

Doctors or Musician?

Why Not Both?

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Medicine is a rather stressful and demanding profession to be in and music has always given me an avenue to de-stress as well as to channel my creativity. It's not always that you get to simultaneously pursue two entirely different paths that you are passionate about and bring a smile to someone's face. I'm fortunate to be able to do that in both medicine and music.

Let me share more about my band – The Missing Link. Dr Suran Kuruppu and Dr Gananath Dassanayaka, both medical doctors by profession, are my other band members. Suran is a resident physician at Changi General Hospital's Department of Anaesthesia and Surgical Intensive Care, while Gananath is a family physician by training. He is currently based in Sri Lanka as the Head of Quality Assurance at the Asiri Group of Hospitals.

Suran and I have been friends since we were in secondary school. We used to spend a lot of time singing and playing music together after school and it was then that we realised that our voices and guitar playing blended very well. We met Gananath during our first year of medical school and it turned out that he made a great addition to the team.





What started out as a simple pastime quickly became a passion for the three of us. In 2006, we took this passion a step further and started playing as a band at various venues back in Sri Lanka. It was unexpected to see three medical students pursuing music but we were very well received by our audience at the time.

The band members

All three of us had been introduced to music at a very young age with formal training and it has been an important part of our lives growing up. This is probably the main reason why we continued to pursue it even after becoming medical professionals.

I started my musical career as a violinist and vocalist when I was 11 years old. Later on, I developed an affinity towards percussion instruments and learnt to play the acoustic drums and the cajon on my own. Suran had been trained in western classical guitar and the two of us had even been in the same choir at one point. Gananath started out as a vocalist and a jazz saxophonist, and he specialises in old school jazz music.

Suran and I have always been very fond of American folk and country music. We both value the tunes that originated during the 1960s to 1980s; Simon and Garfunkel, James Taylor, Cat Stevens, and The Beatles are some of our musical heroes. Gananath, on the other hand, is a fan of old

school jazz music. Frank Sinatra is his biggest inspiration.

Over the years, we have played at numerous venues – from pubs, cocktail parties and weddings to corporate events and even five-star hotels overseas. These venues were where we got our exposure to professional performances, and how we got to really understand the audience and entertain them with our musical skills. With the amazing reviews and responses that we got, our confidence was boosted and we took live performance to the next level. Since then, we have participated in many more performances and even held our own concert in Sri Lanka in 2011, which was a tremendous success.

We were also able to individually gain performance experiences and achievements. With Gananath's special interest in old school jazz music, he plays with another jazz band that has had five sell-out concerts, while Suran has played back up for many live television shows. These experiences have helped us to elevate our performance today as a band.

Ongoing music making

The band likes to feature people with different musical talents that may complement what we do as musicians. This helps us to provide our audience with something different and vibrant each time we

play. We usually charge a nominal performance fee and all our gig proceeds are donated to charities.

We also enjoy experimenting with music from other cultures and different genres. Music is an infinite creative process and experimenting helps us to creatively explore different dimensions influenced by the vibrancy of different cultures. I believe this will help us to continuously evolve as musicians and deliver something new and fresh to our audience. ♦

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