

Name: Sandeep Das  
Instrument: Tabla (a form of percussion from India)  
Where He Used To Live: New Delhi, India  
Where He Lives Now: Newton, MA

### **“The Fastest Fingers in India”**



“Sandeep, leave and stand outside the classroom!” This was the umpteenth time that I had been punished for either tapping the floor with my feet or tapping my hands on anything that I could find.

Luckily, when I was 8, my father realized that I had interest in rhythm and took me to a local Tabla instructor. I was living in Patna, India. A year later, my school entered in the All-Patna Music Competition. I won the Gold medal!

It was then that I started learning the drums from a famous maestro of the Tabla. Two years later, I represented my state, Bihar, in the All-India Music Competition. At the age of 10, I won the first prize again and was awarded the honor of Best Percussion Player in all age categories. The next day one of the leading newspapers of India had my picture on the front page. I was so excited!

The next 3 years I won championships playing the Tabla, but then I grew bored and stopped competing for a few years. When I returned to competitions, I was 15. Again, I won a Gold medal! My debut, or my first big concert, was with one of the best known Indian musicians in the world, Pandit Ravi Shanker. (A pandit is an accomplished music instructor in India.)

Even though I played the Tabla all the time, I didn’t neglect my studies. Instead, I found I was doing better and better in both music and school. Then, I didn’t know what I know now: if you concentrate on one thing, it helps your focus and sincerity

in other fields too. By working hard at the Tabla, I learned to work hard in other areas too!

Very soon it was time for me to decide on a career. On one hand, I was good in academics which meant I could take up higher studies and look for a secure job. On the other hand, I could take up the uncertain prospect of pursuing music as a career. I chose happiness over security and turned into a professional musician.

Fifteen years ago I met and played with the famous cellist Yo-Yo Ma and The New York Philharmonic Orchestra . My music has helped me travel the world from the Middle East (U.A.E, Oman, Qatar etc.) all over Europe (Czech Republic, Romania, Spain, Norway, Italy, Portugal, U.K. Germany, Norway, Holland to name a few). I've also been to many countries in Asia, including Japan, Korea, China, Singapore, Thailand, Taiwan, Malaysia, and Hong-Kong. I've even been to Africa!

I have made friends who are like family to me now. I have played at the UNO, the Hollywood Bowl and at the Opening Ceremony of the Special Olympics in China. You will find my music on CD's, iTunes, television, and the radio. I also love playing golf, swimming, playing table-tennis and soccer!

I am your new friend and I look forward to seeing you soon and learning more about you!

-Sandeep Das

