



The Annenberg Center Presents Zakir Hussain and Masters of Percussion in a Livestreamed Performance, Thursday, April 8

(Philadelphia – March 26, 2021) — The **Annenberg Center** presents a performance of **Zakir Hussain**, the “peerless master of the Indian tabla” (NPR), joined by **Pezhham Akhavass** (tombak and daf), **Marcus Gilmore** (drums) and **Abbos Kosimov** (doyra), in a lively showcase of vibrant Indian music. An international phenomenon and true virtuoso, Hussain performs meditative classical ragas and high-energy rhythmic drumming, mesmerizing audiences with his uncanny intuition and masterful improvisational dexterity. This is a live event, performed on the Annenberg Center stage and streamed online, and includes an interactive Q&A with the performers. Visit AnnenbergCenter.org for details.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Every other year since 1996, **Zakir Hussain** has served as curator, conductor and producer, bringing the very best of Indian music to America and Europe with his series, *Zakir Hussain and Masters of Percussion*. Growing out of his renowned international tabla duet tours with his father, the legendary Ustad Allarakha, *Masters of Percussion* began as a platform for both popular and rarely heard rhythm traditions from India. While performing and collaborating in India for a few months every year, Hussain has sought and unearthed lesser-known folk and classical traditions which feed into the greater stream of Indian music, playing an educational role in affording them greater visibility, as well as introducing them to audiences in the West. Over time, the constantly changing ensemble has expanded to include great drummers and percussionists from many world traditions, including jazz. The 2021 version is no exception, presenting American audiences with extraordinary, exciting and spontaneous combinations of percussive and melodic performances.

Hussain comments, “*Masters of Percussion 2021* features master drummers from Uzbekistan, Iran, India and the USA. **Abbos Kosimov** is a master of the Uzbek frame drum known as the *doyra*. **Pezhham Akhavass** is an acclaimed exponent of the *tombek* and the Iranian frame drum, *daf*. I represent the traditional rhythm repertoire of north India on *tabla* and **Marcus Gilmore** is the most talked about young jazz drummer of our time.”

“Indian, Uzbek and Iranian rhythm traditions have common routes; the technique and the repertoire of these three ancient traditions can be interchangeable. The above four genres could easily be recognized as cousins, with the salient unifying feature in all of them being improvisation. Every *Masters of Percussion* tour performance is a casting off into the unknown, but 2021 is exceptional in that regard. We will be operating in new musical territories—every moment of every night.”

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Zakir Hussain (Tabla)

The preeminent classical tabla virtuoso of our time, Zakir Hussain is appreciated both in the field of percussion and in the music world at large as an international phenomenon and one of the world’s most esteemed and influential musicians. The foremost disciple of his father, the legendary Ustad Allarakha, Hussain was a child prodigy who began his professional career at the age of 12, accompanying India’s greatest classical musicians

and dancers and touring internationally with great success by the age of 18. His brilliant accompaniment, solo performance and genre-defying collaborations, including his pioneering work to develop a dialogue between North and South Indian musicians, have elevated the status of his instrument both in India and globally. He has continued the work begun a generation earlier by his father and thereby brought the tabla into a new dimension of renown and appreciation.

Widely considered a chief architect of the contemporary world music movement, Hussain's contribution has been unique, with many historic and groundbreaking collaborations including Shakti, Remember Shakti, Masters of Percussion, Planet Drum and Global Drum Project with Mickey Hart, Tabla Beat Science, *Sangam* with Charles Lloyd and Eric Harland, Crosscurrents Trio with Dave Holland and Chris Potter, in trio with Béla Fleck and Edgar Meyer and in quartet with Herbie Hancock.

As a composer, he has scored music for numerous feature films, major events and productions. He has composed three concertos and his third, the first ever concerto for tabla and orchestra, premiered in India in September 2015 by the Symphony Orchestra of India, in Europe and the U.K. in 2016, and in the USA in April 2017 by the National Symphony Orchestra at the Kennedy Center. A Grammy® Award winner, Hussain is the recipient of countless awards and honors, including Padma Bhushan, Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, the USA's National Heritage Fellowship and Officier in France's Order of Arts and Letters. Voted Best Percussionist by both the *Downbeat* Critics' Poll and *Modern Drummer's* Reader's Poll over several years including 2020, Hussain was honored in 2018 by the Montréal Jazz Festival with their Antônio Carlos Jobim Award. In 2019, Hussain was named a Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellow and received two honorary doctorates, one from Berklee College of Music and the other from Indira Kala Sangit University in Khairagarh, India.

As an educator, Hussain conducts many workshops and lectures each year, has been in residence at Princeton University and Stanford University and, in 2015, was appointed Regents' Lecturer at the University of California, Berkeley. His yearly workshop in the San Francisco Bay area, conducted for the past 30 years, has become a widely anticipated event for performers and serious students of tabla. He is the founder and president of Moment Records, an independent record label presenting rare live recordings of Indian classical music and world music. Hussain was resident artistic director at SFJAZZ from 2013-2016 and was honored with its Lifetime Achievement Award in January 2017 in recognition of his "unparalleled contribution to the world of music."

Abbos Kosimov (Doyra)

Abbos Kosimov is recognized globally as a master of doyra and an ambassador of Uzbek culture. He was born in Tashkent, Uzbekistan to a highly musical family and studied at the College of Culture and Music and under doyra master Mamurjon Vahabov, graduating in 1984. He also trained from the age of 10 with Ustad Tuychi Inagomov, one of the few honored artists officially recognized by the Uzbek head of state. In 1991, Kosimov won second prize in Central Asia and Kazakhstan's Competition of Percussive Instruments.

He has recorded independently as well as with Stevie Wonder, Zakir Hussain and Masters of Percussion and for the soundtrack of the Alonzo King LINES Ballet's piece *Scheherazade*, which premiered in Monte Carlo in November 2009. In March 2010, Kosimov performed at Carnegie Hall with the Kronos Quartet. He has worked with Dohee Lee, Homayoun Sakhi and the Alim Qasimov Ensemble, Omar Sosa, Giovanni Hidalgo, Terry Bozzio, Swapan Chaudhuri, Steve Smith, the Hand Ensemble, Adam Rudolph and other leading musicians.

Marcus Gilmore (Drum Set)

Multi-Grammy® Award-winning drummer/composer Marcus Gilmore is one of the most gifted jazz prodigies on the scene today. The grandson of the master jazz drummer Roy Haynes, Gilmore graduated from Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts and subsequently received full scholarships to both The Juilliard School and Manhattan School of Music. In addition, Gilmore has embarked on studying and incorporating ideas and techniques from many folk rhythms of Africa and the diaspora, while cultivating an encyclopedic knowledge of the history of jazz, funk, gospel and soul drummers as well as the rhythmic sensibilities of contemporary producers in hip hop and electronic music. He has been touring since he was 16

and has performed with a large selection of the best and best-known contemporary jazz players, including Chick Corea, Pharoah Sanders, Savion Glover, Pat Metheny, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, Nicholas Payton, Steve Coleman, Vijay Iyer, Ambrose Akinmusire, Wadada Leo Smith, Cassandra Wilson, Bilal, Talib Kweli, Queen Latifah, Black Thought, Esperanza Spalding and Roy Hargrove. He pursues solo projects with his bands Actions Speak and Silhouwav.

Among his honors, Gilmore was introduced as one of the “25 for the Future” by *DownBeat* magazine in 2016. He won a Latin Grammy® Award for his work with Chick Corea and was also featured on the cover of the June 2019 issue of *Modern Drummer*. In 2020, he performed his first orchestral composition, *Pulse*, with members of the Cape Town Philharmonic as part of the 2018/2019 annual Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative for which Zakir Hussain was his mentor.

Besides his illustrious grandfather, Gilmore cites as major musical influences The Tony Williams Lifetime, Elvin Jones’ playing on Wayne Shorter’s album *Speak No Evil* and the work of free jazz drummer Milford Graves. Gilmore’s playing is unique, a melodic language of fine shadings and gradations, eliciting optimal tone and vibrations from his instrument.

Pezhham Akhavass (Tombak/Daf)

Pezhham Akhavass was born in Iran. He began his percussion studies at the age of five with Ostad Naser Farhangfar and soon after, with Saeid Roudbary. Akhavass developed a remarkable ability to grasp the technical aspects of the tombak and simultaneously bring a new approach to rhythm. This unique gift has made him one of the most distinguished musicians of his generation. After earning a bachelor’s degree in music from Sureh University in Tehran, he earned a second bachelor’s and a master’s from San Francisco State University. He has also studied tabla with Zakir Hussain.

From 2001 to 2007, Akhavass toured around the world with the renowned vocalist Shahram Nazeri at shows across Iran, Australia, the U.S. and Europe, including prestigious music festivals such as the Festival del Popolo in Italy, Théâtre de la Ville and Théâtre du Soleil in Paris, and the Fes World Festival of Sacred Music in Morocco. In 2008, he was a guest artist with Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble at the Hollywood Bowl. In 2010, he was the featured percussionist of the Masters of Persian Music tour across the U.S., and in the years since, he has continued touring and performing at major festivals including the Pan Asian Music Festival. Akhavass is also the Global Music Director for Iran of the San Francisco World Music Festival. The pandemic brought him an invitation from Stanford Live at the behest of Zakir Hussain to take part in *The Stitches That Bind Us*, which united him with Hussain and Abbas Kosimov.

About the Annenberg Center’s 2020-21 Digital Season

The Annenberg Center’s 2021 spring digital season comprises livestreamed performances featuring world premieres and Philadelphia debuts by top dance companies and outstanding jazz artists, collaborative music performances, and screenings of independent films. Designed specifically for the digital stage, the live performances are broadcast using state-of-the-art digital technology from the Prince or Zellerbach Theatre, integrating live chat, and concluding with interactive discussions with the creators and performers. Livestreamed performances are available online for 48 hours after the start time for those who purchased access. Full season calendar can be accessed [here](#).

About the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts

The Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts serves as a major cultural destination and crossroads connecting the University of Pennsylvania and the Greater Philadelphia region through innovative human expression in theatre, music, dance and film, serving an annual audience of over 80,000. The Annenberg Center also serves as a key resource for the arts at Penn, connecting master artists with Penn students in support of and as an enhancement to the arts curriculum. Student performing arts groups are also key users of the Annenberg Center’s multiple performance and rehearsal spaces, while also staffing many operational roles throughout the academic year. In reflection of Penn’s core values as a world-respected academic institution, the Annenberg

Center emphasizes artistic and intellectual excellence, diversity and rigor in its presentations; prioritizes broad inclusiveness in the artists, audiences and groups it serves; manages outstanding performance, conference and meeting facilities; and stresses comprehensive event planning, production support and customer service. The Annenberg Center is a major provider of performing arts access for school children and actively engages a broad range of primary, secondary and post-secondary student audiences and inclusive constituencies from the campus, community and surrounding region. Visit AnnenbergCenter.org.

LIVESTREAM

Zakir Hussain

Masters of Percussion
Thursday, April 8, 7 PM

Zakir Hussain, the “peerless master of the Indian tabla” (NPR), returns to the Annenberg Center stage, joined by Pezham Akhavan (tombak and daf), Marcus Gilmore (drums) and Abbos Kosimov (doyra), in a lively showcase of the vibrancy of Indian music. An international phenomenon and true virtuoso, Hussain performs meditative classical ragas and high-energy rhythmic drumming, mesmerizing audiences with his uncanny intuition and masterful improvisational dexterity.

This is an original, live event, performed on the Annenberg Center stage and streamed online, and includes an interactive Q&A with the performers.

Visit AnnenbergCenter.org for more information.

Access Information for Zakir Hussain

Visit AnnenbergCenter.org to purchase access to this show until 7:30 PM on April 8. The performance may be watched live at 7 PM on April 8 to participate in the chat and artist Q&A. It will be available on-demand to ticketholders through April 10. Visit the Annenberg Center’s digital streaming [FAQs](#) for additional details.

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