

Delhi's night of jazz with son of Dr King

BY FOZIA YASIN

NEW DELHI

IT PROVED to be an evening full of surprises. On the 50th anniversary celebration of the first visit by the pioneer of the American civil rights moment, Martin Luther King Jr to India, Siri Fort Auditorium in the city came alive to echoes of "Yes We Can" and "We Shall Overcome".

Present on the occasion was Martin Luther King III, son of Martin Luther King Jr who said that it was Mahatma Gandhi's legacy of non-violence that formed the basis even for the American movement.

"My father used to tell me that while he visits other countries as a tourist, when it comes to India, he visits the land

as a pilgrimage. We share the tradition of freedom," he said.

"Had Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King been with us today, they might not have told us that 'we shall overcome', but 'to some extent we have overcome'," he added to huge applause by an emotional crowd.

And to mark the occasion, while music seemed to be a well-thought-of option, he said, "Jazz is a peculiar contribution of America to music."

The duo of vocalists Chaka Khan and Dee Dee Bridgewater took the stage with *We Shall Overcome*. But the real treat of the evening was 12-time Grammy-winning jazz pianist and composer Herbie Hancock, who said, "It is a

great pleasure to be in India again after 2006. And more so when we are celebrating the meeting of two great visionaries whose vision resulted in the first black President to America."

Already in a trance by the works of Martin Luther King historic speech "I Have A Dream", which was playing in the background during the inauguration, the audience was mesmerised by the performance, *Brazilian Love Affair* by multi-Grammy winning George Duke and Ustad Zakir Hussain.

The show was supported in India by US state department and the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz and will organise another show in Chennai.



US singers Chaka Khan and Dee Dee Bridgewater perform at the Living Dream Concert at the Siri Fort Auditorium in New Delhi on Monday.

PHOTO: Biplab Banerjee