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Memories of a maestro

Catch the last leg of this exhibition on the life of Pt Ravi Shankar, which concludes with a tribute concert by Hindustani musicians

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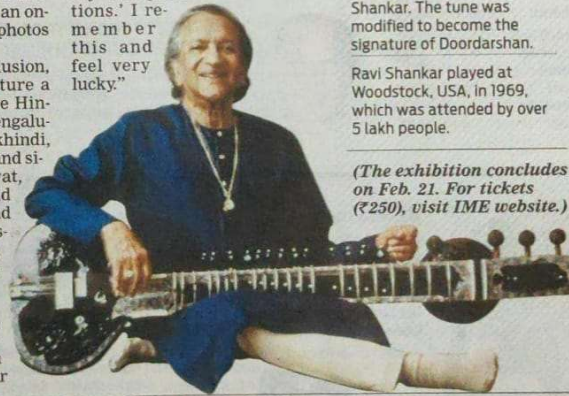
When it comes to Pandit Ravi Shankar's contribution to music, it's well known that the composer won five Grammy awards or taught the Beatles' George Harrison how to play the sitar. But did you also know that Shankar, who was a romantic at heart, left many love notes for his wife Sukanya all around their house? It is such interesting trivia about the late musician's life that has been showcased at the exhibition at the Indian Music Experience Museum (IME), which was originally launched in March last year to celebrate Shankar's birth centenary, and has been on display since the museum reopened in October. It will conclude on Feb. 21. "The exhibition offers glimpses into the life and contribution of Pandit Ravi Shankar to the field of music over nine decades," says museum director Manasi Prasad.

The exhibition comprises various elements, like a pictorial journey into his early years and rare photos of him dressed as a dancer for his brother Uday Shankar's dance troupe, teaching Harrison, and so on. Also on display are his instruments,

one of his daughter Anoushka Shankar's as well, and awards won by him, including the Grammys and the Bharat Ratna. "While some of the artefacts will be sent back to the Ravi Shankar Foundation, his sitar, surbahar and tanpura have been donated to the museum for permanent display, along with his concert attire," adds Prasad. Also a part of the exhibition is an immersive experience, with sound design by city-based musician Ricky Kej, where visitors are surrounded by words and music recordings of Shankar's works. The museum is also working on an online exhibition with 3D photos and videos.

On the day of its conclusion, the exhibition will feature a tribute concert by three Hindustani musicians of Bengaluru - flautist Pravin Godkhindi, vocalist Sangeeta Katti and sitarist Anupama Bhagwat, who will play ragas and compositions created and popularised by the maestro. Bhagwat says, "As a student of music, it is an honour to pay homage to the great maestros who have shown us the path in music." Godkhindi, who will play a raga created by Shankar

in a taal popularised by him as well, adds, "He was a global icon who popularised Indian classical ragas all over the world. So this is a special occasion to pay our tribute to this legend." Katti, on the other hand, recalls a fond memory of Shankar and shares, "I was blessed to sing his thumri compositions during the silver jubilee of AIR Bangalore. When he heard me, he said, 'You are in a proper path with a great Guru Kishoritai... Just keep going, learn as much as you can and I am so happy that you have sung my compositions.' I remember this and feel very lucky."



KEY NOTES FROM THE EXHIBITION

Pt. Ravi Shankar recorded over 60 albums, collaborated with other legendary musicians, and won five Grammy awards, including the Lifetime Achievement Award. He is one of six musicians to be awarded the Bharat Ratna.

He created nearly 40 ragas. On receiving the news of Mahatma Gandhi's assassination, he spontaneously created a raga, emphasising upon the swaras, 'ga', 'ni' and 'dha', an approximation of the name 'Gandhi' and named the raga Mohan Kauns after Gandhi's first name.

The melody of Saare Jahan Se Achchha, as we know it today, was composed by Ravi Shankar. The tune was modified to become the signature of Doordarshan.

Ravi Shankar played at Woodstock, USA, in 1969, which was attended by over 5 lakh people.

(The exhibition concludes on Feb. 21. For tickets (₹250), visit IME website.)