

Counting every beat

MUSIC Vivek Rajagopalan's mridangam sound figures in bands, jingles, and in concerts on stage

When Vivek Rajagopalan chose to play the mridangam he never thought about the leverage it was going to give him.

"I trained as a Carnatic mridangam player and played at all the college festivals and with bands, and for jingles — basically anything that fell under the spectrum of music. I never thought about the cool quotient of the instrument, I just let myself contribute to a situation and react to it," says Vivek Rajagopalan who was in the city for a show at BFlat.

The fact that he was based in Mumbai only helped strengthen his fulcrum.

"Bombay is a pot pourri of culture and there are always people who want to experiment, and I was available. It taught me so much."

Vivek has played with bands, played corporate ads and has even made his own music.

He says that they have all contributed to his growth as a musician. "When I did commercials and programmed music I had an idea of a melody and I just added my own flavour to the music. What I had



ON THE BEAT Vivek Rajagopalan

to keep in mind at all times was to not get sucked into the ad world," says Vivek who is also part of the band Ragatronic.

Vivek's music has given him the opportunity to travel extensively and he says, "Every time I travelled I came back with new perspective. My mind was moulded in a fresh way and that I can say was my

schooling. In my second album I am trying to incorporate all these things I learn and yet keep my own sound."

While the challenges his work pose are totally different, each of them, he says, is equally exciting.

"While in all cases it is an internal process, in an advertisement you are reacting to a

brief that is given to you and I am only playing a supporting role. Otherwise my music is an expression of myself and it is my emotions that have been translated," explains Vivek.

Vivek's music is open to a wider and more global audience without much heavy lyrical content, hence making it a fitting definition of world music.

"In music you cannot define success. If I do a great concert on one day then that day has been successful; besides it has been a difficult journey and even till today it is a struggle."

He has also composed music for the British sitcom "Mumbai Calling". "I had to create a sound that complimented the environment and catered to the vision of the creators of the show. Everyone had to approve my tracks and that is validation for me," he says

But his heart lies on the stage, "It is magical to be in that moment. There is no brief and no editing, it is immediate and it all happens in that moment with you and your audience. It is a high you want to live again and again."

CATHERINE RHEA ROY