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Press Release

Nishagandhi festival: Anoushka Shankar At 'Home' in 'God's Own Country'

Thiruvananthapuram, Jan 19: Celebrated musician Anoushka Shankar will draw from both the cultural tempo of 'God's Own Country' and her new album 'Home' for her concert at the opening of Kerala's annual Nishagandhi festival on Wednesday, January 20.

As the curtain rises on the eight-day music and dance festival in the state capital, the much-anticipated performance – her last in India this season – will see Anoushka's primarily classical Hindustani repertoire married to elements of the Carnatic musical tradition.

"We have two such rich classical traditions in India and it's just lovely to explore them together," said the five-time Grammy nominee, speaking at a press conference on the eve of the festival.

"Being a sitar player, the music I play is predominantly Hindustani classical, but often I'll incorporate some Carnatic ragas and taals," Anoushka said.

"I don't really differentiate between the two. I love music and bringing different styles together is something that matters to me very much," she added.

Besides such stylistic improvisations – in keeping with "the constantly evolving, never static tradition of Indian classical music" – Anoushka will perform from her new album, a contender for 'Best World Music Album' in this year's Grammy Awards.

'Home', composed as homage to her late father sitar legend Pandit Ravi Shankar, features two ragas, of which one, Raga Jogeshwari, is her father's creation.

"Indian classical musical is my first language, having grown up with it since childhood. I was very privileged to have the greatest exponent of his form of music living in my house, to watch him approach his art and for him to be willing to teach me," Anoushka said.

"My father was my Guru. His advice didn't come to me in words as in practice and example. The lesson I learnt from him was to be humble. He was the pinnacle of his music form, but he was always connected to how much better he could be," he added

It was through her father too that Anoushka was introduced to Kerala. "My first visit here was for his performance in 2000." It was a homecoming of sorts for the self-described "one-quarter Malayalee from my mother's side". She described exploring the state during that and a later visit as "beautiful and unique".

"To be able then to open the Nishagandhi festival in my third performance in Kerala, I'm both excited and grateful," she said, promising a "magical" evening.



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Anoushka, who is visiting the state with her family at the invitation of Kerala Tourism, is also preparing a travelogue on Kerala, which will be telecast on global television channels.

The Nishagandhi festival, organised by Kerala Tourism, will run up to January 27 – with several internationally acclaimed artists and musicians, like tabla maestro Ustad Zakir Hussain and Hema Malini taking part.

Kerala Tourism Secretary Shri G Kamala Vardhana Rao and Director Shri P I Sheik Pareeth were also present at the press conference.

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