

A taste of traditional Nepali music

You are invited to enjoy an evening of Nepali folk music in Wrexham.

*Meic Llewellyn &
Norma Blackstock*



Ram Prasad Kadel has played the Shankha since childhood, as is the tradition in Brahmin families, and has a lifelong love of his country's folk music. He has accumulated unequalled knowledge of Nepal's music culture over thirteen years of playing, collecting and research throughout the country.

Nepali people regard music as indispensable in every ceremony and rite of passage, from birth to death - and even after death, during funeral rituals and annual ceremonies to remember deceased ancestors. In recognition of this importance temples have traditionally owned land, known as Guthi land, the produce of which was used to support the temple's musician families. But in spite of the importance of music in Nepali life, the musicians themselves have always held a lowly position in society, regarded as Dalit or untouchable by most people in higher castes.

Due to their lowly position, musicians were usually uneducated and music and lyrics rarely written down. Melodies, lyrics, dance steps and instrument-making techniques were, until recently, passed down through the generations from father to son in an unbroken chain. The past fifty years, though, have seen the introduction of radio and television to Nepal as well as an influx of tourists, with their own musical tastes, especially during the 1970s. The twelve year civil war has also fractured family ties and other social patterns, and Nepal's crushing poverty - it is one of the ten poorest nations in the world - has led to widespread apathy regarding the nation's cultural heritage. All these factors have led to a rapid decline in

the popularity of folk music, and many of the forms and even the instruments are now facing extinction.

Ram felt that something must be done to stem the loss of his country's precious musical heritage before it was too late, and in 1995 began to make a collection of traditional Nepalese musical instruments. He used the profits from his own business to finance research trips and purchases of rare and endangered folk musical instruments, and in 1997 founded and registered the Nepali Folk Musical Instrument Museum (NFMIM), with the Government of Nepal. By 2002, NFMIM's collection of folk musical instruments had become the biggest and most comprehensive in Nepal, and a decision was taken to open the museum to public access. Temporary accommodation was found in Bhadrakali Temple in central Kathmandu, but in 2007, the collection, now numbering 250 types of instruments, was housed in larger and permanent premises at Tripureswor Mahadev Temple.

Over the last 12 years, NFMIM has broadened the scope of its work to encompass not only the collection, preservation and conservation of musical instruments but the rediscovery, conservation and promotion of the entire spectrum of Nepal's traditional musical heritage. Activities include research and the audiovisual recording of traditional music and dance, production of CDs and DVDs, transcription of melodies and lyrics not previously written down, teaching of playing technique to adults and children, workshops, discussion groups, conferences, national competitions, processions, concerts of live music and temporary exhibitions.

The museum, recently renamed the Music Museum of Nepal (MMN) wishes to raise the status of musicians, singers, dancers and craftsmen - who have traditionally also held a lowly position in Nepalese society - and to inform all citizens of the rich musical heritage it stands to lose if action is not taken. They believe it is also imperative to raise international awareness of Nepal's unique contribution to world music.

MMN provides bursaries for the education of talented poor children, and also medical treatment for impoverished musicians. In future years, MMN hopes to establish a research centre, archive, library and college of folk music which will offer training, accreditation and certification for performing musicians, singers, lyricists, dancers, choreographers and crafts people.

The Trio Naatyashwora includes as large a variety of tunes in their repertoire as possible, some dating back to the 12th century. Their performances include songs for every age from childhood through to old age, women's songs, ballads, religious and sacred music, and music relating episodes from the great Hindu epics such as Mahabharata and Ramayana. Ram's researches have gathered together melodies from throughout Nepal, from the Dimal people in the east to Jumla in the west, so the cultures of most ethnic groups and castes will be represented in their performances.

The trio's aim is to preserve and present authentic folk music performed on authentic Nepali folk instruments, including Maadal (the most popular and frequently played Nepali drum), Saarang (a four stringed bowed instrument belonging to the Gaine caste), Baansuri (a transverse bamboo flute), Jhaamtar (a plucked 2 stringed instrument), Majiraa (small brass cymbals) and Shankha (the conch shell). Our forefathers have given us our musical heritage, say the members of the trio, and they wish it to be available to their children for many generations to come, as well as to students and music lovers in the wider world.

MUSIC MUSEUM OF NEPAL

in association with Wrexham Peace and Justice Forum,
St. Mark's Church and Communities First, presents:

an evening of Traditional Nepali music with

TRIO NAATYASHWORA



featuring Ram Prasad Kadel, Director of the Music Museum of Nepal
in Kathmandu, along with three of the most experienced and
virtuoso traditional musicians of Nepal.

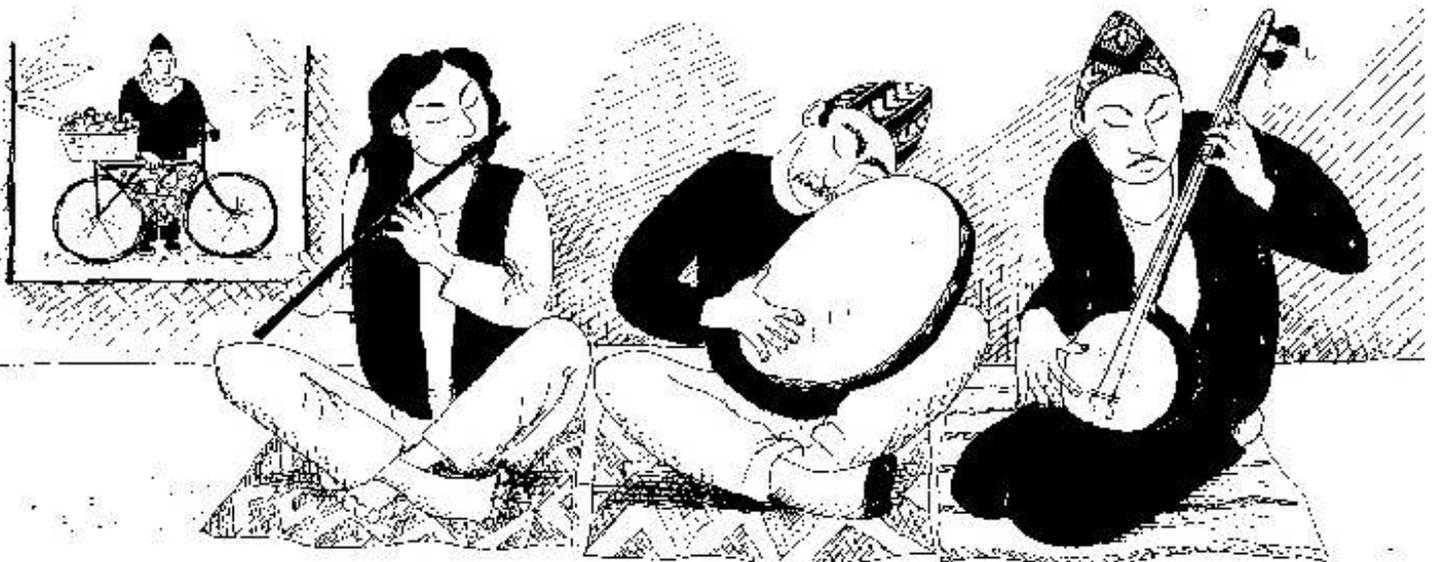
THURS 23 OCTOBER at 7.30 pm

St. Mark's Church, Bryn Eglwys Rd, Caia Park, Wrexham.

Tickets from:

Organic Oasis Charles St, Wrexham: 01978 266786

Communities First, 17-18 Gwenfro, Caia Park: 01978 314094



Tickets: Adult: £5, Concessions: £3, Children: £1

Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult.

For more information about this event, please contact: Norma Blackstock: 01248 490689,
Meic Llewellyn: 01650 511778 or Genny Bove: 0845 330 4505

Supported by the Arts Council of Wales 'Night Out' scheme