

Lamont School of Music

Tapestry of Traditions

Samarth Nagarkar Khyal Ensemble

Samarth Nagarkar - Voice

Suhail Yusuf Khan - Sarangi

Dibyarka Chatterjee - Tabla

Bharat Tata - Tanpura

Aditi Tata - Tanpura

Friday, November 7, 2025

7:30 p.m.

Frederic C. Hamilton Family Recital Hall



**Robert & Judi Newman Center
for the Performing Arts**

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Program

1. Raga Yaman / Yaman Kalyan

Vilambit Khyal - Tala Jhumra (14 beats)

- *Bana re balaiya lyongi*

Drut Tarana - Tala Ektal (12 beats)

2. Raga Savani / Savani Bihag

Vilambit Sadra - Tala Jhaptal (10 beats)

- *Hay Mahadeva*

Drut Khyal - Tala Adachautal (14 beats)

- *Manat na mana mora*

3. Raga Paraj

Madhyalay Khyal - Tala Teental (10 beats)

- *Manmohan Brij ko rasiya*

4. Raga Gaud Malhar

Madhyalay Khyal - Tala Teental / Addha Teental (16 beats)

- *Jisko aisi baat ho*

5. Raga Bhairavi

Bandish ki Thumri - Tala Teental (16 beats)

- *Kaisi ye bhalaai re Kanhaai*

Bandish ki Thumri - Tala Teental (16 beats)

- *Payaliya baje re*

Program Notes

Tapestry of Traditions is a reimagined Indian classical concert experience that brings to life the depth, beauty, and cultural richness of Hindustani vocal music. Led by renowned vocalist Samarth Nagarkar, with Suhail Yusuf Khan (sarangi) and Dibyarka Chatterjee (tabla), the program showcases the *khyal* vocal genre as a dynamic, evolving tradition shaped by centuries of dialogue with devotional, folk, courtly, and theatrical forms.

Ragas form the core of Indian classical music, also known as *raga sangeet* or *raga* music. *Khyal* is the preeminent genre of this music. Ragas express their many moods and contours through compositions called *bandishes*. Some prominent compositional styles in the Khyal genre include *vilambit khyal*, *drut khyal*, *madhyalay khyal*, *tarana*, *sadra*, *trivat*, *chaturang*, *asthapadi*, *bandish ki thumri*, and *tapp-khyal*. Themes range from devotion and peace to romance, longing, and sorrow. The lyrics may describe scenes from mythology (particularly involving Krishna, a beloved Hindu deity), the changing seasons, celebratory moments like weddings or childbirth, or everyday life.

Over several centuries, Khyal bandishes have assimilated elements from Dhrupad, Thumri, and Qawwali genres, and regional folk traditions. Distinctive stylistic disciplines called *gharanas* or *gaykis* also evolved within the Khyal genre. This evening's performance presents a cross-section of all these influences and styles.

1. Raga Yaman / Yaman Kalyan

A widely beloved evening raga, Yaman uses all major notes and an augmented fourth (Teevra Ma). While Yaman and Yaman Kalyan are sometimes treated as separate ragas, their nuances allow for seamless blending. This presentation is rendered in the Gwalior gharana style.

Vilambit Khyal – Tala Jhumra (14 beats) – *Bana re balaiya lyongi*

This is one of the oldest Khyal compositions in the Gwalior gharana tradition. It is likely that this was composed originally as a Sehra, a wedding song, as it describes the celebratory rituals and conventions of the time. Tonight, it will be presented in a style that is over a century old, where the fast tempo of Tala Jhumra, contrasts with the slow unfolding of the vilambit khyal, creating dynamic rhythmic tension and release.

Drut Tarana – Tala Ektal (12 beats)

Tarana is a compositional style that uses abstract syllables not derived from any language. Amir Khusrau, the 13th-century poet and cultural innovator, is credited with popularizing the form. Phrases like “Dara dere tare dani,” “Ta na na na,” and “Yalali yalali yala” are said to have originated from Islamic devotional chants. The twelve-beat Ektal rhythmic cycle brings together the classical Dhrupad structure of Chautaal and folk rhythmic patterns.

2. Raga Savani / Savani Bihag

This is a variant of raga Bihag, featuring a pentatonic ascent and a full-scale descent. Bihag, comes from the Sanskrit “Vihang” meaning “bird” and evokes the Spring season, while Savani alludes to monsoon rains. Savani Bihag merges these two seasonal moods. This will be performed in a blend of the Jaipur and Agra gharanas’ styles.

Vilambit Sadra – Tala Jhaptal (10 beats) – *Hay Mahadeva*

A Sadra is a compositional style that has been adopted into Khyal singing from the Dhrupad tradition. While Dhrupad Sadras are sung in Sooltal, Khyal typically employs another ten-beat Tala called Jhaptal. This hybrid form maintains structural purity of Dhrupad, while allowing Khyal-style improvisation through alap, bol-baant, and taan. This Sadra is an ode to the Hindu deity Shiva.

Drut Khyal – Tala Adachautal (14 beats) – *Manat na mana mora*

A rare 14-beat cycle (Adachautal) anchors this original composition by Samarth Nagarkar.

Program Notes cont.

3. Raga Paraj

Though Paraj shares its scale with Basant (flat second/komal re, flat sixth/komal dha, augmented fourth/teevra Ma, and occasional perfect fourth/shuddha ma), it has a distinct and unmistakable flavor shaped by folk traditions.

Madhyalay Khyal – Tala Teental (16 beats) – *Manmohan Brij ko rasiya*

This composition blends classical structure with folk melody and rhythm, romantic lyrics about Krishna, and improvisational devices from Qawwali.

4. Raga Gaud Malhar

This popular monsoon raga evokes the mood of the rains.

Madhyalay Khyal – Tala Teental / Addha Teental (16 beats) – *Jisko aisi baat ho*

This piece, performed in the Agra gharana style, is attributed either to a poet named Mauj Piya or to the Sufi saint Hazrat Mauj Darya. It integrates and draws from linguistic and improvisational elements of the Qawwali tradition. Key features include:

- Use of Urdu, Persian, or Hindavi / Hindustani dialects.
- Symbolic metaphors (e.g., rain = struggle; moon/alcohol = enlightenment; mullah/priest = hypocrisy; piya = divine/guru)
- Flexible mukhda (refrain) structure - there could be a mukhda in almost every line.
- Mid-composition tempo shift to re-anchor improvisation

5. Raga Bhairavi

Bandish ki Thumri – Tala Teental (16 beats) – *Kaisi yeh bhalaai re Kanhaai*

Bandish ki Thumri – Tala Teental (16 beats) – *Payaliya baje re*

Bandish ki Thumri lies between the Khyal and bol-banaav Thumri forms. It prioritizes expressive lyricism while maintaining rhythmic precision. Some common traits of such compositions include:

- Light ragas like Bhairavi, Khamaj, Kafi, Jhinjhoti
- Medium to fast tempo
- Romantic or playful themes
- Dense lyrical alignment with tala structure

Biographies

Samarth Nagarkar is a virtuoso singer, known for his mastery of Khyal, the preeminent form of Hindustani / North Indian classical vocal music. His performances are noted for their meditative artistry, technical finesse and emotive depth. Samarth has performed at major venues worldwide, including Lincoln Center NY, UCLA Schoenberg Hall LA, LearnQuest Music Conference, Boston, Central Park Summer Stage NY, and NCPA, Mumbai. Author of the acclaimed book *Raga Sangeet*, he has several solo and collaborative albums to his credit. As a dedicated educator, he presents lectures, masterclasses at institutions such as NYU, Manhattan School of Music, and Jazz at Lincoln Center. He is a voting member of The Recording Academy (Grammys) and has received prestigious awards like the Excellence in the Arts Award from NAKA. Trained under distinguished gurus Ulhas Kashalkar and Dinkar Kaikini, Samarth's music represents three traditional gharana styles of Gwalior, Agra, and Jaipur. He is a former scholar of the ITC Sangeet Research Academy, Kolkata. <https://bio.site/samarthnagarkar.com>

Suhail Yusuf Khan is an extraordinary sarangi player, singer, and composer. He trained under his grandfather, Ustad Sabri Khan, one of the greatest exponents and pioneers of the sarangi, and also received extensive training from his uncle, the acclaimed Ustad Kamal Sabri. With over twenty-five years of performance experience, Suhail combines artistic mastery with academic research. He earned a Ph.D. in ethnomusicology from Wesleyan University, where his dissertation "Bridge Overtones: Lessons from the Sarangi" offered the first in-depth ethnomusicological study of the instrument by a hereditary player. His scholarship explores issues of gender, caste, ethnicity, and exclusion in music, while his artistic work spans Hindustani classical music, Qawwālī, devotional song, and experimental collaborations with rock, folk, and jazz. He has taught at the University of Hartford and was a 2024–2025 Fellow at Yale University's Institute of Sacred Music, where his project examined interfaith and intercultural musical dialogues in the United States.

(cont.)

Biographies cont.

Dibyarka Chatterjee is an accomplished tabla artist representing the Farrukhabad gharana. The son and disciple of the renowned Pandit Samir Chatterjee, he began training at the age of five within the traditional guru-shishya parampara (master-disciple tradition). Born in Kolkata and raised in New York City, Dibyarka bridges South Asian and Western musical worlds through his versatile and collaborative approach. He has performed with many leading musicians, including Pandit Jasraj, Pandit Buddhadev DasGupta, Ustad Shujaat Khan, and Pandit Suman Ghosh, and has appeared at major venues such as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and the United Nations. His cross-genre collaborations include projects with the Dance Theatre of Harlem, Battery Dance Company, and fusion musicians Gary Lucas and Najma Akhtar. Dibyarka holds an MFA from Goddard College, where his studies focused on the history, theory, and philosophy of Indian music. He teaches regularly in New York and New Jersey and has given guest lectures and demonstrations at Columbia University, Dartmouth College, NYU, and the Manhattan School of Music.

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