

Sonic heritage

Isha Singh Sawhney

The Rajasthan government has a new formula for heritage preservation: 'living monuments'. This was recently announced by Usha Punia, Minister for Tourism, Art and Culture (Rajasthan).

The first one on the list is Jaipur's Jantar Mantar that has been adopted by Clarks Hotel Amer. Pianist-sound engineer Dominique Barthassat will create a spiritually stimulating plethora of sounds for the monument. Barthassat's music consists of an interaction between his piano and electronic sounds recorded on a laptop that are then mixed, spun and looped. Sounds of nature and Indian classical strains comprise the creation. Keeping the

architectural structure of Jantar Mantar in mind, Barthassat has worked on allowing music to flow from 24 speakers around the monument that have been placed in a circular fashion, based on the figure of the clock. Different strains of music will emanate from different speakers and converge at the centre of the monument, which is called the Sonic Mandala. "My aim is to enhance the beauty and mystery of the monument," says Barthassat. "It's different from the customary, seated version of sound and light shows — here, the spectator can walk around and is included in the sound."

Barthassat has even improvised ragas on the piano with Amaan Ali Bangash on the sarod and Ustad Shafaat Ahmed Khan on the tabla.



Dominique Barthassat's innovation in sound redefines Jaipur's Jantar Mantar