

« NEW LAUNCHES

MINERAL'S NEW COLLECTION

Mineral, by Priyadarshini Rao, launches their new collection of tops, bags and accessories. This latest range of clothes promises quality, style and glamour, making you feel chic and confident. The collection has a colour palette that is dominated by red, blue and deep green that is ideal for this season. Floral, checkered and digital prints in bright hues are blended together in a distinctive fashion. The collection also includes neutral hued bags and eclectic accessories — so you really do have a variety of ways to add a dash of style to your look.

PRICE ₹1,899 onwards

WHERE Central stores and Shoppers Stop outlets across the city



BEETEL MAGIQ TABLET

The new Beetel Magiq Tablet comes at a surprisingly affordable price. You will be missing out on a capacitive touch screen — but that's the price you pay for affordability. The specifications include a 7-inch screen with internal storage of 8GB, a front facing camera and the traditional camera at the back, both of which have a resolution of 2MP and Android 2.2 OS. It runs on a 1 GHz processor. For the price you are getting this tablet, we must say that it's a steal!

PRICE ₹9,999

WHERE Electronic stores across the city



A classic beat

Dhanashree Pandit Rai is a classical singer who sings the slightly obscure but poetic thumri, also known as songs of seduction. Rhea Dhanbhoora talks to her about her music and what it's like being a classical singer in this day and age...

For thumri singer Dhanashree Pandit Rai, Indian classical music is anything but unpopular. She believes that to get younger people to open up to the genre you need to speak in their language. We talk to her about her music, her life and her projects with several international musicians...

When did you realise that you wanted to be a professional singer?

When I was around six; my mum used to try out all sorts of art forms on us so we could see who was talented at what. I found out that I sang well. Once I was in the eighth or ninth standard I felt as though I should be singing more. So, I joined Bharatya Vidya Bhavan and started formal training. Then I joined Bombay University and did my MA in music. It was based on Gurukul training and that helped because every student got specialised attention.

You come from a westernised background, how did you choose Indian classical?

It's not the norm — ideally I would have chosen something more mainstream. But, there was something about Indian classical, especially thumri, that got me hooked.

Tell us a little bit about thumri?

Thumri is a semi-classical form which originated in the Nawabi era as songs that courtesans sang to entice the Nawabs. They were mostly songs of seduction.

It's not a very popular form though, is it?

It was initially just sung to Nawabs, so it wasn't very popular amongst performers.



>> Dhanashree Pandit Rai specialises in thumri, a form of Indian classical that was popular with the Nawabs of the north

- Dhanashree holds a Masters Degree in Hindustani Classical Music from University of Bombay
- She has trained under Pt. Firoz Dastur as well as the Thumri legend Shobha Gurtu.
- She is also a visiting lecturer at S.N.D.T. University, Mumbai.
- She is a founder member of SABRANG, an institution set up to de-mystify the classical arts.
- As a teacher, she has been the chief Vocal Instructor at the Jazz India Vocal Institute (JVI), founded by Niranjan Jhaveri to train world renowned Jazz vocalists in several Indian vocal techniques.
- In Indian classical music, thumri is a form which originated in the Nawabi era. The songs were initially sung by courtesans sang to entice the Nawabs of the north.

Later it transcended and became more accepted as an aesthetic form of music.

Not a lot of singers perform thumri, why do you think that is?

Thumri has poetry, romance and expression — but it's not an easy form to sing, so not a lot of people opt to specialise in it. Also, there are people who do not accept it as the incredible music form that it is today.

Is it difficult to manage home life with your career as a performer?

I've been performing since I was 20-years-old so it's been a long time. I don't travel abroad much, so it's not difficult to manage my home life as well as my career.

You've also had two music albums out. Tell us about that. Are there any more lined up?

I have two albums out and I've sung fusion with artists such as Lenny Stern. I collaborated with Richard Bennet (we called ourselves Mumbai Masala) on several projects. I've also done fusion experiments with Jazz India. There are recordings in the pipeline — so lets see how that goes.

Do you think becoming a classical singer is a lucrative career option?

It's always a good option to follow your dreams. It's not exactly lucrative because there's not enough stage place for the amount of talented artists. You can't depend on it for your bread and butter. In the classical scene you need to be very talented as there are no shortcuts to fame. You need to have something different to offer.

You also teach, tell us about that.

I've given lectures for people as well as Tedx talks. I use popular songs to show youngsters what the music is about. I can use a Coldplay song to show you what a raag is. To teach youngsters you have to talk in their language, which is what I try to do.

What performances do you have lined up?

I'll be heading to the San Francisco Asian Arts Museum to do a programme with a Kathak dancer in January. I am doing a private event at Willingdon Club and on October 16 I'll be performing in Pune. You can get details of my shows and music on my website www.dhanashreepandit.com.