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City bytes: Ito-Diony duet's fusion recital



the Youth Centre Auditorium on April 4.

The concert opened with a performance from the students of Kilu Music School. Parents of the students made up most of the audience, along with some visitors from outside the country.

The spectators found themselves transfixed as Hiroko and Diony worked their magic on stage. They did solos and played together in perfect harmony, without a beat out of sync. Hiroko was flawless on her accordion and Diony worked his skilful fingers on the guitar, which he later switched for a shamisen, a traditional Japanese instrument similar to the Bhutanese drangyen. Both artists performed traditional Japanese and French songs.

A medley of sounds from South America, France, the West Indies, Guadeloupe and Japan followed after the traditional and classic songs. Diony described their music as being "a fusion of sounds from Japan and France." They performed a song inspired by the Spanish Tango followed by a piece composed by Hiroko called "Kuzuzangpo", which she said was inspired from her travels in Bhutan.

So are there any similarities in the music of Japan, France and Bhutan? Diony said that all music could be like the movement of a river. "A lot of ideas and feelings can be conveyed within a short span of time in French music, but I've noticed that, in Japanese and Bhutanese music, a lot more time is required to express the same amount of ideas and feelings."

This is Hiroko Ito and Sylvain Diony's second visit to Bhutan. They have been performing together for ten years. Hiroko from Japan studied the accordion under a famous Japanese artist, Yasuhiro Kobayashi. In order to continue her accordion studies, she moved to France where she met Diony. She currently has

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three albums to her name.

Born in France, Diony is of Guadeloupian origin. He has won many prizes for guitar and chamber music and has performed in concerts all over France, in many European countries, in Guadeloupe, in Quebec (Canada), and several times in Japan.

The two-day concert was organised by Kilu Music School, with support from JICA (Japan international cooperation agency) office in Bhutan.

Masa Yuki Nagano, the only trained music teacher at the School, hopes that the concert will inspire more Bhutanese youth to embrace music and take it up as a constructive hobby. "These kinds of concerts, if held more often, will expose young Bhutanese to music from different cultures," he said. "It also helps raise funds to keep the school open and running."

Kilu Music School has organised other concerts in the past. They had a group from Switzerland perform in August 2008. Said Nagano, "The school has received a proposition from an American Music School for a concert in August this year."

By Pema Choezom

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