



WASHINGTON  
PERFORMING ARTS

HOME DELIVERY PLUS

2021 SERIES



## ZAKIR HUSSAIN AND MASTERS OF PERCUSSION

PREMIERING FRI, APR 30, 8pm (ET)

STREAMING ON DEMAND THROUGH  
THU, MAY 6, 11:59pm (ET)

## ZAKIR HUSSAIN AND MASTERS OF PERCUSSION

Every other year since 1996, Zakir Hussain has served as curator, conductor, and producer, bringing the very cream of Indian music to tour America and Europe with his series, *Zakir Hussain and Masters of Percussion*. Growing out of his 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 which 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.

All of it creates a truly beautiful field from which he can bring Masters of Percussion to the West. The 2021 version will be no exception, presenting American audiences with extraordinary, exciting,

Zakir Hussain, *Tabla*  
Pezhham Akhavass, *Tombak and Daf*  
Marcus Gilmore, *Drum Set*  
Anantha Krishnan, *Mridangam*  
with  
Sabir Khan, *Sarangi*

and spontaneous combinations of percussive and melodic performances.

Maestro Hussain comments, "Masters of Percussion 2021 features master drummers from Iran, India, and the U.S. Anantha Krishnan is a master of the two-headed south Indian cylindrical drum known as the *mridangam*. Pezhham Akhavass is an acclaimed exponent of the *tombek* and the Iranian frame drum, *daf*. I represent the traditional rhythm repertoire of north India on *tabla*, and Marcus Gilmore is the most talked about young jazz drummer of our time."

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“Indian and Iranian rhythm traditions have common roots; the technique and the repertoire of these two ancient traditions can be interchangeable. The above four genres could easily be recognized as cousins, with the salient unifying feature in all of them being improvisation.

Every Masters of Percussion tour performance is a casting off into the unknown, but 2021 is exceptional in that regard. We will be operating in new musical territories—every moment of every night.”

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

### **Zakir Hussain**

The pre-eminent classical tabla virtuoso of our time, Zakir Hussain is appreciated both in the field of percussion and in the music world at large as an international phenomenon and one of the world’s most esteemed and influential musicians. The foremost disciple of his father, the legendary Ustad Allarakha, Zakir was a child prodigy who began his professional career at the age of 12, accompanying India’s greatest classical musicians and dancers and touring internationally with great success by the age of 18. His brilliant accompaniment, solo performances, and genre-defying collaborations, including his pioneering work to develop a dialogue between North and South Indian musicians, have elevated the status of his instrument both in India and globally. He has continued the work begun a generation earlier by his father, bringing the tabla into a new dimension of renown and appreciation.

Widely considered a chief architect of the contemporary world music movement, Zakir’s contribution has been unique, with many historic and groundbreaking collaborations, including *Shakti*, *Remember Shakti*, *Masters of Percussion*, *Planet Drum* and *Global Drum Project* with Mickey Hart, *Tabla Beat Science*, *Sangam* with Charles Lloyd and Eric Harland, *CrossCurrents* with Dave Holland and Chris Potter, in trio with Béla Fleck and Edgar Meyer, and in quartet with Herbie Hancock.

As a composer, he has scored music for numerous feature films, major events, and productions. He has composed three concertos; his third, the first ever concerto for tabla and orchestra, was premiered in India in September 2015 by

the Symphony Orchestra of India, in Europe and the U.K. in 2016, and in the U.S. in April 2017 by the National Symphony Orchestra at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. A Grammy Award winner, Zakir is the recipient of countless awards and honors, including Padma Bhushan, Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, the U.S.’s National Heritage Fellowship, 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 (including 2020), Zakir was honored in 2018 by the Montreal Jazz Festival with their Antônio Carlos Jobim Award. In 2019, Zakir was named a Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellow and received two honorary doctorates, one from Berklee College of Music and the other from Indira Kala Sangit University in Khairagarh, India.

As an educator, he conducts many workshops and lectures each year; has been in residence at Princeton University and Stanford University; and, in 2015, was appointed Regents Lecturer at UC Berkeley. His yearly workshop in the San Francisco Bay Area, conducted for the past 30 years, has become a widely anticipated event for performers and serious students of tabla. He is the founder and president of Moment Records, an independent record label presenting rare live recordings of Indian classical music and world music. Zakir was resident artistic director at SFJAZZ from 2013 until 2016 and was honored with SFJAZZ’s Lifetime Achievement Award on January 18, 2017, in recognition of his “unparalleled contribution to the world of music.”

## **Pezhham Akhavass**

Pezhham Akhavass was born in Iran and began his percussion studies at the age of five with Ostad Naser Farhangfar, and soon after with Saeid Roudbary. Pezham developed a remarkable ability to grasp the technical aspects of the tombak and simultaneously bring a new approach to rhythm; this unique gift has made him one of the most distinguished musicians of his generation. After earning a bachelor's degree in music from Sureh University in Tehran, he earned a second bachelor's and a master's from San Francisco State University. He has also studied tabla with Zakir Hussain.

From 2001 to 2007, he toured around the world with the renowned vocalist Shahram Nazeri, with shows ranging from Iran to Australia, the U.S., and Europe, including such prestigious music festivals as the Festival del Popolo in Italy, Théâtre de la Ville and Théâtre du Soleil in Paris, and the Fes Festival in Morocco. In 2008, he was a guest artist with Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble at the Hollywood Bowl. In 2010, he was the featured percussionist of the Masters of Persian Music Tour across the U.S., and in the years since he has continued touring and performing at major festivals, including the Pan-Asian Music Festival. He is also the Global Music Director for Iran of the San Francisco World Music Festival. The pandemic brought him an invitation from the Stanford Livestream Project at the behest of Zakir Hussain to take part in the "The Stitches That Bind Us," which united him with Zakir and doyra master Abbos Kosimov.

## **Marcus Gilmore**

Multi-Grammy Award winning drummer/composer Marcus Gilmore is one of the most gifted jazz prodigies on the scene today. The grandson of the master jazz drummer Roy Haynes, Marcus graduated from Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts, and subsequently received full scholarships to both the Juilliard School and Manhattan School of Music. In addition, Marcus has embarked on studying and incorporating ideas and techniques from many folk rhythms of Africa and the diaspora, while cultivating an encyclopedic knowledge of the history of jazz, funk, gospel,

and soul drummers, as well as the rhythmic sensibilities of contemporary producers in hip-hop and electronic music. He has been touring since he was 16 and has performed with a large selection of the best and best-known contemporary jazz players, including (the late) Chick Corea, Pharoah Sanders, Savion Glover, Pat Metheny, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, Nicholas Payton, Steve Coleman, Vijay Iyer, Ambrose Akinmusire, Wadada Leo Smith, Cassandra Wilson, Bilal, Talib Kweli, Queen Latifah, Black Thought, Esperanza Spalding, and Roy Hargrove. He pursues solo projects with his bands, Actions Speak and Silhouwav.

Among his honors was being introduced as one of the "25 for the Future" by *DownBeat* magazine in 2016. He won a Latin Grammy for his work with Chick Corea and was featured on the cover of the June 2019 issue of *Modern Drummer*. In 2020, he performed his first orchestral composition, *Pulse*, with members of the Cape Town Philharmonic as part of the 2018–2019 Annual Rolex Mentor and Protégé *Arts Initiative*, for which Zakir Hussain was his mentor.

Besides his illustrious grandfather, he cites as major musical influences Tony Williams's group *Lifetime*, Elvin Jones's album *Speak No Evil*, and the work of free jazz drummer Milford Graves. Marcus's playing is unique—a melodic language of fine shadings and gradations, eliciting optimal tone and vibrations from his instrument.

## **Anantha Krishnan**

Anantha R. Krishnan is the grandson and disciple of mridangam maestro Vidwan Shri. Palghat R. Raghu. Anantha initially learned mridangam (a double-ended "Carnatic" Southern Indian drum) from his uncle, Shri. R. Ramkumar. He also studies tabla with Ustad Zakir Hussain. He holds a Bachelor of Arts from Dartmouth College and a Master of Fine Arts from Mills College, California. He currently serves on the faculty of KM Music Conservatory in Chennai.

## Sabir Khan

Sabir Khan was born in Jodhpur, Rajasthan, and he belongs to a Sikar Gharana of music who have introduced several stalwarts to Indian classical music. He is the ninth generation of his family to take up Sarangi and is considered one of the beacons of the younger generation and a wonderful product of talented lineage.

Sabir's great grandfather, Ustad Azim Khan, was a court musician at Sikar, Rajasthan. Sabir began learning about music when he was six years old through his grandfather, Ustad Gulab Khan, who was a great sarangi player and vocalist and, soon after, he began training with his father, world-renowned sarangi player and vocalist Ustad Sultan Khan, and from his late uncle, Ustad Nasir Khan.

Sabir is well known today for his delicate mastery of sarangi. His technique of playing is

a rare combination of sur and laya (note and rhythm). He has already remarkably learned most of his legendary father's repertoire with a similar command and mastery on the instrument—indeed a “chip off the old block.”

Besides being a classical music artist, he is equally interested in other forms of modern-day Indian music. He has played with artists such as gazal maestro Ustad Gulam Ali, Talat Aziz, and Asha Bhosle, and has recently performed on the album of the great Lata Mangeshkar. Sabir has also performed on the soundtrack to several feature films, including *Chameli*, *Rog*, *Dor*, *Anwar*, *Sanwariya*, *Chodon na yaar*, and *Jodha Akbar*, to name a few.

## ABOUT THE HOST



**Anastasia Tsioulcas** is an NPR Arts reporter and the Series Host of *Home Delivery Plus 2021*. Tsioulcas's NPR roles have included interviews with the likes of composers Steve Reich and Terry Riley and, as a former reporter

and producer for NPR Music, production of episodes of the popular *Tiny Desk Concert* series. For *Home Delivery Plus*, she lends her insights to a number of performance “packages,” from introducing the events to moderating post-performance talks to curating Spotify playlists inspired by package artists and themes.

## SPECIAL THANKS

### EVENT SPONSORS

*This performance is made possible through the generous support of Gordon and Lisa Rush.*

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*This performance is one of six Home Delivery Plus events in 2020/21 included in Washington Performing Arts's World in Our City initiative, which promotes cross-cultural understanding and cultural diplomacy via international performances, globally inspired Mars Arts D.C. programming, and the award-winning Embassy Adoption Program, a partnership with D.C. Public Schools.*

"Welcome to the 2021 edition of Zakir Hussain's Masters of Percussion! Zakir's collaborations with musicians from many diverse traditions has produced much of my favorite music since I first heard him on recordings in the early 1980s. Lisa and I want to celebrate Washington Performing Arts's outstanding and diverse programming with all of you by supporting this performance."

- Gordon Rush

### SERIES SPONSORS

*Thank you to the following lead supporters of Washington Performing Arts's mission-driven work in 2020/21, including presentation of Home Delivery Plus: Jacqueline Badger Mars and Mars, Incorporated; D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities; Betsy and Robert Feinberg; Dr. Gary Mather and Ms. Christina Co Mather; the National Capital Arts and Cultural Affairs Program and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts; Tom Gallagher; The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation; and the Dallas Morse Coors Foundation for the Performing Arts.*

