



Swinging Salseros!

NO SPINS, NO TURNS, NO PRESSURE TO PERFORM, 'TIS THE TIME FOR A SPECIAL TÊTE-À-TÊTE WITH KAYTEE NAMGYAL, INARGUABLY INDIA'S BEST SALSEROS!

A lazy Monday evening at Mocha's on Hill Road, the famous coffee joint struggles to fill up the place with people. It couldn't possibly be the best place to interview someone when there is loud music thumping in the background and your eyes can barely open up amidst the scented smoke of the hukka emitting across every table.

As the wait for the man of the hour continues, a short, petite guy, and five feet something enters with an unusually large gym bag. At first sight, he can easily pass off as a fitness trainer with his well toned physique. But for the time being, it is only the two women sitting with him who know that he is none other than the best Salsa dancer India has ever had.

If you are to believe that one could take a man out of Salsa but could never take Salsa out of a man, 29 year old Kaytee Namgyal undoubtedly reaffirms this thought with his utmost passion for the dance form. Born in Sikkim but brought up in Delhi, he was always seen hip-hopping his way to various inter-collegiate competitions, both as a participant and as a choreographer from Delhi University.

While Salsa came much later in life, Kaytee kept himself busy as a photographer. "Photography was a hobby and I always felt like making a career out of what I loved." Alongwith working as a full time fashion photographer with the infamous Ritu Beri at her Delhi studio, he also took up free-lancing assignments in street photography for NGOs. It's not that he switched to dancing because his career in photography was wavering, but it was his encounter with this

dance form in Tokyo during a family vacation that he realised that Salsa is for what he was meant to be.

It's been 8 years since then and Kaytee is already gearing up for the 4th Salsa India festival, an annual dance event that is held by his company Salsa India Pvt. Ltd. "I don't idolise anyone. Just be yourself, everyone else is taken!" is what Kaytee keeps saying as he tries to make believe the fact that there is nothing more enriching than being yourself, and being able to express yourself than aping anyone. This has given way to

Kaytee's distinctive style called 'Karma Salsa'. Karma being his real name, Karma Salsa is his definition of how one should dance. "Karma-Salsa is a state when your body is the direct representative of the music instrument that is playing." As a result, when Kaytee gets into the groove, all you see is his body swinging to the music beats playing and nothing more. While the Karma Salsa's doing well in his classes, Kaytee also plans to launch a label of merchandise under that name. An offshoot of his growing business, Karma Salsa will sell Retro style clothes and accessories that will be funky and fashionable but not too loud. When asked how he defines his own sense of style, Kaytee quips, "I don't make an effort to dress but I do make an effort to shop!"

"Salsa gives me the freedom to express myself" admits Kaytee. And it is this freedom of expression that exudes in his everyday life. Although this quality has led people to perceive him being

arrogant and has even cost him a few hefty work proposals, he doesn't care much as long as he's being true to himself and does what he strongly believes in. "My biggest turn-off is to see people trying to become someone they are not." What makes him happy is to be in the company of people who are just themselves. Moreover, if one plans to take his class, be it a celebrity or otherwise, Kaytee sees no difference between people the moment they are on the dance floor. And if one tries to demand for his 'special' attention, Kaytee doesn't hesitate in showing them the way to door.

A man who has single-handedly brought up 'Salsa-India' dance school which has now spread wings across the country still calls himself free as a bird. But that can only seem like a statement in disguise as he tries to introduce innovative styles in Salsa at his school with every passing day. While Kaytee plans to dance till his body can take it, he has planned something for the future. "I'd love to build a hotel or a resort in Sikkim and become a film maker!" he says with much conviction, incidentally work ideas that take birth out of his passions, yet again.

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Born on: 23rd April 1978
 Favourite Music: Blues, Rock
 Loves: People who are their selves
 Hates: Politics, Liars & Pretentious people
 Favourite Holiday destinations: New York & Tokyo
 Quotes: "Religion is man-made"

- DISHA GADHIYA
 dishagadhiya@gmail.com