

## **Stockholm Sangeet Festival**

6 November  
Stockholm

### **Remarks by Ambassador Tanmaya Lal**

Namaskar,

Many congratulations to the organisers of Stockholm Sangeet Festival.

I was here last May when the Festival marked its remarkable 15 years journey.

It is great to see such enthusiasm for Indian classical music and dance here in Sweden.

Today, of course, is a very special evening as we eagerly await a legend amongst us here.

Music has been part of human story since millennia.

Despite the wide range of music traditions around the world, it transcends cultures, languages and borders.

In the Indian tradition, Lord Shiva as Nataraja is visualised as holding Damaru, a small percussion instrument, whose sound symbolises the primordial sound that created the universe.

A deep meditative and spiritual quality defines the Indian classical music.

This has been handed down over generations through a strong oral tradition but has also continued to evolve absorbing many influences along the way.

Ustad Zakir Hussain Saheb is among the very few who have reached the pinnacle of their art and creative excellence.

We are fortunate to have him with us today.

His immense contribution to music has been celebrated through a number of prestigious awards both in India and elsewhere, for instance the Grammys for Best Contemporary World Music.

This year's Kyoto Prize describes him as a '*Highly Innovative and Creative Artist who Opened up the New Musical Possibilities of the Tabla*' and that he has '*tremendously influenced genre-bending musicians in India and around the world*'.

He has collaborated not only with some of the other great Indian maestros but also music legends from across the world from many different genres, for instance Dave Holland and Herbie Hancock in recent years.

The Shakti group that came together fifty years ago with outstanding Indian musicians including of Carnatic tradition and John McLaughlin, was one such ground-breaking collaboration that has continued to produce iconic works.

Ustad Zakir Hussain has composed music for several films and other productions. One such movie was The Heat and Dust where he also acted !Recently he composed the background score for the film Manto.

He was the resident artistic director at SFJazz for a number of years.

Zakir Hussain Saheb is the son and disciple of the legendary Ustad Alla Rakha. He continues to give lectures and hold workshops.

Niladri Kumar is another serious exponent of Indian music. He comes from a lineage of Sitar players and is known for a wide range of important works. A child prodigy, he is a Sitar maestro and a highly creative artiste.

I will not take much of your time as all of us are here to listen to Ustad Zakir Hussain and Niladri Kumar.

I thank the organisers for making this possible. Thank you.