

Raga Jazz: Application of Indian Music to Western Instruments

MUSC 77: RAGA-JAZZ - Application of Indian Music to Western Instruments

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Presently Offered During Summer Sessions - General Education code: PR-C, 5 Credits

First thing to do: Please take this survey before starting classes. It'll help me get to know you and to tailor this course with your varying levels of musical knowledge in mind. <https://canvas.ucsc.edu/courses/34693/quizzes/27655>

Dear students, welcome! We will be sharing a precious 5 weeks and almost 30 hours on the subject of Indian music and I want you all to walk away from these sessions with a mind full of knowledge and a personal sense of satisfaction that will hopefully last you a lifetime. My wish is to see you all flourish musically and have these lectures perhaps be that inspiration that you call upon whenever you seek to get a creative urge to make music.

The purpose of this class is to provide all musicians with a theoretical and practical performance approach using the knowledge of the North Indian music system. The goal is to enhance the melodic and rhythmic sensibilities and to help open new doors to boost creativity and help give a unique slant to composing and playing music.

North India has some of the most melodic, and rhythmically complex musical forms in the world. Jazz, rock, pop and classical musicians are increasingly studying Indian music to give themselves an edge in today's musical landscape. It is this edge that all music students taking this class will benefit from.

1. Class Details:

Since this class is both lecture and performance oriented, it is important that students be ready to participate in active playing on the instrument of their choice. This will usually be in the form of "call and response, "follow the leader" or "listen and copy." Although Indian music is mostly an oral tradition, there is today a system of notating music that will be taught. Knowledge of reading music is not essential, but it might be that instruction will make use of Western Staff or Indian Sargam notation to get a point across.

Improvisation techniques and their application will be discussed and encouraged. In general, expect the first part of the lecture to be on Indian music concepts followed by practical playing to demonstrate and practice the concept in action.

The student will learn about the various popular rhythmic cycles of North India as played on the tabla drums along with a working knowledge of melodic expansion in various rāgas.

Improvisation techniques will be explained with special emphasis on improving and enhancing the student's ability of creative improvisation.

There will also be a thorough discussion about the inner working of raga-based music expansion called Chalan.

Auditions will be held on the first day of class to sort students out into smaller ensemble groups.

2. Admission Requirements:

Music Major, Minor, or performing artist. You must provide your own instrument unless you are a vocalist. Since this is an "Application of Indian Music to Western Instruments" you need to play a western instrument to qualify for this class.

Attendance is essential and will be taken each session. The class cannot be made up as it is very intense, and it is too hard to make up missed content. Most of the class is live performance based.

3. Materials Suggested:

Hard copies of the following books, software and audio files will be available online or from the instructor.

1. **Tabla Thekas for Accompaniment and Practice** Digital download of MP3 files through Instructor
(Talas selected according to compositions learned). Each track is 15 mins long. Cost \$1 per track.
2. [Ragopedia Volume 1 – by S. D. Batish and Ashwin Batish](#). Order from Amazon or through Instructor. Cost \$39.95
3. **The Ten Thaats Chalans of the North Indian Music System** – by S. D. Batish and Ashwin Batish (50 pp booklet provided by Instructor. Cost \$15.00 plus Sales Tax)
4. **Original Raga Jazz compositions by Ashwin Batish** – Sheet Music Scores (Instructor)
5. [Rasik Raga Lakshan Manjari by S D Batish and Ashwin Batish](#). "Raga Songs" digital downloads available via iTunes or Amazon.

Individual Song Downloads from Amazon.

1	Raga Asavari Song 1	2:38	\$0.99
2	Raga Asavari Song 2	3:01	\$0.99

3	Raga Bhairava	4:03	\$0.99
4	Raga Bhairavi	3:53	\$0.99
5	Raga Bilaval	4:04	\$0.99
6	Raga Kafi	3:40	\$0.99
7	Raga Khammaj	3:34	\$0.99
8	Raga Marava	3:53	\$0.99
9	Raga Pooravi	4:03	\$0.99
10	Raga Todi	4:42	\$0.99
11	Raga Yaman Kalyan	4:49	\$0.99

Sold by Amazon.com Services LLC. Additional taxes may apply.

By placing your order, you agree to our [Terms of Use](#).

6. MuseScore Software: Download and Install for Mac or PC. Cost: Free from www.musescore.org

4. Learning Outcomes:

The goal of this course is not just to introduce the students to the richness of North Indian melodies and rhythms but also to provide a doorway to a deeper understanding of a highly evolved system of music that predates most modern systems. It will raise awareness of some unshakable truths, laying down a solid foundation of knowledge relating to the journey of music from ancient India to the world we live in today.

Music has always been the greatest resource for spiritual enlightenment and for developing deeper cognizance of our existence. It arguably is the auditory drug of choice to inspire the mind to think beyond mundane and rational vistas and peek into metaphysical and spiritual domains. Most of the past scientists and seers such as Pythagoras, Plato, Kepler, Helmholtz were all students of music. It provided them the insight to realms of explorations that we are all benefiting by today. Understanding musical harmonies and interval ratios has been at the heart of many scientific discoveries. Unbeknownst to many in the West, many of these philosophers were great fans of ancient arts and philosophy of India.

Pythagoras traveled and lived in the East for many years and is even said to have apprenticed himself to a Yogi to learn philosophy, Vedic math, astrology and music. Very

little is written on this except that after his return to Italy from the East, he started his secret society, he only shared his knowledge with a small but dedicated group of disciples. The awareness of harmonics, math ratios of musical tones, the concept of musical shrutis and even his famous theorem was common knowledge to the ancient Indian pundits of the Near East.

A great read on Pythagoras can be viewed on his Wiki page.

1 Riedweg, Christoph (2005) [2002], Pythagoras: His Life, Teachings, and Influence, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, ISBN 978-0-8014-7452-1

2 Pythagoras of Samos <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pythagoras>

5. Class Format and Time Requirements:

Although the emphasis of this class is on performance and application, the classes will be carrying a healthy dose of lecturing to familiarize the students with the theory of Indian music. There will be frequent question and answers sessions to aid understanding the concepts, and finally performance will focus on musical exploration.

Classes will be held twice per week for 5 weeks. Students should expect to spend 6-7 hours per week in class time, 5 hours reading, 8 hours practice. Homework will consist of perfecting the compositions or the raga-based movements as taught in class. Indian music raga scales, passages or exercises that will be chosen out of the books mentioned above will be assigned for expanding on what is taught in class.

Some music research on the Internet will be required to learn about history and theory of Indian music. This will include reading about Indian music basics and listening to exiting musical material for analysis and application into your instrument of choice. Videos of some popular artists involved in the genre will be presented and analyzed. Your research will involve listening to and critiquing some of the performances on YouTube. Homework will require written or recorded media submissions via Canvas. These will be personally graded by the instructor.

6. Grading Rubric:

Final grade will be assessed as 75% class attendance, participation and performance, 10% homework, 15% final performance. Your canvas score will determine your grade so make sure you mark yourself present weekly. 1 missed class will drop your grade substantially.

The final performance will be in Ensemble room. It can be as a soloist or a class ensemble. Create a Raga Jazz Fusion piece and perform it in front of the class.

7. Grading Formula:

- Below 60% Fail
- 61% - 69% Grade is D
- 70 - 79% Grade is C
- 80 - 89% - Grade is B
- 90 - 97 % Grade is A
- 98 - 100% Grade is A+

Weekly Schedule

Week 1 – Overview

Day One: 3 hours – Lecture, Q&A, Performance

1. Welcome message and class introductions.
2. Auditions and placement into groups
3. Invitations to Bandlab Raga Jazz Group
4. Batish Lineage.
5. Introductions of all members.
6. An overview of the two powerful music systems of India – Hindustani (North) and Carnatic (South). Intro to Rāgopedia and 10 Thaats
7. Indian Swarlipi notation System vs the Western Staff.
8. The North Indian note set for all ragas.
9. Indian Sargam vs Western Solfeggio.
10. Writing some simple songs using Sargam
11. Musical Scales - The Major Scale, Minor Scale, Greek Modes
12. 1/4/5 Progression advantage and disadvantages.
13. Pros and cons of Harmony, Diatonic scales, ensemble playing.
14. Western Ensembles vs Indian Ensembles
15. The Oral Tradition vs the Written
16. Indian rendition Rāga Kalāvati and its 1/4/5/ Western cousin Rāgā Rock!

Day Two: 3.5 hours – Lecture, Q&A, Performance

1. The function of drone in Indian Music.
2. Drone Instruments: Tanpurā, its tunings and playing technique. Swar Peti or hārmonium and its variations. Cell Phone Tanpura Apps. Digitally Sampled Tanpurā.
3. Harmonic Tuning vs Commercial Tuner of the West.
4. Understanding the math of music and how to use this to enhance your playing.
5. Ten Thaats or Parent Scales of the North Indian music system. Bilāval, Kalyān, Asāvāri, Todi, Bhairavi, Khammāj, Bhairava, Pooravi, Mārvā, and Kāfi.
6. Concept of Raga and Raagini. Difference between Thāts and Ragas. General rules governing Ragas and Raaginis. The first 10 ragas and Rāginis of the 10 basic Thāts explored.

7. Carnatic Melakartā explained. Chart of 72 Carnātic Melakartās.
8. Everyone sings out the sargam of sample ragas Asāvāri, Bhairava, Bhoopāli.
9. Raga Asāvāri. Arohi/Avarohi. Vādi/Samvādi. Thāt.
10. Raga Asāvāri Swar Vistār or Chalan.
11. Simple composition in Raga Asāvāri based in Tintāl.

Homework: Theme and Variation Exercise: Pick one of the rāgas and create a sargam sequence in 8 beats. Make some variations on the theme and come back to the theme.

Week 2 – Intonation & Technique

Day Three: 3 hours – Lecture, Q&A, Performance

1. Ear Training.
2. Shruti Explained.
3. Equal Temperament vs Just Intonation.
4. Intonation purity and its necessity in raga's musical aesthetics.
5. Chords and their relationship to ragas.
6. Greek Modes vs Ragas - Moorchana explained.
7. Intonation that you can trust.
8. How to tune and align your instrument to play well.
9. The problem with Fixed Note Instruments.

Singing Steadiness, instrumental purity. Discovery through the heart of a child.

Day Four: 3.5 hours – Lecture, Q&A, Performance

1. Alankārs (ornamentation) and their role in Indian music.
2. Different types of Alankārs demonstrated and explained such as gamak, meend, gitkidi, murki, ghaseet, zamazanā.
3. Demonstrate and have everyone copy the alankārs.
4. Function of Alāp in Indian Music.
5. Raga Bhairava lakshan Geet everyone sings and then plays.
6. Select groups for ensemble playing.
7. Each group takes raga Bhairava and learns all its movements.
8. Casbah Shuffle learn and play with everyone.

Homework Week 2: Create and practice some solos in Casbah Shuffle and have them ready to play at the beginning of the next class.

Week 3 – Rhythms of India

Day Five: 3 hours – Lecture, Q&A, Performance

1. Tāla (rhythm)
2. Evolutionary History with examples and demos of various predecessors of tabla.
3. Duality of Rhythm vs Melody
4. Tablā and its language. Tablā Bols demonstrated and explained.
5. Tabla notation – Vibhāg, Khāli, Bhari, Thekā, Prakār, Sum, Dusari, tisari etc., laya, and other terminology covered.
6. Some of the popular tablā Thekās. Tintāl, Jhaptāl, Ektāl, Dādrā, Keharwā, Jhumrā, Dhamār, Rupak, Jaltitāl and Deepchandi.
7. Tihāis and their role explored.
8. Beat Keeping. Learn to understand and keep the beat by Tali.

Day Six: 3 hours – Lecture, Q&A, Performance

Lakshan Geet in Rāga Yaman based in Tintāl. We all play together a “Call and Response” session with Ashwin to learn how to break up the composition and improvise around the melody. There will be an exercise on how to exit the composition and then re-enter. Also, create and insert different Tihāis into your playing. Understanding the Tintāl Thekā.

Discussion: Concept of Chords and Chord Changes in Ragas. Yaman’s Greek cousin. Yaman as a murchanā of Bilāval. Diatonic structure of Yaman. Harmonies in Yaman.

Homework Week 3: Create Fusion pieces in Rāga Yaman and everyone learns and plays it.

Week 4 – Spontaneity

Day Seven: 3 hours – Lecture, Q&A, Performance

1. Composing in the moment
2. Improvisation ideas
3. What makes your blood boil?
4. Keep Practicing
5. Push yourself hard to achieve greatness.
6. Practice your ascending and descending movements.
7. How to improvise and be more spontaneous.
8. Jhalla - Alaap. Jod, Jhalla Free style exposition Improv.
9. Gat = Composition
10. Crescendos - Tihai
11. Rāga Jazz Composition: Learn with charts and recordings.

Day Eight: 3 hours – Lecture, Q&A, Performance

1. Topic Rāga Jazz Composition continued.
2. Recite and play this in Dādrā Tāla.

3. Everyone takes a solo.
4. Follow instructor's clues for improvisations.

Week 5 – Final Performances

Day Nine: 3 hours – Lecture, Q&A

Mockup and finalizing student composition ideas. All students will play their pieces for class and open to self-critique and Instructor review and critique.

Day Ten: Final

1. Solo or Group Performances

Instructor:

Ashwin Batish is a classically trained sitarist and tabla player. He has been teaching Indian music for over 45 years. He is also a pioneer in World Fusion music. He studied music with his father Pandit Shiv Dayal Batish, one of the premiere North Indian vocalists and film music composers for the Bollywood industry. His father is the inspiration for Ashwin's passion to fuse Indian music with Western music forms.

Over the past 35 years, Ashwin and his father have produced numerous books, CDs and videos to help teach Indian music. Their first work, titled the Rāgopedia, is an encyclopedia listing about 680 North Indian rāgas. The second volume of Rāgopedia lists almost 2500 rāgas of the South Indian music system. Their other works are compositions designed to teach each rāga.

They are written in staff notation and Indian Sargam notation to be usable by traditional Indian as well as students familiar with staff notation.

Ashwin also publishes an online Indian music magazine called [RagaNet](#) in which he tackles lessons on the sitār, tablā, Indian music theory, and in-depth reviews of newer and older musical works pertaining to Indian music and cross-cultural fusion hybrids.

Brief Synopsis of Indian Music

In the West, Indian music has long been regarded as the holy grail of musical knowledge and revered as a vast resource of melodic and rhythmic information that comes from an ancient art form. Although the power of the Indian musical system is based on an oral tradition that dates back thousands of years, variant manuscripts of Vedic literature dated around 1200 B.C.E. have survived and have been discovered in various parts on India. These are the Sām Veda compositions specifically written for chanting of mantrās written in the Rig Veda.

India's vast theory of classical music predates Pythagoras or any other culture in the world. It is one of the richest and presently features a collection of over 3000 rāgas (musical modes). It's also highly ornate and critically developed in the art of drumming

and rhythmic patterns called Tālās. The stunning skill levels attained by musical masters have left an indelible mark on music worldwide. Indian music is also an art form that has in the past seemed somewhat unreachable due to the lack of adequate educational materials written in English. Added to this was the initial scarcity of Indian music teachers that were well versed with the English language. This made it difficult to share the musical complexities of Indian music, its finer nuances, and its intricate ornamentation techniques, with Western music students.

In the past, it has also been time and cost prohibitive for a Western student to travel to India in quest of this knowledge. The long and arduous journey coupled with the need to spend years apprenticed to a master can be daunting and a possible health and financial risk to undertake.

While all this was true for hundreds of years, it is evident that over the past 50 years this has turned a corner. We are very fortunate to see the availability of a vast body of well written works with frequent use of the Western staff notation. Several such bodies of work were specially designed and composed by the late Pandit Shiv Dayal Batish and his son Ashwin Batish. The senior Batish was also the first to teach Indian music at the University of California, Santa Cruz, around the late 60s and early 70s. He taught for several years at Merrill College before starting his own music school, currently based in Santa Cruz. Currently, Ashwin Batish is teaching at the same university and continuing with the research he and his father had started.

Another factor that has helped change the musical landscape is the birth of the Internet. Today, India has come online. The West has access to an amazing set of learning resources written in the English language and accessible through YouTube, Spotify, iTunes and other online sites. A student can be living in any corner of the world, belonging to any cultural norm and religion, they have no need to apprentice themselves to any master, they can simply tune in at their own convenience. Some of the best artists can be audited, slowed down, freeze framed, sped up. One can fast forward or rewind and replay unlimited times until the content is learned. It is a new way to be exposed to the learning process although, for anyone seriously trying to master this art, it is still highly recommended to reach out and find a good music Guru. Their mere presence can be illuminating to the learning process.

From Vedās to Bollywood

Present day Indian music has some very distinct and diverse musical forms. Starting with classical, we have the North Indian Hindustāni and the South Indian Carnātic systems. Then there are the vast varieties of indigenous forms that owe their existence to ancient and folk traditions. These have always provided Indian music with a very rich, culturally based, musical diversity. Popular among all these are forms such as Qawwāli, Ghazal, Thumri, Dhamār, Bhajan, Bhāngarā, Geet, Boliyān. Of note is the very popular and very influential filmi music that has been consistently coming out of the Bollywood industry over the past 75 years. It's mass popularity and money generating power has made it a formidable force that is single handedly shaping the modern musical era in India. Its huge musical consumption

capacity has switched focus of musical creativity of traditional India ushering in a heavy influence of Western music forms, rhythms and performance instruments. While some is enriching and adding to the Indian stream of consciousness, other aspects of the Western musical concepts are unfortunately adversely affecting the purity of raga and compromising the attainment of musical aesthetics of raga-based music.

From the four ancient books of knowledge that the Hindu Vedic culture found its start, there is one on music called the Sām Veda. The traditions of classical Indian music and dance considers the Saman chants as one of its main roots. It is said that before Pope Gregory the Great became the Pope (cite?), he was an emissary to India and observed the Indian monks singing the ancient Saman Chants. He was so impressed with this that he had his own monks learn and sing the Christian hymns to this form hence giving birth to the Gregorian Chants. That is perhaps one of the first Indian music applications to date. Rāga Chants!

Why learn Indian Music?

Today, we see Indian music influences in many Western musical forms with the greatest use in the field of jazz where its modal possibilities have found great acceptance. Unfortunately, many of these applications have been used with little concern to the finer nuances of Indian musical practice. Thus, this has only produced partial success and crossover. Much work still needs to be done in the learning department so that future musicians can truly understand and milk the essence of rāgas and tālas. That can only come by developing an Indian mind set to critically study the Indian tradition. It is only then then that one can successfully apply it with greater understanding and effect.

Extended Readings and Indo-Jazz related Articles on Ashwin Batish:

1. <https://www.sfjazz.org/onthecorner/east-meets-west-indian-classical-music-and-jazz/>
2. https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Indo_jazz
3. <http://goodtimes.sc/santa-cruz-arts-entertainment/santa-cruz-music/music-reviews-interviews/sitar-master-ashwin-batish-ucsc/>

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email at drc@ucsc.edu."

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