



Indian ghazal and modern electronica – Percussionist Sebastian Åberg breaks new ground

New release from the Country & Eastern label unites two musical extremes

Sebastian Åberg has been combining tabla studies in India with drumming on club scenes in Sweden and England during the last ten years. Two seemingly different worlds that now has merged on his debut album. "I know that I've found the perfect combination of modern electronica and Indian art music", he says.

The first close contact with Indian music took place in 1998 for Sebastian Åberg, who earlier had been occupied mostly with rock and synth music behind the drums. He went to Panjim on the south Indian west coast to study tabla for the master Maruti Kurdekar.

- I stayed for a year and during that time the idea of finding new types of meetings between classical Indian music and more modern western influences began to take shape, he explains.

The studies at Kala Academy gave Sebastian Åberg an opportunity to do an in-depth study of the strict rules as well as the poetic freedom of classical Indian music - and his love for the complex and dynamic tabla grew strong. So strong that he two years later returned to India with recording equipment as only luggage.

- I stayed for six months. During some intensive weeks, I recorded with local musicians. I used some basic ideas that I had prepared in Sweden for structure and inspiration.

The Sangeet Project was thereby established.

The first meeting

Since then, a lot has happened. Intensive studio work with production and additional recordings with Swedish musicians - on lapsteel and Turkish doudouk to name a few examples - has finally ended in seven tracks that Sebastian describes as music that preserves the traditional magic and structure of the raga, but with "heavier beats and a more suggestive, electronic feeling".

- Two things have been important for me during this process. First – that the origin, the raga, is handled with esteem. Secondly – that the musical meeting between east and west actually enhances the musical expression, more than becoming a gimmick.

At the end of September it's time for Sebastian Åberg to prove his case. Two Indian musicians of world class, Maruti Kurdekar on tabla and the singer Pradip Sarmokadam, will then arrive in Stockholm to join forces with the Swedish musicians for the first time. The premiere live appearance at "Country & Eastern Nights" is scheduled for September 27th at the Ethnographic museum in Stockholm.

- That's of course completely fantastic, Sebastian says smiling. I hope, and believe, that both the album and the concert also will show that it's possible to create music that appeals to specialists on both edges as well as the modern people that stands in between.

Country & Eastern Nights presents "the Sangeet Project" – East meets west under the guidance of Sebastian Åberg.

Musicians: Sebastian Åberg, Maruti Kurdekar, Pradip Samorkadam, Viktor Buck, Tobias Ersson and others.

Time/place: The Ethnographic museum, Stockholm, September 27th 2006.

Info: Several concerts and workshops with the Sangeet Project is being planned. See www.countryandeastern.se or www.sangeet.se for more information.