

# World Music

Music of India: background and instruments



# The music of India

- # The history of Indian music stretches back over two thousand years.
- # It is one of the oldest musical traditions in the world, and is fundamentally associated with religious and cultural expression.
- # There are two main traditions: the **Hindustani** tradition of northern India and the **Carnatic** tradition of southern India.
- # Indian music is not notated, but is taught from master to pupil by listening and playing.



# The music of India

- # Indian classical music can often be very complex, but there are three common elements:
- # **Melody.** This is usually improvised from a type of scale, called a *rag*. The melody might be sung or played on an instrument.
- # **Drone.** Indian classical music focuses on the development of **melody**; therefore accompaniments are usually simple. The drone is an accompaniment using only two notes, a fifth apart.
- # **Rhythm.** Known as the *tala*, it is organised into repeating **cycles**.



# Indian instruments

- # Apart from the human voice, some of the common instruments found in Indian classical music are:
- # The sitar
- # The sarangi
- # The tabla
- # The bansuri
- # The shenhai



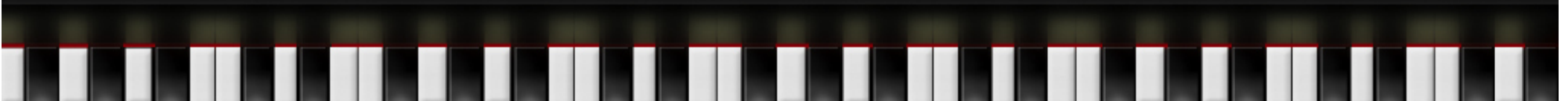
# The sitar

- # This is a plucked string instrument.
- # It has seven metal strings, of which two are used to play the drone.
- # Below these are a number of loose strings which vibrate when the strings above them are plucked with a wire plectrum.
- # This produces the characteristic 'twangy' sound that makes the sitar one of the most recognisable Indian instruments.



# The sarangi and the tabla

- # The sarangi is smaller than the sitar, with a softer sound, making it ideal as an accompaniment to the voice. It uses a bow to produce its notes.
- # The tabla is a set of two different sized drums played with both hands. They play the **tala**, or rhythm cycle.



# The bansuri and shenhai

- # These produce sounds similar to the flute and oboe, but do not have the metal keys used by their western counterparts to play the lower notes.
- # The player covers a series of holes with his or her fingers, similarly to the way the recorder is played.

