

NEWSRELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ragaspirit – A Festival of Indian Music

Presented by Ektaa Center in association with UCLA

October 20th, 2012

Ektaa Center, in collaboration with **Mohinder Brar Sambhi Endowed Chair of Indian Music at the UCLA Department of Ethnomusicology** presents ‘**Ragaspirit 2012 – Festival of Indian Music**’ on **October 20, 2012**, at **UCLA’s Schoenberg Hall**. A daylong festival, it features the cream of musical talent from India that represent Hindustani (North Indian) and Carnatic (South Indian), the two broad classical musical genres from India. This is the very first attempt of its kind in Southern California that emulates the emblematic festival practiced and enjoyed in India in a multi-concert format with lecture-demonstrations. Gita Desai, producer/director of the critically acclaimed *Yoga and Raga* unveiled documentaries, will provide the artistic direction supported by Pandit Vijay Kichlu, an accomplished vocalist and a renowned musicologist from India, who has developed the program content that will appeal to connoisseurs and the uninitiated alike.

The primary objective of the festival is to provide an inimitable musical experience and education to the local audiences while also serving as a forum to establish greater multi-cultural understanding pursuant to the mission of the organization. This will be an all day event featuring

a symposium / lecture-demonstration in the morning and back to back live music concerts, both vocal as well as instrumental, in the afternoon through midnight . The morning session explores the unique genre of Thumris through the scholarly presentation of Pandit Vijay Kichlu ably supported by Shantanu Bhattacharya (vocal), Sanjukta Biswas (vocal) and Durba Bhattacharyya (Harmonium). Featured to represent Hindustani Vocal (North Indian) and Carnatic Music (South Indian) are the duo Rajan and Sajan Mishra and Aruna Sairam respectively. Instrumental music is showcased by Debashish Bhattacharya (Indian Slide Guitar), Kushal Das (Sitar) and Tejendra Mazumdar (Sarod). Accompanying these virtuosos is a lineup of world class percussionists, Samar Saha (tabla), Arup Chatterjee (tabla), Shubhankar Banerjee (tabla) and Patri Satish Kumar (mridangam) besides H.N. Bhaskar's (violin) masterful support for Carnatic music.

Gita Desai, born in East Africa, has always viewed traditional Indian culture and art in all its manifestations with the utmost reverence. While her first documentary, *Yoga Unveiled* explored the impact of yoga on mankind, her second documentary, *Raga Unveiled*, explores the essence of North Indian classical music, and the power of these traditions to liberate and transform mankind over the course of several thousand years to the present day. Both her documentaries have been screened all over the United States, Canada and India and have been aired on national television channels such as PBS.

Pandit Vijay Kichlu, a Master of Arts from the University of Allahbad, has a unique combination of executive ability and artistry. As the executive director of the revolutionary institution in the field of arts, Sangeet Research Academy, Vijay Kichlu is totally committed to classical music, its propagation and preservation. Although he did not take music as a profession, Vijay Kichlu has been recognized as a leading vocalist of the Agra gharana, having been trained under the tutelage of the Dagar Brothers and later Ustad Latafat Hussain Khan. An erudite musician and a very fluent speaker, Pandit Vijay Kichlu is well renown in musicology circles all over the world. His lecture-demonstrations and compact workshops are pleasantly enlightening for the listener and participant. He has been granted Honorary Citizenship of the State of Maryland and the City of Baltimore in appreciation of his efforts in promoting Indian Classical music in the USA.

“RagaSpirit 2012 is a vision not an event. It will be an ongoing effort to bring a confluence of understanding between academia, artistry and audiences and create connections within

communities using the powerful medium of music” - said **Harish Murthy, Executive Director of the Ektaa Center**. The Ektaa Center is the first center in Southern California dedicated to the arts and culture of India. Based in Irvine, the Center serves the southland community with classes, events and activities that promote an awareness and understanding of India’s diverse and rich artistic and cultural traditions. This production is a part of the “Timeless Traditions/Emerging Artists” showcase presented by the Ektaa Center. **For more details or information about the Ektaa Center call Harish Murthy at (949) 300-8912 or visit www.ektaacenter.org. For detailed schedule of events and ticket information please visit www.ragaspire.com.**

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