



Indian Raga – Lesson 1

- Indian music is not notated, but rather passed down from generation to generation through listening and playing by ear.
 - *What do we call this style of musical communication?*
 - *Where have we seen it before?*



- Indian families have a particular type of master-pupil teaching system. It is called a **gharana**.
- One of the most important types of Indian music is **raga**. A raga has three main components:
 - The melody – made up on the spot (*what is this technique called?*) using notes of a particular **rag** (similar to a scale in Western music)
 - each rag is associated with a particular occasion, mood, season or time of day
 - this mood is called the **rasa**.
 - The drone – long, held notes (usually one or two)
 - The rhythm – a particular repetitive pattern (*technical term?*) – called the **tala**.
- The melody is the most important part of Indian music – harmony (given by the drone) tends to be quite simple.



Indian Raga

Commonly used instruments

The voice

The most important of Indian instruments. In the Hindu tradition, it is believed that by singing, one can communicate directly with the gods.

The sitar

- ✓ plucked string instrument
- ✓ seven metal strings with frets
 - ✓ two for drone notes
- ✓ also up to twelve loose strings below
 - ✓ *what do you think these are for?*
- ✓ strings plucked with a plectrum
- ✓ common playing techniques include the **meend** (sliding between notes) and the **tan** (fast, scale-like flourishes)
- ✓ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=erLZ-zW9Ti4>





Indian Raga

Commonly used instruments

The **sarangi**

- ✓ smaller than the sitar
 - ✓ three or four 'main' thick strings
 - ✓ also has a set of 'sympathetic' strings, like the sitar
 - ✓ no frets
 - ✓ bowed, not plucked
 - ✓ quite similar to a violin
- ✓ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i97OcQhbrno>





Indian Raga

Commonly used instruments

The sarod

- ✓ smaller than the sitar, but lower pitched
- ✓ plucked, like sitar, but with no frets – metal finger-board instead
- ✓ like a sitar, the sarod also has a set of ‘sympathetic’ strings
- ✓ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A5Gh93hjjrA>





Indian Raga – Lesson 2

How much do you remember from last lesson?

- What is a **raga**?
- What is a **rag**?
- What is a **rasa**?
- What is a **tala**?
- What is **gharana**?
- What instruments have we met so far?



Indian Raga

Commonly used instruments - continued

The tambura

- ✓ simple instrument with only four strings and a resonator
- ✓ used to provide the **drone** notes
- ✓ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RTrIZcgdcMw>





Indian Raga

Commonly used instruments

The tabla

- ✓ set of two drums – each of a different size – one for each hand
- ✓ the drumheads are made of skin, and the black centres are formed from a paste of iron filings and flour
- ✓ The tabla provide the rhythmic pattern for the raga – the **tala**.
- ✓ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DrLN36uyZJ0>





Indian Raga

All together now!

Which three instruments are featured in this clip?

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4gWCiLexiY>



If you thought that clip was long... some raga performances go on for many hours!



Indian Raga

Some other instruments

The bansuri

- ✓ like a flute
- ✓ http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8F1H_ral0Zo

The shenhai

- ✓ like an oboe
- ✓ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-VAOEQDd9w>

These instruments do not have keys – just holes which the players can cover (or sometimes half-cover)



Indian Raga

Can you remember the three main components of an Indian raga?

1. Melody

Can you remember how the rag is composed?



Indian Raga

Can you remember the three main components of an Indian raga?

1. Melody

Can you remember how the rag is composed?

It is improvised using the notes from a particular **rag** - a pattern of notes. There are different rags for different moods, seasons, times of day, occasions, etc.

Some examples:

VIBHAS RAG

Drone notes

KALYAN RAG

ascending descending

Drone notes

TASK

In pairs, work out your own raga based on one of the rags above. Remember, you must use only the notes in the rag – the rhythm and other aspects of performance is up to you.



Indian Raga – Lesson 3 (Week 4, Lesson 2)

Quick recap. – what do the following terms mean?

Rag/Raga

Tala

Drone

Gharana

Sitar

Sympathetic vibrations

Tambura

Tabla



Indian Raga

How much do you remember about

The melody

- Usually played on the _____ but could also be played on the _____ or sung. The voice is very important to the _____ religion.
- Improvised
- Based on the notes of a particular _____
- The raga has a set of ascending and descending notes. The notes on the way up can be different from those on the way down.
- Some ragas specify rules for *individual notes* in the scale. For example, some notes may always have to be played quickly, or with decoration, or slightly flat or sharp.
- The use of slightly flat/sharp notes and the use of pitch bending means that Indian music can be described as **microtonal**.
- The ascending/descending nature of the rag means that the improvised melodies usually have a **rising and falling** shape.



Indian Raga

Now let's turn our attention to The rhythm

- Played on the _____
- Two components

1 The set pattern of beats – the _____

- There are hundreds of different beat patterns, just as there are hundreds of different ragas.
- The most common pattern is a sixteen beat pattern, organised into four groups/bars. This pattern is called the **teental**.
- There are hundreds of different talas – with different numbers of beats per cycle.

2 An improvised rhythmic pattern - the **bol**. The bol can be independent of the

beat, creating _____ and _____.

- Both components must begin on the first beat – the **sam**.

Bol	Sound
Ti or Te	A dry, slapping sound played in the black circle (syahi) of the dayan.
Na or Ta	A resonant tone played on the outer ring (keenaar) of the dayan.
Tin	A resonant tone played on the middle ring (sur) of the dayan.
Ga	A resonant tone played on the middle ring (sur) of the bayan.
Ka	A dry slap played on the bayan.
Dhin	Ga and Tin played at the same time.
Dha	Ga and Na/Ta played at the same time.
Tirikita	Ti, Ti, Ka, and Ti played quickly in a row

Tin Tin Na O 2 3 Dhi Na 4 5 Dhi Na 6 7 Rupaktaal	Dha Dhin Dhin Dha X 2 3 4 Dha Dhin Dhin Dha 5 6 7 8 Dha Tin Tin Ta O 10 11 12 Ta Dhin Dhin Dha 13 14 15 16 Teental	Ka Dhi Te Dhi Te X 1 2 3 4 Dha -- 5 6 Ga Ti Te 7 8 9 Ti Te Ka/2 10 11 1/2 Dharamital
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Bol and Tal



Indian Raga

Now let's turn our attention to

The rhythm

- Sound complicated?! It is.
- Watch the master at work:
 - In this clip, Alla Rakha improvises on the Jhaptal tala whose pattern is 2+3+2+3. He even speaks his improvisation using the special Indian syllables that identify each type of beat!
 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Joyk_EMtzn0
- Wow!
- How many years of practice must this take?!
- Can you remember how Indian musicians are taught?



Indian Raga

Now let's turn our attention to

The rhythm

- Let's try our own (simple!) teental tala:

CS = clap and stamp

D = hit the desk

C = clap

S = stamp

Teental (4+4+4+4) pattern:

CS	C	C	CS
CS	C	C	CS
CS	D	D	S
S	C	C	CS

Extension task: after each cycle, one player takes a turn to improvise **bols** over the main pattern.

Let's try it...



Indian Raga – Lesson 4 (Week 5, Lesson 1)

Quick recap. – what do the following terms mean?

Rag/Raga

Bols

Tala

Teental

Drone

Sam

Gharana

Meend

Sitar

Sarod

Tambura

Sarangi

Tabla

Tan



Indian Raga

The structure of a raga performance

Section	Tempo	Metre/rhythm	Features
1 Alap	Slow	In <u>free time</u>	Opening improvisation <u>introducing the rag</u> Accompanied by the <u>drone</u> of the tambura. <u>No tabla.</u>
2 Jhor	Steady/Medium	<u>Regular pulse</u> established	Tempo increases. Improvisation becomes more <u>rhythmic</u> and <u>more elaborate.</u>
3 Jhalla	Fast	<u>Fast pulse</u> <u>Exciting rhythms</u>	<u>Virtuosic</u> improvisation Advanced playing techniques
4 Gat/ Bandish (vocal)	Moderate/Fast	Fixed <u>tala</u> pattern	<u>Fixed composition</u> (prepared solo or song) All players interact

- Sometimes the Jhor and/or Jhalla sections may be left out
- The length of a raga performance can vary a lot – some performances go on for many hours