



Parents are biggest strength and harshest critics, says violinist L Subramaniam's daughter Bindu Subramaniam

Bindu Subramaniam performing in Spain
 LATHA SRINIVASAN | Thu, 14 Jan 2016-01:40pm, dna web desk

Currently on tour in Europe, Bindu opens up about their band, SubraMania and more.

She is the daughter of famous violin maestro Dr L Subramaniam and renowned singer Kavita Krishnamurti Subramaniam. Bindu Subramaniam is an accomplished musician herself just like her brother Ambi. In this exclusive interview with **dna**, she talks about their Europe tour, her parents, music and collaborating with her brother.

Tell us about the Europe tour you are currently on.

We are doing six shows in Spain, Belgium and Holland as part of our 'Days in the Sun' tour, to promote our new single with the same name. Right now, we're on the Spanish leg, which has been very special, because it's part of the official celebrations of 60 years of diplomatic relations between India and Spain. These concerts are supported by the Embassy of India in Spain, and our Ambassador was present at the concert in Madrid. We've been fortunate to play sold out shows at some amazing western classical and world music venues like Miguel Delibes and CaixaForum. It's very rewarding to play for new (non-Indian audiences). We've also done some workshops - this morning we introduced 250 children aged 7-10 to Indian music, and they were so enthusiastic!

It's also been a lot of fun for us as a band to travel through Europe on our own bus, sharing light-hearted moments. A couple of days ago on a bus ride, we were with a famous writer who has won 40 awards, and he co-wrote a song in Spanish and English with me.

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Ambi Subramaniam on stage

Why did you start your band SubraMania with your brother Ambi?

Ambi and I started SubraMania sort of as a "safe space" for us to collaborate. We've grown up together, obviously, but we had never really played together - we were both playing separately, or with our parents, but never really together. At some point, we realised that we would like to experiment with different styles of music that have influenced us. I've learnt western classical vocal, Carnatic vocal, and piano, but then I later gravitated towards pop music and studied songwriting at Berklee, and I've always loved jazz. Ambi has been holding up the classical tradition, and has played a lot of western classical violin as well. With SubraMania, we have sort of put aside stylistic labels and just created whatever we feel like. It has been interesting for us to write and perform together - the sibling dynamic has obviously spilled over a little bit, but more importantly, we are friends and musicians who respect each other. Our co-writing has been a tremendous amount of fun. Each song starts a different way - some start with lyrics and melodies that pop into my head, some start with melodies that Ambi comes up with or an interesting violin line of arrangement, and we build on the song together.

What would you say your style of music is?

Our style is Contemporary World Music from India.

Have you started working on any new album?

Days in the Sun was our first single and video release as SubraMania. We have been in the studio working on new material, so there are more releases in the works.

Watch SubraMania's 'Days in the Sun' single here:



Do you and your brother still learn from your dad L. Subramaniam?

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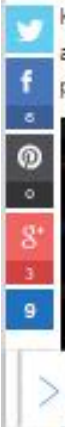
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Do you and your brother still learn from your dad L Subramaniam?

We still learn from both of our parents - L Subramaniam and Kavita Krishnamurti Subramaniam. Every day with them is a learning experience, and it's always slightly terrifying to have them in the audience when we play - they are our strongest support but also our harshest critics!



Ambi and Bindu with their dad Dr L Subramaniam on stage on their 2016 Europe tour

Do you think it's important for Indian musicians to collaborate with international ones?

I think it's very important for every musician to be open minded. By collaborating with other musicians, you not only gain a new audience, but also learn so much about other styles of music, and this makes you a better musician. On this tour, we've had a great flamenco guitarist - Carlos Blanco, guest perform with us for a couple of shows. He's brought in a very characteristic flavour, and we wrote a song around him, combining flamenco and Indian music.

Is SubraMania working with some new international musicians?

Yes. But it's a secret!

Who are your idols?

So many - the clichéd thing to say, of course, would be my parents, but it's true. Then Ella Fitzgerald, Frank Sinatra, Andrea Bocelli; these amazing voices captivate me.

What would like to do in 2016 in terms of music?

Recommendations

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My hope is that 2016 continues the way it started! We hope to continue with some interesting concerts and collaborations - there is more travel on the cards throughout the year. In February, we are in the US, and we also hope to tour more in India. By the first quarter, we plan to have our next single out, and we'll take it from there!