Zakir Hussain, Kala Ramnath, and Jayanthi Kumaresh have come together for the first time as a trio for the 2020 TRIVENI tour. Leading Indian classical exponents of their respective instruments—tabla, violin and Saraswati veena—each is also renowned as virtuoso collaborator, pathbreaker and educator, advancing the art of their particular instruments to remarkable levels in the context of their classical traditions and beyond. Feted and honored in India and abroad with numerous awards, each has successfully toured all over the world with their own acclaimed solo projects.

Triveni is the mythical site of the union of three sacred rivers in India, and the name aptly represents the confluence of the varied musicalities which the three maestros bring to this collaboration. A hallmark of Zakir Hussain’s iconic career has been his groundbreaking work at the forefront of brilliant musical dialogues between Hindustani (North Indian) and Carnatic (South Indian) music. With Kala Ramnath, an innovative representative of North Indian raga tradition, Jayanthi Kumaresh, the leading exponent of the ancient South Indian veena, and Zakir Hussain seamlessly stitching North and South Indian rhythm traditions to provide a bridge for veena and violin to meet, TRIVENI promises to be a fluent, joyous and entirely original musical conversation, a sonic experience of the highest order.

Biographies

Zakir Hussain

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 transcending cultures and national borders. Along with his legendary father and teacher, Ustad Allarakha, he 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 twelve, Zakir quickly became a favorite accompanist for India’s greatest musicians and dancers. He began his international touring career by the age of eighteen, and has been at the helm of many genre-defying collaborations including Shakti,
Remember Shakti, Masters of Percussion, the Diga Rhythm Band, Planet Drum, Tabla Beat Science and Sangam. His first solo album Making Music was released in 1987, 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 contribution to the music world were honored in April, 2009, with four widely heralded and sold-out concerts for Carnegie Hall’s Artist Perspective series.

He is the recipient of countless awards, including two Grammys, Padma Bhushan, Padma Shri, and Officier in France’s Order of Arts and Letters. Voted “Best Percussionist” by both the Downbeat Critics’ Poll and Modern Drummer’s Reader’s Poll over several years, 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 first-ever for tabla and orchestra. In 2009, Triple Concerto for Banjo, Bass and Tabla and new works composed by Zakir, Edgar Meyer and Béla 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 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 is the recipient of the 1999 National Heritage Fellowship, the United States' highest honor for a master of traditional arts. He has been a professor at Princeton University, Stanford University, University of Washington, and at UC Berkeley in the prestigious post of Regents Lecturer. Zakir’s yearly tabla workshop in Marin County, California, 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, and from Indira Kala Sangeet University, Khairagarh.

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.

Kala Ramnath
Maestro Kala Ramnath with her “Singing Violin” stands among the world’s finest, most inspirational instrumentalists. Her playing has been featured on the Grammy-nominated *Miles from India* project, and her compositions have appeared in the Grammy-winning album *27 Pieces* and the Kronos Quartet’s *50 for the Future*. The UK-based *Songlines* magazine called Kala Ramnath one of the world’s fifty best instrumentalists and selected her album *Kala* as one of its fifty best recordings. She was the first Indian violinist ever to be featured in the violinists’ “Bible,” *The Strad*. She was the subject of a solo essay in the third edition to *The Encyclopedia – Rough Guide to World Music*. Her contributions feature in Hollywood soundtracks like the Oscar-nominated *Blood Diamond*, and many more.

Most significantly in an Indian context, in May 2017 she was awarded the most illustrious Sangeet Natak Academy Puraskar for her contributions to the violin in Hindustani Classical Music.

Born into a dynasty of prodigious musical talent, one which has given Indian music such violin legends as her paternal uncle Prof. T. N. Krishnan and paternal aunt Dr. N. Rajam, Kala’s violinistic vision began manifesting early. Recognizing her innate talent, her astute grandfather, Vidwan A. Narayan Iyer, took her under his tutelage. Thus began her most auspicious journey on the road to astounding renown and international acclaim.

She became a pre-eminent disciple of the legendary vocalist Pandit Jasraj. During this mentorship Kala began revolutionizing approaches to vocalized Hindustani violin technique. During this time she began to formulate a voice quite unlike any other Indian or non-Indian violinists. Justifiably, her voice came to be dubbed “Singing Violin.”

Acknowledged as a virtuoso of staggering proportions, Kala has performed at the most prestigious music festivals in India. She has appeared on world stages including the Sydney Opera House, Paris’s Théâtre de la Ville, London’s Queen Elizabeth Hall, San Francisco’s Palace of Fine Arts, Singapore’s Esplanade, New York’s Carnegie Hall, the Rudolstadt Festival in Germany, and the Edinburgh Music Festival in Scotland.

Kala is at the vanguard of the present generation of Indian instrumental superstars. Due to her rigorous training in the Hindustani classical tradition and familiarity with the Karnatic classic tradition, she comfortably forges musical alliances with artists of renown from different genres around the globe, incorporating elements of Western classical, Jazz, Flamenco and traditional African music into her rich and varied repertoire. In that vein. She has performed and experimented with such orchestras as the London Symphony and the London Philharmonic, and such musical legends as George Brooks, Kai

“...if Mozart had been transported to the South Asian subcontinent, this is what he and improvised Western classical music might have sounded like. This comparison is not thrown in to befuddle or impress. Kala Ramnath is a musician of giant-like qualities.”

Ken Hunt, *Jazz Wise*, September 2004

**Dr. Jayanthi Kumaresh**

With her mesmerizing glides, the timing and purity of her notes, and her soulful playing, Dr. Jayanthi Kumaresh has been captivating audiences around the world for thirty years now and is one of the leading Veena (roughly, the Indian lute) artistes today. A sixth-generation musician, she began playing the Veena at the age of three and is one of the youngest Veena artists ever to receive the A-TOP GRADING, the highest from All-India Radio.

Apart from several prestigious venues and festivals in India, Jayanthi has performed at many international festivals, including the San Francisco Jazz Festival, the Darbar Festival, the Queensland Music Festival, the Darwin Music Festival, and the Adelaide Music Festival, and at prestigious venues such as the United Nations in New York, the Palladium, Indiana, the Théâtre de la Ville, Paris, and the Northwest Folklife Festival, Seattle.

She has received many awards in India, including the Sangeetha Choodamani, the Kalaimamani from the Government of Tamil Nadu, the Veena Naada Mani, the Kala Ratna, the Sathyashree, and the Gaana Varidhi, to name a few. She is a seven-time recipient of The Music Academy, Chennai’s Award for Veena.

A collaborator, she has performed with legends such as table Ustad Zakir Hussain, Violin Maestro Shri. R. Kumaresh, Flautist Ronu Mujamdar, and the like.

A pioneer, she founded the Indian National Orchestra, where 21 musicians playing different Indian instruments came together under one banner to showcase Indian classical music.

A researcher, she holds a Doctorate for her works on “styles and playing techniques of the Saraswati Veena,” and conducts workshops and lecture demonstrations around the world.

A composer, she has scored music for several dance productions and musicals. Her music for the dance ballet *Krishna Bhakthi* for Rasika, Portland, featured both the Carnatic and Hindustani styles of composition. She also composed and released the album *Mysterious Duality*, which is a multi-dimensional reflection of the simple yet complex self through a single
instrument, the Veena, overlaying layers of several Veena recordings to create a symphonic composition.

Jayanthi has recorded for world-renowned labels such as Times Music, Music Today, Sa re ga ma, Sense World, and Home Records.

The niece of Violin Legend Sri Laigudi Jayaraman, Jayanthi attributes what she is today to her maternal aunt and guru, Smt. Padmavathy Ananthagopolan, whose training helped Jayanthi evolve as an artiste. Her mother, Smt. Lalgudi Rajalakshmi, first introduced her to music, and Jayanthi is also fortunate to have trained later under Veena Virtuoso Dr. S. Balachander.

Blending the traditional and the innovative in her music in terms of content, technique, virtuosity, and expression, Jayanthi seeks to express the true voice of the Veena, which transcends the boundaries of language and region.