

The Human Experience

SOUND AS EMOTION.

We do not just hear sound—we recognize ourselves in it.

OPENING NOTE

This set is a journey through sound as emotion, memory, and lived experience. Across cultures, centuries, and genres, music becomes a shared language for what it means to be human. Though the forms change, the inner patterns—of longing, presence, grief, surrender, and joy—remain the same.

Sound is a language of emotion. Through it, patterns give shape to what we feel but cannot always say. The Human Experience unfolds through these patterns across time and tradition. Though the forms differ—chant, jazz, folk, lullaby—the emotional core remains shared. In these patterns, we also begin to recognize our connection to nature—the rhythms of breath, the movement of wind, the cycles that exist both within us and around us—reminding us to listen with care and live with respect for the world we are part of.

We see these human stories across centuries in song, enduring because of the truth and connection they carry. And as new technologies emerge, they have the potential to bring us closer—not just to each other, but to a deeper awareness of our shared humanity. We are connected, and always have been.

What does it mean to be human, for you?

In a world where everything can be generated, what is still truly lived—felt, chosen, remembered?

PERFORMING ENSEMBLE

Conceptualized by **Ramya Shankar**

Ramya Shankar *Vocals, Ukulele*

Prasant Radhakrishnan *Saxophone*

Peter Barshay *Bass*

Unpil Baek *Piano*

Zach Mondlick *Drums*

Varun Pattabhiraman *Mridangam*

Barbara Nerness *Biosignals*

PROGRAM

#	SONG	COMPOSER	CONNECTION TO THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE	THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE
1	Annapoorna Stotram	<i>Adi Shankaracharya 8th century CE</i>	In a world fractured by conflict, we turn to something ancient and steady. This Sanskrit devotional hymn is a prayer for sustenance of life, spirit, and compassion—celebrating divine nourishment and abundance. The Human Experience of nourishment, gratitude, and shared abundance.	Prayer for the collective
2	Be Here Now	<i>Ramya Shankar</i>	The human brain was never designed for this speed of life—pulled everywhere at once. We are here, but rarely here. This piece is an invitation to return—not to escape the world, but to arrive in it. The Human Experience of presence and awareness.	Presence
3	Moon River	<i>Henry Mancini & Johnny Mercer, 1961</i>	In the final moments of Breakfast at Tiffany's, Holly Golightly resists being held—"I don't want to be put in a cage." But Paul Varjak gently reminds her: we build our own cages, and keep running into ourselves. Somewhere between freedom and belonging... between fear and surrender... flows Moon River. This piece boldly weaves a Carnatic korvai into a jazz standard, bridging two rich traditions. The Human Experience of curiosity and exploration.	Adventure, Curiosity
4	Kaanaadha Dhura	<i>Arunagirinathar (Thiruppugazh), 15th c.</i>	A woman waits in silence for her beloved, carrying longing across time and distance. Rooted in the Thiruppugazh tradition, this piece opens with a vocalese where lyrics are set to a solo korvai, transforming rhythm into narrative and emotion. The Human Experience of love, separation, and resilience.	Love, Separation
5	Boulevard of Broken Dreams	<i>Al Dubin, 1933</i>	A meditation on solitude after illusion fades, reimagined through ragas Charukeshi and Shanmukhapriya, whose tonal pull evokes grief and longing. Opens with a Tamil poetic reflection by Ramya Shankar. The Human Experience of loneliness and inner searching.	Loneliness & Modern-day disconnection
6	Santatam	<i>Traditional Bhakti poetry, 15th century</i>	Rooted in Bhakti poetry, this piece reflects surrender—not as defeat, but as release. In letting go of control, we find a quieter form of freedom and trust. The Human Experience of surrender.	Surrender
7	Summertime (Porgy and Bess)	<i>Gershwin & Heyward 1934; Tamil lullaby by Ilaiyaraaja</i>	Summertime carries promise and quiet sorrow. A Carnatic korvai is interwoven with blues, juxtaposing promise and pain. Paired with a Tamil lullaby by Ilaiyaraaja, it honors those who care deeply while carrying unseen weight. The Human Experience of care and quiet endurance.	Promise and Pain
8	Adi Katre	<i>Ramya Shankar, Sankar Narayanan</i>	Breath moves like wind—shifting with emotion and inner state. The winds outside mirror the movements within us, reminding us of our deep connection to nature and self. The Human Experience of breath and connection to nature.	Our connection with Nature
9	Paani Mein	<i>Kabir, 15th century</i>	"The fish thirsty in water" reveals the paradox of seeking what already surrounds us. Kabir turns us inward, toward what has always been present. The Human Experience of longing and inner realization.	Inner Self Realization

◆ Thank you for being part of our Human Experience. We are all in this together. ◆