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The Spartanburg Philharmonic Kicks Off the 2022-2023 Espresso Series with an Enchanting Shot of ‘Chai Cello’ on September 30

East Meets West as Sandeep Das, a world-renowned tabla player, and Mike Block, a cellist hailed by Yo-Yo Ma as the “ideal musician of the 21st century,” joyfully join together for an exciting, soulful musical performance

(Spartanburg, South Carolina—August 8, 2022)...There’s no limit to musical creativity, and this year’s Espresso Series, presented by the Spartanburg Philharmonic, showcases several spectacular musicians who help make that so.

The series’ first performance on Friday evening, September 30, will feature Sandeep Das and Mike Block, both formidable musicians in their own right, who will blend the passionate rhythms of the tabla—the tuneful hand drums used in India—with the spirited expression of the cello for “**Chai Cello.**” The event will take place at the Chapman Cultural Center, starting with a happy hour at 5:30pm followed by a one-hour performance at 6:30pm.

Das and Block met as members of Yo-Yo Ma’s Silkroad Ensemble, which won the 2017 Grammy Award for Best World Music album. Das, a classical Indian tabla player and 2019-2020 Guggenheim Foundation Fellow, made his concert debut at 17 with Ravi Shanker, the renowned sitarist. Block, who straps his cello against his body when he plays so he can move with the music, was the first standing cellist to perform at Carnegie Hall. Yo-Yo Ma hailed him as the “ideal musician of the 21st century.”

As collaborators, Das and Block draw from traditional Indian rhythmic compositions and classic American melodies, such as *Glory in the Meeting House*. Their bold interpretations, such as *Brandenburg Meets Taj*, tantalize Westerners who catch snatches of Bach’s music against a rich Indian music backdrop.

The performers' eclectic, electric music is the first taste of the Espresso Series' new direction for the 2022-2023 season. The Spartanburg Philharmonic is using this year's Espresso Series to expand beyond its symphonic performers to introduce new musicians to audiences. "The space and format of the Espresso Series are ideal for talented musicians who perform alone or in small ensembles," explains Kathryn Boucher, Executive Director of the Spartanburg Philharmonic. "We are presenting innovative performers who are making their mark in the music world. Their presence complements Spartanburg's existing vibrant, dynamic arts culture."

The Espresso Series continues on November 18 with "**Jazz Java**," featuring the sensational jazz pianist Konrad Paszudski and his trio. On February 17, Jennifer Chang, a master guzheng (a 21-string Chinese zither), highlights "**Oolong Notes**," treating audiences to a blend of eastern and western classical pieces. The final Espresso performance, "**Fiddle Frappé**" on March 17, celebrates old world "fiddle" music, which has become a cherished part of American folk and country music. The performance will highlight the versatility of the violin and may include a touch of the Irish for St. Patrick's Day.

All Espresso Series performances are laid-back Friday evenings that begin with a 5:30pm happy hour, followed by a short shot of exhilarating music to spark conversation and jumpstart the weekend's fun. The ticket price includes light appetizers and beverages, including wine and beer.

The Spartanburg Philharmonic is now offering discounted subscriptions to all four performances. Adult subscriptions are available for \$90 (regularly \$100) and youth subscriptions are available for \$54 (regularly \$60). Individual ticket prices are \$25 for adults and \$12.50 for students and youth up to age 22. To learn more about the performances and to purchase tickets, the public is invited to visit <https://www.spartanburgphilharmonic.org/espresso>.

About the Spartanburg Philharmonic

Almost a century old, Spartanburg Philharmonic has its roots in the 1895 May Festival, the precursor of the South Atlantic States Music Festival founded in 1898, and one of only four such festivals featuring orchestras in the United States at that time. Recognized as a pillar of creativity, inspiration, and entertainment, Spartanburg Philharmonic is a modern orchestra with a strong foundation in traditional and contemporary music.

As a firm proponent of diversity and inclusion, the Philharmonic is dedicated to creating innovative and exhilarating experiences through memorable performances of well-known and rarely played works by female composers, composers of color, and both established and contemporary composers, for all members of the Spartanburg community and beyond.

An arts organization whose mission is to enrich, inspire, and educate through live performances of high-quality music, the Spartanburg Philharmonic partners with a variety of community, health, and education organizations to provide opportunities for all ages and abilities to enjoy. Amongst the programs are *Music Sandwiched In*, a free and open to the public lunch hour series; the Spartanburg Philharmonic Youth Orchestras, offering instrumental music education to students grades 6 through 12 in 16 different schools across three counties; and Carnegie Hall's Weill Institute's Link Up program, providing a music curriculum to 4th graders throughout Spartanburg County. To learn more, please visit www.spartanburgphilharmonic.org.