

Jagar Samrat, and Uttarakhand Vibhuti. He has also become one of the leading ambassadors of folk music from the Garhwal Himalayas, taking his music and dynamic teaching style to Oman, United Arab Emirates, Germany, and various parts of the United States.

*James Feist* joined the CCM faculty as a tabla instructor in 2011. Jim has been studying tabla since 1990 and has been fortunate enough to learn in India from Ustad Allah Rakha and Pandit Yogesh Samsi. In 2006 he was awarded the American Institute of Indian Studies "Senior Performing Artist" grant to continue his study in India. He has recorded and performed in a wide spectrum of styles and with a wide range of artists, including the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Fareed Haque, Lakshmi Shankar, Kankana Banerjee, Mohenjo Daro, and Aradhna. As a composer his music can be heard on The National Geographic Channel, The Travel Channel, and Hugh Jackman's runaway Australian hit "Aussie Goes Bollywood." He has also published in the Percussive Arts Society monthly magazine, *Percussive Notes*. Jim's ability to communicate to students the many facets of the art of tabla in nuanced detail is a direct result of sitting at his guru's feet for many years.

*Stefan Fiol* joined the CCM faculty as an assistant professor of ethnomusicology in 2010. His area of specialization is the music of the Uttarakhand Himalayas, and he directs the Himalayan student ensemble that is featured in tonight's concert. Stefan received his Ph.D. from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign after conducting several years of ethnomusicological research in India, and shorter fieldwork projects in Zimbabwe, Chile, and Paraguay. His research has been funded by fellowships from Fulbright Hays, the Wenner Gren Foundation, and the American Institute of Indian Studies. Stefan is a visiting scholar in the South Asia program at Cornell University, and he has previously taught at the University of Illinois (2002-04), the University of Notre Dame (2005-06) and the Eastman School of Music (2008-10). His academic publications appear in *Ethnomusicology*, *Asian Music*, *Ethnomusicology Forum*, and the *Journal of Asian Studies*.

The *Himalayan Lab* and *Tabla Lab* are one-credit courses (HILT 581 and 582) open to all UC students. The former is the first Himalayan music ensemble in the U.S., and it aims to familiarize students with the music, dance, and cultural traditions of the Uttarakhand region. The current members of *the UC Himalayan Ensemble* include Maggie Bissler, Yu Jueng Dahn, Sakinah Davis, Bo Kyung Kim, Saul Meyerson-Knox, Tara Morrow, Meera Murthi, Jordan Newman, Gunyoung Park, Shin-Young Park, Adam Shoaff, Jarrod Welling-Cann, Soojee Yoo.

University of Cincinnati  
College Conservatory of Music

*Presents*

## **HIMALAYAN BEATS**

*featuring*

Pritam Bhartwan,  
the UC Himalayan Ensemble,  
and James Feist

8 pm, October 25, 2011

Cohen Family Studio Theater

## PROGRAM NOTES

### **Tabla Solo**

James Feist

The *tabla* is a set of drums primarily associated with Hindustani classical music of North India. This art form is transmitted from guru to apprentice over many years of study. While often played as an accompanying instrument, Jim Feist will offer a glimpse into the rich tradition of solo *tabla* performance.

### **Mangal Geet**

Pritam Bhartwan & the UC Himalayan Ensemble

This is an auspicious song generally performed by married women at the start of important seasonal or life-cycle rituals. The text calls upon various Hindu divinities such as Ganesh, Narayana, and Bhumiya to bless the proceedings.

### **Rhythms of Invocation**

The *dhunyal* is a chain of rhythms (*baja*) performed at the beginning of any ritual. Each rhythm is like a telephone number that 'dials up' a different god or goddess, inviting them into the ritual space. The *hurka* is an hourglass-shaped drum that is played by manipulating pressure on the drumheads and thereby changing the pitch of the drum. The *thali* is a brass plate that produces a bright, resonant sound when struck by two sticks. *Binai* is the Garhwali word for jew's harp (or jaw harp).

### **Rhythms of Ritual**

*Jagar* is a possession ritual in which a healer combines narrative, song, and drumming in order to make deities manifest physically in the bodies of human mediums. *Jagar* are performed in Uttarakhand during all-night ceremonies that allow devotees to interact with goddesses, gods, spirits, saints, and ghosts in order to secure blessings, heal families and communities, and procure a variety of other benefits. This excerpt praises the goddess Gadhmalā and her brother Goril, a former king in Uttarakhand who is worshipped as a god that bestows justice.

### **Rhythms of Emplacement**

Before the era of mobile phones and electric flashlights, drums had a strong communicative function in the Himalayas. As wedding parties traveled on footpaths from one village to another, the rhythms of the *dhol* and *damaun* led the way, signaling the location of the wedding party to those awaiting their arrival, and giving inspiration to those walking behind. The Uttarakhandi *dhol* is a cylindrical drum made of copper and goatskin that is played with the hand on one drumhead and with a stick on the other. An interlocking texture is achieved with the accompanying *damaun*, a small kettledrum played with two sticks. The *bhankora* and

*ransingha*, natural horns that were once used on the battlefield, have ritual significance as instruments that connect mere mortals to the divine.

### **Rhythms of Competition**

During weddings, the bride's and the bridegroom's family each hire their own village *dhol/damaun* drummers. While these drummers play in concert for much of the occasion, there are times when they may face off and challenge one another. *Shabd* is a virtuosic and improvisatory genre in which sets of drummers attempt to outdo each other with speed, dexterity, and depth of knowledge. *Peinsara* is another competitive genre performed at weddings or festivals in which two *dhol* players create spontaneous variations upon a rhythmic pattern while engaged in a mock duel using choreographed movements.

### **Rhythms of Possession**

All the members of the Himalayan ensemble perform a series of *dhunyal* rhythms on the *dhol* and *damaun*. Following this auspicious introduction, Pritam Bhartwan performs a short excerpt from a possession ritual (*jagar*) in praise of Devi, the Goddess. While *jagar* is an orally transmitted performance tradition, the story that is related of Devi vanquishing the demons Shumbh and Nishumbh is also found within the textual tradition of Hinduism (e.g., in the Puranas).

### **Rhythms of Entertainment**

During festival seasons throughout Uttarakhand, men and women enjoy a break from their labor and partake in a startling variety of communal dance and song forms. Three varieties of regional dance-songs are presented in succession (*laman*, *chappeli*, and *jhumeilo*).

## BIOGRAPHIES

**Pritam Bhartwan** is among the most widely acclaimed artists in the central Himalayas of North India. Beginning at the age of seven, Pritam began learning the drumming and singing traditions of Garhwal (the western portion of Uttarakhand) within a hereditary system of transmission by traveling with his father and uncles to possession rituals, epic ballad performances, and various calendrical and life-cycle ceremonies. Pritam soon gained a reputation as one of the most electrifying folk performers in the region. He has recorded 54 albums and appears regularly on All India Radio and Doordarshan, India state television. Pritam has received a number of awards from the government of India, including the Sur Samrat,