Saturday, April 29, 2006, 8pm
Zellerbach Hall

Zakir Hussain presents
Masters of Percussion
An Evening Honoring Ustad Allarakha

with

Fazal Qureshi  tabla and kanjira
Taufiq Qureshi  percussion
Bhavani Shankar  pakhawaj and dholak
Khetre Khan  khartal
Manipuri Jagoi Marup  dancing drummers of Manipur
and special guests

Ustad Sultan Khan  sarangi
Niladri Kumar  sitar

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Zakir Hussain Presents Masters of Percussion is a biennial tour presented by tabla virtuoso and percussion legend Zakir Hussain. This evening’s concert is the first of this year’s tour, celebrating what would have been the 87th birthday of tabla maestro extraordinaire Ustad Allarakha, a groundbreaking artist whose influence has gone beyond his own Hindustani (North Indian) tradition to shape the world of music and percussion as we know it today. This evening is very special, since all three of Ustad Allarakha’s sons, Zakir Hussain, Fazal Qureshi and Taufiq Qureshi, are performing.

The incomparable duet tours of Ustad Allarakha and his son and chief disciple Zakir Hussain were the prelude to the Masters of Percussion ensemble. The duet became a tabla trio with the addition of Zakir’s younger brother Fazal Qureshi and then widened its scope to include Zakir’s groundbreaking collaborations with Karnataka (South Indian) percussionists, with musicians from both contemporary and classical genres and with artists from India’s colorful and dynamic folk traditions. Masters of Percussion occupies both a seminal and influential position in today’s expanding percussion scene.

This concert will feature the traditional repertoire of North Indian drumming on tabla in solo and duet as well as excursions exploring the frontier between traditional and contemporary, folk and classical music. Under the direction of Zakir Hussain, the concert is an opportunity to experience both melodic (raga) and rhythmic (tala) development.

Zakir Hussain and Masters of Percussion are honored to perform for Cal Performances in this Centennial year.

ABOUT THE INSTRUMENTS

Tabla is the premier Hindustani classical concert drum. It is two drums, one dayan and one banya, treble and bass respectively. The dayan is tuned to the tonic, its goatskin head tuned with the aid of a coal tar center, straps, pegs and the musician’s tuning hammer. The banya is usually metal and also has a goatskin head and gob (coal tar resonating center). Capable of an amazing range of sounds and modulations, the tabla has six gharanas or styles in North India. Zakir Hussain and Fazal Qureshi represent the Punjab gharana of tabla.

Pakhawaj, widely considered a forebear of the tabla, is a two-headed cylindrical drum which accompanied North Indian classical music exclusively during the age of dhrupad, the oldest style of Hindustani classical music. A powerful and resonant instrument, it is made of wood and tuned with pegs and straps. The bass end of the pakhawaj is covered with a dough applied before each performance.

Kanjira is a classical Karnataka (South Indian) frame drum resembling a small tambourine; its diminutive size belies its amazing versatility and scope. Made of lizard skin stretched over a wooden frame with one cymbal incorporated into its makeup, it is played with one hand only while the other hand holds and modulates it.

Dholak is a two-headed folk drum of North India, used to accompany folk and devotional music.

Khartal is a folk instrument of Rajasthan, made of four flat pieces of wood, two held in each hand.

Dhol and Pong are folk drums of Manipur.

Sarangi is a North Indian bowed instrument of tremendous complexity. With a wooden body, ivory pegs and gut strings played not with the fingertips but against the flesh above the knuckles, it is the instrument considered to be most like the human voice. It has three playing strings and 36 sympathetic strings and is emerging from its status as an accompanying instrument only (to vocal music, Kathak dance and tabla solo) through the efforts of Ustad Sultan Khan and a few other present-day maestros.

Sitar is a major instrument of great and legendary stature and tradition in North Indian classical music. Its body is made of gourd and its long, fretted wooden neck is strung with four playing strings, two chikari (rhythm) strings and 13 sympathetic strings.
Khete Khan is a brilliant young musician born into the Manganiyar caste of musicians living near the beautiful city of Jaisalmer in western Rajasthan. He is the son of Pempa Khan, a renowned sarangi and shehnai player in the folk tradition of the region. His entire family of uncles, cousins and brothers are all musicians, the most famous of whom is his uncle, Sakkar Khan, maestro of the bowed kamaicha.

Khete’s instrument is the khartal, an unusual percussion instrument comprising four small flat rectangular pieces of wood held two in each hand. Both an outstanding soloist and accompanist, his command over a wide variety of percussion instruments and styles is phenomenal. His albums have been released internationally and he has performed at prestigious music festivals all over the globe. Taufiq has been greatly influenced by his illustrious brother Zakir Hussain and is privileged to receive guidance from Ghatam Vidhwan Pandit ‘Vikku’ Vinayakram. While the realm of studio music keeps him constantly engaged creatively, Taufiq is continuously evolving as a percussionist in the ever-inspiring world of live performance.

Khete has taken the art of playing khartal beyond its folk idiom, having developed an extraordinary and refined technique.
About the Artists

is both an acknowledged sarangi player and vocalist. The instrument most like the human voice, the sarangi is an exquisitely sonorous bowing instrument. The classical music audience has recently enjoyed its ascendance to solo performance status through the efforts of artists like Ustad Sultan Khan, whose solo performance is widely in demand all over the world.

Sultan Khansahib began his initial training with his father Ustad Ghulab Khan, and, by the age of 11, gave his first solo performance at the All-India Musical Conference. In 1974, he joined Beatle George Harrison and Pandit Ravi Shankar’s “Dark Horse” tour. Since then, he has been taking his music to concert halls around the globe, has recorded widely and has gained increasing popularity among classical and world music audiences. He has a longstanding creative relationship with Zakir Hussain, performing, touring, recording and composing together for more than 20 years.

Niladri Kumar, son and disciple of celebrated sitar player Pandit Kartick Kumar, is one of India’s finest young sitar virtuosos, already recognized for his dazzling technical prowess and the maturity of his melodic acumen. A rare instrumentalist equally at home playing traditional classical or contemporary world music, he has proven to be one of the brightest talents of his generation, regarded with high esteem by his peers and promising to extend the musical horizon.