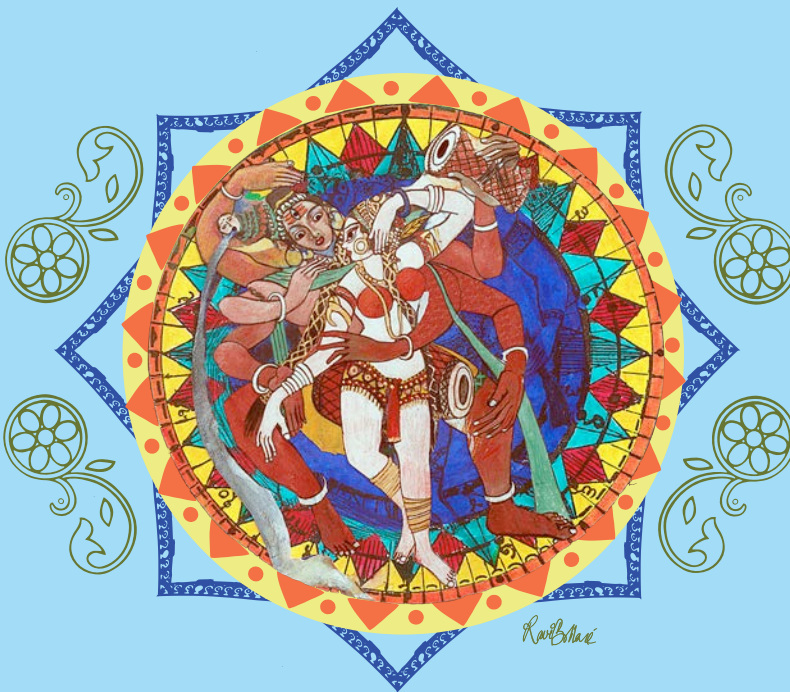


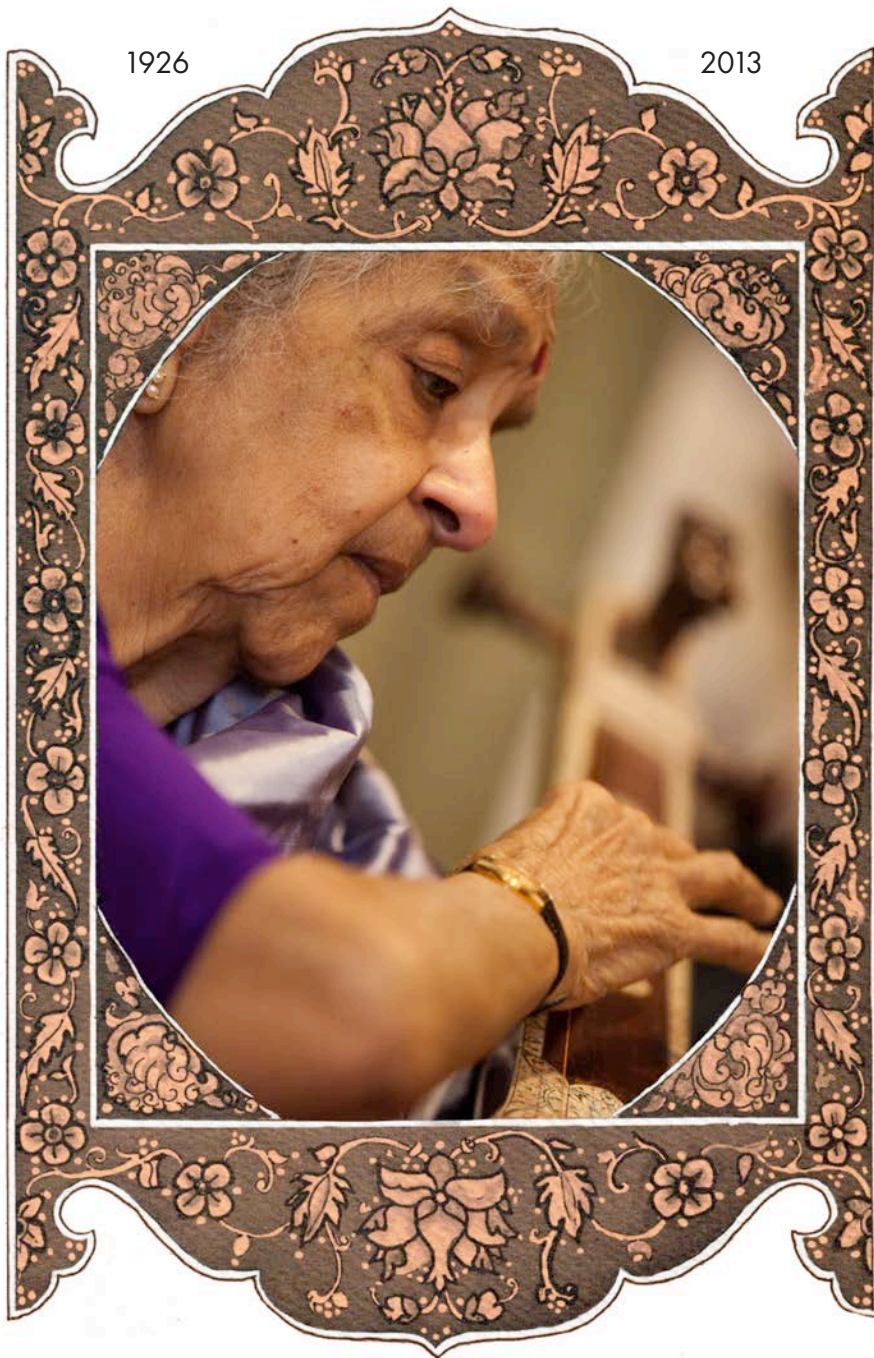
RAVI & SHASHI BELLARE ARTS FOUNDATION PRESENTS
TWO DAYS OF INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC + DANCE + WORKSHOPS

FESTIVAL OF TABLA™



AUGUST 22 & 23, 2026
SOKA PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
ALISO VIEJO, CA
festivaloftabla.com

Remembering Vidushi Lakshmi Shankar On Her Centennial Birthday



Photography by Rupesh



Welcome to the 8th annual Festival of Tabla



FOT was founded in 2017 by Mona & Rupesh Kotecha

JaiGuru (official greeting of FOT)! On behalf of the Ravi & Shashi Bellare Arts Foundation we lovingly welcome you all to the 8th annual 'Festival of Tabla' (FOT). You will witness artists from around the world participate in this two day Indian Classical Music Festival. From the youngest budding artist to the grand masters who all perform on the same stage, each will bring their best. This year, while the concert hall stage hosts spellbinding tabla, vocal, and instrumental performances by talented artists, we are happy to bring back concurrent workshops on Tabla; Indian Classical Dance; vocal; and much more in the adjacent Black Box Theater! It's all included with your ticket. Also, be sure to visit the FOT Gift Store and pick up a souvenir!

As an audience member, please enjoy, respect, and applaud all the hard work and dedication to the art form that our Festival artists are so graciously bringing to the stage. Please give your undivided attention to them and save the talking or looking at the phone for break time. Please turn your phones to vibrate or off. Enjoy every detail of this amazing two-day event and let your friends know that they should come and join you to support this unique endeavor in preserving Indian Classical Music and Arts.

We'd like to thank our many donors, vendors, volunteers, and supporters who have made today's event possible. Lastly we thank YOU, the audience, for being here and gracing our festival with your presence.



Ravi and Shashi Bellare Arts Foundation



The Ravi & Shashi Bellare Arts Foundation memorializes and implements the rich legacies of Pandit Taranath Rao, and Pandits Ravi and Shashi Bellare. The Foundation is a small non-profit that has had a significant impact on the Southern California community. The founders, Rupesh & Mona Kotecha, began promoting local California artists of Indian music and tabla by hosting intimate house concerts (or “dungals”) since 1983. As the years passed, and the foundation took flight, Rupesh and his wife Mona, began inviting master artists from around the world to showcase their expertise on the stage, and to act as workshop leaders for younger musicians and artists. Before our organization started hosting these events, one seldom heard a tabla solo in concert unless you attended a performance of one of the great masters. Seeing this as a crucial gap, our organization made it a point to open up the stage to other performers: from masters to amateurs.

The Foundation’s milestone event, Festival of Tabla, carries the goal to bring back the rich tradition of solo tabla performance at each event and to present many artists of various backgrounds. In particular, the project seeks to provide an unbiased platform for the highly underrepresented female tabla solo artists. Since 2017, the festival has grown by way of attendee numbers and performers. This growth is an example of the inclusive nature and ambience that is created and that attracts and engages all members (from performing artists to audience to volunteers) present during the two-day event. We have since, discovered an immense interest in the percussive arts of India because people are now able to experience a two-day festival and immerse themselves in various art-forms of India, especially the art of tabla solo. The festival has given life and hope to a new generation of performers.



Rupesh's Guru's - Ravi Bellare (Top) & Shashi Bellare (Bottom)



Pandit Taranath Rao



The founder of the Festival of Tabla, Rupesh Kotecha, learned from Pandit Taranath Rao from 1983 - 1990. Pandit Taranath Rao is the uncle of Ravi & Shashi Bellare and taught the twins from a very young age the art of Tabla Duets. Ravi & Shashi played some of the most earliest (1940's) Tabla duets in India and brought out playing Julebani in Tabla. The twins became some of the most sought after Tabla players in the 50's, 60's and 70's.



The Festival of Tabla celebrates the legacies of Rupesh's Guru's



PROGRAM



● **Saturday, August 22** ●

Encourage each artist with your generous applause!

TIME		PERFORMANCE
	AM	Ticketing / Doors open
9:45 - 10:00	AM	FOT Introduction
10:00 - 10:30	AM	Tanishq Iyer + Mahadevan Iyer + Rishabh Bendre - Tabla Trio Chirag Dixit - Sarangi
10:40 - 11:10	AM	Avichal Jha - Sitar Solo Ojas Bhargave - Tabla
11:20 - 11:50	AM	Jim Santi Owen - Tabla Solo Chirag Dixit - Sarangi
12:00 - 12:45	PM	Aditya Sutar - Bansuri Solo Ravi Venugopalan - Tabla
12:45 - 1:45	PM	LUNCH
1:45 - 2:15	PM	Maxton Hunter & Friends - Maxton Hunter - Acoustic Guitar & Sitar Ginger Rose - Harp Nate Alpin - Keyboard & Harmonium Miles Shrewsbury - Tabla
2:25 - 2:35	PM	FOT Short - Leonice Shinneman - Tippi Solo Solo played with fingers tips on a polished half coconut shell
2:45 - 3:15	PM	Sagar Deshpande + Anish Dharam - Harmonium Duet Varenja Sastry - Tabla
3:30 - 4:00	PM	Mehar-Jot Singh Sagoo - Jori Solo Pratyush Goberdhan - Sarangi
4:00 - 4:45	PM	CHAI TIME
4:45 - 5:30	PM	Rukhmani Mehta - Kathak Dance Performance Jayanta Banerjee - Sitar Salar Nader - Tabla Sarah Morelli - Vocals Shriya Patel - Padant (Recitation)
5:40 - 5:50	PM	FOT Short - Waruna Hemachandra - Thammattama Drum Solo
6:00 - 6:30	PM	Rigved Barve - Vocal Performance Hriday Buddhdev - Tabla Aryan Prakash - Harmonium
6:30 - 7:45	PM	DINNER
7:45 - 8:00	PM	Ashvath Karthik - Mridangam Solo Akshaya Karthik - Taalum
8:15 - 10:00	PM	Ustad Tari Khan - Tabla Solo Kamaljeet Ahluwalia - Santoor

WORKSHOPS

● Saturday, August 22 ●

Workshops are included as part of your ticket and free to attend!

TIME		WORKSHOP
10:30	AM	Black Box Theater open for seating
11:00 - 11:45	AM	The Sidi Malunga Project: Rejuvenating the African Musical Bow in India Amy Catlin-Jairazbhoy & Abdul Hamid Sidi
12:00 - 12:40	PM	Tihais Simplified for any Taal Leonice Shinneman
12:45 - 1:30	PM	LUNCH (Please note Workshop lunch time is shorter)
1:30 - 2:10	PM	Traditional Sri Lankan Drums and Dance Waruna Hemachandra + Sandani Sulochani + Gunindu Abeysekera
2:25 - 3:05	PM	Qaida: Demystifying Tabla Improvisation Ravi Deo Chirag Dixit on Sarangi
3:20 - 4:00	PM	Mharo Pranam: A Tribute to Vidushi Lakshmi Shankar and the Enduring Legacy of Patiala Gharana Vidushi Sudakshina Alagia, Rohit Panchakshari + Abhi Patel
4:00 - 4:45	PM	CHAI TIME
4:45 - 5:30	PM	What Remains - an English play Written and Directed by Pawan Janakiram, Musical Score Sushma Kashyap Casting - MK Sathya, Sohani Pawan, Avishi Bansal Musicians - Sushma Kashyap, Prafulla Athalye, Pratyush Goberdhan, Aashray Harishankar, Avichal Jha
6:00	PM	Black Box Theater Closed





Masters of Ceremony



We are happy to have **Saneyee Bhattacharjee** as one of our emcees this year. Her generous support to help introduce this year's lineup of amazing artists is truly appreciated.

Saneyee Purandare Bhattacharjee began her musical education at the age of six under the tutelage of Smt. Prabha Bakshi in Pune. After moving to America at the age of 16, she continued learning with Smt. Usha Sathe for a few years and then with Pt. Arun Dravid for a short while in Orange County. In 2011 she became a disciple of Vidushi Padma Talwalkar and has been under her guidance, and then the guidance of her senior disciple Yashaswi Sirpotdar since 2016. She also seeks guidance from Shri Srijan Deshpande and Smt. Shambhavi Dandekar.

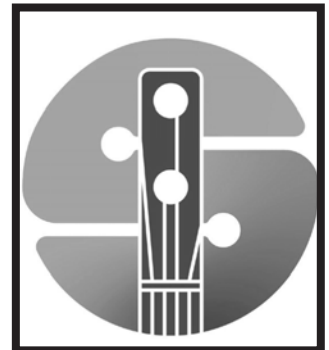
In 2013 she founded the Swaraswati School of Music in the Bay Area, California, to spread and nurture the love for Indian Classical Music among students. She teaches a thriving

community of students, organizes Baithaks of upcoming and established artists, and workshops by visiting Gurus.

As a performer, Saneyee has been featured in several public and private events in India and USA, like the San Jose-Pune Sister Cities Foundation, the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival, concerts by the India Community center, Rangmanch Theater with a Cause, the BMM 2024 convention in San Jose, to name a few.

She regularly composes musical pieces for Kathak artists and accompanies them on stage, like with Shambhavi's international school of Kathak, and the Chitresh Das Institute. She has also been featured on Bolly 92.3 fm in a segment on semi classical film music. Along with nurturing classical traditions, Saneyee also enjoys collaborating with other world musicians to create an eclectic fusion of music. Saneyee holds a degree in journalism, and also enjoys writing. She lives in Dublin, California with her husband and two kids.

Swaraswati school of music was founded in the Bay Area in 2013 by Saneyee Purandare Bhattacharjee to promote Indian classical music in the youth and the community through teaching, workshops, baithaks, and community events. We are based in Dublin California. Since 2023, we are also the official center for Bharati Vidyapeeth music exams in the Bay Area.



Robin Sukhadia is an arts leader, fundraiser, scholar, and tabla artist whose work bridges culture, philanthropy, and creative practice. He is a disciple of Pandit Swapan Chaudhuri and earned an MFA in World Music from the California Institute of the Arts. He serves as a Board member of the Ali Akbar College of Music, where he began his tabla studies in 2000.

A Fulbright Senior Research Scholar, Robin's academic and curatorial work explores classical Indian music, Indian cinema, music, cultural diplomacy, and the intersections of tradition and modernity. He is widely recognized for designing innovative programs that unite performance, scholarship, and community impact, including performances, museum talks, interdisciplinary lectures, and immersive multimedia events.

He currently serves as Director of Development at the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music, where he leads major gifts strategy, donor engagement, and long-term philanthropic growth in support of one of the nation's premier music institutions. Prior to joining USC Thornton, Robin served as the Interim Development Director for the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and Major Gifts Officer at the Colburn School.

Robin is deeply committed to advancing the arts through visionary leadership and storytelling. He currently resides in Los Angeles with his wife Neela and 2 sons, Kabir and Kailash. Learn more at www.tablapusher.com

Robin has been an immense help for the Festival of Tabla and has helped coach and guide Rupesh & Mona on how to fund raise and gain awareness within the community for the work the foundation is doing. The Foundation is grateful to Robin for agreeing to be an emcee for this year's Festival. Photo credit 3rdi Film Festival



Tanishq Iyer

Student of Shri Prafulla Athalye



Tanishq Iyer is a senior at Hamilton High School in Arizona and has been learning tabla since the age of 7 under the expert tutelage of Shri Prafulla Athalye. He completed his Visharad in tabla two years ago and grew up playing tabla to accompany his mother, a kathak dancer, as well as her students.



Mahadevan Iyer

Student of Shri Prafulla Athalye



Maha Iyer is a 21-year-old musician from Tempe, Arizona, who has been learning tabla for the past 15 years. He began learning under Shri Shreyas Iyer and currently learns from Shri Prafulla Athalye.

In addition to tabla, Maha learns Hindustani classical vocal music from Shri Sunil Joshi and Smt. Shalmalee, and Carnatic vocal music from Shri Shyam Krishnan Pillai.



Rishabh Bendre

Student of Shri Prafulla Athalye

Rishabh Bendre is a dedicated Tabla student and performer with 10 years of training in Hindustani classical percussion under Guru Shri Prafullaji. From Arizona, he has performed at various cultural and classical music events through the Phoenix Gharana community. Alongside his musical pursuits, Rishabh is also deeply involved in academic research, community service, and varsity athletics. In the fall, he will be attending UCLA on a pre-med track.





Avichal Jha ●

Disciple of Ustad Shahid Parvez

Avichal Jha is a sitarist based in Los Angeles, and a senior disciple of Ustad Shahid Parvez Khan. His playing is rooted in the Etawah Gharana, a lineage celebrated for its lyrical depth and what its practitioners call the

singing sitar: a tradition where melody becomes feeling, and every note carries the weight of generations.

Inspired by his father's deep love of melody, Avichal began his sitar studies at age 24. Since 2009, he has carried forward the legacy of the Etawah Gharana, performing at cultural festivals, private events, and concert halls across the United States. His collaborators include tabla player Jyotiprakash, flutist Aakash Pujara, and santoor player Kamaljeet Alhuwalia.



Ojas Bhargave ●

Disciple of Pandit Vikas Purandare

Born into a lineage of Hindustani classical music, Ojas began his journey with the Tabla at the age of three. He is a dedicated disciple of the esteemed maestro Pandit Vikas Purandare, a celebrated veteran staff artist of All India Radio who has also accompanied many legendary icons like Pt. Bhimsen Joshi, Pt. Hariprasad Chaurasia, and Pt. Jasraj. Through this lineage, Ojas inherits the core artistic values of his Param Guru, Pandit Ganesh Laxman (G. L.) Samant, a legacy centered on absolute tonal clarity (Khula Haath) and a highly analytical command over rhythmic mathematics.

This strict classical discipline served as the foundation for Ojas's active practice within Pune's live music and theater spaces, an evolution that began early as an All India Radio Baal Kalakar (child artist). Today, his work focuses on traditional classical solo recitals and accompaniment alongside diverse collaborative projects. Having previously performed live music and rearranged scores for theater plays, he has also brought his rhythmic foundation into contemporary spaces as a multi-instrumentalist performing with experimental ensembles. Rather than a departure from his classical roots, Ojas approaches these varied musical experiences as a direct extension of his lifelong devotion to the music.



Jim Santi Owen



Disciple of Pandit Swapan Chaudhuri



Jim Santi Owen is a percussionist, educator, and producer specializing in North and South Indian percussion traditions. A disciple of Pandit Swapan Chaudhuri since 1991, he has studied tabla at the Ali Akbar College of Music, the California Institute of the Arts, and in India. He has also studied South Indian percussion with T.H. Subash Chandran and thavil with K. Sekar. He has performed with artists including Pharoah Sanders, L. Shankar, George Brooks, Pandit Chitresh Das, Alonzo King LINES Ballet, and the San Francisco Ballet. Owen holds an M.A. in World Music from California Institute of the Arts and is a Fellow of the American Institute of Indian Studies.

In addition to performing, Owen is deeply engaged in arts education, cultural preservation, and arts leadership. He has taught at institutions including the California Jazz Conservatory, Dominican University of California, California Institute of the Arts, and the Ali Akbar College of Music. He previously served as Music Director of the San Francisco World Music Festival and currently serves as Vice-Chair of the Oakland Cultural Affairs Commission. As CEO of Jim Santi Owen Music, Inc., he produced more than 150 world music tracks for Meta's Sound Collection, collaborating with artists including T.H. Subash Chandran, Selva Ganesh, Ganesh Kumar, Alam Khan, and Sabir Khan; the music has been used in over 16 million pieces of content across Facebook and Instagram. He is also a key collaborator on the Swapan Chaudhuri Digital Tabla Library, a major archival and pedagogical initiative dedicated to preserving and expanding access to the tabla tradition for future generations.



Chirag Dixit



Disciple of Pt. Pankaj Mishra



Chirag has been learning Sarangi since 2013 from Pankaj Mishra of the Banaras Gharana. He previously studied Hindustani vocal music under Geeta Munshi. Chirag holds a degree in computer engineering.

Chirag is now being recognised by many artists locally. He is also a board member of The Ravi & Shashi Bellare Arts Foundation and has been a huge asset to the Festival of Tabla in organizing and grant writing. He also helps coordinate the Black Box Theater Workshops.

Aditya Sutar



Disciple of Rupak Kulkarni

Aditya Sutar is an emerging Indian Classical flautist and a “B High” Grade Artist of All India Radio, He is a disciple of Pt. Rupak Kulkarni and also receives guidance from renowned vocalist smt.Asawari Patwardhan ji. Alongside performing, he teaches aspiring students through the Pt. Rupak Kulkarni Flute Academy.

Aditya has performed at prestigious festivals and venues in India and abroad, including the Bangkok International Festival of Dance and Music, Dubai Opera, Dover Lane Music Conference, ICCR Delhi, and Pandit Bhimsen Joshi Sangeet Mahotsav. His recognitions include the NCPA Youth Scholarship (2024), Pt. Bhimsen Joshi Youth Scholarship, Kalaratna Award, Swarmani Award, and First Prize at the International Music Competition organized by Kor Institute of Music, Canada.



Ravi Venugopalan



Disciple of Pandit Anindo Chatterjee

Ravi Venugopalan is a Tabla Artist with over 10 years of training in the traditional Guru-Shishya parampara. He is a senior disciple of Pandit Anindo Chatterjee and his son shri Anubrata Chatterjee. Before that Ravi used to learn from Ustad Faiyaz Khan saheb, Dilli Gharana. Ravi Venugopalan preforms alongside with his Guruji Pt. Anindo Chatterjee in India and abroad five times to date.

Notably, his first performance with his Guru Pt. Anindo Chatterjee took place at the prestigious Abbaji's Gurupurnima in Mumbai in 2025. In addition to his accompanying with Pt. Anindo Chatterjee, he has performed with many more senior musicians.

He has performed in the USA and UAE and also teaches tabla internationally to students across different countries. Ravi has received awards including the Rooh E Ghazal Promising Young Tabla Player Award 2023 in the UAE and the Vocational Excellence Award 2016 from Rotary International.



Maxton Hunter

Disciple of Rajib Karmakar

"A tranquil soundscape that is sure to elevate the headspace around you." ~Aquarium Drunkard

Raised on a secluded ranch north of Santa Barbara, Maxton Hunter's imagination ran free, ultimately leading him to music at a very young age. Rather than identify with a single instrument, his truest voice can be found in the studio, blending psychedelic folk-rock, ambient soundscapes and Indian-fusion into what he calls 'Mystic Americana.' In 2021, Hunter joined the L.A. International Music & Arts Academy, where he met his guru Rajib Karmakar. This mentorship, along with his immersion in the FOT community, ignited a deeper artistic purpose of bridging Western and Eastern musical traditions.



Beyond these solo pursuits, Hunter is a member of the soul-blues band East Valley Road, ambient ensemble Academy of Light, as well as the live drummer for singer-songwriter Evan Blix.



Ginger Rose

Ginger Rose Brucker is a Los Angeles-based harpist, educator, recording artist, and composer. She holds degrees from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and University of California, Los Angeles, and performs across California for weddings, private events, concerts, and orchestral engagements.

Ginger's versatility extends to studio work and high-profile collaborations.

She is also the co-founder of Coalesce Duo, a harp and flute ensemble known for its refined blend of classical and contemporary music. In addition to performing, Ginger maintains a private harp studio in Los Angeles, teaching students of all levels.



Soulmate - Nate Alpin 🌸

Soulmate explores the world of keyboard synthesis, and blends these cosmic sounds with field recordings captured on Earth, and creates music of an other-worldly quality. Nate Alpin (aka Soulmate) is currently based in Laguna Hills, California & has 23 years of experience playing piano, 8 years of production with Ableton, and has created original compositions solo and in collaboration with his friends. He is trained in Western & Jazz Theory from Moorpark College and studied audio engineering at Los Angeles Recording School. His sound is greatly influenced by the creations of Brian Eno, Erik Satie, and Boards of Canada.



Miles Shrewsbery

Disciple of Pandit Abhiman Kaushal and Pandit Nandkumar Bhatlouande

Miles Shrewsbery III is a performer and educator of the North Indian classical drum, tabla. He received his ongoing training from Pandit Abhiman Kaushal and Pandit Nandkumar Bhatlouande of Hyderabad, India. Miles has performed all over the world with top Indian classical musicians, jazz artists, and pop stars such as Shujaat Khan, Deepak Ram, Googoosh, Cheap Trick, and Yusef Lateef.

Some notable soundtracks and recordings where Miles' tabla and percussion can be found are, Sinbad (Dreamworks 2003), The Rundown (Columbia 2003), The Riches (FX 2007), Yusef Lateef and Adam Rudolph – Into the Garden (Meta Records 2003), Dave Stringer – Divas and Devas (Spirit Voyage 2007), and Dave Stringer – Yatra (Silenzio 2011). In 2004, Miles earned a B.A. in ethnomusicology from UCLA, and in 2009, he earned an M.A. in ethnomusicology from UCR. In 2012 Miles was awarded the American Institute of Indian Studies' Senior Performing Arts Fellowship which helped support further studies and practice in New Delhi, India for one year. Currently, Miles is a lecturer at UCLA teaching tabla, as well as an Artist-Teacher in Residence for the Center for World Music in San Diego, while managing his own school, San Diego Tabla Academy.



🌀 FOT SHORT - The Sound of the Tippi 🌀

Master percussionist Leonice Shinneman brings a rare and inventive folk instrument to the stage: the Tippi. Originating as a simple South Indian village instrument, the Tippi consists of a polished coconut shell played with ringed fingers to produce surprisingly complex, expressive rhythms. Inspired by percussion legends John Bergamo, Vikku Vinayakram, and Muruges— and built by hand using a buffed coconut shell and finger rings—Leonice adapts traditional tabla and ghatam rhythmic bols (such as KTTK TRKT) onto this humble material. His performance bridges traditional folk craft, North and South Indian rhythmic discipline, and creative DIY ingenuity.

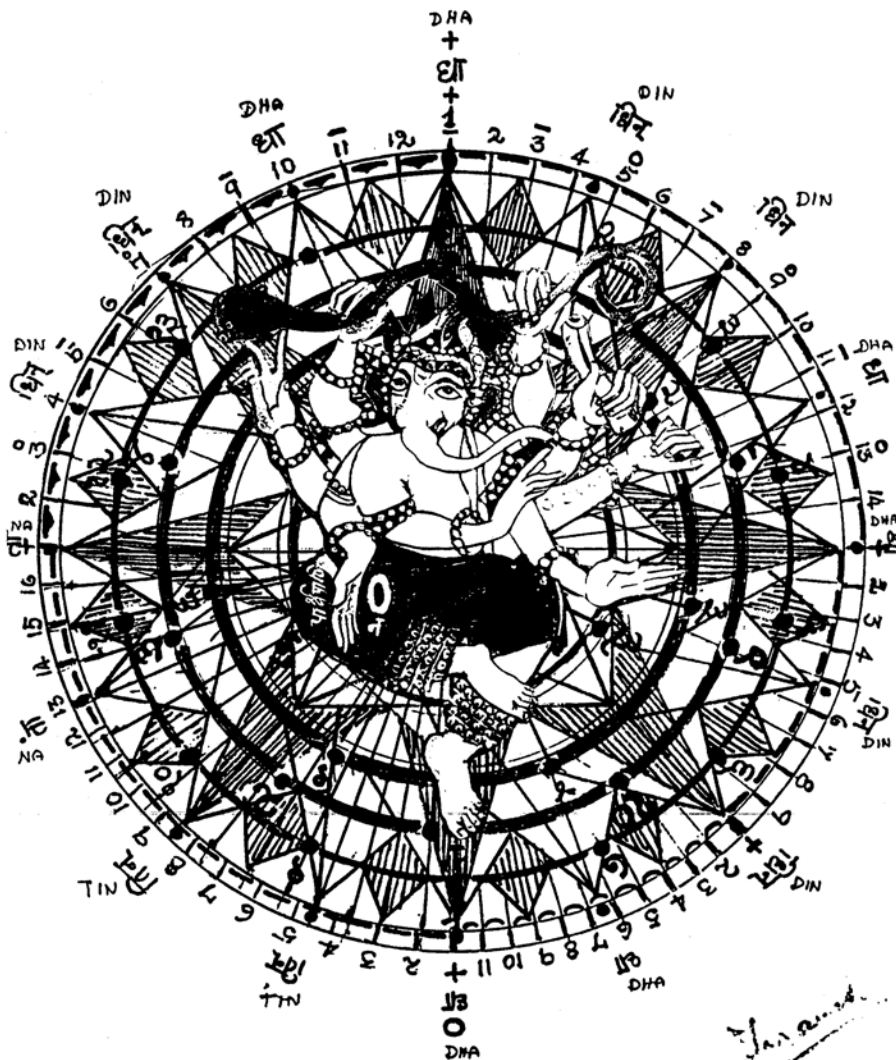


RagaRadar



RagaRadar is a consolidated platform to discover Hindustani Music concerts across the US, unlike never before, with an automated concert collection from Instagram so you never have to scroll through feeds or risk missing a concert again. We have a bi-monthly newsletter available for all regions in the US, so you can get all the concerts around you directly to your inbox, know about concerts you never knew were happening before and be an even more active RagaRasika!

Taal Chakra by Pandit Taranath Rao



Sagar Deshpande



Disciple of Kedar Naphade

Sagar has been learning the harmonium since the age of 6. He received his initial training from Shri Hemant Kulkarni and is now under the tutelage of Shri Kedar Naphade. Aside from harmonium, Sagar is also an avid cellist and is a member of the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra.



Anish Dharam

Disciple of Kedar Naphade

Anish has been learning Harmonium under the guidance of Dr. Kedar Naphade, a senior disciple of Pt Tulsidas Borkar for the past six years. Prior to that, Anish learned from Shri Hemant Kulkarni for over 7 years.

Anish is 21 years old and a senior at Brown University. He is majoring in Math and Computer Science.

Varenja Sastry



Disciple of Shri Anjaneya Sastry & Pandit Yogesh Samsi

Twelve-year-old Varenja Sastry started his training at a young age under the tutelage of his father, Shri Anjaneya Sastry, and is currently a student of Pandit Yogesh Samsi ji. He has also had the cherished privilege of attending workshops and learning directly from the world-renowned Ustad Zakir Hussain ji in 2024. Varenja was also featured as a solo performer in the prestigious Festival of Tabla in 2022. He has performed in several local and international events both as an accompanist and a tabla solo-ist!



Mehar-Jot Singh Sagoo 🏹

Disciple of Ustad Surdarshan Singh Chana

Mehar-Jot Singh Sagoo is an 20-year-old Indian Classical Jori and Tabla artist from the U.K. He is a dedicated student of the internationally renowned Ustaad Surdarshan Singh Chana, who he began learning from at the age of 6. Mehar-Jot Singh engages in weekly lessons and summer intensive retreats, both as a student and youth mentor; to support his practice as a growing musician. Mehar-Jot's playing style draws heavily on the Benaras and Punjab Gharanas, learning an extensive repertoire of authentic compositions that have been passed down through the ages.

Academically, Mehar-Jot is currently in his second year of University, studying Music Psychology and performance . He hopes to work within the field of Musical therapy ; looking into the effects of music on mental health at a deeper neurological level.



Pratyush Goberdhan ●

Student of Pt. Arijit Mahalanabis & Ut. Sarwar Hussain Khan

Pratyush is a student of Pt. Arijit Mahalanabis.

He began learning from his first guru and grandfather the late Sri Hari Shanker Adesh and his mother Smt. Surabhi Adesh mainly focusing on vocal and violin. He first started learning the sarangi during the pandemic under the guidance of Pt Pankaj Mishra. As well he recently started learning with Ut. Sarwar Hussain Khan.

Alongside his mother and the Asian Cultural Association (ACA) of Orlando, Pratyush uses his music to engage with the larger Central Florida community by teaching classes, conducting workshops, helping organize events, as well as facilitating music programs for individuals with special needs.



Rukhmani Mehta

Disciple of Pandit Chitresh Das



Rukhmani Mehta is a Kathak artist, choreographer, and educator working at the intersection of classical Indian dance, contemporary performance, and embodied inquiry. She approaches kathak as a living, evolving practice — one that bridges tradition and innovation while speaking powerfully to the present moment. A senior disciple of the legendary kathak master Pandit Chitresh Das, she is a lineage bearer and contemporary voice whose work spans traditional productions and cross-cultural collaborations.

Mehta is Co-Founder and Co-Artistic Director of Leela Dance Collective. Her original works include SPEAK, a kathak-tap collaboration, described by the New York Times as a meeting of “masters of the art”; and Sandhi, a traditional Kathak solo praised for its “rhythmic duality” and “improvisational depth.” Her works and performances have been presented at prestigious venues across the US and India including the

National Centre for the Performing Arts (Mumbai), 92nd Street Y, The Broad Stage, and NC State Live, among others.

Mehta also serves as Artistic Director of Leela Youth Dance Company, a pre-professional ensemble dedicated to training and mentoring young South Asian women. A Fulbright Award recipient, she is frequently invited to speak on embodied knowledge, lineage and mentorship, and dance as a path to consciousness and transformation.

Rukhmani will be accompanied with vocal support by her Guru Ben Sarah Morelli and recitation support by Rukhmani’s student, Shriya Patel.



Jayanta Banerjee

Disciple of Pandit Robi Chakroborty

Jayanta Banerjee is an internationally acclaimed Sitarist and Music Composer whose concerts have reached audiences and stalwarts all around. Not only a Sitarist, but Jayanta Banerjee is an expert in playing different musical instruments like Sarod, Harmonium, Keyboards and is a melodious singer too.

He has curated his own festival “Sambandh” that brings dance, music and theatre under one roof, propagating art and the Baithaki culture. The festival has over 100 musicians and dancers associated with it. He is one of the few to have bagged Apple Inc. His rhythm on the sitar is used for the app “Nagma Live” owned by Apple Inc.

Jayanta started his journey under the able guidance of Shri Amit Prasanna Mukhopadhyay. Later continued his training under the tutelage of Shri Devi Prasad Chattopadhyay. Progressing ahead, he continued to receive his training in both Rampur Gharana and Maihar Gharana under the guidance of Pt. Santosh Bandopadhyay, later advancing his learning under Pandit Robi Chakroborty, disciple of Ustad Ali Akbar Khan Saheb.



● Salar Nader

Disciple of Ustad Zakir Hussain



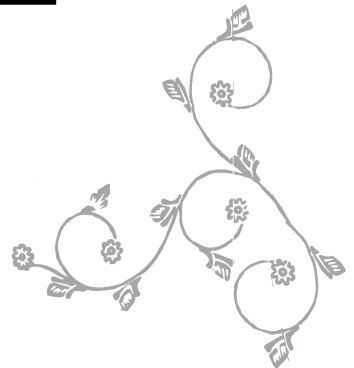
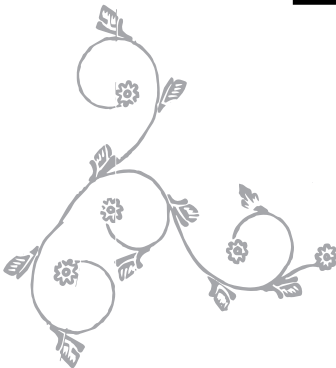
Hailed as “one of the most prominent of the next generation of tabla players” by the Los Angeles Times, Salar Nader is recognized as a virtuoso and global ambassador weaving South Asian arts into the musical traditions of his Afghanistan heritage. A percussionist, composer, and producer, Salar studied under Ustad Zakir Hussain since the age of seven. He has toured widely with Kronos Quartet, Wu Man, Stanley Clarke, Miles From India, and Third Coast Percussion; Central Asian master musicians Homayoun Sakhi, Abbas Kosimov, and the Aga Khan Music Initiative; and legendary Indian classical musicians including Ustad Zakir Hussain, Ustad Amjad Ali Khan, Rahul Sharma, Rakesh Chaurasia, and many others. Salar scored the original stage

adaptation of Khaled Hosseini’s best-selling novel “The Kite Runner,” which had a groundbreaking run on Broadway in 2022 and national tour in 2024. He has performed and recorded with contemporary electronic artists including Cheb i Sabbah, Niyaz, and Grand Tapestry. In 2025, Salar premiered Zakir Hussain’s “Murmurs in Time” with Third Coast Percussion, for whom the piece was written, and he continues to tour with them internationally. Recently Salar performed with the Bang On a Can All-Stars in a 90th birthday tribute to Terry Riley at the Ford in Los Angeles, produced by the LA Philharmonic. Salar continues his dedication to community engagement, workshops, and cross-cultural understanding.

FOT SHORT - Waruna Hemachandra ❁

Thammattama Drum Solo

Waruna Hemachandra is a distinguished Sri Lankan percussionist, composer, and choreographer, renowned for his mastery of the traditional drums of the island. Waruna's artistic journey began at the age of six, and his passion for rhythm led him to pursue formal education in percussion at the University of the Visual and Performing Arts in Colombo, where he honed his skills. In 2012, Waruna founded his own percussion band, "Dinaadah," which quickly rose to prominence as one of Colombo's leading ensembles. After completing his studies, Waruna served as a lead drum instructor and a primary drummer at the prestigious Chitrasena Dance Company, Sri Lanka's oldest performing arts institution. In 2022, Waruna and his wife/dance partner, Sandani Sulochani, moved to the US where they now teach and perform dance and drums under their company, SandaWaruna Art of Dance.



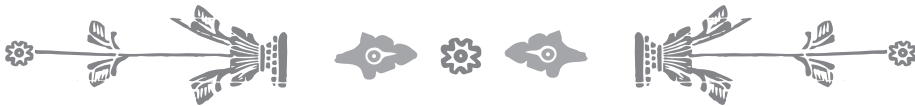
Rigved Barve ●

Disciple of Dr. Pt. Raja Kale

Rigved Barve is born and brought up in Cupertino, California, USA and is currently a rising third-year undergrad student at Santa Clara University, studying biology in the Bay Area. Rigved started learning Hindustani Classical Music at the age of six and took his early music lessons from Shrimati Anumapa Chandratreya and Shri Manoj Tamhankar.



For the last 7 years, he has been a disciple of Dr. Pt. Raja Kale (the senior-most disciple of late Padmashri Pandit Jitendra Abhisheki), and is taking rigorous and advanced training from Panditji. He has also learned the tabla for 11 years, under the guidance of Shri Satish Tare and Ustad Arshad Syed. Additionally, he is a self-taught harmonium player for the last 7 years, and has recently started taking advanced guidance from Shri. Vivek Datar.



● Hriday Buddhdev

Disciple of Ustad Alam Khan

Hriday Buddhdev is a rising Canadian sarod and tabla artist recognized among CBC's "30 Under 30" classical musicians. Trained under Ustad Alam Khan and Pandit Swapan Chaudhuri at the Ali Akbar College of Music, he has performed across Canada and the United States, most recently debuting at the Nehru Centre in London, UK. A three-time recipient of AACM's Advanced Instrumental Scholarship and a three-time performer at Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, Hriday brings a fresh, grounded, and soulful voice to the Indian classical tradition.



2017



2018



2019



2022



2025



2023



2024

❁ Preserving The Art Of Tabla Solo ❁



Preserving Tradition:

The Role of the Festival of Tabla

In the realm of Indian classical music, master artists—guardians of age-old compositions—are facing the passage of time. Their craft blossomed in an era devoid of modern distractions: no technology, no social media, and often no formal schooling. The precious knowledge they impart to their disciples must be nurtured and provided an unbiased platform.

The Unwritten Legacy: Tabla Compositions

Compositions of Tabla, Mridangam, Pakhawaj and many other percussion instruments of India predominantly exist as an unwritten oral tradition. Their survival hinges on the creativity and spontaneity of solo performances. These mesmerizing rhythms, passed down through generations, find expression only when played live. Budding artists benefit immensely from witnessing these masters in action. By observing their artistry, they gain a profound appreciation for the past and find inspiration to practice and

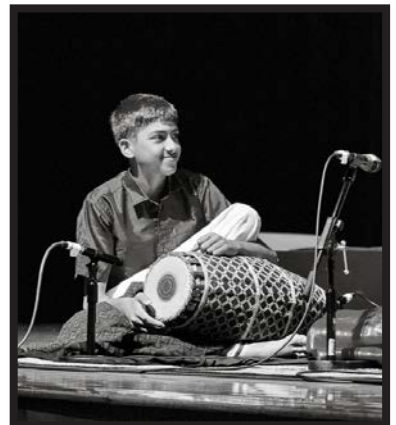
safeguard this rich heritage for the future. The Festival of Tabla (FOT) goes beyond honoring tradition. It also shines a spotlight on the emerging generation of percussion artists. These young artists crave for opportunities to showcase their talent. FOT provides them with hope—a vision that hard work and dedication can lead them to grace the same stage as the masters one day.

Ashvath Karthik ❁

Grand Finale Opener - Student of Shri Arjun Narayanan

Ashvath Karthik is a dedicated young percussionist who has been training in the art of mridangam under the guidance of Guru Shri Arjun Narayanan for the past seven years. Through consistent practice, disciplined learning, and deep respect for the Carnatic tradition, Ashvath has developed a strong foundation in rhythm, technique, and accompaniment.

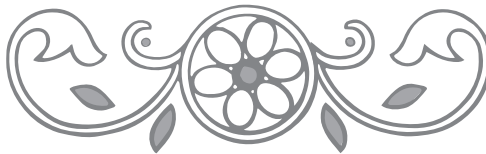
He has actively performed as a mridangam accompanist across the United States, Chennai, and New Delhi, accompanying both vocal and instrumental concerts, including mandolin, flute, and veena.



Kamaljeet Ahluwalia

Giving Lehra on Santoor for Ustad Tari Khan

Kamaljeet Ahluwalia walks an innovative path on the Santoor, a rare and exquisite hammered dulcimer/zither. Her performances invite audiences on an emotional and spiritual journey, exploring vast, sublime melodies and intricate rhythmic patterns that build to an energy-filled crescendo. Kamaljeet began her training at the age of 7 under Sitar Maestro Dharambir Singh (MBE). She furthered her studies with Santoor Maestro Harjinderpal Singh, with her most transformative learning coming from her time under the late Pandit Shivkumar Sharma, whose teachings deeply shaped her artistry. Kamaljeet now humbly works to carry on his legacy through her performances and dedication to the Santoor. Together with her husband, Jas, she is one of the creative forces behind Absolute Focus, a music and media production duo with credits including Netflix, Apple TV+, etc. Through Absolute Focus, they compose original music for film, television, theater, and cultural projects, bridging Indian classical tradition with contemporary storytelling to reach audiences around the world.



Grand Master - Ustad Tari Khan 🌸

Saturday Night Grand Finale Artist

In the realm of South Asian music, when it comes to percussionists emanating from the subcontinent the name of Ustad Tari Khan is inseparable from Tabla. Born in Lahore Pakistan, Tari Khan hails from a family of musicians whose lineage can be traced back to Bhai Mardana. Tari Khan's father was a classical vocalist of great virtuosity and his early education in music was that of a singer. However, Tari Khan listened to the tabla of Ustad Shaukat Hussain Khan at the age of six and became so enamored with the celebrated Ustad that all his musical interests became focused on Tabla. He spent the next eight years of his life listening to Ustad Shaukat Hussain at concerts, on the radio, at private mehfilis (musical gatherings) and on television. At fourteen, he formally became a student of Ustad Shaukat Hussain Khan. Three years later he performed at the death anniversary of Mian Qadir Baksh. That

solo performance earned him a revered place amongst the Tabla greats of all time. Ustad Tari Khan had arrived. There has been no looking back for Tari Khan. Today, he is acknowledged as one of the foremost Tabla players of all time by musicians all over the world.



Ustad Tari Khan has performed in virtually every part of the world, participating in prestigious festivals and concerts, dazzling and captivating audiences by his extraordinary versatility. His work has led to collaborations with artists and producers from all spectrums of the musical world, including collaboration with famed producer Rick Rubin. He has also composed music for several documentaries and films such as Mira Nair's Mississippi Masala starring Denzel Washington. Ustad Tari Khan has received the highest acclaim for both his accompaniment and solo performances. He has been crowned with the title of "Tabla Prince of India and Pakistan", decorated with the prestigious Hazrat Ameer Khusro Award, decorated with the President's Pride of Performance (Pakistan's highest artistic honor), and crowned during Taj Posh (Golden Crown).





Dot Art Booth

By Chandrika Kotecha



Chandrika is an artist who lives in Livermore, CA. Her paintings and sculptural works build on folk art traditions from the Indian subcontinent, including the geometric patterns of the mandala, and the intricate line and dot designs of Gond art.

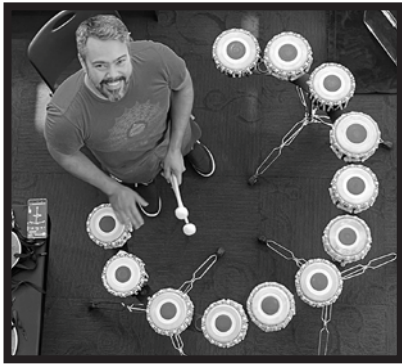
Chandrika's innovative use of medium and material—which ranges from the canvas, to stoneware, to obsolete CD-ROMs—reflects a creative and utterly contemporary approach to these centuries-old forms, and reflects Chandrika's intuitive grasp of color and combination. While she has always had a creative streak, Chandrika spent much of her adult life raising a family and working in the family business. It was only during the COVID-era lockdowns that she found the time and space to explore this inborn artistic talent.



What began as a few sketchpad doodles, quickly turned into an active experiment with the myriad potentials of dot art and design. Chandrika spent hours a day in her at-home studio developing her practice, which gave her solace amid the pandemic's solitude, and has since become a new lease on life: "It's truly meditative work" she says. Since this initial burst, Chandrika's works have only grown in scope and size. In a very short time, she created a robust portfolio to document her practice and showcase her work (her Instagram (@chandris.art)). Please be sure to stop by her booth to view her meticulously crafted artworks and purchase one for your home.



Explore the Future of Tabla Drumming with TransTabla. Visit the booth in the lobby and see what David has invented this year! Don't forget to buy your Tabla Mug!



We're revolutionizing the world of tabla drumming by crafting instruments that are more accessible, versatile, and easier to play than ever before. Our patented tuning mechanism transforms traditional tablas into modern masterpieces, allowing users to adjust pitch and maintain perfect tension with a simple twist. No more strap pulling required! TransTabla is committed to products of the highest quality and beauty, designed to serve you for a lifetime. Whether you're a seasoned performer or a passionate beginner,

TransTabla empowers you to express your musicality with ease and precision. All parts are backed by our guarantee against defects. If we develop an improvement to any TransTabla components, we're happy to offer the updated parts to our existing customers at no additional cost. If you're not completely satisfied, you may return your purchase within 10 business days for a full refund, if the condition is the same as when sent.

TransTabla founder David Yovino is an inventor, musician, and mechanical engineer. He studied for 10 years under tabla master Pandit Swapan Chaudhuri at the Ali Akbar College of Music in San Rafael, California.

TAAL

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Kali Mandir

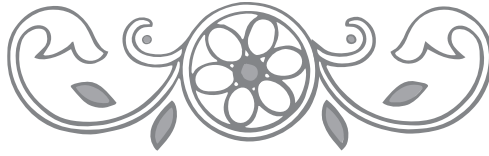
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A California 501(c)(3) tax exempt non-profit religious organization that runs a traditional Hindu temple, ashram, monastery, and seminary dedicated to the worship of the Divine Mother Kali in the devotional tradition of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

Visit the Kali Mandir information booth next to registration to learn more about this extraordinary temple right here in Laguna Beach!

The Temple is currently raising funds to expand into the adjacent land recently acquired. This sacred space offers peace, culture and inspiration for the entire community—if you haven't experienced its transformative energy yet, a visit is a must.





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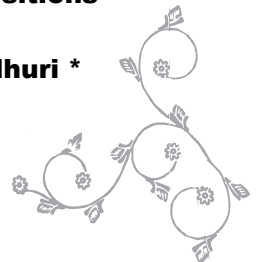
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WORKSHOPS



Documentary film - The Sidi Malunga Project: Rejuvenating the African Musical Bow in India ●

By Amy Catlin-Jairazbhoy joined with Abdul Hamid Sidi

We will present a video of the Sidi Malunga Camp held in the Little Rann of Kacch, Gujarat at Desert Coursers, a nature resort outside Zainabad village. We will share news of our newly formed Sidi Culture and Heritage Foundation of Gujarat, and the Sidi bandhani textile project of Jamnagar, Gujarat. Abdul Hamid Sidi, star African-Indian dancer, cameraman, drummer, and US citizen working at Grinnell College in Iowa, will share his experiences as a Sidi citizen of India. He is a Sidi Sufi dancer, drummer, and singer of ancient hymns to the Sidi Sufi saint Bava Gor of the Rifa'i tariqa.



● Tihais Simplified for any Taal

By Leonice Shinneman



How to land on Sum in any taal? Learn to create unique resounding rhythmic structures in any tala cycle quickly and in real time, without knowing or memorizing numerical factors. Tihai, Tukra, Chakradar and Farmaishi Chakradars will be explored.

The informative workshop is good for musicians, students and music lovers. If you can count to 10 the please join and explore this aspect of Hindustani Rhythm.

❁ Traditional Sri Lankan Drums and Dance

By SandaWaruna Art of Dance



In 2022, Waruna and his wife/dance partner, Sandani Sulochani, moved to the US where they now teach and perform dance and drums under their company, SandaWaruna Art of Dance.

Workshop will be a combination of a live demonstration and a workshop, exploring the five percussive instruments of all three of Sri Lanka's traditional performing art forms: Kandyan, Low-Country, and Sabaragamuwa. The drumming will be accompanied by live dancing.

Sandani Sulochani is a renowned dancer and choreographer from Sri Lanka. She began performing at age seven. She has won over twelve dance awards from the Ministry of Education

in Sri Lanka during her youth. She received both her Bachelors and Masters of Arts in Dance at the University of Kelaniya in Sri Lanka. Sandani also holds a National Diploma in Choreography from the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute in Colombo and earned a certificate from the Chitrasena-Vajira School of Dance's Teacher Training Program. Sandani's graduate research provides an in-depth overview of Vajira Chitrasena, Sri Lanka's first professional female Kandyan dancer, and the dance pedagogy she developed.

After receiving her graduate degrees, Sandani became a frequent guest lecturer at the University of Kelaniya and Ladies' College while teaching and performing as one of the lead members of the acclaimed Chitrasena Dance Company. With her husband and drummer, Waruna Hemachadnra, Sandani is now the co-founder of the US-based dance company and school, SandaWaruna Art of Dance.



❁ Gunindu Abeysekera

Student of SandaWaruna



Gunindu "Guni" Abeysekera is a Sri Lankan-American artist and scholar. Born in Sri Lanka, Guni moved to the US with his family in the year 2000 when he was 2 years-old. Guni is currently a fifth-year PhD candidate in Culture and Performance at UCLA and his current PhD work is a comparative analysis of how the British visually represented Sri Lankan dance during the colonial period and how the Sri Lankan government represents them now in the postcolonial period. Guni's main creative practice is through photography and filmmaking, but he is also a graphic designer, poet, dramaturg for various performances, and beginner Kandyan drummer and dancer. He enjoys collaborating with South Asian artists in the diaspora and now in Sri Lanka as well.

Qaida: Demystifying Tabla Improvisation

By Ravindra Deo



Qaida is one of the central compositional and improvisational forms of the tabla solo tradition. Built from a simple theme, a qaida unfolds through a series of variations that balance creativity with adherence to established musical rules. This workshop explores how tabla players develop, organize, and present these variations in performance, revealing the artistic and structural principles that make qaida a cornerstone of Hindustani percussion repertoire.

Through live demonstrations and guided listening, participants will gain insight into the relationship between composition and improvisation, and learn how a single musical idea can generate an entire performance.



Mharo Pranam: A tribute to Vidushi Lakshmi Shankar and the enduring legacy of Patiala Gharana

By Vidushi Sudakshina Alagia



A Musical Journey: Honoring Vidushi Lakshmi Shankar

Join Vidushi Sudakshina Alagia for an immersive tribute to the legendary Vidushi Lakshmi Shankar, weaving together history, musicology, and live performance into an engaging musical journey.

The workshop opens with a welcoming introduction to the core foundations of Hindustani classical music, demystifying the traditional concept of the gharana (stylistic school) before focusing on the expressive soul of the Patiala gharana. Through rare audio-visual media—including historical photographs and vintage recordings—participants will trace the rich artistic lineage linking Ustad Abdur Rahman Khan to Lakshmi Shankar.



Moving beyond passive listening, the workshop invites attendees to actively engage by synthesizing simple melodic phrases together. Following an open Q&A segment, the experience culminates in a breathtaking live performance by Sudakshina Alagia, demonstrating the hallmark vocal agility, emotive depth, and unique strengths that define the Patiala tradition.

Vidushi Lakshmi Shankar

by Vivek Ullal, Simi Valley California

Vidushi Lakshmi Shankar, the internationally renowned vocalist, was born on June 16, 1926, to Vaidhyanathan Sastri (R. V. Sastri) and Visalakshi. Both parents were from South India, but from different regions: her father was from the Madras Presidency, in what is now Tamil Nadu, while her mother came from an adjoining area of present-day Kerala. Mr. Sastri trained as a lawyer but chose to work as a chartered accountant. Soon after their marriage, he moved to Jamshedpur (now in the state of Jharkhand), the "Steel Town," where he worked for the Tata Iron and Steel Company (TISCO). Lakshmi, as I addressed her, was born and raised in Jamshedpur. As a child, she trained in Bharatanatyam, and her dance education included singing classical music in the Karnatak style (South Indian classical music).

In her teens, Lakshmi joined the famous dancer and dance choreographer Uday Shankar's troupe in Almora as one of the dancers. It was here she met her future husband and younger brother of Uday Shankar, Rajendra Shankar, whom she married in 1944. While pursuing a dancing career, she was struck with a serious medical condition, which made her give up her beloved dancing forever. Fortunately, a beautiful voice and a good background in singing Karnatak style served her well. After their wedding, Lakshmi and Rajendra settled in Mumbai. She was a mother of renowned recording engineer Kumar, who worked with the Beatles and daughter Viji Subramaniam, a vocalist, who tragically passed away from a brain tumor in 1995. While singing jingles for radio ads and a few playbacks singing for early Bollywood movies, Music director Madan Mohan recognized her tremendous potential and introduced her to her vocal music Guru, Ustad Abdul Rehman Khan of Patiala Gharana, from whom she took vigorous lessons over many years. When she started learning Hindustani (North Indian) music, she was a full-time mother and homemaker. Later, Lakshmi also took lessons from her young brother-in-law, Pandit Ravi Shankar. As a vocalist, Lakshmi specialized in singing Khyals, Thumris and bhajans. Pandit Ravi Shankar when asked about female Indian vocalists, said he regarded M.S. Subbalakshmi, Lata Mangeshkar and Lakshmi Shankar as the best female vocalists of Indian music of all times!

She toured widely in India and other countries and gave countless performances. She was the principal vocalist in Sir Richard Attenborough's famous movie "Gandhi", which was internationally acclaimed. She has sung in many formats: Khyal, Thumri, Bhajans, Jazz, Bollywood, and sung in duets with artistes of other genres. She was nominated for an Emmy and won many awards. Lakshmi has sung in both Hindustani and Karnatak styles, and in many Indian regional languages and in English as well!

I was fortunate to be accepted as a student by her. Since I lived in Simi Valley, the same town where she and her son Kumar's family lived, and that too, less than a mile and a half from her, I made full use of it. She was one of the kindest individuals I knew, and was an excellent teacher, role model and mother figure. I enjoyed accompanying her to local concerts, where she was frequently the chief guest. We would listen to a variety of music during those journeys, and she would explain the finer details of the ragas and styles.

She passed away on December 30, 2013, after a brief illness. We miss her presence a lot, but she lives in our pleasant memories, her many recordings and the 200 plus lessons I recorded with her kind consent. We, her students, and her family members celebrated her birth centenary with tributes and recital of music to honor her on June 27, 2026. This year at the Festival of Tabla her disciple, Vidushi Sudakshina Alagia, will present a concert and workshop in memory of Lakshmi ji, the great musical soul who lived right here in Simi Valley California.

● What Remains - An English Play

Written and Directed by Pawan Janakiram



Pawan Janakiram is a storyteller at heart and a lifelong student of theater and cinema. As co-founder of Manodharma Productions, a theater, music and Film production house, he has been actively writing and directing Kannada plays and short films Since 2017, crafting narratives that blend social relevance with humor and emotional depth. His work often explores themes that resonate deeply with audiences, leaving them with meaningful reflections. While he pursues his creative journey with passion, he balances it with a professional career at AWS and over 12 years as a realtor.

About the play: Is a piece of music great because it moves one person completely — or because it moves a million people at once? “What Remains” doesn’t answer that. It makes you feel why the question matters. 42 minutes. Live music. No easy exits.



Sushma Kashyap ❁

Disciple of Pandit Arun Dravid & Pandit Rama Rao Naik

Sushma is a Hindustani Vocalist, performing and teaching classical vocal for 30 years. She has studied Agra and Jaipur Gharanas from eminent Gurus Pt. Arun Dravid of Jaipur Gharana and Pt. Rama Rao Naik of Agra Gharana. Sushma regularly travels to India for concerts. She also teaches in Orange County. Sushma has designed a fusion music ensemble with high school students which blends Carnatic, Western, and Hindustani music.





MK Sathya

Actor



MK Sathya began as a child stage actor before life led him into an accomplished corporate and entrepreneurial career. Returning to his artistic roots, he founded Manodharma Productions to create meaningful, thought-provoking short films and support storytelling across film, stage, dance, and other art forms while providing a platform for local artists. He also serves as President of the US subsidiary of Deepstambh Foundation, an India-based NGO. MK is currently an independent consultant to private equity portfolio companies.



Sohani Pawan

Sohani is a college student at UCLA majoring in Environmental Studies. She has been learning Hindustani Classical Music from Smt. Sushma Kashyap and was an avid member of her high school drama program. Sohani has a deep love for theater and took professional training at Lee Strasberg School of Method Acting. Sohani is very excited to be a part of this play and grateful for this opportunity!



Avishi Bansal



Avishi Bansal is an architecture student and artist interested in exploring the relationship between creativity, storytelling, and human experience. Her work spans across design, theatre, and performance, allowing her to combine her interests in visual arts, movement, and creating meaningful experiences. Through architecture and set design, she enjoys discovering how spaces can influence emotion and bring stories to life. She continues to explore different creative fields and the ways they connect, using each experience as an opportunity to grow as an artist.





PROGRAM



● **Sunday, August 23** ●

Encourage each artist with your generous applause!

TIME		PERFORMANCE
10:30	AM	Ticketing / Doors open
10:45 - 11:00	AM	FOT Introduction
11:00 - 11:30	AM	Jimmy Sudekum - Raga Meditation - Rudra Veena
11:40 - 11:50	AM	FOT Short - David Neptune - Takeda Drum
12:00 - 12:30	PM	Vidushi Sudakshina Alagia - Vocal Performance Rohit Panchakshari - Tabla Aryan Prakash - Harmonium
12:30 - 1:45	PM	LUNCH
1:45 - 1:55	PM	FOT Short - Empire Beats Chenda Group (outdoor performance) Sreejith Kanhirangadan, Rajiv Kuzhupillil, Rachana Mathradan, Dhanya Rajiv, Deepti Nair, Anand Kumar Nair
2:05 - 2:35	PM	Arun Ramamurthi - Carnatic Violin Solo Aditya Ganesh - Mridangam Vivek Chellappa - Kanjira
2:45 - 3:15	PM	Tejas Venkateswaran - Tabla Solo Pratyush Goberdhan - Sarangi
3:30 - 4:00	PM	Saneyee Purandare Bhattacharjee - Vocal Performance Prafulla Athalye - Tabla Aryan Prakash - Harmonium Ruhani Shah & Anushka Pitre - Tanpura support
4:00 - 4:45	PM	CHAI TIME
4:45 - 5:30	PM	Rimpa Siva - Tabla Solo Pratyush Goberdhan - Sarangi
5:40 - 6:10	PM	Hriday Buddhdev - Sarod Solo Sarang Majmudar - Tabla
6:20 - 6:30	PM	FOT Short - Abhi Patel - Djembe Solo Chirag Dixit - Sarangi
6:30 - 7:45	PM	DINNER
8:00 - 9:30	PM	Pandit Anindo Chatterjee - Tabla Solo Suhail Yusuf Khan - Sarangi

WORKSHOPS

● Sunday, August 23 ●

Workshops are included as part of your ticket and free to attend!

TIME		WORKSHOP
10:30	AM	Black Box Theater - open for seating
11:00 - 11:45	AM	Beyond Yoga by Bharat Maru Start the day with some yoga and breathing excercises. Special gift for first 50 people in the room. You have to stay for the full session!
12:00 - 12:40	PM	Indian Melodic Concepts for Saxophone Improvisation Michael Morera
12:45 - 1:30	PM	LUNCH* (Please note Workshop lunch time is shorter)
1:30 - 2:10	PM	Inside the Guru Shishya Parampara Rukhmani Mehta, Pratyush Goberdhan, Ravi Deo
2:25 - 3:05	PM	Mapping Bols on the Body: Making Indian Rhythms Accessible Through Body Percussion Jim Santi Owen
3:20 - 4:00	PM	Her Voice - Women Composers in Hindustani Music Srivani Jade, Anish Dharam, Rohit Panchakshari, Avichal Jha
4:00 - 4:45	PM	CHAI TIME
4:45 - 5:30	PM	Hearing Listening - Sravanum Srithigum - Technology Assisted Immersion and Accessibility in Indian Performing Arts Rishabh Kaushik, Nivrritii(Nivi) Mahesh, Ashvath Karthik, ASL Interpreter
6:00	PM	Black Box Theater Closed



Jimmy Sudekum

Student of Madhuvanti Pal



Jimmy Sudekum is a video editor and producer based in Los Angeles, though music has always been his first language. A lifelong instrumentalist rooted in marching band and classical guitar, he arrived at Hindustani music through sitar study under Paul Livingstone, one of the few American disciples of Pt. Ravi Shankar. Workshops and private lessons with Ramakant Gundecha pulled him deeper still, opening a door into the ancient world of dhrupad he has not stopped walking through since.

That immersion led him, as if by inevitability, to the rudra veena. He has studied the instrument under Madhuvanti Pal in the Bishnupur Gharana tradition, and in 2025 had a Bishnupur-style rudra veena built under her direction. The Festival of Tabla marks his debut public performance on it.



FOT Short Takeda Drum by David Neptune

David Neptune is a percussionist based in Los Angeles whose musical voice draws on a lifetime of immersion in Japanese and world music traditions. Born and raised in Japan, David grew up performing alongside his father, renowned shakuhachi master John Kaizan Neptune, developing a percussive style shaped by influences spanning India, Japan, Latin America, and Africa. The two have performed together in concert halls across the globe. Central to David's musical life is the Takeda Drum, a percussion instrument invented by John Kaizan Neptune. Inspired by the udu drum and crafted 100% from bamboo, the Takeda has a warm, resonant voice entirely its own, and can be played utilizing techniques drawn from many percussion traditions, including the Batá drum and the mridangam. David now produces and manufactures the instrument in Taiwan, carrying forward the world music philosophy he inherited from his father.

David opens his set with a demonstration of the Takeda Drum, walking the audience through the instrument's origins, construction, and sonic range. Crafted 100% from bamboo and inspired by the udu drum, the Takeda produces a warm, resonant sound unlike any other percussion instrument, capable of techniques drawn from many traditions including the Batá drum and the mridangam. David illustrates these possibilities hands-on, inviting the audience into the world of an instrument that is at once ancient in spirit and entirely new, before moving into a solo demonstration.



Vidushi Sudakshina Alagia •

Disciple of Vidushi Lakshmi Shankar & Vidushi Purnima Choudhuri

A multi award winning singer and leading disciple of legendary late Vidushi Lakshmi Shankar and Vidushi Purnima Choudhuri, Sudakshina started singing from the early age of 9. She has meticulously honed and created a unique singing style that combines the tonal perfection and melodious nature of Patiala Gharana and the rustic and emotional singing of Banaras gharana. Sudakshina is equally versed in singing pure classical as well as thumri, dadra, ghazal, kajri, chaiti that are rich in romantic essence, and bhajans that are rich in devotional qualities and evoke a deep spirituality in the listener.



Rohit Panchakshari

Disciple of Ustad Zakir Hussain



Rohit A. Panchakshari began his musical journey in Nashik, India, under the guidance of Pt. Bhanudas Pawar and Nitin Pawar. Drawn to the profound depth of the Punjab Gharana, he has been studying under Guru Narendra Khot, a senior disciple of the legendary Ustad Allarakha Khansaheb. His pursuit of excellence continues through advanced taalim with Guru Pt. Supreet Deshpande, a torchbearer of the Farrukhabad tradition and disciple of Pt. Kiran Deshpande and Taalyogi Pt. Suresh Talwalkar. Rohit has been deeply blessed to receive the guidance of Tabla maestro Ustad Zakir Hussain for over a decade, participating in his annual masterclasses—an experience that continues to shape his musical vision. Balancing tradition with innovation, Rohit complements his artistic path with academic rigor. He holds a Ph.D. in Immunology from Harvard Medical School and currently works in Translational Sciences at Johnson & Johnson in San Diego, bringing the same devotion to science as he does to music.

Aryan Prakash

Student of Shri Tanmay Deochake

Currently an undergraduate student at UC San Diego, Aryan Prakash has learnt harmonium, or samvadini, under the tutelage of his gurus - Shri Partho Roy Choudharyji (disciple of Ustad Amjad Ali Khan saheb) and Shri Adarsh Saxena ji (disciple of Pt Arun Bhaduri ji) and is currently continuing his musical journey under Shri Tanmay Deochake ji. Aryan has begun his musical journey in Southern California by accompanying esteemed artists such as Srimati Srivani Jade ji, and Gaayatri ji and hopes to continue his journey further as a student of music here.





FOT Short - Empire Beats Chenda Group

Rachana Mathradan, Dhanya Rajiv, Deepti Nair,
Sreejith Kanhirangadan, Rajiv Kuzhupillil, Anand Kumar Nair

The Festival of Tabla welcomes one of Kerala's most powerful percussion traditions: the chenda. Carved from jackfruit wood, this ancient drum features two contrasting sides—the sharp, high-pitched Edamthala and the resonant bass Valamthala—creating a thunderous soundscape born from centuries of temple and festival traditions.

Where the tabla speaks with melodic intricacy, the chenda answers with raw power and precision. This profound rhythmic connection was immortalized in 2017 when Kerala's temple drums and the late Ustad Zakir Hussain shared a historic stage. As the global music community continues to honor Ustad Zakir Hussain's immense legacy, this performance stands as a quiet tribute to the artistic bridges he built across Indian percussion traditions.



Carrying forward this spirit of cultural preservation, Empire Beats was formed in 2021 by Malayalee families in Eastvale, Riverside County. Now one of Southern California's most active ensembles, the group brings together nearly 20 multigenerational performers. On August 23, Empire Beats will present a vibrant six-member ensemble showcasing Shinkari Melam—a celebratory form full of energy and synchronization, bringing the authentic, beating heart of Kerala directly to the Festival of Tabla audience.

THIS 10 MINUTE PERFORMANCE WILL TAKE PLACE OUTSIDE RIGHT AFTER LUNCH
LOCATION WILL BE ANNOUNCED



Arun Ramamurthi •

Disciple of Shri P. Sunder Rajan



Arun Ramamurthi is an accomplished Carnatic violinist and senior disciple of the renowned Delhi Shri P. Sunder Rajan. Based in Orange County, California, he is a highly sought-after violin accompanist who has performed alongside legendary artists including Madurai T.N. Seshagopalan, Sudha Raghunathan, and Dr. Trichy Sankaran. In addition to his expertise on the violin, Arun is also a trained vocalist, having studied under Smt. Padma Kutty and the late Vairamangalam Lakshminarayanan.

Deeply committed to nurturing the next generation, Arun has been teaching violin to young students for over 15 years. He is the founder of MaargaUSA, a nonprofit organization established in 2015 to support and promote emerging musicians. He has also contributed to the community through his service as a board member of the South Indian Music Academy in Los Angeles.

✿ Aditya Ganesh

Disciple of Sri N. Narayan and K.R. Ganesh

Aditya Ganesh hails from a family of musicians and dancers and began learning the mridangam from Sri N. Narayan at the age of seven. Since 2008, he has continued his advanced training under the tutelage of Sri K. R. Ganesh, son of the legendary Mridangam Vidwan Sri M. Rajappa Iyer.

With his late grandmother, Kalaimamani Smt. Ranganayaki Jayaraman, and his mother, Smt. Indumathy Ganesh, both leading their own Bharathanatyam dance schools, Aditya developed a deep appreciation for Carnatic music and dance from an early age.

In addition to the mridangam, Aditya has also trained in Carnatic music, which informs his sensitivity and approach as an accompanist. He actively performs and accompanies both music and dance performances throughout the United States.



Vivek Chellappa •

Student of KV Gopalakrishnan



Vivek Chellappa began learning mridangam at the age of six from Sri R. Kannan. He has also taken lessons from Sri. Anoor Dattatreya Sharma of Bangalore and Kalaimamani Guruvayur Sri Dorai. He is currently a student of Sri KV Gopalakrishnan.

Vivek has been performing in mridangam and kanjira since 2004, with leading musicians in the United States and India, including Dr M. Balamuralikrishna, Smt Sudha Raghunathan, and the Mysore Brothers. Vivek is an anesthesiologist in Newport Beach, California.

Tejas Venkateswaran

Student of Vivek Pandya

Tejas Venkateswaran began learning tabla at the age of seven, training in the tradition of Indian classical music. He studied under Ustad Arshad Syed Ji, a disciple of Ustad Allah Rakha Khan and Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma. He is currently training with Shri Vivek Pandya, a senior disciple of Pandit Anindo Chatterjee of the Farrukhabad gharana, where he continues to deepen his technique and understanding of traditional repertoire.



Pen Art by Pandit Ravi Bellare

Saneyee Purandare Bhattacharjee

Disciple of Smt. Prabha Bakshi, Smt. Usha Sathe, Pt. Arun Dravid,

Vidushi Padma Talwalkar, and Smt. Yashaswi Sirpotdar



Saneyee Purandare Bhattacharjee is a Bay Area based Hindustani classical and semi classical vocalist. Her gurus have been Smt. Prabha Bakshi (Pune), Smt. Usha Sathe (Orange County), Pt. Arun Dravid, Vidushi Padma Talwalkar, and Smt. Yashaswi Sirpotdar.

Saneyee performs regularly as a solo artist, composes and records music, accompanies classical dancers, and runs an organization called Swaraswati school of music in the East Bay Area to teach and promote Indian classical music.



Prafulla Athalye



Disciple of Ustad Allarakha Khan, Pt. Arvind Mulgaonkar, Pt. Anindo Chatterjee

Shri. Prafulla Athalye is a senior disciple of Legendary Tabla maestros Ustad Allarakha Khan, Pt. Arvind Mulgaonkar and Pt. Anindo Chatterjee. Prafulla is an 'A' Grade artist of All India Radio and has won many music competitions including National Inter University Competition - 1995 organized by Association of Indian Universities and a National award in 'Rashtriya Yuva Utsav - 1995' organized by Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India. Prafulla is one of the finest tabla players of India and is one of the very few versatile Tabla players and has proven his command not only in Tabla Solo but also in all forms of Tabla accompaniment such as Vocal, Instrumental or Kathak Dance. Currently he's working as a faculty for Tabla for 'Phoenix Gharana School of Indian Arts', located at Scottsdale, AZ since 2013.



Prafulla has performed internationally in more than 22 countries besides India and US and has had an honor of a company stalwarts of Indian classical music, such as his Guru Ustad Allarakha, Ustad Zakir Hussein, Ustad Amjad, Ali Khan, Pt. Jasraj, Pt. Buddhadev Dasgupta, Dr. Smt. N. Rajam, Ustad Shahid Parvez, Pt. Birju Maharaj, Pt. Rakesh Chaurasia, Smt. Arati Ankalikar-Tikekar, etc and many others.

Rimpa Siva ●

Disicple of Pandit Swapan Siva

Rimpa Siva is a globally celebrated tabla virtuoso distinguished by her remarkable technique, deep rhythmic expertise, and inventive approach to classical Indian percussion. Rimpa was hailed as a 'child prodigy' when she burst onto the classical Indian music scene when she was barely a teenager. At the age of nine, Ustad Zakir Hussain honored her with the title "Princess of Tabla".

Trained by her father and guru, Pandit Swapan Siva, she embodies the rich lineage of the Farrukhabad Gharana captivating global audiences with her exceptional technique and dedication. Rimpa continues to inspire and push the boundaries of her art form, envisioning new horizons for classical music.

Recognitions and Awards

Basav Raj Rai Guru Award (2022):

Honored by the Government of Karnataka.

Sangeet Natak Academy Award (2017): Conferred by Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam and the Indian Music Academy

Shamukha Sangeet Shiromani Award (2004)

and numerous other recognitions over the years.



Pratyush Goberdhan ●

Student of Pt. Arijit Mahalanabis & Ut. Sarwar Hussain Khan

Pratyush is a student of Pt. Arijit Mahalanabis.

He began learning from his first guru and grandfather the late Sri Hari Shanker Adesh and his mother Smt. Surabhi Adesh mainly focusing on vocal and violin. He first started learning the sarangi during the pandemic under the guidance of Pt Pankaj Mishra. As well he recently started learning with Ut. Sarwar Hussain Khan.

Alongside his mother and the Asian Cultural Association (ACA) of Orlando, Pratyush uses his music to engage with the larger Central Florida community by teaching classes, conducting workshops, helping organize events, as well as facilitating music programs for individuals with special needs.



Hriday Buddhdev



Disciple of Ustad Alam Khan



Hriday Buddhdev is a rising Canadian sarod and tabla artist recognized among CBC's "30 Under 30" classical musicians. Trained under Ustad Alam Khan and Pandit Swapan Chaudhuri at the Ali Akbar College of Music, he has performed across Canada and the United States, most recently debuting at the Nehru Centre in London, UK. A three-time recipient of AACM's Advanced Instrumental Scholarship and a three-time performer at Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, Hriday brings a fresh, grounded, and soulful voice to the Indian classical tradition.



Sarang Majmudar



Disciple of Pandit Nayan Ghosh

Sarang Majmudar is an Indian Classical Tabla Player who started the journey studying the art of Tabla at the age of 5 years old. He is a senior GandaBandh shagird of Pt. Nayan Ghosh and has dedicated his life to the art of Tabla and Guru-Shishya Parampara in order to preserve the vast lineage of his Guru, Pt. Nayan Ghosh. Sarang has had the opportunity of accompanying legends of Indian music such as Sangeet Martand Pt. Jasraj, Smt. Kankana Banerjee, Ashit and Hema Desai, Alap Desai, and has been invited to perform on the web show, "Utsaah", hosted by Durga Jasraj ji. In 2019, Sarang was invited by his Guru to perform alongside him and illustrious son, Ishaan Ghosh for the birth centenary of the Punjab Gharana legend, Ustad Allah Rakha Khan. He was fortunate enough to play in front of and get blessings of various stalwarts of India such as Pt. Shubhankar Banerjee, Pt. Yogesh Samsi, Pt. Shiv Kumar Sharma, Ustad Zakir Hussain, Pt. Hariprasad Chaurasia, and Pt. Suresh Talwalkar, to name a few. Sarang has also performed tabla solos in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Dallas, and New Jersey.



FOT SHORT by Abhi Patel 🌸

Student of Ustad Taufiq Qureshi

Abhi Patel, professionally known as Matrix Muzik Official, is a versatile drummer, percussionist, and music educator originally from Surat, Gujarat, India.

Abhi's musical journey began at the age of 12 while he was in high school. His foundation in music started with Hindustani Classical Vocal training, followed by studies in Tabla and Harmonium under the guidance of Dr. Dipak Kansara at Swaram Music Academy in Surat. As his passion for rhythm grew, he developed a deep interest in drums and world percussion instruments.

Driven by his dedication to mastering percussion, Abhi had the privilege of learning the Djembe in the Indian classical style from renowned percussion maestro Ustad Taufiq Qureshi at the Rhythun Academy of World Rhythm in Mumbai. Throughout his musical development, he actively participated in numerous national-level music competitions across India, earning several awards and accolades for his performances.



Chirag Dixit 🌸

Disciple of Pt. Pankaj Mishra

Chirag has been learning Sarangi since 2013 from Pankaj Mishra of the Banaras Gharana. He previously studied Hindustani vocal music under Geeta Munshi. Chirag holds a degree in computer engineering.

Chirag is now being recognised by many artists locally. He is also a board member of The Ravi & Shashi Bellare Arts Foundation and has been a huge asset to the Festival of Tabla in organizing and grant writing. He also helps coordinate the Black Box Theater Workshops.





THANK YOU

• **SOKA Team** •



Our sincere gratitude goes out to the **Soka Performing Arts Center Management Team** for their exceptional support and flexibility for FOT

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Lunch | Chai Time | Dinner Catering

The Ravi & Shashi Bellare Arts Foundation extends its sincere gratitude to

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for their excellent service and catering throughout the two-day Festival.

We couldn't have done it without their support!

Alvaro Ruiz (General Manager)

Miguel Rubio (Executive Chef)

Izzy Enriquez (Catering & Operations)

Suhail Yusif Khan

Sarangi



Suhail Yusuf, (stage name: Suhail Yusuf Khan), earned his Ph.D. in ethnomusicology from Wesleyan University in 2024. He is a renowned hereditary sarangi player, a traditional North Indian bowed instrument, and the first Ph.D. recipient from the Mirāsi, a community of Muslim musicians in South Asia. His research effectively combines musical expertise with scholarly rigor, delving into the political and emotional dimensions of marginalized Muslim musician communities and social movements.

Dr. Yusuf has held music residencies at prestigious institutions such as UCLA, Dartmouth, MIT, Wellesley College, University of Pennsylvania and Oxford University. He served as the Visiting Assistant Professor of Music History at the University of Hartford's Hartt School of Music, Dance, and Theater from 2021 to 2024. With an international career spanning over twenty-five years in performance, alongside notable creative and scholarly contributions, he has participated in the production of over twenty music albums and secured a signing with Domino Records in the U.K.

Currently, Dr. Yusuf is a Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of California, Santa Cruz, collaborating with Professor Dard Neuman on transcribing and analyzing performances from hereditary Mirāsi lineages. He is utilizing the interactive digital transcription method pioneered by Professor Neuman. In addition to this research, he is in the process of writing his first book, tentatively titled "Mirāsitude: Interfaith and Inclusive Ways of Resistance in North India and Beyond."



Grand Master - Pandit Anindo Chatterjee



Pandit Anindo Chatterjee is one of the most celebrated and distinguished musicians, revered worldwide as a legendary master of the Tabla. His remarkable musical journey began at the age of 10, when he was blessed on stage by the great Ustad Amir Khan Sahib, an auspicious moment that foreshadowed an extraordinary artistic destiny. Spanning nearly six decades, his illustrious career has been marked by unparalleled artistry, uncompromising excellence, and an enduring dedication to the rich traditions of Indian classical music. Today, Pandit Anindo Chatterjee stands among the foremost icons of Indian music, inspiring generations of musicians and music lovers across the globe.

Pandit Anindo Chatterjee has shared his artistry with audiences in nearly sixty countries, performing at world's most prestigious venues and festivals. In 1989, he achieved the distinction of performing at the House of Commons of the British Parliament as one of the youngest Indian musicians. A respected cultural ambassador of India, he has represented the nation's musical heritage across the globe. Since 1990, he has been recognized as a Top Grade Artist by the ICCR, All India Radio, and Doordarshan.

A dedicated guru as well as a celebrated performer, Pandit Anindo Chatterjee has nurtured and inspired numerous disciples across India, including his son, the acclaimed tabla player Anubrata Chatterjee. Anindo ji is Renowned for his profound mastery of all Gharana traditions of Tabla, He is celebrated for his unmatched clarity, dazzling speed, flawless precision, and distinctive style

Through his artistry, scholarship, and mentorship, he continues to enrich Indian classical music and remains one of its most treasured exponents

Pandit Anindo Chatterjee has performed at the Rashtrapati Bhavan and also had the honour of performing for President Barack Obama during his visit to India in 2010. He is a recipient of numerous prestigious honours, including the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (2002), presented by Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. With a distinguished recording career spanning over four decades, he has contributed extensively to the world of Indian classical music through a wide range of acclaimed albums

A living legend, Pandit Anindo Chatterjee continues to inspire generations of musicians and music lovers worldwide.



WORKSHOPS

Beyond Yoga By Bharat Maru ●

Through “Beyond Yoga,” Bharat helps students and seekers discover greater health, deeper awareness, mental clarity, emotional balance, and a more joyful way of living. His classes emphasize simple, practical techniques that can be practiced anywhere, anytime, and by people of all ages and abilities.



1. Yoga Kriya
2. Pranayama
3. Asana
4. Meditation
5. Eye Exercise
5. Tongue Exercise
6. Laughter Exercise

The first 50 people in black box theater ready to do yoga will receive a free FOT drinking flask, FOT yoga mat and a towel



Indian Melodic Concepts for Saxophone Improvisation ❁

By Michael Morera

A dedicated musician from an early age, Michael often practiced six to eight hours a day. His interest in Indian rhythm began in the 1970s while playing with the Don Ellis Orchestra and continued through his work with Turbulance, where original compositions explored odd meters such as 7/8, 9/8, and 11/16. His love for Indian music grew through the influence of Ravi Shankar, Zakir Hussain, John McLaughlin, Miles Davis, and Chick Corea. Michael is excited to reengage with the influences of Indian music as a source of inspiration to his playing!

The workshop will have a goal of how to incorporate Indian music on the saxophone to expand improvisation vocabulary.

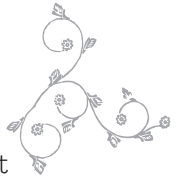
The workshop will cover basic Indian music grammar and what challenges might be encountered on western instruments.

Michael will attempt to show how Indian melodic systems offer expanded vocabulary for the saxophone as a way of shaping phrases and emotional intention in improvisation. A gradual build of complexity; Culminating with a performance of a soulful Sufi melody.



Inside the Guru Shishya Parampara ●

By Rukhmani Mehta



Rukhmani Mehta takes audiences inside one of India's oldest educational traditions — the guru-shishya parampara — through the story of her own journey from student to teacher. With live demonstration woven throughout, this artist talk and conversation traces what it means to surrender to a form, to trust a teacher completely, and to discover that discipline is the path to freedom. Through personal story and live demonstration, audiences will encounter the parampara not as history but as a living tradition — one with the power to transform everyone it touches.



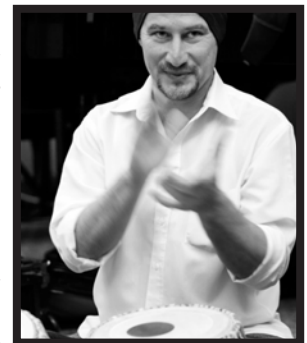
Mapping Bols on the Body: Making Indian Rhythms Accessible Through Body Percussion

By Jim Santi Owen



This interactive workshop explores how foundational concepts from North and South Indian rhythm traditions can be translated into body percussion, vocalization, and movement-based ensemble practice. Drawing from tabla and konnakol pedagogy, participants will learn how rhythmic syllables (bols), cyclic structures, subdivision systems, and compositional forms can be embodied through clapping, stepping, vocal percussion, and coordinated movement.

A central focus of the workshop is making the sophistication of Indian rhythmic systems approachable, physical, and accessible to learners of all backgrounds. By translating complex rhythmic ideas into embodied exercises, participants will develop an intuitive understanding of pulse, subdivision, phrase structure, and rhythmic interplay without requiring prior training in Indian music. This approach is especially effective for introducing Indian rhythm to children, classroom settings, dancers, and non-musicians, creating an immediate and engaging entry point into rhythmic learning through movement and play. Developed through decades of teaching in classrooms, workshops, and community music settings, these methods have been refined through extensive practical application with students of diverse ages, backgrounds, and experience levels. The workshop also serves as a model for tabla artists and rhythm educators seeking practical strategies for sharing Indian rhythmic concepts with broader audiences in clear, engaging, and participatory ways.



Her Voice - Women Composers in Hindustani Music 🌸

By Srivani Jade

Women have been learning and singing Hindustani (North Indian Classical) music for over two centuries. The first students of Khayal were female, and the first recording of a female singing voice in Hindustani Music (1902) is of Gauhar Jan, the renowned tawaif (courtesan) and classical musician from Kolkata. But rarely does one find bandishes attributed to women composers. This seems curious since much of Khayal is improvised music, and in a sense, one is always composing. Perhaps they did not compose in deference to their Ustads/Gurus or shadow-wrote under a different pen-name, much like Victorian era women writers?

With Hirabai Badodekar and Saraswati Rane (daughters of Kirana Gharana founder Abdul Karim Khan Saheb) achieving status and popularity as gharanedaar khayaliyas of their time, and Marathi theater bringing classical based natyasangeet to the masses, the tide turned for women in Hindustani. Since then they have reclaimed their space in public, as prolific musicians, composers and teachers. This program by Srivani Jade Ensemble presents compositions by women artists over the ages, and restores credit to their genius and creativity. From devotional composers like Meera Bai and Pratapbala, to Thumri singers like Girija Devi and Naina Devi to Khayal singers Prabha Atre, Veena Sahasrabuddhe and Ashwini Bhide, and now Srivani herself - we will hear a variety of beautiful compositions born out of the minds of women and their experiences.



Hearing Listening: Sravanum Srithiyum - Technology Assisted Immersion and Accessibility in Indian Performing Arts 🎧

By Rishabh Kaushik and Nivrritii Mahesh

Nivrritii (Nivi) Mahesh is a rising young Bharatanatyam dancer, student, and advocate for accessibility



in the performing arts. A high school senior from Connecticut, she has trained in Bharatanatyam since the age of six under the guidance of her mother and guru, Aishwarya Chakravarthy, Artistic Director of Natyakshetram School of Dance. Nivi has performed extensively in the United States and India, appearing in prestigious productions and venues while balancing a strong academic record with a deep commitment to the arts. She is a recipient of the India Arts Foundation Research Grant and a member of the International Dance Council (CID-UNESCO)

A bilateral cochlear implant recipient and world record holder, Nivi is recognized for pioneering the use of assistive technology in

Indian classical dance. In 2026, she became the first bilateral cochlear implant recipient to perform a full Bharatanatyam Margam with a live orchestra, demonstrating how tradition and innovation can work together to make the arts more inclusive. Through performances, research, and community outreach initiatives, she seeks to expand access to Indian classical arts for audiences and artists of diverse abilities and backgrounds. Her journey continues to inspire others by showing that excellence in the arts is defined by dedication, creativity, and a willingness to reimagine what is possible.



Rishabh Kaushik (17) is a Los Angeles-based vocalist and keyboardist carrying forward a distinguished Carnatic lineage traceable to legends Vid. Thanjavur Vaidyanatha Iyer and Palghat Ghatam Sundaram. Under the guidance of Vid. K.N. Shashikiran and Vid. Sivaralaxmi Maya Abhishek, he made his debut at age nine during Chennai's Margazhi season. Over the past eight years, Rishabh has delivered over 120 international concerts across six countries.



Deeply committed to accessible arts, Rishabh leads the "Service Through Music" initiative, teaching neurodiverse youth, collaborating with disabled artists, and incorporating Cymatics and sign language to make concerts accessible to the hearing-impaired. A recipient of the India Art Foundation research grant, his achievements have been featured in major outlets including The Hindu and The Times of India.



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Amit & Nishant Kotecha

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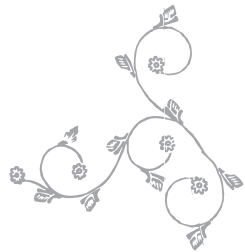
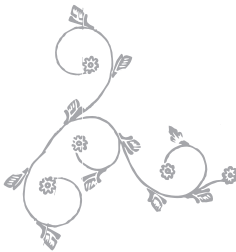
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Every contribution truly counts!

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Chandru's firm, AccounTax Solutions, is now managed by his son Avi Mirchandani.

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Painting by Pandit Ravi Bellare

FOT26 Team:

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Dharini Dixit
Kajal Mahbubani
Mona Kotecha
Rupesh Kotecha
Saish Kotecha
Satyam Kotecha
Sunil Mahbubani
All spent 100's of hours this year to put on FOT26

Graphic Design:

Saish Kotecha

Marketing & Social Media:

Satyam Kotecha

Gift Preparation:

Friends and Family Volunteers

FOT25 Brand Ambassador:

Arjun Prasad

FOT Interviews:

Mausami Momaya
Mausami has conducted over 400+ interviews of audiences and artists over the years.

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Ian Smith - House
Jarmil Maupin - Black Box

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Nilesh Patel & Heena

Videography:

Anthony Ferrara & Riley Bray
Anoop Gandeche - Freelance

Artist Gifts:

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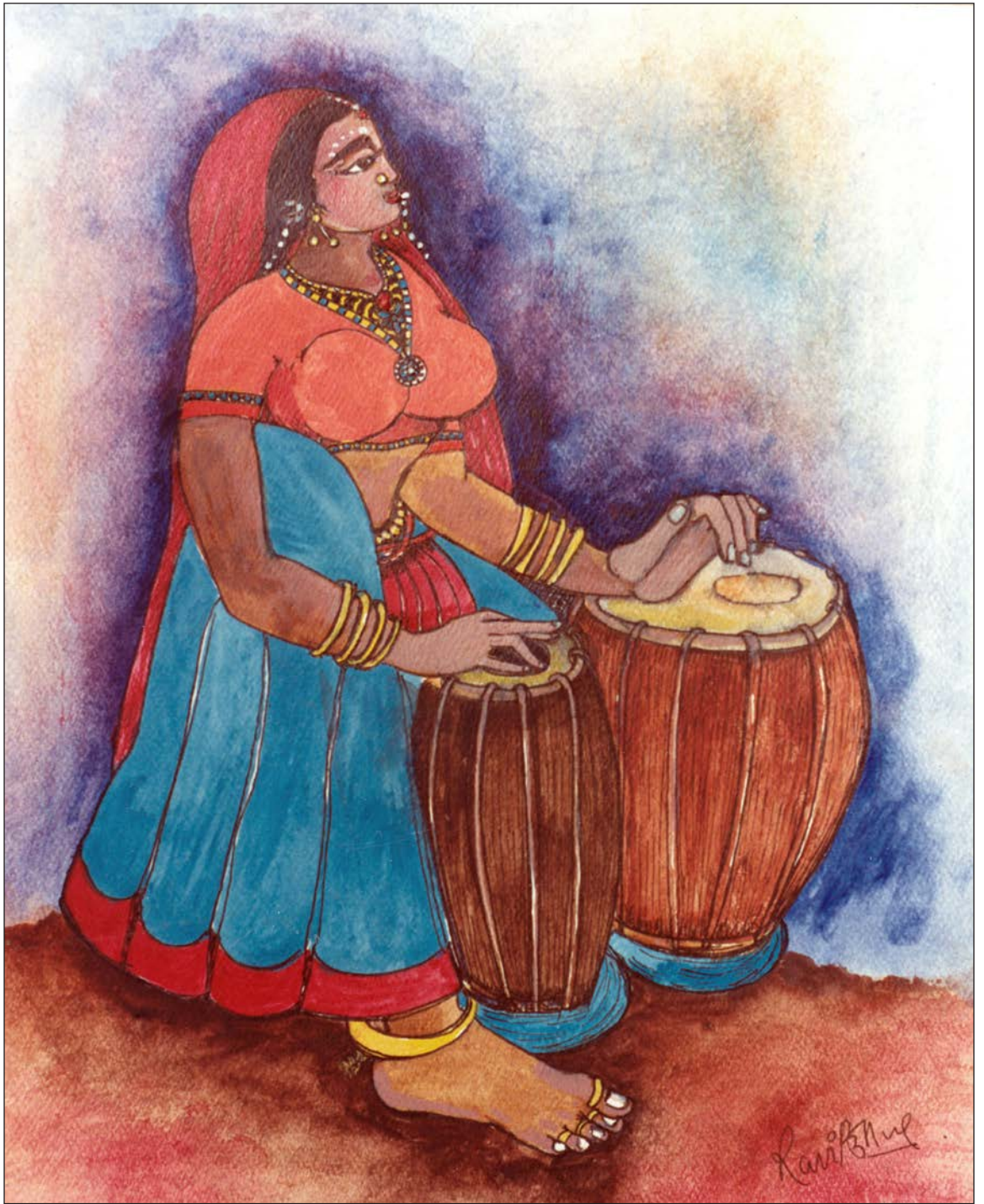
Dining Management:

Upen & Rita Patel
Rohit Patel

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It takes a village! We are extremely grateful to ALL of our volunteers; they have helped make this festival a success and we thank them wholeheartedly for their selfless service!

Thank you for being here!



Dwi Pushkara Painting by Pandit Ravi Bellare

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