



Amjad Ali Khan, Sarod
Amaan Ali Khan, Sarod
Ayaan Ali Khan, Sarod
Elmira Darvarova, Violin

Amjad Ali Khan was only six years old when he gave his first Sarod recital. It was the beginning of yet another glorious chapter in the history of Indian classical music. Taught by his father Haafiz Ali Khan, Amjad Ali Khan was born to the illustrious Bangash lineage rooted in the Senia Bangash School of music. Today he shoulders the sixth generation of legacy in this legendary lineage. After his debut, the graph of his legendary career took the speed of light, and on its way the Indian classical music scene witnessed regular and scintillating bursts of *Raga* supernovas. In his case, the term ‘beauty of the Ragas’ acquires a special meaning as he has to his credit the distinction of having created many new Ragas. It is love for music and his belief in his music that has enabled him to interpret traditional notions in a new, refreshing way, reiterating the challenge of innovation and yet respecting the timelessness of tradition. Thus, the world saw the art of Sarod performance being given a new and yet timeless interpretation by Amjad Ali Khan. He is one of the few maestros who consider his audience to be the soul of his motivation. As he once said, “*There is no essential difference between classical and popular music. Music is music. I want to communicate with the listener who finds Indian classical music remote.*” Performing regularly at Carnegie Hall, Royal Albert Hall, Royal Festival Hall, Kennedy Center, Suntory Hall in Tokyo (first Indian performer), House of Commons, Theatre de la Ville and Musée Guimet in Paris, Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, Esplanade in Singapore, Victoria Hall in Geneva, Chicago Symphony Center, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Mozart Hall in Frankfurt, St. James Palace and the Opera House in Australia, he has also performed at numerous prestigious festivals worldwide, such as the WOMAD Festival in Adelaide and New Plymouth, Edinburgh Music Festival, World Beat Festival in Brisbane, Taranaki in New Zealand, Summer Arts Festival in Seattle, BBC Proms, International Poets Festival in Rome, Shiraz Festival, UNESCO, Hong Kong Arts Festival, Adelaide Music Festival, Enescu Festival in Bucharest, 1200 Years celebration of Frankfurt, WOMAD Rivermead Festival, UK, and Schönbrunn in Vienna. He is a recipient of the UNESCO Award, Padma Vibhushan (highest Indian civilian award), UNICEF’s National Ambassadorship, The Crystal Award by the World Economic Forum, and Honorary Doctorates from the University of York, England in 1997, Delhi University in 1998, Rabindra Bharati University in 2007, Kolkata and the Vishva Bharti (Deshikottam) in Shantiniketan in 2001. He represented India in the first World Arts Summit in Venice in 1991, received Honorary Citizenship to the States of Texas (1997), Massachusetts (1984), Tennessee (1997), the city of Atlanta, Georgia (2002), Albuquerque, New Mexico (2007) and the Key of the City of Tulsa, Oklahoma and Fort Lauderdale, Florida. April 20th, 1984 was proclaimed as Amjad Ali Khan Day in Boston, Massachusetts. In 1995, Mr. Khan was awarded the Gandhi UNESCO Medal in Paris for his composition *Bapukauns*. In 2003 he received the “Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters” by the French Government, and the Fukuoka Cultural Grand Prize in Japan in 2004. His collaborations include a piece composed for the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Yoshikazu Fukumora titled *Tribute to Hong Kong*, duets with guitarist Charley Byrd, violinist Igor Frolov, soprano Glenda Simpson, guitarist Alvaro Pierri, guitarist Barry Mason, cellists Claudio Bohorquez and Matthew Barley, folk artist Carrie Newcomer. He has been a visiting professor at

Stanford University, Indiana University, York University, Washington University, Stony Brook, Northeastern University and New Mexico University. BBC Magazine voted his CD titled ‘*Bhairav*’ among the world’s best 50 classical albums for the year 1995, and in 2009 Amjad Ali Khan was nominated for a Grammy award for ‘*Ancient Sounds*’, a joint-venture with Iraqi oud soloist Rahim Alhaj. In 1999, Mr. Khan inaugurated the World Festival of Sacred Music with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. In 1998, Khan composed the signature tune for the 48th International Film Festival. On the ninth anniversary of 9/11, Amjad Ali Khan gave a Peace Concert at the United Nations in New York in the presence of the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon. To mark the Hundred years of Gandhi’s Satyagrah Movement, Amjad Ali Khan presented a concert at Carnegie Hall in 2006, and in 2007 he performed at the Central Hall of the Indian Parliament, commemorating India’s 60th year of Independence. In 2014 his sarod recital was featured at the “*Music for Peace*” event at the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations at the Dag Hammarskjold Library Auditorium at the United Nations. In 2014 Amjad Ali Khan and his sons Amaan Ali Khan and Ayaan Ali Khan performed at the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize Ceremony and Concert in Oslo, Norway, along with a lineup of Queen Latifa, Steven Tyler, Nuno Bettencourt and Laura Mvula. Two books have been written about him: ‘*The world of Amjad Ali Khan*’ (UBS Publishers, 1995) and ‘*Abba - God’s Greatest Gift to us*’ by his sons, Amaan and Ayaan (Roli Books - Lustre Publications, 2002). A documentary about Mr. Khan, called ‘*Strings for Freedom*’ won the Bengal Film Journalist Association Award and was also screened at the Ankara Film Festival in 1996. Mr. Khan’s photograph was included in a frieze running the length of the river façade of the Royal Festival Hall. In 2012 Khan authored his first book, *My Father, Our Fraternity*, an intensely personal memoir which brings alive the rich classical music tradition from the early twentieth century to the present. Amjad Ali Khan offers an insider’s view of this era, through the life and times of his father, the famous sarod icon, Haafiz Ali Khan. The personal and the professional are intertwined in this book as they are in the author’s life. His Sarod concerto *Samaagam* was premiered in 2008 with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra at St. Magnus Festival, at Kirkwall, Orkney Islands, and in 2009 Mr. Khan presented *Samaagam* with the Taipei Chinese Orchestra. *Samaagam* was released worldwide in 2011 on Harmonia Mundi’s World Village label. That same season, Amjad Ali Khan was the focus of a 4-concert residency at Wigmore Hall in London, including a new piece with the Britten Sinfonia. As a finale to his residency at Stanford University, Amjad Ali Khan performed with conductor Jindong Cai and the Stanford Philharmonia at the Mozart and More Festival. In 2013 *Ananta Opus 195* - a concerto for Sarod, symphonic and electronic orchestra, written by Pierre Thilloy, was performed by Amjad Ali Khan and his sons, Amaan Ali Khan and Ayaan Ali Khan, with the Avignon Provence Symphonic Orchestra and the Kords Collective, conducted by Samuel Jean. That same year Amjad Ali Khan presented his Sarod concerto *Samaagam* in France with Orchestre d’Auvergne and Orchestre National d’Île de France, conducted by Kaspar Zehnder. In 2014 Amjad Ali Khan Khan toured India with the Britten Sinfonia. His two sons, Amaan Ali Khan and Ayaan Ali Khan, are well known names in the music scene and are the seventh generation of musicians in the family. Amjad Ali Khan’s wife, Subhalakshmi Khan, has been a

great exponent of the Indian classical dance, *Bharatnatyam*, with a substantial career, which she sacrificed for her family. As a soul, so in his heart, Amjad Ali Khan is a man who has proven his indomitable belief in the integration of two of life's greatest forces, love and music. He is a living example of a man who practices that integration each day of his life, both on stage and off stage. More info at www.sarod.com

Amaan Ali Khan is the eldest son and disciple of the iconic Sarod Maestro Amjad Ali Khan, and grandson of Haafiz Ali Khan. Belonging to the seventh generation in an unbroken chain of the Senia Bangash School, he was initiated by his legendary father into the fine art of Sarod playing and gave his first public performance at age eight. Amaan's musical style is marked by its precision in tunefulness, bold and resonant strokes, along with tradition and continuity of Indian Classical Music. His performances have evoked great accolades and critical acclaim, and today he is considered one of the finest Sarod players in the world and has obtained a very special place for himself among music enthusiasts across continents. He is an inspiration for the younger generation of musicians and continues to enchant audiences with his virtuosity, sheer brilliance and charismatic stage presence. Appearing at the most prestigious venues in India and around the world, he performed at the 1986 Festival of India in Moscow, and made his UK debut in 1990 and his US debut in 1991. He has performed numerous times for HRH the Prince of Wales at St. James Palace in London, has toured Australia twice, and regularly appears at the world's greatest stages, such as Carnegie Hall, Symphony Space and the Metropolitan Museum in New York; Kennedy Center in Washington, DC; the Chicago Symphony Center; the Palace of Fine Arts in San Francisco; the Getty Center in Los Angeles; the Lensic Performing Arts Center in Santa Fe; the Palais Beaux-Arts in Brussels; the Paris Philharmonie; the Esplanade in Singapore; the Gulbenkian Música in Lisbon; the New York Chamber Music Festival; the Chicago World Music Festival; the Summer Arts Festival in Seattle; the Edinburgh Festival; the Enescu Festival in Bucharest; many WOMAD festivals at various venues around the globe; the Wigmore Hall, the Queen Elizabeth Hall, the Royal Festival Hall and the Barbican Center in London, as well as many other world-famous venues. Amaan performed at the Indian Parliament for India's 60th year of Independence; presented a concert for Coca Cola at The Fox Theater, Atlanta; performed, together with his father and brother, at the United Nations in New York in the presence of Ban Ki-moon to commemorate the 2009 *Ode to Peace Concert*; performed for Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper at the 2011 *Year of India* Inauguration at Musee de la Civilisation Theatre in Ottawa; collaborated with oudist Rahim Alhaj for Amjad Ali Khan's Grammy-nominated project *Ancient Sounds*; performed at Stanford University's Dinkelspiel Auditorium at the end of his father's Stanford University residency in 2012. He starred in a 2012 PETA ad strumming his Sarod against a backdrop of birds flying freely across the sky, next to the words "*Bring Harmony to Birds' Lives - Let Birds Fly Free*". For several years Amaan hosted, with his brother Ayaan, the Zee TV music series show 'Sa Re Ga Ma'. The two brothers composed the music score for Academy Award winner Roger Christian's film "*American Daylight*", and were featured with their father in the Real World

Records' album '*Moksha*'. Amaan's Wigmore Hall concert with his father and brother was released under the '*Live at Wigmore Hall*' series. After the 2002 release of his solo album titled '*Amaan*', Songlines World Music Magazine hailed him as a "worthy heir to his father's crown". His release *Live in Lisbon*, recorded live at Grande Auditório Gulbenkian, produced by Sarod Records (co-founded by Amaan and Ayaan) was released in 2012 on iTunes. Amaan and Ayaan composed two customized special albums - *New Delhi* (2011) and *Raga* (2013) for The Leela Palaces Hotels and Resorts, and also released with their father and guru, Amjad Ali Khan, the albums "*The Music Room*" and '*Sarod Symphony*'. The brothers' electronica lounge albums *Reincarnation* (2005) and *Truth* (2006) won them great critical acclaim, and their collaboration with cellist Matthew Barley and the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain resulted in the album '*Strings Attached*'. Amaan and Ayaan's 2012 album *Rang - Colors of Sufism* features their interpretations of traditional Qawwalis on the Sarod, and, together with their father, they premiered a collaborative project with the American folk artist Carrie Newcomer called '*Everything Is Everywhere*'. In 2013 they released *Headwaters* with the American hammered dulcimer performer, Malcolm Dalglish. Amaan also collaborated with the Derek Trucks Band at the Savannah Music Festival, and with Evelyn Glennie at the Rhythm Sticks Festival in London's Queen Elizabeth Hall. In 2013 Amaan presented his father's sarod concerto *Samaagam* with the London Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by David Murphy, and premiered in India, together with his father and brother, *Ananta Opus 195*, a concerto for sarod, symphonic and electronic orchestra by Pierre Thilloy. In 2014 Amaan toured India with the Britten Sinfonia, and performed with his father and brother at the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize Ceremony and Concert in Oslo, Norway, along with Queen Latifa and Steven Tyler. Recipient of the Provogue Society's Young Achievers Award for the Performing Arts, Amaan also received the MTV's Lycra Award for the Most Stylish Person in Music. The Mayor of the City of Tulsa, Oklahoma presented him with the Keys to the City along with an honorary citizenship and the Bharat Shiromani Award for instrumental music. He was also celebrated for his achievements over the years by the Swiss brand Raymond Weil at the launch of their 2011 *Freelancer* collection of timepieces. Amaan co-authored with his brother Ayaan the book '*Abba - God's greatest gift to us*' about their father's life, published by Roli Books, Lustre Publications as part of their 'Family Pride' series, and in 2010 the two brothers co-authored their second book, called '*50 Maestros 50 Recordings*' for Harper Collins. More info at www.amaanalikhan.com

Ayaan Ali Khan represents the seventh generation of a musical lineage known as the Senia Bangash School. The younger son and disciple of legendary Sarod Maestro Amjad Ali Khan, Ayaan stepped into the world of music and the Sarod at a very early age, with confidence, clarity, consistency and technical mastery, all of which he learnt at his father's knees. Making his solo debut at age eight, and performing concerts in India and abroad since then, he has also assisted his illustrious father at concerts all over the world. With his visionary approach and versatility, he has carved out a special niche for himself in the

world of music, and his contribution in making the Sarod a cross-over instrument in a variety of genres has projected him as an artist of high repute. Since his 1989 UK debut and his 1991 US debut, Ayaan has toured the world and has performed regularly at prestigious venues such as Carnegie Hall, New York's Metropolitan Museum, Town Hall and Symphony Space; Chicago Symphony Center; the Smithsonian; San Francisco Palace of Fine Arts; Getty Center in Los Angeles; Palais Beaux-Arts in Brussels; Esplanade in Singapore; Vienna's Konzerthaus; Amsterdam's Concertgebouw; Paris Philharmonie; Sydney Opera House; Seattle Summer Arts Festival; New York Chamber Music Festival; Chicago World Music Festival; Edinburgh Music Festival; the Wigmore Hall, the Queen Elizabeth Hall and the Royal Festival Hall in London, among many others. He has performed several times for HRH the Prince of Wales at St. James Palace, appeared at the inaugural Dalai Lama's Sacred Music Festival in New Delhi, and at the Indian Parliament for India's 60th year of Independence, and performed, together with his father and brother, at the United Nations in New York in the presence of Ban Ki-moon to commemorate the 2009 *Ode to Peace Concert*. For several years Ayaan hosted, together with his brother Amaan, the Zee TV music series show 'Sa Re Ga Ma'. He starred in a recent PETA ad strumming his sarod against a backdrop of birds flying freely across the sky, next to the words "*Bring Harmony to Birds' Lives - Let Birds Fly Free*". He co-authored with his brother in 2002 a book about their father's life, titled '*Abba - God's Greatest Gift to us*', published by Roli Books, Lustre Publications under their 'Family Pride' series, and in 2010 Ayaan and Amaan released their second book titled "*50 Maestros 50 Recordings*", published by Harper Collins. Ayaan performed with British cellist Mathew Barley and the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain at the Royal Festival Hall, and collaborated with Evelyn Glennie at the Rhythm Sticks Festival at Queen Elizabeth Hall, as well as with guitarist Derek Trucks of the Allman Brothers Band at the Savannah Festival, and with folk singer Carrie Newcomer for *Everything Is Everywhere* (premiered at the Lotus Arts Festival, and released on Light Records). Ayaan and his brother composed the music score for Academy Award winner Roger Christian's film "*American Daylight*", and were featured with their father in the Real World Records' album '*Moksha*'. In 2013 Ayaan performed, along with his father and brother, Pierre Thilloy's concerto for sarod, symphonic and electronic orchestra, *Ananta Opus 195*. He also presented his father's Sarod Concerto *Samaagam* with the London Philharmonia Orchestra, and performed for Amjad Ali Khan's Grammy-nominated project *Ancient Sounds*. A recipient of MTV's Lycra Award for the Most Stylish Person in Music, he also received the Keys to the City of Tulsa, Oklahoma, along with an Honorary Citizenship and the Bharat Shiromani Award for instrumental music. Ayaan's concert at London's Wigmore Hall along with his father and brother, was released under the *Live at Wigmore Hall* series. Amaan and Ayaan composed two customized special albums: *New Delhi* (2011) and *Raga* (2013) for The Leela Palaces Hotels and Resorts. Along with his many solo classical albums, Ayaan has crossed the bridge between Indian music and a variety of genres, with his electronica and lounge albums '*Reincarnation*', '*Truth*', '*Mystic Dunes*', '*Passion*' and '*Dreamz*'. He also released

two albums with his father and guru, titled "*The Music Room*" and '*Sarod Symphony*'. The 2012 album *Rang - Colours of Sufism* presents Amaan and Ayaan's interpretations of traditional Qawwalis on the Sarod, and their 2013 release *Headwaters* - a collaboration with the American hammered dulcimer performer Malcolm Dalglish, features an interplay of ancient voices and images. Recently Ayaan toured with the Britten Sinfonia, had a residency with his father at Indiana University (they were the first artists residents of the School of Global and International Studies), and performed with his father and brother at the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize Ceremony and Concert in Oslo, Norway, along with the lineup of Queen Latifa, Steven Tyler and Laura Mvula. Ayaan co-founded with his brother the label Sarod Records which releases their music exclusively on iTunes. More info at www.ayaanalikh.com

Elmira Darvarova, former Concertmaster of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra in New York (and the first and only woman-concertmaster in the MET's history) started playing violin at the age of three, gave her first recital at four, and made her debut as a soloist with an orchestra at age eight. She performs worldwide to great acclaim and is a Grammy-nominated recording artist. A prizewinner of several international competitions, and a British Council scholar, she studied with Yfrah Neaman in London, Henryk Szeryng in Switzerland and Josef Gingold in the United States. She caused a sensation becoming the first ever woman-concertmaster in the history of the Metropolitan Opera, toured Europe, Japan and the United States with the MET Orchestra, and was heard on the MET's live weekly international radio broadcasts, television broadcasts, CDs and laser discs on the Sony, Deutsche Grammophon and EMI labels. As concertmaster of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra she has performed with many of the most prominent conductors of all time, including the legendary Carlos Kleiber. Appearing in concert halls and at festivals on five continents, she is well-versed in all kinds of genres, having performed opera at the MET, having shared the stage for symphonic and chamber concerts with giants of the music world such as James Levine, Janos Starker, Gary Karr and Pascal Rogé, as well as with tango and jazz luminaries such as Octavio Brunetti, Fernando Otero and David Amram, and, in collaboration and on CD with eminent Indian classical musicians - the superstars of the Sarod: Amjad Ali Khan and his sons Amaan and Ayaan Ali Khan. She has been concerto soloist with the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Moscow State Symphony Orchestra and numerous other orchestras in Europe and America. She has also appeared with the MET Chamber Ensemble at Carnegie Hall under James Levine. A documentary film about her was shown on European TV. She can be heard on a number of labels, including Deutsche Grammophon (as concertmaster of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra). She has recorded two 18th Century music CDs with double bassist Gary Karr, an all-Poulenc disc with pianist Pascal Rogé, the Brahms Horn Trio with New York Philharmonic principal horn Philip Myers, two Piazzolla CDs with the late tango master Octavio Brunetti, two highly-acclaimed Franco Alfano albums, and the world premiere of Vernon Duke's violin concerto (written for Heifetz 75 years ago) with the ORF Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra. One of her CDs (chamber

music by René de Castéra, released by the French label Azur Classical) was named a RECORD OF THE YEAR in 2015 by the prestigious British publication MusicWeb-International. Elmira Darvarova is Artistic Director of the New York Chamber Music Festival, and leader of the New York Piano Quartet, performs with the Delphinium Trio, the Quinteto del fuego, the Amram Ensemble, and in a duo with Fernando Otero. The STRAD Magazine has praised her “silky-smooth, voluptuous sound” and wrote of her “intoxicating tonal beauty and beguilingly sensuous phrasing”, while Gramophone Magazine hailed her “ultra-impassioned, vividly detailed performances”, and featured an interview with her regarding her world premiere recording of Vernon Duke’s violin concerto with the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra. More info at: www.elmiradarvarova.com

Son of tabla maestro Anindo Chatterjee, **Anubrata Chatterjee** was nurtured from day one to be a tabla player. Mr. Chatterjee made his international debut with a solo performance at the BBC World Radio in the United Kingdom. He has performed in some of the most prestigious festivals in countries including the United States, United Kingdom, Greece, Jordan, Egypt, Israel, Croatia, Indonesia, Germany, France, and the Netherlands. He has represented the Indian government at the Corfu Festival in Greece, the Jerash Festival in Jordan, and the Dubrovnik Festival in Croatia.

AMALGAM – A Few Observations by George Mathew

In 2015, sarod virtuosi Amaan Ali Khan and Ayaan Ali Khan joined forces with American violinist Elmira Darvarova to create a unique collaboration. The first fruit of this meeting was their recording SOUL STRINGS, a bridge across which their respective traditions were carried whole and uncompromised. These traditions, coming from Indian Classical and Western Art Music genres, are generously shared, each with its expressive and technical integrity intact, rather than squeezed into that oft-used and abused notion of “fusion”. What that first album suggested subtly about this daring, supercharged, yet profoundly respectful and even affectionate meeting of musical minds, is now brilliantly confirmed by their second CD *AMALGAM*. This new album includes the inimitable sound of the universally beloved and venerated elder statesman of Indian Classical Music today – the Khans’ father and guru, Amjad Ali Khan. This album, like its predecessor, comprises works composed by Amjad Ali Khan, drawing on the North and South Indian classical music idioms, alongside a single solo work created and performed by Elmira Darvarova, powerfully informed by the folk traditions of her own Bulgarian roots. *AMALGAM* features not only these new works, in their world premieres, but also explores new aesthetic and rhetorical terrain both in terms of the intimate level of phrase and note, as well as at the larger architectonic and structural aspects of the music.

Track 1. *Singing Angels* is like most of the other works on this album, composed by Amjad Ali Khan. This opening work, in a 16-beat meter, is cast in Raga *Charukeshi*, which comes from the South Indian Carnatic pantheon of ragas and is approximately equivalent to the Mixolydian mode with an additional lowered 6th step of the scale. As the introduction or *Alaap* opens, the sarod brings us the sound of intervals searching the void or the cosmos perhaps, for a melody that will coalesce out of the notes of the elusive raga. The violin then joins the search, stringing together triads of notes, hinting at the idea of a melodic proto-garland, a kind of embryonic *raga-mala* (scale-garland). She (the violin) then continues the exploration, ascending the stairs of expectation, which in this instance is a more public affair, when an octave higher. The sarod, responding with a much more explicit suggestion of melodic discernment and formation, goes the opposite direction down the stairs of emotion to a lower register, still searching. The violin emerges now with a feint at Bach-like melodic phrases, designed to sound multi-voiced in much the same way that Bach’s melodic sequences for solo string instruments are really compound melodies inlaid with counterpoint, even though there is only “one line” of music sounding at any moment. One might imagine the inchoate outlines of “angel” or “spirit voices” faintly perceptible at the edge of one’s hearing gradually becoming more and more prominent. These contrapuntal melodies are akin to the original searching of the sarod, albeit now with the added multi-dimensionality. The sarod wraps up the music of the *Alaap* and the violin responds with the strongest utterance yet. The sense of expectation, energy and tempo are intensified afresh by the sarod as it now ushers in the main body of the composition with a dulcimered introduction with energetic repeated notes, in much the same way that Monteverdi or Marenzio might have done in their agitated “*concitato*” style, four hundred years ago.

Track 2. *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, the drowsiness of bees who have had perhaps a bit too much nectar in the late afternoon, an atmosphere that leaves one in the same space as Mallarmé’s “*Afternoon of a Faun*.” The autumnal atmosphere of the *Alaap* gives way quickly as the main melody arrives in that familiar texture of repeated notes in the spirit of the dulcimer or cimbalom.

Track 3. *Serene Dawn* is a work in Raga *Lalit* in a 16-beat meter, composed by Amjad Ali Khan for solo sarod and tabla, here played as in the other works on the disc by tabla virtuoso Anubrata Chatterjee. *Lalit* is a morning raga and is characterized by the absence of the fifth degree of the scale or pa. The *Alaap* opens with the sarod lingering on the notes and intervals, again savoring and exploring the notes and intervals in search of the melodic shape that will coalesce into the strangeness of the raga with its unique flirtation with the raised and lowered 4th scale step (*ma*). The tabla launches the main body of the piece with hypnotic repetitions, reminding us once again of the deep resonances this music and the sarod have with the dulcimer as well as the lute families.

Track 5. *The Himachal Valley* - a work rendered by composer Amjad Ali Khan in Raga *Pahadi* in a 6-beat meter. This “Mountain Raga” is a pentatonic (five-note) raga, perhaps among the most primal and universal melodic utterances that human beings have developed literally in every musical civilization in the world. The piece has echoes of Himalayan folk music, especially the folk music of Himachal Pradesh, not entirely unexpected for a work in this raga. The quasi-staccato articulation that highlights the eloquence of the sarod speaks to the percussive qualities being emphasized even as the sarod looks upward as if towards the magnificent mountain peaks visible from the walking paths so common in the Himachal Valley. The sarod plunges deep into the body of the piece, frequently invoking the rustic sensibilities of a rural community with the plaintive sound of the open strings, a technique that is more universal than the average ear and eye might suppose.

Track 6. *Love Avalanche*. This composition by Amjad Ali Khan is set in Raga *Mishra Bhairavi*, in a 6-beat metric cycle. *Mishra Bhairavi* is one of the most popular of all ragas, beloved by artists ranging from the Carnatic Music tradition to the Kronos Quartet. The violin leads with a rising trend followed by the sarod. After a contrasting section characterized by syncopes, the sarod and violin merge into an ecstatic unison.

Track 7. *By the Moon*. The final track of this album, also composed by Amjad Ali Khan, is rendered in Raga *Behag*, a raga that is profoundly associated with the second quarter of the night, set to a 16-beat meter. The ascending version (*Aarohan*) of the Raga is again pentatonic, while the descending version (*Avarohan*) oscillates between various versions of the raised and normal fourth scale degree. The violin leads us into the *Alaap* with various versions of the rising raga, preparing the way for the sarod to embark on a fairly typical exploration of the intervals and pitches, waiting as it were, for the melodic edifice to reveal itself. Violin and sarod alternate in their efforts to reveal the tune until the violin tears the curtain away and the melody is revealed by the sarod, which revels in a chiaroscuro play of shadow and light in that first arrival. Sarod and violin embrace each other in a unison exposition of the main tune which is a mildly modified iteration of the raga. The sarod hints at a possible competitive *jugalbandi* but it is one where the sarod itself takes both competing parts. The violin re-enters and both partners now whirl their way into the distance in the light of that very moon that has shone its silvery brilliance over all human endeavor over the centuries and aeons.

Distant Dreams by Elmira Darvarova (based on traditional Bulgarian folk tunes) - Track 4
“Distant Dreams” is an homage to the beauty of the rich folkloric legacy of the country in which I was born - Bulgaria, a place overwhelmed with tragedy yet forever resilient. By reflecting on traditional folk tunes and rhythms, I wanted to interpret the sound and style of some ethnic instruments through the prism of my own modern and decidedly non-rustic violin. When my husband heard me perform this piece, he called it “heartbreakingly poignant”. Other colleagues said it was “spellbinding”. The melancholic longing of the opening melody carries its sadness into the faster dance-like episode, which unfolds with poetic grace and dignity. Honoring the intricate ancient traditions of a people that managed to preserve its cultural identity throughout centuries of foreign colonization, “Distant Dreams” is a brief reflection on some stylistic elements, meant to capture a reverie-like feeling, created by evoking the essence of a unique culture.

~ Elmira Darvarova

Amjad Ali Khan, Sarod
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Amalgam

1. Singing Angels 14:45

(Composed by Amjad Ali Khan, based on *Raga Charukeshi*)

Amjad Ali Khan - Sarod
Elmira Darvarova - Violin
Anubrata Chatterjee - Tabla

2. Sacred Evening 15:07

(Composed by Amjad Ali Khan, based on *Raga Yaman*)

Ayaan Ali Khan - Sarod
Elmira Darvarova - Violin
Anubrata Chatterjee - Tabla

3. Serene Dawn 6:20

(Composed by Amjad Ali Khan, based on *Raga Lalit*)

Amaan Ali Khan - Sarod
Anubrata Chatterjee - Tabla

4. Distant Dreams 5:20

(By Elmira Darvarova, based on traditional Bulgarian folk tunes)

Elmira Darvarova - Violin

5. The Himachal Valley 5:47

(Composed by Amjad Ali Khan, based on *Raga Pahadi*)

Amjad Ali Khan - Sarod
Anubrata Chatterjee - Tabla

6. Love Avalanche 3:46

(Composed by Amjad Ali Khan, based on
Raga Mishra Bhairavi)

Ayaan Ali Khan - Sarod
Elmira Darvarova - Violin
Anubrata Chatterjee - Tabla

7. By the Moon 12:31

(Composed by Amjad Ali Khan, based on *Raga Behag*)

Amaan Ali Khan - Sarod
Elmira Darvarova - Violin
Anubrata Chatterjee - Tabla

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