

Raag introduces vocalist



PHOTO COURTESY OF VEENA SAHASRABUDHE
VEENA SAHASRABUDHE, renowned for her North Indian vocal style called "khyal," will perform 7 p.m. Thursday at Unitarian Church, 6300 A St.

Concert Preview

RAMAKRISHNA PRASAD
Staff Reporter

With the taste of Indian cuisine and cultural programs still fresh in the minds of many after Saturday's "India Nite" in Nebraska Union, another opportunity to enjoy the country's ancient culture arises this week.

Raag, a student organization promoting Indian music and culture at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, brings celebrated Indian classical vocalist Veena Sahasrabudhe to Lincoln Thursday.

Veena is renowned for the contemporary vocal style called "khyal" in the Hindustani, or North Indian classical, musical tradition, said Piyush Srivastav, a geosciences graduate student and Raag member.

"The word khyal literally means imagination and is an extempore development and improvisation of the typical compositions sung in different ragas," Piyush said.

Khyal performances often start with a slow, rhythmic cycle, building up to a quicker one, Piyush said. Each beat is marked by a specific combination of strokes on the "tabla," an Indian drum, and the improvisation is punctuated by the first few words of the song. This becomes a familiar melody leading up to the first beat of the rhythmic cycle, Piyush said.

"All extemporized melodic or rhythmic variations aim for this beat,

and the gradual building of tension as it approaches is one of Hindustani music's great delights," Piyush said.

Hailing from a family of musicians, Veena and the authenticity of her music have been lauded by pundits, while many listeners are moved by their directness and intensity.

Veena is not new to some Lincoln residents. As a resident from 1974-75, she volunteer taught the nuances of Indian music to Priscilla Parson's world music class in the UNL School of Music.

"Veena told me everything about Indian music and gave a firsthand experience of playing the sitar and tabla to my students at that time," Parson said. "Veena's singing fascinated me, and I knew that Veena had something special to offer."

The singer's vocal wizardry has made her a much sought-after musician, and she has sung at many prestigious venues and occasions in India and around the world, including the Vokalfestival in Stockholm and the Voices of the World festival in Copenhagen. Besides being a popular performer, she is also a composer and teacher and has recordings under many world labels.

Veena's performance Thursday will also feature Bharat Kamat on the tabla, Pramod Marathe on the harmonium and vocalist Jayanthi Sahasrabudhe. Thursday's concert begins at 7 p.m. at Unitarian Church, 6300 A St. Tickets are \$5 for students, \$10 for general admission and are available Thursday at the door. For more details, visit Raag's Internet page at www.unl.edu/raag.

Willis provides 'Jackal' proper stone-cold mood

Movie Review

BY GERRY BELTZ
Film Critic

Cold. Methodical. No feelings. No remorse.

No, this isn't the weather forecast or mental training for a lawyer, but a description of the title character of the movie "The Jackal."

Known only as "The Jackal," a professional hit man (Bruce Willis) accepts a \$70 million contract for his latest assignment. From there, he slides into action, moving from country to country, switching identities at every turn. Every move he makes, every step he takes, brings him closer to his goal.

Hot on his electronic tail are FBI Deputy Director Carter Preston (Sidney Poitier) and Russian officer Valentina Koslova (Diane Venora). But they are too far behind already, and they don't even know what The Jackal looks like.

Eventually, they enlist the assistance of imprisoned, former underground operative Declan Mulqueen (Richard Gere), the only man alive who has ever seen the fugitive. However, Mulqueen has his own agenda with The Jackal, and no government agency will stand in the way of him achieving his goal.

"The Jackal" has as many twists and turns in the plot as The Jackal, himself, has different identities. This character is absolutely brilliant, and a certain admiration is gleaned from that very demeanor. In fact, at one point during the film, the moviegoer wants The Jackal to kill a craftsman who attempts to blackmail The Jackal into a higher payment for services rendered.

Still, the man is a stone-cold killer, and Willis portrays him as such. No sexy smirks or "yippee-kai-yay" anthems will be found here. This man is made of ice, manipulative and leaves very little — if anything — to chance.

Poitier does all right as your standard "working-to-uphold-the-

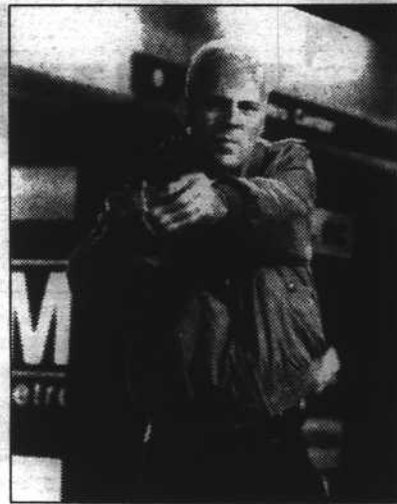


PHOTO COURTESY OF UNIVERSAL PICTURES
BRUCE WILLIS stars as the Jackal, a ruthless assassin hired to eliminate someone at the top of the U.S. government.

The Facts

Title: "The Jackal"
Stars: Bruce Willis, Richard Gere, Diane Venora, Sidney Poitier
Director: Michael Caton-Jones
Rating: R (violence, subject matter, language)
Grade: B+
Five Words: Master assassin hunted across globe.

law" government agency character, but as the movie continues, the character grows beyond that, revealing a man who wants to do what is right.

If Gere only could have done the role straight and without the (occasionally) annoying Irish accent, it would have been more enjoyable. He's rather happy-go-lucky, but becomes much more focused as the chase continues and time is running out. Still, his work in this film is excellent.

Director Michael Caton-Jones ("This Boy's Life") keeps the action flowing very well, and the suspense builds slowly; the actual assassination attempt will get palms sweating and knees bouncing in anticipation all through the auditorium.

"The Jackal" is a wild ride, and it's well worth it.



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