

The word for music in India is **SANGITA** which as well as music, also means dancing and drama. Indian classical music has a history that can be traced back over 3000 years (to roughly 1700 BC) and developed in temples and royal palaces.

Indian musicians learned to play **RAGA** (patterns of notes) and **TALAS** (rhythm patterns) by imitating and memorising. The music is passed on from teacher to student by **ORAL TRADITION**. Students belong to an extended family of musicians learning from a particular master. This is known as the **MASTER-STUDENT TRADITION**.

Spirituality is an important part of almost all Indian classical music and it is almost always related to the Hindu religion. In Southern India, there is a long tradition where a **RAGA** is set to words in praise of a particular Hindu deity.




Indian classical music has since developed a strong tradition that is still prominent today. The impact of modern technology on traditional music from globalisation includes Indian classical music being heard by more people around the world. Internet technology such as YouTube® and other archived music sites allow people to hear Indian classical music as well as at the cinema, on the radio or at live concerts of Indian classical music held in different places in the world. **RAGA PERFORMANCES** which often traditionally lasted several hours have had to be confined to a traditional "concert length". Traditional Indian musical instruments, such as the **TABLA** are often heard in jazz, pop, and rock music (either live or "sampled") and the **SITAR** is often used in popular music. Indian classical music is also mixed with music from a different culture (or in a more popular style) producing **FUSION** music.

The ways in which performers work together is important in Indian classical music. Ensemble musicians must work together in order to interpret the music and perform effectively as one. They have to listen carefully to each other to make sure they:

- Start together.
- Maintain the same tempo.
- Share a similar interpretation of dynamics and expression.
- Negotiate any changes of tempo together.
- Share a "dialogue" with each other.
- Finish together.



For an ensemble, it is usually essential to have may group rehearsals to discuss the interpretation of the music and to rehearse the pieces until they flow easily, with all parts acting together as one. After sorting out the "basics", it is important to spend time on all the subtle details such as:

- The articulation – *e.g., which notes to accent or play staccato.*
- Small changes in tempo – which may include pauses or **RUBATO** added by the performers.
- The balance between the different parts – when should each musician dominate the texture or instead provide and accompanying role? Who should play the loudest?


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The names of some famous performers of Indian classical music include:

**RAVI SHANKAR** (a Sitar player who influenced many different performers, including George Harrison from the Beatles and Western violinist Yehudi Menuhin – *shown right below*)

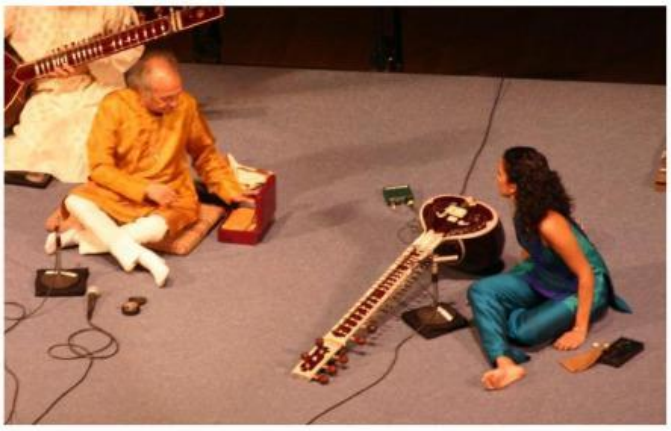
**ALLA RAKHA** (a Tabla player whose technique amazed the famous American jazz musician drummer Buddy Rich – *shown left below*)



Shankar and Rakha often performed together. The fact that they came from different religions (Shankar was a Hindu and Rakha a Muslim), made the musical collaboration all the more significant. Their obvious rapport, developed through the highly imitative musical dialogue, became so impressive that they toured the world with their music for many years.

**ANOUSHKA SHANKAR** *(shown below left)* (a Sitar player and daughter of **RAVI SHANKAR** *(shown together below right*). Scan the QR code to watch a (shortened version) of a live performance of an Indian Raga.







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# PIT STOP

How is Religion and Spirituality connected to Indian Classical Music?

Describe some ways in which musicians in an Indian Classical Music ensmble have to work together **DURING** a performance of a **RAGA**.

How has modern technology impacted on traditional Indian Classical Music?

Describe the characteristic **RHYTHM** and **METRE** in Indian Classical Music.

Describe some ways in which performers within an Indian Classical Music ensemble have to 'work together' and discuss the **INTERPRETATION** of a piece of music before performing it.

Name **TWO** famous performers of Indian Classical Music.

## Indian Classical Music – Further Listening













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