MUSIC AND CULTURE OF INDIA

ARYANS CAME AND SETTLED IN INDIA FROM THE NORTHWEST – THRU THE HINDU-KUSH RANGE BORDERING INDIA AND AFGHANISTAN.

THEY SETTLED FIRST IN THE INDUS VALLEY FIRST.

The settlers from central Asia describe their world view in poems which constituted the four VEDAS. The word Veda means knowledge.

The oldest of the Vedas, SOMA VEDA, was composed in a form which was recited in melodic chants based upon THREE tonal accents. They are still recited in religious ceremoniew by priests in Hindu temples.
THE SANSKRIT WORD FOR MUSIC IS SANGEETA WHICH REPRESENTS
Geeta – song
Vadya – instruments
Nrtya - dance

Music is divided into two categories:
Gandharva or Celestial
Desi or folk form

Earliest Treatise on performing arts : NATYASHASTRA of Bharatamuni 2000 years ago !

Importance of music and dance is very visible in the sculptures adorning the temples and in paintings.
HINDUISM – THE OLDEST OF INDIAN RELIGIONS

GOD OR BRAHMAN HAS THREE MAIN ASPECTS

<table>
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<th>Creation</th>
<th>Process of living</th>
<th>Destruction or death</th>
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<td>Male</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brahma</td>
<td>Vishnu</td>
<td>Siva</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sarswati</td>
<td>Laxmi</td>
<td>Parvati</td>
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Musical Instruments are associated with gods and goddesses

- Flute in the hands of Krishna – incarnation of Vishnu – divine love
- Veena in the hands of goddess of learning Sarswati
- Damaru (a type of drum) in the hands of Siva, representing the dance of life and death.

Religious music consists of recitations and songs of devotion or BHAKTI. They are sung in very catchy rhythms.
INDIAN MUSIC OF TODAY IS, HOWEVER, QUITE DISTINCTIVE HAVING DEVELOPED RICH STYLIZED STRUCTURE CONTAINING MANY MUSICAL FORMS.

Basic forms of Indian music was documented in treatises going back some 1000 years. Some notable texts:

Sangeet Ratnakar of Saranga Deva and Natyashastra of Bharata.

Current music performances reflect more modern development. Development over the last 700 years!

INDIAN MUSIC TRADITIONS

NORTH INDIAN

SOUTH INDIAN
INDIAN MUSICAL SCALE: OCTAVE IS DIVIDED INTO 22 NOTES

INDIAN MUSIC IS NEITHER POLYPHONIC OR HARMONIC

IT IS BEST DESCRIBED AS MODAL MUSIC WHICH IS LINEAR RATHER THAN PARALLEL IN STRUCTURE

THE SCALE IS TIED TO A BASIC PITCH - CALLED THE TONIC

THE MAIN NOTES OF THE OCTAVE ARE 12, HOWEVER THERE ARE 10 OTHER NOTES CALLED SRUTIS FOR A TOTAL OF 22 INTERVALS.
The harmonic form of the chromatic scale thus gives the twelve chromatic notes as:

\[ \text{Frequency ratios} \]

It should not be forgotten, however, that the altered (vikṣitā) notes, and also certain of the unaltered (śuddhā) ones, are susceptible to slight changes of pitch according to their expression or śrūti.
THE MAIN NOTES OF THE SCALE HAVE NAMES SUCH AS SA, RE ... EACH NOTE IS ASSIGNED A SPECIAL QUALITY. THIS IS SHOWN BELOW:

1. Sa or the tonic (of chosen frequency f) - Cry of the Peacock
2. Re (9/8 f) – the mooing of a cow
3. Ga (6/5f) – the bleating of a goat
4. Ma (4/3f) – the heron's cry
5. Pa (3/2f) -- the cuckoo's song
6. Dha (405/240 f) – the horse's neigh
7. Ni (432/240 f) – the elephant's trumpet

In addition there are other half notes which can be used, though sparingly and each have their own designations.
Ragini Sorathi of Megh-Malhar

Megh means the arrival of monsoon clouds. Megh-Malhar is a raga which is to be sung in the rainy season. At this time the lotus blooms and cranes and peacocks are plentiful. Here the lady of the house is shown feeding the crane. It also shows the use of outdoors - a settee spread under a tree with a lady in waiting to the side.
Raga Malkauns

The music of this Raga is compared to the sweetness of a dish cooked with sugar! The usual pictorial formula shows a couple eating sweetened rice from the same plate. Note the depiction of a royal room with its curtains, hanging carpets and various china pieces. Also the clothes from the era.

This is Basohli miniature from around 1580.
Ustad Vilayat Khan

Bridge

Sitar
1: BAARJ (MADHYAM) (Steel)
2: JOD (Shadaj) Tonic (Copper)
3: 5/4 above tonic (Gandham)
4: 3/2 above tonic (Pancham)
5: Tonic
6: 2/3 above tonic

Shape has to be "just" so for good sound.

To top slot
To peg at bottom
THE BASIC STRUCTURES IN WHICH COMPOSITIONS ARE MADE ARE CALLED RAGAS:

THE WORD RAGA MEANS “THAT WHICH CHARMS” OR “THAT WHICH COLORS”

IT IS DISTINCT FROM THE WESTERN FRAMEWORK OF A KEY, OF SAY C-MAJOR.
The scale of a RAGA consists of two sets of notes:
   one to be used while ascending in the scale and
   the other to be used while descending.

Also the order and emphasis of how the notes are to be used is also prescribed.

Any composition must respect these rules and evoke the mood of the RAGA.
A composition must follow the rules of development of a Raga, creating the mood, emphasizing the important notes in the scale.

Essential difference between western and Indian music is in the way notes are developed by the performer. It is permitted to move from one note to another in a smooth fashion (legato) called Meed in sitar playing. Intonating notes which are never used in western music during the transition (use of Shrutis) and vibrating around a note like a vibrato (called Gamaks) makes Indian music distinct from western music. There are assigned times of day and seasons of the year for each Raga and they must evoke special feelings and moods.
THE RAGA BHAIRAVI

The great poets sing of Bhairavi, the consort of Lord Bhairava (Siva), worshipping her Lord seated on a carved crystal on the peak of Mount Kailasa with soft leaves of lotus flowers. She holds the cymbals in her hands and eyes sparkle with yellowish glint.

Bhairavi is to be performed in the late morning in a peaceful, serious and occasionally also in a sad mood.
RAGA's: THAT WHICH CHARMS

3 Classes:  5 notes Audava
            6 "  Shadava
            7 "  Sampoorna

Ascent - AROHA
Descent - AVAROHA

Sonant or VADI - Explains & heralds the mode
Consonant or SAMVADI - Reinforces VADI & expresses mode.

Assonant or ANUVADI - Neither of above
Dissonant or VIVADI - Does not belong to Raga

Number of Ragas:
17000 in Audava
31000 in Shadava
20000 in Sampoorna

TIME,
STYLE (RUPA)
The eighth thāt, Śrī, is given by Bhātkande as Pūrāvi, but since the Pūrāvi we give here has an A natural (śuddhā Dha), its name could not be given to a thāt containing an A flat (Dha komalā). About the scale of Śrī there is no divergence of opinion.
MUSICAL PERFORMANCE
Can take place in many settings:
At religious festivals
At weddings
Informal gatherings
Concerts – salon type or large open air conferences

Indian Classical music is highly stylized:

There are rules for development of the Raga, the choice of composition, the choice of rhythm and the style of performances.

Compositions are generally arranged by the artist, although they may be based on well known compositions. The lead musician, whether he be a vocalist or an instrumentalist creates the music. He develops it, embellishes it and brings out the beauty of the Raga as well as the style of composition. It may be said that Indian Music is “of and by the artist” rather than of and by the composer.
THE ENSEMBLE:

- **Tanpura**
  - Tonic or drone

- **Harmonium**
  - Accompaniment

- **Sarangi or violin**

- **Tabla or Mridangum or Pakhavaj**
  - Rhythm - percussion

- **Lead Artist**
  - Vocalist or Instrumentalist

Improvisation essential – some resemblance to Jazz
Mrindagam
Tanpura
Rudra veena
STYLES OF INDIAN MUSIC

VOCAL:

Khayal: A full rich development of a Raga in slow rhythm, culminating in rapid movements or phrases depicting the full charm of the Raga. Generally sung in 12(ektaal) or 16(teen tala) beats.

Thumri: A lighter composition, with well articulated poetic composition set to a Raga. Its primary qualities are grace and flexibility. It is performed in six or eight beat rhythm. Words of the lyric are important and form an essential feature of the presentation.

Bhajan: Songs of devotion or Bhakti.
INSTRUMENTAL STYLES

Instrumental performance is generally divided into three parts. The first part, called Alaap, is a free development of the Raga without drum accompaniment. It is followed by a slow (Bilampit) composition and variations culminated by a fast (Drut) composition.

Typical rhythmic cycles are 7 (rupak), 8 (kehrawa), 10 (Jhaptal) or 16 (Teen taal).

Concert is generally ended by playing a composition based upon a folk melody usually in six or eight beats.
HOW IS INDIAN MUSIC LEARNED AND PRESERVED?

Indian music is learned from an **Ustad or Guru** (Teacher) who is an accomplished musician with a musical lineage. **It is learned through personal instruction of the techniques and musical styles of the Ustad's HOUSE or GHARANA over many years.**

Real learning takes place at the feet of the Guru. Although, written music does exist, the written notation does not have the details needed for transcribing all the delicate decorations and innuendos that are such an intrinsic part of Indian music. You learn the style of the Gharana of the Guru. You have to become a **Shagrit** at a special ceremony where you are accepted as a family member of the Gharana.

My own style of playing is called the **Indore Beenkar style.**
My Ustad : Mohammed Khan Beenkar of Indore
MAJOR INSTRUMENTS

The Drone Instruments: Tanpura and Surmandal

Plucked instruments: Sitar and Sarod
Veena – Rudra and Saraswati
Mandolin and Guitar

Bowed Instruments: Violin
Sarangi
Dilruba

Blown Instruments: Flute
Shehnai
Nadswaram

Percussion Instruments Tabla
Pakhavaj
Mridangam
GotuVaduam
Manjeera
Sarswati Veena

Tabla: Baya and Madeen

Sarangi

Mridangam or Pakhavaj
Ustad Ali Akbar Khan

Sarod - no frets but with sympathetic strings