

Khanjira

This single-headed frame drum is a tambourine with a lizard-skin face, and metal jingles in the wooden frame. Expert players are able to produce, with one hand only, all of the rhythmic patterns that are played on the *mridangam*. Variations in sound are produced by pressing the skin near the rim with the holding hand, while the playing hand strikes the head with a variety of different finger strokes. The *khanjira* is usually heard in conjunction or in alternation with the *mridangam*.

Tanpura

The *tanpura*, a drone instrument, is an essential part of every classical concert, North or South Indian. Players usually sit behind the main artist so that he/she can constantly hear the drone. The number of strings varies from four to six, tuned to the pitches “do” and “sol” in various octaves. Fine silk threads called *jiva* are carefully positioned between the bridge and the strings in order to enhance the effect of ringing overtones.

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*Co-sponsored by the UO Center for Asian & Pacific Studies
and the International Resource Center.
Oriental rug courtesy of Oveissi & Co.*

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UPCOMING WORLD MUSIC EVENTS

Friday, March 7 • 3:30 p.m., 207 Chapman

Lecture-demonstration of Shona mbira music of Zimbabwe by Chaka Chawasarira.

Wednesday, April 9 • 12 noon, 229 MacKenzie

Lecture-demonstration of Hungarian Romani (Gypsy) music by Kalman Balogh.

Friday, April 25 • 8 p.m., Beall Hall

Concert of traditional Latin American music by the group Tlen-Huicani (Veracruz, Mexico).

Friday, May 9 • 3:30 p.m., 192 Music

Lecture on music and shaminasim in Korea by Mikyung Park (Keimyung University).

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103rd Season, 62nd program

Beall Concert Hall
8:00 p.m.

Friday evening
February 21, 2003

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

WORLD MUSIC SERIES

presents

CLASSICAL MUSIC OF SOUTH INDIA

featuring

SHASHANK, Bamboo Flute

with

*B.U. Ganesh Prasad, violin
Poovalur Srinivasan & Parupalli S. Phalgun,
mridangam (barrel-shaped drum), khanjira (frame
drum), and konnakol (vocalized rhythmic patterns)
S. Shantala, tanpura (drone)*

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ABOUT TONIGHT'S ARTISTS

Shashank, born in 1978, was barely nine months old when he was initiated into Carnatic music (the classical tradition of South India), even before he started speaking his mother tongue. He began his music training by studying vocal music from veteran musicians such as Palghat K.V. Narayana Swamy. At the age of six, Shashank picked up his father's flute, and stunned onlookers by playing spontaneously, thus signalling his entry into the flute world. His maiden flute concert was at Adelaide, Australia in September 1990 when he was eleven, followed by his debut in India the following December. He became the youngest musician of the century to have been invited to play the prestigious "SADAS" concert on January 1, 1991 at the Music Academy in Madras. Since then, Shashank has been a celebrity flutist internationally, having performed in the company of top ranking artists in India and abroad. Shashank has 22 compact discs to his credit. He has enthralled audiences in India, South Africa, USA, Canada, UK, France, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Italy, Denmark, Norway, Holland, Australia, Japan, Hong Kong, the Middle East, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Singapore. Landmark concerts include Rashtrapathy Bhavan (The President's Palace at New Delhi), India Music Group at St. Xaviers College in Bombay, UNESCO Paris, the Tropical Institute in Amsterdam, J. Paul Getty Hall in Hollywood, the National Academy of Sciences in Washington D.C., Xebec Hall in Kobe, Japan, and "Across Fukuoka" in Fukuoka, Japan. Shashank's use of multiple flutes of different lengths in a single performance has been acclaimed the world over by music lovers as a significant contribution to Indian music. His performances feature an extraordinary range of musical expression—from the deepest meditations to youthful fun and astonishing virtuosity. Shashank's percussionists add pizzazz to the performances with rhythmic textures ranging from colorful, sparse punctuation to driving motives that swell to exhilarating levels during solo passages.

Ganesh Prasad had his initial training in violin from Basavanagudi Natraj of Bangalore and advanced training under the guidance of violin maestro V.V. Subramanyam of Madras. Ganesh has gained fame in India and abroad for his excellent accompaniment of leading South Indian artists, including several tours abroad in the company of Shashank.

Poovalur Srinivasan was born and raised in a musical family, and learned *mridangam* from his father P. A. Venkataraman. His father learned under masters Mylatoor Samy Iyer and Palani Subramania Pillai. Srinivasan's credits include performances or recordings with Indian artists such as Emani Sankara Sastry, Alathur, and Lalgudi, as well as Euro-American performers Sir Yehudi Menuhin, Bela Fleck, Mark O'Conner, and David Hidalgo. *Tabula Rasa*, an album in which Poovalur performed and composed with Bela Fleck, Jei Ping Chen and V. M. Bhatt, was nominated for a Grammy. Poovalur came to California in 1986 to accept a teaching position in the music department at San Diego State University. He is currently a faculty member at the University of North Texas at Denton. Many of Poovalur's students have achieved recognition in adapting new techniques and ideas from the rich Carnatic tradition to their creative endeavors.

Parupalli S. Phalgun was trained in South Indian drumming from the age of five by the late Radhakrishna Raju and later under his son M.L.N. Raju of AIR Vijayawada. He hails from a family of great musicians such as Parupalli Ramakrishnaiah Pantulu, the guru of vocal maestro M. Balamurali Krishna. He has accompanied many stalwarts in the field of South Indian music and he is currently on the faculty of The Govt. Music College, Vijayawada. A recipient of many awards, Phalgun is an A-grade artist of All India Radio and Television. He has accompanied Shashank on several concerts and recordings, including a DVD production.

S. Shantala is a very talented flute artist herself and is currently under the guidance of veteran vocalist Vairamangalam Lakshminarayanan and Shashank. She has also been trained in the art of playing the *tanpura* and has been touring in India and abroad with Shashank.

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ABOUT THE INSTRUMENTS

Bamboo Flute

Use of the bamboo flute in India dates back to the mythological time of Lord Krishna, who enticed maidens with haunting melodies on his instrument. Because these flutes are made from natural bamboo, tube dimensions cannot be standardized and thus, no two flutes are exactly alike. While playing, the artist must make frequent minute adjustments to finger and lip positions to compensate for each flute's unique tonal qualities.

Violin

In south Indian music, the violin can function as either the lead voice or as an accompaniment. It is identical in construction to the western violin, but is tuned differently ("do" "sol," "do" "sol" ascending). The pitch of "do" is moveable, according to individual preference or, if accompanying, the soloist's requirements. Players anchor the scroll with one foot in order to facilitate the very rapid hand/arm movements which characterize South Indian violin playing. These movements produce the rapid melodic ornaments, called *gamakas*, which pervade Carnatic vocal and instrumental music.

Mridangam

The *mridangam* is a barrel-shaped percussion instrument made from a hollowed-out block of wood with a drum head on each end. The right head is smaller than the left, and is tuned to the main note, or "do." The drum heads are fashioned from overlapping layers of skin, stretched with leather straps that run along the sides of the body. Each head produces a number of different tones. Tuning is adjusted by moving small wooden cylinders between the drum and the leather straps, as well as hammering the edges of the drum head, to increase or decrease tension on the heads. A patch of iron filings is placed on the higher drum head; a patch of rice flour on the lower. The player can produce an array of different sounds using various finger striking techniques.