Pandit Shubhendra Rao is an internationally acclaimed performer, composer, cultural entrepreneur and music educator. His relentless service in promoting Indian music has made him a highly respected figure in the field of music and education across the world. A protégé of Bharat Ratna Pandit Ravi Shankar, Shubhendra Rao has established himself “*not only as a master of his instrument but also as a thinking musician, constantly endeavouring to carry his instrument beyond conventional boundaries*” and “*a musical bridge to many cultures”* Critics and connoisseurs hail him as a worthy successor to his Guru’s tradition.

Internationally, he has performed at major music festivals and prestigious concert halls like *Kennedy Center for Performing Arts*, *Sydney Opera House*, *Salzburg International Music festival*, *National Centre for the Performing Arts* in Beijing, *National Arts Festival* in South Africa, *BRICS Summit* in China, *Theatre de le Ville* in Paris. In India, Shubhendra Rao has performed at major music festivals in India including *Doverlane Music Conference*, *ITC Sangeet Sammelan, Baba Harvallabh Sangeet Mahasabha, Shankarlal Festival, Gunidas Sammelan, Sankat Mochan Sammarroh, Kashi Utsav, Swami Haridas Sammellan*.

Leading universities invite him as a guest teacher to give lecture-demonstrations about Indian music. His international tours have taken him to North and South America, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, most countries in Europe, and many Asian countries. In November 2007, he was awarded the *“Youth Icon for Classical Music”* by the popular Zee Television Network. In 2014, the Arts and Culture Society awarded him the *‘Delhi Ratna’* award. In 2018, he was awarded the *‘PHD Art and Culture Samman’* by the PHD Chamber of Commerce. In September 2018, he was also awarded the first *‘Atal Behari Vajpayee National Award’* for his contribution to Art and Culture. In February 2019, he was awarded the prestigious “Art Karat Award for Excellence” for his contribution in the field of Arts.

A child prodigy who started playing sitar at the age of 3, he grew up in a musical family. His mother Nagarathna is a Saraswati Veena player. His father, N.R.Rama Rao, a disciple of Pandit Ravi Shankar himself, was his first teacher. Shubhendra had his first lesson from the Bharat Ratna Ravi Shankar at the age of 8. At the age of 18, he moved to Delhi, living with and learning from his Guru in the traditional Guru-Shishya parampara.

As a budding artist, he was the recipient of Youth State scholarship for music, Karnataka in 1975 and National scholarship for music from Ministry of culture in 1977. An A- Grade artist of All India Radio for over 25yrs, Shubhendra Rao is a regular performer on Radio and National Television.

As a composer Shubhendra Rao distinguishes himself to push the boundaries of classical music and creating music for artists across cultures. He has composed for and worked with Dutch Cellist, Saskia Rao-de Haas, American Jazz Guitarist Freddie Bryant, Iranian musicians, Japanese legendary singer Ryoko Moriyama, Chinese Pipa maestro Gao Hong, Bilbao Symphony Orchestra, Chinese National Orchestra amongst others.

‘*When Gods Meet’* was commissioned by Padma Vibhushan Dr Sonal Mansingh for her dance production. The *New York Times* described his composition, ‘*Yathra*’ as *‘movingly meditative’.* His composition ‘*Ekta*’ to honour German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s visit to India in 2015 was described as ‘*exemplifying the very best in the musical traditions of the East & West’.* Leading magazines and newspapers like India-Today, the Hindu, and Indian Express invite Shubhendra Rao to write articles as an expert on music, music education and his guru’s music.

Co-founder of ‘*Shubhendra and Saskia Rao Foundation’,* he is working tirelessly to revolutionize music education in India. By making it accessible to all children, he encourages and empowers children and their communities through their rich cultural heritage. The foundation teaches Indian classical to the under-privileged, differently-abled and children with terminal illness. They bring together children from the foundation and private schools to perform and learn music together and experience the uniting power of music. The foundation organizes *‘Music by children, for children’* concerts, seminars, workshops, free music programs and classes that help uplift these children and their communities.

As Founding Director of Musikul Education Pvt Ltd, Shubhendra Rao is transforming the way music is taught in schools in India. Together with his wife, Saskia Rao, he has created India’s first ever music curriculum for children, Sangeet4All. This early childhood music education program has already influenced over 20,000 children and the numbers are growing.

As the Indian delegate of the Creative Youth Development Conference hosted by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, he collaborates with an international team of experts on creating effective international policies on Child & Youth Arts Education. He is an active supporter as a performing artist for SPICMACAY for the past 30years, performing over 50 concerts every year. As an empanelled Guru and performer of ICCR, Shubhendra Rao has trained many foreign students who, in turn, are teaching Indian music across the world.

In his own words, “*Music is a gift bestowed on me since childhood. Knowing and realizing its power, I wish to bring the joy of music into every child’s life, not necessarily to make him/her into a musician but to make him/her a better and sensitive human being”.*