

Pandit Kartik Seshadri

accompanied by

Pandit Arup Chattopadhyay

In Concert

Mr. Seshadri

will announce the selections
from the stage.

INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC- Kartik Seshadri

Indian classical music known as Raga Sangeeth, is an improvised art form based on the concepts of Raga and Tala. The historical origins of this spiritual musical tradition date back to the sacred Hindu scriptures known as Veda(s), which were the early precursors to the system of music that developed gradually. Raga(s) are the tonal idiom for improvisation and these precise melodic forms while essentially modal in structure, acquire their distinct musical identities from a complex range of factors: the Indian tonal system of perceiving the octave as 22 microtonal divisions (Sruti); the subtle nuances, inflections, and ornamentations associated with each Raga; and the particular emphasis of certain notes (Vadi, Samavadi) within the specific ascending and descending (Arohana and Avarohana) movement of each Raga. While all Raga(s) are specific to the time of the day (morning, evening or night) some Raga(s) are performed only during certain seasons, festivals or special occasions. The melodic and rhythmic aspect of our tradition is completely consistent with our aesthetic and philosophical idea that each Raga expresses a single dominant mood (Rasa). The nine Rasa(s) associated with our music are: Shringara (sensual or erotic), Hasya (humorous), Karuna (pathos), Rudra (anger), Veera (heroic), Bhayanaka (fearful), Vibhatsa (disgust), Adbhuta (wonderment) and Shanta (tranquility).

The second aspect of improvisation in Indian classical music pertains to the concept of rhythm known as Tala. A Tala is conceptualized in cycles of beats ranging anywhere from a three beat cycle to a 108 beat cycle. There are other complex cycles in fractional beats such as 4 1/2, 6 1/2, 11 1/2 to mention a few, that make for complicated improvisations. An accomplished musician of Indian classical music has to develop complete mastery and facility over both Raga and Tala to acquire the total freedom of improvisation within the complex constraints that Raga and Tala impose on the performer. Indian classical music is predominantly steeped in melody and rhythm as opposed to the ideas of contrast manifested in harmony, counterpoint and modulation which shape traditions such as European art music or Jazz. The challenge of our music lies in the musician's ability to shape and develop an entire musical edifice of a Raga and to express its fullest depth and excitement. This is acquired through many years of Talim (training) with a master musician (Guru).

A typical performance of instrumental Indian classical music begins with Alap, Jor and Jhala rendered on the solo instrument such as Sitar, Sarod, etc. While the Alap is a slow, spiritual, non-metric rendition of the Raga, the following sections Jor and Jhala are somewhat free and bound to a more defined pulse. The Gat (theme) follows the previous sections and it is in this section that the concept of Tala is introduced and the accompanying percussion instrument (such as Tabla or Pakhawaj) joins the main instrument.

Sitar: the Sitar is one of the most popular stringed instruments of northern and eastern India and has gained much attention in the West during the last few decades. The instrument usually consists of 20 strings of which seven strings constitute as the main playing strings. There are 13 sympathetic strings that respond in sympathy to the main strings. The instrument also has a track of twenty metal frets that are movable and can be tuned to the specific tonality of each raga. The main facet of the instrument is that the strings can be pulled or stretched over the metal frets to obtain gliding and melismatic effects much in keeping with the ideal of Indian music to emulate the human voice.

Tabla: The Tabla is a two piece drum referred to as Tabla for the right-handed drum and Bayan for the left-handed drum. The Tabla (right-hand) is a pitch specific drum tuned to the main tonic note of the performer. The Bayan is a bass drum that can produce a variety of sounds by exerting pressure on the skin of the instrument. The instrument is tuned with a metal hammer.

Tambura: This background instrument also referred to as Tanpura is used to lend a drone or continuous effect for the performer and listener alike. The instrument usually consists of 4 to 5 strings and is tuned to the main notes of the Raga.

KARTIK SESHADRI

Pandit Kartik Seshadri is a world-renowned force in the field of Indian Classical Music. As a sitarist, he attracted widespread attention when he began performing full-length solos at the age of 6 in India. The sitar maestro is now hailed as an "amazingly accomplished" musical powerhouse noted for his music's "expressive beauty, rich tonal sensibility, and rhythmic intricacy," praised the Washington Post while the Times of India (2011) noted that Seshadri's concert was "a show stopper that transported the audience to soak soul deep in his mesmerizing performance." The prestigious Songlines Magazine (U.K.) has in its March 2012 issue declared his latest album "Sublime Ragas" as one of the "Top Ten of the World's" CD's (as with his 2004 Raga:Rasa album) further citing him as one of the "world's greatest sitarist players."

A multifarious confluence of musical influences steeped in the Maihar gharana's dhrupad & beenkar styles, Seshadri began his initial training with Shri Shankar Rao of the Vishnupur Gharana and further trained and toured worldwide with his acclaimed guru Pandit Ravi Shankar. In 2005 and 2010, Seshadri collaborated with composer Philip Glass and the Brazilian instrumental group UAKTI on the critically acclaimed Orion project. Seshadri performs extensively in his homeland and around the world, including the United States, Canada, Europe, Japan, Australia, Mexico and the Middle East. He has played at prestigious venues and events ranging from Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center, the Melbourne International Arts Festival in Australia, the Brighton Festival in U.K., the Ravinia Festival, the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City to the Dover Lane, ITC, Sawai Gandharva Samaroh and Saptak Sammelans in India to name but a few. Seshadri has received numerous awards and accolades for his contributions to the musical world including his June 2011 nomination as the "Artist of the Month" by the prestigious Sangeeth Research Academy (SRA) in Kolkata and his 2014 honorary award from the Federation of Indian Associations (FIA) for his "incredible contributions, vision, leadership and expertise in the creative field and as a true pioneer" of music and art.

Seshadri is also a distinguished composer and educator of Indian Classical Music. While his Quartet for a Raga was premiered under the auspices of the Contemporary Music Forum in Washington D.C., his latest "Concerto #1 for Sitar and Chamber Orchestra" received its 2010 world premier in San Diego.

As an educator Seshadri heads one of the largest programs of Indian Classical Music in the USA at the University of California, San Diego. He has been invited as a distinguished guest faculty member at various conservatories, universities and academies around the world: The Banff Centre in Alberta, Canada, Stanford University, the Yehudi Menuhin School of Music in Bath, U.K., to the Sangeeth Research Academy (SRA) in Kolkata, India. In 2009 Seshadri launched Raga : Rasa ... Kartik Seshadri's Center for Indian Classical music and improvisation.

ARUP CHATTOPADHYAY

Arup Chattopadhyay is recognized today as one of the outstanding and most sought after tabla artists of the younger generation. As a premier disciple of the world renowned maestro Pandit Shankar Ghosh of the Farukabadi gharana (style) of tabla, Arup has established himself both as an accompanist and soloist.

Arup started his initial training in tabla at the age of six from his father, the eminent tabla player, Shri Pankaj Chatterjee and later came under the tutelage of Pandit Shankar Ghosh with whom he continues to train. An affiliated tabla artist with the All India Radio and Doordarshan Television, Arup records and performs frequently for the Indian broadcasting network.

He has accompanied some of the leading musicians of India such as Pandit Ravi Shankar, Pandits Rajan and Sajan Mishra, Pandit V.G. Jog, Ashish Khan, Ajay Chakravarty, and Vishwa Mohan Bhatt. Arup has toured the U. K. representing highly acclaimed performances and demonstrations with sitar virtuoso Kartik Seshadri in performances throughout the United States, Canada, India, Mexico and Australia.

Arup also serves as a visiting guest lecturer of tabla at the University of California, San Diego.

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Music



Pandit Kartik Seshadri
accompanied by
Pandit Arup Chattopadhyay, tabla



Conrad Prebys Concert Hall

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