

Soul Stone-d

ROHAN SWAMY

TAKING a first-time look at the huge 60 kilo block of stone, with slits and a huge hole cut into it would make it hard to convince even the most simplest of souls that it is a musical instrument. And yet when you hear Germany-based musician Hannes Fessmann wet his hands in a bowl of water, sprinkle a little on the stone and begin running his hands over it, people are forced to eat their words for belittling the musical instrument as a block of stone.

"My father began researching on using stones for music when I was a ten-year-old. And watching him my curiosity regarding the same grew so much so that I actually began to understand the fact that when carefully heard stones had the ability to develop into wonderful musical instruments."

The *Klang Steine* or 'Sound stone' as it is called originally was scouted from the Swiss Alps by the father-son duo; Fessmann now uses granite stones from across the globe. "The stone that I am playing on," he says as he demonstrates, "has been bought from Tamil Nadu. It is called the *Gabbro* stone, which is composed of a percentage of granite, the exact quantity of which I am not aware of."

Presently selling the stones at the



ARUL HORIZON

Fessmann feels that the therapeutic value of this form of music can act as a potential stress buster for everyone

Svaram kiosk, at the *Baajaa Gaajaa Festival*, Fessmann says that the reason behind the music stems from the fact that the deep cuts made in the stone aid the process of resonance and thereby allow the musician to play both, deep as well as rich tones at the same time. "As far as the unique design of the stone is concerned, it is something that came to me over a long period of time, via a lot of trials and errors," he admits sheepishly.

Fessmann also says that the music is therapeutic, and that the music has actually showed impressive results in the case of old patients and patients suffering from Dementia. The music therapy is based on four important pillars. Fessmann says that the first 'being connectivity or touch between the player and the instrument, the second is the non-verbal communication, wherein two players can communicate thoughts via the music and the instrument. "Sensormotoric feedback, the third pillar, involves comparing the evenness of the music along with the feeling of touch that is generated when you play the instrument and the last most important part is meditation, which requires deep concentration for achieving the required finesse," he says.

On the music culture permeating across the globe, Fessmann feels that music is all about harmonious cooperation. "It might take a while before the sound stone actually garners a lot of attention in the west and the east but then I believe that it is music, and as long as it is pure and has the ability to merge seamlessly with audiences it'll catch up," he says.