

Music of Central Asia **VOL.9**

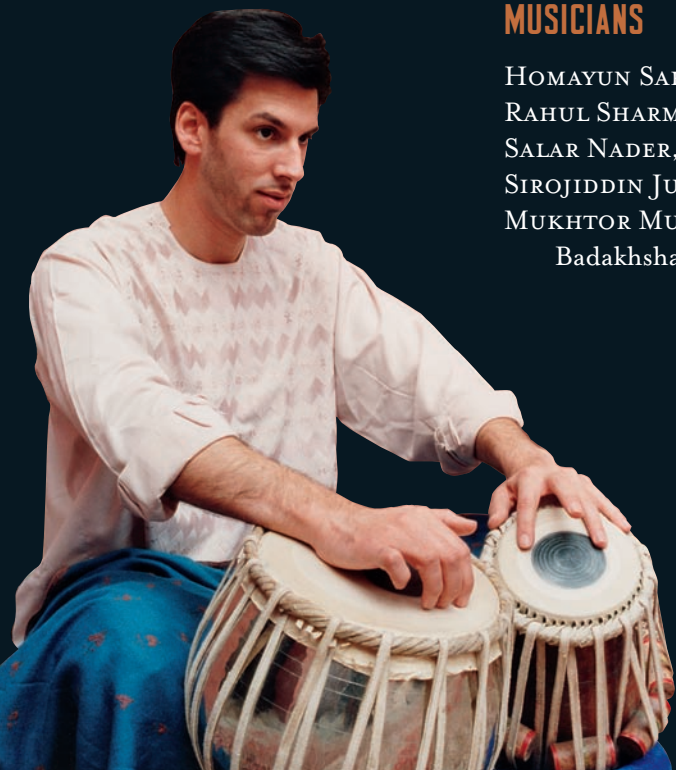
IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF BABUR

MUSICAL ENCOUNTERS

from **THE LANDS** *of the* **MUGHALS**



Smithsonian Folkways



MUSICIANS

HOMAYUN SAKHI, Afghan *rubab*
RAHUL SHARMA, *santur*
SALAR NADER, *tabla*, *zerbaghali*
SIROJIDDIN JURAEV, *dutar*, *tanbur*
MUKHTOR MUBORAKQADOMOV,
Badakhshani *setar*

CD TRACKS

1. SOLO ON THE *SANTUR*:
RAGA VACHASPATI 8:23
2. RAGA KIRWANI 20:17
3. *DHUN*: MISRA KIRWANI 6:57
4. ZUHAL'S SONG 3:19
5. *ALAP* ON THE AFGHAN *RUBAB*:
RAGA BHUPALI 5:56
6. JAMMU AND KASHMIR 5:25
7. BILAK UZUK (BRACELET) 3:17
8. RUBOYAT-I VANJ
(RUBAYAT OF VANJ) 3:54
9. SAYR-I BADA KHSHAN
(A STROLL IN BADA KHSHAN)
5:10

DVD

*MUSIC OF CENTRAL ASIA AND THE
AGA KHAN MUSIC INITIATIVE*

*IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF BABUR:
MUSICAL ENCOUNTERS FROM THE
LANDS OF THE MUGHALS*

*INTERACTIVE INSTRUMENT
GLOSSARY*

MAP OF CENTRAL ASIA

*Music of Central Asia Vol. 9
In the Footsteps of Babur: Musical
Encounters from the Lands of the Mughals*

SFW CD 40528 © © 2010 Smithsonian Folkways Recordings

CENTRAL ASIAN MUSIC *An Overview*

Central Asia is commonly understood to encompass the territory of six nations: Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan (see map). Yet patterns of settlement and cultural links that predate the establishment of current political boundaries argue for a broader definition of the region. For example, the Uyghurs, a Muslim, Turkic-speaking people whose traditional territory is in western China, have old cultural affinities with other Central Asian groups. The Turkmen, who comprise the titular ethnic group of Turkmenistan, are strongly represented in the Iranian region of Khorasan that flanks Turkmenistan to the southwest. Shia Isma'ili Muslims

in mountainous Badakhshan, the eastern region of Tajikistan, share cultural and religious traditions with Isma'ilis living in the nearby Northern Territories of Pakistan, Afghanistan, and western China, as well as in Khorasan and other parts of Iran.

Beyond Central Asia itself, diaspora communities created by recent emigration have spread cultural influences from the region far beyond its geographical borders. Some of Afghanistan's finest musicians were among the hundreds of thousands of Afghans who fled to Pakistan and later emigrated to the West following the Soviet invasion of their country in 1979 and the rise of the Taliban in the 1990s. Outstanding musicians were



also among the tens of thousands of Central Asian (“Bukharan”) Jews who left Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to resettle in New York City and Tel Aviv when the USSR opened its borders to Jewish emigration in the mid-1970s. Central Asian Jews long lived as a Persian-speaking minority population among their Muslim neighbors. Indeed, an overwhelming majority of Central Asia’s Persian-speaking and Turkic-speaking population identifies itself with Islam, as an active religious practice, a cultural legacy, a worldview that informs everyday social life, or all of these. Excluded from this group are Russian-speaking Slavs and other non-Muslim immigrants who began to populate Central Asia after the tsarist conquests in the latter half of the 19th century and during the

Soviet era accounted for half or more of the population of the region’s major cities.

Central Asia’s history has been shaped by its strategic position at the intersection of two great axes of civilization. One axis points southwest, toward the sophisticated urban culture of Iran. The other axis points northeast, to what has been called Turan—the nomadic world of the Inner Asian steppe, where pastoralists belonging to myriad Turkic and Mongolian clans created a succession of powerful steppe empires. Iran vs. Turan, sedentary vs. nomadic, urbanite vs. steppe-dweller—in broad strokes, these contrasting pairs represent the distinctions of worldview and way of life that echo strongly in Central Asia’s musical traditions despite centuries and

millennia of intermingling among its diverse social groups.

In nomadic cultures, the consummate entertainer is the bard, and music is characterized by a strong narrative dimension. Epic tales up to thirty times the length of Homer’s *Iliad*, and instrumental pieces whose wordless melodies and rhythms relate beloved stories through a kind of musical onomatopoeia all reflect a nomadic sensibility. Traditional nomadic spirituality ascribes spiritual power to a range of natural phenomena and living creatures, and nomadic music and sound-making often serve as a means of representing and accessing the power of spirits.

The music of sedentary-dwellers, by contrast, reflects the deep impact of Islam as a spiritual and cultural

force. The central artifact of musical performance is the elaboration and embellishment of words and texts by a beautiful voice. Singers are typically accompanied by small ensembles of mixed instruments that almost always include percussion. The beauty of the voice may also be represented symbolically by a solo instrument such as a plucked lute, violin, or flute, which reproduces the filigree embellishments and ornamentation characteristic of a great singer.

In the years following the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, the Soviet Union tried to bring about fundamental transformations in the organization, transmission, and expression of indigenous culture among the inhabitants of its vast empire. Since the beginning of the post-

Soviet period, musicians throughout Central Asia have sought to recover and reanimate older musical traditions in response to growing interest in their cultural heritage, among both local inhabitants and outsiders. These traditions are firmly rooted in local musical practices, but none of them is “pure.” Central Asia’s long history of contact and exchange with other cultures continues to evolve in our own time. And as the musicians whose performances come alive on *Music of Central Asia* leave their own creative imprint on the region’s musical legacy, there can be no doubt that authentic traditional music remains forever contemporary.



INTRODUCTION

In the Footsteps of Babur: Musical Encounters from the Lands of the Mughals

In the month of Ramadan of the year 899 [June 1494] and in the twelfth year of my age, I became ruler in the country of Ferghana.” Thus begins the remarkable autobiography of Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur, the precocious Central Asian nobleman whose journey of conquest through Afghanistan and Hindustan—the northern part of the Indian subcontinent—laid the foundation of the Mughal Empire. Fusing cultural influences from Persia, Central Asia, and India, the Mughals created a brilliant intellectual and artistic efflorescence

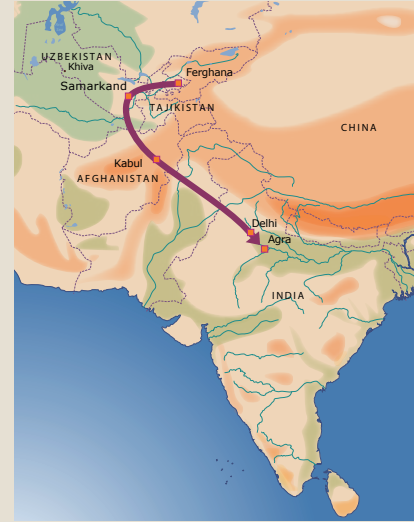
whose legacy remains strong today. *In the Footsteps of Babur* represents a modern-day encore of Mughal artistic synthesis. Inspired by visual images and literary descriptions of exuberant music-making in the Mughal courts, the Aga Khan Music Initiative brought together musicians from Afghanistan, India, and Tajikistan with the aim of merging their talents, traditions, and musical instruments to create new sounds.

Babur was born into a world in which the influence of Persian culture loomed large. His birthplace, Ferghana, now a city in the nation of Uzbekistan,

was in Babur's time a principality that had once been part of the Timurid Empire. Babur traced his ancestry to the empire's founder, Timur (anglicized as Tamerlane), as well as to Genghis Khan. The Timurids, descended from Turco-Mongol stock, had cultivated a Persian sensibility in art, architecture, poetry, and music that reached its zenith in 15th-century Samarkand and Herat, and it was this sensibility that Babur absorbed in his youth.

As a teenager, Babur set off from his native Ferghana with a small army. His objective: to capture Samarkand, which he viewed as his family's ancestral homeland. His attempt failed, but in 1504, when Babur was twenty-one, he seized Kabul, and the next year took up residence there. From his base in Kabul, Babur led reconnaissance

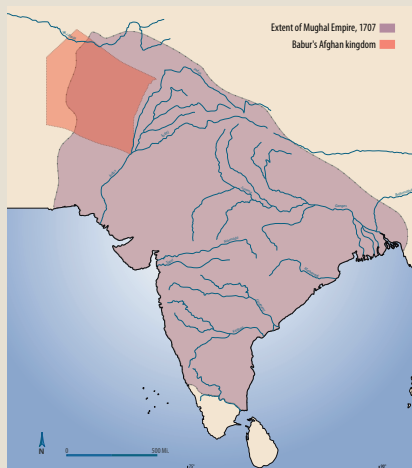
expeditions eastward into Hindustan, and in 1526, his vastly outnumbered troops won a decisive battle that gave him control of Delhi and Agra, the future site of the Taj Mahal, built by his great-great-grandson, Shah Jahan. During the 16th and 17th centuries, Babur's descendants—the Mughal rulers Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan, and Aurangzeb—continued the expansion and consolidation of the Mughal Empire until it covered almost the entire subcontinent. The cultural diversity of this vast territory was reflected in the different kinds of music and musical ensembles that were patronized by the Mughal courts. Orchestras of kettledrums, cymbals, trumpets, and loud oboes whose origins were in Persia and the Middle East marked the comings and goings of the



BABUR'S ROUTE FROM FERGHANA (MODERN-DAY UZBEKISTAN) TO INDIA, 1500–1526

emperor. Mughal miniature paintings show a variety of long-necked lutes and spike fiddles—instruments rooted in the Persian and Turkic cultures of Central Asia. These paintings also show indigenous Indian instruments—most commonly the *rudra vina*, also called *bin*, easily identifiable by the large gourds attached to either end of a long neck.

The legions of performers in the service of the Mughal courts may well have created their own “fusion music” jam sessions, experimenting with various combinations of instruments, sonorities, melodic modes, and rhythmic structures. Another venue for musical fusions might have been the meeting places of Sufis—followers of a mystical path in Islam—where, contrary to more orthodox Islamic custom, musical instruments were sometimes



EXTENT OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE, 1707

used to facilitate prayer leading to a state of spiritual ecstasy.

Following the death of Aurangzeb, in 1707, the Mughal Empire began a

long period of decline, which ended in 1858 with the abdication of Emperor Bahadur II and the establishment of the British Raj. As Britain faced off against its imperial rival, Russia, in what became known as “The Great Game,” Afghanistan became a buffer zone between empires. Following the rise of Soviet power in Central Asia in the 1920s, the once porous border between Central Asia and the subcontinent hardened. The fluid movement of artists and musicians characteristic of Mughal times was replaced by bureaucratized cultural exchanges of state-sponsored performing troupes and artistic luminaries. The 1947 partitioning of India, decades of war and political instability in Afghanistan, and, in the post-Soviet era, a focus on strengthening national cultural

identities in the newly independent “stans” of Central Asia, all impeded the reestablishment of closer links among musical descendants of the singers, drummers, and instrumentalists portrayed in Mughal miniatures. Hoping to reanimate those links, the Aga Khan Music Initiative invited a small group of cosmopolitan-minded musicians from Central Asia, Afghanistan, and India to meet and explore the living legacy of their common musical ground. These musical meetings did not take place in the historical lands of the Mughals. Rather, in the spirit of today’s musically globalized world, they occurred in northern California, where Afghan *rubab* player Homayun Sakhi currently makes his home, and in Paris, where the commodious Studios Babel, true to its name, offered an ideal environment for

a multicultural recording project.

Sakhi himself offers an exemplary case study in artistic synthesis. Born into one of the leading musical families of Kabul, he studied *rubab* with his father, Ustad Ghulam Sakhi, a student of Ustad Mohammad Omar (d. 1980). The music he learned included both the classical Hindustani raga tradition of North India and Afghan folk and popular music. Beginning in the mid-19th century, at the sunset of the Mughal Empire, Hindustani musicians were patronized by the local ruling family of Kabul, where they created a Kabuli tradition of raga performance whose principal instruments were Afghan *rubab* accompanied by *tabla*. The addition of sympathetic strings and drone strings increased the deep, resonant quality of the *rubab*’s sound—ideal for the slow

and meditative opening section of a raga performance. This 19th-century adaptation of the *rubab*, an instrument rooted in the music of Central and West Asia, reprised the adaptation of older forms of long-necked lutes by musicians in the early 17th-century Mughal court, who, as shown in miniature paintings, used them to play the steady drone pitch that was then coming into fashion as an accompaniment to classical singers.

At around the same time that Homayun Sakhi was learning *rubab* from his father in Kabul, Rahul Sharma was studying *santur* with his father, Shiv Kumar Sharma, in Mumbai. Drawn by the lively musical life of Mumbai, the elder Sharma had moved there in the 1960s from Kashmir, his native land. The *santur*—a zither whose strings are struck with small wooden mallets, like

a hammer dulcimer—had long been played in Kashmir as a folk instrument and as part of Sufyana Kalam, a local classical music tradition linked to Sufi practices. Musical instrument specialists place the origins of the *santur* in the Middle East. When it first appeared in Kashmir is unknown, but *santur*-like zithers are depicted in Mughal miniature paintings.

Just as Afghani *rubab* players learned to play Indian ragas and, in so doing, achieved a new level of virtuosity on their instrument, Shiv Kumar Sharma devoted himself to developing a way to perform raga on the *santur*. While the *santur*, with its tautly stretched strings and percussive playing technique, might seem an unlikely candidate for adaptation to the pitch-bending embellishments and sinuous melodic



From left: HOMAYUN SAKHI, RAHUL SHARMA, AND SALAR NADER

lines characteristic of raga performance, Shiv Kumar Sharma created a range of sophisticated *santur* techniques that brilliantly represent the sound and spirit of raga. This was the craft and

sensibility that Rahul Sharma learned from his father.

Indian raga thus became the musical lingua franca for the meeting of Homayun Sakhi and Rahul Sharma.

Their fluency in the language of raga was in some sense a vestige of the enormous momentum of Mughal artistic synthesis, which persisted long past the cultural apogee of the empire, drawing an ever-expanding constellation of regional instruments and performance traditions into the cosmopolitan musical domain that was one of its great artistic legacies. Homayun and Rahul's magisterial rendition of raga Kirwani on *In the Footsteps of Babur* includes tabla player Salar Nader, a young Afghan-American disciple of the renowned tabla master Ustad Zakir Hussain. "Raga Kirwani" is followed by "Misra Kirwani," a lighter and shorter improvised piece based on the same melodic motifs and modal characteristics as raga Kirwani. Two other ragas—Bhupali and Vachaspati—are also represented on the



SALAR NADER

CD, each in a solo performance, on the Afghan *rubab* and *santur*, respectively.

At the same time that instruments such as the *rubab* and *santur* from the geographical margins of the Mughal Empire became a part of the Hindustani classical music tradi-

tion, they remained popular among performers of many kinds of local folk music. Rahul Sharma drew on the folk-song tradition of Jammu, in the southwest of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, for the charming melody that serves as the basis for an extemporized duet he performs with Homayun Sakhi. Rahul taught the melody to Homayun, and they quickly worked out an arrangement.

Two other pieces, "Sayr-i Badakhshan" (A Stroll in Badakhshan) and "Zuhal's Song," bring together a different configuration of instruments from Central Asia and the subcontinent. In these sprightly, folk-like pieces, Homayun Sakhi and Salar Nader, on Afghan *rubab* and tabla, team up with master musicians from Tajikistan, Afghanistan's neighbor to the north. In

this collaboration, the tabla represents the influence of India in a sound rooted in the Persian-speaking world from which Mughal artists and musicians drew much of their inspiration.

One of the musicians from Tajikistan, Mukhtor Muborakqadomov, lives not far from the Afghan border, in

MUKHTOR MUBORAKQADOMOV



the Pamir Mountains of Badakhshan, a culturally autonomous region that straddles the boundary between Afghanistan and Tajikistan. Mukhtor plays the Badakhshani *setar*, a long-necked lute whose multiple sympathetic strings and soothing timbre call to

SIROJIDDIN JURAEV



mind the sound of the *setar*'s near-namesake, the Indian sitar. Unlike the sitar, however, the Badakhshani *setar* is purely a village instrument—an artifact of the long tradition of music, poetry, and spirituality among inhabitants of the austere settlements that dot the steep alpine slopes and valleys of the Pamirs.

The second musician from Tajikistan, *dutar* player Sirojiddin Juraev, grew up in and around Khujand, the main city of northern Tajikistan, not far from the birthplace of Emperor Babur, in Ferghana. Sirojiddin's instrument, the *dutar*, has old roots in the Ferghana Valley region, which encompasses both Khujand and Ferghana. These days, the *dutar*, like the Afghan *rubab*, lives a dual musical life in which it is used both by



HOMAYUN SAKHI

performers of classical music and folk music. Sirojiddin studied the classical tradition of Shashmaqom—historically linked to the cities of Bukhara and Samarkand, and now proclaimed by both Tajikistan and Uzbekistan as a monument of intangible cultural

heritage—but he's also fond of folk and popular music, and readily joined in the extemporaneous arranging of "Sayr-i Badakhshan" and "Zuhul's Song."

Between the ensemble pieces are two short instrumental duets, "Ruboyat-i Vanj" and "Bilak Uzuk," which pair the *setar* and *tanbur* with *tabla*—a pairing that wouldn't occur in present-day Badakhshan or northern Tajikistan, where the customary percussion instruments are frame drums. The *tabla*, a product of the Mughal-era fusion of Persian percussion and Indian sensibility, provides an Indian accent to the sounds of Central Asian instruments, reanimating the artistic synthesis of two great and enduring musical civilizations.

THE ARTISTS

HOMAYUN SAKHI

Since immigrating to the United States in 2002, Hodayun Sakhi has established a worldwide reputation as the outstanding Afghan *rubab* player of his generation. His artistry demonstrates how an imaginative musician working within a traditional musical idiom can enrich and expand its expressive power, while respecting the taste and sensibility passed down from master musicians of the past. Sakhi's performance style has been shaped not only by the musical traditions to which Afghan music is geographically and historically linked but by his lively interest in contemporary music from around the world. Born in Kabul into one of

Afghanistan's leading musical families, he studied *rubab* with his father, Ustad Ghulam Sakhi, in the traditional form of apprenticeship known as *ustad-shagird* (Persian: "master-apprentice"). Ghulam Sakhi was heir to a musical lineage that began in the 1860s, when the ruler of Kabul, Amir Sher Ali Khan, brought classically trained musicians from India to perform at his court. Over the next hundred years, Indian musicians thrived there, and Kabul became a center for the performance of North Indian classical music. Musicians in Kabul also cultivated the art of playing the *rubab*, which was prominent in regional folk music. Today the people of Afghanistan regard the *rubab* with



great pride as their national instrument. Hodayun Sakhi currently resides in Fremont, California, a major cultural center of Afghan émigré life, where he opened a school to teach Afghan music to children. His busy performance schedule regularly takes him to cities around the world.

RAHUL SHARMA

Born in Mumbai in 1972, Rahul Sharma is heir to the Indian classical *santur* tradition established by his esteemed father, Shiv Kumar Sharma. "It wasn't a preconceived idea that I would become a professional musician," Rahul recounted. "I majored in economics at university, and didn't begin performing publicly on the *santur* until I was around 22. But once I started, it just took off. In the last dozen years, I've probably



released more than 40 albums and had a lot of opportunities to collaborate with international musicians. I've always enjoyed composing. Ever since I was a kid, I played the Casio synthesizer and composed my own tunes. Composing offers freedom from the discipline of classical music. When I was growing up, I was fascinated not just by Indian classical music but by world music and rock. I listened to the Beatles, Pink Floyd, Celtic music, Sting. Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan's collaborations with Michael Brook inspired me. So I thought, why don't I do something like this with *santur*? I've always had a desire to experiment. I played with Shakti and John McLaughlin, and with percussionist Zakir Hussain and mandolin player U. Srinivas. The *santur* is not just a classical instrument. It has a whole

different side. My father established the *santur* in the classical mode. Now it's ready to head off into new realms. I'm still experimenting."

SALAR NADER

Salar Nader is one of his generation's leading performers on the tabla. His parents emigrated from Afghanistan to Germany, where Nader was born in 1981. At the age of three, he came to the United States, and at age seven, he began formal tabla study with renowned tabla master Ustad Zakir Hussain. Nader frequently accompanies Homayun Sakhi and other performers of Afghan and North Indian classical music. He is also active as a performer in world percussion and jazz-fusion groups. A resident of San Francisco, Nader recently appeared as an onstage



musician in an American theatrical adaptation of Khaled Hosseini's best-selling novel, *The Kite Runner*. In addition to his performance activities, Salar is a devoted teacher of tabla.

SIROJIDDIN JURAEV

Sirojiddin Juraev comes from a lineage of *dutar* players in his native region of northern Tajikistan. “Both my father and grandfather played the *dutar*,” said Sirojiddin, “and my first *ustad* was my father. Later I studied at the Music College in Khujand and at Khujand University, and after that, at the Academy of Maqam, in Dushanbe, where my *ustad* was Abduvali Abdurashidov. I listen a lot to old recordings of the great *ustads*, and when I listen to their records and hear something I really like, I try to learn those tunes. Now I teach *dutar* in the National Conservatory in Dushanbe. When I feel inspired, I also compose my own music on the *dutar*. If you listen a lot to old records that are inspiring, there should be an urge to compose.



You can't compose from a void. There has to be an inspiration that comes from listening to a master.”

MUKHTOR MUBORAKQADOMOV

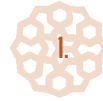
Badakhshani *setar* player Mukhtor Muborakqadomov makes his home in a village near Khorog, the regional capital and Badakhshan's largest city, with a population of around 40,000. “I began playing the *setar* when I was in eighth grade. I learned by ear from my uncle,” said Mukhtor. “I've never learned to read music. I like Indian music and frequently listen to it, so probably that's why my style sounds Indian.” Mukhtor is a member of the Badakhshan Ensemble (featured on *Music of Central Asia*, vol. 5), which performs both traditional Badakhshani music and contemporary pop songs—



the latter typically in the context of local wedding festivities, for which Mukhtor plays electronic keyboard in place of *setar*. He is also a composer who creates original melodies for song lyrics drawn from classical Persian and Badakhshani poetry.



TRACK NOTES



I. SOLO ON THE *SANTUR*: RAGA VACHASPATI

Music: Traditional
RAHUL SHARMA, *santur*

Rahul Sharma introduces the sound of the solo *santur* with an improvisation in raga Vachaspati, which belongs to the repertoire of Carnatic, or South Indian, ragas. Although Rahul was trained in the North Indian, or Hindustani, raga tradition, he likes the haunting quality of Vachaspati. "There's a bit of mystery and intrigue in it because it's Carnatic," he said. "The tonal quality of the *santur* brings out this raga beautifully. I play it in *dhrupad* style [a venerable style of Hindustani vocal performance characterized by slow and elaborate melodic development], joining the notes, the way I learned from my father. He always said that it gives more depth if you play it like this."

The scale of Vachaspati is distinctive: it contains a raised fourth and flat seventh, expressed in European solfeggio as: do re mi fa[#] sol la si^b do.



2.

RAGA KIRWANI

Music: Traditional; arranged by HOMAYUN SAKHI, RAHUL SHARMA, and SALAR NADER
HOMAYUN SAKHI, Afghan *rubab*
RAHUL SHARMA, *santur*
SALAR NADER, *tabla*

“Raga Kirwani evokes a very romantic mood,” explains Rahul Sharma. “It’s a late-night raga, and a lot of composers have used it in composing themes for love stories. The scale of Kirwani has a flat third and raised seventh—the harmonic minor scale of Western music. We felt that this scale would complement and enhance the sound of the *rubab* and *santur* together.” The raga is performed in Tintal, a rhythmic cycle of 16 beats.



3.

DHUN: MISRA KIRWANI

Music: Composed by RAHUL SHARMA; arranged by HOMAYUN SAKHI and RAHUL SHARMA
HOMAYUN SAKHI, Afghan *rubab*
RAHUL SHARMA, *santur*

In North Indian music, a *dhun* is a light instrumental piece typically of shorter



4.

ZUHAL’S SONG

Music: Composed by HOMAYUN SAKHI
HOMAYUN SAKHI, Afghan *rubab*
MUKHTOR MUBORAKQADOMOV, Badakhshani *setar*
SIROJIDDIN JURAEV, *dutar*
SALAR NADER, *tabla*, *zerbaghali*

duration than a full-length raga performance. *Misra* means “mixed,” and *Misra Kirwani*, though based on raga Kirwani, gives performers the freedom to mix different ways of playing particular notes in the scale. The third, fourth, sixth, and seventh degrees can all be played with their pitch altered by a semitone. “It’s good for *dhuns*,” said Rahul, “because you have more freedom to improvise.” The principal melody of the *dhun* was composed by Rahul, who played it for Homayun during a rehearsal. Homayun in turn composed another part of the piece, and from there, it took on an improvisational character.

The rhythmic cycle is *Keharwa Tala*, an 8-beat cycle that is frequently played in light classical music.

Homayun Sakhi composed this piece, dedicated to his daughter, specifically for his meeting with Mukhtor, Sirojiddin, and Salar. The style is that of *Kataghani*, a lively popular music genre from the north of Afghanistan.



5.

ALAP ON THE AFGHAN RUBAB: RAGA BHUPALI

Music: Traditional
HOMAYUN SAKHI, Afghan *rubab*

Alap is the unmetered opening section of a raga that introduces the raga's scale and affective character, or *rasa*. Bhupali is a late-night raga that is linked to feelings of melancholy. The scale is pentatonic—an uncommon occurrence in Hindustani raga.



6.

JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Music: Unattributed; arranged by RAHUL SHARMA
HOMAYUN SAKHI, Afghan *rubab*
RAHUL SHARMA, *santur*

According to Rahul Sharma, the unassuming folk tune he used as the basis of the present arrangement belongs to a song that women in the Jammu section of Jammu and Kashmir, India's northernmost state, sang to welcome their soldier-husbands home from military duties. "It's a traditional song, but totally improvised in this piece," said Rahul. "I changed the tune a little, and added a few notes here and there that go better with the *santur*. Most people in Kashmir no longer know this



7.

BILAK UZUK (BRACELET)

Music: Unattributed
SIROJIDDIN JURAEV, *tanbur*
SALAR NADER, *tabla*

song, but it's known to lovers of folk music. There's an innocence and simplicity in it that's hard to find in other forms of music, and that's the beauty of folk music. I learned it from my father, and taught it to Homayun."

"Bilak Uzuk" is an Uzbek song that was transformed into a well-known instrumental piece by the great Uzbek *dutar*, *tanbur*, and *sato* player, Turgun Alimatov. "The original is known to old people, but isn't sung much anymore," says Sirojiddin Juraev. "By contrast, the instrumental arrangement is a staple of the repertoire of *tanbur* players." Alimatov loved Indian music, and frequently listened to radio broadcasts of Indian musicians in his native city of Tashkent, Uzbekistan. He infused his own performances of Uzbek instrumental music with Indian *gamaka*—melodic ornamentation—thus emphasizing the old connection between the musical traditions of South and Central Asia. Alimatov, who died in 2009, would hopefully have enjoyed this version of "Bilak Uzuk" with *tabla*.



8. RUBOYAT-I VANJ (RUBAYAT OF VANJ)

Music: Unattributed
MUKHTOR MUBORAKQADOMOV, *setar*
SALAR NADER, *tabla*

Performed as an instrumental piece on the *setar* and accompanied by *tabla*, this folk *ruboyat* (quatrain) from Badakhshan takes on an Indian-like character. Vanj is a place on the road from Dushanbe to Badakhshan. Salar Nader said about the collaboration, “One of the reasons that I could bridge the music of these two regions, India and Badakhshan, is that my *ustad* gave me a vision that there are no borders that restrict how far you can collaborate with this instrument, and with whom and with what kinds and styles of music.”



9. SAYR-I BADAKHSHAN (A STROLL IN BADAKHSHAN)

Music: Composed by KURBONSHAH NOYOBShOEV
HOMAYUN SAKHI, Afghan *rubab*
MUKHTOR MUBORAKQADOMOV,
Badakhshani *setar*
SIROJIDDIN JURAEV, *dutar*
SALAR NADER, *tabla*

The composer of “Sayr-i Badakhshan,” Kurbonshah Noyobshoev, was a well-known Soviet-era composer of Tajik popular music. In this arrangement, put together during the recording session, Noyobshoev’s composition is joined to an unattributed composition for *dutar* in the repertoire of Sirojiddin Juraev.

INSTRUMENT GLOSSARY

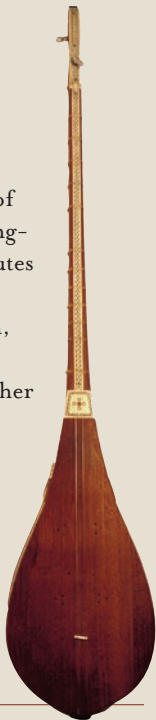
AFGHAN RUBAB

A double-chambered lute with 3 main strings (originally made of animal gut, now nylon), 4 frets, 2–3 long drone strings, and up to 15 sympathetic strings (made of copper and steel). It was probably invented in the 18th century in Kandahar, Kabul, Peshawar, Ghazni, or another city with a sizable Pashtun population. In the 19th century it was also known in Rampur and in Punjab (northern India). In India the Afghan *rubab* was modified to become the *sarod*.



DUTAR

Designates different kinds of two-stringed long-necked fretted lutes among Uzbeks, Tajiks, Turkmen, Qaraqalpaks, Uyghurs, and other groups.



SANTUR

A trapezoidal zither whose strings are struck with light wooden mallets. The *santur* has ancient roots in Iranian culture and is also played in Iraq and other parts of the Middle East. Struck zithers exist in many cultures under a variety of names, and with different numbers of strings configured in a variety of tuning systems. Well-known examples include the American hammer dulcimer, Hungarian cimbalom, and Chinese *yangqin*. How and when the

santur became established in Kashmir is uncertain, but it has been played in northern India at least since the early Mughal era.



SETAR

A long-necked fretted lute with wood-covered deck, 3 steel melody strings, and a variable number of sympathetic strings that provide a drone background to the melody strings.



TABLA

A pair of hand-played, tunable drums that is the principal percussion instrument in North Indian classical music, also used since the middle of the 19th century in the Kabuli art music tradition. The *bayān* ("left") is a metal kettle drum whose pitch is modulated by pressure from the heel of the hand on the drum skin. The *tabla* or *dahina* ("right") is a wooden drum whose skin can be tuned to a precise pitch.



TANBUR

A long-necked plucked lute with raised frets used in Uzbek-Tajik and Uyghur classical music traditions. The fundamental accompanying instrument for vocal performances of Shashmaqom. One string is plucked, while the others serve as drones.



ZERBAGHALI

A goblet drum commonly used in small ensembles that perform Pashtun folk music.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Koen, Benjamin. 2008. *Beyond the Roof of the World: Music, Prayer, and Healing in the Pamir Mountains*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Levin, Theodore. 1996. *The Hundred Thousand Fools of God: Musical Travels in Central Asia (and Queens, New York)*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press (with CD).

Schimmel, Annemarie. 2004. *The Empire of the Great Mughals: History, Art and Culture*. London: Reaktion Publishers.

Sharma, Shiv Kumar. 2002. *Journey with a Hundred Strings: My Life in Music*. New Delhi and New York: Viking Press.

Thackston, W. M., ed. and trans. 2002. *The Baburnama: Memoirs of Babur, Prince and Emperor*. New York: Modern Library.

Wade, Bonnie. 1998. *Imaging Sound: An Ethnomusicological Study of Music, Art, and Culture in Mughal India*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

DISCOGRAPHY

For recordings by Rahul Sharma, see: <http://www.rahulsantoor.com/albums.php>

The Silk Road: A Musical Caravan. 2002. Smithsonian Folkways SFW CD 40438.

Ouzbekistan: Turgun Alimatov. 1995. Ocora/Radio France C560086.

CREDITS

Produced by Theodore Levin and Fairouz R. Nishanova

Series executive producers: Theodore Levin and Fairouz R. Nishanova

Tracks 1–3, 5, 6 recorded at Skywalker Sound (Nicasio, California)

Recording engineer: Joel Gordon

Assistant recording engineers: David Corcoran, Dann Michael Thompson

Tracks 4, 7–9 recorded at Studios Babel (Paris)

Recording engineer: Vincent Joinville

Photography: Sebastien Schutyser, Jay Blakesberg

Videography: Saodat Ismailova and Carlos Casas

Video post-production: Henninger Media Services; Lauren Meschter, colorist; Laurie Rihner, DVD menu artist; Ari B. Zagnit, senior DVD developer; Lauren Boettcher, post-production supervisor

Annotated by Theodore Levin

Maps: Nathalie Hericourt

Miniature paintings: Collection of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture

The producers gratefully thank: Soudabeh Kia, Leslie Ann Jones, and Théâtre de la Ville.

AGA KHAN MUSIC INITIATIVE

Director: Fairouz R. Nishanova
Senior project consultant: Theodore Levin

SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS

Executive producers: Daniel E. Sheehy and D. A. Sonneborn
Sound production supervised by Pete Reiniger
Production manager: Mary Monseur
Editorial assistance by Carla Borden
Design and layout by Sonya Cohen Cramer

Additional Smithsonian Folkways staff: Richard James Burgess, director of marketing and sales; Betty Derbyshire, financial operations manager; Laura Dion, sales; Toby Dodds, technology director; Spencer Ford, fulfillment; León García, web producer and education coordinator; Henri Goodson, financial assistant; Mark Gustafson, marketing; David Horgan, e-marketing specialist; Helen Lindsay, customer service; Keisha Martin, manufacturing coordinator; Margot Nassau, licensing and royalties; Jeff Place, archivist; Ronnie Simpkins, audio specialist; John Smith, sales and marketing; Stephanie Smith, archivist.