

Press note:

Children with a cause, steal hearts and limelight

Students of Cathedral and John Connon School put up a grand musical extravaganza in a star studded charity show to raise funds for Salaam Bombay Foundation kids.

Mumbai, 11th September, 2014: Cathedral and John Connon Senior School students did it once again! The second edition of last year's successful charity music concert 'WE', aimed at raising funds for Salaam Bombay Foundation children, proved to be a big draw. The budding and talented young artists performed to a packed house. Actor Vidya Balan, parents, teachers, Salaam Bombay Foundation children and the who's who of Mumbai were present to witness the spectacle.

The 90-minute live music extravaganza was held at Blue Frog, Lower Parel, on Thursday evening and presented a peppy mix of jazz, pop and contemporary music.

Actor Vidya Balan was present to support the cause and cheer aloud for young artists on a mission to help children of their own age.

'WE' made an enduring impression last year, with 25 Class 7 students of Cathedral and John Connon Senior School coming together to raise funds for Salaam Bombay Arts Academy. The two-hour show proved to be a huge hit and the over-whelming response it received compelled the group to recreate the magic once again.

The Art Academy children too presented a lively dance performance to complement the efforts of their friends.

Mrinalini Somani, a Class 8 student of Cathedral and John Connon School, is the brain behind WE.

It was in September 2013 that the idea of raising funds for The Salaam Bombay Academy of the

Arts struck this young girl who has closely been working for her mother's anti-tobacco campaign. Mrinalini roped in her classmates and shared the thought of helping children through music, only to be receive supports and encouragement from her classmates.

"My friends and I are elated to be working for this cause. We managed to raise a little more than a million rupees last year through WE. The appreciation and warm response we received has encouraged us put up a bigger show this year. We are extremely excited to be able to help the children of The Salaam Bombay Academy of the Arts. These children are equally talented; they just aren't fortunate enough." **Said Mrinalini**

The Salaam Bombay Academy of the Arts provides world-class training in dance, music and theatre to children in government schools. The academy builds their confidence, fosters creativity and creates different vocations in the arts. Like last year, the funds raised at this year's musical event too will directly benefit the academy, by providing talented and deserving underprivileged children an opportunity to receive advanced training in their chosen vocation, bringing them one step closer to their dream.

Children of Salaam Bombay Arts Academy too expressed their excitement about the concert. "It's the biggest platform and an unprecedented opportunity for us to showcase our talent. The Cathedral children helped us train and hone our musical skills. If given half a chance, we would definitely take up music as our career later in life," **says Deepali, Preeti and Dhanashri**, in unison, who hail from a municipal school in Goregaon.

Their contemporaries from Cathedral share Salaam Bombay Foundation kids' sentiments. "WE is a team, a team of friends. It's like working as a group of friends. We help them groom their singing, dancing and music skills while being inspired by their zeal to learn and prove themselves. The cause is bringing out the best in us," **said Zahan Parekh and Rehan Bhat.**

Devika Chadha, Vice-President, Operations, Salaam Bombay Foundation, said "This initiative

has been instrumental in bringing children from two different sections of the society on the same platform. The Salaam Bombay Academy of the Arts believes in peer-learning and friendship!”

About Salaam Bombay Foundation

Salaam Bombay Foundation, a non-profit organization, was established in 2002 with an aim to empower children with life skills. These life skills help them make the right decisions for their health, education and livelihood. Salaam Bombay Foundation believes that educating children is the most enduring way of shaping the future of the country. It works in government-aided and municipal schools with children in the age group of 10-17 years across Mumbai city and rural Maharashtra. Currently Salaam Bombay Foundation runs the largest preventive programme in tobacco control in Mumbai which has already reached out to over 5 lakh children throughout Maharashtra and has covered 27 districts of Maharashtra through its Rural Outreach programme.

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