

Lincoln Center's

white light festival

October 16–November 16, 2016

Tuesday, November 1, 2016, at 7:30 pm

Pre-performance lecture/demonstration at 6:15 pm in the Gerald W. Lynch Theater

Sounds of India

Curated by Mark Morris

V. Selvaganesh

With special guest appearance by T. H. "Vikku" Vinayakram

V. Umashankar, Ghatam and Konnakol

Swaminathan, Khanjira and Konnakol

A. Ganesan, Morsing and Konnakol

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

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

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

Sriyah: Sankirtanam; Panchtaal Pallavi;

Lalita Lavanga; Aali; Sridevi

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

A Little Night Music

Thursday, November 3 at 10:00 pm in the Stanley H. Kaplan Penthouse

Nrityagram Music Ensemble

Jateen Sahu, lead vocals and harmonium

Rohan Dahale, chant and mardala (percussion)

Sanjib Kunda, violin

Manu Raj, bamboo flute

A Little Night Music

Friday, November 4 at 10:00 pm in the Stanley H. Kaplan Penthouse

MMDG Music Ensemble

LOU HARRISON: *Suite for Cello and Piano*

NICO MUHLY: *Drones & Viola*

MESSIAEN: Selected Preludes for piano

ESA-PEKKA SALONEN: *Homunculus*

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 Anastasia Tsioulcas

Rhythm and meter are building blocks of many musical styles, but they are rarely as eloquently—or dynamically—expressed as they are in the music of South India, and particularly in the hands of such master artists as V. Selvaganesh and his percussion ensemble. Their performances fuse their profound musical inheritance with exhilarating playfulness and innovation.

Within any piece of Indian classical music—whether from the north (in the Hindustani music tradition) or south (Carnatic music)—the two primary and fundamental principles at play are the *raga* (*ragam* in Carnatic parlance), or the melodic mode, and the *tala* (Carnatic *thalam*), or rhythmic cycle. Over the course of many centuries, these two pillars of Indian musical theory have become codified into extremely organized and sophisticated systems. The aesthetic ideas of the *ragalragam* form have become more familiar to Western audiences, thanks to some world-famous Hindustani classical artists who play melodic instruments, such as sitarist Ravi Shankar. But there are far fewer Carnatic artists playing any instrument who have gleaned a comparable level of cross-cultural renown, and so their southern Indian musical traditions are not nearly as familiar internationally.

The *tala/thalam* is as uniquely complex and essential to Indian classical music as the *raga/ragam*. A *tala/thalam* can last anywhere from three beats to 108 per cycle—and multiple cycles can be strung together into even longer rhythmic ideas. Not only do percussionists strike those beats out on their instruments, but there is a whole system of spoken syllables and hand gestures, called *solkattu*, that is used to communicate the *thalam* and its elements. (It is not just musicians who rely on *solkattu* for

learning and communicating that framework; dancers in classical styles also utilize *solkattu*.) Carnatic percussionists have also inherited a tremendously vibrant tradition of *konnakol*, in which they speak percussive syllables of *solkattu* in rapid-fire patterns; each syllable represents a certain type of stroke that they would use on their instruments. *Konnakol* is a teaching method, but also a performance tradition—for audiences, hearing *konnakol* performed is simply a breathtaking experience.

Historically, however, artists playing melodic instruments have been the primary focus of the concert stage, and percussionists have been relegated to accompanying roles. In both the Hindustani and Carnatic traditions, it has only been in the past few decades that innovative drummers have become solo concert artists, either at home in South Asia or abroad. The late Alla Rakha and his son, Zakir Hussain, have served as the primary ambassadors of the Hindustani percussion tradition; in the Carnatic style, this kind of solo stardom has largely become the realm of the family of this evening's featured artist.

V. Selvaganesh is heir to one of the great musical lineages in India and one that has thrived on innovation, generation to generation. He is the son of T. H. "Vikku" Vinayakram, the Grammy Award-winning drummer who was in turn the son of another celebrated percussionist, T. R. Harihara Sarma. Along with his more traditionally minded performances, Vinayakram has been one of the most central Indian artists in bridging tradition with other styles. In the mid-1970s, along with British guitarist John McLaughlin, violinist L. Shankar and Zakir Hussain, Vinayakram was one of the founding members of the influential band Shakti, which married Hindustani and Carnatic music with jazz; in turn, Selvaganesh joined Remember Shakti, an offshoot project, around 2000. In recent years, Selvaganesh has also begun

to work as a film score composer and even a film director.

The Carnatic percussion instruments we will be hearing tonight are strikingly different from the more commonly known Hindustani *tabla* drums. Selvaganesh plays a hybrid drum kit as well as the *ghatam*, which is a simple clay pot frequently used in Carnatic music. Traditionally, a *ghatam* player controlled the instrument's tonal color and even its pitch by using his belly to cover the pot's open mouth, though that technique has become less popular over time. The other Carnatic instruments in this ensemble include the *khanjira*, a small, tambourine-like frame drum with jingles on its sides, and the *morsing*, a petite mouth harp.

For this concert, Selvaganesh honors his father's singular legacy by inviting him to

the stage for a special guest appearance, in which Vinayakram is playing what he calls the *chatur ghatam*—a group of ghatams, each differently pitched. The whole ensemble is very much a family affair: Vinayakram's younger son, V. Umashankar, also plays *ghatam* in this ensemble, while Selvaganesh's son, Swaminathan, plays the *khanjira*. A. Ganesan, a senior disciple of Vinayakram, plays the *morsing*.

Anastasia Tsioulcas is a reporter and producer for NPR Music. She appears regularly on NPR's flagship national news programs to profile artists across many genres and discuss music from around the globe. She was formerly an editor of Gramophone and columnist for Billboard.

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Today, Like Every Other Day

By Rumi

Today, like every other day, we wake up empty
and frightened. Don't open the door to the study
and begin reading. Take down a musical instrument.

Let the beauty we love be what we do.
There are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground.

—Translated from the Persian by Coleman Barks

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

Meet the Artists

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V. Selvaganesh

A leading musician in the world of rhythm, V. Selvaganesh was born in Chennai to Grammy winner T. H. "Vikku" Vinayakram, the legendary musician and former member of the group Shakti. Mr. Selvaganesh is also the grandson of T. R. Harihara Sarma, who founded the Sri Jaya Ganesh Tala Vadya Vidyalaya school in Chennai. He initially trained at his grandfather's school and then under his uncle, Ghatam Vidwan Shri T. H. Subashchandran. Since arriving on the concert scene at the age of 10, Mr. Selvaganesh has been mesmerizing the audience with his immaculate style and innate creativity.

Mr. Selvaganesh gained international recognition through tours with John McLaughlin's group Remember Shakti. He has performed at Carnegie Hall with Vikku Vinayakram and Zakir Hussain and at music festivals around the world with such renowned Indian musicians as L. Shankar, L. Subramaniam, Pandit Jasraj, Pandit Shivkumar Sharma, and Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia. In addition to Carnatic music, Mr. Selvaganesh has performed in multiple genres including fusion, jazz, blues, flamenco, Celtic and Latin music, as well as Western classical music. He has composed rhythm for two movies by director Mira Nair, *Vanity Fair* and *Monsoon Wedding*, and is venturing further into the world of Indian film music.

Mr. Selvaganesh's debut international solo album, *Soukha*, was released in 2006 featuring members of Remember Shakti including McLaughlin, Hussain, U. Srinivas, and Shankar Mahadevan, as well as sitar player Niladri Kumar and Mr. Selvaganesh's

father. He has also formed a new group called JSM with the U.K.-based songwriter/producer Dr. Joel and the young Carnatic singer Mahesh. Their Indo-Celtic album, *Turn on the Dreams*, was released in the U.K. in 2005. Along with his father, Mr. Selvaganesh helps to run the school in Chennai to train a new generation of percussionists.



T. H. "Vikku" Vinayakram

T. H. Vinayakram, famously known as Vikku Vinayakram, is a world-renowned, Grammy-winning Indian percussionist who is credited with popularizing the *ghatam*. It is his single-handed effort that the *ghatam*, an instrument that was seldom given importance in Indian percussion ranking, is now featured in world music.

His father, Thethakudi Harihara Sarma, a well-known percussionist himself, was Mr. Vinayakram's first guru. After his first public performance at the age of 13 in Chennai, his reputation grew as he accompanied the likes of Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, the flutist Mali, M. Balamuralikrishna, and Chembai Vaidhyanatha Bhagavathar. His first overseas performance came in 1966 when he accompanied the Carnatic vocalist M. S. Subbulakshmi in concert at the United Nations. Since then he has traveled throughout Europe, the U.S., Middle East, and Australia. In the 1970s Mr. Vinayakram joined Shakti, a quintet that combined elements of traditional Indian music with elements of jazz. The band consisted of guitarist John McLaughlin, Zakir Hussain, and L. Shankar.

Today Mr. Vinayakram serves as the principal of the percussion school Sri Jaya Ganesh Tala Vadya Vidyalaya in Chennai.

He is the recipient of many awards, including a Grammy Award, and is the only musician to have received awards from four different presidents of India. He was awarded the prestigious Padmashree, a civilian award in India, in 2002.

V. Umashankar

V. Umashankar (ghatam, konnakol) comes from a lineage of highly accomplished musicians. He is the grandson of T. R. Harihara Sarma and the second son of T. H. "Vikku" Vinayakram. Mr. Umashankar began giving performances when he was five years old; he is the only one amongst his siblings to follow in his father's footsteps by taking up the *ghatam* as his main instrument. His meteoric rise in the Carnatic music field began with his first concert for T. V. Gopalakrishnan's vocal concert in Kanchipuram when he was only 12. Following this performance, he regularly accompanied other rising artists, including T. M. Krishna, Vijay Siva, Sanjay Subramaniam, and Unni Krishnan. He has also toured with Sirkazhi Sivachidambaram and was invited to accompany M. S. Subbulakshmi.

In addition to accompanying both South Indian Carnatic music and artists of the Northern Hindustani style, Mr. Umashankar collaborates with Western, jazz, and alternative music artists such as Jonas Elberg and John McLaughlin. He also teaches *ghatam* and *konnakol*, the art of reproducing rhythmic intonations vocally.

Swaminathan

Born into a family devoted to traditional music, Swaminathan (khanjira, konnakol) started learning *khanjira* when he was four years old under the guidance of his grandfather, T. H. "Vikku" Vinayakram, and his father, V. Selvaganesh. He gave his first concert performance at the age of 12 accompanying his grandfather, with whom he has since performed in concerts abroad. Along with his musical friends and his

uncle V. Umashankar, Swaminathan has performed at the Chennai Super Kings' cricket games held in Chennai. He has also performed on many television shows, and has shared the stage with such leading artists as Indian Classical flutist Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia, vocalist M. Balamuralikrishna, and percussionist Zakir Hussain.

A. Ganesan

A. Ganesan (morsing, konnakol) is a disciple of T. R. Harihara Sarma, T. H. "Vikku" Vinayakram, and T. H. Subashchandra. Having started his career at the age of eight, he has played the *morsing* for leading musicians such as M. Balamuralikrishna, T. N. Krishnan, and Mandolin Shrinivas, as well as Zakir Hussain and many others. Mr. Ganesan has traveled widely and performed in prestigious venues such as Lincoln Center and London's Royal Festival Hall, and at various music festivals in India and abroad. He is a senior instructor at Sri Jaya Ganesh Tala Vadya Vidyalaya, the school of rhythm headed by T. H. "Vikku" Vinayakram.

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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