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Global Fusion Concert Raises Funds for Hindu Temple

By [Shyamal Leonard](#), Special to India-West
Jun 28, 2013

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Kavita Krishnamurthy Subramaniam performs June 22 in Los Angeles. (Surenra Prakash photo)

WESTWOOD, Calif., United States

Violin virtuoso Dr. Laxminarayana Subramaniam, accompanied by a pantheon of musical legends and bolstered by son Ambi and renowned Bollywood playback singer and wife Kavita Krishnamurthy Subramaniam, performed in a "Global Fusion" concert to raise funds for the Hindu Temple of Antelope Valley Association's ambitious effort to finish construction of its temple, at the historic Wadsworth Theater here June 22.

All proceeds from the concert will be donated toward the estimated \$2.5 million project to build a 4,500 square foot worship center, which is geared for completion in the city of Lancaster by November of this year, according to the architect, Cyrus Subawalla of CSA Partner Ltd. The initial ground work has



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already been laid on an estimated 2.5 acres of land.

Subramaniam's Global Fusion band was composed of famed Chicago blues harmonica composer Corky Siegel, jazz rock guitarist Larry Coryell and his son Julian, keyboardist Vasanth Vaseegaran, jazz pianist and host of NPR's piano jazz Jon Weber, "American Idol" drummer Russell Miller and bassist Jerry Watts, chair of the bass department at the Los Angeles Music Academy, along with Mahesh Krishnamurthy on the mridangam and Satya Vaidyanathan on tabla.

The first half of the concert showcased Krishnamurthy's supersonic vocal flexibility ranging from fast-paced Bollywood hits to the meditative polyphony of a complex raga, as well as the subtle variant sounds of thumri and bhajans.

Roughly 11 songs from the outlandishly peppy "Hawa Hawaii" from "Mr. India," "Nimbooda" from "Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam," to a fluidly sung Meera bhajan roused the audience members. Cheers erupted after Siegel thumped while effortlessly fusing harmonics with Ambi, who laid down his violin to sing a duet with his mega-star mother to "Mausam Ki Sargam" from the 1996 film "Khamoshi."

Krishnamurthy, who has worked alongside some of the best music composers from Manna Dey to A.R. Rahman in the last 40 years and has sung over 1,500 songs, while thankful to Bollywood for giving her an "identity," is also eager to move from the "3-minute songs" to new collaborations and the challenges of Carnatic and fusion music as well as the classical works of Bengali poet and revolutionary Kazi Nazrul Islam.

The artist is currently working on an unnamed new album composed by her husband Subramaniam and written and co-performed by artists such as Sonu Nigam, Pandit Jasraj, and Shaan, to mention a few.



The second half of the concert peaked with the signature sounds of Global Fusion which adeptly mingled Carnatic, western classical, jazz, rock and Spanish sounds.

The ease as well as the complexity of mixing diverse instruments on a common platform such as

the Spanish guitar, the African Kora or the Japanese Koto, characteristic of many performances, not only adds "color" but is a well-honed art form for Subramaniam, who described the arrangement of its notes as "ornamentation" that entreat different emotions. "If you have studied the instrument's culture and style it makes it easier to compose," he commented.

Coryell, dubbed as the godfather of jazz-fusion, kicked off a medley of riffs on the acoustic guitar with his son Julian on the electric guitar. The Coryells' jam ranged from furious strumming to the slow-built intensity of Maurice Ravel's bolero.

The cheers continued as Siegel's unique harmonica solo on the 10-hole diatonic harmonica transformed the ambiance with his primal sounds of the Deep South. Audience members thumped in unison with the blues legend as he belted out a melody charged with lamenting swoops and slides and finishing on a lingering note.

The show climaxed with the much anticipated Subramaniam and the entire band performing compositions from earlier works. Subramaniam's solo prelude in "In Pursuit" quickly gave the audience a glimpse of the artist's mastery and his flair for dynamic sounds as the violin soared and recessed while finding comfort with its instrumental counterparts and occasional solos.

"Conversations" from the 1992 album "Conversations" crossed jazz and Carnatic ragas with ascending and descending repetitive themes. The original work was co-led with French jazz violinist Stéphane Grappelli whose performance was adeptly reincarnated and refashioned by Ambi, who engaged in a playful jugalbandi

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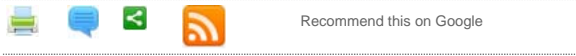
characterized by the duo sawing away furiously with driving rhythms.

The evening ended with another hit, "Ganga," augmented by Krishnamurthy on vocals, Ambi on the violin, and punctuated by numerous trade-offs between the violin against the tabla and mridangam.

Fusion seems to be a central theme not only professionally for the Subramaniam but also personally, so one cannot help but wonder what life is like at home with the family who also have two additionally artistically inclined children. Krishnamurthy told India-West, "We talk shop all of the time, even at dinner, and after a few mouthfuls we tend to go to music."

"It does not get boring as we are all musicians" quipped Ambi.

Subramaniam is now putting the finishing touches to his upcoming album, "Beyond Borders," which will feature many of the past music legends he has worked with along with Krishnamurthy. The Subramaniam will return to the United States in September for a series of concerts in the Midwest, East Coast and Canada. Subramaniam and his Global Fusion band also performed June 20 at Yoshi's in San Francisco.



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