

# Remember Shakti

Saturday, September 20, 8 pm, 2003  
Zellerbach Hall

John McLaughlin, guitar

Zakir Hussain, tabla

V. Selvaganesh, ghatam, kanjira, maretangham

U. Shrinivas, mandolin

Shankar Mahadevan, vocals

Tonight's program will be announced from the stage,  
and will be performed without intermission.

Sven Hoffmann, sound engineer  
Christophe Deghelt, tour manager  
Christian Pégand, personal manager

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a federal agency that supports the visual, literary, and performing arts to benefit all Americans,  
and the California Arts Council, a state agency.

The artists performing tonight were brought together for the first time, after 25 years of collaborating in various other combinations, by the Asian Music Circuit, who produced a tour of the UK in September 1997. Taking place during the year of the 50th anniversary of the Independence of India and Pakistan, the tour (presented by Contemporary Music Network Tours, with funding provided by the Arts Council of England) celebrated some of the greatest achievements in the collaboration between Indian and Western music with four musicians who have played a leading role in this field, producing some of the most exciting music of our time.

"Playing with John McLaughlin is a truly nirvanic experience that I always look forward to. I have had incredible musical experiences and the feeling of becoming one with the universe of music and rhythm. The camaraderie between us, the respect for each other's space and artistic contribution, and the realization of working as one unit are all a dream come true for me."

— Zakir Hussain

"To play with these musicians is one of the greatest joys of my life. Our friendship goes back many many years. I have had the thrill of playing with Zakir since 1971, and the profound experience of making music with them is without equal."

—John McLaughlin

John McLaughlin, one of the most versatile and influential guitarists of our time, is known as an extraordinary solo artist; as the leader of both the ground-breaking Mahavishnu Orchestra and the revolutionary Indo-jazz group Shakti; and as the composer of some of the most stunning classical jazz-fusion pieces ever written.

McLaughlin was born in Yorkshire, England, in 1942, and began playing guitar at age 11. During the 1960s, he established a name for himself playing with British blues greats Ginger Baker, Graham

Bond, and Alexis Korner before veering off into free jazz. After making his solo debut with *Extrapolation* in 1969, McLaughlin moved to New York, where he recorded with Miles Davis on the famous *Bitches Brew* album, which wrote the blueprint for jazz fusion.

In 1971, McLaughlin formed the Mahavishu Orchestra, a critically acclaimed rock-jazz ensemble that released three albums over the next two years before breaking up. He re-formed the group in 1974 with new musicians, but the experiment ended a year later and McLaughlin went on to play acoustic guitar for the world music group Shakti. Inspired by the traditional music of India, as well as Western sounds, Shakti released three albums during the mid-1970s before disbanding in 1977. McLaughlin marked the split by recording *Electric Guitarist*, a solo work recorded in collaboration with past sidemen.

During the early 1980s, McLaughlin worked with Al DiMeola and Paco De Lucia on several fusion albums, playing acoustic guitar. After releasing another solo album, McLaughlin re-formed the Mahavishnu Orchestra in 1984, but the group once again split after recording only a single album. McLaughlin recorded several more albums with his friend Miles Davis and then began experimenting with classical guitar as well as jazz and rock. By the 1990s, he was performing in trios with a rotating cast of musicians, recording well-received jazz albums for the Verve label that reflected his vast experience and skill.

McLaughlin has written two concertos for guitar and orchestra: *Mediterranean*, commissioned by Ernest Fleishman, executive director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic; and *Europa*, commissioned by the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie, which he performed with that young orchestra throughout Europe.

Zakir Hussain (tabla) is today appreciated as an international phenomenon both in the field of percussion and in the music world at large. A classical tabla virtuoso of the highest order, his consistently brilliant and exciting performances have not only established him as a national treasure in his own country, India, but gained him worldwide fame as well. The favorite accompanist for many of India's greatest classical musicians and dancers, from Ali Akbar Khan and Ravi Shankar to Birju Maharaj and Shivkumar Sharma, he has not let his genius rest there. His playing is marked by uncanny intuition and masterful improvisational dexterity, founded in formidable knowledge and study.

Widely considered a chief architect of the contemporary world music movement, Zakir's contribution to world music has been unique, with many historic collaborations, including Shakti, which he founded with John McLaughlin and L. Shankar, the Diga Rhythm Band, *Making Music*, *Planet Drum* with Mickey Hart, and recordings and performances with artists as diverse as George Harrison, Joe Henderson, Van Morrison, Airta Moreira, Giovanni Hidalgo, Pharoah Sanders, Billy Cobham, Rennie Harris, the Kodo drummers, and Charles Lloyd.

A child prodigy, Zakir was touring by the age of 12, the gifted son of his great father, tabla legend Ustad Allarakha. Zakir came to the United States in 1970, embarking on an international career that includes no fewer than 150 concert dates each year. He has composed and recorded many albums and soundtracks, and has received widespread recognition as a composer for his many ensembles and historic collaborations. Most recently, he has composed soundtracks for the films *In Custody* and *The Mystic Masseur*, directed by Ismail Merchant; Bertolucci's *Little Buddha*, for which Zakir composed, performed, and acted as Indian music advisor; *Vanaprastham (The Last Dance)*, chosen to be screened at the Cannes Film Festival in 1999; *Saaz*; and *Everybody Says I'm Fine*.

Zakir received the distinct honor of co-composing the opening music for the Summer Olympics in Atlanta (1996). He has been commissioned to compose music for Alonzo King's *Lines*, and to compose an original work for the San Francisco Jazz Festival, both in 1998. He has received numerous grants and awards, including participation in the Meet the Composer programs funded by the Pew Memorial Trust, and an "Izzie" (Isadora Duncan Award) for his composition for *Lines*. In 2000, Zakir worked again with choreographer Alonzo King, this time composing music for the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.

In 1987, his first solo release, *Making Music*, was acclaimed as "one of the most inspired East-West fusion albums ever recorded." He has received the titles of "Padma Bhushan" (2002) and "Padma Shri" (1988) from the Indian government, becoming the youngest percussionist to be

awarded these honors, which are given to civilians of merit. In 1990, he was awarded the Indo-American Award in recognition for his outstanding cultural contribution to relations between the United States and India. In April 1991, he was presented with the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award by the President of India, making him one of the youngest musicians to receive this recognition from India's governing cultural institute.

Zakir is the recipient of the 1999 National Heritage Fellowship, the United States' most prestigious honor for a master in the traditional arts, presented by First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton at the United States Senate on September 28, 1999.

In 1992, Zakir founded Moment! Records, which features original collaborations in the field of contemporary world music, as well as live concert performances by great masters of the classical music of India. The label presents Zakir's own world percussion ensemble, The Rhythm Experience, both North and South Indian classical recordings, the Best of Shakti, and a Masters of Percussion series.

V. Selvaganesh, the son of T.H. "Vikku" Vinayakram, received musical instruction at his grandfather's institution, the Sri Jaya Ganesh Thala Vadya Vidyala. He gave his first performance at the age of 10, and today enjoys a strong reputation among leading musicians of the Carnatic tradition. He has played with Smt. M.S. Subbalakshmi, Smt. M. Vasanthakumari, Smt. Gayathri, Lalgudi Sri Jayaraman, Mandolin Sri Srinivas, Sri Ganesh, Sri Kumeresh, Sri D.K. Jayaraman, Sri T.N. Seshagopalan, Kadri Sri Gopalnath, and Trichur Sri Ramachandran. Since 1986, he has been performing major concerts accompanying musicians from India, Andaman, and the Nicobar Islands. In 1993, he toured in Europe together with tabla maestros Ustad Zakir Hussain, Ustad Alla Rakha, and Sri T.H. Vinayakram. V. Selvaganesh has proved not only to be a talented musician in the field of Carnatic tradition, but also in the world of jazz, where he has played in the group conducted by Sri Ganesh and Sri Kumeresh, Sri Maha Periyava's Swara Laya Mela, and Rikhy Ray's Mangalam. He has become well-known in the West for his work with guitar maestro John McLaughlin in the group Shakti, as well as with bass player Jonas Hellborg.

U. Shrinivas has often been compared to the world's greatest prodigies, and when critics first reviewed his performances, it was hard to tell if they were talking about a child or a god: "Innocence was writ large on his face. But the music that he produced on the little brittle mandolin was unbelievably Carnatic and classical to the core. . . . One had to rub one's eyes and pinch oneself to make sure that a nine-year-old lad was performing musical miracles. . . . That he could conceive in his mind the raga in all its grandeur and inherent niceties and transform them into musical extravaganzas had to be seen and heard to be believed!"

Shrinivas got his first big break in Gudivada in the Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh, during the Sri Thyagaraja Aradhana festival. Following public recognition and acceptance in 1983, the next eight years were spent in touring the world, enchanting audiences with his youthful vigour and expertise. His concerts were highly acclaimed and he was showered with many prestigious awards.

Over the years, his performing afforded him no time for formal schooling. Shrinivas has been principally educated through private coaching. He remains essentially the shy small-town boy with a wide smile and a magnificent obsession—his mandolin. The implicit faith in God and the blessings of the Paramacharya of Kanchi and Bhagawan Sri Saturdayhya Sai Baba have, he feels, contributed to his success. "I owe it all to Kanchi 'Periyava' (Paramacharya). Right from my childhood I have had great reverence for 'Periyava.' Sri Saturdayhya Sai Baba is like Lord Shiva incarnate. Bhagawan Baba, Ramana Maharishi, and Periyava are forever guiding and guarding me. And of course, Pillayar, Hanuman, Venkatachalapathi and Thyagabrahmam are my favorite gods and idols. Whatever I have accomplished is due to their grace, blessings of guru, and the encouragement given by my parents."

Shankar Mahadevan's parents spotted his musical talents quite early, when he was around four years old. By the time he was six, Shankar was learning to play the Veena under Smt. Lalita Venkatraman. His advanced training in the vocal tradition of Carnatic music began at the age of 10,

under the watchful eye of Smt T.R. Balamani. Shankar always kept a very open mind when it came to music and he believed in absorbing as much as he could from his various renowned teachers.

After the strong grounding he received in Carnatic classical music, he went on to learn the art of singing Bhajans, Abhangs, and Bhavgeet from Shri Shrinivas Khale, reputed to be among the finest composers in the Marathi music world. Shankar also had the good fortune to train under Smt. Tara Devi.

Innate talent, excellent training, and hard work helped Shankar reach where he is today. But his open mind also helped him to identify outlets to express his finely tuned musical skills. He believed that this was the best way he could thank God for all the success he has been able to achieve. Shankar is a software engineer who made a decision to pursue a career in music, something he has never regretted. He began his journey by singing jingles in advertisements (his soulful rendition of "Kuch Khaas Hai" for Cadbury is something people still remember). Subsequently his voice has been heard in a host of other commercials in various languages.

Shankar has performed regularly with the likes of Louis Banks, Sivamani, Ranjit Barot, and Taufiq and Fazal Qureshi. He is part of Louis Banks' Indo-jazz fusion group Silk and Taufiq Qureshi's group Surya. For the last few years, he has been touring Europe regularly with the Swedish world music band Mynta.

Shankar became a household name with the launch of the now famous Breathless album, and he has achieved great fame for his film music (including music for Dillagi, Rockford, Mission Kashmir, Alavandan, and Dil Chahta Hai).

Shankar's live performances display talent and energy that few artists can match. Besides his tremendous stage presence, he seems to interact with audience members on a one-on-one basis. On stage, Shankar can always be depended on to sweep an audience off its feet.