

In the line of fire

Agnee, a hard rock band from the nineties, has resurfaced with a new sound and different vowels



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In the nineties, there was a band called Agni that fired up proceedings at college rock shows. The Pune rockers played covers of seventies rock idols and were generally well accepted by the Indian rocker. The band went through the rigours of touring, releasing an album and then disbanding.

Now, the band has been rekindled by guitarist Koko, who was a part of the original line-up. A lot of things are different about their new avatar. The band members frequently travel the Mumbai-Pune expressway to jam. The name has changed to Agnee and the music on their self-titled debut is nowhere close to what it used to be. The band's sound is a mishmash that throws up Indian folk, guitar solos and Hindi lyrics.

Koko explains, "Agnee is not really a reincarnation of the old band, I like the name. I'm used to being called Koko of Agni. The old Agni disbanded in 2002. When I formed this new line-up, we were thinking of a new name. Arijit said that Agnee is a nice name. So, I called my old band mates and they gave the go ahead. They've heard the new music and they love it."

Their eight-track album is actually their debut as a three-piece band. Koko describes the chord change. He says, "2002 was a dif-

ferent time and a different space. I was a much younger man. Over a period of time, your mindset changes. This is the outcome of that evolution I suppose. Within the band, all three of us compose, so we have three different styles. I used to play with a hard rock band, Arijit has jazz influences and Mohan plays the mridangam. Agnee is a combination of styles and that's why the album is so diverse. There's not been a specific style that we have tried to follow. Nothing has been force-fitted, if a song required a grunge sound or a jazzy approach, it has got that."

The band is composing for Prakash Jha's *Dil Dosti Etc.* Koko describes the experience as 'very good.' He adds, "I had a stint with Bollywood as a music director years back. That was in an individual capacity but that movie was not released. Arijit has also scored for a film called *Chowki*, which has also not been released. I did a South Indian film too. Now of course, *Dil Dosti Etc.* is scheduled for release next month. Mohan has sung a few tracks for that too."

The only thing that the new Agnee has retained from their namesake is Koko's guitar tone. He says, "I suppose that thing (playing solos) is never going to change. I'm old but I'm not a relic as yet. I still have a few fighting years."