

PAULA LINDO

Abhijit Anchortassoo plays a staggering range of instruments: harmonium, guitar, piano, pan, mandolin, violin, dholak, tabla and tassa. He is also a vocalist.

At the recital Music of the Diaspora, staged May 6 by the Department of Creative and Festival Arts (DCFA), UWI, St Augustine, Anchortassoo performed as a member of the UWI Arts Indian Classical Ensemble.

He sang the solo Damadam Mast Kalandar while also playing the harmonium during the ensemble's set in the recital. He also played violin, tabla, piano and tassa at various points in the show.

Anchortassoo's interest in Indian classical music began when his family sent him to classes in the genre at age eight. He's now 20 and music is what he wants to do for the rest of his life.

In 2007, he entered his first competition, Children of Mastana Bahar; he went on to win it in 2011. He has won third place in WinTV's Chhote

Abhijit's a musical whiz

Champs and the NCIC/Coca Cola Youth Champ Competition. In secondary school he also won awards in school competitions, especially singing ragas.

Anchortassoo recently completed the first year of a two-year certificate in music at the DCFA and intends to do his bachelor's degree.

"After I finish that, I want to teach in secondary schools and have my own private classes.

"Eventually I plan to do my master's and then one good day become a music lecturer, maybe here in UWI itself. I'd like to go abroad to study at some point, especially for my master's."

His career is a family affair, of sorts.

"My dad and my grandfather are my biggest inspirations," he said. "They teach me what they know and they are always inspiring me to



Abhijit Anchortassoo sings, plays harmonium, guitar, piano, pan, mandolin, violin, dholak, tabla and tassa. PHOTO COURTESY ABHIJIT ANCHORTASSOO

learn new stuff. Without their support, none of this would be possible. It's not just my dad, it's my grand-

parents, my mom, they keep telling me this is what I am made to do and never give up and they support me

100 per cent."

Anchortassoo said his love of Indian music was "close to my very being"; he is moved by how this genre of music can deeply affect the mood of the audience.

However, he does not want to restrict himself to one type of music.

"I want to do some jazz, do some chorale, voice, and piano and learn to sight read, etc. I don't want to be stagnating in one musical style. I wouldn't mind being an ambassador for Indian classical music, but I want to try all kinds of music."

Anchortassoo said he follows his passion because he's genuinely happy when he's doing music.

"To new musicians, I would say never give up, but understand the road is going to be very rough and there will be challenges and setbacks.

"A lot of people will say you don't have a future in music but if you genuinely love it and this is what you feel you are good at and you're happy, continue and don't ever stop. Find the avenues to keep going forward and better yourself."