

Dr. L. Subramaniam

"I find nothing more inspiring than the music making of my very great colleague Subramaniam. Each time I listen to him, I am carried away in wonderment," said Lord Yehudi Menuhin.

"In the West, I have heard only one other music which is as meditative, serene, powerful and yet equally joyful – that of Johann Sebastian Bach" says a leading critic of Subramaniam.

Subramaniam, India's violin icon, "The Paganini of Indian Classical music", "the God of Indian Violin" is the serenity of an Indian musician combined with the magnetism of a western "star". Constantly propelled from Singapore to Paris, from Delhi to Los Angeles, he has conquered every audience with the elegance and virtuosity of his style. His career as a childhood prodigy brought him into contact with the greatest musicians and he soon imposed himself as a master of the violin. At a very young age, he was honoured with the title "Violin Chakravarthy" (emperor of the violin). No other musician can boast of such diverse repertoire and collaborations, or even such mind-boggling techniques. Till date, Dr. Subramaniam has produced, performed, collaborated, conducted and close to two hundred recordings.

Dr. L. Subramaniam is the only musician who has performed/recorded Karnatic Classical Music, Western Classical Music, both Orchestral and non-Orchestral, and also composed for and conducted major Orchestras, scored for films, collaborated with a wide range of some of the greatest musicians, from different genres of music including jazz, occidental, jugalbandis with North Indian musicians, world music and global fusion. He has established himself as a force that is strongly Indian, but universal in nature and approach.

His insatiable musical curiosity made short shrift of all kinds of technique, of all types of form (he has composed for several western classical orchestras and ballets) and of all new experiences (he was a musical advisor to Peter Brook about the sound concepts for his "Mahabharata"). He has composed music for a select few films, including "Salaam Bombay" and "Mississippi Masala" and was the featured soloist for Bernardo Bertolucci's "Little Buddha" and "Cotton Mary" of Merchant – Ivory Productions. This total receptivity towards the world, this polymorphous talent, this technical mastery all however find their truest experience in the service of Karnatic music, the tradition he has inherited from his Father and Guru, Professor V. Lakshminarayana. Dr. L. Subramaniam's parents Prof V. Lakshminaryana and V. Seethalakshmi were the driving force behind their son and the reason he chose a life in music.

Passionate about music, Subramaniam was also dedicated to Science. He studied medicine, finishing his M.B.B.S at Madras Medical College and registered as a General Practitioner. Subsequently he did his Master's Degree in Western Classical Music in California and he finally decided to dedicate his life to music. From then on, his artistic activity was to spread in many directions. No one else is as qualified as Dr. L. Subramaniam to experiment with new concepts

and different ideas because of his stable foundation in Karnatic Classical, Western Music, Orchestration and rhythm. He is the creator of the Global Music concept.

Attracted by his unusual musical phrasing, several western musicians wanted to play with him. He willingly lent himself to these exchanges, which represented for him a no-man's land, which allowed him to explore the field of improvisation. In this atmosphere of live exchanges, the musical differences and similarities became obvious to him and from then on they organised themselves brilliantly. Since 1973, Subramaniam has made historic collaborations and recordings with people like Yehudi Menuhin, Stephane Grappelli, Jean-Pierre Rampal, Steven Seagal, Ruggiero Ricci, Arve Tellefsen, Herbie Hancock, Joe Sample, Stanley Clarke, George Duke, Al Jarreau, Jean Luc Ponty, Earl Klugh, Larry Coryell, Corky Siegel, Tony Williams, Billy Cobham, John Surman, Maynard Ferguson and Ravi Coltrane.

Today, he is the founder/director of the Lakshminarayana Global Music Festival, the biggest global music festival in India, in which this spirit of encounter, which he has always enjoyed, is strongly expressed. The Festival has brought some of the greatest artists from around the globe together on one stage. It is held annually, primarily in India, but has also been held in different parts of the world.

Not only is he the most outstanding Indian Classical Violinist, but also an exceptional composer who has established himself as the foremost Indian composer in the realm of orchestral composition. In 1983, he crossed other frontiers, that of western classical tradition. "The Double Concerto for violin and flute" combines western scales and micro intervals. "Spring – Rhapsody" is a homage to Bach and Baroque music. Over the years he has written and created works for the world's greatest orchestras The New York Philharmonic Orchestra and Zubin Mehta ("Fantasy on Vedic Chants"), the Swiss Romande Orchestra ("Turbulence"); The Kirov Ballet ("Shanti Priya") The Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra ("The Concerto for Two Violins"); The Berlin Opera (Global Symphony), the live concert of which was broadcast simultaneously over 28 nations for millions of people. His latest orchestral composition is entitled 'Astral Symphony' for full symphony orchestra and soloists from different musical traditions, once again emphasizing the concept of Global Fusion.

His compositions have also been used in various stage presentations by leading ballet companies, including the Cleveland San Jose Ballet Company and the Alvin Ailey Company.

To increase understanding of the concepts of South Indian Classical Music, he has released a four-CD set, called "An Anthology of South Indian Music" and written an authoritative book "Euphony", which was co-authored with his late wife Vijayashree Subramaniam.

He has received several awards and honours, including the coveted Padma Bhushan and Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for "The Most Creative Artist" from the President of India. He has been awarded the "Nada Chakravarti" (Emperor of Sound) from H.H Sri Ganapati Sachchidananda Swami-ji. In recognition of his contribution to the World of Music, he has been

conferred with Honorary Doctorates (D.Lit) by Bangalore University, University of Madras and Sheffield University.

His album titled 'Global Fusion' was a critically acclaimed milestone and features artists from five continents including one of the most popular and successful singers in the film industry, Kavita Krishnamurti (whom Dr. L Subramaniam married in November 1999), and his daughter Bindu Subramaniam.

This living legend's concerts are truly marvelous landmarks, which are a real inspiration to the audience. The album, "Conversations" and his orchestral composition "Fantasy on Vedic Chants" have become milestones and serves as a reference and guide for any composer exploring the concept of fusion. One can hardly believe that such technique and emotive playing can exist.

"Music is a vast ocean and no one can claim to know it all. The more you know, the more you realise how little you know. It is an eternal quest." Dr. L. Subramaniam