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by David Guinane

RHYTHMS OF THE WORLD

OCR's Area of Study 3, Rhythms of the World, covers a huge variety of what we often call 'world music'. This term usually refers to any music that isn't part of the Western classical tradition. It's a huge area, with hundreds of years of history, and vast amounts of social context.

To bundle it all as 'world music' isn't actually a very helpful term. 'World music' is really just 'music'. This resource covers around half of the styles specified in the OCR AoS, and contains required knowledge as well as details of musical activities that will deepen students' understanding of the traditions. It will be followed by a second resource covering the remaining styles in the specification.

THE MUSIC OF THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT

This part of the AoS is divided into two traditions:

- Indian classical music
- Bhangra

INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC

This section focuses on North Indian or Hindustani classical music, as typified by performers such as Ravi Shankar. (See also a previous *Music Teacher* resource on Indian classical music, May 2014.)

What is 'classical' music?

Students need to understand that the performance, conception and composition of this music is a long way away from the Western traditions they may have studied. A good starting point could be a discussion of the term 'classical' in relation to Western music, and how the term applies to Hindustani music. Think about:

- Classical music as 'art music' or 'serious music'.
- The idea of a 'formal' tradition of music making, with a long history.
- The idea that this music requires more effort by the listener to fully appreciate what is going on.
- Distinctions between 'popular', 'folk' and 'classical' music in terms of audience, purpose and performance practice.

Hopefully your students have strong views on this, which could make for a heated discussion!

To understand the nature of Indian classical music, play your students a typical Indian classical performance (using, for example, sitar, tabla and tanpura), and ask them to highlight aspects of the performance practice that strike them.

PERFORMANCE PRACTICE IN INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC

- Performers sit cross-legged on the floor while performing.
- Performances can last several hours, and are of indeterminate length.
- The vast majority of the music is improvised, and the performers are constantly communicating and responding to each other with their playing.

A good starting point for this music is Anoushka Shankar's performance of *Pancham Se Gara*.

Students need to understand that Indian classical music is based on three key musical parts:

- Rag
- Tala
- Drone

Rag

Rag or raga forms the **melody** in Indian classical music. A raga is a set of pitches, a little bit like a major or minor scale. There are hundreds of ragas, all learnt by ear, and each will be used at a particular time of day, or at different times during the year.

Each raga will have some notes that are more important than others, and they each have short musical phrases associated with them (called 'fixed compositions'). The raga is often played on a sitar, a fretted stringed instrument.

The musician performing the melody will improvise using the notes of the raga in many different ways:

- Pitch bends
- Fast scales or runs
- Slides between notes (glissandos)
- Ornamentation or decoration of the melody

Tala

Tal or tala forms the **rhythm** in this music. A tala is a cycle of beats, some accented, some silent (the first and most important beat in the cycle is called the **sam**). Cycles vary in length, and some are over 100 beats long! A **tabla** player will improvise rhythmic patterns based on the tala, creating complex, virtuosic rhythms.

Drone

A drone is a repeated, sustained note (or notes), heard throughout a piece of Indian classical music. Usually played on the tanpura, the sustained notes will often be the two most important notes of the raga.

Instead of showing pictures or videos of traditional Indian instruments, try searching for phone apps that are 'virtual' sitars or tabla. It's not the real thing, but students can at least interact with these apps, giving them a more engaging experience.

PERFORMANCE TOOLS

Indian classical music can be performed with just three performers, so assign everyone a role using the tools below:

Rag Yaman (late evening raga)



C and G are the **drone** notes for this rag. Notice the G only occurs when you are descending.

Tala

Pick one of these two tala, depending on your students:

■ Tintal:

Percussion $\text{H} \frac{16}{4}$
Dha Dhin Dhin Dha Dha Dhin Dhin Dha Dha Tin Tin Na Na Dhin Dhin Dha

■ Jhaptal:

Percussion $\text{H} \frac{10}{4}$
Dhin Na Dhin Dhin Na Ti Na Dhin Dhin Na

As a guide to the symbols used:

- X = sam: the strongest beat
- x = thali: an accented beat
- O = khaki: a silent beat, often signalled by a wave

Tintal is the most straightforward tala, as it is divided into four groups of four beats (4+4+4+4). **Jhaptal** is a little more complex, a ten-beat tala (grouped 2+3+2+3).

The syllables represent the different sounds (or bols) that can be made with the tabla. Start by sounding the basic tala, then, on whatever percussion instrument you are using, begin to improvise, still accenting the relevant beats of the tala.

Once you have the correct melodic, harmonic and rhythmic tools to perform Hindustani classical music, focus on following a typical **structure**.

Structure in Indian classical music

An Indian classical piece is usually in three sections. As the music is predominantly improvised, the length of each section is always different.

1. ALAP

The opening section of an Indian classical piece is in free time, beginning with just the drone. The instrument playing the raga improvises, beginning slowly, with just a few notes from the scale. Over time, more and more notes are incorporated into the improvisation.

2. GAT

The tabla enters in this section, improvising over the tala. The melody instrument continues to improvise over the raga, but the material becomes more complex. Some 'fixed compositions' (also called **gats**) may also be played.

3. JHALLA

Towards the end of the piece, the tempo increases, and the music builds in excitement and intensity. Both the tala and raga instruments perform virtuosic patterns that are both melodically and rhythmically complex. The piece ends with a huge climax.

Try to incorporate this basic structure when performing Indian classical music with your students.

Make this music accessible to anyone by producing versions of your chosen raga in C, B flat, E flat, F, bass clef and guitar tab. The tala can be played on any percussion instrument. Instead of having one person improvise, have multiple students take turns improvising over the raga.

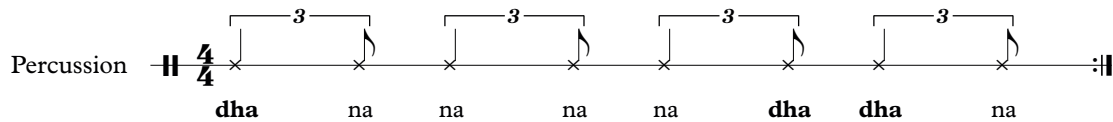
BHANGRA

The term bhangra traditionally referred to a form of dancing from the Punjab region of India. During the 1970s, however, young people of Punjabi descent in the UK created a form of upbeat popular music and called it bhangra. This is the music we will be studying.

'Bhabiye Ni Bhabiye' by Alaap is a bhangra classic.

Chaal

The **chaal** is a fundamental rhythm found in bhangra, and it looks like this:



It is played fast, often with shouts of 'hoi!' on beats 2 and 4. It is usually played on the dhol, a double-headed drum played with sticks. Both ends of the drum are played on the beats marked 'dha', and the higher drumhead only is played on beats marked 'na'. This is a great rhythm to play with students on tables – complete with shouts of 'hoi!'.

Common musical features of bhangra

Remember that bhangra is a fusion of traditional music from Punjab and modern club dance from the UK. Ensure your students can work out which feature belongs to which style.

PITCH AND MELODY

- Repeated instrumental riffs and hooks, often based around a minor 3rd.
- Melodies are short and repetitive.
- Sung melodies often use **microtonal intervals**, emphasising pitches smaller than a semitone – think very wide vibrato.

TONALITY

- Chords are diatonic.
- Often pieces are based around one or two short chord progressions.

STRUCTURE

- Verse, chorus, instrumental.
- Structures are similar to Western pop music.

INSTRUMENTS AND TIMBRE

- Tumbi: a small stringed instrument that plays repeated riffs.
- Dhol: the double-headed drum that plays the chaal rhythm.
- Other traditional instruments like the harmonium, and a wide range of percussion.
- Western instruments like guitars, bass guitars, synthesisers and drumkit are common.
- Lead vocals and backing vocals.

TEXTURE

- Melody and accompaniment.
- Often more than one layer of melody, and several layers of percussion.

TEMPO, RHYTHM AND METRE

- 4/4.
- Fast.
- Chaal rhythm.
- Off-beat chords are not uncommon, almost like reggae.
- Music for dancing.

The compilation CD *The Rough Guide to Bhangra* is an excellent resource for bhangra listening tracks (and it's also available on Spotify).

Use of technology

Music technology plays a huge role in many bhangra tracks, and it is likely students will be asked about it in a bhangra exam questions. Ensure they understand the following music technology terms:

DRUM MACHINES

Drum machines create electronic dance beats using sounds and rhythms not possible on a standard drumkit. As an example, listen to the beats on 'Gerra De De' by DJ Dips and Miss Pooja.

SYNTHESIZERS

Synthesized instruments create electronic sounds that can be used as melodies, chords or baselines. There are many synthesised sounds on 'Bol! Bol! Bol!' by Tigerstyle, for example.

EFFECTS

Effects such as **echo** and **reverb** are often heard on vocal tracks. You can hear several effects on the vocals at the start of 'Tumba' by Manpreet Sandhu and Dr Zeus.

SAMPLING

Sampling involves putting sounds from an external source in a new piece of music. Any sound can be sampled and used by an artists. In bhangra, clips from Bollywood films are commonly used. Panjabi MC uses samples from the theme tune to the 1980s crime drama *Magnum* in his track 'Jatt Ho Giya Sharabee'.

BHANGRA DANCING

Bhangra is music for dancing. Amazing costumes and group dancing with synchronised moves play a huge role in bhangra. Check out videos on the YouTube channel 'Bhangra Empire' to see some feats of athleticism!

Get your students to learn some bhangra moves. The YouTube channel 'Learn Bhangra App' has a series of 14, beginner moves, and teaches them in a series of very clear videos. Get rid of your desks, teach your students a few basics, and have some fun!

THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN AND THE MIDDLE EAST

This part of the AoS covers Greek folk music, and traditional music from Israel and Palestine.

GREEK MUSIC

Studying this AoS, you might come across Greek folk dances, which would be heard at weddings or other celebrations, or Greek folk songs, whose socially charged lyrics might be heard in cafes or bars throughout Greece.

Rhythm and metre

Time signatures like 7/8 or 5/8 are common in Greek songs and dances, often with accented irregular beats, as detailed below:

- 5/8: 1 2 3 4 5
- 7/8: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Clap these rhythms with your students, while accenting the appropriate beats.

Rebetiko is a term used to refer to a range of Greek folk musics. The Rebetika Revival refers to a period, beginning in the 1970s, when traditional Greek music grew in popularity. It has continued to this day.

Instruments

BOUZOUKI

- Stringed instrument.
- Three or four pairs of strings, tuned to the same note or an octave apart.
- Often plays the melodies.
- Techniques include slides, and tremolos in 3rds.

DEFI

- Hand drum.
- Bangles attached.
- Plays the distinctive rhythmic patterns and accents.

PERCUSSION

Many percussion instruments are found in Greek folk music. For exam purposes, the **type** of percussion instrument (shaker, bell, etc) will suffice.

OTHER INSTRUMENTS

Greek folk music also features many instruments common to Western ears. They include, but are not limited to:

- Acoustic guitars
- Accordions
- Bass guitars/upright bass
- Violins and other bowed stringed instruments
- Clarinets and other reed instruments

Musical features of Greek music

In order to understand features of Greek music, let's look at a typical song: 'O Haralambis'.

A

1.

Musical notation for section A, measures 1-4. The piece is in D major and 7/8 time. The first staff shows a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes. The second staff shows guitar accompaniment with a D chord (xx0232) and a bass line with quarter notes.

5

2.

Musical notation for section A, measures 5-8. The piece continues with a melodic line and guitar accompaniment. Chord diagrams for D (xx0232), G (320033), and A7 (x02020) are provided. The bass line continues with quarter notes.

10

B

Musical notation for section B, measures 10-14. The piece is in D major and 7/8 time. The first staff shows a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes. The second staff shows guitar accompaniment with Dm (xx0231) and A7 (x02020) chords and a bass line with quarter notes.

14

Musical score for measures 14-17. The score is in treble and bass clefs with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The melody in the treble clef consists of eighth and quarter notes. The bass clef provides a simple bass line. Chord diagrams are provided for the guitar accompaniment: Dm (x x 0 x x 0), A7 (x 0 0 0 0 0), and Dm (x x 0 x x 0).

BB

18

Musical score for measures 18-21. The score is in treble and bass clefs with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The melody in the treble clef consists of quarter and eighth notes. The bass clef provides a simple bass line. Chord diagrams are provided for the guitar accompaniment: Dm (x x 0 x x 0), A7 (x 0 0 0 0 0), and Dm (x x 0 x x 0).

AA

22

Musical score for measures 22-25. The score is in treble and bass clefs with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The melody in the treble clef consists of quarter and eighth notes. The bass clef provides a simple bass line. Chord diagrams are provided for the guitar accompaniment: D (x x 0 x x 0).

O Haralambis: analysis

A great version of 'O Haralambis', with a highly decorated melody, can be found here. It's interesting to compare it to the first movement of Franco Cesarini's *Greek Folk Song Suite*, which also features the tune.

After performing this tune with your students, print the sheet music, and annotate the following points:

- The piece is in 7/8, a compound time signature.
- The melody has a narrow range, and could easily be sung (it has words, not included here).
- The accompaniment uses off-beat, syncopated chords.
- The bassline only plays tonic and dominant notes (in a chord of D major, the bass will play D and A).
- There are two main sections.
- Section A is in two sets of four bars.
- Section B is eight bars long, and Section BB is a little four-bar extension of this section.
- Section AA is based on the first half of Section A.
- The piece is in D major.
- In Section A, only primary chords are used: D, G and A7.
- Section B modulates to the tonic minor (the minor version of the main key, ie D minor).
- The melody in section B uses some accidentals (chromatic alterations).

It's important to emphasise to students that a tune like this would never be written down by Greek musicians, only learnt **aurally**. The melody and chords presented here are only a guide, and any traditional performance would freely change and adapt both elements. Comparing several versions of the same tune is a great way to understand how folk music works.

FURTHER LISTENING

The following discs contain a huge range of Greek folk music (many are available via streaming services and YouTube):

- The Rough Guide to Greek Cafe (World Music Network)
- Authentic Greek Folk Songs and Dances: the Royal Greek Festival Company (Tradition Records)

There are many sources for Greek folk sheet music online:

- 8notes.com
- Sheet Music Daily
- Jan Wolters Sheet Music

ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN FOLK MUSIC

Israel and Palestine share a complex and difficult history. At the time of writing, the State of Israel has a population of over 8 million, and the State of Palestine, which comprises the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, has around 4.5 million inhabitants.

For the purposes of OCR's Area of Study, we will focus on Palestinian folk music through the lens of Arabic folk traditions, and look at Israeli folk music by focusing on traditional Jewish Israeli dances.

Arabic folk traditions: melody

MAQAM

Much like the tradition of raga in Hindustani music, **maqam** refers to a system of modes or scales often found in Arabic music.

It's difficult to replicate the sound of these scales on Western instruments, as they use notes and intervals not found in the 12 pitches of Western music. However, there are two famous scales that replicate the sound of Arabic music:

- Double harmonic scale, or 'Arabic scale'

Acoustic Guitar

- Phrygian Dominant Scale, known in Arabic music as the Hijaz-Nahawand or Bayati maqam

Acoustic Guitar

GET IMPROVISING!

Improvising in free time is a great way to get students thinking about the sound world of Arabic music. Get students to improvise over one of these two scales, adding techniques like hammer-ons and pull-offs (for guitarists), repeated notes, scalar runs, note bends and slides. Add a drone on a C and G to help.

oud

One of the most common melody instruments in Palestinian or Arabic music is the oud. A bit like a lute, the oud

- is pear-shaped.
- usually has 11 strings, tuned in pairs with one drone string.
- is played with a pick or plectrum.
- is fretless.

By utilising the drone string, an oud can accompany itself.

Arabic folk traditions: rhythm

WAZN

Wazn refers to a rhythmic cycle in Arabic music, much like the Hindustani tala. When combined with Arabic melodies, you have the makings of a traditional piece of Arabic folk music. There are many hundreds of wazn, all taught aurally, and of course, improvisation is a huge part of any performance.

HAND DRUMS

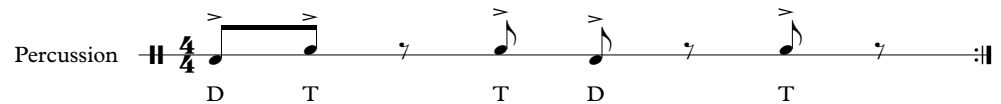
Arabic music is dominated by hand drums, usually the **darbuka** or **doumbek**. These goblet-shaped drums can produce many subtle sounds and patterns, are played with a very light touch.

You can use any hand drum to approximate the sound of Arabic rhythms. There are countless sounds that can be made, but focus on three main sounds:

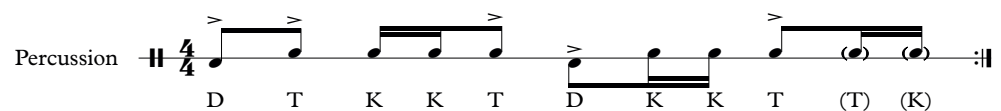
- Doum (D): a low tone, played with the right hand.
- Tek (T): a high tone played with the right hand.
- Ka (K): a high tone played with the left hand.

MAQSUM

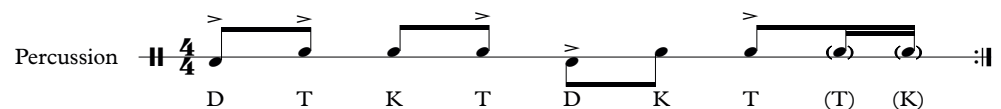
Maqsum is the most basic and traditional pattern, occurring throughout the Middle East. Here is the basic pattern:



And here is a variation with fills:



Finally, this pattern is known as the 'walking Maqsum', as it is played with very even strokes:



Remember that fills and embellishments are very much part of this style.

LISTENING TO ARABIC FOLK MUSIC

One of the most useful sources for this type of Arabic folk music is the YouTube channel Arab Instruments. Though primarily an online store, the videos showcase many of the key features of this music, to solidify students' understanding, such as:

- very clear demonstrations of traditional instruments.
- free-tempo introductions on the oud.
- melodic techniques and ornamentation on the oud.
- improvisation on the darbuka, including fills and decoration.
- interaction between the melodic and rhythmic elements of the music.
- music for other traditional aspects of this culture, such as belly dancing.

Israeli folk dances

There is much common ground between many types of Arabic and Middle Eastern folk music, but for examination purposes students will want to associate Israeli folk dances with traditional Jewish music for celebrations. Weddings and bar mitzvahs are where you will commonly hear these dances.

COMMON MUSICAL FEATURES IN ISRAELI FOLK DANCES

- A 2/4 or 4/4 time signature.
- A fast tempo.
- A bass part, playing every crotchet beat, often playing the root and 5th of the relevant chord.
- An instrument playing chords on the off-beat.
- A gradual speeding up (accelerando) throughout the performance.
- Use of Western instruments such as guitars and drum kits.

Everyone knows the traditional Israeli tune 'Hava nagila', often heard at Jewish celebrations. It is as good a starting point as any – check out this dance remix of the tune.

Israeli folk dances often have melodies are played on the clarinet, violin or accordion. You will hear grace notes and pitch bends, as well as lots of ornamentation, which creates a distinctive sound.

Create a checklist of these musical features, play students examples of Israeli folk dances, and get them to explain and describe the features they hear.

WHERE TO FIND ISRAELI FOLK DANCES TO LISTEN TO AND/OR PERFORM

- **ABC Notation** is a site that contains thousands of folk tunes in simple notation. Search 'Israel' from the home page. The tune 'Hora medura' is a fun one to play with classes.
- The **Jewish Music Website** produces a reasonably priced eBook of 51 dances from Israel, called *The Best of Israeli Folk Dances*.
- **Effi Netzer**: searching for Effi Netzer's band on Spotify or YouTube will yield many usable results.

COMPOSITION

One of the most effective ways of approaching these areas of study is through composition. A small composition task in groups or pairs not only solidifies students' understanding of the AoS, but can also provide a good leaping-off point for assessed composition.

Here are some ideas for tasks based on the areas of study covered in this resource:

Indian classical music

- Compose a raga, and construct a piece in three sections, based on the raga.
- Compose some 'fixed compositions' based on an existing or original raga.
- Compose some stylistic rhythmic improvisations based an existing or original tala.
- Use improvisation around a raga in a piece form another style, creating a fusion piece – a piece of jazz or electronic music would work well.

Bhangra

A bhangra instrumental (or vocal piece if you have the right students) is a fairly simple task to create. Give your students something as simple as a two- or four-chord progression, and ask students to create 'stylistic' bhangra parts:

- The chaal rhythm on a dhol or similar.
- A rhythmic, perhaps off-beat chordal accompaniment.
- A syncopated bassline.
- A repeated riff, perhaps focusing on a minor 3rd, on tumbi-like instrument.
- Some element of music technology (effects or synthesised instruments).

Students can then compose a verse, chorus and instrumental, to give them the foundations of a bhangra piece.

Greek music

A compound time signature is a must for any Greek-style composition. 7/8 is a good starting point. Students could sketch out a melody and chord progression (mainly primary chords and a simple melody), and then look to decorate and embellish that melody in the style of a folk tune. They can then orchestrate with appropriate chordal, melodic and percussive instruments.

Arabic folk tradition

An interesting approach here would be to workshop maqam and wazn on Western instruments. Improvising over these melodies and rhythmic patterns on guitars, drumkits or orchestral instruments will open up a new world of possibilities for students' compositions.

Israeli folk dances

A lively folk dance in 2/4 is a fairly simple composition task. Give students a chord progression, or ask them to compose an eight- or 16-bar progression using primary chords. Israeli folk melodies are characterised by short, repeated ideas that are then developed and extended. Structuring these pieces is usually based around varied repetitions of two or three ideas, so combining or ideas from many students could help inspire a student composition.

CLASSIC OCR QUESTION: THE COMPARISON

In most OCR exams, students will hear two similar pieces, and then be asked to compare the two. This question could very easily be based around styles from the Rhythms of the World AoS. You will hear two extracts, and be asked to compare them in a grid that looks like this:

Compare how each extract uses the following elements:

Instruments and their use	(4)
The use of texture	(4)
Dynamics	(2)

Any element can be in the left-hand column, and there are ten marks available for this table.

Top tips for the comparison table

An actual comparison will get you more marks: the following statements would be worth two marks:

- Both extracts use melody and accompaniment.
- Both extracts use cross-rhythms.
- Extract A uses music technology, while piece B does not.
- Extract B uses a drumkit, but extract A does not.

Be specific when describing the music:

- Extract A uses music technology (OK).
- Extract A uses reverb (better).
- Extract A uses reverb on the vocal part (best).

Talk about how the extract changes over time:

- Extract A starts with two parts, and more layers are added.
- Extract B begins quietly, and crescendos towards the end.
- A solo electric guitar comes in towards the end of extract A.