

improvise, he may do so only as long as he does not leave the format of the raga and tala. This freedom within the bounds of artistic discipline comes only after many years of training and *sadhana* (disciplined practice).

The step-by-step acceleration of the rhythm in the gat finally culminates in the *jhala* portion as it becomes more and more playful and exciting. *Sawal jabab*, the dazzling and rapid dialogue between sitar and tabla, has the power to enthrall even the most uninitiated listener with its thrilling interplay.

Often at the conclusion of a recital, the musician may choose to play a *thumri* or *dhun*. This semi-classical style is much freer and completely romantic, sensual and erotic.

Today, the music of India has become a permanent part of Western culture. Many composers and musicians have been influenced by our music. The openness, willingness to learn, and sincere enthusiasm of western audiences are a continuing source of inspiration and delight.

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Oriental rugs courtesy of Oveissi & Co.

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UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

WORLD MUSIC SERIES

presents

CLASSICAL MUSIC OF NORTH INDIA

featuring

KARTIK SHESHADRI, Sitar
SANJU SAHAI, Tabla

with

DOUG SCHEUERELL, Tambura

ABOUT TONIGHT'S ARTISTS

Sitar virtuoso **Kartik Seshadri** is internationally acclaimed as one of India's outstanding musicians and the foremost disciple of Pandit Ravi Shankar. Kartik was hailed as a child prodigy by critics and prominent musicians when he began performing full-length solo recitals at the age of six. His initial training in music began with Shri Shankar Rao of All India Radio, who nurtured his precocious musical abilities. As a young genius, Kartik had an illustrious performing career, and in 1965 he met the world renowned maestro Pandit Ravi Shankar, who was already a profound musical influence in his life. Kartik became a disciple of the maestro in 1974 and has since been receiving *taleem* (knowledge) steeped in the distinctive and pure styles of the *senia*, *beenkar* and *dhrupad* traditions. As a soloist, Kartik performs extensively in major venues throughout India and abroad. His concerts in India frequently include prestigious festivals such as the Sangeeth Nataka Academy, Madras Music Academy, Indian Fine Arts Society, Saptak and Sancharini, establishing him as a musician of national importance. In the United States and Canada, Kartik's recent solo engagements have included the Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, World Music Institute, Asia Society, Vancouver Jazz Festival and Ravi Shankar's 75th Birthday Celebrations. Kartik has had the added honor of accompanying Pandit Ravi Shankar in major concert halls throughout the world: India, Europe, Middle East, Japan, Mexico and the United States, including Carnegie Hall. His consistently brilliant performances are marked for their expressivity, rich tonal sensibility and exciting rhythmic intricacy.

Sanju Sahai is the direct descendant of the illustrious Pandit Ram Sahai (1780- 1826), founder of the Benares style of tabla playing. He began learning tabla from an early age from his guru Pandit Sharda Sahai and gave his first major performance at the age of nine. Sanju is one of the finest and most sought after tabla players of his generation, and has accompanied some of India's most legendary musicians, including Pt. Birju Maharaj, Ustad Amjad Ali Khan, Pandits Rajan & Sajan Mishra, Girija Devi, Umayalpuram Shivraman, Ustad Ashish Khan, and Vishwamohan Bhatt. Sanju is also known as a soloist, and has performed throughout India, Europe, the Middle East, and the U.S. In addition to performing in the classical tradition, he has worked in genres as diverse as Egyptian, Spanish, African, Jazz, and Irish music. Sanju has played for numerous live recordings - BBC TV, Channel East, Asian Net, and All India Radio, and has recorded with Navras, ARC Music, NA classical India, and other labels.

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teacher such as the use of *shrutis* (microtones other than the 12 semitones in an octave), *gamakas* (special varieties of glissando which connect one note to the other), and *andolan* (a sway - but not a vibrato). The result is that each note pulsates with life and the raga becomes vibrant and incandescent.

Next to be considered are the *talas* or "rhythmic cycles" the unique intricacy and rhythmic sophistication in Indian music. There are talas ranging from a 3 beat cycle to 108 beats within a cycle! The most popular talas are those which have 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 14, and 16 beats to a cycle. There are also other cycles such as 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, and 19 beats, etc., which are only played by outstanding musicians on rare occasions.

The division in a tala, and the stress on the first beat (called *sum*), are the most important rhythmic factors. While there are talas having the same number of beats, they differ because the division and accents are not the same. For example, there is a tala known as *Dhamar* which has 14 beats in the cycle divided 5+5+4: another tala, *Ada Chautal* has the same number of beats, but is divided 2+4+4+4: still another tala, *Chanchar* is divided 3+4+3+4.

In vocal music, a drummer will accompany a singer either in slow, medium, or fast tempo at the start of a song in whatever tala the singer chooses. He will do the same when he accompanies an instrumentalist in the *gat* section of a composition. Like ragas, talas also have their own characteristics. Some of the older traditional talas, such as *Chautal* (12 beats) and *Dhamar* (14 beats) are played on a two-faced drum known as *pakhawaj*. This accompaniment is used in the old traditional *Dhrupad-Dhamar* form of singing and in instrumental performances on the *veena*, *rabab*, *surbahar*, etc. Today, most vocal and instrumental music is based on the contemporary form called *khyal* and is accompanied by the *tabla*, a two-piece drum.

The improvisatory nature of Indian classical music requires the artist to take into consideration the setting, time allowed for his recital, his mood and the feeling he discerns in the audience before playing. Since Indian music is religious in origin, it is spiritual in performance.

The traditional recital begins with the *alap* section—the stately and serene exploration of the chosen raga. After this slow, introspective, heartfelt, sometimes sad beginning, the musician moves on to the *jor*. In this part, rhythm enters and is developed. Innumerable variations on the raga's basic theme are elaborated. There is no drum accompaniment in either the *alap* or the *jor*.

The *alap* and the *jor* evolve into the *gat*, the fixed composition of the raga. Here the drums enter with the wonderful rhythmic structure of the *gat* and its time cycle, the *tala*. This section is based on the *Khyal* form. From this moment on, the *gat* (which can be anything between 4 and 16 bars of fixed composition) becomes the vehicle for the musician to return to after his improvisation. While the artist has complete freedom to

music, every human emotion, every subtle feeling in man and nature can be musically expressed and experienced.

The performing arts in India - music, dance, drama, and poetry - are based on the concept of *Nava Rasa*, or the "nine sentiments." Literally, *rasa* means "juice" or "extract" but here in this context, we take it to mean "emotion" or "sentiment." The acknowledged order of these sentiments is as follows: *Shringara* (romantic and erotic), *Hasya* (humorous), *Karuna* (pathetic), *Raudra* (anger), *Veera* (heroic), *Bhayanaka* (fearful), *Vibhatsa* (disgustful), *Adbhuta* (amazement), *Shanta* (peaceful).

Each raga is principally dominated by one of these nine rasas, although the performer can also bring out other emotions in a less prominent way. The more closely the notes of a raga conform to the expression of one single idea or emotion, the more overwhelming the effect of the raga.

In addition to being associated with a particular mood, each raga is also closely connected to a particular time of day or a season of the year. The cycle of day and night, as well as the cycle of the seasons, is analogous to the cycle of life itself. Each part of the day - such as the time before dawn, noon, late afternoon, early evening, late night - is associated with a definite sentiment. The explanation of the time associated with each raga may be found in the nature of the notes that comprise it, or in historical anecdotes concerning the raga.

Although there are 72 "melas" or parent scales upon which ragas are based, Indian music scholars have estimated that, with all their permutations and combinations, there exist over 6,000 ragas! But a raga is not merely a matter of the ascending - descending structure. It must have its *chalan*-or certain note patterns characteristic of the raga; its principle important note (*vadi*); the second important note (*samavadi*); and its main feature known as *jan* (life) or *mukhda* (face), the cluster of a few notes by which a raga is immediately recognized.

In terms of aesthetics, a raga is the projection of the artist's inner spirit, a manifestation of his most profound sentiments and sensibilities brought forth through tones and melodies. The musician must breathe life into each raga as he unfolds and expands it. As much as 90 percent of Indian music may be improvised and because so very much depends on understanding the spirit and nuances of the art, the relationship between the artist and his teacher is the keystone of this ancient tradition. From the beginning, the aspiring musician requires special and individual attention to bring him to the moment of artistic mastery. The unique aura of a raga (one might say its "soul") is its spiritual quality and manner of expression, and this cannot be learned from any book.

It is only after many long and extensive years of *sadhana* (dedicated practice and discipline under the guidance of one's guru), and his teacher's blessings, that the artist is empowered to put *prana* (the breath of life) into a raga. This is accomplished by employing the secrets imparted by one's

PROGRAM NOTES

"On Indian Music" by Ravi Shankar

Indian classical music is principally based on melody and rhythm, not on harmony, counterpoint, chords, modulation and the other basics of Western classical music.

The system of Indian music known as *Raga Sangeet* can be traced back nearly two thousand years to its origin in the Vedic hymns of the Hindu temples, the fundamental source of all Indian music. Thus, as in Western music, the roots of Indian classical music are religious.

To us, music can be a spiritual discipline on the path to self-realization, for we follow the traditional teaching that sound is God-*Nada Brahma*. By this process individual consciousness can be elevated to a realm of awareness where the revelation of the true meaning of the universe - its eternal and unchanging essence - can be joyfully experienced. Our *ragas* are the vehicles by which this essence can be perceived.

The ancient Vedic scriptures teach that there are two types of sound. One is a vibration of ether, the upper or purer air near the celestial realm. This sound is called *Anahata Nad* or unstruck sound. Sought after by great enlightened yogis, it can only be heard by them. The sound of the universe is the vibration thought by some to be like the music of the spheres that the Greek Pythagoras described in the 6th century B.C. The other sound *Ahata Nad* or struck sound, is the vibration of air in the lower atmosphere closer to the earth. It is any sound that we hear in nature or man-made sounds, musical and non-musical.

The tradition of Indian classical music is an oral one. It is taught directly by the guru to the disciple, rather than by the notation method used in the West. The very heart of Indian music is the *raga*: the melodic form upon which the musician improvises. This framework is established by tradition and inspired by the creative spirits of master musicians.

Ragas are extremely difficult to explain in a few words. A *raga* is a scientific, precise, subtle and aesthetic melodic form with its own peculiar ascending and descending movement consisting of either a full seven note octave, or a series of six or five notes (or a combination of any of these) in a rising or falling structure called the *Arohana* and *Avarohana*. It is the subtle difference in the order of notes, an omission of a dissonant note, an emphasis on a particular note, the slide from one note to another, and the use of microtones together with other subtleties, that demarcate one raga from the other.

There is a saying in Sanskrit - "Ranjayathi iti Ragah" - which means, "that which colours the mind is a raga." For a raga to truly colour the mind of the listener, its effect must be created not only through the notes and the embellishments, but also by the presentation of the specific emotion or mood characteristic of each raga. Thus through rich melodies in our