

## Abhay Rustum Sopori gets prestigious 'Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar'

Abhay Rustum Sopori, the internationally acclaimed Santoor Maestro and Music composer has been awarded the prestigious Sangeet Natak Akademy's first 'Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar' for the year 2006.

This award is been constituted this year only and shall be given to prominent personalities every year for their contribution and achievements in performing arts such as Music, Dance, Drama. This award consists of a cash prize of Rs.25,000 along with a citation. The award ceremony's date has to be finalized by the Sangeet Natak Akademy.

Abhay Rustum is the youngest Santoor Player of India from Delhi born in beautiful valleys of Kashmir, in a musical environment and spiritual surroundings; he has been the torch bearer of the exclusive traditional Santoor family of the country. He is the son of Santoor Legend Pt. Bhajan Sopori. He learnt Santoor from Grand Father Pt. Shambhoo Nath Sopori and from his father. He has immense musical sense from traditional Sufiana Gharana. He also acquired knowledge of Western Classical Music to get a base for systematic compositional work.

Abhay has performed in so many concerts at national and international levels to spread the Indian music through his magic of Santoor. Opening-Strings, Shehjaar, Aao Kadam Badhayain, etc. are some of his innovations in the field of music.

Other artists who have been awarded the first ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar include Niladri Kumar (Sitar), Sandipan Samajpati & Manjari Kelkar (Vocal), A.A. Bhat (Direction), Rajinder Rozy (Acting) etc. Sangeet Natak Akademy is the first Akademy which is established by Republic India as National academy for dance, music and drama to establish Indian Culture and Tradition.

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