



### THE MAHINDRA BLUES FESTIVAL

Catch Soulmate along with Tedeschi Trucks Band featuring Derek Trucks and Susan Tedeschi with special guests Doyle Bramhall II, Grammy Award-Winning Jimmie Vaughan, Lil' Ed & The Blues Imperials, Zac Harmon, Soulmate and the Blackstratblues at the Mahindra Blues Festival this weekend on February 15 and 16, at Mehboob Studios, Bandra (W). Passes are available on [www.bookmyshow.com](http://www.bookmyshow.com) as well as at the venue.

Photo credit: Bimu Ju



>> Shraddha Soni's book, *I Am Life*, is available at [www.flipkart.com](http://www.flipkart.com) for ₹165

# SINGING THE BLUES

**Tipriti Kharbangar** is a vocalist who is keeping the blues alive with her band, Soulmate. The musician from Shillong talks to **Rhea Dhanbhora** about her music and upcoming performance at The Mahindra Blues Festival this weekend

Shillong based band Soulmate was formed in 2003 and released their first record in 2005. Their second album, *Moving On*, was released in 2009. Having toured India and the world, the band which comprises of guitarist Rudy Wallang and vocalist Tipriti Kharbangar, are all set to bring the blues to Mumbai with their second performance at the Mahindra Blues Festival 2014 (MBF). We talk to Tipriti to find out more about their music and what their third album (which will be launched at the festival) is like.

#### What's in store for audiences at MBF?

Well, we've got something new lined up this time, as we are going to bring our roots to the festival.

#### Did you always want to be a musician?

No, I had no idea that I was going to pursue something I just love doing. As a little girl, something I loved was waking up on Sunday mornings (at 6am!) to go to children's mass. I would always wait for the part of the service when the choir master told us to open our hymn book to my favourite hymn. I'd be the loudest of them all!

#### What made you and Rudy decide to collaborate together?

When Rudy met me, I knew nothing about the blues, but he saw that I had the blues in me. It definitely lives in me, so it was just natural that we started to work together.

#### What's your one favourite song to perform?

I have been writing a lot recently, and there is a song that we are working on often since our third album is about to get released... it's a song that I wrote, called *LIE*.

#### Who are your inspirations and influences?

Everything in life inspires me. We turn to things we can relate to and the blues has always been that for me, even when I didn't know what it was. Artists such as Aretha Franklin, Koko Taylor, Etta James, B.B. King and Buddy Guy have always inspired me. Of course, Rudy has inspired me the most.

#### Who do you really admire in the music industry right now?

I really admire Eric Clapton for what he is doing for the blues and music in general, as well as his work with rehabilitation.

#### How do you guys handle disputes?

We've never had any! Decisions are made together and we have a manager, Keith, to advise us as well.

#### Do songs fall into place or do you work on them separately?

Rudy writes his songs and I write mine. I write lyrics first then the melody, then I sing it to Rudy and ask for his opinion and we work on it together to make it a complete song.

#### Anything you'd like to tell people before they come see you?

(Laughs) Clean your ears so you don't miss a thing!

#### You've played this festival before. Will you come back?

Why not?! It's about the music and we love to play the blues.

#### Do you want your sound to evolve with each new album?

This album is different because I have contributed four songs and we recorded it in Mumbai. We tried to get as close as possible to our live sound. We learn different things everyday... so our sound will definitely evolve.

## FABLES ON PHILOSOPHY

Author of the book *I Am Life*, **Shraddha Soni** tells **Shirley Mistry** about her new book and what compelled her to write this story

#### What are the different issues that your latest book covers?

*I Am Life* is about the purpose of the soul. The philosophies in it convey that life is not a coincidence but an important stage in evolution. It covers the difference between the ego and soul.

#### What is the best way to deal with our common inner conflicts?

Identity crisis is the root. We are lost in a socially driven world looking for a mask. We spend all our energy fixing our outer façade and lose touch with ourselves; so we are perpetually role playing. Witnessing and questioning yourself is a way to break out of the role. Ask, 'Why do I want to do this?' 'What is my real intent?' 'Do I believe in what I want to do, or is it just to get me attention and approval?'

#### What inspired you to write this book?

I didn't set out to be an author, this story made me one. I saw this story in a flash of a moment and it got stronger by the day. To calm the clamour, I started making notes on my phone. Months later when I joined them, I realised that I had an entire story.

#### Which authors do you admire? What appeals to you about them?

I am a dictionary-worm! It is one book I can claim to have read fully and enjoy reading, as it brings me back to the real meaning of words. I also love *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint Exuper for the simplicity with which profound messages are conveyed.

#### Why did you choose a fable, rather than opting for non-fiction?

I am a storyteller. I need characters, drama and a little bit of magic. I always tell friends I have a film studio in my head, so whatever I say will be through a fable.

#### What can readers expect from your next venture?

Another mystical fable.