

Bach at the heart of music

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IT MIGHT seem a tad ironic that Jacques Loussier, the same man who sued rap star Eminem for plagiarism in 2002, has made a career out of appropriating and improvising with the music of classical masters like Bach, Vivaldi and Handel.

"My son told me: 'Papa, Eminem used your music on the track *Kill You*,'" the French musician, who will be in Singapore on Oct 20 for a one-night only performance at the Esplanade, was quoted as saying to London's *Independent* four years ago.

"So I went into a store and found it had the same tempo, figures, harmonies and repeated sections as in my *Pulsion*."

Though the case was settled out of court, the reputation Loussier has earned in the course of his 45-year career certainly didn't suffer from the publicity.

Loussier has been branded as a "classical pianist who uses jazz as an idiom" to express himself. His improvisations of Bach's *Tocatta* and *Fugue in D Minor* and



HOMAGE: Jacques Loussier (left) is inspired by the music of Bach.

Prelude in C Major were ubiquitous throughout the 1960s.

In his conversation with TODAY, he gushed about his muse.

"I love Bach, the construction of his music, the richness of his harmonies, the beauty of his themes," Loussier said. "He constructs with a very interesting baseline, which is a copy of the jazz rhythm."

The musician insisted, however, that his method of working is no different from that of others.

"For instance, the cadenza is there for the musician to show that he is inspired by the spirit of

the music ... people should play with that," he explained. "Bach himself was improvising on those pieces for many years."

It's this rather adventurous, always admiring spirit that Loussier said he strives to bring to Bach. His work is homage, certainly, but it is also a "perpetual search for ideas".

WHAT: JACQUES LOUSSIER PLAYS BACH

WHEN: OCT 20, 7.30PM

WHERE: ESPLANADE CONCERT HALL. TICKETS FROM SISTIC

Rural India in striking colours

Artist JMS Mani to show 'global narrative' works

THE Indian woman with a sari casually wrapped around her body has long been a picture of latent sexuality, and in an upcoming exhibition by JMS Mani, such images along with others of rural India will come to Singapore in all their technicolour glory.

"In Karnataka state, there is Badami, it's a historical place. I went there when I was a student 35 years back," the 57-year-old artist told TODAY over the phone while explaining the inspiration for his upcoming exhibition.

"I mingled with the people and, for one or two years, I kept going back."

At the time, Badami was a place of verdant fields, coconut trees and a spectacularly colourful Pongal (harvest festival).

"They know me very well there — they even asked me to come to their party," Mani said of the townspeople. "Everyone I wanted to sketch was very happy with me."

To his credit, the artist found

a symbolic way of depicting the guileless nature of the locals in his work.

"In my paintings, the people have no eyes, they cannot see, and so they are innocent," he said.

Mani feels that though his paintings offer bold portraits of these rural folk, they are also microcosms of larger, more global narratives.

His *Dancing Girl* of the ancient Mohenjodaran civilisation of the Indus Valley, for instance, is a work that explores the origins of an entire race.

But lest one think that his work is merely representational, Mani begs to differ.

"I do abstract work too," he said. "I have no particular style."

— ASHRAF SAFDAR

WHAT: JMS MANI EXHIBITION

WHEN: OCT 12 TO 27

WHERE: ART MOSAIC GALLERY, #01-02 MICA BUILDING, 140 HILL ST

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