

Corsican couple delights MSU with Hang, fire dance

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Vadodara: "Stand for the Burrup," says 29-year-old Loic Robreteau. He and his companion, Marie Giorgi (25), are farmers from the island of Corsica in France. They have been spreading the message to save 30,000-year-old aboriginal paintings of the Burrup Peninsula in Western Australia, now under the threat of Oil companies.

Loic is a percussionist and Marie is a fire dancer. On Monday, the duo performed at two faculties of M S University. They have done this several times all over the world with a recently invented percussion instrument called Hang.

"Two years ago, we had started cycling from France through Turkey towards South Asia, when authorities in Iran refused to issue us Visa," said Loic. They had to go back to France and sell their bicycles, only to come to India this year. "After two weeks, we will be going to Nepal," he added.

Loic plays the Hang, which is a flying saucer shaped percussion instrument that produces sound like harp, bells and steelpans.

At the Faculty of Performing Arts, assisted by the students, Loic and Marie thrilled the audience. "We want to perform a jugalbandi with an Indian musician, as we can see that this city has a lot of them," said Loic.

He added: "The Hang was developed by Felix Rohner and Sabina Schärer from Panart, in 1998. We bought it in 2003."

Loic never had any formal training in music, but got attached to the alien sounding instrument that reminded him of "raindrops falling over bells."

Marie, on the other hand, is a trained fire dancer, who circles around Loic when he plays the Hang. "We call this 'line on the flame' if I have to translate it in French," said Marie. She is a beekeeper in their tiny coastal farm in northern Corsica.

"We saved some money out of the farm produce and decided to globetrot. We headed for the Burrup Peninsula in Australia," Marie added.

The couple plans to join thousands of people in Australia as they march for conserving rock paintings, now under threat from major Oil companies that have been eyeing the peninsula for its oil and natural gas reserves.