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World Music Series, Nirmala Rajasekar and Friends, October 25, 2017

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WORLD MUSIC SERIES

Nirmala Rajasekar and Friends
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Nirmala Rajasekar • veena and voice • lead performer
VVS Murari • violin
Thanjavur Muruga Boopathi • mridangam
KV Gopalakrishnan • khanjira

Wednesday • October 25, 2017
Harper Hall
8 p.m.

Program to be announced from stage
No intermission
Nirmala Rajasekar is a master veena artiste and vocalist. A dynamic and vibrant performer, she is one of the most recognized names in the world of Indian classical music today. She began training in this art from the age of 6 and began her career as a concert performer when she was 13.

Nirmala’s music is marked by a repertoire that reflects her adherence to the rich patanthra (lineage and heritage) of her gurus. Her several creative works explore the veena and the voice in the paradigm of world music. Many honors have been conferred on Nirmala and she has been recognized by many institutions around the world for her contributions to music and education. This includes best performance awards from top music organizations in India: The Music Academy, Narada Gana Sabha and Sri Krishna Gana Sabha, Madras and the Bangalore Gayana Samaja.

Nirmala has received the Bush Artistic Fellowship, the McKnight Performing Artist Fellowship and several other commissions and grants from the American Composers Forum, the Minnesota State Arts Board, the Jay Phillips Center for Inter-faith Learning, Meet the Composer New York among others. She has also been feted with several other awards including the Vocational Excellence Award from the Rotary Club International and a Lifetime Achievement award from the India Association of Minnesota. Nirmala is a top ranking artiste, a regular performer in radio and television around the world, including the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), All India Radio (AIR), Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and many radio networks in the United States. Her concerts have been featured in many countries in North America, Europe, Asia and Australia. She has performed in world-renowned venues including Carnegie Hall, United Nations Headquarters, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan–London, Musee Rietburg–Zurich and BBC–London. Her concert at the International Festival of Music in Konya, Turkey was the first veena concert in that country in 50 years. Her performances have been featured at several special events including playing for President of India Dr. Abdul Kalam and jazz great Ornette Coleman among other world luminaries. Before this fall tour in the United States, Nirmala completed successful tours in Australia, New Zealand and Singapore during 2017. She will perform in India at the winter music festival from December 2017–February 2018.

Nirmala has recorded extensively over the three decades of her career and has many albums from various record labels. She has showcased Carnatic music and performed in a collaborative setting playing and singing alongside other genres of music including western classical music and jazz. She has been featured as a special guest artist by the three-time Grammy award-winning group Sounds of Blackness on their album, which won Outstanding World Music Album of the Year 2012. Her newest album, Maithree the Music of Friendship, features collaborative music from many different genres and will be released worldwide by Innova Records in 2018.

Nirmala is a passionate educator and her unique approach to education in the realm of Indian classical music has brought the music to many people across the world. She holds advisory positions on the boards of many organizations in the United States and India. Nirmala is the artistic director at the Naadha Rasa Center for Music based in Plymouth, Minnesota. Her students, who live in many countries, are accomplished veena players and vocalists who have won awards and recognitions for their performances.

VVS Murari, a renowned violinist, violist, composer and educator was born to the illustrious violin maestro Prof. VVS. He comes from the great musical lineage of Sri. Muthuswami Dikshithar and Sri. Swathi Tirunal. He had his initial training from his grandfather, Vadakkencheri Veeraraghava Bhagavathar, and later on from his legendary father Shri. VVS. He also trained under the doyen Padma Vibushan Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer. Murari was also mentored by his mother, Janaki VVS, who hails from a family of talented connoisseurs of music and arts.

Murari has carved a niche for himself in the field of South Indian classical music. With a musical career that began at the age of 10 and now spans over three decades, Murari has been making waves in the field of Carnatic music through his aesthetic musical approach and remarkable violin technique. He conceptualizes and executes his style of playing in a way that stands as a pillar of support in each concert. Murari has had the privilege of sharing the stage with various legendary musicians and percussionists from an early age.

Murari is also known for his versatility, especially his ability to approach various genres with precision and ease. Apart from classical music, he has composed music for dance dramas, ballets, short films and fusion/modern music. He has worked on various projects with world class
musicians, music directors, choreographers and dancers and has been apart of many prestigious national and international festivals. He won the prestigious best violinist award from The Music Academy–Madras six continuous times.

His new concept, Carnatic Philharmonic Orchestra, Panchamukhi, brings together different genres and dimensions of music in a unique way.

Sri Murugaboopathi, a.k.a. Boopathi, is one of the world’s most celebrated mridangam players of today. His techniques and creative ability in accompaniment, solo renditions and jugalbandi programs with his North Indian brethren have earned him a critical acclaim around the world.

Murugaboopathi was born April 19, 1965 in Madras, India to a family of musicians and artistes from several generations. He had the unique honor of staying with his Guru, Tanjore Upendren, and learned the age old tradition of *gurukula*.

He had his initial training under Sri T R Srinivasan (Mridanga Vidwan and lecturer) at the Tamil Nadu Music College, Chennai. Sri Murugaboopathi was conferred the Vadya Visharada with distinction by the music college. After two years of stage experience, he underwent further training in the *gurukula* tradition under the late Mridangam Maestro, Tanjore Upendran, for over 10 years. His percussion career has been a colorful spectrum of accompaniment to a legion of reputable virtuosos in Carnatic vocal and instrumental music.

Prominent vocalists among them are Padma Vibhushan Sri M Balamuralikrishna, Padmabhushan Madurai Sri T N Seshagopalan, Padma Bhushan T V Sankaranarayanan, Sanjay Subramanyam, P Unnikrishnan, T M Krishna, Sudha Raghunathan, Aruna Sayeeram and Nithyashree Mahadevan. Renowned instrumentalists supported by Sri Murugaboopathi include the renowned and respected flautist Dr N Ramani, mandolin Sri U Srinivas, saxophonist Sri Kadri Gopalnath, violinist brothers Sri Ganesha and Sri Kumaresh, veena player Nirmala Rajasekar and flautist Sri Shashank.

He has collaborated with several Hindustani (North Indian) musicians on Jugalbandi concerts, including Ustad Sultan Khan, Ustad Shahid Parvez and Sri Gaurav Majumdar.

His concert performances outside of India have included PBS and the United Nations in the United States and the Royal Albert Hall in London.

He has the honor of being one of the first Carnatic musicians to be showcased on the international music scene in Turkey, accompanying veena artiste Smt. Nirmala Rajasekar in 2011.

KV Gopalakrishnan - Kanjira Artiste

‘KVG’, as he is popularly known, had his initial training from his father KVRS Mani. He is now under the guidance of percussion legend “Sangitha Kalanidhi,” Dr. TK Murthy.

He has shared the stage with many top stars and up-and-coming artists of today. KVG has also worked with famous cinema music directors Isai Gnyaani Ilayaraja & Vidyasagar.

He has received many titles and awards, the most recent being the *Bismillah Khan–Yuva Puraskar* from the Sangeet Natak Academy, government of India.

He has traveled widely around the world taking part in many international tours and music festivals.

KVG is also a very well accomplished Mridangam player and won the best mridangist award from the Music Academy for three consecutive years.
WORLD MUSIC SERIES 2017–18

Calan
Monday, Sept. 18, 2017, 8 p.m. | Stansbury Theatre, Music-Drama Center

Nirmala Rajasekar and Friends
Wednesday, Oct. 25, 2017, 8 p.m. | Harper Hall, Music-Drama Center

Goitse
Monday, February 26, 2018, 8 p.m. | Harper Hall, Music-Drama Center

Brasil Guitar Duo
Monday, April 9, 2018, 8 p.m. | Harper Hall, Music-Drama Center

Pedrito Martinez Group
Wednesday, April 18, 2018, 8 p.m. | Harper Hall, Music-Drama Center

Lawrence University Gamelan Concert
Sunday, May 20, 2018, 3 p.m. | Lawrence Memorial Chapel

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