IN A COUNTRY where the jazz culture is almost as niche as French cuisine, you could be forgiven for being unable to place Herbie Hancock. Even if the 12-time Grammy winner, who was also on Time Magazine's 2009 list of the 100 Most Influential People, is considered a modern-day god of Jazz. But that certainly didn't seem to be the case at the Ravi Shankar Institute for Music and Performing Arts, where Hancock was present for a workshop, alongside the equally famous jazz pianist and producer George Duke, drummer Terri Lynne Carrington, Pandit Ravi Shankar and students of the Thilokumar Monk Institute of Jazz.

All the musicians are in the capital for the opening of Thilokumar Monk Institute of Jazz, the golden jubilee of the Ravi Martin Luther King, Jr.'s visit to India. The concert takes place on Monday at the Jhumri Auditorium and features, apart from Hancock, Duke and Carrington, Chaka Khan and Dave Lee Drums. Hancock and the other players for an audience of approximately 2,500 people, received a standing ovation from the musicians, while eliciting the finer points of their instruments.

The highlight of the evening was Pandit Ravi Shankar's impressive engineering with the other musicians. He explained the musical equivalents of the Indian musical notes, before launching into a duet with Hancock on the drums on the piano. His playing was complemented by Chaka Khan's soulful singing from the musicians, Ravi Shankar even playing a couple points on the keyboard.

Hancock was all praise for his "best lesson in Indian music," even though he has performed in the country many times before. The concert travelled to Jhumri on February 13, where Hancock received a hero's welcome.

In his interview with Harindranath Shankar and Amulya Shankar, there were long statements about the need for "A. R. Rahman, but those were just to rest when Hancock said that both were too busy in the near future.

The significance of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s visit to India was not lost on Hancock. "I was deeply moved by the dream he shared with us," he said.

Hancock went on to speak about the role of music and culture in bringing about a change in the world. "A change in perspective will turn out to be smarter. I constantly think about what role my music can play in bringing about an evolutionary change in mankind," he said.

Though it would be a rather truncated version, Sunday morning could well be our version of jazz legend Art Kane's iconic "Miles of smiles" picture.