

The Telegraph

Fingers laden with magic

Named the *Hathor* series after the Egyptian goddess of love, this year's set of six musical presentations by the Kolkata Classics Club kicked off with an exciting programme on March 29 at the Park Hotel's Galaxy Room. The Kolkata Classics Club goes from strength to strength, motivated by its dynamic founder, the pianist, Jennifer Heemstra. This was the club's first public concert of 2016, and it featured Heemstra and Chanda VanderHart in a programme of musical works for four hands at one piano.

Chanda VanderHart is a performing artist from the United States of America. She is, at present, a doctoral scholarship fellow at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna. In 2008, she recorded both of Brahms's sonatas for cello and piano on the historical Brahms-Flügel in Mürzzuschlag, Austria with the cellist, Ronald Fuchs. In 2010, the duo recorded the works of Robert Fuchs. VanderHart visited Calcutta on the invitation of Heemstra, her friend and former colleague, to perform in the city in a spontaneous act of musical generosity, much like all the artists who are a part of these presentations.

This series targets a larger audi-

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ence of listeners of all ages, and from all walks of life. The concerts do not only take place at conventional venues such as The Park and the new venue at the Goethe Institute (March 31); there has also been an interactive session with children at the Little Gym, and an amazing performance in Kalighat where they held a Health Fair. At the latter, the popular singer, Sandeep Vyas, entertained a delighted group of young and elderly people with Bollywood songs, and Heemstra and VanderHart surprised listeners with a spectacle they had probably never seen before - four hands on one keyboard making equally entertaining music. The interactive element in all these presentations was exhilarating, and proved the fundamental need for people to find expression through the arts.

The general repertoire of the concerts contained works by Aram Khachaturian ("*Sabre Dance*"), Claude Debussy ("*Petite suite*"), George Gershwin (the Fred Astaire medley), and Sergei Rachmaninoff (*6 Morceaux, Op. 11*). Each concert boasted an unusual inclusion of



ethnic fairy tales from the West Indies, with projected picture illustrations by Kyle Alkema, music composed by Erika Chun and a well-synchronized reading by Isha Daga. Isha's clear diction and droll vocal illustrations were delightful and attractive to all. The selections from Felix Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer*

Night's Dream were beautiful.

An attractive innovation was the video projection of the pianists' hands on the inside of the open lid of the piano. This enabled all the members of the audience who did not have good seats (the right side of the auditorium) to see the detailed movements of their technical finger

work. Both pianists wore elegant costumes by their new designer, Jyoti Sachdev Iyer, which they carried off with runway grace.

The unending generosity of the sponsors should be lauded, as well as that of the dedicated musicians, whose passion and artistic devotion should be an inspiration for all.