

HOW DID IT COME TO BE THAT INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC EXERCISED A SIGNIFICANTLY NEW INFLUENCE IN WESTERN POPULAR MUSIC? DISCUSS USING THE EXAMPLE OF RAVI SHANKAR.

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The fusion of Indian classical music with Western popular music was a landmark of the music industry evolution's history. This evolution was mostly down to the works of maestros like Ravi Shankar, Zakir Hussain, John McLaughlin, A. R. Rahman, etc. This essay will focus on the factors that contributed to Indian classical music's influence on Western popular music, with Ravi Shankar being the prime example.

Ravi Shankar's impact on the Western popular music industry is the result of several reasons. First of all, his Sitar playing and composing virtuosity tremendously impressed the Western audience and to some extent led to the discovery of the beauty of the ancient Indian classical music. Shankar's concerts at popular venues such as the Monterey Pop Festival and his collaborations with famous Western musicians, especially George Harrison of The Beatles, contributed to the global distribution of classical music.

Moreover, Shankar's works of cross-cultural collaboration greatly contributed to the integration of Indian classical music into Western music pop. The co-writing together on the World known "Within You Without You" presented on the album Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band showed the smooth combination of the Indian Raga with Western pop. Similarly, these fusion of styles not only expanded the scope of modern popular music in the West but also exposed the audiences to the amazingness and richness of Indian classical music.

In addition, Shankar's role as a cultural ambassador helped eradicate the audience's incomprehension of Indian music traditions in the West. Through his lectures, workshops, and recordings, his works popularized Indian classical music and helped demystify Indian musical traditions. By going on tour and performing his classical Indian music in front of non-Indian audiences, Ravi Shankar made a major impact on the music world - getting rid of the prejudice and ignorance that existed towards Indian classical music at that time and paving the way for the success of the Indian classical music in the mainstream of the Western musical scene.

The impact of Shankar turned out not to be confined to the musical realm, it rather went beyond to the areas of culture and religion. Engaging with Western artists contributed to the exchange of cultures and dialogue, amid which mutual respect and appreciation for different song energies was nourished. By doing that, Shankar not only richly contributed to Western music, but also performed a role of cultural mediation and a provider of harmony.

Finally, it can be affirmed that it was Ravi Shankar's revolutionary endeavours that had a tremendous impact on the emergence of Indian classical music in the West and the growth of Western popular music. His exceptional virtuosity as a musician both as a solo artist and in his collaborations across cultures rendered a bridge between East and West, in this process contributing towards musical diversity and interaction, thus stimulating further cultural exchange. Therefore, Indian classical music has played a huge new role in Western music through Ravi Shankar's influence that has come to continue in these modern music times.