



There are two main types of Indian classical music from Northern and Southern India. Music from Northern India is known as Hindustani music. In this unit children study Hindustani music by listening to famous Indian musicians such as Kishori Amonkar (a singer), Ravi Shankar (a sitar player), Bikram Ghosh (a tablā player) and Amjad Ali Kahn (a sarod player). If following the PKC geography curriculum the children will be studying India in geography at the same time as doing this unit.

The children learn how Hindustani music is based on a 'tala' and a 'raga'. The 'tala' is a repeated rhythm cycle which is often played on an Indian percussion instrument called the tablā. The 'raga' is a melodic framework upon which a piece of Indian music is based and might be played on a sitar or a sarod, both plucked stringed instruments. The name for a rhythmic piece of music based on a tala (a set rhythmic cycle) is called a ṭukḍā.

Rhythmic and melodic patterns in Hindustani music are played over a drone which is one or more notes played repeatedly, often on an instrument called the tanpura. Improvisation (making music up on the spot) is an important part of Hindustani music. Melodic improvisation will be based on the 'raga' and rhythmic improvisation will be based on the 'tala'. A ṭukḍā (a rhythmic piece of music) can either be a set piece, or improvised.

Over the course of the unit the children learn to clap different 'talas', over which they clap improvised rhythms and a set ṭukḍā. Tablā players typically learn rhythms orally, by saying the rhythm to words/sounds and the children do the same, saying words to learn the set ṭukḍā. They construct a piece of music to create a structured piece of music which incorporates the use of a tala, set ṭukḍā and improvisation.

Lesson Sequencing

In lesson 1 the children are introduced to Indian classical music. Indian classical music has two major traditions, from Northern and Southern India. In this unit the children listen to and explore music from Northern India (also known as Hindustani). Note that, if children are studying PKC geography they will also be studying India during this term. In this lesson the children listen to Kishori Amonkar who was a famous Indian singer from Jaipur in Northern India. She is accompanied by various tuned instruments (which are explored in other lessons in the unit) as well as the tablā which is an Indian percussion instrument. In Indian music the tablā plays the rhythm of the music in cycles, known as 'talas'. The children learn to clap three different talas at the end of the lesson over 4, 8 and 16 beats.



Indian classical music has two foundational elements, the ‘tala’ which the children learnt about in lesson 1, and the ‘raga’ which they learn about in lesson 2. The ‘raga’ is the melodic framework upon which a piece of Hindustani piece of music (from Northern India) is made. The children listen to the sitarist Ravi Shankar, perhaps the best-known expert on Indian classical music of the 20th century playing an *Evening Raga*. At the beginning of the music the sitar player plays the raga before using it as a vehicle for improvisation (inventing music on the spot), which is also a large part of this musical style. At the end of the lesson the children improvise a clapped rhythm over one of the talas (over 16 beats) which they learnt in lesson 1.

In lesson 3 the children learn more about how the tablā (an Indian percussion instrument) is played. By watching the virtuoso tablā player, Bikram Ghosh playing a tablā solo they identify how tablā players learn rhythms orally, by saying the rhythm to words/sounds. They see him using a tīn tāl (a tala over 16 beats) and learn that the name for a rhythmic piece of music on the tablā is a ṭukḍā. A ṭukḍā can either be a fixed piece of music or improvised. Here Ghosh improvises a ṭukḍā over the tīn tāl. The children revise clapping the tīn tāl which they learnt in lesson 1 and 2 and then use English words to learn a ṭukḍā which fits over it.

In lesson 4 the children explore how Indian classical music uses a drone, which is where one or more notes are played repeatedly, over which the other instruments play. The drone can be heard in the piece of music, *Ekla Chalo Re* in which Amjad Ali Khan and Bikram Ghosh play the sarod and the tablā. A sarod is another kind of Indian melodic plucked string instrument. At the end of the lesson the children practise clapping the tīn tāl which they learnt in lesson 1 and 2 and the ṭukḍā which they learnt in lesson 3 at the same time.

In lesson 5 the children observe how players of Indian classical music look at each other to communicate whilst playing, which is necessitated by the large amount of improvisation which the music requires. They go on to practise the ṭukḍā and tīn tāl which they learnt in proceeding lessons and put this together to create different sections of music in which pupils use rhythmic improvisation.

In lesson 6, the children perform and record the piece of music which they created in lesson 5. They then evaluate their performance. In doing so, they learn that we can evaluate a performance to make it better next time. By practising the piece so it is ready for performance they develop their skills in playing together as an ensemble following the teacher who acts as a leader.

Musical Focus

Structure and Form/Texture

- Raga (melodic), tala (rhythmic)
- Improvisation
- Drone

Metre and Rhythm

- Tala and ṭukḍā

Indian Instrumentation

- Sitar, sarod, tablā, tanpura

Links to Prior/Following Units

Year 2

Autumn A—*Ostinato II* (Rhythm—Rhythmic ostinato)

Spring B—*Gamelan* (Texture—gamelan music is played in different parts which fit around the melody)

Summer A—*Emotions in Sound* (Rhythm—Rhythmic ostinato)

Summer B—*Lullabies* (Style—Purpose of a lullaby, lullabies from different cultures, jazz and improvisation)

Year 4

Autumn B—*Take the 'A' Train* (Texture-Melody and accompaniment, solo/duets (improvisation/scat singing))

Summer A—*Stories in Sound III* (Texture – Building layers of texture)

Outcomes

Learn a tala and ṭukḍā, building up layers of a composition by clapping and speaking. Include sections which incorporate rhythmic improvisation. Perform composed/improvised piece as a class directed by teacher.

Key Learning Points



- There are two main types of Indian classical music from Northern and Southern India. Music from Northern India is known as Hindustani music. In this unit children study Hindustani music.
- The tablā is an Indian percussion instrument which is a pair of drums which are played on the floor.
- In Indian music the rhythm is played in repeated cycles called a 'tala'.
- The melodic framework upon which a piece of Indian music is based is called a 'raga'. Ragas often use smaller jumps in pitch between notes, so this makes Indian melodies sound different to Western music.
- Indian music uses a lot of improvisation.
- The name for a rhythmic piece of music played on the tablā is called a ṭukḍā. A ṭukḍā can either be a fixed piece of music or improvised.
- Indian tablā players learn ṭukḍā rhythms by learning these orally, saying the rhythm to words
- Ravi Shankar was a famous sitar player. A sitar is an Indian plucked string instrument.
- A sarod is another Indian plucked string instrument.
- Indian classical music uses a drone which is one or more notes, played repeatedly over which the other instruments play.
- Players of Indian classical music need to communicate when they play together.

Progression: Technical, Constructive, Expressive

Singing

Children learn and sing call and response and action songs, including Indian songs, to warm up at the beginning of each lesson. This develops their technical singing skills which include posture, breath control, singing with a pulse, imitating rhythms, varying speed, holding a particular pitch and singing together in an ensemble. Practising songs over the course of six lessons ensures familiarity and increasing sophistication of musical expression.

Listening

Children practise 'active' listening, developing skill in identifying how the music is different from music with which they are familiar, how the music makes them feel, and making observations about how different Indian instruments are played. By listening to a variety of Hindustani music they begin to have conscious understanding of how the music is constructed, focussing on the dimensions of rhythm, melody, instrumentation, texture and structure/form. By studying this music, they begin to develop an increasing understanding of the expressive qualities of music from a particular culture/genre.

Practising

Practising creating a piece which makes use of clapping and the recitation of words to create rhythms based on set patterns develops an internal sense of pulse and rhythm. Creating a such a piece which layers different rhythms over a pulse develops knowledge of handling pulse, rhythm, metre, tempo and texture as component dimensions of making music. Practising the skills required for building the piece gradually over the course of the unit, ensures increasing confidence and sophistication in the expressive quality of musical outcomes.

Performing

Working towards performance of a piece, which includes improvisation, over the course of six lessons ensures increased technical accuracy, confidence, fluency, expression and the ability to play securely in an ensemble, following a leader.