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# Delhi band scripts a musical to the Deccan Queen

Kartikeya Ramanathan : Mumbai, Wed Nov 10 2010, 10:27 hrs



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Over the centuries, musicians have dedicated their art to what they hold closest to their hearts: wives, beloveds and country. Few have, however, dedicated a song to a train. Meet Mrigya, the Delhi-based band that has dedicated Deccan to the Deccan Queen, the train connecting Mumbai and Pune.

"We came up with the song quite by accident," says bassist Indraneel Hariharan. "We were jamming to the raag Yaman, which is a very interesting raag; its scales are exactly the same in North and South India, one of few such pieces. After we finalised the song, we were looking for a name when we came up with Deccan, because of the associations of that word with South India. Then realising there is also a train by that name, we decided to dedicate it to the train. It starts with beats on the mridangam and has shades on Carnatic, orchestral, Hindustani and Sufi musical styles."

Today, the song is one of the band's most famous, with fans at every concert requesting it be played. Now, the band, which has completed

10 years, will release the song as part of its first album, The Composition of World Harmony, which will include also its most recognisable song, Ganga.

Hariharan says, "The song (Deccan) has a lot of overlays and a rhythm structure which resembles the movement of a train. We also did a bit of research on the Deccan Queen and found that it's one of the longest running train lines in the world to have never run on steam engines."

Violinist Sharat Chandra Srivastava adds, "The idea of the song is to encompass the entire culture of India. Once, while travelling on the train, we realised that people from every community, caste, and religion travel on this train, commuting between Pune and Mumbai. Thus we felt that the best possible way to honour the train is to dedicate our song to it."

Apart from Hariharan and Srivastava, the fusion band comprises Gyan Singh on the tabla and other Indian percussion instruments, Rajat Kakkar on drums, Sachin Kapoor on the keyboard, Karan Sharma on the guitar and two vocalists, Qadir Niyazi for Sufi and Sukriti Sen on Hindustani classical. They prefer not to stick to any particular genre, dabbling across musical styles, from the Western blues, rock, funk and punk to the Indian Hindustani.

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