

Pt. VIJAY RAGHAV RAO

Through the past six decades, Pt. Vijay Raghav Rao has shaped and influenced the essential form and derivatives of culture known to the world as classically Indian. It can be authoritatively said that with his performances on the Indian flute in front of audiences worldwide, and recordings thereof, he has interpreted ancient music for modern ears with an understanding that is chaste, and an elocution that stimulates intellects, both mature and young. His genius has also expressed itself in critically acclaimed works for modern orchestral and ballet ensembles. Several award winning features and short films shown at some of the most prestigious international film festivals carry his experimental music.

Critics and connoisseurs of his expression in Asia, Europe and America have responded with meaningful praise. To note a few-

"No substitute for his flute...the complete master" - The Hindustan Times

"A volcano of creative expression" - The Indian Express

"His flute is an unending fountain of myriad melodies, always fresh, always original..." - The Patriot

"Creator of beautiful, wide and ethereal canvasses..." - The Deccan Herald

"20th Century Renaissance Genius.." - The Cleveland Plain Dealer

"Intensely romantic...lyrical...extremely serene..." - Rave Magazine

"Innovator in the world of music.. a versatile genius.," -The JS Magazine

"Seeker of truth through music. One of the greatest flautists of this world" - The Times of India

“Reflective music, refreshing and genuinely haunting” - The New York Times

“Awe inspiring. Freshness and finesse in every note. Marked by gay abandon, innovativeness and imaginative vitality” - The Statesman

“Suave tonicity, lyricism, rich melodic beauty” - The Listening Post

Panditji’s awards, citations and press have reflected public sentiments of awe and respect for one who has staked new vistas for an ancient tradition, unfettered by a need for acceptance or accolades. He has been bestowed with prestigious honors in India, the United States, the former Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Canada, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, France and Germany.

In India alone, he has received multiple *Sangit Natak Akademi* awards, the titles of *Sangit Kala Shiromani* and *Gana Kala Prapoorna*, the *Gaurav Puraskar*, Lifetime Achievement awards and honorary doctorates. In 2002, the Governor of Maryland bestowed Panditji with an honorary citation for his contributions to strengthening cultural ties between India and the United States. In 2008, he received the prestigious Aditya Birla Kala Shikhar (Zenith of Art) award from the Governor of Maharashtra.

Panditji’s creative works in the realms of dance, orchestral composition and film music are recognized for an energizing originality that is often perceived to extend the boundaries of the artistic idiom. His compositions in dance and music have set trends, recognized worldwide with awards, and permeated musical expression in cultural media such as film, ballet and recordings. Panditji’s scores for Mrinal Sen’s ‘Bhuvan Shome’ (honored with the Golden Peacock, IFF, New Delhi) and painter M.F. Hussein’s ‘Through The Eyes of a Painter’ (honored with the Golden Bear, Berlin Film Festival) are just two examples of such brilliance. As a poet, Panditji has published five well-received anthologies of poems and short stories in English and Telugu.

Musicians are a rare species of human beings, seeking originality in the midst of what is the norm, expressing the voice of the human condition to those who experience it every day, seeking new spirits and notes in scales that have not changed in two thousand years. And it may be said that over half a century, Pt. Vijay Raghav Rao has been the preeminent musician to more than a generation of musicians, connoisseurs, musicologists and fans in India and parts of the world outside.