



CMA Performing Arts Series 2013-14



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DEPARTMENT OF PERFORMING ARTS, MUSIC, AND FILM

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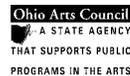
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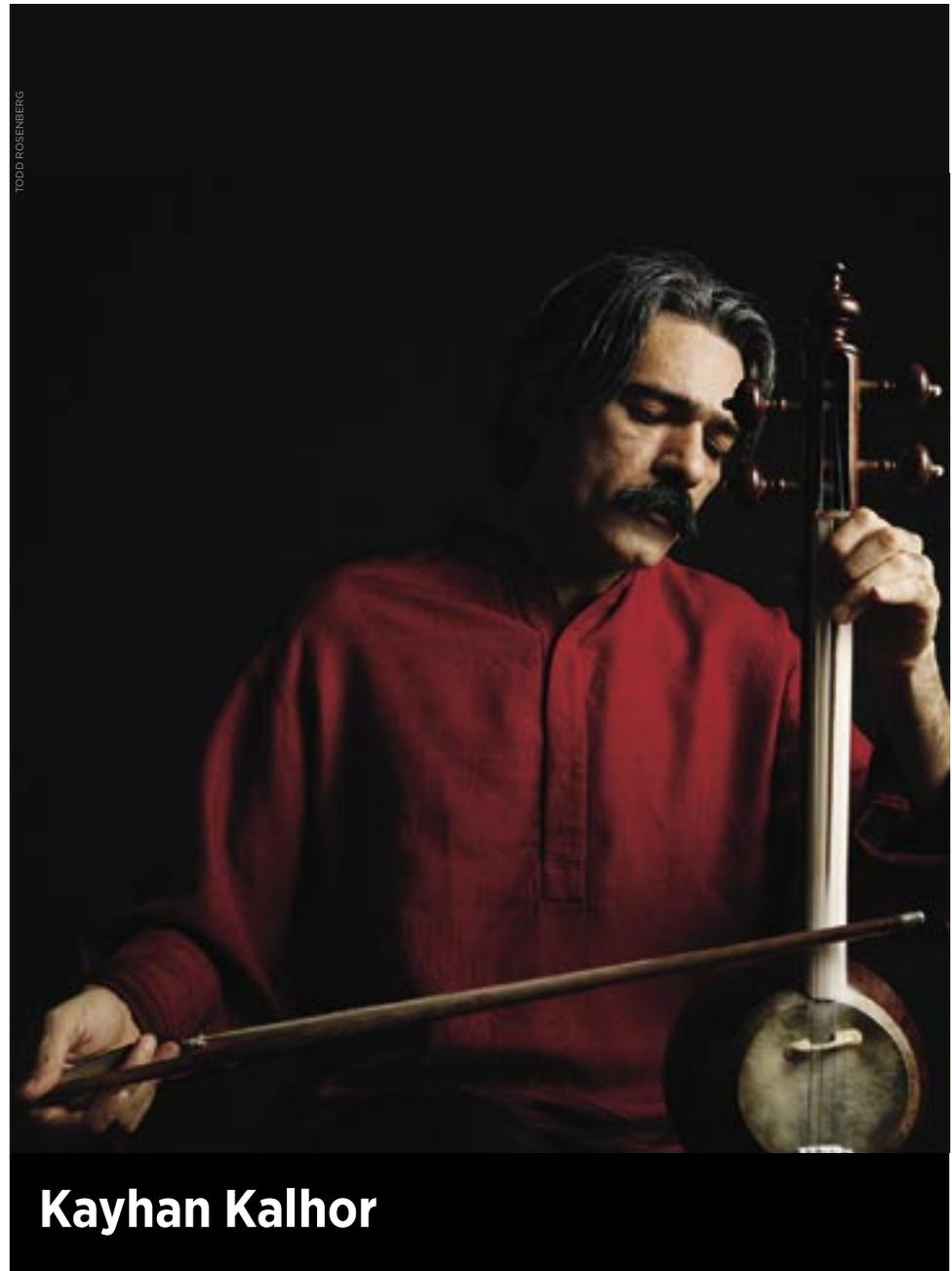
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Programs are subject to change.



Kayhan Kalhor

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Welcome to the Cleveland Museum of Art

The new season of concerts at the Cleveland Museum of Art showcases 18 outstanding performances from around the globe and the U.S. This year we focus on four themes: Masters of the Violin, Flamenco Festival, Asian Performances—Part One: Subcontinent of India, and Mother & Child.

Tonight our Masters of the Violin series focuses on another of the violin's relatives, the *kamancheh* (Persian spiked fiddle). Please join me in welcoming to Cleveland Kayhan Kalhor and Ali Bahrami Fard.

In December we turn to music from various eras inspired by spiritual imagery of the mother and child. First, a return engagement by the State Capella of Russia in the spectacular setting of the Ames Family Atrium. Then a free musical event showcasing the impressive Cleveland Orchestra Youth and Children's Choruses, Quire Cleveland, and Trinity Cathedral Choir with organist Todd Wilson.

I invite you to come early to look at works of art, dine at the restaurant or cafe and refresh yourself with great performances from around the world. There's much more to come. . . glance through the Performing Arts Series brochure available in the lobby and see if anything catches your imagination for an evening in the fabulous surroundings of the Cleveland Museum of Art.



Massoud Saidpour
Curator of Performing Arts and Music



Kayhan Kalhor *shah kaman* Ali Bahrami Fard *bass santour*

Wednesday, November 20, 2013 • 7:30 p.m.
Gartner Auditorium, The Cleveland Museum of Art

PROGRAM

“I Will Not Stand Alone”

Tonight's program is presented without intermission.

Following the performance, after a brief pause, join us in the auditorium for a conversation between Kayhan Kalhor and Massoud Saidpour, curator of performing arts and music.

For legal reasons and physical safety of the artists and for the comfort of the audience, cameras and other recording devices are not permitted in the auditorium during the performance.



NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

Persian Classical Music

From high mountain ranges to vast desert plains and fertile coastal areas, Iran is a land of contrasts. Iranians often explain the profound spirituality of their music and poetry as a response to this landscape as well as to the country's turbulent history, marked by successive invasions from the ancient Greeks onwards. Rooted in a rich and ancient heritage, this is a music of contemplation and meditation which is linked through the poetry to Sufism, the mystical branch of Islam whose members seek spiritual union with God. The aesthetic beauty of this refined and intensely personal music lies in the intricate nuances of the freely flowing solo melody lines, which are often compared with the elaborate designs found on Persian carpets and miniature paintings.

Developed at the royal courts of Iran over many hundreds of years, nobody really knows how old Persian classical music is. The sparse documentary record dates it back to the pre-Islamic era before the Arabic invasion of 642 AD and later medieval treatises written during the golden age of Middle Eastern scholarship mention names of pieces that are still performed today, but the extent to which the music has changed over time isn't clear.

Until the early twentieth century, Persian classical music was largely restricted to the royal courts, but with the declining influence of the monarchy following the 1906 Constitutional Revolution, this music found a new setting in small, informal gatherings at the homes of musicians and aristocratic supporters of the arts. Although still very much a private and elite affair, this marked the beginning of an increasingly public presence which gained momentum with the arrival of sound recording, broadcasting (Radio Tehran was established in 1939) and European-style public concerts (from the first decade of the twentieth century, but regularly from the 1930s onwards). By the 1960s, Persian classical music had become available to a wide audience, but at the same time the growing pace of modernization and westernization in Iran created a demand for all things western—including western music and western-style Iranian pop which seemed to be more in tune with people's increasingly



modernized lifestyle—and Persian classical music gradually became sidelined as a minority interest. Many fine classical musicians were performing and recording at this time, but in the context of a society which seemed little interested in its own culture, it is not surprising that many of these musicians became preoccupied with trying to preserve the musical tradition rather than exploring new ways of developing and enriching that tradition. The headlong rush into modernization and westernization reached crisis point in the late 1970s and eventually culminated in the Revolution of February 1979. One of the most interesting aspects of post-1979 Iran was a “return to roots” reawakening of national consciousness in which Persian classical music played a central role. Such was the popularity of this music that by the mid-1980s—and despite the many religious proscriptions against music-making and the long period of austerity during the Iran-Iraq war—Persian classical music had attracted a mass audience of unprecedented size, with many young people in particular learning the music.

Persian classical music has experienced significant changes over the last twenty years, partly through a new confidence among those musicians willing to explore new musical avenues. The music you will hear tonight is deeply rooted and imbued with a sense of tradition and continuity, but at the same time they speak with a contemporary voice.

The Musical Tradition

Creative performance lies at the heart of Persian classical music. The importance of creativity in this music is often expressed through the image of the nightingale (*bol bol*). According to popular belief the nightingale possesses the most beautiful voice on earth and is also said never to repeat itself in song. A bird of great symbolic power throughout the Middle East, the nightingale represents the ultimate symbol of musical creativity. To the extent that Persian classical music lives through the more or less spontaneous re-creation of the traditional repertoire in performance, the music is often described as improvised. The musicians themselves talk freely of improvisation, or *bedaheh navazi* (lit. “spontaneous playing”), a term borrowed from the realm of oral poetry and which has been applied to Persian



classical music since the early years of the twentieth century. Musicians are also aware of the concept of improvisation in styles of music outside Iran, particularly in jazz and Indian classical music. But as in so many other “improvised” traditions, the performance of Persian classical music is far from “free”—it is in fact firmly grounded in a lengthy and rigorous training which involves the precise memorization of a canonic repertoire known as *radif* (lit. “order”) and which is the basis for all creativity in Persian classical music.

Like other Middle Eastern traditions, Persian classical music is based on the exploration of short modal pieces: in Iran these are known as *gushehs* and there are 200 or so *gushehs* in the complete *radif*. These *gushehs* are grouped according to mode into twelve modal “systems” called *dastgah*. A *dastgah* essentially comprises a progression of modally-related *gushehs* in a manner somewhat similar to the progression of pieces in a Baroque suite. Each *gusheh* has its own name and its own unique mode (but is related to other *gushehs* in the same *dastgah*) as well as characteristic motifs. The number of *gushehs* in a *dastgah* varies from as few as five in a relatively short *dastgah* such as *Dashti*, to as many as forty-four or more in a *dastgah* such as *Mahur*. The training of a classical musician essentially involves memorizing the complete repertoire of the *radif*. Only when the entire repertoire has been memorized—*gusheh* by *gusheh*, *dastgah* by *dastgah*—a process which takes many years, are musicians considered ready to embark on creative digressions, eventually leading to improvisation itself. So the *radif* is not performed as such, but represents the starting point for creative performance and composition.

There is very little documentary information before the middle of the nineteenth century, so the history of the *radif* is quite speculative. The evidence suggests that for many generations each *ostad* (master teacher) would have developed his own individual repertoire of pieces based on a broad tradition shared with other musicians. These versions of the traditional repertoire were passed down orally from one generation to the next, each generation developing its own variants. Around the middle of the nineteenth century, there were moves to standardize the repertoire, and Ali Akbar Farahani (1810–1855), master of *tar* (plucked lute) at the court of the Qajar



monarch Nasser-e Din Shah (r.1848–1896) in Tehran, is credited with organizing the diverse materials of the traditional repertoire into a coherent structure in which modally-related pieces (the *gushehs*) were grouped together into the twelve *dastgahs*. It was also around this time that this repertoire acquired the name “*radif*.” Farahani’s work was completed after his death by his son, Mirza Abdollah (1843–1918), and this particular version of the repertoire came to be known as *radif-e Mirza Abdollah* (“Mirza Abdollah’s *radif*”). A proficient performer, Mirza Abdollah was also active as a teacher, and was more aware than most musicians of his day of the importance of transmitting the repertoire to the next generation. Many of his numerous pupils became prominent musicians and they, in turn, taught this *radif* to their own pupils. There are, in fact, a number of different *radifs* in existence today (including interesting regional variations), mostly rooted in a shared tradition and each one usually associated with the particular master who developed it. Indeed, students of Persian classical music are often expected to learn a number of *radifs* of different schools (*mektabs*) of with a series of teachers in order to consolidate their musical knowledge. At the same time, in the course of the last century, Mirza Abdollah’s *radif* (as developed and transmitted, and later recorded and published by his pupils and grandpupils) attained authoritative status, particularly in the version taught to many contemporary musicians by Ostad Nur Ali Borumand at the University of Tehran in the 1960s and 70s.

A performance of Persian classical music is usually based in one of the twelve *dastgah* (although there is a technique known as *morakkab navazi* by which musicians can move between different *dastgah* using shared *gushehs* as “bridges”). The musician (or musicians in the case of a group performance) selects a number of *gushehs* from the learned repertoire of the chosen *dastgah*, and presents these in turn, using each one as the basis for improvised performance. This progression of *gushehs* takes the music gradually away from the opening “home” mode of the *dastgah*, through a series of increasingly more distant modes and usually tracing a rise in pitch until the music reaches a climactic point (*owj*) towards the end of the *dastgah*. This is followed by a release in the final cadential section known as *forud* (lit. “descent”) which returns the music to the home mode of the *dastgah* to end the performance. The resulting arch-like



shape of the complete dastgah provides the music with much of its dynamic energy. The length of a performance can vary a great deal depending on the context, the number of gushehs selected by the musician and the extent of the musician's improvisations, but most performances nowadays are between thirty minutes and an hour long.

The complex detail of the solo melody line is of utmost importance in Persian classical music—there is no harmony as such and only an occasional light drone (in contrast with the constant underlying drone in Indian classical music). As such, Persian classical music was traditionally performed by a solo singer and a single instrumental accompanist—in which case the instrument would shadow the voice and play short passages between the phrases of poetry—or by an instrumentalist on their own. In the course of the last century it became increasingly common for musicians to perform in larger groups, usually comprising a singer and four or five instrumentalists (each playing a different classical instrument). Nowadays one can hear both solo and group performances. The latter often follow a formula by which a performance begins and ends with an ensemble piece (with or without the vocalist) which are generally pre-composed (and often notated) rather than improvised and which frame the largely improvised and unmeasured central part of the performance. In this section, known as *avaz* (lit. “song”), it is still common practice for instruments to take it in turns to accompany the singer rather than play together.

The Poetry

Poetry has played a central role in Iranian culture for centuries. At times when Persian language and identity were under assault, it was poetry in particular which kept the essence of the culture alive. Such a time, still remembered as one of the darkest periods of Iranian history, was the Mongol invasion of the 13th century through which the sufi poet Mowlavi (also known as Jalal-e Din Rumi, 1207–1273) lived. The fact that such a period produced some of the finest poetry in the Persian language is a testament to the passion with which the culture was maintained against the odds. Moreover, it was through the poetry, particularly that of Mowlavi, that the message of mysti-



cal sufism found its most potent voice. With religious proscriptions against music, dance, and representational art at various times over the past few centuries, the creative energies of the artistically-minded have often found an outlet through poetic expression. It will be no surprise then, to find that an art form so imbued with history and which addresses some of the most fundamental and eternal philosophical issues of human existence, should play such an important role in the lives of Iranians today. Poetry is also central to Persian classical music—it's still unusual to hear a performance without a singer—and vocal sections are usually set to the poetry of medieval mystic poets such as Baba Taher (11th Century A.D.), Sheikh Attar (12th Century A.D.), Mowlavi and Hafez (1325–1389) and, less often, to the words of classical contemporary poets.

The Kamancheh (spike fiddle)

This ancient stringed instrument of Iran is the ancestor of most modern bowed instruments. It has a small, hollowed body made of walnut or mulberry wood covered by a thin, stretched skin and has a conical neck which is played vertically. The contemporary kamancheh has four strings, generally tuned in fourths or fifths.

—Notes by Laudan Nooshin

ALBUM LINER NOTES

“I Will Not Stand Alone”

About The Album

“During the early period of unrest in my country, I felt very isolated. This was one of the most difficult stages in my life, where darkness and violence seemed to be taking over. Closing in allowed me the time to rethink music: not technically, as my work has followed a certain path, but this period allowed me to see the importance of music and how it can open doors of hope. It took me a while to understand this, and the events I witnessed crystallized many things for me. I chose to be with the people and play music for them, feeling more connected than ever before.



This album is the product of that dark period. The process of making this music and letting it be heard allowed me to realize that I will not stand alone.”

–Kayhan Kalhor

Creating the Shah Kaman

The *shah kaman* has a lineage stemming from two different sources. Its physical form owes much to the traditional *kamanchehs* of Persia and Azerbaijan, but the way it makes its sound comes from the *tarhu* (a new form of spike fiddle that I created in 1995).

I first came across the kamancheh in miniature paintings from the Middle East and Central Asia, and there was an elegance in its form that I found extremely attractive. The first bowed instrument I made was a kamancheh with an almost traditional design, except that it had sympathetic strings in a channel down the middle of the neck.

From 1980 onwards, I experimented with the kamancheh and various other forms of spike fiddle from the East, especially the Turkish *tanbur* and the Chinese *erhu*. These instruments all used a skin top, and I was drawn to the type of sound that came from such a lightweight sounding board. There were other aspects of skin tops that I didn’t like—because of its flexibility, skin is not good at producing low notes. By 1994, I gave up trying to get the sound I wanted from a skin top, and changed to using a wooden cone instead—this weighed the same as a skin top, but was much more rigid. Using this concept I created the new instrument that I called *tarhu*, combining the words *tanbur* and *erhu*.

In 1995, I heard a recording of the great Azerbaijani kamancheh player Habil Aliyev, which proved to be very significant for me. I listened to this recording hundreds of times over the next few years and finally, in 2001, I made a kamancheh version of the *tarhu*. The overall design drew heavily on traditional kamancheh but inside it was pure *tarhu*, with a lightweight wooden cone suspended within the body.



In 2002, I met Kayhan Kalhor when he and I were both performing at the *Knee Fiddle Magic* festival in Rudolstadt, Germany. Kayhan liked the sound of the *tarhu*, but wanted to explore an instrument with sympathetic strings. I had already done extensive work in this field, so we decided to work together on developing a *kamancheh tarhu* with five playing strings and seven sympathetic strings.

The first version was sent to Kayhan in 2003—some aspects of this instrument were good, but the sound needed further development. An opportunity to do this came up in 2004 when, with the help of Ross Daly, I was able to spend three weeks on Crete working with Habil Aliyev on the sound of the kamancheh *tarhu*. This was a wonderfully creative period, and there was a huge leap forward.

Kayhan and I collaborated further over the next few years as I continued to develop the new form of kamancheh *tarhu* for him, which he eventually received in 2008. When Kayhan suggested that this form of instrument should be called *shah kaman*, it seemed to me that after a long journey we had reached a significant milestone.

–Peter Biffin

Bass Santour

The *santour* is a wooden, hammered dulcimer with seventy-two strings arranged on adjustable tuning pegs in eighteen quadruple sets. The instrument is played using lightweight wooden plectrums or *mezrab*, which are often covered by a piece of felt or cotton to soften the sound. A percussive instrument, its strings are tapped using wrist movement, with the dynamics controlled by the stroke. The santour is tuned diatonically according to the desired mode.

For this recording, Ali Bahrami Fard performs on a modern interpretation of the traditional instrument with ninety-six strings and twenty-four bridges, twelve on each side, with four strings falling on each bridge and tuned to the same note. It is also larger and sounds an octave lower than a regular santour.



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Kayhan Kalhor (shah kaman)

Kayhan Kalhor is an internationally acclaimed virtuoso on the *kamancheh* (Persian spiked fiddle). His performances of traditional Persian music and his many unique collaborations have attracted audiences around the globe. Born in Tehran, Iran, he began his musical studies at the age of seven. At thirteen, he was invited to work with the National Orchestra of Radio and Television of Iran, where he performed for five years. When he was seventeen he began working with the Shayda Ensemble of the Chavosh Cultural Center, the most prestigious arts organization in Iran at the time. He has traveled extensively throughout Iran, studying the music of its many regions, in particular those of Khorasan and Kordestan.

Kayhan is considered one of Iran's most creative and innovative artists and an important ambassador for Persian culture, introducing a wide range of its music to audiences worldwide. He is credited with revitalizing the kamancheh—deepening and developing its technique and vastly pushing its sound—which was rarely heard and largely ignored, overshadowed by the violin.

He is co-founder of the renowned ensembles Dastan, Ghazal: Persian & Indian Improvisations, and Masters of Persian Music. Kayhan has composed works for Iran's most renowned vocalists Mohammad Reza Shajarian and Shahram Nazeri, has performed and recorded with Iran's greatest instrumentalists and has composed music for television and film including Francis Ford Coppola's *Youth Without Youth* in a score that he collaborated on with Osvaldo Golijov. His commission for the Cologne Philharmonie ("Three Poets") was premiered in October 2009 and his new composition for the Dresden Sinfoniker ("Cinema Jenin: A Symphony") was premiered in October 2011.

Kayhan has performed as soloist, with his many ensembles, and as special guest at the world's greatest concert halls, festivals and events. He is an original member of Yo-Yo Ma's *Silk Road Project* and his compositions appear on all of the Ensemble's albums. He has recorded more than a dozen albums, four of which were nominated for a Grammy® Award.



The album "I Will Not Stand Alone" marks the first time on a recording Kayhan is playing his new instrument, the *shah kaman*—a new kamancheh created by Australian instrument-maker Peter Biffin and designed especially for Kayhan.

Ali Bahrami Fard (bass santour)

Ali Bahrami Fard, born in Shiraz, studied *santour* with Mrs. Arfa Atra'i and the legendary master Ostad Faramarz Payvar. With his impeccable technique and exquisite sound quality, Ali is one of his generation's most gifted and masterful santour players. He is a co-founder of the ensemble Santour Navazan (a quintet of five santour-players), and he has toured with the Kayhan Kalhor Ensemble, Baran Ensemble, Iran Zamin Ensemble, the chamber music ensemble of the Iranian Conservatory of Music, and as a soloist with the Strad Kiev Symphonic Orchestra. He has composed music for theater, film, and television including the music for the prize winning theater piece "Among The Clouds" in Brussels. He has written books and essays on Iranian music, including *Feragh*, a collection of compositions written for two santours and *Goshayesh*, for a plucked and hammered string ensemble, and he has organized numerous festivals and concerts. He teaches santour, music theory and composition at Shiraz University.

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For tour dates, information, and to join Kayhan's mailing list, please visit www.kayhankalhor.com

CREDITS

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UPCOMING PERFORMANCES AND EVENTS

Music in the Galleries

Wednesday, December 4, 6:00 p.m.

Our 2013–14 season of “first Wednesday” gallery concerts continues with an hour-long performance by musicians from the Cleveland Institute of Music. Free.

State Capella of Russia

Wednesday, December 4, 9:00 p.m. – Ames Family Atrium

“What a choir! Beautiful, noble, ideally balanced sounding, diversity of timbres, flawless clear intoning. We can only dream about such a choir”—*Le Monde de la Musique*

The fifty-member mixed choir, under the direction of Valery Polyansky, returns to the CMA Performing Arts Series in the magical setting of the atrium with a program of Orthodox music, carols, Russian folksongs, and more. \$33–\$51

Pre-concert talk by David J. Rothenberg, associate professor of music at CWRU, who will discuss Marian music and ties to the museum’s collection at 7:30 p.m.

Mother and Child

Saturday, December 14, 2:00 p.m.

Museum galleries, Ames Family Atrium and Gartner Auditorium

This themed choral event focuses on music inspired by holy imagery of the Virgin and Child in the museum’s collection of medieval art. The program progresses through the museum and features performances by Quire Cleveland, the Cleveland Orchestra Youth and Children’s Choruses, and Trinity Cathedral Choir with organist Todd Wilson. Seating is limited in the galleries. Free.

Pre-concert talk on Virgin and Child imagery by Stephen Fliegel, curator of medieval art, at 1:00 p.m. in the Recital Hall.

CMA Performing Arts Series

Visit ClevelandArt.org/PerformingArts for more information about performances, including audio/video samples and program notes.

MASTERS OF THE VIOLIN

L. Subramaniam

Friday, October 4, 7:30

O’Connor String Quartet

Wednesday, October 30, 7:30

Jordi Savall and Hespèrion XXI

Friday, November 1, 7:30

Masters of the Fiddle: Natalie MacMaster and Donnell Leahy

Friday, November 15, 7:30

Kayhan Kalhor

Wednesday, November 20, 7:30

Gil Shaham, Solo Violin

Thursday, February 6, 7:30

Ray Chen and Julio Elizalde

Wednesday, February 12, 7:30

Riccardo Minasi and Musica Antiqua Roma

Wednesday, February 19, 7:30

Midori

Saturday, April 12, 7:30

Roby Lakatos

Friday, May 2, 7:30

FLAMENCO FESTIVAL

Ballet Flamenco

Eva Yerbabuena

Wednesday, March 5, 7:30

Estrella Morente

Wednesday, March 12, 7:30

Tomatito

Friday, March 14, 7:30

ASIAN PERFORMANCES PART 1: SUBCONTINENT OF INDIA

L. Subramaniam

Friday, October 4, 7:30

Sufi Devotional Music: Asif Ali Khan

Wednesday, March 19, 7:30

Nrityagram Dance Ensemble

Friday, April 11, 7:30

Mother and Child: Sujatha Srinivasan

Sunday, May 11, 2:00

MOTHER AND CHILD

State Symphony Capella of Russia

IN THE ATRIUM

Wednesday, December 4, 9:00

Mother and Child

Saturday, December 14, 2:00

Mother and Child: Sujatha Srinivasan

Sunday, May 11, 2:00