

By Karanjeet Kaur

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 2008 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 Lyne Carrington, Pandit Ravi Shankar and students of the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz.

All the musicians are in the capital for *Living Dream*, a concert commemorating the golden jubilee of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr's visit to India. The concert takes place on Monday at the Siri Fort Auditorium and features, apart from Hancock, Duke and Carrington, Chaka Khan and Dee Dee Bridgewater. Hancock and the others played for an audience of star-struck youngsters, most of them budding singers and musicians, while explaining the finer points of their instruments.

The highlight of the morning was Pandit Ravi Shankar's impromptu jamming with the other musicians. He explained the musical equivalents of the Indian musical notes, before launching into a delightful *jugalbandi* with Duke on the keyboard. Then, on multiple requests from the musicians, Ravi Shankar even played *Raghuipati Raghava Raja Ram* on the keyboard.

Hancock was all praise for his "first lesson in Indian music," even though he has performed in the country thrice before. The concert travels to Mumbai on February 19, where Hancock is planning to record an album with Ustad Zakir Hussain and Anoushka Shankar. There have been rumours about a collaboration with the toast of the season, A. R. Rahman, but those were laid to rest when Hancock said that both were too busy in the near future.

The significance of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr's journey to India was lost, till Hancock was asked what it meant to him. "My parents had to endure a great deal of suffering due to racism in Georgia. I would never be able to lead the life they did. The story of the change that America is experiencing now begins with Mahatma Gandhi," he declared.

Hancock went on to speak about the role of music and culture in bringing about a change in the world. "A child who is exposed to music at an early age 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, Saturday morning could well be our version of jazz legend Art Kane's iconic Harlem 1958 picture.

karanjeet.kaur@mailtoday.in



Herbie Hancock at a workshop at the Ravi Shankar Institute of Music and Performing Arts in the city

GET READY FOR ALL THAT JAZZ



(Above, from left) Larry Schwartz of the American Center and Soli J. Sorabjee, president, Capital Jazz, with Ravi Shankar and wife Sukanya at the workshop. (Right) George Duke enthralled the audience.