

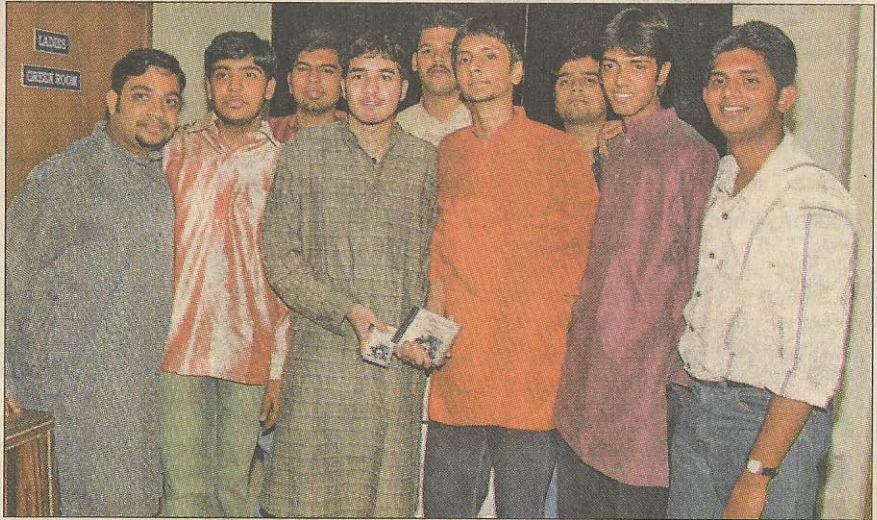
Sing with plenty of 'Oxygen'

DIVYA SUBRAMANIAN | CHENNAI

Christened the youngest fusion band in Asia, 'Oxygen', an instrumental fusion band from Chennai released their second album titled *Dimensions* recently. The band has Girinand on the western keyboard, Harish on the *carnatic* keyboard, Karthick on the violin, Suresh on the flute, Bharat Ram and Raghu on bass guitar, Prithvi on the drums, Ramana on the *mridangam*, Anirudh on the *kanjira* and Videep on the lead guitar.

Like most teenagers, the members of the band are caught up in their studies, examinations and career options. But it is their love for music that has made them achieve such great heights. In their new album, they have only one vocal number and one cover of *Vatapi Ganpathy*, a devotional number for Lord Ganesha. Girinand says, "Our music is an instrumental mix of *carnatic* and western tunes. We don't do covers, our music is individual and spontaneous. I usually come up with the basic tune and play it to the guys and they add to it."

How do they manage their music and education? Harish says, "Music is our passion and it does not tire us. In fact it de-stresses us." What makes them even more interesting is that



(From left to right) Bharat Ram, Harish, S. Karthick, Girinand, K.S. Ramana, Prithvi, Anirudh, Suresh, Raghu

they also have solo careers in the instruments they have specialised in. Karthick says, "When we go and perform individually, we get more practice and learn more, which actually helps the band. We don't have any rules that says that we must stick just to the band." Another interesting feature is that Videep, the lead guitarist is also a member of *No Idea*, a local band. Suresh says, "We don't use software to enhance our music. It is all recorded live. For *Dimensions*, we

used 24 violinists for a particular melody." Who is their idol? They reply unanimously that it is A.R. Rahman who inspires them and they hope that one day they will perform with him. Ramana says, "We are working on our next album and want to make a video of it." Guitar Prasanna, Mandolin V Srinivas, Kadrigopalnath, Harris Jeyaraj and Kamal Haasan are all praise for these youngsters who seem to have charted out their future.