



Known for his energetic slapstick performances, this Canadian-American actor used to wear tap dancing shoes to bed when he was small because his parents often asked him to "perform in the middle of the night".

Members of the band Swaraag, all suited up in traditional attire before a performance



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Pratap Singh Nirwan, Founder, Swaraag

Changing scenario

Thanks to the increasing use of digital music and recorded tracks, people are forgetting the sounds of instruments. And, because of this very reason, the life of today's songs is extremely short, unlike the classic Bollywood songs.

# STAYING TRUE TO THEIR MUSIC

Formed in 2014, Jaipur-based band, Swaraag, is known for fusing Indian and Western instruments

ANGELA PALJOR

From tabla to drums, sitar to acoustic guitar, traditional Rajasthani *morchang* to saxophone, the band Swaraag creates fusion music from a *jugalbandi* of Indian and Western instruments. Formed in 2014, the Jaipur-based ensemble brings forth the traditional Rajasthani renditions amalgamated with modern instruments. In Delhi for a corporate event, founder Pratap Singh Nirwan tells us about the band's journey and upcoming plans. Excerpts:

**How was Swaraag formed?**  
We began as an instrumental band, but soon realised that

people loved vocals more than instrumental music. So, we started looking for a vocalist. Asif, who is the younger brother of Arif Khan (co-founder, who plays the sitar), was a Sufi singer working with different bands. We included him in our band and the audience loved him.

**How did the band come to include so many genres?**  
We didn't plan to create anything specific. Bollywood mashup happened because of audiences' demand. We've worked hard to bring all these aspects together and have evolved with time.

We began with Sufi music, but later realised that since we belong to Jaipur, we need to

have a Rajasthani touch. When we introduced Rajasthani fusion, we ensured it didn't lose the essence of the traditional Rajasthani folk.

The reason people like Swaraag today is because we deliver music from various genres while staying true to their origin. Our line-up depends on how open the audience is and what kind of music they prefer. Once when we were performing at a wedding, the bride's father got so emotional that she asked us to stop playing for a while. That's the power of our music.

**How has music changed over the years?**  
Thanks to the increasing use of

digital music and recorded tracks, people are forgetting the sounds of instruments. And, because of this very reason, the life of today's songs is short, unlike the classic Bollywood songs. So, when we perform, we make sure that the audience can hear the actual sounds of our instruments. We don't use recorded tracks, everything is played live at our shows.

**How do you look at the growing avenues of indie music?**  
Some years ago, only certain labels dominated the market. Others didn't even get a chance to showcase their talent. Today, with the advancements in technology, different platforms like YouTube and other social me-

dia, it is possible for anyone to make themselves visible. However, even with the growing acceptance of music, the quality of music is degrading as many are focusing only on the number of views and subscription.

People are busy churning out songs every month without thinking of the quality. Daily, around 50 songs are released, but nobody knows for how long these last. I get calls from aspiring artists requesting to join the band. When I ask about their knowledge of classical music, the usual answer is that they have been practising for two-three years. Many are aping other singers and have lost their individuality. Artists must remember that they don't have to copy others, but keep the quality of music a top priority.

## DELHI DIGEST



### Making merry at the 'Money Heist'

Premium bar and restaurant, The Finch, hosted 'Money Heist' event. It was based on Netflix's popular web series, *Sacred Games*. Along with aromatic flavours of the delectable cuisine and beverages, a host of eclectic activities were organised for the visitors. Some spontaneous offers were also given to diners. There were clues on each table and those who solved got interesting incentives. All this with a band playing the theme songs of the series in the background.



### Skeyndor launches new skincare products

Skeyndor India launched its advanced skincare range, *The Luxury Elixir* at an event held at Hotel Eros in Nehru Place. Present on the occasion was international trainer & Holistic Aesthetician Margaret Beales, who informed the gathering about the benefits of these products. "These products are based on comprehensive scientific research to address the specific requirements of beauty-conscious women all over the world," said Ravi Mittal, Director, Skeyndor India.

SHANTANU DAVID

AFTER the central Delhi market's facelift, the many, many gastro-bars that have opened and since shuttered in Connaught Place cast a long shadow, and Station Bar is definitely sequestered among that number. Now occupying the former space held by Vault Café, Station Bar is supposed to be a terminus of sorts, through which many of the world's most significant train lines intersect. Each former vault is, well, still a vault, but the entrances are marked with famous railway lines.

When we enter, this Station is surprisingly silent, with us occupying the only table. Understandably this is because the Station is more an evening habitué, while we visited during a damp (not dank), raining winter afternoon.

Having previously visited Station during the evenings, during which it's usually packed, this emptiness is all the more surprising during an afternoon delight.

Corresponding to our culture shock, the food menu is just as non-partisan when it comes to cuisine, and includes some dishes from

## The boy on a train



Clockwise from left: Shish Taouk, Interiors of the Station Bar; and (inset) restaurant owner Umang Tiwari



everywhere.

We go ahead and start with the *Mixed Meat Platter*, which comprised *Tex Mex Chicken Wings*, *Lamb Albondigas* (meatballs), *Chicken Satay*, *Garlic Prawns*, and *Chicken Shish Taouk*, alongside hummus and salsa. It is at this early

point, in which things became almost scripted.

Our personal favourite, the garlic prawns are firm yet tender as well as pliant yet saucy, much like the second female lead in a vintage transcontinental adventure, while the *Chicken Satay* is unfortunately overdone to the point of being burnt, much like John Wayne having played Chinggis (Genghis, if you're being pop cultured) Khan.

Turning to the new world, the *Tex Mex Wings* have the

characteristic tang and twang of jalapenos and Mexican Texas respectively, without committing fully to each side, while the *Lamb Albondigas* are tragically warm on the outside, yet (frozen) cold to through the center.

Talk about Disney villains. That being said, our ordered cocktail, *Blue Train*, chugged up first, and being a bar-rage of gin, tamarind, puree (presumably tomato), and *Blue* (counting on Curacao), all coddled, and topped, by egg white, is a potent potion. Given the strength of their cocktails, it's no worry this station is packed during the evenings.

Next, we decide to go basic and pick out our very own *Fungi Misti Pizza*. Apparently, the chefs took a leaf out of the afternoon clientele's book, and was missing in action, because it took us half an hour to get a pizza in a restaurant that was empty.

The end result kind of makes us kind that they had lost the pizza in the forest (or the station, or the kitchen pass). Again though, this place is a super-jumping bar (I believe they call them nightclubs), and their cocktails are pretty LIT, so maybe you should visit and form your own opinion.

F-60, 2nd Floor, Connaught Place. Meal for two: ₹3,000 (with alcohol, and taxes)

SHILAJIT MITRA

THE Hindi film mom is set in stone. She's benign, compassionate, and forever on the verge of teary sentimentality. Well, not in Navjot Gulati's *Jai Mummy Di*. Releasing this week, the film stars Supriya Pathak and Poonam Dhillon as a pair of raucous Delhi moms. Their kids – played respectively by Sunny Singh and Sonnalli Seygall – wish to get married, something these matriarchs are up in arms against. It's a war of the mommy superiors, set in the familiar comic world of Luv Ranjan, who has produced the film with T-Sevries.

"*Jai Mummy Di* is essentially Romeo and Juliet turned around," says Gulati, who has

directed the short films *Best Girlfriend* and *Jai Mata Di* and is making his feature debut with this one. "It's a risky spin because on the face of it, the villain in my film is the mom. It's not the mollycoddling, *kheer-khilane wali* ma people are used to watching."

Singh, who plays the harried son stuck between a possessive mom and a loving girlfriend, says the theme of familial conflict never falls out of fashion. "Indian moms are naturally possessive. It's a form of unconditional love that comes out in varying expressions, from anger to tears. So the bicker-



New take on Romeo and Juliet story

ing is inevitable. The film pokes fun at all that, but also has an emotional story at its heart."

Since *Pyaar Ka PUNCHNAMA 2* (2015), Singh has



The outdoor section at Duty Free Courtyard has also been done up interestingly – each seat has a huge comfy cushion, unlike the inside.

## Of good food and menu card layout

RAJKUMARI SHARMA TANKHA

THOSE Lamb Chops were succulent and flavourful, weren't they? The *Baigan Bharta* tasted so different? And what say of the dessert *Daulat Ki Chaat*... quite yummy, right? These are a few common statements one gets to hear while walking in or out of a restaurant. But never have I heard anyone mentioning how impressed they were by the design of the menu card. Generally there is nothing innovative about it.

But not so at the Duty Free Courtyard. On my visit here, I heard diners gushing about the menu card! It wasn't surprising, given that the menu card of this restaurant is indeed quite unique. In fact, it is a piece of art – tastefully designed, meticulously created and perfectly spread out. Each dish on offer has been first cooked, then clicked and thereafter printed on the menu card.

Duty Free Courtyard, spread over 10,000 sqft, took off a month ago and is the third one by restaurateur Varun Puri – the other two being in Delhi and Gurugram.

The interiors are classic yet fun and the decor aesthetically pleasing to the eye. The staff is extremely courteous and ever-smiling. We, my friend and I, were greeted by manager Rohit Malik who seated us near the DJ console. Being afternoon, the DJ was missing from action, and soft music played instead.

After browsing through the menu, we ordered a *Chakhna Sampler* comprising popcorns, nachos, masala peanuts, *chana jor garam*, pita and some salad from the Nibbles section. However, there are other options like *Chicken Popcorns*, *Nachos Corn*

*Chaat*, *Mexican Fries* and *Salami & Sausages*.

For soup, Chef Anil Adhikari, who personally visits all the guests, suggested a *Veg Manchow Soup* and a *Hyderabadi Paya Shorba*. And both proved to be extremely refreshing and delicious. Another worth-a-try is the *Hungarian Mushroom Soup*.

Then came in the starters – *Amritsari Kulcha* (two bite-sized, well-cooked and lavishly spread with ghee) along with a few pieces of *Paneer Tikka*, *Soya Chaap*, *Tandoori Paneer* and *Mushrooms* for me, a hardcore veggie. For my non-veggie friend, the starter spread consisted of

*Grilled Chicken*, *Grilled Fish*, *Special Seekh Kebab*, *Kung Pao Chicken* and *Fish Fingers*.

One must admit that each dish was cooked to perfection and melted in the mouth. You can also opt for *Dahi Ke Kebab*, *Sharabi Soya Chaap*, *Crispy Lotus Stem*, *Honey Chilli Water Chestnuts*, *DF Special Prawns* and *Chilli Chicken*. Even as we were enjoying our starters, Chef Adhikari walked in to help us with the order for the main course. While my friend opted for *Mutton Rogan Josh* and *Butter Chicken*, I chose a *Paneer Makhni* and *Malai Kofta* along with the regular breads – *rotis* and *naans*. And of course, some green salad to go with it.

The other options in the main course include *Aloo Dum*, *Rawalpindi Channe*, *Paneer Kadhai* and *Baigan Bharta* in the veggie section and *Tawa Seekh*, *Andhra Fish Curry*, *Mutton Chettinad* and *Nalli Nihaari*.

We rounded off the delectable meal with the famous Old Delhi's *Daulat Ki Chaat* eating which was just as heavenly an experience as the other delicacies. You can also order a *Fried Cassata*, *Malt-ing Chocolate* and *Doughnuts Three Way* to satiate your sweet tooth.

All in all, an experience worth remembering.

FB-103, Garden Galleria Mall Sector 38A, Noida Time: 12.00pm to 1.00am Meal for two: ₹1,400

