



Jasdeep Singh Degun

Anomaly

**HOWARD
ASSEMBLY
ROOM**

Wed 17 May 2023
7.45pm

Artists

Jasdeep Singh Degun
sitar

Kaviraj Singh
santoor

Kirpal Singh Panesar
esraj

Aisling Brouwer
piano

John Pope
bass

Harkiret Bahra
tabla

Glenn Sharp
guitar

Prathap Ramachandra
mridangam/kanjira/ghatam

Liz Hanks
cello

Programme

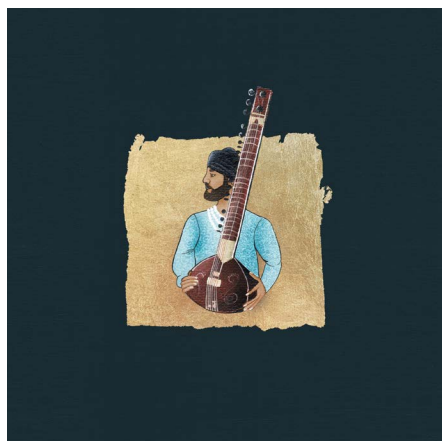
Veer
In Search of Redemption
Enigma 7.5
Mahogany

INTERVAL

Uterior Motives
Undertow
Rageshri
Nadia
Redemption (reprise)
Anomaly

Breaking down cultural boundaries with his extraordinary artistry and new approach to composition, virtuoso sitarist **Jasdeep Singh Degun** brings a new energy and vision to both Indian classical and contemporary music. He is redefining genres and is passionate about exposing music from his heritage to audiences across the globe. Learning under the careful guidance of Ustad Dharambir Singh MBE, Jasdeep has performed all over the world in venues including Buckingham Palace, the Amphitheatre in Doha, and Westminster Abbey at the Royal Commonwealth Service 2022 in the presence of the British Royal Family and Prime Minister. He has written, arranged, and produced music for a diverse array of projects and soundtracks, including music for orchestra, contemporary classical ensembles, and high-profile music productions. Signed to the prestigious Real World Records label, he released his much anticipated debut album *Anomaly* in 2022, working under the guidance of celebrated musician and producer Nitin Sawhney. He was announced as Artist-in-Residence at Opera North in 2022, an appointment designed to create new musical encounters and to bring unique ideas and perspectives to the Company. He was composer, co-music director and soloist in Opera North and South Asian Arts-uk's acclaimed cross-cultural opera *Orpheus*, which opened at Leeds Grand Theatre in October 2022.

Presented by South Asian Arts UK in association with Concerted Artists and Real World Records.



ANOMALY album available on Real World Records
VINYL / CD / DOWNLOAD / STREAM



Anomaly

Having spent much of 2022 breaking new ground as composer, co-music director and soloist on Opera North and South Asian Arts-uk's acclaimed opera *Orpheus*, this performance marks the return to the concert platform of sitarist, composer and Opera North Artist-in-Residence Jasdeep Singh Degun.

Written and recorded under the mentorship of Nitin Sawhney and released by Peter Gabriel's Real World Records last year, the 12 tracks of Jasdeep's debut album *Anomaly* range from shimmering high-wire sitar solos to lush, string-laden cinematic excursions. The album places the sitar – the Indian stringed instrument made from gourd and wood, dating from the Mughal Empire – in innovative and thrillingly contemporary settings. Yet its roots remain in ancient raags, the melodic frameworks used in the improvised performance of Indian classical music, and in Jasdeep's lifelong training in *gayaki ang*, a lyrical, expressive style of playing that mimics the human voice.

Like *Orpheus*, which brought European baroque opera together with South Asian classical music, *Anomaly* is built on the Leeds-born virtuoso's unique command of both Western and Indian classical traditions. Tasked with combining the richness and scale of chamber music with the spontaneity of Indian improvisation, the formidable eight-piece band assembled for the tour includes string, piano and guitar players from classical, contemporary and jazz backgrounds, with Kaviraj Singh (santoor) and Kirpal Panesar (esraj) from the *Orpheus* ensemble among performers from the Indian tradition.

'For me, it's really not a matter of different worlds meeting', Jasdeep reflects. 'It's just *me*: as much as I'm steeped in Indian classical music, I'm a product of this country; I'm a British composer'. Whether completing *Arya*, his concerto for sitar and orchestra – an Opera North commission – during a residency at Benjamin Britten's home in Aldeburgh, or working simultaneously in Indian taal and European time signatures with musicians from both spheres in the *Orpheus* rehearsal room, his approach to crossing musical cultures is always instinctive, organic, unprejudiced. '*Anomaly* is my way of shining a light on Indian classical music, on the music that comes naturally to me as a product of my surroundings as well as my training.'



He's just returned from Pune, western India, where he spent two months off-grid, during which he got back to the intense study of his instrument without distractions. Having 'really immersed myself in the music again' over long consecutive days of practice, he is clear that 'first and foremost I am an Indian classical musician: that's who I am.

'In our culture, you're always a student: we have the teacher-disciple tradition. My teacher is incredibly knowledgeable, but he also shows me how big the music is, how much we still have to explore. It's humbling because it's so vast. There are always new, intricate creative paths that you can take and the more you drill down into it, the better the musician you become: you can just go on and on, it's limitless'.

howardassemblyroom.co.uk

Photographs: Adam Lyons (cover); Robert Leslie (this page)

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