

When Rahman rubbed shoulders with Michelle Obama

Being voted one of the 100 most influential people by Time magazine has seen his popularity soar. Oscar-winning Indian composer A.R. Rahman not only got an opportunity to share the same platform with US First Lady Michelle Obama, he also had the whole audience in New York chanting 'Jai ho'.

'At the function I was on the same table as Michelle Obama, Oprah Winfrey and the CEO of Time magazine. When I went up to the stage, a chant of 'Jai ho' (the Oscar-winning song from 'Slumdog Millionaire') went up in the house.'

The music maestro, who won two golden statuettes for his compositions in British filmmaker Danny Boyle's underdog drama, says the awards have had a huge impact on his life.

'The impact of 'Slumdog Millionaire' has been tremendous. The western perception of Third World countries has changed. Earlier when some of the most talented musicians of Asia would approach western companies, they'd encounter stumbling blocks. Today that has changed. The west is ready to listen to us,' Rahman told IANS in an interview.

Rahman admits that dealing with the huge amount of attention after the Oscars has been unnerving.

'Yes, the Oscar changed my life. I can't even attend places of prayer without being recognised. Even when I'm at malls in the US, kids freeze in recognition when they see me. I need to concentrate on my music. I'm not the kind of guy who can pull himself away from my music, attend functions, give interviews and get back to what I'm supposed to do. It's like entering and leaving new cities,' he said.

Ever since the Oscar happened, the music maestro has been doing extensive travelling.

'It's been a full roller-coaster ride for me in the past week... from New York to Dubai to Calicut, Pune, Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai... every day I've been in two cities. Can't be helped. Everywhere they want to felicitate me and I can't say no. How can I? Everyone was excited about my Oscar and wanted to share their excitement with me,' said Rahman, who will be conferred an honorary doctorate by the Aligarh Muslim University June 7.

He admits he is not able to spend time with his children.

'Luckily all three of my children are into music. So my kids and I are on the same wave-length. My wife dreamt of walking the red carpet with me to the Oscars. She can now dream of walking to the Oscars with our children,' said the 43-year-old.

'I'm slowly getting back to normal now,' said Rahman, now blocking away the Oscar euphoria to focus on his current work.

His forthcoming films are 'Blue', 'London Dreams' and S. Shankar's Tamil film 'Endhiran', which has Aishwarya Rai and Rajnikant in lead roles.

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