music

Jazz guitarist Fred Hamilton and santoor exponent Pandit Tarun speak about their new album and much more

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A blend of guitar riffs and strains of the santoor blissfully ringing in the ears when tuned in. But what is even more exciting is that this melodic melange is seamlessly conjured up by two reputed music icons. World renowned jazz guitarist Fred Hamilton and noted santoor exponent Pandit Tarun Bhattacharya make a great team.

“I recorded a piece with Tarun last year and it included a double CD titled Positive Music. Around the concept of aromatherapy, the unique overtone infused guitar lends with the harmonious notes of the santoor. And that was the USP of the album, adding a fragrance of freshness in it. Well, in the offing is another joint venture with the tentative title Transcendence. The santoor scale involved is not usual to the jazz musicians per se but chords on the guitar add to the raagas and take care of the ensuing euphoria that accompanies it,” says Hamilton.

Despite his jazz background, Hamilton swears by the fathomless profundity of Indian classical music.

“Professing his love for the richness of raagas and raag-based compositions, this seasoned music whiz reveals, “I’m influenced by the concept of aromatherapy, the unique overtone infused guitar adds to the raagas and take care of the ensuing euphoria that accompanies it,” he says.

The album begins in Laxmikant-Pyarelal’s signature style, with an out-and-out desi track, Ringa Ringa. Alka Yagnik and Ila Arun have done full justice to the song that reminisces their storm-raiser, Choli Ke Peeche Kya Hai. Alile the Khiladi teaser, Ringa Ringa depicts Bollywood at its raunchiest.

The concept of aromatherapy, the unique overtone infused guitar enriches Bhattacharya. The CD under production will feature five tracks out of which, four have already gone on records. “Keeping the santoor tradition alive, I’ve incorporated a clutch of conventional pieces entwined with soul-stirring raagas. Starting off with raag Bhairavi, the symphonic sojourn streams ahead with Puriadhyaneshri — a sentimental strain, then meanders along with raag Bibhas and finds its outlet in the smooth-sailing charms of raag Hansadhwani, a melody of ecstasy, very cheerful in tone and flows with facile élan to brighten up one’s mood. Through music, we aim to beckon peace in times of distress and pray for common good that’s been eluding us on earth. The merging of the east with west is a global phenomenon to set up one world into one direction and create a unified voice of amity,” he says.

Next from Rahman’s repertoire is O Saya, a highly energetic background theme, with heavy Afro-chants and slick use of the train’s chugging, that reminds you of Mumbai’s hustle-bustle. M.I.A’s poppy rap lends perfect cover to the song that will definitely make it to the top of the charts. Years after giving soulful instrumental pieces like Bombay Theme and Spirit Of Rangeela, Rahman conducts a similar track, Roots. One can easily connect Roots to the dark and murky underworld. Following suit is Mauseam & Escape, a fantabulous fusion of Indian and Western classical, sitar and orchestrated symphony.