



LIVE IN ASPEN

SHARON ISBIN AMJAD ALI KHAN
AMAAN ALI BANGASH AYAAN ALI BANGASH



1. CAPRICHO ÁRABE – FRANCISCO TÁRREGA 5:34
2. SACRED EVENING – ALAP YAMAN 8:05
3. SACRED EVENING – RAGA YAMAN 8:16
4. BY THE MOON – ALAP BEHAG 5:37
5. BY THE MOON – RAGA BEHAG 7:19
6. RAGA GANESH KALYAN 7:40
7. RAGA BAHAR 2:06
8. RAGA BHATYALI – FOLK MUSIC OF BENGAL 3:23
9. ROMANCING EARTH – ALAP PILU 8:15
10. ROMANCING EARTH – RAGA PILU 7:31

Music by Amjad Ali Khan (2-7, 9,10)
and Amjad Ali Khan and Rabindranath Tagore (8).

Sharon Isbin guitar (1-5, 9,10)
Amjad Ali Khan sarod (6-10)
Amaan Ali Bangash sarod (4, 5, 9,10)
Ayaan Ali Bangash sarod (2, 3, 9,10)
Amit Kavthekar tabla (2-10)

Through this collaboration, recorded live at the 2022 Aspen Music Festival, we strive to preserve the essence of Indian and Western traditions so they can flow into each other without artistic compromise. This blissful dream of a project is infused with the unique contributions of my work with multiple GRAMMY-winning guitarist Sharon Isbin, my beloved sons Amaan and Ayaan Ali Bangash, and Amit Kavthekar. We are united, regardless of our diverse backgrounds, cultures, traditions, generations, genders, religions, upbringing, and career paths.

Amjad Ali Khan



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The Aspen Music Festival, one of North America's largest and most beloved summer classical festivals, celebrates its 75th anniversary in 2024. My cherished collaborators, India's great sarod master **Amjad Ali Khan**, his brilliant sons **Amaan Ali Bangash** and **Ayaan Ali Bangash**, tabla virtuoso **Amit Kavthekar** and I are honored to share in this historic milestone with **LIVE IN ASPEN**, our sold-out concert performed at the festival in August 2022. The program was inspired by our album *STRINGS FOR PEACE* recorded in 2019 following a tour in India and released by ZOH0 in 2020. We have been performing together ever since!

We had not thought of making another album in summer 2022. We simply wanted to play our hearts out for the exuberant Aspen audience eager to hear a sarod (actually three!) for the first time, and celebrate my 30th consecutive summer performance at the festival where I also direct the guitar department. When we listened to engineer **Wes Lanich's** masterful recording, however, we were moved by the energy, excitement, joy, spontaneity and love generated that night - to which Ayaan exclaimed, "this is an album!" With the festival's blessing, engineer **Sai Shraavanam** mixed and mastered *LIVE IN ASPEN* in India, presenting us with this treasure.

To open the program, I perform a solo by celebrated 19th-century Spanish guitarist Francisco Tárrega, his lilting serenade **Capricho árabe** rich in Moorish influences. Spanish composers often found inspiration in flamenco tradition, an art form believed to have evolved in Andalucía with influences from the Romani who migrated from India hundreds of years ago. Indeed, one can hear elements of Indian classical music in flamenco's melismatic cante jondo (deep song), as well as in rhythms and gestures by composers like Tárrega, Albeniz, Granados and Falla.

In **Sacred Evening**, Ayaan Ali Bangash joins me in the first of three works composed by Amjad Ali Khan for guitar, sarod and tabla and arranged by Kyle Paul. The music is based on **Raga Yaman**, a night raga, romantic in nature and evocative of the beauty of sunset and evening. Maestro Khan, who represents the sixth generation in his family of sarod virtuosos, writes that "Raga is like a living entity. A scale alone is not a Raga but is more of a supporting structure...a Raga has to be invoked!"

An introductory alap invites the sarod and guitar to explore an intimate spirituality with contemplative improvisations and spirited dialogue. When the fast section begins, fueled by Amit Kavthekar's energetic tabla, a new track delineates its arrival. Virtuoso exchanges between guitar and sarod build at the end to an exhilarating climax.

In **By the Moon**, Amaan Ali Bangash takes the stage to join me in a **Raga Behag** associated with the second quarter of the night and set to a 16-beat meter. The ascending version is pentatonic, while the descending alternates between various raised and normal fourths of the scale. Following the alap, the tabla enters, inviting a virtuosic duo with guitar and energetic improvisatory exchanges with sarod that culminate in a fiery conclusion.

Maestro Khan's solo set opens with his **Raga Ganesh Kalyan**, a work first performed in 1992 at the yearly Ganesh Festival. **Raga Bahar** which follows presents a Tarana inspired by Indian classical vocal music. He writes that the form was "developed in the 13th Century by Amir Khusrau, representing a move away from song-text into the realm of instrumental music, with melodic and rhythmic expression unfettered by literal language." In **Raga Bhatyali**, folk music of Bengal, "we hear a famous song composed in 1905 by Nobel Prize laureate Rabindranath Tagore. The text exhorts the listener to continue their journey, despite being abandoned by others. Mahatma Gandhi was deeply influenced by this song, citing it as one of his favorites."

In the final work, we all take the stage for **Romancing Earth**. Based on **Raga Pilu** associated with monsoon season, it unfolds with a peaceful character that alternates yearning and melancholy with joy, devotion and love. Its folk song origins inspire expressive freedom and extensive dialogue between the instruments, leading to a thrilling finale.

Sharon Isbin

With special thanks to the Aspen Music Festival!