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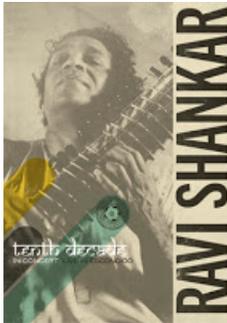
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Global Music Consciousness

Thursday, December 6, 2012

In review--Radiant Ravi



Ravi Shankar
Tenth Decade DVD
In Concert: Live in Escondido
East Meets West

As Pandit (term of reverence in India) Ravi Shankar made his way to the concert stage, the 91 year old sitar player looked exhausted and dispirited. Accompanied by his right-hand man tabla player Tanmoy Bose, master percussionist (also on tabla) Samir Chatterjee, student Ravichandra Kulur on bansuri flute (and percussion on one track), and another student Parimal Sadaphal on sitar, Shankar opened with the

Alap to the evening raga, *Yaman Kalyan*. By the time the musicians had joined in jod portion of the raga (when the tabla introduces beats), Shankar's face emitted a rosy glow. An hour and twenty-four minutes later as the musicians played the fiery last notes of the final raga, *Ragamala*, (based on an Indian folksong), Shankar resembled a new man, glowing from a spectacular performance.

The second raga, *Khamaj* in slow and medium tempo teen taal (or 16 beats per measure) develops into a mood-lifter halfway through with two percussionists, two sitar players, bansuri join in another spectacular performance, with the flute and sitar engaging in a playful call & response. I thought the second raga was my favorite until I watched the final raga which in its course downstream flowed from ethereal to fiery reminding me of a calm river transforming into white rapids. Through eye contact, Shankar engages the other musicians in musical challenges tossed like a tennis ball from one musician to the next. And each musician knows instinctively what to play and when to build the excitement of the music into a crescendo (famous with Indian ragas). Each moment grows more intriguing and more delicious than the last one.

But prior to the feisty passages of the raga, the music slowed into an interlude where we could hear the singing qualities of the instruments basking in the glow of the evening. Percussionists will find their thrills on the third track, *Taal Vadya*. The fourth track *Goonga Sitar* offers a more experimental sound when Shankar gagged or muted the strings on his sitar, turning the lute into a percussion instrument temporarily. The result proved interesting, but hardly compared to the three ragas that gave us more proof as to why Ravi Shankar, even in his nineties is one of the top ten musicians on the planet.

<http://www.eastmeetswestmusic.com> and <http://www.ravishankar.org>

Posted by Moon Child at 12:00 AM



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