

SUKARMA

(Redefining Nepali Traditional and Classical Music)

1. Introduction

The tangible heritages of Nepal are no new story to the rest of the world. However, Nepali music and especially Nepali instrumental music, is pride of Nepal on its own right. Sukarma is one of the musical group which has already won heart of the millions with their enchanting melody. Formed in 1997, Sukarma, as the word refers to as "good deeds". It is Nepal's most sought-after traditional -classical outfit initially founded by instrumentalists Dhrubesh Chandra Regmi and late Atul Prasad Gautam. Music for them is not only the means to sustain their livelihood but it's a way of life; a quest for inner beauty, love and peace. With the passage of time, many members have joined and left the group but the mission of Sukarma has been going on. Currently, many aspiring young, talented and versatile national and international artists are involved with Sukarma known as Friends of Sukarma and promoting Nepali music globally.

In the words of Professor Abhi Subedi "the musicians of Sukarma are the walking museum". As an ideal, the group takes devotion to music as a source of harmony and contribution to the wellbeing of society. Sukarma while reposing its undying faith on the ragas and rhythms of the South-Asian musical tradition, also adds value to the classical music through innovative fusion of indigenous folk music of Nepal to create peace and harmony. However, the group remaining faithful to the spirit of music is always keen and open to innovation and experimentations. The group has traveled far and wide winning the hearts of countless music lovers and have received various prestigious awards as well as produced over fifteen audio and visual CDs to its credit.

2. Brief of the artists

a. Prof. Dr Dhrubesh Chandra Regmi (Sitar)

Dhrubesh is a rare exponent of sitar belonging to the illustrious musical family of Nepal. His great grandfather Dev C Regmi is credited for pioneering sitar in Nepal. Thus, he is reckoned as the fourth generation of sitar player within his own family lineage. Under the tutelage of his father late Prof Satish C Regmi he honed his skills and as he grew up he joined the esteemed music schools such as Gandharva Mahavidyalaya and Delhi University in India. He also feels very fortunate to avail lessons from renowned Indian Maestros Prof Anil Dhar, Pt Binay Chandra Maudgalya and most importantly, Pt. Uma Shankar Mishra.

Dhrubesh became the first musician to hold PhD degree in music in Nepal from Delhi University for his dissertation titled "History of music in Nepal with special reference to classical music during the Rana period." Dhrubesh, has a more than 3 decades of teaching experience as a Professor at Padma Kanya Multiple Campus, currently working as Head of the

Central Department of Fine Arts, Tribhuvan University. Dhrubesh, a respected name in the field of music in Nepal is also a recipient of various prestigious awards and prizes which includes title of Goodwill Ambassador for Nepal Tourism Year 2011 by the Government of Nepal. A law graduate Dhrubesh has also completed his post-doctorate and artistic work on the theme of 'Music for peace and harmony' from The City University of New York, USA as a Fulbright Visiting Scholar and extensively traveled many parts of the world.

b. Umesh Pandit (flute)

Umesh Pandit started learning flute at his early age under the guidance of flutist and founding member of Sukarma Manose Singh and Sehnaï with late Pt. Madan Bhatta. As a fine musical talent, he has been honored and recognized by various national and international artistes that include an opportunity to play together with the Grammy Award winning famous Indian Classical Hawaiian guitarist Pt. Vishwa Mohan Bhatt. He has performed in different places in Nepal and abroad. Umesh has proved himself as a successful composer and flutist among his fellow artistes. Currently, he is working as a flute instructor in various institutions and has been also active in performing and recording. He has won several awards and prizes that include first prize in the music competition organized by Kirateswar Sangeet Ashram, Narayan Sangeet Pratisthan, Kalanidhi Sangeet Mahavidyalaya, among others.

c. Jagannath Dhaugoda (tabla and percussion):

Jagannath Dhaugoda is an enthusiastic and proactive percussionist with the playing experience of more than 15 years. Initially he learned tabla with late Santosh Verma and later on with a renowned Tabla Player Pt. Samir Day of India. A bachelor degree in tabla from the Tribhuvan University and Sangeet Prabhkar (B.Mus) from Prayag Sangeet Samiti, Allahabad, Dhaugoda has been honored with many prestigious awards and recognitions as the young classical musician from several organizations. He is renowned among national and international personalities as he has showcased his talent in countless platforms including reality shows like the Nepal Idol, Voice of Nepal, Voice of Kids Nepal in various seasons and musical performances with renowned classical and modern artists. Furthermore, Dhaugoda is also well-known for being talented and humble recording artist and has filled his rhythmic excellence in many popular songs. Being a freelancer, he also spares his time to share his musical knowledge to the upcoming keen students to expand the musical bliss among people and is involved in teaching music in various organizations.

3. Brief Introductions of Instruments

Except some organizers demand or request by providing all expenses of artists, normally, the group travel with three members. The combination of the instruments will be Sitar, Tabla, Madal, Flute and Sarangee with many other percussion instrument. Below is the brief introduction of the instruments:

- a. **Sitar:** *Sitar* is perhaps the most famous classical stringed instruments in Nepal. Originally, sitar had only three strings and thirteen frets but the modern sitar has a total number of sixteen to twenty-two slightly curved frets of brass or silver, seven main strings and eleven to thirteen sympathetic strings (*tarab*) which are fastened to big and small pegs on the neck and the sides. The sympathetic strings are tuned to produce the scale of the melody. The *sitar* is played by means of a wire plectrum (*mizrab*) worn on the forefinger of the right hand. Traditionally, it is believed to be the sacred instrument of Goddess Saraswati, the Hindu Goddess of Wisdom.
- b. **Tabla:** *Tabla* is the most widely used percussion instruments in Nepal in both classical and modern music. The *tabla* constitutes a vital part of classical music, and no concert, either vocal or instrumental, can take place without a pair of *tablas*. It consists of two drums, the left or the one played with the left hand and the right played with the right hand. The left one is made either of clay or of copper while the right is usually hollowed out of block of wood. Both are covered with skin fastened to leather hoops, which are stretched over the body of the drum by means of leather braces. The *tabla* is used for solo playing as well as also extensively used as accompaniment to lighter varieties of music.
- c. **Madal:** *Madal* is one of the famous folk musical instruments associated with our culture and lifestyle. It is famous and used by almost all of the Nepalese society. This instrument is made especially with skin stretched over both of the ends of a wooden hollow tube and tightened with leather strings. *Madal* is drum played by hand beating on both sides. The *madal* has a strand that goes around the waist of the person playing it to hold it horizontally. Playing technique involves rhythmic struck one either ends (heads) with palm.
- d. **Sarangee:** *Sarangee* is a popular folk strings musical instrument, traditionally played by Gandharva who originally resides in the hilly and mountainous area of Nepal. It is an instrument made of a piece of wood, the bottom of which is made a hollow and four pieces of strings are fastened tightly with four wooden nails fixed on the top of it. It is played by rubbing on a group of strings especially left and right repeatedly with a small stick, which is fastened with some strings. *Sarangee* resembles the violin in western culture. Besides entertaining the people and community, in early days it used to play in Nepal to spread and convey the message and news across the country.
- e. **Flute:** The instrument is a simple cylindrical tube, mostly of bamboo of uniform bore, closed at one end. There are different kinds of flutes and their lengths and number of holes varies. The length can be anything from eight inches to two and a half feet. Long flutes have a rich, deep and mellow tone whereas in small flutes the tone is bright and high pitched. In addition to the mouth hole, there are six to eight holes arranged in a straight line. The range

of the flute is about two and a half octaves, the normal range of the human voice. It seems incredible that such a wide range of notes can be produced from only six to seven holes. This is among one of the very popular instruments in Nepal.

4. Brief about the presentation

The prime objective behind the music presented by Sukarma is to spread the message of peace and harmony through music as well as showcase a musical rendition of unity in diversity through fusion of folk, eastern and western music. Needless to say, folk-classical and fusion music of Sukarma truly represents the rich culture of Nepal such as; Nepal's uniqueness, cultural diversity, landscape and its people. Besides that, the compositions also represent themes and issues related to environment, climate change right based approach, community rights and the messages of peace and harmony.

Music knows no territorial boundaries and is above race, nationality, caste and ethnicity. As an ideal, the group takes devotion to music as a source of harmony and contribution to the wellbeing of society. Sukarma while reposing its undying faith on the ragas and rhythms of the South-Asian musical tradition, also adds value to the classical music through innovative fusion of indigenous folk music of Nepal as well as other popular genres of music. The unusual convergence of classical and folk music and instruments, presents a broadening of possibilities for dynamic musical expression.

5. List of Compact Disc (CDs) of Sukarma

- **Revival**, Sukarma, 2018.
- **Best of Sukarma (Vol 1- 4)**, Sukarma, 2013, 2016, 2018.
- **Hope**, Ujyaalo Network Pvt. Ltd. And Sukarma, 2015.
- **Folk Mala**, Sukarma, 2010.
- **The Himalayan Journey**, Sukarma, 2010.
- **Abako Nepal** (Musical theme of New Nepal); Gurukul, 2008.
- **Eastern Bridge** (Fusion of Jazz, Rock and Eastern classical) Riyaaaz Music 2007.
- **Sukarma with Ibsen** (Three dramas in musical form); Arohan Theatre and Sukarma 2006.
- **Divine Path**, Sukarma, 2005.
- **Karmas of Sukarma- Mero Desh**, Visual Compact Disc (VCD), Sukarma, 2005.
- **Mountain Mantra** (Music for Peace and Harmony) Sukarma, 2004
- **Upasana** (A unique combination of Nepali sarangi with sitar) Sukarma, 2002
- **Ghansi** (Fusion of Nepalese folk with classical music), Dexo Music Centre, 2002
- **Kirateswar** (Classical Raga Music), Dexo Music Centre, 2002

- **Mustang** (Relaxation and Meditation), Dexo Music Centre, 2002
- **KARMA** produced by Music Nepal Pvt. Ltd. 2000.
- **Tarang**, Prastar's presentation, East Meets West Music Box, 1997
- **Towards the Peace**, Music Nepal Pvt. Ltd. 1994

6. Some major International events (after 2002 only)

- **Concert tour to USA** 20 May to 25 June (Armenian Church in Boston, Eastern Music Academy- Queens- New York, Jalopy Theatre- Brooklyn, NY; Laxmi Narayan Temple in Orlando. Florida and Seti Foundation in Seattle, WA).
- **Europe Concert Tour 2018:** 1- 4 June France; 5-20 June Germany and 21-30 June Switzerland.
- **Europe Concert Tour 2017:** Germany – 6 to 16 August and Switzerland – 17 to 28 August.
- **Spring Swaranjali** (Featuring Alumni of the Faculty of Music and Fine Arts Delhi University), East Indian Music Academy Inc., Queens, New York, 11 June 2017.
- **Music from Himalaya at the Piccolo Festival**, Pure Theatre, Charleston, SC, USA, organized by Other Brother Entertainment 28- 29 May 2017
- **Europe Concert Tour 2016:** 27 May to 20 June (Italy: May 28 to June 7 including participation at an **International Village Guitar Festival** in Sarzana and 20th edition of festival **Artistee in Piazza** in Pennabelli, Rimini, Italy); Switzerland 9 to 20 June).
- **Concert tour to Europe** (Germany 15 – 24th July; France 26 – 27th July; Belgium: 28-30 July; Switzerland: 31st July to 8th August) 14 July to 10 August 2015.
- **A special performance of Sukarma** Organized by National Art Council of Pakistan/ Lahore Art Council and Embassy of Nepal, Islamabad (10 March) and Lahore (12 March), 2015.
- Concert at the **International Workshop on Instrumental Music** organized by Department of Instrumental Music, Benaras Hindu University, Benaras, India, 16–22 Nov. 2014.
- **Concert tour to Switzerland** 8 August 2014 to 26 August 2014
- A Special Evening of Raga "**Swaranjali - Spring**", presented by East Indian Music Academy, South Ozone Park, Queens, New York, USA. 1st March 2014.
- "**Valentine day special fusion with a renowned guitarist and music Composer Phiroj Syngden**" Himalayan Yak, Jackson Height, Queens, New York, USA. 14th February 2014
- **The Colours of Himalayas: Ragas and Melodies from South Asia**, CUNY Academy, The Graduate Centre, City University of New York, New York, USA, 4 February 2014
- **Spiral Music Concert** with American flutiest Steve Gorn, Rubin Museum of Art, NY, USA, 29 Jan 2014
- **Concert at the Art Museum of Honolulu**, USA, 26 Jan 2014

- **Two days of Sacred Music from Nepal:** Polestar Garden, Pahoehoe (16 Jan 2014); Waiaka Events Saloon, Kamuela (17 Jan 2014), organized by Indian Classical music Circle of Hawaii, Big Island, USA.
- **Brooklyn Raga Massive**, Brooklyn, New York, USA, 5 September 2013
- **Concert Tour to Europe-** 29 May 2013 to 17 June 2013 (France, Switzerland and Italy)
- Special Concert at the Inaugural of **Nepal China Cultural Festival**, 15- 18 September 2012, Beijing China organized by Nepali Embassy, Beijing, China
- **Concert Tour to Europe-** 25 May to 1 July 2011 (Switzerland 26-30 May and 19-21 July; Italy: 31 May-3 June; France and Belgium: 4-18 July; Germany: 22 – 24 July; Denmark 25 -30 June)
- A Musical recital with renowned Nepalese and Korean Poet in Hong Kong and South Korea, **World Literary Journey** July 29 to August 7, 2010
- **Concert tour to Europe-** 28 May to 11 July 2010 (France, Belgium and Luxembourg: 29 May to 19 June; Netherlands: 20- 23 June; Switzerland: 24 June – 10 July)
- **Concert Tour to Europe-** 19 June to 10 August 2009 (Germany: 19-25 June and 28 June- 4 July; Netherlands: 25-27 June; Belgium: 5–9 July; Italy: 22-24 July; Austria 26–30 July; France: 2- 4 August; and Switzerland: 10 – 21 July, 24- 25 July, 31 July – 1 August and 5 to 9 August)
- **Europe Concert Tour-** 29 May to 5 August 2008 (UK: 30 May- 8 June; Germany: 9 -14 June; Netherlands: 15 - 20 June; Belgium: 21 - 26 June; France: 27 - 30 June; Italy: 1 - 16 July and Switzerland: 17 July - 5 August)
- **Concert tour to Italy and Austria** 13 July to 27 July 2005.
- **Concert tour to Italy** 31 July to 11 August 2004
- Concert at **Bishkek Global Mountain Summit** 29 Oct–2 Nov. 2002 at Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.
- **Concert tour of Japan** organised by Medaka Family Association, Nara, Japan, 5–21 Oct. 03.
- **Concert tour to Europe-** 7 June 2002-17 August 2002: (France 8-20 June; Belgium 21-26 June; Germany 27 June-1 July and 6-21 July, 3–5 July Austria; Italy 22 July–17 August,)
- A special appearance at the International Congress "**The Alpine Process- An Approach for Other Mountain Regions?**" 29 June, 2002, Kongresshaus, Berchtesgaden, Germany.

7. Travel

Austria, Belgium, Brazil, China, Denmark, France, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Italy, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, Pakistan, Qatar, South Korea, Switzerland, Thailand, United Kingdom and United States of America.

8. Some links on YouTube

Composition Music

Ncell Sukarma Yatra <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QIVdB0PHBG8>

Upasana <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S4a9Cghn2tU>

Mero Desh <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CPqepi6WdQQ>

East meets West <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aB-HIYxP1BE>

Classical Music:

Semi folk Rag- Pahadi <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MtjC3ikzhcc>

Rag Bageshwari alap and bilamwit <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7mekhSnGH40>

Rag Bageshwari bilamwit and rajakhani gat <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RkNvhNVt80c>

Rag Malkauns alap and bilamwit gat <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bsvkemH-hBE>

Rag Malkauns bilamwit and rajakhani gat <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oczTqKaYSdM>

Last part Rag Charu KC <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rMZx4do7TD8>

For further information:

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**Prof. Dr. Dhruvesh Chandra Regmi
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**Shri. Jagannath Dhaugoda
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