Kane Mathis
& Roshni Samlal

DePaul Recital Hall
804 West Belden Avenue • Chicago
Kane Mathis, kora & oud
Roshni Samlal, tabla

Guest Recital

Program

Selections will be announced from stage.
The Kora

The kora is arguably the most complex chordophone of Africa. It is played in the westernmost part of Africa in Mali, Gambia, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Senegal. Each of the regions has characteristic playing styles and to some extent a region can be deduced from specific repertoire, but they share quite a bit of repertoire as well. It is very common to hear the same song with a variety of regional variants. The people most famous for the development of the kora are the Mandinka of The Gambia, Senegal and Guinea-Bissau.

The kora is made from a calabash gourd that has been cut in half with a hardwood post that runs through it to which the strings are attached.

The calabash is covered with a cowhide that is stretched over the open side and then left in the sun to dry tight and hold the handposts in place. A tall bridge is mounted upright on the skin face of the instrument and separates the strings into two planes. The kora player supports the instrument with the third, fourth and fifth fingers and the notes are played with the thumbs and forefingers of both hands. A kora can take up to a month to make in the hands of a skilled craftsman.

When the craftsman is at the stage of stretching the skin over the calabash it can sometimes take up to three people to pull it properly. A traditional kora has 21 strings, but it is very common to see additions. The kora is strung with monofilament fishing line in varying thickness. In the days before monofilament was available, braided antelope hide was used and produced a sound less brilliant than the modern kora sound. The range of the kora is about 3 and 3/8 of an octave and is capable of highly contrapuntal textures.

A kora musician may accompany his own voice or he may have a singer sing the vocal line while tapping the rhythm on the calabash. Kora repertoire may also be performed instrumentally. Since each kora song relies strongly on the vocal line it is easy to discern a piece when it is played instrumentally. A good musician will bring out the vocal line in an instrumental rendering of a traditional piece and ornament it and play off of that line with soloistic runs called birimintingo. The ostinato pattern that the vocal line or birimintingo is performed over is called the kumbengo. The kumbengo is not an ostinato in the orthodox sense of being a repeating line but is usually a looping contrapuntal texture.
The Oud
The oud is a half pear-shaped lute of north Africa and Asia minor. It traces its origin back to pharaonic times and its origin story is couched in myth as it is said to have been invented by Lamek, a 6th generation descendant of the Biblical Cain. The word “oud” indicates that the lute has wooden face as opposed to a skin face as its predecessors did. The oud is fretless and played with a plectrum in the right hand. Construction styles vary from region to region with Turkey, Armenia, and Greece sharing one family of tunings and the Arab and Jewish players generally using a slightly different style of construction and a lower tuning. Repertoire of ornamentation and interpretation vary from region to region although a lot of repertoire is shared. For example, one recording of the faculty of the Tunisian conservatory features a program heavily populated by Turkish composers.

Near eastern classical music consists of a single melody line that is performed by as many musicians as are on hand. This could be one or 50 with traditional chamber ensembles being around 5-10 people. There is essentially no functional harmony used although the performers in an ensemble will create spontaneously generated variations in heterophonic style. The theory system of near eastern music utilizes a modal system called makam. A makam is a confluence of pitch material and composition rules. There are hundreds of makams.

Notes by Kane Mathis.
Brooklyn-based Kane Mathis is active internationally as a performer, composer and educator. Specializing in music of West Africa and the Middle East, Mathis has a broad range of experience in traditional and contemporary contexts. His recorded and live performances have won him enthusiastic praise from music lovers and scholars alike. Mathis began his musical career at age 16 playing blues and jazz clubs in Chicago before going to the Lawrence Conservatory of Music to study jazz and classical guitar. Simultaneously Mathis began making trips to The Gambia, Africa, to live with a family of hereditary musicians, which he has done for the past 20 years. Mathis holds a diploma from the Tiramang Traditional music school in The Gambia and has performed for the President of The Gambia, the American Ambassador to The Gambia and he has appeared on Gambian National Radio and Television. In 2011 Mathis became the first non-African to be endorsed by the country’s National Center For Arts and Culture.

Mathis is also one of the leading interpreters of Ottoman classical music having studied with Mutlu Torun of Istanbul’s I.T.U. conservatory before beginning a five-year apprenticeship with oud virtuoso Münir Nurettin Beken. As a composer Mathis is regularly commissioned to create original works for dance, theatre and instrumental ensembles. He has created numerous works for dance over the past 10 years with newer works focused on electronic fixed media. Mathis is a 2010 Earshot Jazz album of the year winner and a recipient of the 2012 Chamber Music America grant. To learn more about Kane, visit his website: www.kanemathis.com.

Roshni Samlal is a New York–based tabla player originating from Trinidad, WI. At age 5, she was initiated into the tradition of Indian classical music both in vocal performance and tabla in the academic community of “Bharatiya Vidya Sansthan”, taught by the Hindusthani classical theorist and composer, Professor H.S.Adesh. Since 1998 she has continued her tutelage in the Benares style of tabla playing under Shri Tapan Modak and is currently a student of the epic Farukhbad exponent Pt. Anindo Chatterjee and the masterful Punjab/Benares. While her passion is Indian classical tabla, Roshni has performed in
many collaborative settings in creating scores for films and playing for kirtan singers such as Snatam Kaur and Nina Rao. Roshni has had the opportunity to accompany maestros in the Hindustani classical world, such as Pt. Subrata Roy Chaudhuri and Steve Gorn. Roshni is an actively performing member of the innovative collective, the Brooklyn Raga Massive, and teaches in the NY area.

If you enjoyed tonight’s performance, we invite you to attend An Evening of Composers & Choreography, tomorrow, Saturday, February 11, 2017 at 8 pm in the Concert Hall. Kane and Roshni will accompany new choreography by DePaul University faculty member Lin Bathsheva Kahn.
**Upcoming Events**

Saturday, February 11 • 8:00 p.m.
Concert Hall
Composers & Choreography: An Evening of Music & Dance

Friday, February 17 • 8:00 p.m.
Concert Hall
New Music DePaul

Saturday, February 18 • 8:00 p.m.
Concert Hall
Symphonic Choir

Thursday, February 23 • 6:30 p.m.
Recital Hall
Career Workshop: Freelancing 101 with Third Coast Music
Open to School of Music current and prospective students, and alumni.
For more information, please visit https://freelancingwiththirdcoast.eventbrite.com

Friday, February 24 • 8:00 p.m.
Concert Hall
Baroque Chamber Concert

Sunday, February 26 • 8:00 p.m.
Concert Hall
Brass Ensemble

Monday, February 27 • 7:00 p.m.
Recital Hall
Wind Chamber Showcase I

Monday, February 27 • 8:00 p.m.
Concert Hall
African Ensemble

Wednesday, March 1 • 5:45 p.m.
Concert Hall Green Room
Masterclass: Celeste Johnson, oboe

Wednesday, March 1 • 8:00 p.m.
Recital Hall
Jazz Combos I
Wednesday, March 1 • 8:00 P.M.
Concert Hall
Baroque Ensemble

Thursday, March 2 • 8:00 P.M.
Concert Hall
DePaul Wind Ensemble

Saturday, March 4 • 7:00 P.M.
Recital Hall
Cello Studio Recital

Saturday, March 4 • 8:00 P.M.
Concert Hall
DePaul Wind Symphony

Sunday, March 5 • 3:00 P.M.
Student Center • 2250 N. Sheffield Ave.
Jazz Ensembles

Sunday, March 5 • 3:00 P.M.
Concert Hall
Wind Chamber Showcase II

Sunday, March 5 • 8:00 P.M.
Concert Hall
String Chamber Showcase I

As a courtesy to those around you, please silence all cell phones and other electronic devices. Flash photography is not permitted. Thank you.

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