

STORIES TOLD IN SOUND

DR. D. GOPALAKRISHNAN

Dr. D. Gopalkrishnan is currently the Dean, Professor and Head of Department of Periodontology and Oral Implantology at Dr. D.Y. Patil Dental College and Hospital, Pune and also the President Elect- Indian Society of Periodontology. Although, he handles the entire college and has endless responsibilities to fulfill, he also takes out a little time for his keen interest in music. He has been a vocalist for many years and was also offered a shot at playback singing during his III B.D.S by Mr. Ilaiyaraaja's brother, Mr. Gangai Amaran



@drgopalmds



D Gopalakrishnan

Dr. D.Gopalakrishnan's car radio is currently playing :-

- Ilaiyaraaja
- M.S. Viswanathan
- A.R. Rahman
- Bappi Lahiri
- Laxmikant- Pyarelal
- S. P. Balasubrahmanyam
- Anup Jalota
- Anand- Milind
- Sivamani
- Vikku Vinayakram
- Zakir Hussain
- Pandit Jasraj
- Bhimsen Joshi
- Pink Floyd
- Eagles
- Hariharan
- K. J. Yesudas

A song which introduced you to the world of singing?

Well, I would say that I started learning traditional music at a very early stage in my life i.e., Carnatic music, so there is no particular song that got me interested in music as such. I used to participate in school competitions but had to discontinue it halfway due to education. I am a strong believer in the fact that music has no language or any boundaries whatsoever.

The best live performance witnessed by you?

When I was a student in my school going days, there was this great music composer in the south - late Mr. M.S. Viswanathan, he was the guru of Mr. Ilaiyaraaja and Mr. A.R. Rahman. My school had arranged a live music show for all the students and staff members where we had late Mr. M.S. Viswanathan and late Mr. S. P. Balasubrahmanyam performing live. It was a complete treat to the eyes and a feast for the ears.

A more recent one was with Mr. Shankar Mahadevan in Mumbai back in early January 2023. I have also had the pleasure of hearing other live artists like Mrs. Bombay Jayshree and late Pandit Jasraj.

How do you take out time for music?

I create time for music, as being in administration, you juggle a lot of things to make sure the house is functioning in order and everyone is comfortable, but yes, occasions like Cultural fests and Annual days, when there is a chance to interact, I do my best to create time for music as that gives me a sense of relaxation.

We have had the pleasure of seeing you perform live sir, can you share a past experience of you performing live on stage?

As I mentioned earlier, I used to participate in the inter-school cultural competitions back in Madras, or Chennai as it is called now. I remember winning prizes in vocals back in those days. Later, when I was in college I used to participate in the intercollege fest during my undergraduate programme. Whereas, during my postgraduate programme, I used to organise the college orchestra for the Annual day, so that was something that the students and my colleagues used to look forward to. Once I passed out in the year 2000, I took a break for 19 years. After 19 years, I did a stage show here, at our institution's Annual fest. It was a nostalgic thing and since then, at the request of our students, I perform every year, so it gives me a nostalgic feeling of my college days.



From Madras to Mauritius, Middle East, on & off to USA & Thailand and in Pune currently. What musical elements/experiences have you picked up through this journey?

There is no experience I would say, any form of music is divine, be it traditional Indian, traditional Western, traditional Asian or any music. Even pop music has some divine element to it, so at the end of the day, it is how one looks at it. Each culture has its own specialty, and any music lover would enjoy music in any form across the globe.

Your favourite song to hum and why?

There are many, I do not have anything in particular to hum. The list remains endless.

Do you think 'soul' is missing from the music being produced today?

Yes, I would very powerfully say that. In the past, there used to be a proper musician who was trained or had a sharp acumen in singing, recording and delivering. But the current trend is that anyone gets a chance to sing. It may be even as if a person is talking and if the person talks fast, it is called rap. So, if anyone walking on the road is picked up and given a chance, it is good as there is a chance for everyone to express their talents but when it comes to quality, I feel like a proper selection has to be in place before singing and recording has been done. Singing on a platform is a lot different than singing in the restroom. So, one must make an appropriate choice to choose the right person.

Do you wish to attend a particular artist's concert?

Yes, I would love to attend Mr. A.R. Rahman's concert in person although I have attended Mr. Ilaiyaraaja's brother's concert, but it was only a replica. If you look at Western music, I would like to attend Pink Floyd and the Eagles concert in person someday.

An artist that you would play on your car radio without a second thought?

There are many: Mr. Ilaiyaraaja, Mr. AR Rahman, and late Mr. MS Viswanathan. Coming to Bollywood music, Mr. Laxmikant and Mr. Pyarelal's duo, some numbers of late Mr. Bappi Lahiri and Mr. Anand and Mr. Milind's duo, these were all great composers and singers in the past. Coming to traditional, I would love to listen to Mr. Sivamani, Ustad Zakir Hussain, Mr. Vikku Vinayakram, Mr. Anup Jalota, late Pandit Jasraj and late Pandit Bhimsen Joshi. One special mention is a renowned singer - Mr. KJ Yesudas, who has lovely numbers to sing. Depending on the time and situation, I would shuffle between these artists.

You must have attended live performances both in the past and present. What changes have you observed, if any?

Yes, for sure. I feel that in the past during live performances, musicians used to play live musical instruments but now everything is automated and electronic. When a person plays the drums, you get the actual feel of the drums compared to someone playing on the drum pad. Even the conga, everything can be played on buttons, but there is no feel or thrill to it. One can play the flute and violin on the synthesizer, but there is no pleasure in that. It is like driving a manual car compared to an automatic car.

