

## Ravi Shankar accepts Regents' professor appointment at UCSD

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### LEGENDARY VIRTUOSO SITARIST RAVI SHANKAR ACCEPTS REGENTS' PROFESSOR APPOINTMENT AT UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Internationally renowned musician Ravi Shankar has accepted a prestigious appointment as Regents' Professor at the University of California, San Diego.

Shankar, in a statement of acceptance, said: "It makes me very happy and honored being offered the Regents' Professorship by the University of California, San Diego. I am inspired to feel that this is the beginning of a long-term musical relationship."

The Regents' Professor appointment is a rare and distinguished award, first introduced to the University of California system in 1962. The purpose of the appointment is to bring to campus distinguished individuals, usually from non-academic fields, who through their contact with students and faculty, may add to and enrich university life. This is the first time a Regents' Professor has been appointed at the UCSD campus.

Music Chair F. Richard Moore said, "We are certainly delighted that after a considerable amount of thought by all parties that the Regents have almost immediately seen fit to follow our recommendation to appoint Ravi Shankar to our faculty. His appointment as Regents' Professor presents a unique opportunity that will significantly enrich university life, the education of students, and contribute to the prestige of our campus. We look forward to this relationship, to our opportunity to know Mr. Shankar and his work better, and to introduce him to our work as well."

Moore added, "Shankar's interdisciplinary work (especially his film scores), his international touring, and his involvement with popular music figures have brought his music to millions of people throughout the world. His experiments with cross-cultural musical collaborations are unparalleled, and stand among the most significant cultural accomplishments of our time."

As Regents' Professor, Shankar will begin the appointment with a series of lecture demonstrations.

Moore explained, "Shankar is interested in transferring portions of his vast experience and knowledge about music to advanced and very well-prepared listeners, including faculty, graduate and undergraduate students, and perhaps others who have the readiness to receive the kind of wisdom and experience that he has gathered. He is certainly a senior musician among us. We are especially pleased because our Music Department has a long history of concern with not only contemporary music in a Western sense, but also with the 'new' in music. Shankar's presence will broaden our awareness of the enormously rich heritage of music from all around the world. Although much of this music has a vast history, it may be new to many people in our part of the world."

Shankar, a resident of Encinitas, California, remains an active performer. In the next few months, he will travel to perform in New York City, Washington, D.C., and Houston, Texas. He will also travel to Japan to accept the

Praemium Imperiale (akin to a Japanese Nobel Prize for music) from the Japanese government. Shankar is slated for an extended tour of India at the end of December.

#### BIOGRAPHICAL MATERIAL:

Ravi Shankar is a world-renowned musician, composer, performer, and scholar of classical Indian music. He is one of the leading cultural figures of the twentieth century whose accomplishments place him as the leading figure of an important musical tradition. His long and distinguished musical career includes numerous recordings, performances at all the world's leading venues, and a series of unprecedented collaborations with other leading musicians. Although he is well known because of his interaction with the popular music world, it is important to underscore that Shankar is considered the leading international figure in a very elevated art form, Hindustani music.

Shankar was born on April 7, 1920, in Varanasi, India. He moved to Paris in 1930, and received most of his education there. From the age of 12, he performed as a musician and dancer on tour in Europe and America with his brother Uday Shankar, and in 1939 had his first concert as soloist at a music conference in Allahabad.

By 1945 Shankar's reputation as the leading performer of traditional Hindustani music on the sitar had coalesced. He began to branch out as a composer, writing music for ballet and for important films such as such as *Dharti Ke Lal* and *Neecha Nagar*. He also composed the song *Sare Jahan Se Accha*, which is the most widely known piece of music in India, second only to the national anthem.

In 1949, Shankar became Music Director of All-India Radio at Delhi, and founded the *Vadya Vrinda Chamber Orchestra*. The years 1950-55 were a particularly intense period of compositional activity, most notably in the internationally-acclaimed film studios of Calcutta, where he scored *The Ray Trilogy*.

In 1956, Shankar again initiated a tour of the Western world, and by 1957, had achieved widespread acclaim, disseminating traditional Indian music to large audiences all over the world, most of whom had never encountered this ancient, profound and rich musical tradition. In 1958 he collaborated with distinguished violinists Yehudi Menuhin (Israel) and David Oistrach (Russia) in concert at the Paris UNESCO Music Festival. This event was to become revered as the unprecedented inauguration of a long sequence of cross-cultural collaborations for which Shankar has been recognized and honored internationally. For his outstanding contribution to Indian music and culture, he received his first of five Presidential Awards in 1962, India's highest honor in the arts.

In the mid-1960s, his preeminence as one of the world's leading serious musicians was augmented with wide popular success. George Harrison of the Beatles developed a deep, abiding interest in Hindustani music, and began to study with Shankar. One influence of this study can be heard in his song *Within You, Without You*. Shankar was featured in popular music venues, most notably at the Monterey Pop and Woodstock Festivals, both of which were filmed and embraced, leading to his first Grammy Award in 1966. He was also recognized as the "Recording Artist of the Year" and "Musician of the Year" by *Downbeat Magazine*. Shankar received his second Grammy Award in 1972. His list of special awards and honors is extensive, and he is the recipient of honorary doctorates from numerous institutions.

His long and distinguished musical career includes numerous recordings, performances at all the world's leading venues, and a series of unprecedented collaborations with other leading musicians. These include recordings made with such diverse musicians as Philip Glass, Jean- Pierre Rampal, Zubin Mehta (and the New York Philharmonic), George Harrison, Hosan Yamamoto (Japanese Shakuhachi master) and Musumi Miyashita (Japanese koto virtuoso). The extent to which these projects reach across and successfully bridge cultural boundaries is unprecedented: his creative work stands among the most notable achievements of the twentieth century.

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