

[Gandhi & Shankar Feted](#)

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It was not a normal birthday party. This party, held last October at the Mahatma Gandhi Center in St. Louis, USA, was more a spiritual ceremony. It honored two of India's legendary spiritual ambassadors: Mahatma Gandhi and sitarist Ravi Shankar. Gandhi taught that first and foremost all peoples are brothers and sisters--and must relate as such. In a similar vein, Ravi Shankar spread, perhaps more powerfully than he knows, another of Hinduism's most sacred messages: that music, at its highest, is a spiritual discipline and, in its deepest expression, a channel of the universal spirit within all and a potent source of peace and blessings. Ravi Shankar's presence and a sitar concert by disciple Kartik Seshadri were thrill enough, but added to this were inspiring talks and a beautiful dance offering by Kalakshetra graduate Shruti Bhatt. The high point was the unveiling of a spectacular oil painting of Gandhi (top left) by Dasharath Panchal. The event was organized by Sangeetha (a society promoting Indian classical music) in alliance with other Indian organizations.