

Lincoln Center's

# white light festival

October 16–November 16, 2016

*Sunday, November 6, 2016, at 5:00 pm*

## *Sounds of India*

Curated by Mark Morris

## T. M. Krishna

Akkarai S. Subhalakshmi, *Violin*  
Rajna Swaminathan, *Mridangam*  
N. Guruprasad, *Ghatam*  
Vikram K. Raghavan, *Tambura*  
Madhav Iyengar, *Tambura*

*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.*

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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.**

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Gerald W. Lynch Theater at John Jay College

*Please make certain all your electronic devices are switched off.*

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## UPCOMING WHITE LIGHT FESTIVAL EVENTS:

*Wednesday–Saturday, November 9–12 at various times at The Duke on 42nd Street, a New 42nd Street project*

### **All That Fall**

by Samuel Beckett

### **Pan Pan Theatre**

**Gavin Quinn**, director

*Thursday–Saturday, November 10–12 at 8:00 pm at Baryshnikov Arts Center, Jerome Robbins Theater*  
**(T)here to (T)here** (World premiere)

### **Liz Gerring Dance Company**

**Liz Gerring**, choreographer

In collaboration with **Kay Rosen**

Dancers: Brandon Collwes, Joseph Giordano, Pierre Guilbault, Julia Jurgilewicz, Claire Westby  
*Post-performance discussion with Liz Gerring on November 11*

*Co-presented by Lincoln Center's White Light Festival and Baryshnikov Arts Center*

*Saturday, November 12 at 7:30 pm in Alice Tully Hall*

### **Venetian Coronation**

**Gabrieli** (formerly Gabrieli Consort & Players)

**Paul McCreesh**, conductor

Works by ANDREA and GIOVANNI GABRIELI

*Pre-concert lecture by Raymond Erickson at 6:15 pm in the Stanley H. Kaplan Penthouse: "Prisoners in Their Own Palace: The Doges of Venice"*

*Wednesday, November 16 at 7:30 pm in Alice Tully Hall*

### **Medieval to Modern**

**Jeremy Denk**, piano

Works by MACHAUT, MONTEVERDI, BACH, MOZART, BEETHOVEN, BRAHMS, DEBUSSY, LIGETI, PHILIP GLASS, and more

For tickets, call (212) 721-6500 or visit [WhiteLightFestival.org](http://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](http://WhiteLightFestival.org) for full festival listings.**

Join the conversation: #LCWhiteLight

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*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 Siddhartha Mitter

“Krishna is always a magnetic performer,” Samanth Subramaniam writes of T. M. Krishna in the Indian magazine *The Caravan*. “His voice is strong and sure, his diction is cleaver-sharp, and his energy is boundless. On stage, he does not request your attention, he demands it.”

Like most great Indian musicians, Krishna started performing at a high level at a very early age. Now 40, he has become a key figure of generational renewal in Carnatic music, the classical tradition of South India. But his demand for attention is not limited to the stage. The energetic and voluble Krishna has made it his mission to challenge the artistic and social orthodoxies of Carnatic music. He has published a thick volume of essays on the music and its culture, *A Southern Music*. He no longer takes part in the Chennai winter music season, the month-long festival that is the central event on the global Carnatic calendar, judging it conservative and hostile to new audiences.

If you knew nothing about Carnatic music, you might think Krishna was a political writer and social critic, judging from his busy Twitter feed or his column at news site Scroll.in, where he has taken on violence against women, LGBT rights, caste discrimination, and other issues.

For Krishna, it all connects. Starting in the late 19th century, Carnatic music performance became codified among the bourgeoisie of Chennai (then called Madras). A certain type of concert, known as a *kutcheri*, became the norm, with a standard formula: short pieces first, long in the middle, and a series of light ones at the end. The concert world became a province of Tamil Brahmin culture, with caste and religion filtering access—not completely, but in large measure—to high-level music training and

also to serious listenership. Critics, such as Krishna, argue this has not changed much to this day.

Krishna is himself a product of this world, the Chennai “Tam-Bram” elite. “I am, in fact, proud of my caste and have subconsciously always held on to that identity,” he wrote in Scroll.in recently. “I am empowered by its history.” He went on to describe the benefits he gained from caste and class privilege. He continued: “The top-down cultural model gives the privileged the best seat in the house.... Therefore, I feel the onus falls equally on those who occupy this seat to demolish this structure.”

Krishna isn’t a fusion artist. He is steeped in Carnatic music, and his concerts and recordings rarely stray outside. How he delivers it, however, is different. The conventional sequence of the *kutcheri* is out the window. If he develops a *raga* to his satisfaction in the *alapana*, the slow exposition phase, he might switch to a different *raga* altogether for the rhythmic phase. The short form called *varnam*, which usually appears at the start of the concert, like an appetizer, can occur at any point in a Krishna recital. The point is not disruption for its own sake, but to let the *ragas* breathe differently, and the audience hear differently.

The next challenge, for Krishna, is to take the music to the people. It isn’t a simple exercise. Indian classical music is highly technical and requires an early start and years of apprenticeship-style training that most families cannot afford. Still, non-Brahmin virtuosos do emerge—many in other parts of South India, outside Chennai—and there is plenty of room to expand the audience. Krishna is involved with an alternative festival, the Urur-Olcott Kuppam Vizha, which presents high-end Carnatic music alongside other arts, including dance-drama, children’s, and folk

performances, in an open-air seaside setting for a working-class audience, and anyone else who cares to attend.

This year Krishna was a recipient of a Ramon Magsaysay Award, an Asia-wide public service honor. The other Indian laureate for 2016 was Bezwada Wilson, the organizer of an empowerment group for one of India's most oppressed communities, the people who conduct "manual scavenging" of latrines. Some critics sniped that the privileged Krishna had yet to earn his stripes on that level, but the

award committee disagreed. Democratizing music, as Krishna is doing, is an essential project, they argued in the citation. "While much of his work is ahead of him, he has embarked on an important path."

*Siddhartha Mitter is a culture journalist in New York. He contributes regularly to the Village Voice, Boston Globe, and other outlets.*

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*For an interview with Mark Morris, curator of Sounds of India, please turn to page 60.*

# I won't come

By Kabir

I won't come  
I won't go  
I won't live  
I won't die

I'll keep uttering  
The name  
And lose myself  
In it

I'm bowl  
And I'm platter  
I'm man  
And I'm woman

I'm grapefruit  
And I'm sweet lime  
I'm Hindu  
And I'm Muslim

I'm fish  
And I'm net  
I'm fisherman  
And I'm time

I'm nothing  
Says Kabir  
I'm not among the living  
Or the dead

—Translated by Arvind Krishna Mehrotra. Published by New York Review Books. Copyright © 2011 by Arvind Krishna Mehrotra. All rights reserved.

*For poetry comments and suggestions, please write to [programming@LincolnCenter.org](mailto:programming@LincolnCenter.org).*

# Meet the Artists



S. HARSHARAN

## T. M. Krishna

T. M. Krishna is a preeminent vocalist in the Carnatic tradition of India's classical music. He trained under the distinguished gurus B. Seetharama Sarma and Sem-mangudi Srinivasalyer, and has come to occupy a distinct place in the Carnatic universe for the individuality of his renditions, marked by an inner luminosity and a passionate intensity.

In 2016 Mr. Krishna received a Ramon Magsaysay Award, Asia's premier prize for transformative leadership. The prize honors his commitment as an artist and advocate of "art's power to heal India's deep social divisions, breaking barriers of caste and class to unleash what music has to offer not just for some but for all." Mr. Krishna launched an initiative called Svanubhava to kindle interest among the young in music, dance, and theater. He also conceived of the Urur-Olcott Kuppam Margazhi Festival to bring art and artists to new audiences and environments. He founded organizations for the revitalization of Carnatic music in places that lack access to artistic opportunities, and has catalyzed efforts at documentation and archival preservation.

Mr. Krishna is also a published author and lecturer on music, aesthetics, and related topics. He has provided guidance to a movement for cultural retrievals in the war-ravaged northern province of Sri Lanka. His first book, *Voices Within*, co-authored with Bombay Jayashri, was an illustrated work on Carnatic musicians. His most recent book, *A Southern Music*, was published by Harper Collins in 2013.

## Akkarai S. Subhalakshmi

Akkarai S Subhalakshmi (violin) took the music world by storm at age eight, and her music continues to touch the hearts of music lovers around the world. She hails from a musical family; she is a disciple of her father, Akkarai Shri S. Swamynathan, who founded the Swara Raga Sudha school of music. Ms. Subhalakshmi is known for her blend of virtuosity on the violin with the fine nuances of Indian classical music. She has played with legends such as M. Balamuralikrishna, T. V. Gopalakrishnan, and Chitravina N. Ravikiran. She has performed extensively in India, as well as in East Asia, North America, Europe, the Middle East, Australia, and New Zealand. Her international debut was in Moscow at age 13 for an Indo-Russian cultural exchange program. She has since been featured at international events and venues including Théâtre de la Ville (Paris), the farewell concert for Zubin Mehta, Darbar Festival and Sadler's Wells Theatre (U.K.), and a special duet with her sister for the Emperor and Empress of Japan and the chief minister and governor of Tamil Nadu. She has also given talks on Carnatic music for various institutions around the world. Ms. Subhalakshmi has received multiple awards and titles, including the Rajiv Gandhi Yuva Puraskar award from the president of India. She is also a highly sought-after teacher.

## Rajna Swaminathan

Rajna Swaminathan (mridangam) is a protégé of mridangam legend Umayalpuram K. Sivaraman. She has performed with several renowned Indian classical musicians, most notably mentor and vocalist T. M. Krishna. Over the past few years, Ms. Swaminathan has been studying and collaborating with eminent musicians in New York's jazz and creative music scene, including Vijay Iyer, Steve Coleman, Miles Okazaki, and Amir ElSaffar. Ms. Swaminathan leads the ensemble Rajas, which explores new textural and improvisational

horizons at the nexus of Carnatic music and jazz/creative music traditions. She is also a composer and performer for dance and theater works. She has toured widely with the acclaimed Ragamala Dance Company, and has collaborated with playwright Anu Yadav. Ms. Swaminathan regularly teaches workshops on the South Indian rhythmic perspective, most prominently at the Banff International Workshop for Jazz and Creative Music and the Percussive Arts Society International Convention. She holds degrees in anthropology and French from the University of Maryland, College Park. She is currently pursuing a PhD in music at Harvard University.

### **N. Guruprasad**

N. Guruprasad (ghatam) initially learned ghatam from his father, K. Nagaraja Rao, and later studied with T. H. "Vikku" Vinayakram. He then joined V. Suresh, another prominent ghatam player, as a student and learned Kodhandarama Iyer fingering techniques. His desire to learn advanced Carnatic music brought him into the tutelage of Laya Chudaroli Madurai Shri T. Srinivasan, who trained him in the intricate mathematics of the genre. He gave his debut performance at the age of 16, and he has since accompanied many of the most respected Carnatic artists including M. Balamurali Krishna, K. V. Narayanasami, and Rajam Iyer. Mr. Guruprasad has performed at festivals throughout India, as well as in Qatar and Oman. He received a prestigious government scholarship, as well as the Yuva Kala Bharathi and Naadhoali awards.

### **Vikram K. Raghavan**

Vikram K. Raghavan (tambura) began his training in Carnatic music with Rajalakshmi Ramachandran in Chicago. He has trained with T. M. Krishna since 2003 and performs regularly throughout India and North America. Mr. Raghavan has won several prizes from prestigious institutions, including the Madras Music Academy and Cleveland

Tyagaraja Aradhana. He is involved in organizations such as the Youth Association for Classical Music and Svanubhava, a community of students that celebrates Indian art forms through festivals throughout India.

### **Madhav Iyengar**

Madhav Iyengar (tambura) studies Carnatic singing with T. M. Krishna. He began his training 16 years ago with Sitalakshmi Madhavan in Pittsburgh. He has learned from several distinguished Indian music teachers at Sri Venkateshwara Temple in Pittsburgh. Mr. Iyengar has also trained in mridangam under Srimushnam V. Raja Rao. He has been performing in vocal kutchcheris since 2010 for organizations including Sri Venkateshwara Temple in Pittsburgh and Sri Shiva Vishnu Temple in Washington, D.C. Mr. Iyengar has performed in Chennai for prestigious organizations including Mylapore Fine Arts Club, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Sri Thyaga Brahma Gana Sabha, and Indian Fine Arts Society. He recently completed his master's degree in electrical and computer engineering at Carnegie Mellon University.

### **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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