

László Hortobágyi
Letter to Pt. Suresh Chandwankar
(Founder-Honorary Secretary of Mumbai-based SIRC and
a member of the Department of Condensed Matter Physics at the Tata
Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai)
connection with the death of Pt. Ravi Shankar:
rethinking on a phenomenon

Dear Sureshji Pandit

Still less is a Genius.

I would like to congratulate your Necrolog.

Although it is not fair held in many cases Pt. Ravi Shankar's reputation on World Wide (because He comes from a Brahmin family of Benares with great karma-possibilities) compared against a number of lesser-known genius, like Pt. Nikhil Banerji, Satish Kumar, Gulam Hussain Khan, Balarám Pathak, Budhaditya Mukherji, etc.etc., not mention so many Karnatak Indian Master Giants unknown in the West too, but He was absolutely one of the greatest and latest Classical Masters.

I think His story is a gem of our culture and of the false consciousness of human collectivities, one of the possible millions. Ravindra Shankar was born in Benares, 1920, in a brahman family, thus, in a high position and having great chances. In the 30ies, as a dancer being member in his brother Uday Shankar's troupe, he regularly managed to visit Europe. This meeting took place in the spirit of romantic ethos of the "art", that wouldn't even show a sign of change in our days, the Schubert-like pathos and the false romantic of the suffering artist, that completely prevented him, the extra-European man coming from the cretin and indifferent world of the English colonial culture of that time, from finding the only possible linkage between the European and Indian music in respect of the Gregorian vocal practice, the instrumental styles of the Middle Ages and the standard language of Baroque improvisation.

Thus, it becomes understandable the unmusical and boresome character of Pt. Ravi Shankar's subsequent so-called Romantic orchestral compositions, that was recorded featuring Y. Menuhin, P. Rampal, then Ph. Glass.

Huge mistake and musical kitsch collection.

All high-cultures of the music history has developed their own sophisticated musical instruments, therefore it is obvious that the Sitar, for example, isn't suitable for rock-jazz or orchestral music and therefore it is obvious that the tuneless and agrestic-brutal, macho saxophone or the wagnerian orchestra isn't suitable for the performance of the classical Indian music which (inter alia) based on the

sophisticated 22 intervals-shruti system.

Many people are angry his Western worship (me too) : his excuse of I attach two pages from his Raga-mala, I hope strongly that they are well represented his original but hidden habit.

pranam from Hungisthan

Laszlo