



Leading from the front

SHE was supposed to be the star of the concert. Eliana Burki, the Swiss Alphorn player, was in concert in Kolkata to mark 60 years of Indo-Swiss relations. From an early age most thought she would become a popular Alphorn player and she has not let anybody down. At the age of five she started playing the instrument and by 17, after winning every possible award, she started her professional career by presenting jazz, rock, funk and blues numbers on the Swiss Alphorn, sparking off a controversy. During her Kolkata concert Burki did what every star is supposed to, she even presented a special piece for the occasion - *Kolkata Blues*. The spotlight was on her - starting from the moment she appeared in a mini skirt that had a touch of Swiss traditional designs and then sported something that's up Madonna's alley. She played until the audience clapped and screamed "encore", making everybody join her in singing *Chak De India*. But...

She was supposed to be a star but her band stole the show. Her brilliance was overshadowed by her band members. Electric guitarist Samuel Siegenthaler thought he was in a rock concert by jumping around, Adriano Regazzin mesmerized everyone, especially when he picked up the accordion. Even the bassist, Arnaud Francelet, was superb.

Who was the star? Unquestionably the drummer: Anthony Lo Gerfo. With a huge smile, he went wild. He even sang in the chorus. Lo Gerfo usually plays for Gwen Stefani and the audience could tell right away this man with a gray hat found his confidence long ago. He was given an ovation any rock star deserves. Eliana Burki and her manager, of course, do deserve credit for bringing together the band of international maestros. The long Alpine horn surely was something new, making everybody look forward to her album that would be released in Germany this month. At the time of recording, the band was different. I wish it was not.

■ Kasia Mill