

Lincoln Center's

white light festival

October 16–November 16, 2016

Thursday, October 27, 2016, at 7:30 pm

Sounds of India

Curated by Mark Morris

Bombay Jayashri

Embar Kannan, *Violin*

V. V. Ramanamurthy, *Mridangam*

K. V. Gopalakrishnan, *Khanjira*

Amrit Ramnath, *Tambura*

This performance is approximately 75 minutes long and will be performed without intermission.

Please join the artists for a White Light Lounge immediately following the performance.

The White Light Festival presentation of *Sounds of India* is supported by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

This performance is made possible in part by the Josie Robertson Fund for Lincoln Center.

Gerald W. Lynch Theater at John Jay College

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UPCOMING WHITE LIGHT FESTIVAL EVENTS:

Sounds of India

Friday, October 28 at 7:30 pm and Sunday, October 30 at 5:00 pm in the Gerald W. Lynch Theater

Kerala Kalamandalam Kathakali Troupe

Dussasana Vadhom ("The Killing of Dussasana"), from the *Mahabharata*

Sounds of India

Saturday, October 29; Thursday, November 3; and Saturday, November 5 at 7:30 pm in the Gerald W. Lynch Theater

Mark Morris Dance Group

Mark Morris, choreographer

MMDG Music Ensemble

O Rangasayee

Serenade

The "Tamil Film Songs in Stereo" Pas de Deux Pure Dance Items (World premiere)

Pre-performance discussion with Mark Morris on November 5 at 6:15 pm in the Anya and Andrew Shiva Gallery, John Jay College

Sounds of India

Tuesday, November 1 at 7:30 pm in the Gerald W. Lynch Theater

V. Selvaganesh, hybrid drums and khanjira

Vikku Vinayakram, chathur ghatam

V. Uma Shankar, ghatam and konnakol

Swaminathan, khanjira and konnakol

A. Ganesan, morsing and konnakol

Pre-performance artist discussion at 6:15 pm

Sounds of India

Wednesday, November 2 and Friday, November 4 at 7:30 pm in the Gerald W. Lynch Theater

Nrityagram Dance Ensemble

Surupa Sen, choreographer

Nrityagram Music Ensemble

Śriyah: Sankirtanam; Panchtaal Pallavi; Lalita

Lavanga; Aali; Sridevi

Post-performance artist discussion on November 2 in the Anya and Andrew Shiva Gallery

For tickets, call (212) 721-6500 or visit WhiteLightFestival.org. Call the Lincoln Center Info Request Line at (212) 875-5766 to learn about program cancellations or to request a White Light Festival brochure.

Visit WhiteLightFestival.org for full festival listings.

Join the conversation: #LCWhiteLight

We would like to remind you that the sound of coughing and rustling paper might distract the performers and your fellow audience members.

In consideration of the performing artists and members of the audience, those who must leave before the end of the performance are asked to do so between pieces. The taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment are not allowed in the building.

Note on the Program

By Siddhartha Mitter

There's a lovely concept in Indian music culture that doesn't have an English equivalent: the *rasika*. This is something like a connoisseur—a listener with understanding of the music and its context—but it's an emotional identity more than a cerebral one. An audience of *rasikas* is one that is primed to commune with the artist. When the energy is right, the shared experience of artist and *rasika* contains something of the ecstatic.

Bombay Jayashri is one of India's top artists—probably today's most celebrated female vocalist in the Carnatic (South Indian) tradition—but she describes herself as a *rasika*, a listener first. Though grounded in strenuous training that her guru, the late violinist and vocalist Lalgudi Jayaraman, imparted through long apprenticeship, she also inherited Jayaraman's enthusiasm for music across styles and traditions. "He urged me to become a complete *rasika*," Jayashri once told the *Deccan Chronicle*. "He showed me how enjoying an art form with no holds barred is very important."

Carnatic music is complex, or has that reputation. Part is the structure: Like Hindustani (North Indian) music, it is built around *ragas* (melodic patterns) and *talas* (rhythmic cycles), but it identifies more variants of the scale's seven notes, generating many more *ragas*, which can be developed in different song forms. But part is also the myths around the music: Chennai, its center, is a conservative city; most recitals follow a conventional sequence; reviews in *The Hindu*, the highbrow newspaper, brim with technical jargon.

In this hidebound setting, Jayashri is different. Her virtuosity has earned the favor of the prickly Chennai critics—who measure her against the gold standard in female

vocals, the late M. S. Subbulakshmi—yet her work stretches beyond their realm. She has recorded many albums of light classical and devotional music, as well as film songs for the busy Chennai movie industry. She has worked for years with Finnish composer Eero Hämeenniemi, playing with the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra and in towns near the Arctic Circle. Within India, she crosses the Carnatic/Hindustani demarcation line, performing *jugalbandis* (concerts pairing two featured artists) with flutist Ronu Majumdar, an old friend, or vocalists such as Subha Mudgal or Rashid Khan.

When director Ang Lee wanted the right music to open his 2012 film *Life of Pi*—about a boy drifting across the ocean in a lifeboat with a Bengal tiger—he sought out Jayashri. She had already made multiple recordings of traditional lullabies in different Indian languages; her song for the film, "Pi's Lullaby," with Tamil lyrics that she composed, earned a 2013 Oscar nomination. The honor made big news in India, where the press spun it as recognition for Carnatic music, though it was really testimonial to Jayashri's border-crossing originality.

Though raised in a South Indian family, Jayashri was born in Kolkata (Calcutta) and grew up in Mumbai (Bombay). Her parents were amateur musicians; the home was filled with Carnatic music, plus classic Hindi film songs on the radio. Jayashri studied music from childhood, learning both Carnatic and Hindustani styles, and sang the film songs of Lata Mangeshkar at school. She earned a business degree before committing to advanced Carnatic training, moving to Chennai in the late 1980s to study with Jayaraman. There she became known as Bombay Jayashri, following the tradition of prefacing an artist's name with their place of origin. Jayaraman was a doyen of tradition, but rather than fence Jayashri in, he encouraged her

eclecticism. (She has described how he once, to her surprise, ushered her in to watch Michael Jackson videos together.)

Besides her status in the Carnatic classical world, Jayashri is a prominent public figure. But by describing herself as a *rasika* first, she levels status barriers and puts herself side by side with her listeners, together pursuing transcendence through music. "Anything that touches me seeps into me and becomes a part of me, and becomes my path," she once said in a

newspaper interview. "How can one miss out on the beauty of different forms of music as a *rasika*, which is what I am and will remain—always wanting more!"

Siddhartha Mitter is a culture journalist in New York. He contributes regularly to the Village Voice, Boston Globe, and other outlets.

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For an interview with Mark Morris on curating Sounds of India, please turn to page 60.

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By Rabindranath Tagore

Sing the song of the moment in careless carols, in the transient
light of the day;

Sing of the fleeting smiles that vanish and never look back;

Sing of the flowers that bloom and fade without regret.

Weave not in memory's thread the days that would glide into
nights.

To the guests that must go bid God-speed, and wipe away all
traces of their steps.

Let the moments end in moments with their cargo of fugitive
songs.

With both hands snap the fetters you made with your own heart
chords;

Take to your breast with a smile what is easy and simple and near.

Today is the festival of phantoms that know not when they die.

Let your laughter flush in meaningless mirth like twinkles of light
on the ripples;

Let your life lightly dance on the verge of Time like a dew on the
tip of a leaf.

Strike in the chords of your harp the fitful murmurs of moments.

*For poetry comments and suggestions, please write
to programming@LincolnCenter.org.*

Meet the Artists



Bombay Jayashri

Bombay Jayashri Ramnath, popularly known as Bombay Jayashri, is an Indian Carnatic vocalist and an Oscar-nominated composer. She is a disciple of violin maestro Lalgudi Jayaraman, and has been critically praised for her intuitive and melodic approach that lends a spiritual quality to her music. Born into a family of musicians, Ms. Jayashri represents the fourth generation of music practitioners in her family. She has been groomed under the guidance of Jayaraman and T. R. Balamani. She bears the torch of the Lalgudi tradition, but has also evolved a distinct style of her own.

With a career extending over two decades, Ms. Jayashri is today among the most sought-after Carnatic musicians. She has performed in major festivals across India, as well as internationally in such cities as Helsinki, Lausanne, Shanghai, Beijing, Sydney, Paris, and New York. In 2013 Ms. Jayashri was nominated for an Academy Award for her lyrics in "Pi's Lullaby" from the movie *Life of Pi*. As a cultural ambassador of India's rich heritage, Ms. Jayashri had the privilege of being the first Carnatic classical performer in the opera house in Durban, South Africa. She has collaborated extensively with Western classical music groups in creating what could be described as world music that opens up new vistas of music appreciation.

As a composer, Ms. Jayashri's work includes an operatic ballet based on the Tamil epic *Silappatikaram*. She is also focused on exploring the therapeutic and healing value of music, working closely

with institutions that care for autistic children to help open up their senses through the medium of music. She has participated in an array of charity concerts.

Embar Kannan

Embar Kannan (violin), a student of Padmashri A. Kanyakumari, has received many awards and honors both as a soloist and an accompanist. He is an "A Grade" artist of All India Radio and plays solo concerts and violin duets with his guru. He has accompanied many leading artists and has performed in the U.S., Europe, and Asia.

V. V. Ramanamurthy

V. V. Ramanamurthy (mridangam) has been a "Top Grade, Grade I" mridangam staff artist of All India Radio for 24 years. Inheriting a family tradition from four generations of musicians, he has performed with Classical Indian musicians for more than three decades. He mainly focuses on Carnatic and Hindustani styles, but he has also accompanied jazz groups. Known for his melodic and instantly appealing presentation, Mr. Ramanamurthy adopted the techniques of the pakhawaz drum and evolved a new approach to accompaniment. He is dedicated to keeping the purest and most traditional standards of Carnatic music.

K. V. Gopalakrishnan

K. V. Gopalakrishnan (khanjira) began learning khanjira from his father and K. V. R. S. Mani. He currently studies with T. K. Murthy. He has accompanied many leading artists such as T. N. Seshagopalan, Sanjay Subramaniam, and N. Vijay Siva, among many others. He has received awards including the Harihara Sarma Award for best khanjira artist in 2002, and the Yuva Kala Bharathi award in 2007. He was honored by Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam as the Asthaana Vidwan, a prestigious title, in 2007. Mr. Gopalakrishnan is an "A Grade" artist of All India Radio, Chennai, in both khanjira and

mridangam. He has performed in all the leading *sabhas* of Chennai and throughout India, Europe, the U.S., and Australia.

Amrit Ramnath

Amrit Ramnath (tambura) is a student of Bombay Jayashri. He has accompanied her on several occasions both as a vocalist and on tambura.

Gerald W. Lynch Theater at John Jay College

John Jay College of Criminal Justice of the City University of New York, an international leader in educating for justice, offers a rich liberal arts and professional studies curriculum to upwards of 15,000 undergraduate and graduate students from more than 135 nations. In teaching, scholarship and research, the college approaches justice as an applied art and science in service to society and as an ongoing conversation about fundamental human desires for fairness, equality, and the rule of law.

Since opening its doors in 1988, the Gerald W. Lynch Theater has been an invaluable cultural resource for John Jay College and the larger New York City community. The theater is dedicated to the creation and presentation of performing arts programming of all disciplines with a special focus on how the artistic imagination can shed light on the many perceptions of justice in our society. The theater is also a member of CUNY Stages, a consortium of 16 performing arts centers located on CUNY campuses across New York City.

The Gerald W. Lynch Theater has hosted events in the Lincoln Center Festival since its first season in 1996, as well as performances by the Lincoln Center's Great Performers series, New York City Opera, Gotham Chamber Opera, Metropolitan Opera Guild, and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater/Ailey II. The theater has also

been the site of many television and film specials including A&E's *Live by Request*, Comedy Central's *Premium Blend* and *Robert Klein in Concert*, and VH1's *Soundtrack Live*.

White Light Festival

I could compare my music to white light, which contains all colors. Only a prism can divide the colors and make them appear; this prism could be the spirit of the listener.
—Arvo Pärt. Now in its seventh year, the White Light Festival is Lincoln Center's annual exploration of music and art's power to reveal the many dimensions of our interior lives. International in scope, the multidisciplinary festival offers a broad spectrum of the world's leading instrumentalists, vocalists, ensembles, choreographers, dance companies, and directors complemented by conversations with artists and scholars and post-performance White Light Lounges.

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc.

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts (LCPA) serves three primary roles: presenter of artistic programming, national leader in arts and education and community relations, and manager of the Lincoln Center campus. A presenter of more than 3,000 free and ticketed events, performances, tours, and educational activities annually, LCPA offers 15 programs, series, and festivals including American Songbook, Great Performers, Lincoln Center Festival, Lincoln Center Out of Doors, Midsummer Night Swing, the Mostly Mozart Festival, and the White Light Festival, as well as the Emmy Award-winning *Live From Lincoln Center*, which airs nationally on PBS. As manager of the Lincoln Center campus, LCPA provides support and services for the Lincoln Center complex and the 11 resident organizations. In addition, LCPA led a \$1.2 billion campus renovation, completed in October 2012.

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