

Indian Classical Music

Indian classical music is based on **rāgas**. They are associated with different moods, seasons or times of the day. Each rāga has:

- at least five different notes from a particular rāga scale
- rules for how each note should be played (duration, decoration, omission, detuning)

Scale - rāga scales are based on seven notes (twelve with the flats/sharps), but they are not equally spaced in pitch (it is a **non-tempered scale**).

Note names in Western scale	C	D	E	F	G	A	B
Note names in Rāga scale	sa	re	ga	ma	pa	dha	ni

Instruments



The **tambura** is a four-stringed instrument that plays a **drone** - a simple two-note harmony pattern set to an independent rhythm.



A **sitar** uses the scale implied by the tambura to improvise melodies, often adding bends and slides.



The **tabla** plays the main rhythm, called a **tal** (explained later).

Tal - The Indian system of rhythm. The beats of each tal **cycle** are divided into groups:

	Sam (1st beat of tal)															
	↓															
drum	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
words	dha	dhi	dhi	dha	dha	dhi	dhi	dha	dha	tin	tin	ta	ta	dhi	dhi	dha
action	clap				clap				wave				clap			
	vibhag				vibhag				vibhag khali (contrast)				vibhag			

Structure - Rāgas have four linked sections:



Alap - long free improvisation outlining the scale; this is set to a drone

Jhor - tambura and sitar play to a slow steady pulse

Jhala - a exciting, faster paced section

Gat (instrumental) or **Bandish** (song) - very fast composition with complex tabla rhythms, and improvised 'Q&A' between instruments