

The New York Times

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NEW YORK, MONDAY, APRIL 30, 2001

\$1 beyond the greater New York metro area

A limb-shaking beat boomed from the windows of the Jivamukti Yoga Center

By ANN POWERS

A limb-shaking beat boomed from the windows of the Jivamukti Yoga Center in the East Village Friday night as a hearty American voice sang a Sanskrit chant. The next evening a very different sound wafted from the Synod Hall at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine: a sitar gliding up a scale, as discreet as that singer had been bold.

Both were fresh sounds of the East Indian diaspora. The first was made by the D.J. Sean Dinsmore and a featured vocalist, Bhagavan Das, during a record release party for the group Dum Dum Project. Sampled sitars mixed with breakbeats, moving a stylish crowd of rapturously dancing American yoga devotees.

The second came from Shujat Husain Khan, the young master sitarist from New Delhi, during an all-night performance of Indian classical music sponsored by the World Music Institute and several groups with Chhandayan, a Queens organization that promotes and preserves Indian music, as host. This festival was ecstatic, too, but its hundreds of attendees sat still and hushed during long, subtle improvisations.

Seemingly so different, these shows illuminated the appeal of Indian music in contemporary America. The Dum Dum Project's transformation of the club sound favored by young Indians worldwide was flashy and happily appropriative, a grab bag of references. The Chhandayan concert honored tradition, attracting immigrants and other enthusiasts of the raga, an art passed down by pedigree.

Yet at the core of both was one concern: how personal expression benefits a view focused on communal ideals and universal truths.

Mr. Dinsmore's music reimagines two worlds. Traditional music peppers his mixes alongside the Bollywood film music samples used in bhangra, the club music of young Indians. As an Anglo experimenter in this scene, Mr. Dinsmore distinguishes himself by creating buoyant, diverse soundscapes.

During his Jivamukti set, acid jazz mixed with feisty hip-hop and jungle beats. Jason Goodrow made his sitar sound like a jaunty

electric guitar. Under the light of a plastic lamp in the shape of a lotus flower, Mr. Dinsmore aimed for a jovially modern version of bliss.

The vocalists fed the open mood. Jivamukti's co-director, Sharon Gannon (performing under the name Tripura Sundari), offered spiritual direction in a velvety alto on "Be Love." The star, though, was Asha Puthli, a fusion pioneer best known for singing on Ornette Coleman's 1971 free jazz masterpiece "Science Fiction."

Ms. Puthli displayed the piping soprano that makes Indian female vocalists exotic to Westerners but shifted to a throatier register in a prayer for the health of the earth. Mr. Dinsmore's drum-and-bass rhythms helped create a moment that recalled Yoko Ono's urgency.

Urgency was not in the air on Saturday at Synod Hall. In the midnight slot of an 11-hour program, Mr. Khan followed the raga's form into pieces that stretched nearly an hour. In sync with the empathetic rhythms of the tabla player Samir Chatterjee, he reached furious peaks, then gracefully shifted into highly contemplative passages.

When Ramesh Misra joined in on

the sarengi, an ancient bowed instrument, serenity settled in. Dedicating a piece to the guru-disciple bond, Mr. Khan led Mr. Misra into a re-enactment of that relationship, with each phrase answering and gently melding with the one before it. Mr. Khan sang in a liquid voice that further encouraged introversion.

The next set, featuring the bansuri flute master Raghunath Seth with Mr. Chatterjee and the American flutist Steve Gorn, was even more delicate in tone. The strains of the wooden flutes chased one another like fireflies as Mr. Chatterjee used the lightest touch. When the dynamics grew more intense, the utter attentiveness of the musicians kept the tone tranquil and the audience rapt.

The ragas would stretch until morning, but four hours had confirmed the relevance of this tradition. These artists, though dedicated to form, were also innovators. Jazz and other world-music influences were evident even to a drifting listener. The challenge here was the same as on Jivamukti's dance floor, to become immersed in sound that defied time and narrative structure by going deep within.

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