



•• GEORGE M SONI

A symphony of sounds greets you at the Jam Conservatory in Palarivattom. Follow the music and it leads you to Frijo Francis, as he seamlessly moves his fingers on a grand piano. He has been a member of Dr. L Subramaniam's band for the past five years.

"My music is my personality," says the music composer and pianist. His comments on creating original music are a fine blend of honesty and satire. "Many people set out to be original and end up being like everybody else, like ants on a trail," he says. "Every person is unique, so you be yourself and your music will follow suit."

The 31 year-old from Thrissur studied western classical piano for 11 years at Chetana Academy in his home town. He has fond memories of his guru, Father Thomas, and his daily walk to the academy everyday after school. He credits the academy for instilling in him a sense of discipline and laying a strong foundation in music.

He says he never set out to be a musician, instead, in the beginning nursed rather humble dreams. "My life's ambition was to play the piano at church, and things just took a different route from there," says Frijo. The academy, followed a strict approach to Western Classical training which led him to a Diploma in Piano from Trinity.

Frijo moved to Bangalore shortly after graduating in Mathematics from St Thomas College, Thrissur, to work as a piano tutor at a school.

# Frijo's jazz passion

Music composer and pianist Frijo Francis says music is his personality

It was there that he landed a chance to audition for Dr L. Subramaniam's band and got selected. Frijo considers being in Dr. Subramaniam's band and his presence a blessing.

They have travelled around the world to over 20 countries covering five continents.

Frijo says he gets more excited about playing in some of the best venues in the world than the prospect of travelling around the world. Though he has had trouble communicating in these countries he finds solace in the universality of written music. "Everybody understands music, it's the same everywhere."

Frijo believes good music arises when the different members of the band respect each other, he urges every player to find his space and also to give space for others on stage. For him, music, be it on stage or off

it, is about this blending of sounds, rather than any one instrument or person standing out.

"When I get on stage with a band, it shouldn't be 'Frijo is on stage'. Instead I should find my space in the whole performance. One should know when to play and when to be silent."

As a composer and an instrumentalist, he always tries to keep this idea of sensible playing in mind when designing his music. A composer should have knowledge about the capabilities of both instruments and the instrumentalists when arranging music.

"He should be in sync with the entire experience," says Frijo. He

**Notable notes** Frijo Francis believes music has an universal language

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## FOR ELISE

"Für Elise", or "For Elise" in English, is one of Ludwig van Beethoven's most popular compositions. It was not published during his lifetime, only being discovered (by Ludwig Nohl) forty years after his death



prefers acoustic instruments because of the groove that they bring and jazz for it's emotional connect with his audience.

But he does not plan his performances to convey any particular emotion but rather expresses himself through music and the listener is free to choose what they feel. Though he experiments with music a lot now, it is the strong foundation in western classical music and a systemic approach to music learning, that enables him to play almost anything.

His light hearted satire is also reflected in the band's name, 'Frijo's Not Yet Jazz', a progressive jazz fusion band. Frijo's Not yet Jazz (FNJY) is releasing their first single 'Lava Lamp' on Youtube soon.

(The writer is an intern)