

SoNA

Continental Connections

Featuring Sandeep Das and members of the SoNA orchestra

Saturday, February 26, 2022 at Walton Arts Center

Featuring Sandeep Das and an ensemble of SoNA musicians, a repertoire of beautiful melodies, spontaneous improvisations, and powerful rhythms will be unveiled over the course of this unforgettable evening.



SoNA's guest artist, **Sandeep Das** is a master of the Tabla, one of the most iconic drums of North India. Described as a "creator of myths with Houdini-like skills" by Australia's *Sydney Morning Herald*, Das is a Grammy-winning musician, Guggenheim Foundation fellow, and prolific international musician whose performances have dazzled audiences across the globe for more than three decades. Drawing on the two great traditions of Indian Classical and Western Classical Music, the program will include a colorful collection of Das' original compositions which have headlined events like the BBC Proms, the 150th anniversary of the United Nations, tours by Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble, and multiple documentary films.

6:30PM pre-show Creative Conversations with guest artist and composer Sandeep Das and SoNA Music Director Paul Haas

7PM pre-show music by the Ra-Ve Cultural Foundation in Walton Arts Center's Walker Atrium – featuring Kartik Balachandran and Santhosh Ramaswamy –

7:30PM mainstage concert in Baum Walker Hall

Solo tabla performance by Sandeep Das

Tarang by Sandeep Das for Tabla and SoNA String Trio

– featuring Winona Fifield, Concertmaster; Jesse Collett, Principal Violist; and Jarrett Bastow, Principal Bassist –

Vaishnavi - The Invincible Woman by Sandeep Das for Tabla and Bass

– featuring Jarrett Bastow, Principal Bassist –

Srishti by Sandeep Das for Tabla and SoNA Percussionists

– featuring Fernando Valencia, Acting Principal Percussionist; and Amy Hearting, Percussionist –

SoNA

program notes

Tabla Solo: North Indian Classical Music is an ancient tradition that has been cultivated for over 4,000 years. A typical Tabla solo offers an awe-inspiring glimpse into the vast heritage of the Indian rhythmic traditions by masterfully winding through spontaneous improvisations, dancing through complex rhythm cycles called Taal, and unveiling a breathtaking collection of compositions that have been passed down from teacher to student for generations.

“**Tarang** [...] became a mainstay of this afternoon's BBC Prom at The Royal Albert Hall.”
—*The Independent* (U.K.)

Literally meaning “currents” in Hindi, *Tarang* is a journey through characteristic rhythms and melodies in Indian Classical music, which flow in waves as vast rhythm cycles, or *taal*. A combination of eastern drums and western strings, it tells a spellbinding story of human determination and tenacity.

Tarang was commissioned for the 36th annual Smithsonian Folklife Festival and has been performed at venues including The Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, Chicago Symphony Hall, and the 2004 BBC Proms at The Royal Albert Hall in the United Kingdom. It is also the theme music for *Blindsight*, a documentary about the first Mount Everest climb by six blind climbers.

Vaishnavi, The Invincible Woman (2018) was commissioned by the Smithsonian Museum of Asian Art and inspired by a ninth century statue of Queen Sembiyan Mahadevi as the Goddess Parvati on display at the museum galleries in Washington, D.C. She is the female aspect of the Hindu god Vishnu and represents the primordial cosmic energy, the invincible feminine creative force, and the complete embodiment of Vishnu’s power. The composition is currently featured in the museum’s audio tour.

The piece begins with an improvised *Aalap* representing Hindu god Shiva calling out to his consort Parvati to join him in a cosmic dance. Their union depicts the masculine energy as *Tandava*, the vigorous form of dance associated with the destruction necessary for creation to occur, and the feminine energy as *Lasya*, the gentle form of dance associated with the creation of the world.

Srishti is “a full-throttle explosion of percussive virtuosity, speed, and almost tribal call and response.” —Bachtrack

One day, during a residency of the Silk Road Ensemble at Rhode Island School of Design, Sandeep Das witnessed a workshop where students were asked to look at a statue of the god Nataraja and paint, on a blank canvas, their personal interpretation of the image. This deity is the cosmic dancer

SoNA

believed by Hindu legend to have created the universe with the sound of his drum, and his eternal dance is said to simultaneously renew and destroy the very fabric of reality.

A musical encapsulation of that experience, Das sought to create an empty rhythmic canvas on which his fellow percussionists of the Silk Road Ensemble could paint. *Srishti* seeks to evoke a sense of primordial awakening through its increasingly complex rhythmic framework – as the sound of drums becomes ever more present, rhythm cycles based on the 14-beat Taal Dhamaar, 12-beat Ektaal, and 8-beat Keherwa take form to fuel its chaotic energy and growing excitement.

Srishti has been performed for events like the 150th anniversary of the United Nations at the General Assembly Hall in New York City and has toured in more than 30 countries across six continents.

Thank you for attending our concert. For more information, please visit sonamusic.org