

present...

AMJAD ALI KHAN | Sarod
SHARON ISBIN | Guitar
AMAAN ALI BANGASH | Sarod
AYAAN ALI BANGASH | Sarod
AMIT KAVTHEKAR | Tabla

Saturday, February 22, 2025 | 7:30pm
Herbst Theatre

Strings for Peace

SHARON ISBIN

FRANCISCO TÁRREGA **Capricho árabe**

AMJAD ALI KHAN
(arr. Kyle Paul)

AYAAN ALI BANGASH AND SHARON ISBIN
Sacred Evening (Based on Raga Yaman)

AMJAD ALI KHAN
(arr. Kyle Paul)

AMAAN ALI BANGASH AND SHARON ISBIN
By the Moon (Based on Raga Behag)

AMJAD ALI KHAN

AMJAD ALI KHAN
Raga Ganesh Kalyan
Raga Behar

BENGALI FOLK MUSIC **Raga Bhatyali**

AMJAD ALI KHAN

AMJAD ALI KHAN, SHARON ISBIN, AMAAN AND AYAAN
Romancing Earth (Based on Raga Pilu)

Amjad Ali Khan sarod.com

Sharon Isbin sharonisbin.com

Amaan Ali Bangash amaanalibangash.com

Ayaan Ali Bangash ayaanalibangash.com

ARTIST PROFILES

Tonight is the San Francisco Performances debut of Amjad Ali Khan, Amaan Ali Bangash, Ayaan Ali Bangash, and Amit Kavthekar. Sharon Isbin returns for her seventh engagement; she made her SF Performances debut in November 1986 in a Guitar Jam with Laurindo Almeida and Larry Coryell and her solo debut in February 1992.



Amjad Ali Khan is one of the undisputed masters of the music world. Born to sarod maestro Haafiz Ali Khan, he gave his first performance at the age of six and is credited with reinventing the technique of playing the sarod. Over the course of a distinguished career spanning more than six decades, Amjad Ali Khan has won numerous accolades including a Grammy® nomination, the Crystal Award by the World Economic Forum, UNICEF's National Ambassadorship, and the Fukuoka Cultural grand prize. He has performed at venues the world over including Carnegie Hall and the Royal Albert Hall, as well as at the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize Concert in 2014 in Oslo, Norway. *Samaagam*, his first Sarod Concerto, has been performed by the Britten Sinfonia, Orchestre national d'Île-de-France, Orchestre d'Auvergne, London Philharmonia, Gulbenkian Orchestra, New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, Welsh National Opera, Atlanta Symphony, and Scottish Chamber Orchestra. Amjad Ali Khan has also been a visiting professor at Stanford University, University of New Mexico, and Jacob's School of Music. Amjad Ali Khan recently received coveted Global Music Awards under the Gold Medal category for their outstanding contribution to the glob-

al music industry and excellence in the classical music sphere. The UN Day Concert 2018 featured Sarod virtuoso Amjad Ali Khan, accompanied by his sons Amaan Ali Bangash and Ayaan Ali Bangash, and the Refugee Orchestra Project. The concert dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi was themed on "Traditions of Peace and Non-violence" in the presence of António Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations.

Amjad Ali Khan recently joined Gwen Stefani and Jon Bon Jovi for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Inductee and multi-Grammy® Award winning musician Joe Walsh's VetsAid Charity Concert in 2020 and 2021. Amjad Ali Khan with Joe Walsh came together with an EP named *Prayers* as a tribute to doctors and frontline workers. It's a wonderful project where the East meets West with an idea to bring the spirit of sharing the great unique treasures of their own artistic traditions, as well as finding common ground at both the cellular and cosmic levels of two musical traditions, which are often held to be radically different.



Hailed as the pre-eminent guitarist of our time, multiple Grammy® winner **Sharon Isbin** was named Musical America's Instrumentalist of the Year, the first guitarist in their 59-year award history and inducted into the 2023 Guitar Foundation of America's Hall of Fame. She has been soloist with over 200 orchestras, premiered over 80 works written for her by some of the world's finest composers, and given sold-out performances in celebrated halls across 40 countries. Winner of the Munich ARD, Madrid and Toronto Competitions, Germany's Echo Klassik, and Guitar Player's Best Classical Guitarist awards, she performed in Scorsese's Oscar-winning

The Departed, at the White House by invitation of President Obama, and as the only classical artist in the 2010 Grammy Awards. The documentary seen by millions on PBS and abroad, *Sharon Isbin: Troubadour*, won ASCAP's Television Broadcast Award. Latest in her discography of over 35 recordings include *Affinity* and *Strings for Peace* with Amjad Ali Khan, both named Best of 2020. Other titles include *Souvenirs of Spain & Italy* with the Pacifica Quartet, her Grammy-winning *Journey to the New World* with guest Joan Baez which spent 63 weeks on top Billboard charts, and her Latin Grammy-nominated disc with the New York Philharmonic, their only recording with guitar. Recent highlights include a commission for her by Carnegie Hall for its 125th anniversary, a 21-city Guitar Passions tour with jazz greats Stanley Jordan and Romero Lubambo, and a collaboration with Sting. She is the founding director of guitar departments at The Juilliard School and the Aspen Music Festival.

Cultural and musical traditions gives life and purpose to the work they bring to the stage. By asking audiences to listen from the heart, Sarod virtuosos **Amaan Ali Bangash** and **Ayaan Ali Bangash** breakthrough the troublesome polarities of continuity and change, tradition and innovation. In their sound we encounter technical assuredness bolstered by elegant lyricism and joy-filled dynamism. It is music forged from a unique artistic vision that rests upon a legacy seven generations deep and includes their revered father and grandfather, Amjad Ali Khan and Haafiz Ali Khan. They have performed across the globe, including Carnegie Hall, Kennedy Center and Royal Albert Hall.

They have collaborated with guitarist Derek Trucks, of the Allman Brothers Band, Guitarist Sharon Isbin, Chicago Philharmonic Orchestra, and Avignon Symphony Orchestra among others, and established themselves as soloists and as a duo, carrying forward their musical legacy in sync with both tradition and contemporary times. They performed at the Nobel Peace Prize Concert 2014 in Oslo and recently won the Gold Medal at the Global Music Awards in LA for their new album *Peace Worshipers*. More recently, they performed their father's *Concerto Samaagam* with New Jersey Symphony Orchestra with Conductor Xian Zhang, Moscow State Philharmonic Orchestra, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, and Bronx Arts Ensemble. The UN Day Concert 2018 featured Sarod virtuoso Amjad Ali Khan,

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SHARON ISBIN *

Amjad Ali Khan | Sarod

Sat., Feb. 22, 2025 7:30 pm | Herbst Theatre

MĚLA GUITAR QUARTET

Sat., March 8, 2025 7:30 pm | St. Mark's

THOMAS DUNFORD | LUTE *

Sat., March 29, 2025 7:30 pm | St. Mark's

ANA VIDOVIC

Sat., April 12, 2025 7:30 pm | Herbst Theatre

MANUEL BARRUECO *

Sat., May 3, 2025 7:30 pm | Herbst Theatre

** In association with San Francisco Performances*

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Amaan Ali Bangash, Ayaan Ali Bangash, and the Refugee Orchestra Project conducted by Lidiya Yankovskaya, themed on “Traditions of Peace and Non-violence” in the presence of António Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations.

Amaan Ali Bangash and Ayaan Ali Bangash have been announced as Associate Artists at Wigmore Hall, in advance of the Hall’s 120th anniversary celebrations. They join fellow new Associate Artists such as Lawrence Power and Gweneth Ann Rand and are committed to a five-year relationship with the Hall, performing at least once every season.

Young and talented **Amit Kavthekar** (“GANDA-BANDH SHAGIRD” of Late Ustad Allarakha) has rhythm running in his veins. At the early age of six, he was being groomed in the art of playing tabla by the legendary Ustad Allarakha. He has also been fortunate enough to be taught tabla intricacies by Ustad Zakir Hussain—a maestro in Indian classical music and an international phenomenon in the fields of percussion and world music.

Recently, Amit played at the United Nations Day Concert 2018 with Ustad Amjad Ali Khan, Ayaan Ali Bangash, and Amaan Ali Bangash as well as with the Refugee Orchestra project.

Amit has frequent collaborations with western classical, jazz and fusion musicians. He is a member of the Purna Loka Quartet along with David Balakrishnan of the Grammy®-winning Turtle Island Quartet. He has also played with the Massachusetts Symphony Orchestra and is also a founder member of the band Sawaari, which explores music from different parts of the world.

Recently, Amit started working with the renowned and one of the best Jazz guitar players Al Di Meola and now he is the integral part of Al Di Meola acoustic trio Project.

Amit is currently teaching Tabla in the New England School of Music based in Massachusetts. He also teaches master classes and workshops in universities.

PROGRAM NOTES

Strings for Peace was recorded in 2019 following a tour in India and released by ZOHO in 2020. The album is a collaboration with my cherished colleagues, India’s great sarod master Amjad Ali Khan and his brilliant sons Amaan Ali Bangash and Ayaan Ali Bangash.

To open the program, I perform a solo by

celebrated 19th-century Spanish guitarist **Francisco Tárrega**, his lilting serenade *Capricho árabe* rich in Moorish influences. Spanish composers often found inspiration in flamenco tradition; an art form believed to have evolved in Andalucía with influences from the Romani who migrated from India hundreds of years ago. Indeed, one can hear elements of Indian classical music in flamenco’s melismatic *cante jondo* (deep song), as well as in rhythms and gestures by composers like Tárrega, Albeniz, Granados and Falla.

In **Sacred Evening**, Ayaan Ali Bangash joins me in the first of three works composed by Amjad Ali Khan for guitar, sarod and tabla and arranged by Kyle Paul. The music is based on **Raga Yaman**, a night raga, romantic in nature and evocative of the beauty of sunset and evening. Maestro Khan, who represents the sixth generation in his family of sarod virtuosos, writes that “Raga is like a living entity. A scale alone is not a Raga but is more of a supporting structure...a Raga has to be invoked.”

An introductory alap invites the sarod and guitar to explore an intimate spirituality with contemplative improvisations and spirited dialogue. When the fast section begins, fueled by Amit Kavthekar’s energetic tabla, a new track delineates its arrival. Virtuoso exchanges between guitar and sarod build at the end to an exhilarating climax.

In **By the Moon**, Amaan Ali Bangash takes the stage to join me in a **Raga Behag** associated with the second quarter of the

night and set to a 16-beat meter. The ascending version is pentatonic, while the descending alternates between various raised and normal fourths of the scale. Following the alap, the tabla enters, inviting a virtuosic duo with guitar and energetic improvisatory exchanges with sarod that culminate in a fiery conclusion.

Maestro Khan’s solo set opens with his **Raga Ganesh Kalyan**, a work first performed in 1992 at the yearly Ganesh Festival. **Raga Bahar**, which follows, presents a Tarana inspired by Indian classical vocal music. He writes that the form was “developed in the 13th Century by Amir Khusrau, representing a move away from song-text into the realm of instrumental music, with melodic and rhythmic expression unfettered by literal language.” In **Raga Bhatyali**, folk music of Bengal, “we hear a famous song composed in 1905 by Nobel Prize laureate Rabindranath Tagore. The text exhorts the listener to continue their journey, despite being abandoned by others. Mahatma Gandhi was deeply influenced by this song, citing it as one of his favorites.”

In the final work, we all take the stage for **Romancing Earth**. Based on **Raga Pilu** associated with monsoon season, it unfolds with a peaceful character that alternates yearning and melancholy with joy, devotion and love. Its folk song origins inspire expressive freedom and extensive dialogue between the instruments, leading to a thrilling finale.

—Program notes by Sharon Isbin



MANUEL BARRUECO Guitar

**SATURDAY
MAY 3**

Program to Be Announced

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