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The Bollywood Masala Orchestra and Dancers of India (COLUMBIA ARTISTS MANAGEMENT INC.)

BY DAN TAYLOR - October 14, 2015.

Botanists will tell you that the term Bollywood can refer a number of different tree species, but for most of us, the word conjures an image of India's equivalent of Hollywood, a thriving film industry perhaps best-loved in the United States for its infectious music and dance numbers.

Rahis Bharti, founder of the Bollywood Masala Orchestra and Dancers -- performing Friday, Oct. 16, at the Green Music Center -- goes beyond that with his latest touring show.

His goal is to capture some of the Bollywood screen experience in live performances, while embracing the entire rich cultural tradition of his native state of Rajasthan in northern India. RELATED STORIES

"Normally, when you talk about Bollywood, people are looking at the films and their musical comedy. The idea was to create a live orchestra and use the Bollywood songs. And the girls are dancing live. It's a spectacular and colorful show, and people love it," Bharti said. "I created this band because I belong to a traditional Indian musician family of Rajasthan. All of my family are musicians, and our forefathers used to play for the majarajahs," he said by phone during the troupe's current tour, its first visit to the U.S. and Canada.

To carry out his mission of sharing his musical legacy around the world, he formed a 17-member ensemble, including four dancers and an acrobat, as well as a dozen singers and musicians. During the past 14 years, Bharti's group has given more than 1,000 performances in 85 countries around the world, including a performance at Queen Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee celebration in London in 2012.

"As I traveled around the world, I was wanting to bring something new to the world. So I created an Indian brass band, because the brass bands are always playing at weddings and street festivals in Rajasthan," Bharti explained.

"Out of 5,000 brass bands in Rajasthan, I selected the best musicians living in the small villages and also the traditional musicians," he said. "This is, for the first time, a meeting of the brass bands and traditional musicians of Rajasthan."

Imagine a trombone playing to beat of a tabla, or Indian drum.

The band's repertoire for this current show, created three years ago, covers a variety of music from Rajasthan to Mumbai (formerly known as Bombay,) center of the Bollywood film industry.

"We will take the audience on a musical journey," Bharti said.

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