

About the style...

Indian music is easily recognised by the sound of its unique musical scales and instruments. Traditionally, Indian musicians learn to play patterns of notes - **ragas** - by imitating and memorising music passed on from their teachers. There are no vocals.

Instrumentation – Most common instruments were sitar, tabla and tanpura.



Each instrument had a role to play in each performance:

- Sitar plays the **melody (raga)**.
- Tanpura provides the **drone**.
- Tabla provides the **rhythm** and the **beat** called **tala**.

Dynamics – Indian Classical music uses a range of dynamics. Performances usually begin with subtle use of dynamics and get louder as the performances goes on.

Melody – The melody is played by sitar (guitar like instrument) which uses notes of the raga. The melody is highly improvised and decorated using ornaments..

Rhythm – The use of rhythm in this style can often be very complex. The rhythmic patterns may sometimes sound out of time. This is due to the patterns often being played off beat or when the emphasis is being placed on the weaker beats of the bar.

Tempo – The tempo used in Indian music changes depending on the section of the piece. Starts very slow and progresses as the piece goes on.

Structure – There are four sections in Indian Classical music:

1. Alap – melody and drone, no set tempo, the music is free.
2. Jhor – melody and drone, more rhythmic, a sense of pulse is established.
3. Jhala – melody and drone, faster and more improvisation.
4. Gat – tabla enters, tempo and dynamics increase.



Keyword	Meaning
Raga	A series of notes on which the performance is based on. Often represent a specific mood, feeling, occasion, season of the year or even time of the day.
Drone	A long held note played in the background which supports the raga and improvisation.
Tala	A rhythmic pattern played on a table drum.
Improvisation	Making music up on the spot using raga notes.
Syncopation	The music sound off beat due to the emphasis being placed on the weaker beats.