



Astad Deboo: Performer with a cause

Description



Astaad Deboo with his students at the performance

Astad Deboo is a world reknowned performer, he works with differently abled and street children and creates magic on stage.

As a person who is always taking the path that is less traversed, Astad Deboo has rewritten the conventional dance theatre styles. This may be the reason why Astad Deboo has been called the pioneer of modern dance in India. The groups of performers he always choose to work with also make him stand unique. Astad loves to work with the underprivileged and has been doing this for the past 25 years. For 22 years he has been working with children who have hearing impairment and now he is with the street children of Salaam Baalak Trust, an NGO working for the underprivileged in Delhi.

The Inquirer had the privilege to interact with and see the performance of this veteran choreographer when he came to Puducherry and performed at Lycee Francais on Feb. 20. The performance was named 'Breaking Boundaries' and as the name suggests the style was fresh to the art enthusiasts of Puducherry as this was his first performance in this coastal town. For this performance he chose a group of performers from Salaam Baalak Trust.

The 14-member team from the Salaam Baalak Trust was fully unaware of the kind of dance they were stepping into when they joined Astad on October 2008 to start the work for 'Breaking Boundaries'. Though all of them were from Bollywood background they were able to catch up with Astad's entirely different style. This was possible because Astad being a strict teacher. "This dance is tougher and its slow pace demands more control over body compared to Bollywood dance and Salsa", says Avinash, one of the performers.

On an interaction with The Inquirer, Astad talked about 'Breaking Boundaries'. "Performers of Salaam Baalak Trust with their Bollywood dance background broke the boundaries to come into a new boundary of mine. In this particular performance I gave importance to exploring spaces, defining gravity and learning to trust", says Astad. One who sees the performance need not to be explained the importance he has given to body movements and pace.

Pride filled Astad's eyes while speaking about the performers. "All of them are talented, enthusiastic and hardworking. I don't want the audience to tell oh! they were from deaf or oh! they were from street. That's not an excuse", tells the strict instructor. Astad has always been able to amaze the viewers through the talent of the performers he trains.

During His Performance In Pondicherry

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