Venu is the ancient name for the bamboo flute that is today called bansuri. Compared with a modern Western flute, with its myriad levers, buttons, and pads, the bansuri seems to be a relatively simple instrument; a length of bamboo with finger holes and an extra hole near one end, across which the player directs his breath. Yet in the hands of a master like Hariprasad Chaurasia, this simple bamboo tube can express all the intricacies and subtleties for which Indian music is renowned. The bansuri was developed as a classical instrument by the late Pandit Ghasipuri, under the inspiration of the famed Ustad Allauddin Khan. After beginning his training under Shri Bhola Nath, Hariprasad-Ji went on to complete his musical education with Shrimati Annapurna Devi, the illustrious daughter of Allauddin Khan. Hariprasad-Ji thus carries on a musical tradition of the highest caliber, adding to his own inimitable genius. He now stands at the pinnacle of achievement in North Indian music.

Rag Ahir Bhairav is a light classical melody for the early morning hours that combines the profound elements of Rag Bhairav with a lifting folk melody of the Ahir, a pastoral tribe of India's mountainous areas. Its mixture of romantic and devotional moods with a touch of mystery evokes the
expectant hush of the predawn hours. This is a time when romantic thoughts of
the night mix with a feeling of reverence for the daily return of life-giving forces.

The flautist begins to unfold the haunting notes of this rag (accompanied
only by the tonic drone of the tambura) in the loosely structured and
rhythmically free alap section. Gradually the music takes on a feeling of rhythmic
pulse as the artist moves into the section called jor. As the flautist begins a
gat, or theme, the music takes on a new dimension with the introduction of a
7-beat rhythm cycle \((3 + 2 + 2)\) played on the tabla drums. The performance
builds in intensity and complexity, reaching a thrilling climax with high-speed
variations in the 16-beat rhythm cycle called teental \((4 + 4 + 4 + 4)\).

The performance captured on this recording represents an early meeting of
Hariprasad-ji with the great percussionist Zakir Hussain. This historic
1974 concert at the Stone House in Fairfax, California is marked by a youthful
vigour that cannot fail to inspire the listener. In an enthusiastic exchange of
rhythmic complexities these two artists reveal the mastery of improvisatory
technique that is a hallmark of Indian music.

\textbf{VENIU was recorded live at a 1974 concert in a large granite room, literally
a stone house. B\&K condenser microphones with custom-selected field
effect transistors were directly coupled to a custom Ampex MM-1000 16-track
recorder. This eliminated the normal mixing console and vastly reduced distortion,
while enhancing the signal-to-noise ratio. We close-miked each instrument
and also made a stereo image recording of the room in order to capture its
natural stone ambience.}

\textbf{VENIU was re-mixed July 30–31, 1989 at Studio X in Petaluma, CA. The
16-track master was mixed using a Studer A 80 16-track through a Neve
8058 console to a MCI analog 2-track recorder with Dolby SR noise reduction. Quantec
digital reverberation was used for spatial enhancement. The analog
2-track tape was transferred directly to a Sony PCM digital 2-track for CD pro-
duction. The mixdown process was monitored using Meyer 833 Studio Monitors,
with sub-woofers.}