

WIGMORE HALL

Saturday 7 January 2023
7.30pm

Soul Strings

Amaan Ali Bangash sarod
Ayaan Ali Bangash sarod
Jennifer Pike violin
Anubrata Chatterjee tabla

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) Preludio from Partita No. 3 in E for solo violin
BWV1006 (1720)

Folk music from Bengal and Assam

Amjad Ali Khan (b.1945) Sacred Evening (Raga Yaman) (2015)

Romancing Earth (Raga Pilu) (2015)



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Taj Hotels – As custodian of Indian Hospitality here in the UK, Taj is delighted to be the hospitality partner for the special celebration of Mahatma Gandhi's 75th year of freedom.



This concert is part of the CAVATINA Chamber Music Trust ticket scheme, offering free tickets to those aged 8-25

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30

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It was such an honour to be appointed Associate Artists along with our father and Guru, Sarod Grand Master Amjad Ali Khan on the historic occasion of the Hall's 120th Anniversary. It is indeed a matter of great joy and honour for us to present our music at Wigmore Hall for the music lovers of United Kingdom. Tonight's concert aims to preserve the essence of both Indian and Western traditions so that they can flow into each other without artistic compromise. The aim is through this process to joyfully explore the common musical 'DNA' of both traditions. Indian Classical music has had both a very spiritual and scientific development and growth; it is a phenomenon that existed from Vedic times (c.1500-500BCE). The tradition of classical music dates back to the Samaveda period. The earliest version of classical music was the Vedic chants. Interestingly, the effect of all the 12 notes on our body, mind and soul is something empirical. Various permutations and combinations give the scales a shape of a raga.

However, a raga is much more than this. It's not just a mere scale. A raga has to be invoked, understood and cared for, like a living entity. People might find it amusing but in the olden days and even to some extent now, artists would say, 'Don't mess with a raga, it can curse you!' The brilliant Jennifer Pike and we come together in the spirit of sharing the unique treasures of our own traditions as well as finding common ground in ragas and medieval modes, *vibrato* (pitch inflection on a single note), *portamento* and *gamakas* (the sliding melodic ornaments connecting notes). Along with the sarods and violin, we have the tabla, a membranophone percussion instrument originating from the Indian subcontinent, accompanying in all the pieces.

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Johann Sebastian Bach – Preludio from Partita No. 3 in E for solo violin BWV1006

Folk Music of Bengal and Assam

Folk music is one of the most natural forms of music, self-taught all over the world. It's interesting to see how music can define and create a region of any country. While presenting the folk music of Bengal,

we will hear a famous song composed and written by Nobel Prize laureate Rabindranath Tagore in 1905. The song exhorts the listener to continue their journey, despite lack of support or abandonment from others. The song is often quoted in the context of political or social change movements. Mahatma Gandhi, who was deeply influenced by this song, cited it as one of his favourites.

Sacred Evening (Raga Yaman)

Sacred Evening is cast by its composer, **Amjad Ali Khan**, in *Raga Yaman*, in a metric cycle of 16 beats. This raga, not surprisingly, is usually associated with the evening and with the dying of the day. Sarod and violin open the introduction together in a slightly drowsy trance that leaves one in the same space as Mallarmé's *Afternoon of a Faun* (*L'après-midi d'une faune*). The autumnal atmosphere of the *alap* gives way quickly as the main melody arrives in that familiar texture of repeated notes in the spirit of the dulcimer or cimbalom.

Romancing Earth (Raga Pilu)

Raga Pilu, often described as a peaceful raga, is associated with the second quarter of night. Amjad Ali Khan's melody is a profoundly vocal idiom that shares much with the Indian classics and latter day Bollywood. This performance is shaped as a binary structure with an extended introduction or *alap*. The sarod opens the seven-part introduction with an ethereal descent of the notes of the raga, as it emerges from the accompanying drone. The sarods and violin now exchange improvised embellishments of the raga as well as the melody. Close listening will reveal how the violin portamento at the critical cadential moments, before passing the line back, reveals its kinship to the Indian slides (*gamakas*). The sarods and violin alternate with virtuoso improvised arabesques on the tune, while the other intones the notes of the raga below in the very same spirit as the *cantus firmus* styles of medieval and renaissance European music.

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