



Paul Joseph

Saturday, March 11, 2023, 8pm  
Zellerbach Hall

## Zakir Hussain's Masters of Percussion

Zakir Hussain, *tabla*  
Sabir Khan, *sarangi*  
Tupac Mantilla, *percussion*  
Melissa Hié, *djembe*  
Navin Sharma, *dholak*

*This performance is made possible, in part, by an anonymous Patron Sponsor.*

Every other year for the past 30 years, Zakir Hussain has served as curator, conductor, and producer for his series, Zakir Hussain's Masters of Percussion, which brings the very finest in Indian music and world percussion to tour America and Europe.

Growing out of Zakir's renowned international *tabla* duet tours with his father, the legendary Ustad Allarakha, Masters of Percussion began as a platform for both popular and rarely heard rhythm traditions from India. While performing and collaborating in India for a few months every year, Zakir has sought and unearthed lesser-known folk and classical traditions that feed into the greater stream of Indian music, playing an educational role in affording them greater visibility, as well as introducing them to audiences in the West. Over time, the constantly changing ensemble has expanded to include great drummers and percussionists from many world traditions, including jazz and Latin music.

All of it creates a truly beautiful field from which Zakir can bring Masters of Percussion to the West. The 2023 version is no exception, presenting American audiences with extraordinary, exciting, and spontaneous combinations of percussive as well as melodic performances.

Past years have included master drummers from Central Asia, India, and the United States; virtuosi like Abbos Kosimov, a master of the Uzbek frame drum known as the *doyra*; Marcus Gilmore, the most talked about young jazz drummer of our time; Eric Harland of Sangam; and Niladri Kumar, the great young sitarist.

This season's program, which features Zakir Hussain, Sabir Khan, Tupac Mantilla, Melissa Hié, and Navin Sharma, will be no exception.

The pre-eminent classical *tabla* virtuoso of our time, **Zakir Hussain** is appreciated as one of the world's most esteemed and influential musicians, one whose mastery of his percussion instrument has taken it to a new level that transcends cultures and national borders. Along with his legendary father and teacher, Ustad Allarakha, Zakir has elevated the status of the *tabla* both in India and around the world.

A child prodigy touring in India from the tender age of 12, Zakir quickly became a favorite accompanist for India's greatest musicians and dancers. He began his international touring career by the age of 18 and has been at the helm of such genre-defying collaborations as Shakti, Remember Shakti, Masters of Percussion, the Diga Rhythm Band, Planet Drum, Tabla Beat Science, and Sangam. Zakir's first solo album, *Making Music*, was released in 1987, and was acclaimed as "one of the most inspired East-West fusion albums ever recorded." In 1991, *Planet Drum*, an album co-created and produced with Mickey Hart, became the first recording to win a Grammy in the Best World Music category and the *Downbeat* Critics' Poll for Best World Beat Album. Zakir's music and extraordinary contributions to the music world were honored in 2009, with four widely heralded and sold-out concerts for Carnegie Hall's Artist Perspective series.

Zakir is the 2022 Kyoto Prize Laureate in Arts and Philosophy and the recipient of countless awards, including two Grammys, Padma Bhushan, Padma Shri, Officer in France's Order of Arts and Letters, the 2022 Aga Khan Music Award, and the 1999 National Heritage Fellowship, the United States' highest honor for a master of traditional arts. Voted Best Percussionist by both the *Downbeat* Critics' Poll and the *Modern Drummer* Reader's Poll over several years, including 2020, Zakir was honored with SFJazz's Lifetime Achievement Award at

their 2017 Gala for his “unparalleled contribution to the world of music.”

As a composer, he has scored music for numerous feature films, and has composed three concertos, the most recent enjoying the distinction as the first-ever for *tabla* and orchestra. In 2009, Triple Concerto for Banjo, Bass and Tabla and new works composed by Zakir, Edgar Meyer, and Bela Fleck, were released as the Grammy-nominated *The Melody of Rhythm*. Zakir's second concerto, *Ameen, Amen, Shanti – Concerto for Four Soloists*, a special commission for the National Symphony Orchestra, premiered at the Kennedy Center in March 2011, and his third concerto, Concerto for Tabla and Orchestra, was premiered in September 2015, by the Symphony Orchestra of India, subsequently enjoying international premieres.

Zakir's work as an educator is no less splendid, having led workshops and master classes all over the world over the course of his career. He has been a professor at Princeton University, Stanford University, the University of Washington, and at UC Berkeley in the prestigious post of Regents Lecturer. Zakir's yearly *tabla* workshop in Marin County draws hundreds of serious students and performers. In 2019, he was selected as a Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellow and awarded honorary doctorates from Berklee College of Music (Boston), Indira Kala Sangeet University (Khairagarh,) and, in 2022, Mumbai University.

Zakir is the founder and president of Moment Records, an independent record label presenting rare live concert recordings of Indian classical music and world music.

**Sabir Sultan Khan** (*sarangi*) is an Indian *sarangi* player and the son of legendary *sarangi* player and vocalist Padma Bhushan Ustad Sultan Khan. He belongs to the Sikar *gharana* (school) of music, which has given several stalwarts to Indian classical music.

Khan was born in Jodhpur, Rajasthan. Exposed to music when he was six years old through his grandfather, Ustad Gulab Khan, he trained under his father, grandfather, and his uncle Ustad Nasir Khan. He is the Tenth generation of his family to take up *sarangi*. Khan's great-grandfather Ustad Azim Khan Sahab was a court musician at Sikar, Rajasthan.

Khan is known today as a master of *sarangi*. His playing technique is a rare combination of *sur* and *laya* (note and rhythm).

Khan has performed with his father in concert and also as a soloist. He has appeared alongside artists such as Ustad Zakir Hussain, Pandit Birju Maharaj, Ustad Rashid Khan, Gazal maestro Ustad Gulam Ali, Lata Mangeshkar, and Asha Bhosle.

He has played in feature films including *Laal Singh Chadda*, *Dangal*, *Badlapur*, *Rog*, *Dor*, *Sanwariya*, *Jodha Akbar*, and was part of A.R. Rahman and Shreya Ghosal's episode for *MTV Unplugged*. He also composed songs for movies like *The Dark Side of Life*, *Mumbai City*, *Direct Ishq*, and *Ghustakia Single* for Zee Music.

Khan has recently created his new record label, SSB Records, which works with talented artists as well as celebrity singers including Salim-Sulaiman, Yasser Desai, Madhur Sharma, and Pawandeep Rajan.

**Tupac Mantilla** (*percussion*) was born in Bogota, Columbia, and graduated with a master's degree in music (with honors) from the New England Conservatory. He has worked with Bobby McFerrin, Esperanza Spalding, Danilo Perez, and Julian Lage in what might loosely be called the world of jazz, but he was also the First Prize winner at the 2002 Bogota Philharmonic Orchestra's Classical Soloist Competition.

He has been associated with Stanford University's Jazz Workshop and the Berklee College Global Jazz Institute, and lectures and administers percussion programs

worldwide through his PERCUATION's Global Rhythm Institute.

He has appeared at venues and festivals including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, the Barbican, and the Tanglewood, Montreux, and Newport jazz festivals, among many others.

Much of his current performing focuses on his "Solo Percussion" project, which has led him to develop R.I.T.M.O. (Rhythmic Immersion Training for Multidimensional Openness), a holistic learning methodology that studies life and rhythm and the use of the body as a musical and evolutionary tool.

**Melissa Hié** (*djembe*) grew up in a musician family and was a member of the family band from a very young age. Her father taught her how to play several instruments, including *balafon*, *barra* and *djembe*. This enabled her to acquire a strong knowledge of African traditional rhythms and develop her own soft and melodic touch. At the age of nine, she chose the *djembe* as her main instrument. Hié then began playing in various formations and bands as a percussionist. To reinforce her skills, she continued to discover other instruments such as the conga. She further developed her artistic skills (singing, dance, computer music) through several collaborations, including

major projects with artists including Damon Albarn and Fatoumata Diawara. Today, she enjoys experimenting with music in unexpected ways, exploring genres ranging from jazz to electronic music.

**Navin Sharma** (*dholak*) is a young master of the *dholak* (a double-headed hand drum from Indian folk tradition). He studied *dholak* with his first teacher, his father Shri Shyam Rughuram Sharma, who then sent Sharma to the great Ustad Allarakha (playing partner of Pandit Ravi Shankar; together they were essential in introducing Indian music to the United States) to study the *tabla*.

Life being the great circle, Sharma now finds himself playing with Allarakha's son Zakir, having already played with Zakir's brothers Shri Fazal Quereshi and Shri Taufiq Quereshi, Pandit Anindo Chatterjee, Shri Ranjeet Barot, Shri Selvaganesh, Shri Shivamani, and the maestro of the *ghatam*, the clay pot drum, "Vikku" Vinayakram.

Sharma has also worked extensively in Bollywood.

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