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Thank you for the music



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Photo: M. Vedhan.



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The Boardwalkers' tribute concert to Abba sent the audience spiralling back to the '70s

The Museum Theatre was jam-packed with enraptured rows of people who probably first heard Abba's easy tunes and lilting disco beats on a Saturday night decades ago. It's astonishing that a

pop group that has been defunct for over 30 years can still inspire this kind of nostalgia. From the stage props and the satin clothes to the songs, The Boardwalkers' 'Thank You For The Music' was in every way a tribute concert to the Swedish band.

Michael Muthu's earnest 'Welcome Song' gave way to Shalini and Shema of Colour Chaos who sang interesting, improvised versions of 'Honey Honey' and 'Ring Ring'. And then it was time for the party. With Nipun Nair on the guitar, Conrad Simmons on the bass, Antony Karuna and Vivian on keyboards and a gifted Maynard Grant on the drums, the girls — Nadisha Thomas, Maalavika Manoj, Sangita Santosham, Anuradha Cheyyur, Mili Nair and Harshita Krishnan — performed mostly faithful renditions of Abba's greatest hits.

Sangita and Harshita's best came in the lively 'SOS', the classic break-up song 'Knowing Me, Knowing You', the futuristic 'Summer Night City', Abba's tribute to their hometown Stockholm and the upbeat 'Take A Chance On Me'. Their voices blended in so well a manner that it marked the original sound of Agnetha Faltskog and Anni-Frid Lyngstad.

Nadisha, Maalavika and a feisty Anuradha set the template for rich, multi-textured soundscapes in 'Chiquitita' (with Maalavika's bell-like voice soaring); 'I Have A Dream' with a host of little children singing along to the strum of the guitar; the dark and mysterious 'Name Of The Game' with Nadisha's voice mainlining into your soul; 'Waterloo' where the audience more than surrendered to Karuna and Vivian's incredible keys; the disco-tinged 'Voulez Vous'; and the sax-filled 'Lay All Your Love On Me'.

A couple of songs designed as rhythmic exercises followed — 'Money, Money, Money' and 'Gimme! Gimme! Gimme!' but it was the authenticity and the voices of Anuradha and Mili that blew away the audience. Roxygen, comprising Sudhin Prabhakar and Josh Mark Raj (guitar), David Joseph (drums), Jim Sathya and Timmy Madhukar (keyboard) and Keith Peters (bass), were fellow travellers and lent incredible instrumental support to the energetic Mili's 'Super Trouper' and the melodic 'One Of Us', breathing chords and progressions with ease.

Plenty of sing-alongs spurred the audience — Anuradha's grand rendition of the nostalgic 'Fernando', Mili's peppy 'Dancing Queen', Nadisha's powerful 'The Winner Takes It All', Timmy's 'Eagle' and 'Mama Mia' — who were determined to have fun and remember yesterday. And that's what they got at this tribute concert — a really good time.