



Hindustani Music

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Hindustani Music is one of the two distinct schools of Indian Classical Music practiced mainly in North India. The other school of Indian Classical Music is **Carnatic music** which is practiced mainly in Southern India.

Origin of Hindustani Music

- While the historical roots of both the music types belong to the **Bharata's Natyasastra**, they diverged in the 14th century. The Hindustani branch of music focuses more on the musical structure and the **possibilities of improvisation in it**. The Hindustani branch adopted a scale of **Shudha Swara Saptaka or the 'Octave of Natural notes'**.
- The Hindustani music **has elements of ancient Hindu tradition, Vedic philosophy and Persian tradition** as well. It has been influenced by various elements such as Arab, Persian and Afghan elements which have added a new dimension to Hindustani music.
- In ancient times, it has been passed from one to another through the **Guru-Shishya Parampara**.
- **Musical instruments used in Hindustani are Tabla, Sarangi, Sitar, Santoor, Flute and violin.**
- It is based on the Raga system. The Raga is a melodic scale comprising of basic seven notes.

Hindustani Music is vocal-centric. The major vocal forms associated with Hindustani classical music are the khayal, Ghazal, dhrupad, dhammar, Tarana and thumri.

- Most of the Hindustani musicians trace their descent to Tansen.
- There are **ten main styles of singing in Hindustani music** like the Dhrupad, Khayal, Tappa, Chaturanga, Tarana, Sargam, Thumri and Ragasagar, Hori and Dhamar.

Major Styles of Hindustani Music

Dhrupad

- One of the oldest and grandest forms of Hindustani classical music. Finds mention even in Natyashastra (200 BC–200 AD).
- Reached its zenith in the court of emperor Akbar. He employed and patronised musical masters like Baba Gopal Das, Swami Haridas and Tansen, who was considered to be one of the Navaratna or nine gems of the Mughal court.
- A poetic form incorporated into an extended presentation style marked by precise & orderly elaboration of a raga.
- The exposition preceding the composed verses is called alap and is usually the longest portion of the performance.
- Dhrupad became a major form of singing in the medieval period but fell in a state of decline in the 18th century.
- Dhrupad singing can be further divided into four forms on the basis of vanis or banis:
 - **Dagari Gharana:** The Dagar family sings in the Dagar Vani. This style puts great emphasis on alap.
 - **Darbhangha Gharana:** They sing the Khandar Vani and Gauhar Vani. They emphasise on the raga alap as well as composed songs over an improvised alap.
 - **Bettiah Gharana:** They perform the Nauhar and Khandar vani styles with some unique techniques that only those trained within the families know.
 - **Talwandi Gharana:** They sing the Khandar vani but as the family is based in Pakistan it has become difficult to keep that within the system of Indian music.

Khayal

- Word 'Khayal' is derived from Persian and means "idea or imagination".
- Origin of this style was attributed to Amir Khusrau.
- Is popular amongst the artists as this provides greater scope for improvisation.
- Based on the repertoire of short songs ranging from two to eight lines. Is also referred to as a 'Bandish'.
- Khayal is also composed in a particular raga and tala and has a brief text.
- Texts mainly include Praise of kings, Description of seasons, Pranks of Lord Krishna, Divine love & Sorrow of separation
- **Major gharanas in khayal:** Gwalior, Kirana, Patiala, Agra, and Bhendibazaar Gharana
- Gwalior Gharana is the oldest and is also considered the mother of all other gharanas.

Tarana Style

- In this style the rhythm plays a very crucial role. The structure consists of melody.
- It uses many words that are sung at a fast tempo.
- It focuses on producing rhythmic matters and hence, the singers need specialised training and skills in rhythmic manipulation.

- Currently, the Worlds Fastest Tarana Singer is Pandit Rattan Mohan Sharma of the Mewati Gharana.

Thumri

- Originated in Eastern Uttar Pradesh, mainly in Lucknow & Benares, around 18th century.
- A romantic & erotic style of singing; also called “the lyric of Indian classical music”.
- Compositions are mostly on love, separation and devotion.
- **Distinct feature:** Erotic subject matter portrayed picturesquely from the various episodes of the lives of Lord Krishna & Radha.
- Lyrics are typically in Brij Bhasha and are usually romantic & religious.
- A Thumri is usually performed as the last item of a Khayal concert.
- **Three main gharanas of thumri** — Benaras, Lucknow and Patiala.
- Begum Akhtar is one of the most popular singers of thumri style.

Tappa

- In this style the rhythm plays a very important role as the compositions are based on fast, subtle and knotty constructions.
- Developed in the late 18th Century AD **from the folk songs of camel riders of North-West India.**
- Great use of very quick turn of phrases.
- **Some of the expounders of this style:** Mian Sodi, Pandit Laxman Rao of Gwalior and Shanno Khurana.

Ghazal

- A poetic expression of both the pain of loss or separation and the beauty of love in spite of that pain.
- Originated in Iran in the 10th century AD.
- A Ghazal never exceeds the 12 ashaar or couplets.
- Spread in South Asia in the 12th century due to the influence of Sufi mystics and the courts of the new Islamic Sultanate. Reached its zenith in the Mughal period.
- **Amir Khusrau** was one of the first expounders of the art of making Ghazal.
- **Some of the famous persons associated with Ghazals:** Muhammad Iqbal, Mirza Ghalib, Rumi (13th century), Hafez (14th century), Kazi Nazrul Islam, etc.

Hindustani Music Gharanas

- A Gharana is a system of social organisation linking musicians or dancers by lineage or apprenticeship, and by adherence to a particular musical style.
- Function in guru-shishya parampara, i.e. disciples learning under a particular guru, transmitting his musical knowledge and style.

Gharana	Place	Founder
Gwalior	Gwalior	Nanthan Khan
Agra	Agra	Hajisujan Khan
Rangeela	Agra	Faiyyaz Khan
Jaipur Atrauli	Jaipur	Alladiya Khan
Kirana	Awadh	Abdul Wahid Khan

Hindustani vs. Carnatic Style

Similarities

- Although there are stylistic differences, the basic elements of swara, raga and tala as the foundation of both Carnatic and Hindustani are same.
- Hindustani music originated in the Vedic period, while Carnatic music originated during the Bhakti movement. Thus, both have a deep association with religion.
- Carnatic is one of two main sub-genres of India classical music that evolved from ancient Hindu traditions, the other sub-genre being Hindustani music, which emerged as a distinct form due to Persian and Islamic influences in North India.
- Both the music evolved with Sanskrit language scripts in itself and through Vedic traditions.
- The central notions in both these systems are that of a melodic mode or raga, sung to a rhythmic cycle or tala.

Differences

- Origin of Hindustani music is earlier than Carnatic music. It synthesizes with Vedic chants, Islamic traditions and Persian Musiqu-e-Assil style. Carnatic is comparatively pure and was developed in the 15th 16th century during the Bhakti movement and also got a boost in the 19th -20th century.
- The main emphasis in Carnatic music is on vocal music and most compositions are to be sung, involving gayaki style. In Hindustani music vocal- centric group is required. Many instruments are designed to accompany the singer.
- The major vocal forms of Hindustani music are Dhrupad, khayal, Tarana, Thumri, Dadra and Gazals. While Carnatic music embraces several varieties of improvisation consist of Alpana, Niraval, kalpanaswaram and Ragam Thana pallavi.