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In her own voice



Special Arrangement
Sunitha Sarathy

Sunitha Sarathy is the country's first female solo vocalist to endorse the AKG microphones associated with international legends

Sunitha Sarathy is in a car enroute to a rehearsal but her voice comes across as plush and vibrant despite the strident honking in the distance. This is the voice that has, for nearly 25 years, made her that rare songbird. Spanning five octaves, it can release spirited flourishes of gospel or ring out a simple pop chorus; sing harmoniously or give a free rein to sultry rasp. And this is the voice that has led Harman India to sign Sunitha as the first female solo vocalist from the country to figure in the roster of international artistes who endorse AKG in India. AKG's microphones and headphones have had a long history on tour and in studio with international musicians such as Frank Sinatra, Eric Clapton, Peter Gabriel, Aerosmith, the Rolling Stones and Kanye West among others.

An excited Sunitha, who now joins other band and artiste endorsees from India such as Soulmate, Sivamani, Niladri Kumar and Ranjit Barot, says, "This is an approval of my evolution as a musician especially in niche genres such as Neo-Soul and Quiet Storm, both of which fall under the realm of R&B."

Sunitha, who sang her first jingle (for Cadbury's) when she was only four, has her roots deep in the world of gospel. She grew up singing in church choirs, her talent honed by her mother, Susheela, who is herself an accomplished pianist and conductor of many church choirs. For one who never underwent formal voice training Sunitha is equally at home performing Indian contemporary music (as a playback singer for films in varied languages or singles), western classical music and other western genres. In 2000, she beat over 45,000 contestants to win the Virgin Voice Choice contest sponsored by Virgin Records and Channel (V) India. "I sang 'I Have Nothing' from *Bodyguard*. You can't go wrong with Whitney Houston," says Sunitha who counts the diva as one of her influences and whose inflections her own voice closely resembles. Since then there has been no looking back for Sunitha who has gone on to sing her own compositions, film songs under famous music directors and at shows worldwide.

Sunitha now uses an AKG C5 professional vocal condenser microphone for live performances and the C414 XL II reference multi-pattern mike for recording. "I love them for their sonic purity and warmth. It keeps my tone, timbre and texture intact. Especially when I hear a playback of my favourite song 'En Ullam Enguthae' I am thrilled and moved with how good it sounds."

Sunitha who began the year with the release of her hit Valentine single 'Nimmadhi' and an A.R. Rahman song for director's Shankar's upcoming film *I*, has her diary full — a tribute next month to Michael Jackson, recordings with her own band and an annual Christmas concert. Accompanied by nothing less than her remarkable voice.