

## Citation for Doctor of Laws *honoris causa*

### Mr Ravi Shankar

Ravi Shankar, the legendary Sitarist and composer, is India's most esteemed musician and has been primarily responsible for bringing Indian music and culture to a world wide audience.

Ravi Shankar has bridged the classical music worlds of East and West. With the longest international career spanning 79 years and always ahead of his time, he has written three concertos for sitar and orchestra, violin-sitar compositions for Yehudi Menuhin and himself, music for flute virtuoso Jean Pierre Rampal, music for Hosan Yamamoto, master of the Shakuhachi, and Musumi Miyashita - Koto virtuoso including a collaboration with Phillip Glass on **Passages**. Ravi Shankar is also very well known for his collaboration with former Beatle, George Harrison, who produced and participated in three Ravi Shankar albums; **Shankar Family and Friends**, **Festival of India II** and **Chants**.

Ravi Shankar has also composed for ballet and films in India, Canada, Europe and the United States. His composition for the film **Gandhi** earned him an Academy Award nomination.

In 1971, deeply concerned by the plight of more than eight million refugees who fled to India during the Bangladesh freedom struggle from Pakistan, Ravi Shankar took the initiative and with the help of his dear friend George Harrison, arranged a concert to raise money for the refugees. This **Concert for Bangladesh** marked the first time rock musicians collaborated for a common humanitarian cause and it provoked awareness of the plight of refugees among young concert goers. Over \$15 million was raised for UNICEF to support programs providing lifesaving assistance to children caught in the humanitarian crises. This fundraising model has since been widely emulated in other humanitarian causes. UNICEF recognized Ravi Shankar's efforts and gave him a special award for his concern shown to children.

Ravi Shankar is the recipient of many honours which recognize his outstanding contribution to music, his expansion of appreciation of Indian music and culture through out the world and his humanitarian work.

He is an honorary member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and is a member of the United Nations International Rostrum of composers. He has received many awards and honours from his own country and from all over the world, including sixteen honorary doctorates, India's highest honour the Bharat Ratna, Desikottam, the Music Council UNESCO award 1975, the Magsaysay Award from Manila, three Grammy's, the Fukuoka Grand Prize and Praemium Imperiale from Japan. He was also awarded the Polar Music Prize of 1998 and the Crystal Award from Davos which gave him the title of 'Global Ambassador'.

In 1986 Ravi Shankar was nominated as a member of the Rajya Sabha, India's Upper House of Parliament. In 2000 he was given the French Legion of Honour and in 2001 he was awarded an honorary knighthood by Queen Elizabeth II.

In December 2009, the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh bestowed on him the Lifetime award by CNN-IBN with the words: "His truly global musical spirit and unparalleled achievements that have risen above cultural and national barriers".

Now aged 89 Ravi Shankar is still performing in concerts around the world.