Pandit Ramesh Misra is a phenomenon in the field of Indian classical music. Mastering one of the most difficult and unique string instruments, sarengi, Misra is acclaimed as an outstanding artist of India. Presently he is under the tutelage of legendary maestro Pandit Ravi Shankar. In addition to his appearance in most of the major music festivals of the world, he has been featured in numerous recordings, including his own solos, and has earned a niche in the hearts of millions of music lovers.

* * *

Rite Rhythm, Misra Yana, and Jyotsna were commissioned by the Jerome Foundation Emerging Composers Commissioning Fund for the Ethos Percussion Group.

Visit Ethos on the World-wide Web: www.ethospercussiongroup.com

Ethos would like to give special thanks to associate members John Hadfield and Jack Mansager. Ethos thanks the generous support of Innovative Percussion, Yamaha Percussion & Remo.

Ethos is a member of Chamber Music America and a sustaining member of the Percussive Arts Society. Ethos Percussion Group is represented by:

BAYLIN Artists Management
18 West State Street, Suite 203, Doylestown, PA 18901
267.880.3750/p  267.880.3757/f  www.baylinartists.com

This performance received support from the Oregon Arts Commission; WESTAF, the Western States Arts Federation; and the National Endowment for the Arts.

* * *
PROGRAM (subject to change)

Piru Bole (1986)  John Bergamo

Misra Yana  Steve Gorn

North Indian Classical Music  To be announced from stage

Ragas and Tablas Selections  Pandit Samir Chatterjee &
   Pandit Ramesh Misra

INTERMISSION

Rite Rhythm (2000)  Samir Chatterjee

Jyotsna (2000)  Samir Chatterjee

* * *

PROGRAM NOTES

Misra Yana  Steve Gorn

The piece originated with variations on the Indian raga Chaurukeshi, and interest in creating unusual drone and ostinato patterns. By maintaining the scale, the changing tone centers, fragments of other ragas emerge. Altered notes bring about interplay of melodic contours well suited to the marimba. I would like to thank Ethos for the opportunity of composing Misra Yana.

~ Steve Gorn

North Indian Classical Music

Any performance of North Indian classical music depends considerably on the mood and inspiration of the artists and their rapport with the audience. Therefore, today’s selection of ragas and talas will be chosen just prior to the performance by the artists. Moods from solemn and sad, to romantic and restless, are said to be embodied like personalities in the more than 75,000 ragas in the classical literature.

Indian classical music is a highly developed musical language which expresses itself entirely through melodic tone rows called raga. Whereas in Western music a major key may be said to symbolize happiness and a minor key sadness, different ragas express or symbolize a whole variety of emotions as well as the various times of day and seasons of the year. In Indian music there is no harmony, so all musical meaning must rest with the interrelation of the notes

Michael Sgouros founded the Ethos Percussion Group in 1990 after graduating with a Bachelor of Music degree from The Juilliard School. He has performed with the American Symphony, Philharmonia Virtuosi, Long Island Masterworks Chorus Orchestra, and the Broadway productions of The Secret Garden, Falsettos, The Goodbye Girl, Sunset Boulevard, Miss Saigon, and Phantom of the Opera. He has toured nationally with A Chorus Line and has traveled to Singapore with the touring production of Anything Goes. Sgouros has worked professionally as drummer/percussionist with Eartha Kitt, Mandy Patinkin, Michael Rupert, Bernadette Peters, Martin Short, Danny Aiello, Michael Kamen, Allison Janney, and Richard Thomas. He has been honored by the National Foundation of the Arts and is a winner of the National Music Week Concerto Competition. Sgouros has been a panel speaker for Chamber Music America and the Percussive Arts Society.

World music specialist Yousif Sheronick appears internationally as soloist, chamber musician, and collaborative artist with world-renowned groups and artists such as Philip Glass, Glen Velez and Handance, Foday Musa Suso, Simon Shaheen and Qantara, Paul Winter Consort, New York City Ballet, Battery Dance Company, and Music from China. He has performed in such prestigious venues as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center’s Alice Tully Hall, Royal Festival Hall (London), Wigmore Hall (London) and New York’s Town Hall. Encompassing a wide range of styles including ethnic, jazz, rock, and chamber music, Sheronick specializes in percussion instruments from around the globe. Distinguished collaborators have included Yo-Yo Ma, Branford Marsalis, Pandit Samir Chatterjee, Marcel Khalife, Sonny Fortune, Pacifica String Quartet, David Krakauer, John LaBarbara, Steve Gorn, and Alessandra Belloni. Festival appearances include the JVC Jazz Festival, Newport Jazz Festival, Spoleto Festival USA, Lincoln Center “Out Of Doors,” Jazztet (Madrid), Salisbury Festival (England), Territorios Urbanos (Seville, Spain), Renaissance Festival (Rethymno, Greece) and Early Music Festival (Regensburg, Germany). Sheronick has performed live on NPR’s “Performance Today” and John Shaffer’s “New Sounds.” He is an active clinician giving master classes and facilitating drum circles around the U. S. and Australia. He has worked in film, commercials, and appears on Ellipsis Arts, Koch International, PGM, Newport Classics and Interworld Music record labels. Sheronick holds degrees from Yale University and the University of Iowa, and serves on the faculty of Concordia Conservatory.

Pandit Samir Chatterjee is one of the leading tabla players of India. Chatterjee represents the Farrukhabad Gharana of tabla-playing by virtue of studying under gurus, all of whom are from the Farrukhabad Gharana. Since 1982, he has regularly toured
Phinney holds both a bachelor’s and master’s degree from Manhattan School of Music, where he studied with Duncan Patton, James Preiss, and Chris Lamb. In addition to classical studies, he has a strong interest in world music. After graduation, he began North Indian tabla studies with Indian tabla masters Pandit Sharda Sahai of Benares and Pandit Samir Chatterjee of Calcutta. He recently became a disciple of Pdt. Chatterjee and is a member of Chhandayan, an Indian musical organization based in Calcutta. In addition to Hindustani studies, he is currently a student of West African (Ghanaian) drumming with Robert Levin and Abraham K. Adzenyah and gyil (West African xylophone) with Valerie Naranjo, Bernard Woma, and Kakraba Lobi.

India Percussion

In both the North Indian (Hindustani) and South Indian (Carnatic) musical traditions, percussion plays a major part. In both systems, the rhythmic aspect is known as tala. Just as there are many thousands of ragas that determine the melodic content, there are many talas that define the rhythmic cycle. Some of the most commonly used talas are Tintal (16 beats: 4+4+4+4), Rupak (7 beats: 3+2+2), Jhaptal (10 beats: 2+3+2+3), Ektal (12 beats: 2+2+2+2+2) and Dhamartal (14 beats: 5+2+3+4).

Improvisation on a composition must follow the exigencies of both the raga and the tala. Just as the melodist improvises on the raga, the drummer too will improvise, calling on the hundreds of small set patterns he has learned through long training, rearranging them, modifying them with variation technique, inserting longer
and more complex patterns at main divisions in the musical architecture. There is an exchange of improvisation. While the soloist is developing melodic and rhythmic complexities, the drummer will keep a relatively simple pattern that outlines the origins of the tala by contrast of timbre produced with different strokes of the hands and fingers. There is, in fact, a particular orthodox stroke pattern to show the structure of each tala, call the theka. Sometimes the soloist will repeat the composition in its simple original form, at which time the drummer may introduce rhythmically complex improvisation. When both improvise simultaneously in cross-rhythms, the audience listens attentively to see that they both arrive at the end of their patterns on the sam, or first beat of the tala cycle. When they do, the response is often vocal, for the audience is deeply involved.

In North Indian music there is usually only one percussion instrument, the tabla, or for the ancient form of dhrupad—the pak-hawaj.

~ World Music Institute

Rite Rhythm
Samir Chatterjee

On May 18th, 1999, I heard Ethos for the first time at Merkin Hall, NYC and felt very impressed. So when they approached me to compose two pieces for them, very enthusiastically I consented. The main challenge in this assignment was the communication part. I write my music in the Indian notation system and don’t have much idea about its western equivalent. But when my student Eric Phinney, who is a member of Ethos as well, offered to transcribe the piece from my notation to the western notation system, it made the task a lot easier.

I envisioned the main piece Rite Rhythm to be a reflection of the tradition of percussion from all over the world, which is quite often associated with rites and ceremonies. Rhythm, as we know, has been integral to many of our social activities. I wanted to highlight some of it from the traditions of Asia, Africa, Middle East, and America. In doing so, I thought it would be very interesting to hear some Indian compositions on different instruments from around the world. Other than that, the piece is designed to have a lot of different rhythmic movements coming out of different melodic associations. The piece is based on the Indian concept of Taal, meaning rhythmic cycle.

~ Samir Chatterjee

Jyotsna (Moon Light)
Samir Chatterjee

Jyotsna is much less intense. It is built up on a soothing melody in a seven beat rhythmic cycle called Roopak Taal in North Indian tradition and Mishra Chapu Taal in South Indian tradition. Both the pieces are based on the Indian concept of Taal, rhythmic cycle.

~ Samir Chatterjee

It has been a tremendous pleasure to work with Ethos. They are an extremely talented group of musicians and have learnt the pieces practically in no time at all. In both these compositions, I also intended to bring out the best of each of the performing members. I heartily thank all of them for their cooperation and hard work. Finally, I want to dedicate the pieces to my gurus and the tradition that I have imbibed from them.

~ Samir Chatterjee

ABOUT TONIGHT’S ARTISTS

The Ethos Percussion Group, celebrating extraordinary music-making for a decade, is dedicated to the advancement of the percussion arts in performance and education. Ethos’ success is a result of virtuosic and entertaining performances that are fascinating for both the eyes and ears. The ensemble’s hallmark is the programming of a wide variety of musical styles, on an eclectic battery of instruments, from around the globe.


Recent seasons have included performances across the United States, with major engagements at Lincoln Center’s Alice Tully Hall (for Lou Harrison’s eightieth birthday celebration), Carnegie’s Weill Recital Hall, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the U.S. Military Academy, the American Museum of Natural History and Carnegie Hall. The ensemble is in great demand for residencies and clinics, and has conducted workshops for many universities, as well as The Juilliard School and the Berklee College of Music. In 1998, the ensemble performed their international debut at Wigmore Hall. In 1999, Ethos inaugurated a new annual series dedicated to percussion chamber music at New York’s Weill Recital Hall and Merkin Concert Hall. Recent collaborators have included Grammy-winning frame drummer Glen Velez, acclaimed vibraphonist Stefan Harris, Indian tabla master Samir Chatterjee, and the Kansas City Symphony.

Ethos offers its outstanding educational program, Bing! Bang! Boom!, in New York under the auspices of Young Audiences/New York, and Arts Connection. Ethos is also a recipient of a Chamber Music America Ensemble Residency Grant dedicated to an educational residency at the Children’s Museum of Manhattan. In 1998, Ethos was awarded a grant from the Jerome Foundation, which has both funded a series of commissions for the ensemble and supported their New York series.