

Tambura

Central to the texture of Indian music is the presence of a drone against which the melody moves. It is a tonal center around which musicians (folk as well as classical) weave their architecture. The South Indian tambura is made of jackwood and has four strings. The notes used for the drone are the tonal center and a perfect fifth below it. Indian musicians are free to choose their tonal centers according to their vocal or instrumental range.

Vina

The traditional South Indian Sarasvati Vina is a plucked lute. With a fretboard (neck) of 24 brass frets fixed on beeswax and spanning three and a half octaves, its origins can be traced to the Raghunatha Mela Vina developed by Govinda Dikshitar in the sixteenth century. The two and a half foot fretboard merges into a large hollow wooden resonator on the right side of the performer, and is supported by a smaller gourd used as a lap-rest on the left. The instrument is still hand-crafted using jackwood, brass, and other metals. The vina has seven strings - four melody strings and three side strings to mark the rhythm.

Mridangam

The mridangam is the principal percussion accompaniment in South Indian concerts. This is a barrel-shaped double-headed drum made from a hollowed-out log of jackwood. The heads are covered with multiple layers of leather skins and held by leather straps. The smaller (right-hand) head has a black spot made of rice paste and other ingredients, and is tuned to the tonic. The larger (left-hand) head has a blob of wheat paste to produce a lower pitch.

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Oriental carpets courtesy of Oveissi & Co.

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COMING WORLD MUSIC EVENTS

Saturday, March 6 • 3 p.m. Agate Hall

SHADOW PUPPETT THEATER with

UO JAVANESE GAMELAN

Guest & Ensemble; Free admission

Sunday, April 4 • 8 p.m. Beall Hall

SHOGHAKEN ARMENIAN FOLK ENSEMBLE

World Music Series, \$10, \$8

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104th Season, 57th program



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON • SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Beall Concert Hall

8:00 p.m.

Friday evening

February 27, 2004

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

WORLD MUSIC SERIES

presents

**CLASSICAL (CARNATIC)
MUSIC OF SOUTH INDIA**

featuring

Rajeswari Padmanabhan, vina (lute)

Sreevidhya Chandramouli, vina

Karthik Gopalaratnam, mridangam (drum)



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

PROGRAM

Varnam

Invocation to Lord Ganesha

Raga Alapana, composition, and improvisation

INTERMISSION

Ragam-Tanam-Pallavi and percussion solo

Concluding compositions.

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ABOUT TONIGHT'S ARTISTS

Rajeswari Padmanabhan, daughter of Lakshmi Ammal and grand daughter of Karaikudi Subbarama Iyer (the elder of the Karaikudi Vina brothers), is a ninth generation descendent in the Karaikudi Vina tradition. From the age of five, she was under the tutelage of her grandfather Karaikudi Sambasiva Iyer (the younger of the Karaikudi Vina brothers), and remained under his guidance until the demise of the maestro in 1958. Later, under a Government of India scholarship, she continued her training in vocal music from the composer Sri. Mysore Vasudevachar. Padmanabhan retired as the principal and head of the department of music at Kalakshetra, the internationally renowned school of arts and dance in Chennai, India where she had been teaching for more than four decades. She has numerous awards to her credit, including the Sangeet Natak Academy Award by the Government of India and the Kalai Mamani Award by the State Government of Tamil Nadu. A top grade artist at All India Radio and Indian Doordarshan (TV), Padmanabhan has performed for various prestigious music organizations in India, North America, Europe, and Southeast Asia. She is also credited with innovative approaches towards making portable vinas, and designing a new acrylic melam (fretboard or neck), which offers durability without sacrificing the tonal quality of the instrument.

Sreevidhya Chandramouli, daughter of Smt. Rajeswari Padmanabhan, is a tenth generation vina player in the Karaikudi Vina tradition. She started learning vina from her mother at the age of four, began performing with her from the age of nine, and gave her first solo performance at the age of sixteen. In addition to this traditional background, she pursued music academically and holds a Masters Degree in music from the University of Madras. Chandramouli was a visiting artist at the University of Washington in 1993-95, where she also did graduate work in ethnomusicology and cultural anthropology. A regular performer at All India Radio and Indian Doordarshan (TV) for the last two decades, Chandramouli has performed for various prestigious music organizations in India, Europe, and North America. She has been teaching and performing in the Pacific Northwest

since 1990. She offers regular lecture-demonstrations at the University of Washington, University of Oregon, and Lewis & Clark College. In addition to music, she is a professional painter and disciple of the musician-teacher-painter Sri.S.Rajam.

Karthik Gopalaratnam started learning the art of mridangam playing at the age of 9 in Bangalore, India. His guru is the renowned Sri H.S. Sudhindra, a respected teacher and prominent performer in Bangalore, and a prime disciple of Sri Srimushnam Raja Rao, one of the foremost exponents of the art. Gopalaratnam has given numerous performances in Bangalore, and was placed third in the state-wide music examination. He has given many concerts in Dallas and Houston after moving to the U.S. in 1999, and continues to maintain an active concert schedule. Gopalaratnam also studied vocal music with his mother Smt. Girija Gopalratnam, and with Vidushi Neela Ramgopal of Bangalore, torchbearer of a style of Carnatic music steeped in traditional values. Using his solid grounding in vocal music, Gopalaratnam strives to emulate the style of his mridangam gurus, who are known for their in-depth knowledge of vocal music and sensitive accompaniment. Gopalaratnam is currently a graduate student in computer science at the University of Washington.

PROGRAM NOTES

South Indian Music

South India comprises a geographical area where four major languages (Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam) are spoken. Although there are two major urban areas (Madras, now known as Chennai, and Bangalore), and a few other important cities, most people still live in villages and small towns. The origins of Indian music are traced to prehistoric antiquity. Art or concert music in South India is called Karnāṭaka Sangītam ("Karnatic" or "Carnatic" music in English). Its development stems from the Renaissance Period which, in South India, had its center in the Vijayanagara empire (1336-1565). Purandara Dasa (1484-1564), a celebrated poet, mystic, and composer, created a systematic way of teaching Carnatic music. This method is still followed today, and provides the common denominator for all Carnatic musicians. Rāmāmātya, a 16th century music scholar at Vijayanagar, laid the foundations for the present theoretical framework of South Indian music. Since the 17th century, 72 principal scales (mēla) provide the basic melodic material. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the important kriti form of song was refined by the great composers Tyāgaraja, Mutusvami Dikshitar, and Shyama Sastri. This form consists of three verses, each with particular melodic themes and their variations. Several other forms of compositions further enrich the concert repertoire which, in its present format, evolved in the course of the 20th century. Indian musicians never rely on written musical scores. In Carnatic music, compositions and improvisation play an equally important role. Thousands of "songs" have been handed down from generation to generation in the oral tradition, and continue to be composed in our time. There is no separate repertoire for vocalists and instrumentalists. Improvisations such as the free-rhythm exposition of a rāga (rāga ālāpana), tānam (improvisation with a rhythmic pulse) and variations of a theme (e.g. kalpana svara and niraval) are so carefully intertwined with a composition that the resulting effect is one of complete musical unity.