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## Footloose and Fancy Free - Globetrotting with Dr.Sunil Kothari

### 2nd edition of Samarpana: The Asian Festival of Classical Dance

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Photos courtesy: Samarpana Festival

October 15, 2013

During the 2nd edition of Samarpana, the Asian Festival of Classical Dance, produced by Sruti Laya school of Bharatanatyam in Singapore under the guidance of its director Gayatri Sriram, one at once notices that it is an international arts platform where, as claimed by the organizers 'sensibilities, sense and the sublime come alive.' The presentation was not limited to classical Bharatanatyam dance form only. Sruti Laya and event organizer Jyoti Ramesh of Jade Group along with the sponsors BSI, Orbis, Passion Card, Mudrika Foundation for Indian Performing Arts, Bengaluru, media partner Tabla, the Tagore Society of Singapore, and several well wishers, have a large canvas of performing arts.

The scope of the three-day festival included celebrated Indian classical Dhrupad singers Gundecha Brothers in collaboration with Kumudini Lakhia, internationally renowned Kathak exponent, guru and choreographer with her dance company Kadamb from Ahmedabad, collaboration of Flamenco Sin Fronteras with guest artist Miguel Angel Espino and JSLN Company, three segments of Bharatanatyam, Contemporary (Zaini Tahir and NUS Dance, French ballet academy L'Academie du Danse, Singapore and a special lecture by V Sriram, the noted musicologist and cultural historian from India on 'The Devadasis of George Town' and a panel discussion on 'Dilution of classical arts' by experts from various fields. The sumptuous fare was offered on a silver platter from 27th till 29th September 2013 at the Drama Centre Theatre, National Library Building, Singapore.

On the opening night, India's leading musicians of the Dhrupad tradition, the Gundecha Brothers Umakant and Ramakant accompanied on pakhavaj by Akhilesh Gundecha and on tanpura by Nirantan Gundecha and Sanjeev Jha, wove a web of magic of musical sound with their slow alap as is performed traditionally in Dhrupad. The dignity and the serious manner with which they elaborated the alap was a measure of their artistic height they have achieved in their distinguished career. It was a coming together for the first time of Dhrupad and Kathak.

Earlier, they have collaborated with late Chandralekha in her choreographic work Sharira. It created history as both the iconoclastic dancer, exploring frontiers of not only Bharatanatyam, but also of dance employing physical traditions of Yoga and South Indian martial art Kalaripayattu of Kerala to the accompaniment of Dhrupad singing by the Gundecha Brothers, revealed possibility of a daring collaboration in the field of dance and classical music. Even earlier, the Gundecha Brothers had collaborated with contemporary dancer Astad Deboo in his explorations of movement in his choreographic work imbued with a deep feeling of prayer. This openness to participate with dancers has won Gundecha Brothers great respect. The dancers and the musicians show complete respect for each other and the art forms, journeying together enhancing the emerging form with such collaboration. Therefore, when the musicians and choreographer Kumudini Lakhia, known for her catholic approach in Kathak, agreed to undertake such a collaborative work together, a lot of expectations were raised on part of the rasikas. The music aficionados and the dance buffs were eager to see the resultant artistic work. Suffice it to say that both the Gundecha Brothers and Kumudini Lakhia with her well trained dancers more than fulfilled the expectations.