

# On a winning streak

A versatile bunch, fusion is the forte of Unison

■ SPATIKA NARAYANAN

Meet the animated members of *Unison*, Rajalakshmi Engineering College's (REC) official band. When asked how their name came to be, Sushmita, vocalist, excitedly recounts how it was a spur-of-the-moment decision by the original members in 2005 – just so they could register for an event. That decision turned out to be prophetic, if the way they love to fuse genres and work together seamlessly, is any indication.

"It is always teamwork, when it comes to working on songs. It was never a case of 'one-decides-and-the others-follow'," enthuses Sriram, who plays the *mridangam*.

Besides their instruments of choice including the guitar, bass, percussion, keyboard and violin, each member brings something different to the table. When asked what genre they most identify with as a band, the responses are varied. This is because some are from a rock background, whereas others are classically-trained. They perform their



Team Unison: Sounds of success

original compositions as well as covers but with their own unique spin. Given their versatility, fusion seems like a good way to classify them.

"We're more of a family," says percussionist Srihari. And they mean this quite literally. Sandip, the band's guitarists, echoes the sentiment, and adds that they try to get their parents involved as well, "We think and hope this helps them us particip-

ate better," he says.

All parents – including those of alumni – attend their performances. Karthik, violinist, says "Right now, my parents are more interested in me jamming with the band, rather than studying for exams."

Members are transitory, as seniors graduate and freshman matriculate. Still, alumni continue to be a strong presence. For some events, senior band mem-

bers perform together with juniors. That kind of commitment and support might just be their secret ingredient.

## Sounds of success

*Unison* has been consistently winning laurels. Last year, it was placed second at both SSN's *Instincts* and NIT Trichy's *Festember*. In 2015, they were runners-up in their category at IIT Madras' *Saarang*, VIT's *Riviera*, and

came third at KM Music Conservatory's *Rangrezaa*. The band has been placed in the top three at almost every event they have participated in – and that's just in the last couple of years.

Their set is usually fine-tuned keeping in mind the occasion and the audience that they are playing for. "We like to keep it technical for the bigger culturals and perform fun, energy-based songs for the arts colleges," says Sandip. "Carnatic fusion in different languages for the former, and Tamil rock songs for the latter," adds Sriram.

Besides the usual circuit of inter-college cultural fests, they have been invited as guest performers at venues like Goethe Institute for World Music Week and Tamil Nadu Music and Fine Arts University. For upcoming gigs and bookings, get in touch on Facebook <http://bit.ly/unisonrec> or YouTube <http://bit.ly/unisonband>.

An occasional column on college bands across the country.