

Ravi Shankar

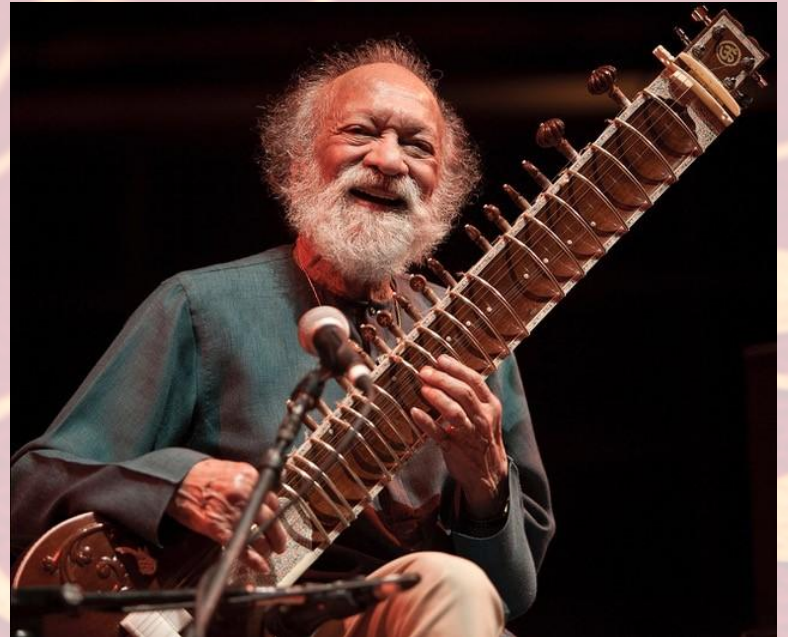
Symphony – finale (excerpt)

KS2 Music



Trailblazer

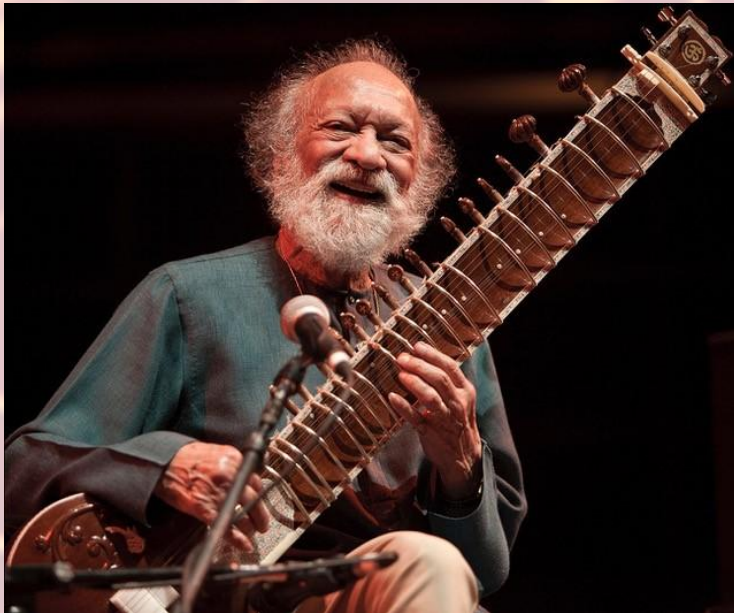
Passionate sitar performer
Ravi Shankar shared his
love of Hindustani classical
music by exploring it using
the instruments of a large
western orchestra



Glossary of music terms

| Term | Definition |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Call and response | a musical conversation. An idea is heard and then repeated by a different section of the orchestra |
| Coda | the 'ending' |
| Drone | one long, continuous sound (pitched or unpitched) that is present throughout a piece, usually at the bottom of the texture |
| Improvise | make it up on the spot! |
| Pitched percussion | percussion instruments that can play different pitches – xylophones, glockenspiels, chime bars, etc. |
| Raga | a special scale used in Indian music, different to the major or minor scales used in western music |
| Unpitched percussion | percussion instruments that can only make a limited number of sounds – drums, shakers woodblocks, tambourine etc. |

Background – the composer



Ravi SHANKAR (1920–2012)

- Indian musician and composer
- Known as a sitar maestro
- Brought Indian classical music to a western audience in the 1960s and was a huge influence on George Harrison from the Beatles, US composer Philip Glass and classical violinist Yehudi Menuhin

Background – the music



Symphony – finale (excerpt)

- This 2010 work is a cross between a symphony and a concerto – it has four movements like a symphony and a prominent concerto-like solo part for sitar
- Much of the sitar part is improvised
- Uses traditional Indian ragas (modes) rather than major or minor scales and keys
- Towards the end, there is a vocal section which uses Indian drum syllables as text

Watch the orchestral performance



**List the instruments you have seen in
the performance**



Draw one of these instruments (you can use the internet to see what they all look like)

Pat your knees quickly – this sounds like a ‘drone’
This sound is similar to a ‘drone’ – i.e. a long note played at the bottom of the music. There is a drone almost all of the way through the type of Indian music Ravi Shankar played and there is often a drone in his symphony.



Practise your drone (knee rumble) again and this time add a vocal sound by humming a low pitch too. Try just the vocal drone alone, if you have a xylophone, recorder or piano nearby play a low D. D is the pitch of Shankar's drone and the most important note in his symphony.

Shankar's music uses a raga – this is a scale used in Indian music. The notes of the raga give Shankar's symphony its special and unique sound.

Taking it further – cross-curricular activities

MUSIC: Listen to traditional South Indian Carnatic music and see how it compares and differs from Ravi Shankar's piece. Listen to how Ravi Shankar inspired the Beatles and American composer Philip Glass.

RESEARCH: Continue your research by taking a closer look at the other Indian instruments featured in a Carnatic orchestra, or instruments from other places around the world. Maybe someone in your class has family members who can play one of these instruments.

DANCE: Indian music is often danced to. Record your new piece and create a dance to go with it. Or choreograph Ravi Shankar's piece.

SHARE: Share any research, pictures, dances or compositions on google classroom.