

S. Indian classical music highlights UO series

By Jennifer Rollings
Freelance Reporter

No mistakes allowed. This is the bottom line for performers of South Indian classical music.

"A musician simply cannot make any errors with any of the notes, combinations or various patterns," said Proteep Malik, a physics major who has studied Indian classical music for almost 10 years. "The slightest miscalculation could be disastrous."

The School of Music is offering the community the chance to observe this technical perfection in the music of vocalist Lalitha Krishnan, who will perform selections of classical music from South India on Sunday, April 26, at 7:30 p.m. in Beall Concert Hall.

The concert is part of the World Music Series, organized by the School of Music and co-sponsored by the Office of International Affairs and the Center for Asian and Pacific Studies.

"The series has three concerts a year and usually one of them is the music of India," said assistant professor Mark Levy, who is a specialist of ethnomusicology in the School of Music.

Indian music is based on a complicated blend of composed musical material and the art of improvisation within that material.

"Indian music in general does not have any counterpoint or harmony," Malik said. "Basically, it's totally melodic, unlike European classical music."

There are two separate categories of classical music in India: Hindus-

tani music in the north and Carnatic music in the south.

"To the ear of the novice American listener, North Indian music could be compared to jazz," Malik said. "South Indian music, however, has a much more disciplined playing style which requires mathematical precision."

The most common form of South Indian classical music is the kriti, an often religious devotional poem, that is set to a melody sung in a particular raga or mood.

"Because the kriti is the most common genre, we'll probably be hearing some of those Sunday night," Levy said. "It's hard to predict what else the singer will do. Because Indian music involves so much improvisation, the singer can select her pieces depending on her mood or the vibes in the air."

During Sunday's concert, Lalitha Krishnan will be accompanied by Madurai Gnanasudaram's violin, which carefully follows the melodic line of vocals.

"When the singer makes an improvisation, the violinist responds with a similar improvisation," Malik said. "It's as if the singer is asking a question and the violinist is answering, like a language."

Alongside Krishnan and Gnanasudaram, Ganapathy Rama will play a mridangam, a barrel-shaped, two-headed drum held horizontally on the musician's lap. Listeners will also notice what Levy describes as an "omnipresent drone" provided by a long-necked instrument called a tambura.

Tickets are \$10 general admission and \$8 for students and seniors.

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