

= Ravi Shankar =

Ravi Shankar , KBE ( IPA : [ ʀʔbi ʔʔʔʔkʔr ] ; 7 April 1920 ? 11 December 2012 ) , born Rabindra Shankar Chowdhury , his name often preceded by the title Pandit ( ' Master ' ) , was a known Indian musician and a composer of Hindustani classical music . He was one of the best @-@ known exponents of the sitar in the second half of the 20th century and influenced many other musicians throughout the world .

Shankar was born to a Bengali family in India , and spent his youth touring India and Europe with the dance group of his brother Uday Shankar . He gave up dancing in 1938 to study sitar playing under court musician Allauddin Khan . After finishing his studies in 1944 , Shankar worked as a composer , creating the music for the Apu Trilogy by Satyajit Ray , and was music director of All India Radio , New Delhi , from 1949 to 1956 .

In 1956 he began to tour Europe and the Americas playing Indian classical music and increased its popularity there in the 1960s through teaching , performance , and his association with violinist Yehudi Menuhin and Beatles guitarist George Harrison . His influence on the latter helped popularize the use of Indian instruments in pop music throughout the 1960s . Shankar engaged Western music by writing compositions for sitar and orchestra , and toured the world in the 1970s and 1980s . From 1986 to 1992 , he served as a nominated member of Rajya Sabha , the upper chamber of the Parliament of India . He continued to perform until the end of his life . In 1999 , Shankar was awarded India 's highest civilian honour , the Bharat Ratna .

= = Early life = =

Shankar was born on 7 April 1920 in Varanasi , British India , to a Bengali family , as the youngest of seven brothers . His father , Shyam Shankar , was a Middle Temple barrister and scholar from East Bengal ( now Bangladesh ) . A respected statesman , lawyer and politician , he served for several years as dewan ( chief minister ) of Jhalawar , Rajasthan , and used the Sanskrit spelling of the family name and removed its last part . Shyam was married to Hemangini Devi who hailed from a small village named Nasrathpur in Mardah block of Ghazipur district , near Benares , and her father was a prosperous landlord . Shyam later worked as a lawyer in London , England , and there he married a second time while Devi raised Shankar in Varanasi , and did not meet his son until he was eight years old . Shankar shortened the Sanskrit version of his first name , Ravindra , to Ravi , for " sun " . Shankar had six siblings , only four of whom lived past infancy : Uday ( who became a famous choreographer and dancer ) , Rajendra , Debendra and Bhupendra . Shankar attended the Bengalitola High School in Benares between 1927 and 1928 .

At the age of ten , after spending his first decade in Varanasi , Shankar went to Paris with the dance group of his brother , choreographer Uday Shankar . By the age of 13 he had become a member of the group , accompanied its members on tour and learned to dance and play various Indian instruments . Uday 's dance group toured Europe and the United States in the early to mid @-@ 1930s and Shankar learned French , discovered Western classical music , jazz , cinema and became acquainted with Western customs . Shankar heard Allauddin Khan - the lead musician at the court of the princely state of Maihar - play at a music conference in December 1934 in Calcutta , and Uday convinced the Maharaja of Maihar in 1935 to allow Khan to become his group 's soloist for a tour of Europe . Shankar was sporadically trained by Khan on tour , and Khan offered Shankar training to become a serious musician under the condition that he abandon touring and come to Maihar .

= = Career = =

= = = Training and work in India = = =

Shankar 's parents had died by the time he returned from the European tour , and touring the West

had become difficult because of political conflicts that would lead to World War II . Shankar gave up his dancing career in 1938 to go to Maihar and study Indian classical music as Khan 's pupil , living with his family in the traditional gurukul system . Khan was a rigorous teacher and Shankar had training on sitar and surbahar , learned ragas and the musical styles dhrupad , dhamar , and khyal , and was taught the techniques of the instruments rudra veena , rubab , and sursingar . He often studied with Khan 's children Ali Akbar Khan and Annapurna Devi . Shankar began to perform publicly on sitar in December 1939 and his debut performance was a jugalbandi ( duet ) with Ali Akbar Khan , who played the string instrument sarod .

Shankar completed his training in 1944 @.@ he moved to Mumbai and joined the Indian People 's Theatre Association , for whom he composed music for ballets in 1945 and 1946 . Shankar recomposed the music for the popular song " Sare Jahan Se Achcha " at the age of 25 . He began to record music for HMV India and worked as a music director for All India Radio ( AIR ) , New Delhi , from February 1949 to January 1956 . Shankar founded the Indian National Orchestra at AIR and composed for it ; in his compositions he combined Western and classical Indian instrumentation . Beginning in the mid @-@ 1950s he composed the music for the Apu Trilogy by Satyajit Ray , which became internationally acclaimed . He was music director for several Hindi movies including Godaan and Anuradha .

= = = 1956 ? 69 : International career = = =

V. K. Narayana Menon , director of AIR Delhi , introduced the Western violinist Yehudi Menuhin to Shankar during Menuhin 's first visit to India in 1952 . Shankar had performed as part of a cultural delegation in the Soviet Union in 1954 and Menuhin invited Shankar in 1955 to perform in New York City for a demonstration of Indian classical music , sponsored by the Ford Foundation . Shankar declined to attend because of problems in his marriage , but recommended Ali Akbar Khan to play instead . Khan reluctantly accepted and performed with tabla ( percussion ) player Chatur Lal in the Museum of Modern Art , and he later became the first Indian classical musician to perform on American television and record a full raga performance , for Angel Records .

Shankar heard about the positive response Khan received and resigned from AIR in 1956 to tour the United Kingdom , Germany , and the United States . He played for smaller audiences and educated them about Indian music , incorporating ragas from the South Indian Carnatic music in his performances , and recorded his first LP album Three Ragas in London , released in 1956 . In 1958 , Shankar participated in the celebrations of the tenth anniversary of the United Nations and UNESCO music festival in Paris . From 1961 , he toured Europe , the United States , and Australia , and became the first Indian to compose music for non @-@ Indian films . Chatur Lal accompanied Shankar on tabla until 1962 , when Alla Rakha assumed the role . Shankar founded the Kinnara School of Music in Mumbai in 1962 .

Shankar befriended Richard Bock , founder of World Pacific Records , on his first American tour and recorded most of his albums in the 1950s and 1960s for Bock 's label . The Byrds recorded at the same studio and heard Shankar 's music , which led them to incorporate some of its elements in theirs , introducing the genre to their friend George Harrison of the Beatles . Harrison became interested in Indian classical music , bought a sitar and used it to record the song " Norwegian Wood ( This Bird Has Flown ) " . This led to Indian music being used by other musicians and created the raga rock trend .

Harrison met Shankar in London in June 1966 and visited India later that year for six weeks to study sitar under Shankar in Srinagar . During the visit , a documentary film about Shankar named Raga was shot by Howard Worth , and released in 1971 . Shankar 's association with Harrison greatly increased Shankar 's popularity and Ken Hunt of AllMusic would state that Shankar had become " the most famous Indian musician on the planet " by 1966 . In 1967 , he performed at the Monterey Pop Festival and won a Grammy Award for Best Chamber Music Performance for West Meets East , a collaboration with Yehudi Menuhin . The same year , the Beatles won the Grammy Award for Album of the Year for Sgt. Pepper 's Lonely Hearts Club Band , which included " Within You Without You " by Harrison , a song that was influenced by Indian classical music . Shankar

opened a Western branch of the Kinnara School of Music in Los Angeles , in May 1967 , and published an autobiography , *My Music , My Life* , in 1968 . In 1968 , he scored for the movie *Charly* . He performed at the Woodstock Festival in August 1969 , and found he disliked the venue . In the 1970s Shankar distanced himself from the hippie movement .

= = = 1970 ? 2012 : International career = = =

In October 1970 Shankar became chair of the department of Indian music of the California Institute of the Arts after previously teaching at the City College of New York , the University of California , Los Angeles , and being guest lecturer at other colleges and universities , including the Ali Akbar College of Music . In late 1970 , the London Symphony Orchestra invited Shankar to compose a concerto with sitar . *Concerto for Sitar & Orchestra* was performed with André Previn as conductor and Shankar playing the sitar . Hans Neuhoff of *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* has criticized the usage of the orchestra in this concert as " amateurish " . George Harrison organized the charity Concert for Bangladesh in August 1971 , in which Shankar participated . After the musicians had tuned up on stage for over a minute , the crowd broke into applause , to which the amused Shankar responded : " If you like our tuning so much , I hope you will enjoy the playing more . " Although interest in Indian music had decreased in the early 1970s , the concert album became one of the best @-@ selling recordings to feature the genre and won Shankar a second Grammy Award .

During the 1970s , Shankar and Harrison worked together again , recording *Shankar Family & Friends* in 1973 and touring North America the following year to a mixed response after Shankar had toured Europe with the Harrison @-@ sponsored Music Festival from India . The demanding schedule weakened Shankar , and he suffered a heart attack in Chicago in November 1974 , causing him to miss a portion of the tour . In his absence , Shankar 's sister @-@ in @-@ law , singer Lakshmi Shankar , conducted the touring orchestra . The touring band visited the White House on invitation of John Gardner Ford , son of US President Gerald Ford . Shankar toured and taught for the remainder of the 1970s and the 1980s and released his second concerto , *Raga Mala* , conducted by Zubin Mehta , in 1981 . Shankar was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Original Music Score for his work on the 1982 movie *Gandhi* , but lost to John Williams ' *ET*

He served as a member of the Rajya Sabha , the upper chamber of the Parliament of India , from 12 May 1986 to 11 May 1992 , after being nominated by Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi . Shankar composed the dance drama *Ghanashyam* in 1989 . His liberal views on musical co @-@ operation led him to contemporary composer Philip Glass , with whom he released an album , *Passages* , in 1990 . Shankar underwent an angioplasty in 1992 due to heart problems , after which George Harrison participated in a number of Shankar 's projects . Because of the positive response to Shankar 's 1996 career compilation *In Celebration* , Shankar wrote a second autobiography , *Raga Mala* , with Harrison as editor . He performed in between 25 and 40 concerts every year during the late 1990s . Shankar taught his daughter Anoushka Shankar to play sitar and in 1997 became a Regents ' Professor at University of California , San Diego . In the 2000s , he won a Grammy Award for Best World Music Album for *Full Circle* : Carnegie Hall 2000 and toured with Anoushka , who released a book about her father , *Bapi : Love of My Life* , in 2002 . Anoushka performed a composition by Shankar for the 2002 Harrison memorial Concert for George and Shankar wrote a third concerto for sitar and orchestra for Anoushka and the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra . In June 2008 , Shankar played what was billed as his last European concert , but his 2011 tour included dates in the United Kingdom .

On 1 July 2010 , at the Southbank Centre 's Royal Festival Hall , London , England , Anoushka Shankar , on sitar , performed with the London Philharmonic Orchestra , conducted by David Murphy what was billed the first Symphony by Ravi Shankar . This performance was recorded and is available on CD . It is 40 : 52 minutes long and is composed of 4 movements ( in the tempi allegro ( fast ) , slow , scherzo ( fast ) , finale ( fast ) ) like a classical Western symphony but uses an Indian raga as the mode for each movement : I. Allegro ( Kafi Zila ) 9 : 21 minutes , II . Lento ( Ahir Bhairav ) 7 : 52 minutes , III . Scherzo ( DoGa Kalyan ) 8 : 49 minutes IV . Finale ( Banjara ) 14 : 50 minutes . The website of the Ravi Shankar Foundation provides the information that " The symphony was

written in Indian notation in 2010 , and has been interpreted by his student and conductor , David Murphy . " The information available on the website does not explain this process of " interpretation " of Ravi Shankar 's notation by David Murphy , nor how Ravi Shankar 's Indian notation could accommodate Western orchestral writing .

= = Style and contributions = =

Shankar developed a style distinct from that of his contemporaries and incorporated influences from rhythm practices of Carnatic music . His performances begin with solo alap , jor , and jhala ( introduction and performances with pulse and rapid pulse ) influenced by the slow and serious dhrupad genre , followed by a section with tabla accompaniment featuring compositions associated with the prevalent khyal style . Shankar often closed his performances with a piece inspired by the light @-@ classical thumri genre .

Shankar has been considered one of the top sitar players of the second half of the 20th century . He popularised performing on the bass octave of the sitar for the alap section and became known for a distinctive playing style in the middle and high registers that used quick and short deviations of the playing string and his sound creation through stops and strikes on the main playing string . Narayana Menon of The New Grove Dictionary noted Shankar 's liking for rhythmic novelties , among them the use of unconventional rhythmic cycles . Hans Neuhoff of Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart has argued that Shankar 's playing style was not widely adopted and that he was surpassed by other sitar players in the performance of melodic passages . Shankar 's interplay with Alla Rakha improved appreciation for tabla playing in Hindustani classical music . Shankar promoted the jugalbandi duet concert style and claims to have introduced new ragas Tilak Shyam , Nat Bhairav and Bairagi .

= = Recognition = =

= = = Indian governmental honours = = =

Sangeet Natak Akademi Award ( 1962 )

Padma Bhushan ( 1967 )

Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship ( 1975 ) .

Padma Vibhushan ( 1981 )

Kalidas Samman from the Government of Madhya Pradesh for 1987 ? 88

Bharat Ratna ( 1999 )

= = = Other governmental and academic honours = = =

Ramon Magsaysay Award ( 1992 ) and the .

Commander of the Legion of Honour of France ( 2000 )

Honorary Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire ( KBE ) by Elizabeth II for " services to music " ( 2001 )

Honorary degrees from universities in India and the United States .

Honorary member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters

Honorary Doctor of Laws from the University of Melbourne , Australia ( 2010 )

= = = Arts awards = = =

1964 fellowship from the John D. Rockefeller 3rd Fund

Silver Bear Extraordinary Prize of the Jury at the 1957 Berlin International Film Festival ( for composing the music for the movie Kabuliwala ) .

UNESCO International Music Council ( 1975 )

Fukuoka Asian Culture Prize ( 1991 )

Praemium Imperiale for music from the Japan Art Association ( 1997 )

Polar Music Prize ( 1998 )

Five Grammy Awards

1967 : Best Chamber Music Performance - West Meets East ( with Yehudi Menuhin )

1973 : Album of the Year - The Concert for Bangladesh ( with George Harrison )

2002 : Best World Music Album - Full Circle : Carnegie Hall 2000

2013 : Best World Music Album - The Living Room Sessions Pt . 1

Lifetime Achievement Award received at the 55th Annual Grammy Awards

Nominated for an Academy Award .

Posthumous nomination in the 56th Annual Grammy Awards for his album " The Living Room Sessions Part 2 " .

First recipient of the Tagore Award in recognition of his outstanding contribution to cultural harmony and universal values ( 2013 ; posthumous )

= = = Other honours and tributes = = =

American jazz saxophonist John Coltrane named his son Ravi Coltrane after Shankar .

On April 7 , 2016 Google published a Google Doodle to honor his work .

= = Personal life and family = =

Shankar married Allauddin Khan 's daughter Annapurna Devi in 1941 and their son , Shubhendra Shankar , was born in 1942 . Shankar separated from Devi during the 1940s and had a relationship with Kamala Shastri , a dancer , beginning in the late 1940s .

An affair with Sue Jones , a New York concert producer , led to the birth of Norah Jones in 1979 . He separated from Shastri in 1981 and lived with Sue until 1986 .

In 1989 he married Sukanya Rajan , whom he had known since the 1970s , at Chilkur Temple in Hyderabad , India . Their daughter Anoushka Shankar was born in 1981 .

Shankar 's son , Shubhendra " Shubho " Shankar , often accompanied him on tours . He could play the sitar and surbahar , but elected not to pursue a solo career . Shubhendra died of pneumonia in 1992 .

Ananda Shankar , the experimental fusion musician , is his nephew .

Norah Jones became a successful musician in the 2000s , winning eight Grammy Awards in 2003 . Anoushka Shankar was nominated for a Grammy Award for Best World Music Album in 2003 . Anoushka and her father were both nominated for Best World Music Album at the 2013 Grammy Awards for separate albums .

Shankar was a Hindu , and a devotee of the Hindu deity , Hanuman . As well , he was an " ardent " devotee of the revered , Bengali Hindu saint , Sri Anandamayi Ma . Shankar used to visit Anandamayi Ma frequently and performed for her on various occasions . Shankar wrote of his hometown , Varanasi , and his initial encounter with " Ma " :

" Varanasi is the eternal abode of Lord Shiva , and one of my favorite temples is that of Lord Hanuman , the monkey god . The city is also where one of the miracles that have happened in my life took place : I met Ma Anandamayi , a great spiritual soul . Seeing the beauty of her face and mind , I became her ardent devotee . Sitting at home now in Encinitas , in Southern California , at the age of 88 , surrounded by the beautiful greens , multi @-@ colored flowers , blue sky , clean air , and the Pacific Ocean , I often reminisce about all the wonderful places I have seen in the world . I cherish the memories of Paris , New York , and a few other places . But Varanasi seems to be etched in my heart ! "

In his later years , Shankar became a vegetarian . He wore a large diamond ring which he said was " manifested " by Sathya Sai Baba . He lived with Sukanya in Encinitas , California .

Shankar performed his final concert , with daughter Anoushka , on 4 November 2012 at the Terrace Theater in Long Beach , California .

= = Illness and death = =

On 6 December 2012 , Shankar was admitted to Scripps Memorial Hospital in La Jolla , San Diego , California after complaining of breathing difficulties . He died on 11 December 2012 at around 16 : 30 PST after undergoing heart valve replacement surgery .

The Swara Samrat festival organized on 5 ? 6 January 2013 was dedicated to Ravi Shankar and Ali Akbar Khan where musicians like Shivkumar Sharma , Birju Maharaj , Hari Prasad Chaurasia , Zakir Hussain , and Girija Devi performed .

= = Discography = =

= = Books = =

Shankar , Ravi ( 1968 ) . My Music , My Life . Simon & Schuster . ISBN 0 @-@ 671 @-@ 20113 @-@ 1 .

Shankar , Ravi ( 1979 ) . Learning Indian Music : A Systematic Approach . Onomatopoeia . OCLC 21376688 .

Shankar , Ravi ( 1997 ) . Raga Mala : The Autobiography of Ravi Shankar . Genesis Publications . ISBN 0 @-@ 904351 @-@ 46 @-@ 7 .