

daily dossier



MUSIC CORNER

'Without Zubin Mehta we wouldn't be here'



(From left to right) Dr Farokh Udwadia, Mehroo Jeejeebhoy, Shabnam Minwalla, and Cyrus Guzder in conversation



The MMMF Singing Tree Senior and Youth Choirs conducted by Rohini Basu, accompanied by Tavan Shah and Kalpesh Karde of the Udayachal High School. PICS COURTESY/MEHLI MEHTA MUSIC FOUNDATION

WITH this glowing introductory tribute to honour the maestro, **Mehroo Jeejeebhoy**, founder-trustee, Mehli Mehta Music Foundation (MMMF), opened up the conversation that followed the launch of *Encore*, last weekend at Pundole's in Ballard Estate. The book was released to commemorate three decades of the prestigious platform at the forefront of Western Classical music education among young learners. Jeejeebhoy recalled the early days of the foundation, with **Zubin Mehta**, where he felt it was necessary to honour his father **Mehli Mehta's** contribution to music in (then) Bombay. The session, moderated by **Cyrus Guzder**, cultural patron, was heartwarming and insightful, and included thoughts from fellow panelists **Dr Farokh Udwadia**, senior physician and music aficionado, and **Shabnam Minwalla**, author of *Encore*. "He has always been a silent supporter, and opened many doors for us. Over 30 years we could do 40 concerts thanks to him, with finest orchestras from across the world," Jeejeebhoy reminisced, adding, "I wish he could have been with us today. We are planning to celebrate his 90th birthday in January 2026."

Earlier, memorable performances by the MMMF Singing Tree Senior and



Dr Udwadia and Mehroo Jeejeebhoy release the book, *Encore*

Youth Choirs, and The MMMF String Quartet, liting from traditional to contemporary tunes, wowed all. The tagline in the invite alluded to plenty of 'unofficial stories'. And it didn't disappoint, as Jeejeebhoy, Udwadia and Minwalla revealed many sidelights, courtesy Guzder's gentle nudges.

As the glorious evening rolled by, we learnt about how they lugged a piano up a marble staircase to an apartment in Banoo Mansions for rehearsals, and how Jeejeebhoy worked tirelessly with Mehta to bring the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra to India. We secretly wished for, what else, but an encore! But we aren't complaining. The enriching evening was worthy of a standing ovation that apro Zubin would have been very proud of.