey, New York and Connecticut) area.

Kulture Kool, since its launch in 2009, is the first center in North Jersey to provide year-round comprehensive programs and workshops in Indian Classical and Instrumental music, Indian Classical Dance, Indian Popular and Folk dance, and has enjoyed tremendous success in Bergen County with its Rutherford venue, leading it to expand its brand beyond to Glen Ridge, Hoboken and West New York.

Kulture Kool has an enviable roster of highly trained exponents and talented teachers that teach more than 15 programs to over 280 students of all ages

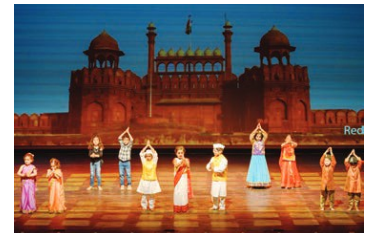


*Archana Athalye, Founder-Director, Kulture Kool*

and ethnicities. The school also carries out year-round outreach programs in libraries, public and private schools and community events throughout the state.

Kulture Kool offers the option to get certification from prestigious boards and institutes from the USA and UK, for all Indian Classical Dance & Music and Western instrumental Music programs.

**ABOUT ARCHANA ATHALYE:** Archana Athalye is the founder-director of Kulture Kool. With a Masters in Communications and over 25 years of experience in events, tour management and A&R. She has designed Guru Kool as an exclusive program aimed at helping young children internalize the beauty of South Asian languages and cultures



*Kulture Kool performers salute India's Capital, Delhi*



*Kulture Kool performers display Bollywood Dance Moves.*

*Photo / Courtesy, Kulture Kool/TAG ADDS LLC*

through hands-on, play-based activities in a group setting. She conducts various workshops on Indian culture at public institutions in many parts of the tri-State area. To learn more about the Kulture Kool Cultural Academy and its programs, visit [www.kulturekool.com](http://www.kulturekool.com) or write to [info@kulturekool.com](mailto:info@kulturekool.com) or call 201 933 6651.

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