

## Unique fusion

**K**ALA SANGAM brought together members of the BBC Philharmonic on stage at the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television at Bradford, England, on Sunday October 8.

Chitraveena N. Ravikiran, T.H. Subash Chandran and Sukvinder Singh joined Julian Gregory, Peter Wilmott, Frances Pye and Mathew Compton, members of the BBC Philharmonic, in the Global Echoes concert performance which has been touring Britain throughout October. They presented classical pieces of both Eastern and Western music played in new style and on a unique combination of instruments, as well as some pieces specially composed for Global Echoes.

The project was the brainchild of Kala Sangam and was funded by the Millennium Festival Commission. Kala Sangam, a registered charity organisation, promotes South Asian arts amongst people of all cultural backgrounds and abilities.

Global Echoes was divided into the three parts. The members of the BBC Philharmonic took the stage first. Julian Gregory and Frances Pye on the violin, Peter Wilmott on the bass guitar and Matthew Compton on the accordion and the keyboard played pieces that ranged from "Si Si" by the legendary saxophonist, Charlie Parker to the Hungarian dance No. 5 by Brahms. Francis Pye rocked the audience with the gently mellow, lazy ballad "You go to my Head". Although most pieces are well known in orchestral arrangements or jazz bands, the unusual combination of old and new Western instruments gave them a new spin. The exciting improvisations of the four versatile musicians sent a buzz through the audience, a tingle, that something magical was about to happen.

In the second section of the concert, the members of the BBC Philharmonic orchestra gave way to the Kala Sangam musicians. Ravikiran from Chennai, Tamil Nadu is the acknowledged master of the very rare stringed instrument, the Chitraveena. Subash Chandran also from Chennai is an expert percussionist on the ghatam or clay pot and Sukvinder Singh Namdhari, from Punjab, disciple of the famous musician Samrat Pandit Kishan Maharaj, is a young player of the tabla or finger drums. The three musicians performed a classic Carnatic piece.

2 THE HINDU, Sunday, December 3, 2000

## Millennial twang from chitravina

**R**AVI KIRAN, the prodigious musician who put the chitraveena on the global music map is doing it again.

He has been invited by the Millennium Grants Commission and Kalasangam for an encore in London on December 12 this year.

The story began early this year when he collaborated with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra in Kalasangam's "Global Echoes," presented with

Band. "Global Echoes" is the only South Asian project chosen.

This comes close on the heels of his latest effort, 'Om Ganesha,' which was premiered in the US in September.

For Chennaites, Ravikiran is no new name. The chitravina exponent has been giving concerts with the instrument since he was 12, did a full length vocal recital when he was five, made his first professional appearance when

he was two and has composed more than 425 pieces in five languages.

He has been featured in major events like the Autumn Festival of France (1985), Radio France International Festival (1987), Cleveland Festival, USA



the Millennium Grants Commission. It was presented in London, Bradford, New Castle and Manchester. This presentation, which embraces the concept of 'Arts for everyone,' was selected among the best five in the Millennium Festival in the U.K., from nearly 2000 events. Kalasangam is a multicultural organisation in the UK.

The show will be on at the Tate Modern Gallery, London. The four other projects are: Drummers of Ireland, Pied Pipers, Gospel Choir and A Rock

(1994, 1997, 1999, 2000), World Circuit Arts Festival, London (1996), Brisbane International Festival, Australia (1996), Harborfront festival, Toronto (1997), Cal Arts Festival, USA (1999) among others.

He was honoured with his first title at the age of six and has received awards which include Sangeeth Samraat, Kalaimamani, Kumar Gandharva Samman, Sangeetha Choodamani, Chitravina Gana Varidhi, Isai Peroli and Star of India.

By R. K. Radhakrishnan