



Sunday, March 31, 2019, 7pm
Zellerbach Hall

Zakir Hussain's Masters of Percussion

featuring

Zakir Hussain, *tabla*

Niladri Kumar, *sitar*

Eric Harland, *drums*

Mattanur Sankarankutty Marar and the Drummers of Kerala

*Tonight's concert will be performed without an intermission
and will last approximately 90 minutes.*

Cal Performances' 2018–19 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

Drumming crosses cultures and unites all peoples in the dance of the heart. Zakir Hussain is both the acknowledged master *tabla* player of that most sophisticated of the world's musical heritages—the classical North Indian—and also a student of an astonishing array of percussion traditions.

Zakir Hussain's *Masters of Percussion*, an outgrowth of his duet tours with his late father, the legendary Ustad Allarakha, began making biennial appearances in 1996 to provide a platform for rarely heard rhythm traditions from India. Over time, the ensemble has expanded to include great drummers and percussionists from many world music traditions, as well as the occasional stringed instrument. This year the ensemble honors a very special anniversary, the centennial year of Allarakha's birth.

Zakir Hussain (*tabla*) is the pre-eminent classical *tabla* virtuoso of our time. Considered a national treasure in his native India, he is one of the world's most esteemed and influential musicians, renowned for his genre-defying collaborations.

Widely considered a chief architect of the contemporary world-music movement, Hussain's artistic contributions have been unique, with historic and groundbreaking partnerships including the *Masters of Percussion*, *Shakti*, *Remember Shakti*, the *Diga Rhythm Band*, *Planet Drum*, *Tabla Beat Science*, *Sangam* with Charles Lloyd and Eric Harland, in trio with Bela Fleck and Edgar Meyer, and most recently, with Herbie Hancock. The foremost disciple of his father, Ustad Allarakha, Hussain was a child prodigy who began his professional career at the age of 12, and was touring internationally by the age of 18.

As a composer, he has scored music for numerous feature films, major events, and productions. He has composed three concertos, the most recent being the first-ever concerto for *tabla* and orchestra; it was premiered in India in 2015, in Europe and the UK in 2016, and in the United States in 2017, with the National Symphony Orchestra at Kennedy Center. A multiple Grammy winner, Hussain is the recipient of countless other awards and honors, in-

cluding the Padma Bhushan and a National Heritage Fellowship, as well as being named an *Officier* in France's Order of Arts and Letters. In 2015 he was voted Best Percussionist in both the *Downbeat Critics' Poll* and *Modern Drummer's Readers' Poll*.

As an educator, Hussain conducts many workshops and lectures each year, has been in residence at Princeton University and Stanford University, and, in 2015, was appointed Regents Lecturer at UC Berkeley. He is the founder and president of Moment! Records, an independent record label presenting rare live concert recordings of Indian classical music and world music. Hussain was a resident artistic director at the SFJazz Center from 2013 until 2016, and received their Lifetime Achievement Award in 2017 in recognition of his "unparalleled contribution to the world of music."



Niladri Kumar (*sitar*), a renowned, fifth-generation *sitar* player, is an unconventional and rare instrumentalist, honing a unique repertoire and deep understanding of traditional and

classical styles on the *sitar* while at the same time reaching out to new and younger audiences. Always interested in the latest musical trends, he has redefined the way audiences view Indian classical music through the invention of his own instrument, an electric *sitar* that he has called the *zitar*.

Kumar first gained an in-depth and profound understanding of Indian classical music under the guidance and training of his father and guru, Pandit Kartick Kumar. The *zitar* has allowed him to reach a wider audience, bridging the "age un-gap," as he calls it, where individuals from all walks of life can find a place in his music that they can call their own. Through these various efforts, he has emerged as one of the world's most accomplished *sitar* and *zitar* masters.

Kumar has received numerous awards and released more than 10 albums. In addition, he has contributed immensely to the Indian film industry.



Eric Harland is one of the most sought-after drummers of his generation, primarily but not exclusively in the world of jazz. He has worked on more than 400 recordings and film scores,

and has shared the stage with masters including Betty Carter, Joe Henderson, McCoy Tyner, Michael Brecker, Terence Blanchard, Branford Marsalis, Wayne Shorter, Savion Glover, and the SF Jazz Collective. Harland has also played with virtually all the current rising stars, including Esperanza Spalding, Jane Monheit, Taylor Eigsti, Julian Lage, Stacie Orrico, and Robert Glasper. He currently plays in groups including James Farm with Joshua Redman; Prism with Dave Holland and Kevin Eubanks; Sangam with Charles Lloyd and Zakir Hussain; the Overtone with Dave Holland, Jason Moran, and Chris Potter; and his own Voyager. Outside jazz, Harland has collaborated with Les Claypool's Primus, John Mayer, Mariah Carey, Steve Miller, and Spike Lee. He was a resident artistic director at the SF Jazz Center for the 2014–16 seasons and the artist-in-residence at the 2014 Monterey Jazz Festival.

After his extensive travels, Harland has come to realize that “the deepest secret is that life is not a process of discovery, but a process of creation.” That depth of understanding makes him a perfect member of the Masters of Percussion.



Mattanur Sankarankutty Marar and the Drummers of Kerala. In the Indian tradition, Mattanur's first teacher was his father, and from an early age he began his studies of *thayambaka*, a call-and-response style of drumming using the South Indian *chenda*, a cylindrical percussion instrument. This art form is often associated with the story-play style of Kathakali, a classical South Indian dance form. Eventually, Mattanur was assigned the role of “Mela Pramani,” which he performed in temple festivals across Southern India. He has collaborated with such greats as Ustad Allarakha and Padmashri Umayalpuram Sivaraman, and was awarded the Padma Shri by the President of India in 2009.

The Drummers of Kerala include Mattanur's sons V. M. Sreekanth and V. M. Sreeraj, and their fellow Keralan Vellinezhi Anand. All three have progressed through intense training in *thayambaka* and temple rituals, and have played with outstanding Indian artists including vocalist Hariharan, both in India and all over the world.