

Mp3 Nikhil Banerjee - Manomanjari, Sindhu Khamaj 1972



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Live sitar concert with tabla, North Indian classical music in Rotterdam, 1972. 11 MP3 Songs

CLASSICAL: New Age, WORLD: Asian Details: Raga CD-212 (2-CD set) Tabla: Zamir Ahmed Khan

Introduction by co-producer Ira Landgarten In the early 70s, while living in Amsterdam, I became infatuated with Indian classical music. Amsterdam was a true cultural crossroad, and the interest in the East was high. Many prominent Indian artists performed there during European tours, and there were even a few resident musicians like sarangi player Ustad Munir Khan and his tabla player son, Zamir Ahmed Khan who had developed a small, avid following. My particular focus of interest was sitar, and I voraciously tried to collect all and any recordings I could, mostly of Pandit Ravi Shankar and Ustad Vilayat Khan, which were available in abundance. One fateful day, a Dutch fellow aficionado, knowing of my obsession, asked if I was familiar with Pandit Nikhil Banerjee. Since I wasn't, he loaned me a well-worn Gramophone Company of India LP of Mr. Banerjee. That record (Lalit, Sindhu Bhairavi, Puriya Kalyan EASD 1355) immediately became my favorite and I searched high and low for more Banerjee; alas, very few recordings turned up. Then in the autumn of 1972, I got word that Mr. Banerjee would be in Europe and that there was a gap in his touring schedule between Belgium and Germany. I was convinced that he must come to Amsterdam. I immediately approached some friends at De Kosmos, a large old wooden church near the harbor which had been turned into a popular center for alternative activities. De Kosmos was in fact a mecca for world travellers, hippies and anyone interested in psychedelia, Eastern mysticism or the occult. So with the go-ahead from De Kosmos, I trained down to Brussels to meet Mr. Banerjee and escort him back to Amsterdam. He was performing at the Royal Opera and I arrived late. No one stopped me or asked for my ticket. As in a dream, I entered the dark hall ticketless! just as he began his spell-binding alap, and sat motionless in the aisle until the intermission. I was enthralled by

what I heard! After the concert, I introduced myself and we arranged to meet the next morning for our train ride to Amsterdam. We were forced to stand the entire journey, and I was amazed at how unperturbed he was about the lack of seats. He was from Calcutta, after all, and with his gentle, unassuming, philosophical nature he just took it in stride! Once we arrived, I delivered him to a small, cozy hotel near De Kosmos. There was a definite buzz of excited anticipation in the air as Mr. Banerjee took the stage lit by an enormous light-show projection. He began the performance with Manomanjari, a raga of his own design which he magnificently rendered with a sense of joyous heroism and virility. He concluded with a charmingly romantic rendition of Sindhu Khamaj, raga-mala fashion, sprinkled with tastes of Hamir, Hindol, Hindoli and, finally, Hansadhwani. Fortunately, Felix van Lamsweerde, from the Royal Tropic Museum, was able to capture this remarkable music on tape and allowed Raga Records to bring it to you. So enjoy! Ira Landgarten Zamir Ahmed Khan started to study at age 4 with his grandfather Ustad Nazeer Khan and his uncle Faiyaz Khan. Later he studied with his maternal uncle, Hidayat Khan of Jaipur. He is also a disciple of the late Ahmed Jan Thirakwa. He is the son of sarangi maestro Ustad Munir Khan. He has been based in Amsterdam for many years, teaching; and performing and recording with many of India's leading musicians.

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