



London Philharmonic Orchestra

RAVI SHANKAR

SYMPHONY

DAVID MURPHY *conductor*

ANOUSHKA SHANKAR *sitar*

LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

RAVI SHANKAR

SYMPHONY

- 1 *Allegro – Kafi Zila*
- 2 *Lento – Ahir Bhairav*
- 3 *Scherzo – DoGa Kalyan*
- 4 *Finale – Banjārā*

Ravi Shankar travelled a great deal in the West as a child dancer in his elder brother Uday Shankar's troupe of Indian musicians and dancers. During a long sojourn in Paris in the early 1930s he met many of the legends of Western classical music: his brother was a friend of George Enescu, the great Romanian violinist and composer who was then teaching the teenage Menuhin in Paris. Toscanini, Heifetz, Paderewski, Casals, Kreisler and the great Russian bass Chaliapin were some of the musical legends who made an impact on the young Ravi Shankar.

Simultaneously he also experienced the reaction of Westerners to hearing Indian music for the first time: although many found it exciting he realised that it needed to be presented very carefully for the untrained Western ear to realise its depths. He noticed that the Western ear is attuned to harmony, modulation and counterpoint: musical textures which of necessity are almost entirely absent in Indian music in order to maintain the melodic purity of the raga. He realised Western-trained ears needed an awareness of the rhythmic and melodic structures underpinning Indian music in order to appreciate it.

Thus in later years, Ravi Shankar became the first Indian musician to explain these concepts to his audiences. Through Ravi Shankar, Indian music began to have an influence on most genres of Western music: Yehudi Menuhin became a duo partner and George Harrison was another Western musician for whom the music of India resonated deeply. Harrison became a devoted student and lifelong friend, thus the influence of Indian music reached out to a whole generation.

Other musicians profoundly influenced included the great jazz saxophonist John Coltrane and in 1965, Philip Glass, then a student of Nadia Boulanger in Paris, first encountered Ravi Shankar when assisting him on the soundtrack for the Conrad Rooks film *Chappaqua*. Glass remarked: 'Indian music pushed me towards a whole new way of thinking about music, in which the rhythmic structure became the controlling function' and speaking of Ravi Shankar later: 'It may be hard to imagine that one person through the force of his talent, energy and musical personality could have almost single-handedly altered the course of contemporary music in its broadest sense. But that is actually and simply what happened.'

Thus the rhythmic organisation of Indian music, honed over thousands of years, began to have a profound effect on the direction of Western music and the emergence of what became known as minimalism. This Symphony therefore is a continuation of this long journey.

The idea for a symphony germinated as the result of Ravi Shankar and me working on a project run jointly by the Bharatya Vidya Bhavan Centre and Dartington, when I was invited to organise the process of notation and orchestration and conduct the final performance of a work for a mixed group of Indian and Western instrumentalists. In working with Ravi Shankar, I had a similar experience to Glass in the 1960s: the process profoundly affected my music-making and I absorbed as much as possible through subsequent projects.

Throughout this time we returned to some of the ideas explored during our initial projects and began developing them in a new way through the prism of the Western classical symphony. (Prokofiev lights up this prism from a different angle in his 'Classical' Symphony.) Shankar therefore uses the Western

four-movement symphonic structure, with two faster outer movements, a lyrical second movement, and a third movement structured along the lines of a scherzo and trio. Subtlety and pliability of melody and the organising power of rhythm are the cornerstones of each movement.

The first movement is based mostly on a raga known as *Kafi Zila*, which is similar to the natural minor scale in Western music. After a brief introduction, the raga and important rhythmic cycles are immediately announced by the *tutti* orchestra. In keeping with the Western symphonic tradition, the raga is explored through two contrasting themes to form an 'exposition'. The 'development section' playfully explores elements of this material through an 11-beat time cycle, with virtuoso passages for solo sitar, returning after a *Tehai* (literally 'three times' – a cadential rhythmic motif repeated three times over the fundamental rhythmic cycle) to the opening material.

The second movement is based on the scale of the beautiful morning raga *Ahir Bhairav*. This devotional raga, with its characteristic flattened 2nd and 7th, creates an atmosphere

tinged with pathos. The movement emphasises the lyrical side of Indian music, and listeners will be able to hear how much this has in common with the melodic traditions of Western music. The singing quality of the sitar and flute occupy the central section of the movement in a quasi-improvised section that explores fragments of the melodies from the opening of the movement.

Multi-rhythmic variation is very much to the fore in the third movement, which uses as its basis the rhythmic cycle known as *Jhaptal* (2+3+2+3=10). The melodic base is a creation of Ravi Shankar known as *Raga DoGa Kalyan*. This raga omits the second note of the scale, but has both 3rds and an augmented 4th. From the outset, rhythmic cycles moving in multiple metres are piled one upon the other producing a hypnotic effect. The trio section of the movement features the sitar in a virtuoso role with xylophone and marimba.

The fourth movement is based on *Raga Banjārā*, also created by Ravi Shankar. *Banjārā* uses a flattened 6th and both the major and minor 7th. The Banjārā are a nomadic people with a

lively folk tradition living throughout the Indian subcontinent. This movement explores Indian rhythm in a folk context, and the centre of the movement contains a beautiful contrasting *alap* (non-rhythmic) section for the solo sitar. Indian rhythmic cycles are then explored by individual sections of the orchestra. Ever the innovator, Ravi Shankar explores them in a way never before attempted by a Western orchestra: there is a surprise in store towards the end of the work.

Ravi Shankar has said that the purpose of Indian music is to lead the listener 'to a realm of awareness where the revelation of the true meaning of the universe – its eternal and unchanging essence – can be joyfully experienced'. This also sums up the essence of Ravi Shankar's *Symphony*: the joyful experience of melodious, rhythmically charged and multi-faceted sound as it passes through time.

© David Murphy

DAVID MURPHY *conductor*



Born in Pembrokeshire, Wales, David began his musical studies as a violinist. Within a few months of study he had won a local music competition and was subsequently awarded a full scholarship to the Purcell School.

His conducting début occurred at a moment's notice when a conductor was suddenly indisposed, leading to studies at Tanglewood and with Léon Barzin in Paris. David was Barzin's last student, studying intensively with him over five years. Through this experience he has a direct link to the great conductors of the early 20th century, notably both Toscanini and Furtwängler: a unique training for a conductor of his generation.

Two other legendary mentors were subsequently central to his development as a musician: the conductor Sir Charles Mackerras and the sitar maestro and composer Pandit Ravi Shankar. David's music-making contains a unique blend of these potent influences. He is currently at the forefront of the development of a new 'Indo-Classic' musical genre that aims to tap into the common roots of both traditions. This quest has included concerts, recordings and broadcasts with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Academy of Ancient Music, Sinfonia ViVA and London Sinfonietta.

David is a popular international guest conductor. In South Africa he undertook a long series of engagements with the country's orchestras, from Beethoven symphonies with the Johannesburg and KwaZulu-Natal Philharmonic orchestras to outreach work with township choirs. He performed Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the Seoul National Symphony Orchestra in a Concert for World Peace broadcast on both Korean and Japanese television and conducted *Samaagam*, a collaboration with Ustad Amjad Ali Khan and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, on a pioneering tour of India. This tour also featured symphonies by Mozart and Beethoven, heard in some Indian venues for the first time. His critically acclaimed Royal Festival Hall début with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra included Janáček's *Sinfonietta* and a groundbreaking performance of Sibelius's Symphony No. 2, utilising the original manuscript sources.

David is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

ANOUSHKA SHANKAR *sitar*

Sitar player and composer Anoushka Shankar is one of the leading figures in world music today. She is deeply rooted in Indian classical music, having studied exclusively with her father, the legendary Ravi Shankar, from the age of nine. Thriving as a composer, she has been exploring fertile ground in the crossover between Indian music and a variety of genres including flamenco, electronica, jazz and Western classical music. Among her various accolades she has twice been nominated for a Grammy Award and in 1999 was the youngest and first female recipient of a House of Commons Shield from the British Parliament.

Anoushka began performing aged 13, and by the age of 15 had already performed at New York's iconic Carnegie Hall. Before turning 20, she made three classical Indian sitar records for Angel/EMI under the guidance of her father, and established herself as one of the foremost classical sitarists on the world stage.

In 2011 Anoushka signed to the prestigious classical music label Deutsche Grammophon, and released her sixth album, *Traveller*, to critical acclaim. *Traveller* is an exciting exploration of two musical traditions: Spanish flamenco and Indian classical music. This is the third in a series of explorative albums from Anoushka, following 2005's hugely successful, self-produced *Rise* and 2007's *Breathing Under Water*, a unique collaborative venture between Anoushka and multi-instrumentalist and composer Karsh Kale.

Over the years Anoushka has maintained active, creative careers outside of music: in 2002 she authored the book *Bapi: The Love of My Life*, a biographical portrait of her father, and she has served as columnist for prestigious publications including New Delhi's *First City* magazine and the *Hindustan Times*. She earned a Best Supporting Actress nomination from India's National Film Awards for her role in *Dance Like a Man* in 2004.

Today, from her home in London where she lives with her husband and son, Anoushka's career reflects her aim to constantly stretch herself creatively. As multi-award winning musician Nitin Sawhney wrote in the sleeve notes of *Traveller*, 'No-one embodies the spirit of innovation and experimentation more evidently than Anoushka Shankar.'



LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

The London Philharmonic Orchestra is known as one of the world's great orchestras with a reputation secured by its performances in the concert hall and opera house, its many award-winning recordings, its trail-blazing international tours and its pioneering education work. Distinguished conductors who have held positions with the Orchestra since its foundation in 1932 by Sir Thomas Beecham include Sir Adrian Boult, Sir John Pritchard, Bernard Haitink, Sir Georg Solti, Klaus Tennstedt, Franz Welser-Möst and Kurt Masur. Vladimir Jurowski was appointed the Orchestra's Principal Guest Conductor in March 2003 and became Principal Conductor in September 2007. The London Philharmonic Orchestra has been Resident Symphony Orchestra at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall since 1992 and there it presents its main series of concerts between September and May each year.

In summer, the Orchestra moves to Sussex where it has been Resident at Glyndebourne Festival Opera for over 40 years. The Orchestra also performs at venues around the UK and has made numerous tours to America, Europe and Japan, and visited India, Hong Kong, China, South Korea, Australia, Oman, Russia, South Africa and Abu Dhabi.

The London Philharmonic Orchestra made its first recordings on 10 October 1932, just three days after its first public performance. It has recorded and broadcast regularly ever since, and in 2005 established its own record label. These recordings are taken mainly from live concerts given by conductors including LPO Principal Conductors from Beecham and Boult, through Haitink, Solti and Tennstedt, to Masur and Jurowski. **lpo.org.uk**



RAVI SHANKAR (b. 1920)

40:52 **Symphony**

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| 01 | 09:21 | Allegro – Kafi Zila |
| 02 | 07:52 | Lento – Ahir Bhairav |
| 03 | 08:49 | Scherzo – DoGa Kalyan |
| 04 | 14:50 | Finale – Banjārā |

DAVID MURPHY *conductor*
ANOUSHKA SHANKAR *sitar*
LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA
Pieter Schoeman *leader*

Recorded live at Southbank Centre's **ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL**, *London*