



Basics of Hindustani Classical Music for Listeners

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Nature, the source of music

- This can only be felt/experienced, heres some material that might help you:
 - Listen to the 2011 Grammy winning 'The Whale Raga' by Sarangi maestro Dhruba Ghosh, from the album 'Miho: Journey to the Mountain' by Paul Winter (<http://paulwinter.bandcamp.com/album/miho-journey-to-the-mountain>)
 - Listen to the song 'sunane waale sun lete hein, kaNa kaNa mein sangeet' from the Hindi film 'saaz' directed by Sai Paranjpe
 - See classic films like 'Sound of Music' (directed by Robert Wise and starring Julie Andrews), 'navrang' (Hindi, directed by V Shantaram), and the Telugu film 'shankarabharanam' or its Hindi version 'sur sangam'





The goal is – bliss ('aanand')

- Entertaining ('mano ranjan'), enjoyable experience
- Peaceful, happy, relaxed mind
- Appreciating what one is listening to, getting intellectual satisfaction
- Identifying, recognising creativity
- Enhancing self's sense of beauty
- Being in tune with nature
- Healing the mind and body with sounds
- Spiritual upliftment: 'atma ranjan' (feed the soul)





Notes ('swara's, 'shruti's) ...

- A tone is a single frequency, and is called 'shruti'
- A note is the smallest part of a melody and includes one tone plus possible microtones and/or harmonic tones, and is called 'swara', 'sur'
- There are 12 'swara's (notes) in all
- 7 'shuddha' (plain) swaras: 'saa' ('shaDja'), 're' ('rishabh'), 'ga' ('gandhaar'), 'ma' ('madhyam'), 'pa' ('pancham'), 'dha' ('dhaivat'), and 'ni' ('niSHaad')
- 'saa' and 'pa' are fixed 'swara's, the rest ('re', 'ga', 'ma', 'dha', 'ni') are mutable 'swara's and each has one 'vikrut' (different) version
- The 5 'vikrut' 'swara's ('komal' (flat) 're', 'ga', 'dha', 'ni', and 'teevra' (sharp) 'ma')
- 10 more minute note variations, having their own different names, add up to 22 'shruti's. I have seen this level of detail only in Indian

Classical Music





... Notes ('swara's, 'shruti's) ...

- The same 'swara' sounds different when created by different sources (voices, instruments) because of its timbre or quality of the sound produced
- In a set of 12, 'swara's are separated by the factor $2^{1/12}$ or 1.059463
- i.e. $\text{note1} * 1.059463 = \text{note2}$
- This applies to 12 notes and is in accordance with the 'Equal Tempered Scale' which is a set of frequencies standardized in the west.
- This is adopted by the current Indian music system
- This mathematical progression does not apply to the additional 10 'shruti's (within the same set) of the Indian system





... Notes ('swara's, 'shruti's)

'swara'	Frequency	Symbol, Notation
saa	220	सा
komal re	233.08	रे
re	246.96	रे
komal ga	261.64	ग्
ga	277.20	ग
ma	293.68	म
teevra ma	311.12	मा
pa	329.64	प
komal dha	349.24	ध्
dha	370	ध
komal ni	392	नि्
ni	415.32	नि





Scale ('patti') ...

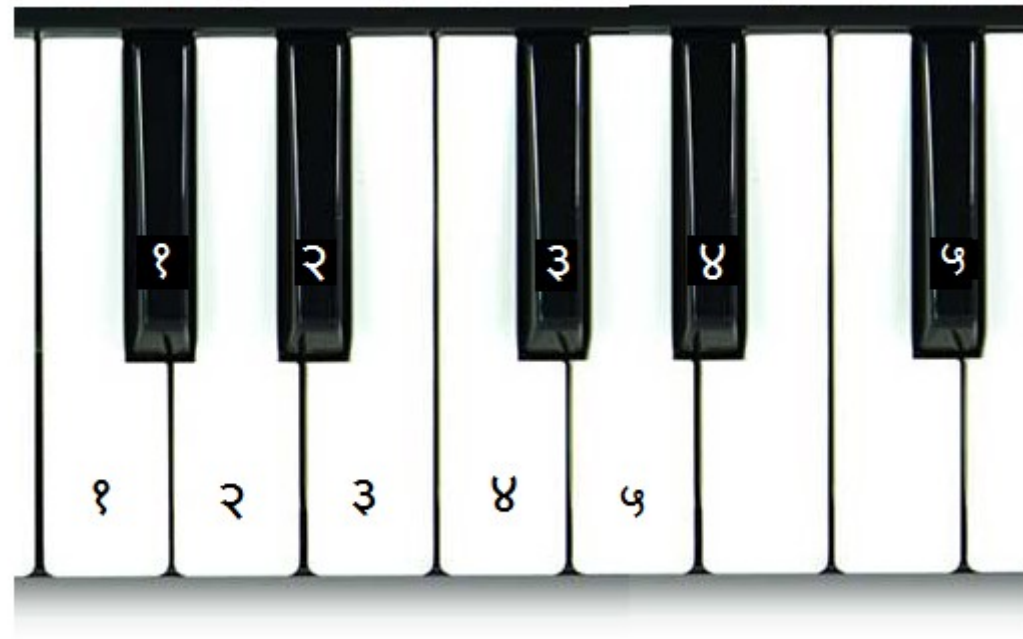
- Denoted by the frequency of the first note i.e. 'saa', the rest of the 'swara's will be according to the relative separation distance
- Most commonly, all artists and instruments on stage use the same scale for a 'raga' recital. This is a major difference between Indian and western music – western music explicitly uses multiple scales that are in 'harmony' with each other - chords.
- Explicit use of harmony is only seen in group songs in Indian music
- The reason for not using chords is that if a custom scale (different from 'Equally Tempered') is chosen, using 'swara's from multiple scales may generate resultant 'shruti's (frequencies) that are not in the same harmonic set as the 'swara's from the scale.





... Scale ('patti')

- 'safed 1' (White #1) corresponds to C4 (middle C, 256 Hz) of the western scale, 'kali 1' (Black #1) to its C#
- Typically
 - Male vocalists use 'safed/kali' 1 or 2
 - Female vocalists use 'safed/kali' 4 or 5
 - Instruments use various
- Indian music gives the freedom to use a non standard frequency as the 'saa'.





Octave ('saptak') ...

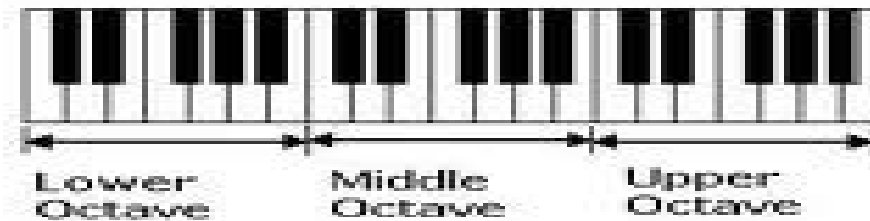
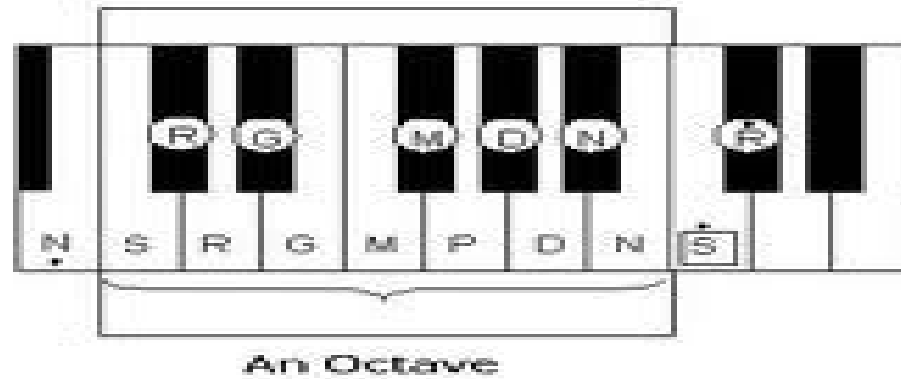
- 'saptak' is a set/group of 7 'swara's (including its 5 variations as well as the remaining 10 'shruti's – hence actually adding up to 22) that starts from the lower 'saa' of the saptak and ends at the lower 'saa' of the next 'saptak'
- The lower 'saa' of the next 'saptak' is treated as the higher 'saa' of the current 'saptak' and the lower 'saa' of the current 'saptak' is the higher 'saa' of the previous 'saptak'.
- Typically, a good voice covers at least 2 'saptak's (in Indian music) i.e. The notes of both 'saptak's are sung equally clearly. In western classical for e.g. operas, a good voice covers more than 2 'saptak's
- Typically, instruments play a larger number of 'saptak's – 3 or in rare cases even more
- The middle C octave (that starts with Sa¹) ranges from 256 to 512 Hz.





... Octave ('saptak')

(lower tetrachord) पूर्वांग । उत्तरांग (upper tetrachord)



अति मंद्र । मंद्र । मध्य । तार । अति तार





'swara' Instruments

- These are the note generators, the traditional manual 'taanpura' and the modern version – electronic – called 'shruti box'
- You may also see a 'swar manDal'
- There is also an Android application 'Tanpura Droid'





Note groups – 'raga's ...

- 'ranjayati iti raagaha' (sanskrit) – one that entertains is a raga
- A 'raga' is a selection of 'swara's with a particular sequence or one-or-more sub-sequences
 - A minimum of 5 'swara's (out of 12)
 - A set of rules and constraints
 - 'swara's that you can sing
 - 'swara's that you can't sing
 - (sub-) sequences/phrases that you can/must sing
 - (sub-) sequences/phrases that you cannot sing





... 'raga's ...

- Lets make a 'raga'

सा रे ग प ध सा

- We have selected only the 'shuddha' (plain) 'swara's
- We have omitted 'ma' and 'ni'
- It turns out that this is the famous 'raga' known as 'bhoop' or sometimes 'bhoopaali'
- The meaning of 'bhoop' is King. Congratulations – you have just re-created the king of 'raga's !





... 'raga's ...

- How many 'raga's can there be ?
- Theroetically, rules say that to make a 'raga',
 - one can select minimum 5 swaras, maximum 12
 - permutations don't count, i.e. only combinations count.
- So, mathematically, for $n=12$ 'swara's and $r=5,6,7$ choices, max count of 'raga's = sum (nCr)
- i.e. $12C5 + 12C6 + 12C7$
- i.e. $792 + 924 + 792 = 2508$





... 'raga's ...

- How many 'raga's can there be ? (contd...)
- Over the ages people have taken lesser than 5 'swara's (e.g. Hindol), taken both forms of a note (e.g. the Malhaars), used different permutations of the same set of notes – called 'chalan' – to create new ragas (e.g. Pooriyaa and Maarwa) and even used the exact same notes but with a different emphasis on certain notes (e.g. Bhoop and Deshkaar)
- But only those 'raga's that are compelling melodies have stood the test of time. And I don't see this natural law changing anytime soon :)





... 'raga's (vitals) ...

Vital Characteristics:

- 'raga's are made up of two parts: ascending sequence called '**aaroha**' and a decending sequence called '**avaroha**'
- Number of 'swara's in these two can be different. This determines the '**jaati**' (literally, caste) of the 'raga'
- 5 'swara's = 'oDava', 6 'swara's = 'sHaaDava', all 'swara's = 'sampoorNa'. The 'komal/teevra' and 'shuddha' versions of the 'swara's are counted singly. 'jaati' is represented as a tuple representing 'aaroha' and 'avaroha'. Example: 'sHaaDava-sampoorNa'





... 'raga's (vitals) ...



Vital Characteristics (contd):

- The most important 'swara' in the 'raga' is called '**vaadi**'. This is supposed to be heard the most, in relation to other 'swara's, during a performance
- The second most important 'swara' in the 'raga' is called '**samvaadi**'. This is supposed to be heard less than the 'vaadi' but more than rest of the 'swara's
- The pair of 'vaadi' and 'samvaadi' are important contributors to make the mood of the 'raga'
- The 'swara's that are not allowed in the 'raga' are called 'varjit' (omitted) 'swara's

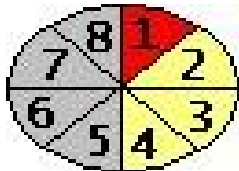




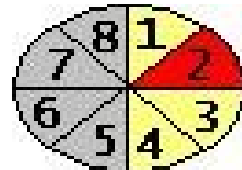
... 'raga's (vitals) ...

Vital Characteristics (contd):

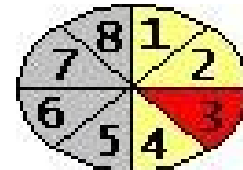
- **'prahar'**: A unit of time - one 3 hour division of the day totalling 8 such in 24 hours
- Each 'raga' has its own 'prahar' as the opportune time to perform/listen to it. Some 'raga's also have their own seasons.
- Observe 'raga's carefully and you will find commonalities in the 'swara' combinations of ragas with similar timings



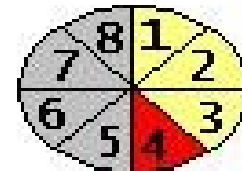
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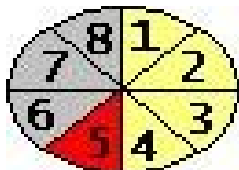
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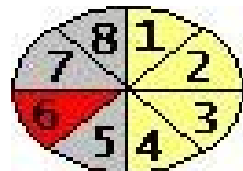
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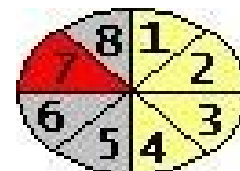
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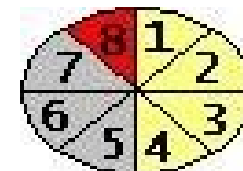
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21-24



0-3



3-6





... 'raga's (vitals) ...

Vital Characteristics (contd):

- **Rationale for 'prahar':**

- Ayurveda says 3 tendencies 'vata', 'pitta', 'kapha' work in a cyclic order, both on a 24 hour clock as well as a 12 month clock. [1]
- Chemistry of the human body and emotions of the human mind are tightly coupled and affect each other
- Sound affects water, see [2] for contemporary proof.
- 72% of our body is made up of water
- Different 'swara's (and their combinations) have different effects on the human mind and body
- Musical geniuses of the past have minutely studied this causality and as a result, 'raga' timings are recommended

[1] http://ayurveda-foryou.com/music/raga_time.html

[2] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masaru_Emoto





... 'raga's (vitals) ...

Vital Characteristics (contd):

- **'rasa'** refers to the effect that the 'raga' is expected to have on the performer, listener and their surroundings.
- Most important and most powerful aspect of 'raga' music, equally difficult to master
- 9 traditional 'rasa's (collectively called 'nav rasa') that originate in Bharata's 'Natya Shaastra' (ancient Indian scripture) and the 10th 'rasa' written by poet 'Soordas' called 'vaatsalya' (motherly love) – these constitute the largely accepted 'rasa's today.
- Commonly heard are the 7: 'bhaktee' (devotion), 'shringar' (love), 'veer' (brave and energetic), 'roudra' (angry), 'karuNa' (kindness), 'shaanta' (peaceful), 'adbhuta' (wonderful, magical)
- Adherence to the rules of the 'raga' makes maximum positive contribution towards creation of the 'rasa'





... 'raga's (vitals)...



Vital Characteristics (contd):

- The sign of a good performer is the ability to create that effect on his surroundings as prescribed by the 'raga' being performed
- The sign of a good listener is whether he/she gives maximum weightage to this aspect in the assesment/evaluation of the performance

Please Remember: Just as, 'result' is the most important aspect of an 'action' (whats the use of an action that ultimately doesn't achieve the desired result ?), 'rasa' is the most important aspect of a 'raga' performance (whats a performance that fails to generate the 'rasa' ?).





... 'raga's (vitals) ...



Vitals Characteristics (contd):

- '**pakad**' (literally – 'catch phrase') is a set of one or two (sub-)sequences that are unique to a 'raga', to the extent that they help uniquely identify the 'raga'
- It logically follows that 'pakad' of 'raga' A be avoided in any other 'raga' B, even if the 'swara's that make this (sub-)sequence in 'raga' A are also valid constituents of that other 'raga' B
- '**prakriti**' (nature of a raga) refers primarily to the 'laya' aspect suitable to a 'raga'. Some 'raga's are slow, steady serious and calm ('gambheer') while some are fast paced, bright and effervescent ('chanchal'), and some are simply in-between and happy ('aanand').





... 'raga's (vitals)...

Vital Characteristics (contd):

- **'thaat'** is a way of categorization of 'raga's based on a theme – the 'swara's that make the raga
- 'raga's made of similar 'swara's tend to be grouped into one 'thaat'
- There are about 10 'thaat's. For e.g. 'aasavaree', 'bhairav', 'khamaaj' are names of 'thaats'
- Some 'raga's don't belong to a 'thaat' – they are classified as 'swatantra' (independent)
- Lately, this classification system seems to be relegated to academic purposes





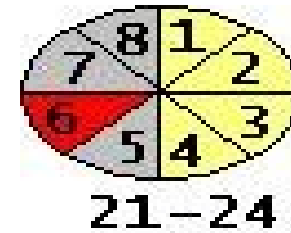
... 'raga's ...

Vitals of Bhoop*

- Aaroha:
- Avaroha:
- Jaati
- Vaadi, Samwaadi
- Prahar
- Rasa: Shaanta, Gambheera
- Pakad
- Thaata

सा रे ग प ध सां
सां ध प ग रे सा
ओडव - ओडव

ध , ग



प ग रे ग

कल्याण

* As is to be expected of philosophy, differences of opinion abound. I guarantee you will find an expert who disagrees with at least one these. :P
The secret behind the world still being a peaceful place is that listeners can take all these differences in their stride. :) Ditto for other Ragas ...

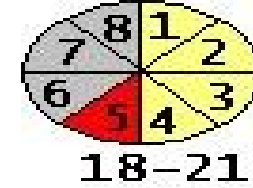


... 'raga's ...

Vitals of Bhimpalās

- Aaroha:
- Avaroha:
- Jaati
- Vaadi, Samwaadi
- Prahar
- Rasa: Shaanta, Bhakti, Shringar
- Pakad
- Thaata

नि सा ग् म प नि सां
 सां नि ध प म ग् रे सा
 ओडव - संपूर्ण
 म , सा



प नि सा ग् रे सा
 ग् म ग् रे नि सा
 काफी





... 'raga's

Vitals of Maarawa

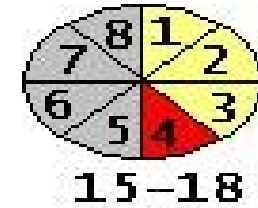
- Aaroha:
- Avaroha:
- Jaati
- Vaadi, Samwaadi
- Prahar
- Rasa: Veer, Roudra
- Pakad
- Thaata

नि रे ग मा ध , मा ध नि रें सां

सां, नि रे नि ध, मा ध, मा ध मा ग रे, नि ध, रे सा

षाडव - षाडव

ध रे



रे नि ध

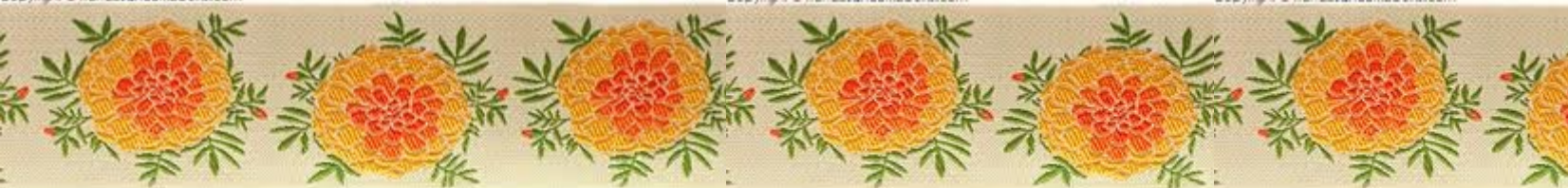
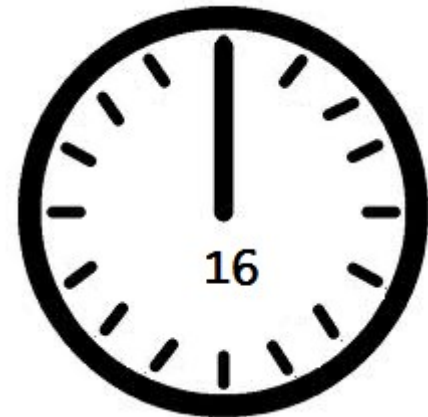
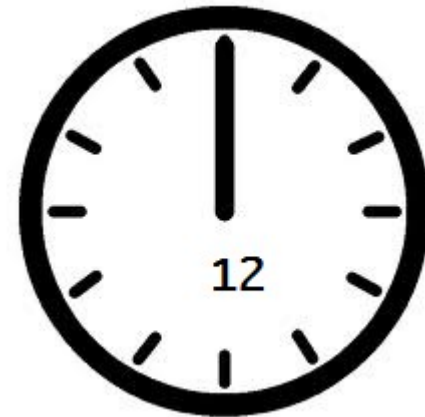
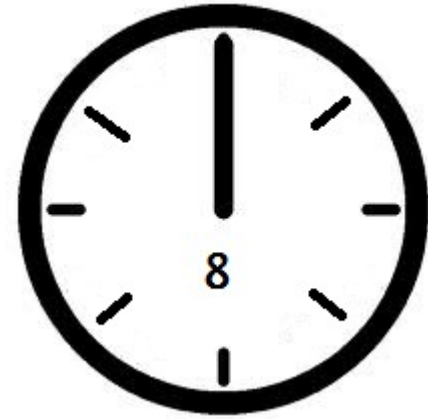
मारवा





Beats & Rhythms ...

- Beat ('maatras') is a single unit of time measurement
- A certain number of beats grouped together make a bigger unit called 'taal' – examples 16 beats, 10 beats, 12 beats and so on
- It's as if you are creating a customised mental clock/counter for the number of beats you want to keep track of.
- 'taal's have (equal or unequal) sub-divisions ('vibhaag') as well as significant and less-important beats





... Beats & Rhythms ...

- The first beat is the most significant beat of a taal and is called the 'sum' (a name by itself and not meaning addition)
- The middle beat is (most typically) the next significant beat and is called the 'kaal', meaning a pause in time, and signifying that its time to turn back in the 'awartan' (cycle) and is the start of the 2nd half of the 'taal's cycle
- One can count a taal in various ways using ones palms and/or fingers and use 'taali' (clap) and 'khaali' (wave) sequences to denote different beats and sub-divisions
- As a rule, the 'sum' is marked by a 'taali' (clap) and the 'kaal' (turning point, midpoint) by a 'khaali' (wave)





... Beats & Rhythms ...

- There are different kinds of maatraas having different single- or multi-syllable sounds ('bol's) like 'dhaa', 'dhin' 'tin', 'kat', 'toona', 'tirakiTa'.
- A particular composition of a 'taal' using a particular set of 'bol's is called a 'Thekaa', 'bols' constitute the language of the 'taal'
- Popular examples of 'Thekaa's
 - 16 beat Thekas called 'teen taal', 'tilwaaDaa'
 - 10 beat Theka called 'zhap taal'
 - 12 beat Thekas called 'ek taal', 'chautaal'
 - 8 beat Theka called 'bhajani Theka'
 - 14 beat Thekas called 'Dhamaar', 'zhoomraa'
- The use of the word 'taal' in names of these 'Thekas' is technically incorrect, but being supremely popular misnomers, their use continues





... Beats & Rhythms ...

- 'Theka's are critical parts of the music system and all compositions (rachanas) are set to some 'Theka' or the other
- 'Theka's are repeated in a cyclical manner while the composition is being sung/played
- Whatever kinds of improvisations a performer does, he/she does it sync with the 'Theka' being played alongside.

An un-violable rule is that all performers in the group need to reach the 'sum' (first beat) of the Theka at the same time, for every cycle that is repeated.





... Beats & Rhythms ...



Example 'Thekaa': 'teentaal'

धा धिन धिन धा, धा धिन धिन धा,

dhaa	dhin	dhin	dhaa,	dhaa	dhin	dhin	dhaa,
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
(sum)							

धा तिन तिन ता, ता धिन धिन धा

dhaa	tin	tin	taa,	taa	dhin	dhin	dhaa
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
(kaal)							

'teentaal' has 4 equal subdivisions demarkated by commas as shown above



Tempos ('laya's – 'vilambit', 'madhya', 'drut')

- Tempo i.e. Speed i.e. Pace is called 'laya' to denote how time is being **spent**.
- Roughly 3 different speeds are commonly observed.
- Slow 'laya' is called 'vilambit'
 - 5 seconds per beat by a **very rough** rule of thumb
- Medium 'laya' is called 'madhya'
 - 1 second per beat by a **very rough** rule of thumb
- Fast 'laya' is called 'drut'
 - $\frac{1}{4}^{\text{th}}$ of a second (250 milliseconds) per beat by a **very rough** rule of thumb

These numbers may vary and the disclaimer from the 'Bhoop raga vitals' slide applies :) And then there are the 'ati' versions of course! But we are only talking about the basics :)





Tempos ('dugun laya')

- 'Dugun' means double
- It represents the double speed of any 'laya' and hence takes half the time to complete one cycle
- For a 'raga', 'laya's are always presented in ascending order of speed towards climax – never reverse
- Once a particular 'laya' is being presented, a 'dugun' of that same 'laya' may be presented before switching to the next higher 'laya'.
- There are other (faster) speeds having their own names, but lets keep them for the 'advanced' session ;)





'taal' Instruments

- These are the beat generators, the traditional manual 'tabla'/'mridangam'/'pakhawaj' and the modern version – electronic tabla
- You may also see 'manjira's or indian cymbals, especially accompanying 'bhajan's





Compositions ('rachana's) ...

- A 'rachana' is a song composed such that
 - the 'swara's of the song are the 'swara's of one chosen 'raga'
 - based on one 'taal' in one 'laya'
- Since it is **bound** by the rules of the 'raga' and 'tala', the song is most commonly called as 'bandish'
- The words ('shabda') of the 'bandish' are typically from a north Indian language (or a dialect) – or at times a mix of languages – such as Hindi, Braj, Punjabi, Rajasthani





... Compositions ('rachana's) ...

- 'bandish'es are typically short, commonly two stanzas called the 'sthaayee' and the 'antaraa' with two lines each. (needless to say, they can be even shorter or just a little longer, but overall, certainly short, compared to other kinds of poems)
- The first line of the 'bandish' is the one most repeated through the 'raga' recital (like the refrain) and is called 'mukhaDa' (literally – face of the song)
- Subject/meaning/function of the 'shabda' of the 'bandish' are primarily to express one of the 'nav rasa' that we saw earlier.
- Depending on different contexts ('laya' or season or festival or geography or 'rasa' or some others), 'bandish'es also have these names – 'dhrupad', 'khayal', 'cheez', 'tarana', 'thumri', 'tappa', 'gat', 'bhajan', 'hori', 'kajaree', 'gazal'. As you listen, you learn.





...Compositions ('rachana's)...

Example* 'bandish', 'raaga' – 'vrindaavaneer saarang',
'Theka' – 'teental', 'laya' – 'drut'

स्थायी - बन बन ढूँढन जा ऽ ऊं
सांसां निसांनिप पनिपम रेसा मरे पम प

bana bana				DhoonDhana				jaa				oon			
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

कितहूं छुप गये कृष्ण मुरारी ।
मप निसारेसां निप मप रेम पनिपम रे सा

kitahoon				chhupa gaye				KrishNa		mu	raaree				
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

* 'taali' and 'kaal' signs not shown in example

Mark the starting beats of the 'sthaayee' and 'antaraa' – they are different



... Compositions ('rachana's) ...

अन्तरा - सीस
म मम

मुकुट और
प नि

कानन
सां सांसां

कुंडल
नि सांसां

seesa				mu				kuTa aura				kaanana				kunDala			
1	10	11	12	13	14	15	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16				

बंसी ऽ
निसां रेमं

धर मन
रें सांसां

रंग फि
निसां रेसां

रत गिरि
निसां निप्

bansee				dhara mana				ranga				phi		rata giri			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16		

धा ऽ शी ऽ
मपनिसारेमरेसां निसारेसानिपमप

dhaa				ree											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16



... Compositions ('rachana's)

- While the rachana itself is fixed and short, it is repeated for appropriate amount of time with improvisations and embellishments
- It is this freedom for improvisations and embellishments, that gives the performer the opportunity to be creative.
- Hence the same 'bandish' presented by different performers can sound similar yet different, adding variety to the listeners experience.
- Slow 'laya' improvisations are called 'alaap's and fast laya improvisations are called 'taan's





Typical parts of a 'raga' presentation ...

- Vocal:

1. 'vilambit' 'laya' 'bandish' called 'khayal' (or 'dhrupad', according to context) in some 'theka' that uses the 'aalaap' within the 'aawartan' (cycle) and the 'mukhaDa' of the 'bandish' at the edges of the cycle.
2. 'bol-aalaap', 'sargam' and 'taans' in 'dugun' of 'vilambit' 'laya', while the same 'bandish' is continued
3. 'madhya' 'laya' 'bandish in some 'theka' – typically a different 'bandish' in the same 'raga'
4. 'drut' 'laya' 'bandish in some 'theka'– yet another different 'bandish' in the same 'raga', typically a faced paced 'tarana' is sung at this point.





...Typical parts of a 'raga' presentation

- Instrumental:
 1. 'aalap', slow beginning of the raga, without rhythmic accompaniment
 2. 'jor' (also 'joD'), more exploration of the 'swara's of the raga, again without rhythmic accompaniment, may or may not be in a speedier 'laya'
 3. 'gat', vilambit, madhya laya and drut 'bandish'es played in some Theka (with rhythmic accompaniment)
 4. 'jhala', highly rhythmically oriented and fast paced conclusion of the 'gat' played in some Theka (with rhythmic accompaniment)





Styles – 'gharana's

- Specific styles of singing developed by individual master musicians few centuries ago and taught to their disciples through generations
- Names of 'gharana's come from places these people lived or originated e.g Gwalior, Kirana, Jaipur-Atrauli, Agra and so on
- Differences in styles (of 'gharana's) shouldn't really matter much to listeners unless one listens to a particular style for years and likes it over other styles for whatever reason.
- Ordinarily, listeners would like all styles for the fine grained variety they provide, because the basics are the same anyway.





What makes a good performance ...

- For vocal:
 - Quality of voice: well rounded, clear voice, medium volume, pleasing timbre
 - Style of 'swara' production: 'aakar' (full throated) is considered as best
 - Presenters dexterity with the 'swara's and command on the 'Theka' and 'laya'
 - Clarity in pronunciation of 'shabda' of the 'bandish' – this obviously does not apply to instrumental
- Additionally for instrumental:
 - Smooth, fluent like a voice and not mechanical





... What makes a good performance

- That it be technically correct is a given: correct 'swara's and correct keeping of the 'Theka'
- Correct in all other 'raga' vital characteristics that we have seen earlier, especially the 'rasa' (effect)
- Variety and innovation in 'raga' presentation **without** breaking raga rules => creativity
- Co-ordination amongst all musicians on stage
- A river-like flowing progression of the presentation to climax

The concious act of *listening* is perhaps the most important part of a performance, listener participation can make the performance way more valuable than the performing team can do by themselves.

Indian music is played 'by the ear', rarely 'read' from 'notation'





Listeners – make the most of it ...

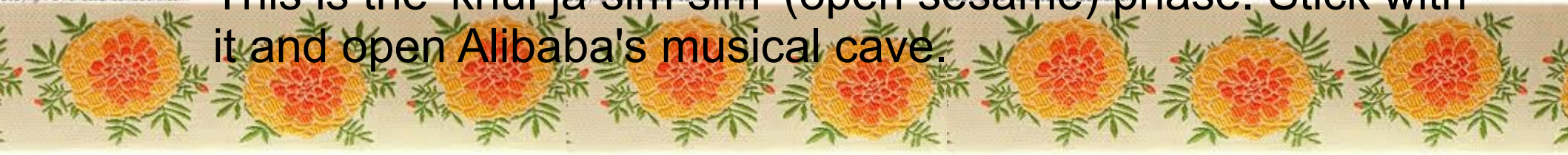
- Overcome the 'listeners block'*
 - Music is simple. 'sa', 're', 'ga', 'ma' are simple frequencies. Even babies communicate using mono syllables. Everyone can certainly listen and produce these simple sounds. We already speak some language which is a more complex sound. Some languages too sound simple and musical. (Ever listened to a conversation in a foreign language ?)
 - We come factory-fitted with some level of musical ability. We just need to try it out and polish it. We need to spend some time with it, we need to get used to whats already there.
 - As a first step, there are only 12 'swara's to learn. You've already learned the sounds of 26 english alphabets and the 72 Devanagari (or relevant) alphabets of your language. Why do you assume learning 22 'shruti's would be difficult ?

* analogous to the 'writers block'



Listeners – make the most of it ...

- Overcome the 'listeners block' (contd ...)
 - Music is all about getting in tune with nature and the cosmos. Really. Initially, 'vilambit' 'laya' seems boring to new listeners and it occupies a big part of the performance too.
 - Teachers/performers know this and still teach/sing/play 'vilambit'. Its to quieten the mind first so as to help it appreciate the beauty, to get in sync with nature.
 - Analogy: Ever tried a water 'rangoli' ? You can only create a 'rangoli' on still water.
 - If you are human, and persist, you are bound to overcome this 'bored phase' sooner, and then onwards, the treasure that is music, is yours.
 - This is the 'khul ja sim sim' (open sesame) phase. Stick with it and open Alibaba's musical cave.





... Listeners – make the most of it ...

- Observe 'raga' timings in the divisions of 8 'prahar's of a day – listen to the 'raga' that corresponds to current time
- Observe seasons – listen to more of seasonal 'raga's in their respective season
- Have favourite artists – vocalists and instrumentalists
- Have favourite instruments. Mine are the 'sarangi' and the 'rudra veena'
- Buy/Collect your favourite recordings and listen to them repetitively, gift them to the sick for healing





...Listeners – make the most of it...

- Wake to your favourite morning 'raga', sleep to your favourite night 'raga', listen to 'raga's as soft background music of your life. Design your own music therapy for relaxation on a daily basis.
- (Live-)blog/update Facebook/Tweet about the concerts you enjoyed, why you enjoyed them, which particular parts you liked, your impression of the artists, and connect/discuss with others with similar interests. (No, don't start a war – doesn't go well with the spirit of music. If someone differs, let them be)
- Have 'bandish'es as ringtones and caller tunes. - don't have them as voicemail prompts please :)





...Listeners – make the most of it...

- Neurology and Music

- New/different music satisfies the brain the most - "it is the suspenseful tension of music (arising out of our unfulfilled expectations) that is the source of the music's feeling", says Leonard Meyer in his book *Emotion and Meaning in Music*. 'raga' music, being explorative by design is highly conducive.
- The finer pitches in 'raga' music increase your usage of your brain, as well it's ability to do fine grained processing.
- Music is processed in multiple parts of the brain. Music influences 'neuro-plasticity' – the brains capacity to re-organize itself.
- 'Theta state' of the brain (4-7 Hz of EEG activity), associated with meditation, problem solving, creativity, intuition, and 'Eureka' moments can be reached with the various 'vilambit' thekas in mathematical proportion. The 'swaras' around the 'sum' acts as a set of isochronic tones and the combination is a powerful brain tonic.





...Listeners – make the most of it...

- Attend concerts
 - Take a raga book with you
 - Listen to the configured Taanpuras on the stage
before the performer starts – this helps you tune-in to the scale being used
 - Treat the performance like meditation – **need not look** at the performer, **listen** to him/her/them
 - Make notes of special things you note about the performer – you can look these up later or discuss them with friends or other artistes
 - hum along the bandish if you know it – softly, and to yourself





...Listeners – make the most of it...

- Attend concerts (contd ...)
 - Do nothing to disturb the performer, don't demand anything for eg. that he sing a particular piece, if at all, only request. Be prepared to **recieve** peace and joy via the notes.
 - Don't **ever** disturb the performer visually by getting up and leaving midway. Even if you have the most important and the most innocent/pardonable reason for doing this, the performer will most likely think its because you dont like his performance, will feel bad and it will bring his performance down by a notch. If you know you may need to leave, choose an edge-seat or better still, listen from outside the hall door





...Listeners – make the most of it...

- Attend concerts (contd ...)
 - Do applaud but by using common gestures and words of a 'mehfil' like 'wah!' and 'kyaa baat hei'.
 - Dont eat or drink while you listen – its disrespectful – leave that for the breaks.
 - Typical dress code is ethnic.
 - Use a stopwatch and observe and note the 'Theka' lengths for 'vilambit', 'madhya' and 'drut' 'laya's for various performers
 - Arrive at the 'sum' beat along with everyone else





...Listeners – make the most of it...

- Attend concerts (contd ...)
 - Most 'bandish'es have the pen-name of the composer mentioned or even disguised in the lyrics. See if you can identify and remember a few prolific composers
 - As a 'raga' is unfolding, identify as many songs/tunes you otherwise hear, that match with the 'aalaap's and 'taan's





...Listeners – make the most of it ...

- By repetitive listening, (by a rule of thumb – 10,000 hours i.e. 20 hours per week for 10 years) one can become a connoisseur of hindustani classical music. You can:
 - Identify 'raga's
 - Hum commonly sung compositions
 - Know the 'raga' rules and identify when performer is sometimes near-perfect
 - Understand and appreciate when performer is innovative and creative when he/she makes new and different melodies within the rules of the raga
 - Spread the knowledge, teach someone to enjoy.





...Listeners – make the most of it



- Make inter-disciplinary observations that only you can, here are some of mine
 - Notice that a plot of 'swara's of the 'aarooha' and 'avaroha' of 'raga' 'bilaskhani todi' looks like the hysteresis curve
 - Notice that uttarang pradhan ragaas like Shankara, Adana, Basant are so bright and energetic, they can replace your coffee. 'suryavanshi' people (late risers) should definitely try, also those trying to reduce caffeine intake :)
 - The 'patti' concept with moving 'saa' relates with the 'sliding window protocol' of computer networks theory
 - Playing ragas as soft background music is very therapeutic and soothing for babies and young kids





References

- My gurujee Pt. Ram Mate's teachings. More about him at <http://www.atulnene.com/rammate.html>
- Dr. Veena Sahastrabuddhe's teachings, lecture-demonstrations, recordings, discography and live recitals.
- The book 'This is your brain on music' by Daniel J Levitin
- Internet and the wikipedia





Further Reading


- Text books on Hindustani Classical Music by 'Gaandharva Mahavidyaalaya' (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gandharva_Mahavidyalaya)
- The documentary 'Bhinna Shadja' on GaanSaraswati Kishori Amonkar by Amol Palekar (2011)
- Marathi book 'Naad Vedh' by Achyut Godbole (<http://achyutgodbole.com/>)
- Biographies of the greats for example Bharat Ratna Pt. Bhimsen Joshi's 'Swar Bhaskar' by Dr. Shankar Abhaykar
- Books written by the greats for example 'Swaramayee' by Dr. Prabha Atre (available both in Hindi as well as Marathi)





Start Listening!

Wishing You The Very Best!

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Thank you :)

