

The Chamber Music Society of Colombo Presents a Magical Evening with Pianist Sujeeva Hapugalle

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Internationally acclaimed pianist Sujeeva Hapugalle.

When Sujeeva Hapugalle plays the piano, she unlocks and delivers a world of mystifying harmonies. The keyboard is like her personal palette, where she paints an enigmatic canvas of maestros' music, creating an aura where listeners are transported into a consciousness that is both prayerful and meditating. This Sri Lankan-American pianist with an exceptional repertoire has captivated a worldwide audience for several decades. Following a five-year hiatus, she returns to her home country to mesmerize an eager audience of music aficionados as she plays for the Chamber Music Society of Colombo (CMSC).

Her gripping stage presence has established her as a masterful artist with an extraordinary flair for interpreting music and revealing its intricate stylistic nuances. A Magical Evening promises to be a memorable musical journey featuring Sujeeva's performances of masterpieces by Schumann, Chopin, Ravel, and Gershwin. A thoughtfully devised program, it includes classical and twentieth-century pieces showcasing the pianist's virtuosity and musical depth.

Born in Sri Lanka, Sujeeva's musical journey began with her mother, Indranee Hapugalle, sharpening her skills under the tutelage of Mary Billimoria. Her musical prowess propelled her to new heights, a full scholarship to the Royal College of Music in London being the feather in her cap. The musical genius in her rose to great heights as she, under the mentorships of her RCM professor, David Parkhouse, won national and international competitions in the UK, including at the Royal College of Music in London. Sujeeva is a scholar of ABRSM (Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music) and, since 2001, has been listed in the prestigious international roster of Steinway Concert Artists.

Sujeeva has used her platform to support several charities in Sri Lanka, the UK, and the USA. Her passion for community service is reflected in her collaborations with charities that raise funds to help specific causes. At the same time, at a personal level, she has initiated programs to provide opportunities for young people to access music education. She was a select artist for the Sunera Foundation and Zonta International in Sri Lanka and for Lord Yehudi Menuhin's "Live Music Now" series in the UK. She has served on the Board of the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra. She initiated the Rush Hour Concert Series in the Financial District of San Francisco, among other projects.

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Since 2006, Sujeeva has worked as a music educator in San Francisco, USA, starting a music studio in her home. Under her tutelage, her young students have earned the highest honors in their music exams. What Sujeeva enjoys most is using her talent and platform to help young students access music education. In 2011, she launched the Musical Bridges Concert series with her students, an endeavor supported by their parents. It was a community endeavor, the first of which had raised money with the support of local businesses to purchase a piano for an elementary school. The concert series has helped raise funds for youth music education programs, providing avenues for youth from less privileged schools to participate in music education programs. As a music educator, Sujeeva has instilled in her students an appreciation for classical music and community service, which she has practiced actively and regards as vital for youth development.

Her performance this time reflects her unwavering dedication to serving communities. She proudly and humbly dedicates A Magical Evening concert to the CMSC Education Fund, a cause close to her heart since its establishment. The concert has also received significant support from the distinguished Sri Lankan pianist Professor Malinee Jayasinghe-Peris. It serves as a tribute to two of her most cherished piano teachers, Alix Cockburn and Maestro Louis Kentner.

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Lakshman Joseph-de Saram, Artistic Director, Chamber Music Society of Colombo (CMSC).

In addition to the solo performances, the concert will feature Mozart's timeless piano quartet in E major, with principals from the CMSC including Sulara Nanayakkara (violin), Ilana McNamara (viola), and Shinichi Murata (cello). The concert will conclude with a performance of Mahler's enigmatic piano quartet movement, featuring the CMSC concertmaster, Lakshman Joseph-de Saram, and Avanti Perera (viola) alongside Shinichi Murata (cello).

"We are thrilled to welcome Sujeeva Hapugalle back to Colombo after five years for an exceptional evening of pianism and chamber music," said Lakshman Joseph-de Saram, Artistic Director of the CMSC. "Sujeeva's artistry and warmth are exceptional, and we are delighted to have her with us to make music once again."

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Led by Lakshman Joseph-de Saram, CMSC explores chamber music of all periods and forms, from instrumental duos to opera, often partnering with the CMSC Chorale. Every CMSC concert provides a carefully curated music sequence featuring extraordinary compositions.

*Date: September 3, 2024. Venue: Lionel Wendt Theatre. Time: 7:30 pm. Tickets: Rs.10,000, Rs.7,500, Rs.5,000, Rs.3,000, and Rs.2,000*