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Mostly Music Staff

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Mostly Music at NEIU
presents

Lyon Leifer,
bansuri

Shyam Kane,
tabla

4:00 pm
Sunday, November 24, 2002
Material Culture
401 N. LaSalle Street
Chicago, IL



A Recital of North Indian Raga Music

Flutist, Lyon Leifer spent five years in India studying classical raga music - improvised, highly structured and deeply expressive - and the deceptively simple-looking keyless bamboo flute, the bansuri. Continuing his study over the years, he has performed the music to acclaim in India, England and around the United States. He is joined in recital by the brilliant drummer, Shyam Kane, who regularly performs in concert with major Indian artists both in the United States and at major festivals in India.

The recital features traditional raga extemporizations and compositions, sparkling interplay of melody and rhythm, and brief, helpful explanations of what to listen for in music which is all at once - meditative, dynamic, ancient and contemporary.

NOTE S

Raga music, the improvised, profoundly expressive classical music of India, is first and foremost melodic! Harmony, as we know it in the West, is not present. But the music is profusely rich in melody and possesses immense rhythmic variety and vitality, all of which can make for highly entertaining, often deeply moving musical experience.

For many listeners, the bansuri may serve as a vehicle for appreciating this great art, since it is obviously akin to our own transverse flutes. The music world is indebted to this deceptively simple-looking instrument, as well as to the late Pannalal Ghosh (1912-1960) who developed thorough-going approach to playing it. Before him, the flute in north India was a small and rustic folk instrument. Ghosh innovated the research to enlarge, voice, and tune the instrument. He solved technical and aesthetic problems to develop a style which is at once immensely lyrical and virtuosic. His work has had, and continues to have, great impact in India. Through broadcasts and recordings, the deep-seated emotionality of his playing has crossed cultural barriers and elicited common bonds of response among listeners in many countries. Ghosh's work was beautifully carried on and developed by my late Guru, the flutist and flute maker, par excellence, Devendra Murdeshwar (1923-2000).

Much of Hindustani music's appeal may lie in its heady mix of spontaneous creation, organized structure, and profoundly emotional expression. But to gain appreciation of these aspects, active involvement in listening is highly recommended. Each raga has a melodic profile, in which certain notes play a principal part, others are secondary, and still other notes are not allowed at all. Listeners learn to recognize these profiles by ear. Most important, every raga should convey its own particular mood. If the wonderful chemistry of creative artist and receptive listener is present, a few notes correctly rendered will both reveal the profile of the raga and establish its mood. The inner sensibility of the raga, its *Rasa*, is then considered to arise in a state of enjoyment established through this chemistry.

The realm of tabla, or cyclical meter, is encountered most directly in the *theka*, or prescribed series of drum strokes belonging to a given cycle. This is maintained throughout each rendition. At the same time, the drummer uses all kinds of devices such as supplementation, variation, replacement and motivic development to lend rhythmical and compositional interest and expressivities to the performance. Many listeners actively identify and track the cycle by learning its basic pattern of strokes.

Melodic variations are improvised and calculated in terms of the cycle's stroke pattern. They are brought to a close by repeating one form or another of a pre-determined melodic idea, the *mukhda*, leading *sam*, the first beat of the cycle.

Of course, one need not listen analytically. Simply visualizing imagery in response to the music is another common way of enjoying the vastness of this musical art. If Indian classical music is an "ocean," as is often said, then surely it is one in which the listener can, in a sense, co-navigate or else be safely carried by the waves.

**A Special Thanks to
Anthony A. Trotalli and
material culture for hosting today's concert!**

Upcoming *Mostly Music* at NEIU concerts :

January 19, 2003 at 4:00 pm
Pianist, Katarzyna Marzec
Location: North Side Residence

February 9, 2003 at 4:00 pm
CSO violinist, Florence Schwartz and pianist Jelena Dirks
Location: North Side Residence

March 23, 2003 at 4:00 pm
Meredith Barber, soprano and Dana Brown, piano
Location: North Side Residence

Tickets: \$20 and \$15 for students

For more information call 773-442-4978 or
email mostly-music@neiu.edu

