

Soulful Charisma

A tete à tete with Bulgarian Musical Diva, Dyana Dafova

Lyricist, composer, singer and dancer of world renown, Dyana Dafova, often called 'the Spiritual Voice of Bulgaria', was in Thiruvananthapuram in December 2008. Accompanied by her husband Mr. Michael Butterfield, Dyana was on an 'Ayurvedic' holiday at Manaltheeram Ayurvedic Beach Village, arranged by Vacation India tours. Kerala Tourism was fortunate enough to have a tete à tete with this beautiful and talented personality.

Dyana writes songs, composes music and sings in more than 14 languages including Sanskrit, Celtic, Latin, Japanese, Italian, Bulgarian, English, North American Indian, and even Indonesian. A few years ago, when National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) sent Shuttle Columbia to the space, it carried Dyana's music too. The song was 'Ahadyah', a mixture of several languages including Sanskrit. Dyana considers her biggest achievement when her song Taliesin won the First Prize for composition from among some 35,000 entries in an international songwriting competition held in the USA. Her latest album 'Charisma: One World in Songs', released in the USA last year by KRB music companies in Nashville, was positioned number 8 in the top hundred.

Talking about her compositions, she said, "My music is contemporary, but combines different genres and cultural elements from around the world. I blend traditional intonations and instruments. I have classical elements in my songs, along with very modern Jazz, Hip-hop, Pop and the like. So my music is a mixture of contemporary elements, but composed with due respect to the tradition-if I can explain it this way."

Dyana frequently mixes several languages in her compositions. She is not an expert in many of these languages and to perform the lyrics with the right pronunciation, she works with language specialists.

"I am a seeker. I try to understand different nations and cultures and I believe that through music and art, one can convey positive messages

and unite people from all around the world," Dyana says. "In the 21st century, it is the spiritual way of life that should take precedence over violence and aggression. People have to believe in one big global village of tolerance, peace and love" she adds.

Though she travels a lot, she doesn't try to be just a tourist. "I try to learn about different local cultures by meeting local people. Then I compose my music by blending in these elements in the best way possible, without least interference to the intonation of these cultures. In fact, I try to put my music on a plane that corresponds with cultures from around the world."

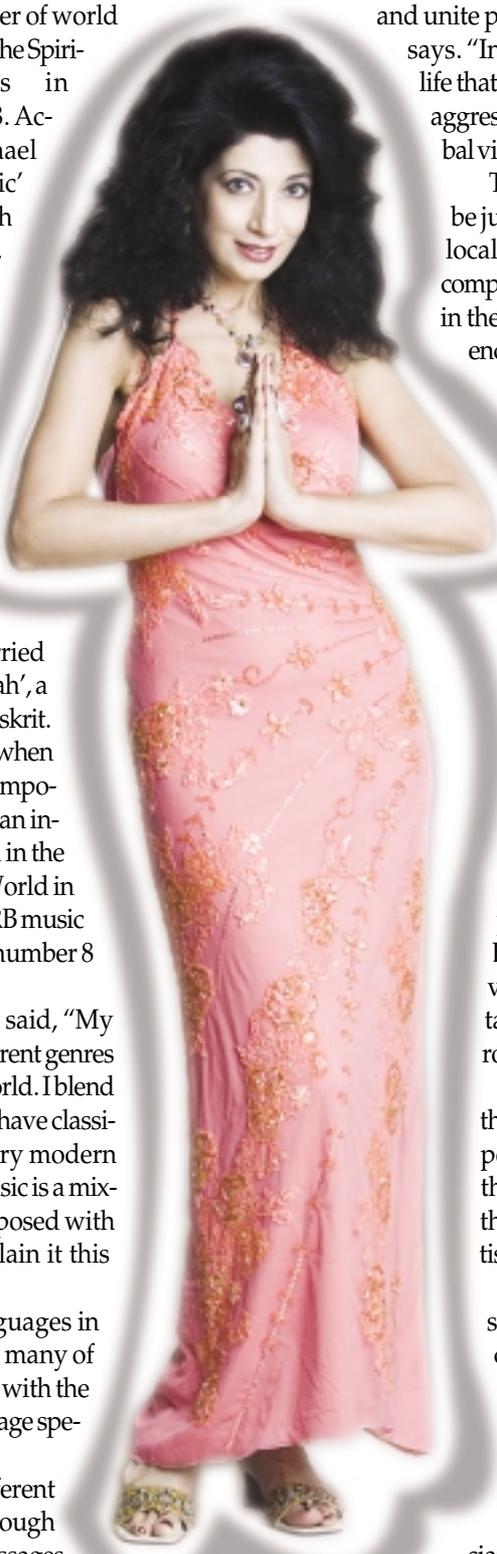
Would she include her experience with Ayurveda in her coming compositions, we asked. Ms. Dyana said, "I like to make Ayurveda known to Europe or America, where people don't know too much about it. I mention Ayurveda in my interviews by showing pictures of my stay at Kerala and telling people about this unique and beautiful gift from God."

Dyana believes that the beauty of being an artiste is that of being able to connect people through art. "When I visit a place like India, I go back and tell people in Bulgaria about my experience, and vice versa." She now feels this is very important, because tourists are scared by the terror attacks in Mumbai.

"We have told our friends that it is not the time to cancel their trip; we have to support India, because we love India. To fight the terrorists, we just have to go and show them that we are not scared," said the artiste.

Dyana attributes the global financial crisis to long years of living without the 'right calculations'. She believes that better and positive attitudes will show the way ahead and that one should not fall into depression and give up on life because of the present problems.

Dyana was born into a family of musicians in Sofia, Bulgaria and started studying





music when she was just five. She went on to become proficient in classical piano, classical and jazz ballet and singing. This messenger of peace and harmony spends a lot of time touring the world's troubled hotspots as a special envoy of UNHCR. Dyana was in Kosovo recently and is now awaiting approval from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for conducting a concert in Afghanistan. Dyana supports a lot of charity organisations in association with UNHCR, to help the women and child refugees.

Dyana met A.R. Rahman at Houston a year ago and is impressed with his skill in fusing traditional with the contemporary. They planned to do a song together, but it has not materialised so far because of the time constraint.

On her latest project, Dyana revealed that she is working on a new album, which will be something 'strong and spiritual'. She is also planning a few big projects in

"I am a seeker. I try to understand different nations and cultures and I believe that through music and art, one can convey positive messages and unite people from all around the world"

United States next year in association with NASA. She is in discussions for some stage shows in India too. "I believe that Indian audience will appreciate my music, because they are very open and spiritual. It will be

very interesting for the Indian audience to see the combination of dance with colourful costumes, choirs and traditional instruments. I have very beautiful memories of connecting with the Indian audience during my previous tour," she said.

Her husband and Executive Producer, Michael also had interesting information to share. He said that India and Bulgaria are connected through the tribes.

"The trail of tribes from India goes through Asia Minor to Europe and then to Bulgaria. Also mountains like Himalaya and the houses in India are very similar to those in Bulgaria" he said. "There are similarities in words too. We too use the word 'chai' for 'tea'", added Dyana.

For more information about Dyana you may go to: www.dyana-dafova.com

