



Hartford Symphony Orchestra

SCHEHERAZADE & SHANKAR

May 6 - 8, 2022

HARTFORD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Carolyn Kuan, music director

SCHEHERAZADE & SHANKAR

Friday, May 6, 2022 / 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, May 7, 2022 / 8:00 p.m.

Sunday, May 8, 2022 / 3:00 p.m.

Belding Theater, The Bushnell Center
for the Performing Arts

CAROLYN KUAN, conductor

ANUPAMA BHAGWAT, sitar

RAVI SHANKAR
(1920-2012)

Sitar Concerto No. 1
Raga Khamaj
Raga Sindhi Bhairavi
Raga Adana
Raga Manj Khamaj
Anupama Bhagwat, sitar

~ INTERMISSION ~

NIKOLAI RIMSKY-KORSAKOV
(1844-1908)

Scheherazade, Op. 35
The Sea and Sinbad's Ship
The Story of the Kalandar Prince
The Young Prince and the Young Princess
Festival at Baghdad - The Sea - Shipwreck

The 2021-22 Masterworks Series is presented by

The Edward C. & Ann T.
ROBERTS
FOUNDATION

**The Elizabeth M.
and Harriette M.
Landon Foundation**

Artist Biography



Anupama Bhagwat

sitar

Anupama Bhagwat, sitar musician nonpareil, has carved a niche in Indian Classical Music with a versatile & eclectic style. Acclaimed world-wide with a repertoire of global performances since 1995, her sensitivity and erudition has taken her to the highest echelons of the modern genre, while remaining true to tradition.

Anupama, born in family of passionate musicians, began her training in sitar in Bhilai at the age of nine and is today, one of the leading disciples of the world-renowned Late Pandit Shri Bimalendu Mukherjee, a doyen of the Imdadkhani Gharana.

Anupama has imbibed the vigor that is a hallmark of her Gharana: scintillating fast taans, mastery of the meditative alaap and brilliant fluency of melody (raag bhava), all the while maintaining her technical virtuosity. Anupama is one of the finest Sitar players of the current generation, who has acquired the finesse and technical nuances of the **Gayaki** Style while bringing out its lyrical beauty and subtly nuanced style modeled upon the human voice with the emotive cadences of sitar.

Anupama has been lauded by the connoisseurs in India for her performances at prestigious festivals and venues such as: Doverlane Music Conference (Kolkata), Ustad Amir Khan Smriti Samaroh (Indore), Saptak (Ahmedabad), Sankat Mochan Samaroh (Varanasi), Sangeet Research Academy (Kolkata), Baba HarBallabh Samaroh-(Jalandhar), KM Conservatory (Chennai) and more.

Anupama's repertoire of performances world-wide span major universities and conservatories, notably: SouthBank Center (London, UK), Ali Akbar Khan School of Music (Basel, Switzerland), MIT Fall Concert Series (Boston, USA), U Penn, Berkeley, Ole Miss (USA), Asian Arts Museum (San Francisco), U of Victoria & Calgary, Musée Guimet, Paris, Musée Des Beaux Arts, Angers, France and many more.

Anupama obtained her Masters in music from India Kala Sanger Vishwavidyalaya, India and received grants in '00, '02, '04, and '08, from the Ohio Arts Council, USA. Anupama has been conferred the title Surmani, by Sur Stingar Sansad, Bombay (1995). Early on in her career, she had won the first position in the All India Radio (AIR) Music Competition (1994), as well as a HRD Scholarship from the Government of India (1993-1996). She is a graded AIR artiste. She has regularly appeared on Doordarshan, India's National Television, WKCR (New York City), WDPR (Dayton Public Radio), WEFT (Champaign, IL), Mood Indigo (California Arts TV) and others. Anupama has collaborated with noted musicians across genres. On the world music front, Anupama has performed at Global Rhythms, Lotus Festival, Cincinnati Choir and more.

For more information, please visit www.anupamabhagwat.com.

Program Notes



RAVI SHANKAR (1920-2012)

Sitar Concerto No. 1

World Premiere: *January 28, 1971*

Most Recent HSO Performance: *This is the HSO's first performance of this work.*

Instrumentation: *3 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, timpani, percussion, 2 harps, celeste and strings: violin I, violin II, viola, cello, and bass*

Duration: 40'

Sitar Concerto No. 1 (1970)

Ravi Shankar

(Born April 7, 1920 in Benares [now Varanasi], India Died December 11, 2012 in San Diego)

“Ravi Shankar: musician to the world, whose rare genius has opened the ears and minds of millions to the wondrous aesthetic of India’s ancient musical tradition, adored musical ambassador whose incomparable artistry has created bridges of understanding among the peoples of the earth.” Thus was the contribution of Indian sitarist and composer Ravi Shankar to the culture of humankind summarized in the citation accompanying the honorary doctorate presented to him by the Regents of the University of California in 1985.

Shankar was born in 1920 in Benares (now Varanasi), and began his training under his eldest brother, Uday, one of the country’s leading performers and scholars of traditional dance. In 1931, Uday took Ravi and several others family members to Europe to establish a dance company in Paris, which enjoyed phenomenal success on its world tours during the following years. In 1935, the noted performer and teacher Allauddin Khan joined the troupe, and began Ravi Shankar’s formal training in music. Three years later Ravi left Uday’s dance company to begin a rigorous seven-year apprenticeship with Khan at Maihar, where Khan was the chief court musician of the Maharaja. Shankar began appearing as a solo sitarist in 1939, and he soon demonstrated extraordinary gifts for interpreting the technique and the spirit of the complex *ragas* and *talas* — the essential melodic and rhythmic components — of Indian music. He quickly gained prominence throughout the country, and in 1949, was named director of music by All-India Radio and composer-conductor for its new instrumental ensemble. He left that position in 1956 to tour internationally as a sitarist and composer.

Shankar subsequently collaborated with such diverse musicians as Beatle George Harrison (who was also his student), Yehudi Menuhin, Zubin Mehta and Philip Glass, and he became a veritable icon of cross-culturalism and Eastern sensibilities in the 1960s with performances at the Monterey Pop Festival, the Concert for Bangladesh and

Hartford Symphony Orchestra

Woodstock. He founded a music school in Bombay in 1962 and another one in Los Angeles five years later, published a memoir in 1968, and edited a guide to learning Indian music; in 1997, he was named Regent's Professor at the University of California. He continued a full schedule of composing, touring and recording almost until his death in 2012 in San Diego.

Among Shankar's many distinctions are the *Padma Vibhushan* and the *Praemium Imperiale*, the highest awards bestowed on an artist by, respectively, the governments of India and Japan, honorary membership in the American Academy of Arts and Letters, membership in the United Nations International Rostrum of Composers, fourteen honorary doctorates, and nomination as a member of the *Rajya Sabha*, India's upper house of Parliament; in 2013, he won his fourth World Music Grammy Award, for *The Living Room Sessions, Part I*; he received a Lifetime Grammy Award that same year. Shankar's compositions include: three concertos for sitar; music for flutist Jean-Pierre Rampal, violinists Yehudi Menuhin and Joshua Bell, and the Japanese virtuosos Hosan Yamamoto (*shakuhachi*, a vertical bamboo flute) and Musumi Miyashita (*koto*, a zither-like instrument with a long, slender wooden body); film scores, most notably for Richard Attenborough's *Gandhi*, for which Shankar received an Academy Award nomination; an opera-ballet (*Ghanashyam*) for the City of Birmingham (England) Touring Opera; and hundreds of pieces for solo instruments, voice and ensembles.

Shankar embodied in his performances and compositions the basic philosophical and artistic tenets of Indian music, which hold, he said, that "individual consciousness can be elevated to a realm of awareness where the revelation of the true meaning of the universe — its eternal and unchanging essence — can be joyfully experienced."

In 1970, Shankar bridged the cultural gap between Indian and Western music in the Sitar Concerto No. 1, which he premiered at Royal Festival Hall with the London Symphony Orchestra and conductor André Previn on January 18, 1971. Rather than being primarily harmonic or contrapuntal, its music is linear in nature, threaded around a continuously unfolding and richly colored skein of melody that is shared between soloist and ensemble. Shankar has written about the style characteristics and expressive essence of Indian music, and his thoughts provide insightful background to the Sitar Concerto No. 1:

"Indian classical music is principally based on melody and rhythm, not on harmony, counterpoint, chords, modulation and the other basics of Western classical music. The system of Indian music known as '*Raga Sangeet*' can be traced back nearly 2,000 years to its origin in the Vedic hymns of the Hindu temples, the fundamental source of all Indian music. Thus, as in Western music, the roots of Indian classical music are religious. To us, music can be a spiritual discipline on the path to self-realization, for we follow the traditional teaching that sound is God — *Nada Brahma*. By this process, individual consciousness can be elevated to a realm of awareness where the revelation of the true meaning of the universe — its eternal and unchanging essence — can be joyfully experienced.

"The tradition of Indian classical music is an oral one. It is taught directly by the guru to the disciple, rather than by the notation method used in the West. The very heart of Indian music is the '*raga*': the melodic form upon which the musician improvises. This framework is established by tradition and inspired by the creative spirits of master musicians. Though Indian music is modal in character, *ragas* should not be mistaken as modes that one hears in the music of the Middle and Far Eastern countries, nor be understood to be a scale, melody per se, a composition or a key. A *raga* is a scientific, precise, subtle and aesthetic melodic form with its own peculiar ascending and descending movement consisting of either a full seven-note octave or a series of six or five notes (or a combination of any of these) in a rising or falling structure. It is the subtle difference in the order of notes, an omission of a dissonant note, an emphasis on a particular note, the slide from one note to another and the use of microtones together with other subtleties, that demarcate one *raga* from the other.

"There is a saying in Sanskrit — *Ranjayathi iti Ragah* — which means, 'that which colors the mind is a *raga*.' For a *raga* to truly color the mind of the listener, its effect must be created not only through the notes and the embellishments, but also by the presentation of the specific emotion or mood characteristic of each *raga*. Thus through rich melodies in our music, every human emotion, every subtle feeling in man and nature can be musically expressed and experienced. Although there are 72 '*melas*' or parent scales upon which *ragas* are based, Indian music scholars have estimated that, with all their permutations and combinations, there exist over 6,000 *ragas*!

"Next to be considered are the '*talas*' or 'rhythmic cycles' of a *raga*. There is unique intricacy and rhythmic sophistication in Indian music. There are *talas* ranging from a three-beat cycle to 108 beats within a cycle! While there are *talas* having the same number of beats, they differ because the division and accents are not the same.

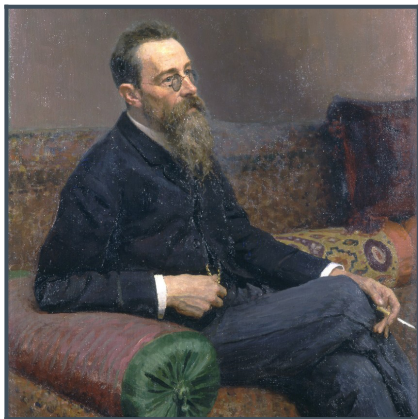
Hartford Symphony Orchestra

Like *ragas*, *talas* also have their own characteristics.

"The traditional sitar recital begins with the stately and serene exploration of the chosen *raga*. After this slow, introspective, heartfelt, sometimes sad beginning, the musician moves on ... as the rhythm enters and is developed. Innumerable variations on the *raga*'s basic theme are elaborated. While the artist has complete freedom to improvise, he may do so only as long as he does not leave the format of the *raga* and *tala*. The step-by-step acceleration of the rhythm, which often includes rapid dialogue between sitar and tabla [the traditional accompanying drum], culminates as it becomes more and more playful and exciting. Often as part of a recital, the musician may choose to play in a freer style that is completely romantic, sensual and erotic."

Each of the four movements of the Sitar Concerto No. 1 (based on four traditional *ragas* — *Khamaj*, *Sindhi Bhairavi*, *Adana* and *Manj Khamaj*) mirrors the thematic elaboration and expressive progression from "serene" to "exciting" that Shankar indicates above.

©2022 Dr. Richard E. Rodda



NIKOLAI RIMSKY-KORSAKOV (1844-1908)

Scheherazade, Op. 35

World Premiere: *December 1889*

Most Recent HSO Performance: *October 9, 2016*

Instrumentation: *2 flutes with second flute doubling on piccolo, piccolo, 2 oboes with second oboe doubling on English horn, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, suspended cymbal, snare drum, triangle, tambourine, tamtam, harp, and strings: violin I, violin II, viola, cello, and bass*

Duration: 42'

Scheherazade, Op. 35 (1888)

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov

(Born March 18, 1844 in Tikhvin, near Novgorod Died June 21, 1908 in St. Petersburg)

"In the middle of the winter [of 1888], engrossed as I was in my work on *Prince Igor* and other things, I conceived the idea of writing an orchestral composition on the subject of certain episodes from *Scheherazade*." Thus did Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov give the curt explanation of the genesis of his most famous work in his autobiography, *My Musical Life*. His friend Alexander Borodin had died the year before, leaving his *magnum opus*, the opera *Prince Igor*, in a state of unfinished disarray. Rimsky-Korsakov had taken it upon himself to complete the piece, and may well have been inspired by its exotic setting among the Tartar tribes in 12th-century central Asia to undertake his own embodiment of musical Orientalism. The stories on which he based his work were taken from the *Thousand and One Nights*, a collection of millennium-old fantasy tales from Egypt, Persia and India which had been gathered together, translated into French, and published in many installments by Antoine Galland beginning in 1704. They were in large part responsible for exciting a fierce passion for *turquerie* and *chinoiserie* among the fashionable

Hartford Symphony Orchestra

classes of Europe later in the century, a movement that left its mark on music in the form of numerous tintinnabulous “Turkish marches” by Mozart, Beethoven, Haydn and a horde of lesser now-faded lights, and in Mozart’s rollicking opera *The Abduction from the Seraglio*. The taste for exoticism was never completely abandoned by musicians (witness Bizet’s *The Pearl Fishers* or Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly* or *Turandot* or even *The Girl of the Golden West*; Ravel prided himself on his collection of Oriental artifacts), and proved the perfect subject for Rimsky-Korsakov’s talent as an orchestral colorist. Preliminary sketches were made for the piece in St. Petersburg during the early months of 1888, the score was largely written in June at the composer’s country place on Lake Cheryemenyetskoye, near Luga, and the orchestration completed by early August. *Scheherazade* was a success at its premiere in St. Petersburg in December, and it has remained one of the most popular of all symphonic works.

To refresh the listener’s memory of the ancient legends, Rimsky-Korsakov prefaced the score with these words: “The sultan Shakriar, convinced of the falsehood and inconstancy of all women, had sworn an oath to put to death each of his wives after the first night. However, the sultana Scheherazade saved her life by arousing his interest in the tales she told him during 1,001 nights. Driven by curiosity, the sultan postponed her execution from day to day, and at last abandoned his sanguinary design. Scheherazade told many miraculous stories to the sultan. For her tales she borrowed verses from the poets and words from folk-songs combining fairy-tales with adventures.” To each of the four movements of his “symphonic suite” Rimsky gave a title: *The Sea and Sinbad’s Ship*, *The Story of the Kalandar Prince*, *The Young Prince and the Young Princess* and *Festival at Baghdad—The Sea—Shipwreck*. At first glance, these titles seem definite enough to lead the listener to specific nightly chapters of Scheherazade’s soap opera. On closer examination, however, they prove too vague to be of much help. The *Kalandar Prince*, for instance, could be any one of three noblemen who dress as members of the Kalandars, a sect of wandering dervishes, and tell three different tales. “I meant these hints,” advised the composer, “to direct but slightly the hearer’s fancy on the path which my own fancy had traveled, and leave more minute and particular conceptions to the will and mood of each listener. All I had desired was that the hearer, if he liked my piece as *symphonic music*, should carry away the impression that it is beyond doubt an Oriental narrative of some numerous and varied fairy-tale wonders.”

Of the musical construction of *Scheherazade*, Rimsky-Korsakov noted, “A characteristic theme, the theme of Scheherazade herself, appears in all four movements. This theme is a florid melody in triplets, and it generally ends in a free *cadenza*. It is played, for the most part, by the solo violin.” There is another recurring theme, given in ponderous tones in the work’s opening measures, which seems at first to depict the sultan. However, the composer explained, “In vain do people seek in my suite leading motives linked always with the same poetic ideas and conceptions. On the contrary, in the majority of cases, all these seeming leitmotives are nothing but purely musical material, or the given motives for symphonic development. These given motives thread and spread over all the movements of the suite, alternating and intertwining each with the other. Appearing as they do each time under different moods, the self-same motives and themes correspond each time to different images, actions and pictures.” Well, then, if there is here no programmatic plot and if the movements tumble forth in some sort of free musical fantasy, how is the attentive listener to find his way through Rimsky-Korsakov’s story of *Scheherazade*? Perhaps the advice of Donald N. Ferguson about this veritable orgy of blazing orchestral color and atmospheric sensuality is profitably heard: “Ecstasies of imaginatively fulfilled desire: visions of celestial luxury engendered in the hashish-fevered mind of some squalid dreamer in the market place of Baghdad or Teheran — such are the tales of Scheherazade and the Arabian nights.