

RAW MATERIALS

vijay iyer + rudresh mahanthappa

“Years from now, listeners surely will marvel at one of the great partnerships in jazz: saxophonist Rudresh Mahanthappa and pianist Vijay Iyer. Each has gone a long way toward infusing the music with elements of South Indian culture. Together, they have pointed jazz in a new direction—or at least developed Eastern elements that long have been dormant in the music.” - Howard Reich, *Chicago Tribune*

“They effortlessly traverse traditions, their materials repeatedly coiling with the tensions of Indian scales and unraveling with forward rhythmic motion... Iyer and Mahanthappa create compelling music.” - Bill Shoemaker, *JazzTimes*

“Two gifted musicians who speak each other's language... Iyer's spiky chords, precise phrasing, and surprising linear improvisations are consistently compelling, and Mahanthappa reads his mind... Their work together over the past couple of years has displayed a rare cohesiveness. Each man is so assuredly rhythmic and so in tune with the other that you won't miss a rhythm section -- Iyer's percussive piano is rhythm section enough.” - Gary Giddins, *The Village Voice*

It's no exaggeration to describe pianist Vijay Iyer and alto saxophonist Rudresh Mahanthappa as two of the most celebrated young American jazz artists working today. In the past decade, these two visionary, award-winning innovators have gained tremendous recognition from critics, audiences, and musicians alike as world-class improvisers and composers, outspoken young Asian American voices, and important forces in the music world.

Since 1996, alongside simultaneous vibrant solo careers, Iyer and Mahanthappa have worked together constantly as a duo, performing their wildly inventive, collaborative music to widespread acclaim around the world. In 2006, Savoy Jazz released their first duo album, titled **Raw Materials**. *Time Out New York* called it "their most striking collaboration yet. A series of confident duets, the set combines stateliness with



rawness... It's like seeing two sides of the same coin." *All About Jazz* hailed the disc as "a total triumph from beginning to end."

Both sons of immigrants from India, Iyer and Mahanthappa are at the forefront of a new generation of American jazz musicians who explore their cultural heritage through their music. From the frontiers of New York City's creative landscape, they synthesize Asian, African, and European musical elements to create original music that is simultaneously state-of-the-art, timeless, and beyond category.

Grammy-nominated composer-pianist **VIJAY IYER** (pronounced "VID-jay EYE-yer") was described by *Pitchfork* as "one of the best in the world at what he does," by *The New Yorker* as one of "today's most important pianists... extravagantly gifted... brilliantly eclectic," and by the *Los Angeles Weekly* as "a boundless and deeply important young star." He was voted the 2010 Musician of the Year by the Jazz Journalists Association, and named one of the "50 Most Influential Global Indians" by *GQ India*. Iyer has released sixteen albums as a leader, most recently *Accelerando* (2012), an intense, visceral follow-up to the multiple-award-winning *Historicity* (2009), both featuring the Vijay Iyer Trio (Iyer, piano; Marcus Gilmore, drums; Stephan Crump, bass). *Historicity* was a 2010 Grammy Nominee for Best Instrumental Jazz Album, and was named #1 Jazz Album of the Year in *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Detroit Metro Times*, National Public Radio, PopMatters.com, the *Village Voice* Jazz Critics Poll, and the *Downbeat* International Critics Poll. The trio won the 2010 Echo Award (the "German Grammy") for best international ensemble and the *Downbeat* Critics Poll for rising star small ensemble of the year. Iyer's many other honors include the Alpert Award in the Arts, the New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship, the Doris Duke Performing Artist Award, the 2012 Greenfield Prize and numerous composer commissions.

Iyer's many collaborators include his generation's fellow forward-thinkers Rudresh Mahanthappa, Rez Abbasi, Craig Taborn, Ambrose Akinmusire, Liberty Ellman, Steve Lehman and Tyshawn Sorey; elder avant-garde pioneers such as Steve Coleman, Roscoe



Mitchell, Wadada Leo Smith, Butch Morris, George Lewis, and Amina Claudine Myers; new-music experimenters Miya Masaoka, Pamela Z, and John Zorn; hip-hop innovators Dead Prez, Das Racist, DJ Spooky, and High Priest of Antipop Consortium; South Asian percussionist-producers Karsh Kale, Suphala, and Talvin Singh; filmmakers Haile Gerima and Bill Morrison; choreographer Karole Armitage; and poets Mike Ladd, Amiri Baraka, Charles Simic, and Robert Pinsky. His concert works have been performed by the Ethel, JACK, and Brentano String Quartets, the Silk Road Ensemble, American Composers Orchestra, Hermès Ensemble, and Imani Winds.

A polymath whose career has spanned the sciences, the humanities and the arts, Iyer received an interdisciplinary Ph.D. in the cognitive science of music from the University of California, Berkeley. He has published articles in *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, *Wire*, *Music Perception*, *JazzTimes*, and *The Best Writing on Mathematics: 2010*. He was recently appointed Director of the Banff Centre's International Workshop in Jazz and Creative Music, a program founded in 1974 by Oscar Peterson. Iyer is currently engaged in a multi-year residency with San Francisco Performances, performing and working with arts and community groups.

He teaches at Manhattan School of Music, New York University, The New School, and School for Improvisational Music. His writings appear in *Music Perception*, *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, *Current Musicology*, *JazzTimes*, *Wire*, *The Guardian*, and the anthologies *Uptown Conversation*, *Sound Unbound*, *Arcana IV*, and *The Best Writing on Mathematics: 2010*.

For more info: <http://www.vijay-iyer.com>

Consistently heralded by critics as one of the most original composers in his field, altoist **RUDRESH MAHANTHAPPA**'s prolific contributions to contemporary jazz have earned him a Guggenheim Fellowship, commissions to create new work from the likes of the Rockefeller Foundation MAP Fund, Chamber Music America and the American Composers Forum, and a win in the 2011 Downbeat international Critics Poll. His rare



ability to synthesize South Indian music concepts with a seemingly boundless range of unexpected influences frequently characterizes him as one of the most important artists in the music today -- a distinction the Jazz Journalists Association recently echoed by naming him Alto Saxophonist of the Year three consecutive times from 2009-2011. But accolades aside, it's what the *New Yorker* has called Rudresh's "visceral tone and grab-you-by-the-collar attack" that's driven new, international audiences to each of the seven projects he currently leads or co-leads. His critically acclaimed 2010 release, *Apex (Pi)*, with alto saxophone legend Bunky Green, featuring Jason Moran and Jack DeJohnette, was widely lauded as one of the year's best recordings, as NPR, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Village Voice*, the *Boston Globe*, *JazzTimes* and other publications hailed the rhythmic dynamism and exuberant ensemble interaction sparked by the group both on stage and on the record. The material Rudresh recorded in 2008 with Carnatic sax guru Kadri Gopalnath for their *Kinsmen, (Pi)* project displayed a wholly different concept -- executed with equally breath-taking chops. And since the 2009 release of *Apti*, the tabla and guitar-studded Indo-Pak Coalition has provided a more playful take on Mahanthappa's symbiosis between the music of his ancestors and the jazz he grew up listening to in Colorado. In 2011, Rudresh set about revamping his own quartet by adding guitarist Dave Fiuczynski to the lineup and composing an entirely new body of work for the band. Other projects currently include trios *MSG* and *Mauger*, and the quintet, *Dual Identity*. Most recently Rudresh has signed a multi-record deal with the major European label ACT Music + Vision. His first release with ACT is the electro-acoustic quartet record *Samdhi*.

Though the formats vary widely, Rudresh's purpose shines through them all. In both his composition and his playing, he seeks to explore new musical territory and, in Rudresh's words, "to address what it is to be Indian-American by digesting Indian music on my own terms." By meticulously searching for a new swath of musical possibilities, Rudresh casts a wide net, incorporating inspiration from the gamut of his experience -- from his days as an undergrad at Berklee to his studies in DePaul University's Jazz Composition Masters program to his professional work with artists in North America, Europe, India, and beyond. Rudresh is a Yamaha artist and uses Vandoren reeds exclusively.

For more info: <http://www.rudreshm.com>



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