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Grammy-nominated Varijashree Venugopal makes historic debut at International Jazz Day Abu Dhabi 2025



MUMBAI: The world of jazz witnessed a groundbreaking moment at the 2025 edition of International Jazz Day, hosted in Abu Dhabi, where India's prodigious talent, Grammy-nominated Varijashree Venugopal, made her unforgettable debut on the global stage. Marking a milestone for Indian music blending with jazz, Varijashree becomes one of the very few Indian artists to perform at this prestigious event, sharing the stage with some of the biggest legends in jazz music.

International Jazz Day, established in 2011 by jazz legend and UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador Herbie Hancock in collaboration with UNESCO, honors jazz as a universal language of peace and cultural exchange. The 2025 edition in Abu Dhabi featured legendary jazz icons including John McLaughlin, Arturo Sandoval, Kenny Barron, Marcus Miller, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Dianne Reeves, Kurt Ellings, John Patitucci, Danilo Perez, musical director John Beasley, and many others, creating an extraordinary lineup of musical excellence.

Varijashree's performance was nothing short of spectacular. She presented her rendition of John Coltrane's timeless standard "Giant Steps", sung in Indian Sargam, seamlessly blending jazz harmony with Indian classical vocal traditions. Her soulful voice and mastery of cross-cultural fusion captivated the audience, exemplifying her versatility and innovative spirit. She also performed in the finale — a powerful rendition of Herbie Hancock's version of John Lennon's "Imagine", where she delivered a heartfelt verse translated into Kannada, penned by renowned composer and lyricist Praveen D Rao.

From Varijashree's perspective, "Performing at International Jazz Day Abu Dhabi 2025 was an incredible honour and a dream come true. Sharing the stage with jazz legends and presenting the unique musical sound and soul of India on such a global platform reaffirms my belief in the power of music to unite diverse cultures. This moment is a testament to India's rich musical heritage and its growing influence on the world stage. I am grateful to be part of this historic celebration and look forward to creating more bridges through music."

A prodigious talent and a leading figure in contemporary Indian music, Varijashree began her musical journey at a young age rooted in Carnatic traditions. Over the years, she has evolved into a multifaceted artist known for her innovative fusion of Indian and global music styles, earning international recognition and a Grammy nomination along the way. She currently serves as a distinguished Singer, Flautist, and Composer contributing to the global music scene.

Her debut at International Jazz Day Abu Dhabi 2025 not only highlights her individual brilliance but also symbolizes India's rising presence in the international jazz community. Her journey continues to inspire aspiring musicians across the globe.