

# raga, Ravi Shankar, and intercultural crossings in Indian music

10/1/10 12:10 AM

## Overview

### Indian Music in Context:

- **Diverse landscape & population**
  - Mountain passes in the NW serve as an entry to India
  - 1/3 size of U.S.
  - India 1 billion people, U.S. 300 million people.
- **Spiritual Context: Hinduism & Islam**
  - HINDUISM:
    - *4 Vedas (holy scripture):*
      - *Rig Veda*
      - *Sama Veda*
      - *Yajur Veda*
      - *Atharva Veda*
    - *Bhajan → Hindu Devotional song*
    - ***Musical Example: Bhajan***
      - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yCYr30zn8Gw>
  - ISLAM:
    - Introduced to Northern India in the 5<sup>th</sup> century
    - Despite the political and religious conflict, the musical influences have merged in Northern India and overflowed into what is now Pakistan
    - Combined elements of both led to SUFISM
      - Muslim devotional recitation → Qawwali
      - Qawwali:
        - ***Typical Qawwali program:***
          - A song in praise of Allah
          - A song in praise of the prophet Muhammad
          - A song in praise of Sufi teachers
          - Songs to express romantic love for the union with the divine

- Most popular Qawwali singer was Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan (From Pakistan - died: 1997).
- **LISTENING EXAMPLE: Watch to 1:57**
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Glrcs7o8sAo>
- **Making a Connection to Today:**
  - This example is the singer of traditional music in the previous example (Khan) recording with Northern India & Pakistan's most popular band today –
    - traditional Qawwali fused with Rock
  - **LISTENING EXAMPLE: Watch to 1:19**
  - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yS8INDOQUxA&a=GxdCwVVULXflxkNjYIV5RKq0rS7bHbuK&list=ML&playnext=1>

*Backtracking to the two Indian Classical Traditions:*

### **Indian Classical Music: Hindustani (North) & Karnatic (South)**

- North & South India are divided in musical tradition as a result of Islamic influence into two categories: *Hindustani music and Karnatic music*.
- **Distinct musical cultures with separate histories**
- **Hindustani music is better known internationally (mostly because of Ravi Shankar)**
- **Some Similarities**
  - 1. Use of Raga
  - 2. Use of Tala
  - 3. Steeped in Hinduism (despite Islamic influence)
  - 4. Learned by memory (always)
  - 5. Gifted students become disciples of a Guru
    - They become part of a **gharana**
      - A gharana is a musical family and can be thought of as a school of raga performance. You don't have to be blood to be part of the "family", but you have to be indoctrinated. Each gharana has a shared style and approach to performance practice.
  - 6. Singing is regarded as the highest form of musical expression
  - 7. Both employ a trio of instruments

- **Differences in Instrumentation:**
  - KARNATIC: Veena, Mridangam (“*mri-dan-ga*”), Sarangi
  - HINDUSTANI: Sitar, Tambura, Tabla
    - *iTanpura example*
  - Other instruments: harmonium, veena, voice

*Our chapter focuses on Hindustani music...*

### **Examining Hindustani Music:**

- **Introducing to Ravi Shankar**
  - Early connections led to international attention
  - Guru: Allaudin Khan
    - Maihar Gharana
  - Two Daughters:
    - Anoushka
    - Norah Jones
  
- **Instruments of Hindustani Raga**
  - Sitar-Tambura-Tabla Trio
    - Sitar
      - 3 types of strings
      - moveable frets
    - Tambura (*called tanpura in Northern India*)
      - Similar to sitar
      - Only purpose is drone
    - Tabla
      - Higher-pitched right hand drum: dahina/tabla
        - Usually made of thick wood
      - Lower-pitched left hand drum: bayan (which means bass)
        - Usually made of metal
      -
  
- **MUSICAL EXAMPLE**
  - (*Ravi- listen for instrumentation*)
    - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZYIPcbNAPH8>

- **What is a Raga?**
  - Each has distinguishing ornaments & motives
  - Each has a set of rules & procedures
  - Each has a unique repertoire
  - Each has ‘extramusical’ associations: time of day/seasons
- **What is Tala?**
  - Rhythmic framework
  - Each tala has a specific number of beats
  - Each tala has strong and weak beats
  - Tala is elaborated on within the confines of the rules of the raga

***LISTENING EXAMPLE: Badal (tabla language) Watch to 00:58***

  - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u1h5lbYqRLk>
- **Recap:**
  - Sitar – melody – raga
  - Tambura – drone
  - Tabla – rhythm – tala
    - ***KEEPING TAL CLASS ACTIVITY:***
      - ***CD Ex: #2-11. (p. 136)***
- **Growth of the Raga:**
  - “Life Cycle”
    - melodic movements unfold and expand
    - start simple & get more complex
  - **Raga Form**
    - Alap
      - Opening section
    - Gat
      - Announced by the entry of the tabla
    - Ultimate goal is to reach toward the “Sound of God”
  - ***GUIDED LISTENING CLASS ACTIVITY:***
    - ***CD Ex: #2-12 (p. 138)***
      - ***0-3 minutes : Alap/ non-metric***
      - ***2:59-3:09: transition to Gat***
      - ***3:09-End: Gat w/ growth***

- **IF TIME: VIDEO EXAMPLE: RAVI & ANOUSHKA**
  - **\*\*Note: They Omit the Alap**
    - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-KXk\\_8\\_8oLY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-KXk_8_8oLY)

**Intercultural Crossings:**

- **There are many dimensions to those connections that result in a fusion of Indian and Western music.**
  - Coltrane
  - Harrison
    - ***Video Example: Harrison's Sitar Lesson w/ Ravi***
    - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMfJeAC4Rgc&feature=fvst>
- McLaughlin
- Trilok Gurtu

**Summary:**

- **Context of Indian Music**
- **Two Great Traditions**
  - Hindustani – North – Islamic Influence
  - Karnatic – South – Hindu Influence
- **Ravi Shankar**
  - Gharanas (musical families)
- **Elements of Hindustani Music**
  - Raga
  - Tala
  - Growth
  - Form
- **Intercultural Crossings**

**CLASS ASSIGNMENT:**

- *Indian sounds have found their way into western popular music. Go home and find examples of this. Some clues: Rolling Stones, Ricky Martin – google “Rolling Stones and Sitar” and see what comes up. Everyone bring one example & describe how Indian music functions in the tune, and we’ll compile a list on Blackboard to share.*

## **Bibliography:**

Bakan, Michael B. *World Music: Traditions and Transformations*. NYC: McGraw-Hill, 2007.

### **Audio Visual Material in order of appearance in lecture:**

*Meera Bhajan*. Deepti Omchery Bhalla , 2009. YouTube. 30 Sep. 2010

<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ycyr30zn8gw>>.

*Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan - Amazing Improvisation* . Sochta Hoon Woh Kitne Massoom Thay, 1985.

YouTube. 30 Sep. 2010 <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=glrcs7o8sao>>.

*Garaj Baras Coke Studio Rahat Fatah Ali Khan & Junoon*. waqassshehzad , 2005. YouTube. 30

Sep. 2010 <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=glrcs7o8sao>>.

*Ravi Shankar - Gat Kirwani*. adityaworld , 2006. YouTube. 30 Sep. 2010

<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zylpcbnaph8>>.

*July 19th Badal Roy*. Tutuma Social Club, 2009. YouTube. 30 Sep. 2010

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u1h5lbyqrlk>

*Ravi & Anoushka Shankar - Raga Anandi Kalyan*. Halfaouine, 2008. YouTube. 30 Sep. 2010

<[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-kxk\\_8\\_8oly](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-kxk_8_8oly)>.

*George Harrison Sitar Lesson w/ Ravi*. subxero1961 , 1961. YouTube. 30 Sep. 2010

<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jmfjeac4rgc&feature=fvst>>.