

AN INTRODUCTION TO
THE CLASSICAL FLUTE
WESTERN CONCERT
AND NORTH
INDIAN BANSURI

The Donnelly Music Studio Presentation Series

May 1, 2025

7:30 p.m. (EST)



Guest Artists

Elaine Newhall, Western Concert Flute

Jeff Whittier, Bansuri Flute



Welcome to the Donnelly Music Studio Presentation Series. Today we are pleased to present two classical flutes: the Western concert flute and the North Indian Bansuri.

Our guest artists are renowned in their fields as performers and teachers. Elaine Newhall is Principal Flautist with the Columbia Orchestra where she currently holds a position on the Board of Directors. Elaine is also a member and Treasurer in the Greater Columbia Music Teachers Association. The Elaine Newhall Flute Studio is located in a historic home in Columbia, recognized by the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties. Jeff Whittier hails from California, where he is a professional musician and teacher, and a prominent bansuri flute maker. He is recognized among Hindustani classical musicians, film orchestras and Broadway for his performances and his flutes, featured in many films including “The Lion King.” We heartily welcome both esteemed colleagues.

Using an interview guided question and answer format, each speaker will briefly review the history of their instrument and its relevance today in professional music.

Elaine Newhall



Elaine Newhall performs as principal flute with the Columbia Orchestra where she also serves as a member of the Board of Directors and is also a member of the Greater Columbia Music Teachers Association. She has maintained a private studio in Howard County since 1980. She earned her B.S. in Music Education from College of St. Rose, Albany, NY, and M.M. in Music Education from SUNY Potsdam, NY, Crane School of Music. Mrs. Newhall studied flute with Eleanor Barnes in Schenectady NY. Elaine was honored with the Howard County Arts Council Howie Award for Outstanding Artist 2001.

JEFF WHITTIER



JEFF WHITTIER began his formal study of North Indian classical flute in 1971 at the Ali Akbar College of Music in San Rafael, California with G.S. Sachdev. He is an exponent of the Indian classical tradition called “Gayaki Ang” or the style of playing based on Hindustani vocal music. His music is noted for its purity of rag and tal, the exposition of ancient principles of melody and rhythm which are the basis of all classical improvisationists. He frequently performs at Hindu ashrams and temples in addition to the concert stage, and often plays classical music for Hindu and Muslim weddings. He was formerly the bansuri instructor at Shruthi Swara Laya, a school of Indian music in Fremont, California.

His music was used in the soundtrack of “The Asian Indians in America,” a documentary on Indian culture in the U.S. produced by the PBS station WLIW. As well as being a performer and teacher of the bansuri, or bamboo flute, he is also a master craftsman of the instrument. In a 50-year career of flute-making he has provided flutes to some of the most famous musicians of India, including P.J. Vijay Raghav Rao, G.S. Sachdev, and P.T. Hari Prasad Chaurasia. His flutes are also used in the orchestras of the Broadway shows “Tarzan,” “The Flower Drum Song,” “Miss Saigon,” “The King and I,” “Bombay Dreams,” “The Book of Mormon,” “Amazing Grace,” “Allegiance,” “When You Wish,” and “Aida.” For the Broadway production of “The Lion King” Disney gave a credit for his flutes in the Playbill.



