

STAGE

EMAMI CULTURAL FIESTA, WITH ₹2, STARTED ON A HIGH NOTE WITH THE SABRI BROTHERS

“Calcutta was once the home of theatre, music and dance. And now I see a revival again, which comes from businessmen who decide to sponsor these arts. To me art is the greatest form of human expression and when business and art join together it has a greater effect,” said **Ahlyque Padamsee**, who came up on stage to introduce the Sabri Brothers.




Hashim Sabri (right) and Aftab Sabri perform *Dama dam mast kalandar* and wrap up the musical evening with *Chadhta suraj dheere dheere* (below).
Pictures: Pabitra Das



Rituparna Sengupta with R.S. Agarwal, joint chairman, Emami Group. “Unfortunately I could not stay for the entire concert. I heard the first song and had to leave for shooting. But I hope to hear the Sabri Brothers live again. They had such a high level of energy and such great bonding! The instrumental back up was good too. Also, they looked fabulous in their white sherwanis,” said Rituparna.



Emami Cultural Fiesta in association with t2 hit the high note with a memorable *qawwali* performance by the Sabri Brothers — Aftab and Hashim Sabri — at Kala Mandir on March 18. “We have performed in Calcutta before. And the way the people of Calcutta respect music and artistes, no other city does.

Shukriya to all of you,” declared the *qawwals*, as they took the audience on a magical ride starting with *Chaap tilak sab chheeni*.

Qawwali, Sufi and soulful Bollywood numbers held the auditorium in thrall as the brothers rendered, pitch-perfect of course, songs like *Hamein toh loot liya milke husan walone, Khwaja mere khwaja (Jodhaa Akbar), Yeh jo halka halka suroor hai, Tumse milke dil ka hai jo haal (Main Hoon Na)* and many more.

The audience was not shy in putting forth requests. If the elderly wanted *Chadhta suraj dheere dheere*, the youngsters wanted *Pee loon (Once Upon A Time In Mumbaii)*.

The moment of absolute wonder? Their powerful rendition of *Dama dam mast kalandar*. Half the audience stood up, started clapping and singing along to the most-requested-for song.

“It was a great musical evening. The audience responded very well especially when it came to requests for songs. When the Sabri Brothers sing, it seems they communicate with each one in the audience. This is a different genre altogether. We hope to host similar programmes in the future,” promised Aditya Agarwal, director, Emami Group.



This is the first time I heard *qawwali* and I enjoyed it thoroughly. Their singing was flawless
— **Puravi Nath**, Class IX, The Heritage School



Music lovers in Calcutta do not get much exposure when it comes to *qawwali* and Sufi. The Sabri Brothers are famous for *qawwali* so I was excited when I came to know they would be performing here. Sufi connects the supreme power with the soul.

Truly *Khwaja mere khwaja* took the audience into a trance — **Rahul Rathi**, businessman



I was counting days and could not wait for this day to arrive. My favourite was *Pee loon*. They engaged the audience so there was no scope of getting bored.

We clapped along to all the songs — **Rishika Bajaj**, Class VIII, Lakshmipt Singhania Academy



I was really looking forward to the Sabri Brothers because I have not had many chances to hear *qawwali* live. Loved the first few songs like *Chaap tilak sab chheeni* and *Khwaja mere khwaja*. It was a lovely experience

because we Calcuttans get to hear such great singers once in a while. This performance reminded me of Abida Parveen’s many years ago
— **Arindam Sil**

Text: Malancha Dasgupta

EMAMI CULTURAL FIESTA, WITH ₹2, PRESENTED ALYQUE PADAMSEE'S DEATH OF A SALESMAN

It's a real treat for the theatre lovers of Calcutta to have Alyque Padamsee and Sabira Merchant here. This has been such a celebrated piece of literature by Arthur Miller. We wanted to bring good theatre and not just Bollywood-type theatre to Calcutta because it is a city of culture — **Priti Sureka**



The play is really very nice. The performance has exceeded my expectations. Alyque Padamsee at this age is doing a fabulous job. Sabira Merchant is also excellent — **Faiz Khan**



I have seen multiple productions of this classic. The individual performances were very good. Sabira Merchant was excellent. Calcutta ought to see more productions of such quality and learn from them — **Renu Roy**



I have heard a lot about this production. It is one of my favourite plays. I am glad I came to see it. The way they have used the lights is fantastic. The light is almost a protagonist — **Modhurima Sinha**



(L-R) Jim Sarbh, Alyque Padamsee and Neel Tolani; (right) Sabira Merchant with Padamsee in *Death of A Salesman* at Kala Mandir

A small man can be just as exhausted as a great man. He works for a company 36 years this March, opens up unheard-of territories to their trademark, and now in his old age they take his salary away.

That's the predicament of Willy Loman, an ageing salesman who makes his living "riding on a smile and a shoeshine", in the words of his wife Linda.

Theatre lovers in Calcutta witnessed his tale on March 19 and 20, as actor-director Alyque Padamsee staged Arthur Miller's *Death of A Salesman*, co-hosted by Theatretracian and presented by Emami in association with ₹2, at Kala Mandir.

"The play is about human beings and human condition. Willy is a dominant father and the mother, Linda, is caught between the eldest son and the father. The mother is worshipped but the father is the boss. More important, it is about a time when there was high inflation and people were losing jobs. Like in India today

That's what makes the play, written in 1949, so relevant even in 2014 India," said Padamsee before the play.

Padamsee played Willy while Sabira Merchant was Linda, and they were backed by a cast of young and veteran actors — Neel Tolani, Jim Sarbh, Farrokh Mehta, Farid Currim, Nishith Dhanak, Cyndy Khojol and Nivvy Randhawa.

The struggles of the elder son (Biff) to do something worthwhile, his father's aspiration for him, Willy's helplessness as he gets fired after a lifetime of dedicated service, Linda's unfailing love for her husband and Biff's finding out about his father's closeness to another woman — situations and moments such as these lead to the climax where Willy, unable to cope, decides to quit living.

Sibendu Das

Pictures: Pabitra Das and Sayantan Ghosh

An American play from the late '40s draws a full house today! That proves classics will never die. The story is still so relevant. The same thing happens in a middle-class household in Calcutta even today — **Shiboprasad Mukhopadhyay**



I have known Alyque Padamsee and Sabira Merchant for long. It is good to see them again. I have seen Alyque's production of this play 20 years ago. It's wonderful to see Alyque and Sabira in good form — **Shamlu Dudgeja**



I love this classic. Super acting by all. Reality and truth of family bonding, emotions, old age and depression in the face of it for the audience to connect and relate to in their lives — **Rajat Dalmia**



It's a complicated play with a lot of undercurrents. It is very difficult to bring out the subtext with the background of that period in America. It's been done very well — **Ashoke Viswanathan**

