# Musical tribute to gurus of Benaras

# September 7, 2009

# D. Borthakur – The Asian Age

It is not always that one gets to hear stalwarts of an age-old musical gharana featured in a single album. Might come as a pleasant surprise to those, who are acquainted with names such as Pandit Hanuman Misra, Pandit Gopal Misra, Pandits Rajan-Sajan Misra, but for those who want to do a crash course on the musical legacy of the Benaras gharana, Mystica Music’s latest offering Kula Sampada is nothing short of an MBA degree from one of India’s premier management institutes. Firstly because it features some rare recordings of the chief exponents of the gharana, and secondly, one will get to hear some rare Hindustani classical ragas, which as Padma Bhushan awardee Rajan Misra puts it, “are almost forgotten these days”.

And after all this, if one is still double minded about buying the album, this is what Pandit Rajan has to say, “We had so many early recordings of our ancestors and gurus from their times that we literally had to choose which ones to be used in the album, and honestly it was a Herculean task as all of them were equally appealing.” “This is a dream come true. This album is an endeavour to offer our heartiest gratitude to our gurus, and the pioneers of our gharana. We have really worked hard on it.

From choosing the content of the album to its artwork, all of us were religiously involved in the whole process,” opines Ritesh Misra, sixth generation musician of the gharana, and also the son of Pandit Rajan Misra, who along with his brother Rajnish has sung three ragas in the album. “Basically, we have tried to offer a glimpse of the extraordinary quality of the gharana,” avers Rajnish. While launching the album, both Rajan and Sajan Misra spoke at length about a few issues concerning Indian classical music such as the gharana tradition, modernisation of instruments, and also on the immediate need to spread awareness about Indian classical musics tradition saying that most Indians are not aware of our great musical legacy, and now that it has got global attention, we have been able to gauge its worth, which should have happened much earlier.