

Performer Descriptions • Spurlock Museum WorldFest March 5, 2011



Sandunga

Sandunga draws its inspiration from the Cuban musical traditions of *son*, *guajira son*, and *trova/bolero*. With its historic roots in the interweaving of African and Iberian rhythms and melodies, the Cuban *son* remains today a vibrant musical and dance form across the island and throughout the Americas. Sandunga consists of Julián Norato (guitar), William Hope (*laúd* and Cuban *tres*), Tina Hope, (*claves* and *guacharaca*), Eduardo Herrera (bass), Adam Walton (congas), and Andy Miller (bongó and maracas).

William Hope

William Hope has long been inspired by Cuban music making. He completed his doctoral studies in Anthropology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2009. His dissertation research explored the musical traditions of Cuban *son* and *punto guajiro* in Guantanamo, Cuba, where he had the honor and privilege to study the *laúd* and Cuban *tres* with master *laudista* Jesus Fernandez. He has also had the good fortune and pleasure of playing with Sandunga in Champaign-Urbana since 2002.



Yu-Chen Wang

A native of Taiwan, Yu-Chen Wang is a graduate of the Tainan National University of the Arts where she studied *gu-zheng* with Dong-He Ling and Hao-Yin Huang and composition with Siao-Wun Jhang and Chao-Ming Tung. She has performed in master classes for Yan-Jia Zhou, Li Meng, Ji Qiu, Yuan Sha, Ji Wei, and Lei Zhu.

Ms. Wang is the winner of the Gold Prize at the “Golden Lotus” International Youth Music Competition in Macau. She was a three-time First Prize winner at the Taiwan National Music Competition, First Prize at the Chinese Musical Instrument Association’s Competition, and the winner of the Taiwan Young Concert Artist Competition. Ms. Wang has appeared as soloist with the Tainan National University Chinese Orchestra, the National Chinese Orchestra, and the Kaohsiung City Chinese Orchestra. She has performed many solo recitals and has toured in Germany with the Little Giant Chinese Chamber Orchestra.



Ms. Wang’s compositions blend western classical and traditional Chinese music. She enjoys expanding the usual instrumentation and forms used in *gu-zheng* ensembles. She was recently a guest artist for Kansas City’s newEar contemporary chamber ensemble, UMKC Music Nova and joined Compost Q, an improv group, which performs across the U.S.



Han-Jui (Henry) Chen

A native of Taiwan, Henry Chen has performed in more than 10 countries in North America, South America, Europe, South Africa, and Asia. He enjoys performing as a soloist, as a chamber musician, and in a large ensemble. Mr. Chen is currently enrolled in the School of Music of University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana for his DMA degree, under the instruction of Michael Cameron. Mr. Chen got his Masters degree in the School of Music of DePaul University, where he was taught by Robert Kassinger, bassist with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. During his time in DePaul University, Mr. Chen was also appointed to the Civic Orchestra of Chicago as co-principal.



Steve Gorn

Steve Gorn has performed Indian Classical Music and new American Music on the *bansuri* bamboo flute in concerts and festivals throughout the world. His gurus are the late *bansuri* master Sri Gour Goswami, of Kolkata, and Pandit Raghunath Seth of Mumbai, whom he has often accompanied in concert. He has also studied with the late Ustad Z. M. Dagar. During the past decade Steve has often performed in India, appearing at Bharat Bhavan in Bhopal, Triveni Hall in New Delhi, The Sangeet Research Academy in Kolkata, NCPA, and The Nehru Center in Mumbai, and numerous other venues. His performance with Pandit Ravi Shankar's disciple, Barun Kumar Pal, at Kolkata's Rama Krishna Mission, was televised throughout India.

His numerous recordings include *Luminous Ragas*, the landmark Indian-Jazz fusion recording, *Asian Journal*, *Pranam a jugalbandi* with Barun Kumar Pal playing *hansaveena*, and Samir Chatterjee, *tabla*. His latest recording is *Rasika*, with *tabla* by Samir Chatterjee.

Jason Finkelman

Philadelphia-born percussionist Jason Finkelman specializes in the *berimbau*, an Afro-Brazilian musical bow, and performs on a wide variety of African and Brazilian instruments, many handcrafted by Adimu Kuumba. His artistic concerns focus primarily on the performance of improvised music and composition for dance, theater, and film. He leads the Champaign-Urbana-based projects Ferrocene3 and Nu Orbit Ensemble, is a member of the didjeridu led, groove-oriented rock band Tree Thump, and is a founding member of the New York-based ambient, avant world trio Straylight. Noted collaborations with choreographer Cynthia Oliver include *Rigidigidim de Bamba de: Ruptured Calypso* (2009-10), the dance film *AfroSocialiteLifeDiva* (2004), and the "Bessie" award winning works *SHEMAD* (2000) and *Death's Door* (1996). Recent music for film includes *Can't Go Native?* (2010), a documentary by David Plath on the life and work of anthropologist Keith Brown.



Manpreet Bedi

Manpreet is a disciple of Taal Yogi Pundit Suresh Talwalkar and Pundit Ramdas Palsule (an ace tabla player and also a senior disciple of Pt. Talwalkar).

He started learning tabla at an early age of 6 years old and is still continuing the journey of education under the strict guidance of his gurus. His first performance at age 10 got him a bronze medal in an interschool competition.

Some of the artists Manpreet has accompanied are Pundit L.K. Pandit, Pundit Nagaraj Rao Havaladar, Dr. Vikas Kashalkar, Kumar Mardur, Pundit. Brij Narayan (sarod), Milind Tulankar (jaltarang), Surmani Anupama Bhagwat (sitar), Sunil Avchat (bansuri), and Dr. Vikas Gupta (sitar).



Manpreet has been collaborating with Bill Koehler (a professor of the Double Bass at Illinois State University), David Vayo (a professor of the Piano and Composition at Illinois Wesleyan University), John Hill (the director of percussion at Murray State) and a few other friends to produce an eclectic contemporary Jazz inspired by various musical influences, such as Western Classical, traditional Jazz Compositions, Hindustani Classical rhythmic arrangements, and musical work of groups like Shakti. His group is called Sonic Exploration Society (S.E.S.) and has released two CD's (*Vandana—A Journey Together* in 2004 and *Syzygy* in 2011).

Manpreet is also the founder of Omkar School of Music (OSOM). His school specializes in teaching tabla to all age groups. He has been teaching in Bloomington, IL and Peoria, IL for over 8 years. Many visiting guest tablists have presented workshops on *tal* and other musicians have presented educational workshops on *sur*. He has been actively giving workshops as a guest faculty in various universities on Hindustani Classical Rhythmic Arrangements. He takes a special interest in understanding, learning and sharing his experiences on Psychology of Improvisation in rhythm.

Manpreet is a Systems Analyst in information technology at RLI, a specialty Insurance company based in Peoria, IL. He holds a bachelor's degree in political science international relations and a master's in computer science.



Phil Clark

Phil Clark has been playing the *didgeridu* for over seven years. Following his passion for the *didgeridu*, Phil has traveled to northern Australia several times since 2006 to learn more about the instrument from some of its Aboriginal custodians, the Yolngu people of Northeast Arnhem Land. These travels have given Phil a better understanding of not only what makes a good didgeridu, but also of the *didgeridu's* place in Aboriginal peoples' musical and ceremonial lives, and enriched his life in unexpected and inexplicable ways.

Because of the *didgeridu's* positive contributions to his own life, Phil is committed to sharing it with others in East-Central Illinois and around the country, through his teaching in the Champaign area, his performance with the band Tree Thump, and through his work with the Tree Thump *didgeridu* company.