

MUS 242

MUSIC OF OTHER
WORLD CULTURES

2 UNITS



MUS 242
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WORLD CULTURES**



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Course Code: MUS 242

Course Title: Music of other World Cultures

Course Credit Load: 2 Units

Series 1: Survey of Non-Western Musical Traditions

Series 2: Exploring American, Indian, Arabic, Chinese, Hebrew, Japanese, and Nordic Music

Series 3: Characteristics of Musical Cultures Beyond Africa and the Western World

Series 4: Types of Vocal Music Across World Cultures

Series 5: Classification and Functions of Musical Instruments in Global Contexts

Proposed Outline for Series 1

Part 1.1 Introduction to non-Western musical traditions

- 1.1.1 Definition and scope of non-Western music
- 1.1.2 Importance of studying non-Western traditions

Part 1.2 Historical and cultural contexts of non-Western music

- 1.2.1 Role of music in society and culture
- 1.2.2 Transmission of musical knowledge across generations

Part 1.3 Comparative overview of selected world traditions

- 1.3.1 Distinctive features of American, Indian, Arabic, Chinese, Hebrew, Japanese, and Nordic music
- 1.3.2 Shared elements and differences across traditions



Introduction

Music is a universal language, yet each culture expresses it in unique ways that reflect its history, values, and identity. Non-Western musical traditions offer rich insights into how societies beyond Africa and the Western world have shaped sound and meaning. By surveying these traditions, learners gain a broader perspective on the diversity of world music and its role in human experience.

The aim of this Series is to introduce you to the scope and significance of non-Western musical traditions, to highlight their cultural contexts, and to provide a comparative overview of selected traditions from around the world.

We shall commence this Series by defining non-Western music and considering why it is important to study these traditions. Next, we will explore the historical and cultural contexts in which non-Western music developed, focusing on its social functions and methods of transmission. Finally, we will provide a comparative overview of selected traditions, examining both their distinctive features and shared elements, to bring this Series to a close.

Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- **SLO 1.1** define non-Western musical traditions and explain their scope,
- **SLO 1.2** analyse the importance of studying non-Western traditions in global music education,
- **SLO 1.3** describe the historical and cultural contexts of non-Western music,
- **SLO 1.4** explain how musical knowledge is transmitted across generations in non-Western cultures,
- **SLO 1.5** compare and contrast the distinctive features of selected world musical traditions.



1.1 Introduction to Non-Western Musical Traditions

1.1.1 Definition and scope of non-Western music

Non-Western music refers to musical traditions that originate outside Africa and the Western world. These traditions include the music of cultures such as American (Indigenous), Indian, Arabic, Chinese, Hebrew, Japanese, and Nordic societies. Each of these traditions has developed unique systems of melody, rhythm, and instrumentation that reflect their cultural values and histories. Studying non-Western music broadens our understanding of how diverse societies use sound to express identity, spirituality, and community.

Fill in the blank: Non-Western music refers to traditions that originate outside _____ and the Western world.



Figure 1.1 Global scope of non-Western musical traditions

1.1.2 Importance of studying non-Western traditions

The study of non-Western traditions is important because it helps learners appreciate the diversity of musical expression across cultures. These traditions often use scales, rhythms, and instruments that differ significantly from Western practice, offering fresh perspectives on composition and performance. For example, Indian music employs **ragas** (melodic frameworks) and **talas** (rhythmic cycles), while Arabic music uses **maqam** (modal systems). By engaging with these traditions, learners develop perceptiveness and creativity, building a foundation for continued exploration in world music.

Fill in the blank: Indian music employs melodic frameworks called _____ and rhythmic cycles called talas.





Plate 1.1 Importance of studying non-Western traditions

BENEFITS OF STUDYING NON-WESTERN MUSICAL TRADITIONS			
Benefit Category	Key Concept	Explanation	Specific Examples
Cultural Awareness & Competence	Cross-Cultural Understanding	Develops empathy and understanding of diverse belief systems and artistic expressions. Overcomes ethnocentrism.	Studying 'Maqam' in the Middle East, 'Gagaku' in Japan, and 'Indian Classical' helps understand regional histories and values.
Creative Inspiration & Innovation	Interdisciplinary Creativity	Provides new harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic vocabularies for original compositions. Fuses traditions.	Incorporating 'Sitar' or 'Tabla' (India) rhythms, 'Guzheng' (China) scales, or 'Oud' (Middle East) microtones into new works.
Enhanced Analytical Skills	Cognitive Flexibility	Challenges conventional Western theories, requiring analysis of different scales, tunings, and forms.	Analyzing 'Gamelan Orchestras' (Indonesia) tuning systems, 'Polyrhythmic Drumming' (Sub-Saharan Africa), or 'Hardanger fiddle' (Nordic) polyphony.
Expanded Global Perspective	Global Citizenship	Positions Western music as one of many traditions, promoting a more holistic view of human artistic achievement.	Recognizing the diverse expressions of 'Polynesia', 'Indigenous America', and 'Sub-Saharan Africa' alongside 'European Classical' models.

Box 1.1 Benefits of studying non-Western musical traditions

Pilot questions 1.1

1. What is meant by non-Western music?
2. Name three cultures whose traditions are considered non-Western.
3. Why is it important to study non-Western musical traditions?
4. What are ragas and talas in Indian music?
5. How does studying non-Western music contribute to creativity?

1.2 Historical and Cultural Contexts of Non-Western Music

1.2.1 Role of music in society and culture

In many non-Western cultures, music is not simply an art form but an integral part of daily life, rituals, and community identity. For example, in Indian society, music is closely linked to spirituality and religious ceremonies, while in Arabic cultures, music often accompanies poetry and storytelling. In Chinese traditions, music has long been associated with philosophy and the balance of nature. These examples show that music functions as more than entertainment: it is a medium for communication, cultural preservation, and social cohesion.



Fill in the blank: In Chinese traditions, music has long been associated with _____ and the balance of nature.



Plate 1.2 Role of music in society and culture

1.2.2 Transmission of musical knowledge across generations

Transmission refers to the way musical knowledge is passed from one generation to another. In non-Western traditions, this is often done orally, through apprenticeship, or by participation in community events. For instance, Japanese music is taught through master-apprentice relationships, while Indigenous American traditions rely on oral storytelling and communal singing. This method of transmission ensures that music remains deeply connected to cultural identity and lived experience, rather than being confined to written notation.

Fill in the blank: In many non-Western traditions, musical knowledge is passed on through _____ rather than written notation.

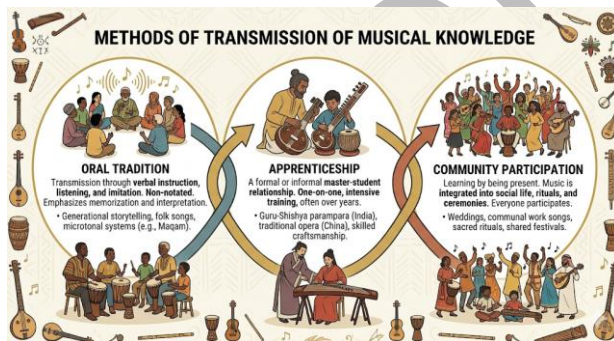
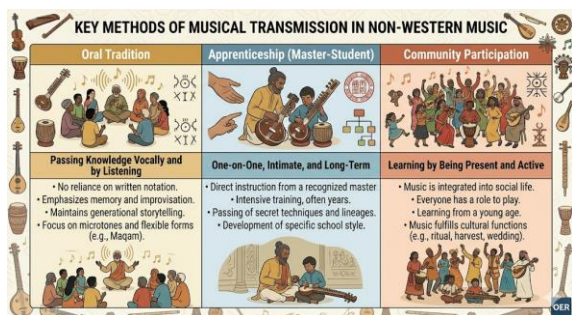


Figure 1.2 Transmission of musical knowledge across generations





Box 1.2 Methods of transmission in non-Western music

Pilot questions 1.2

1. How does music function in non-Western societies?
2. Give one example of how music is linked to spirituality in non-Western traditions.
3. What does transmission mean in the context of music?
4. Name two methods of transmitting musical knowledge in non-Western cultures.
5. Why is oral tradition important in preserving non-Western music?

1.3 Comparative Overview of Selected World Traditions

1.3.1 Distinctive features of American, Indian, Arabic, Chinese, Hebrew, Japanese, and Nordic music

Each non-Western tradition has distinctive features that reflect its cultural identity. **American Indigenous music** often uses repetitive chants and percussion to accompany rituals and storytelling. **Indian music** is built on ragas (melodic frameworks) and talas (rhythmic cycles), creating intricate improvisations. **Arabic music** employs maqam, a modal system with microtones that give it a unique sound. **Chinese music** is closely tied to philosophy, using pentatonic scales and instruments such as the guzheng. **Hebrew music** blends liturgical chants with folk traditions, often centred on community worship. **Japanese music** emphasises timbre and silence, with instruments like the koto and shakuhachi. **Nordic music** draws on folk traditions, using modal melodies and instruments such as the fiddle to evoke landscapes and legends.

Fill in the blank: Arabic music employs a modal system called _____, which often uses microtones.



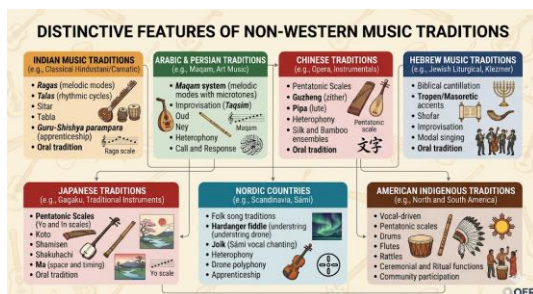


Figure 1.3 Distinctive features of selected non-Western traditions

1.3.2 Shared elements and differences across traditions

While each tradition is unique, there are shared elements across cultures. Many traditions use music for ritual, storytelling, and community bonding. Percussion instruments are common in American Indigenous, Indian, and Arabic traditions, while string instruments dominate Nordic and Chinese music. Differences lie in tonal systems: Indian ragas and Arabic maqam use microtones, while Chinese and Japanese traditions often rely on pentatonic scales. These comparisons highlight both diversity and universality, showing how music serves as a cultural bridge across societies.

Fill in the blank: Chinese and Japanese traditions often rely on _____ scales.



Plate 1.3 Shared elements and differences across traditions

MUSICAL TRADITION	DISTINCTIVE FEATURES	SHARED ELEMENTS
INDIAN MUSIC TRADITIONS (Hindustani/Carnatic)	- Ragas (melodic modes) - Talas (rhythmic cycles) - Sitar - Guru-Shishya parampara (apprenticeship) - Oral Tradition	- Modal frameworks - Melodic and Rhythmic - Heterophony - Oral transmission
ARABIC & PERSIAN TRADITIONS	- Maqam system (modal modes with microtones) - Taqsim (improvisation) - Oud - Ney - Heterophony - Call and Response	- Modal frameworks - Melodic focus - Microtonality - Heterophony - Oral transmission
CHINESE TRADITIONS	- Pentatonic scales (五声音阶) - Guzheng/Pipa - Operatic forms ensembles - Oral Tradition	- Melodic focus - Pentatonic structures - Heterophony - Oral transmission
HEBREW MUSIC TRADITIONS	- Biblical cantillation - Shofar - Tropen/Masoretic accents - Modal singing - Klezmer/Cantorial - Oral Tradition	- Modal frameworks - Melodic focus - Heterophony - Oral transmission
JAPANESE TRADITIONS (Gagaku/Traditional)	- Pentatonic scales (Yo and In scales) - Koto/Shamisen/Shakuhachi - Ma (space/timing concept) - Gagaku - Oral Tradition	- Melodic focus - Pentatonic structures - Heterophony - Oral transmission
NORDIC COUNTRIES (Scandinavia/Sámi)	- Folk song traditions - Hardanger fiddle (understring drone) - Jokk (Sámi vocal chanting) - Heterophony - Drone polyphony - Apprenticeship	- Folk/oral traditions - Melodic focus - Drone elements - Oral transmission
AMERICAN INDIGENOUS TRADITIONS (North/South)	- Vocal-driven - Pentatonic scales - Drums - Flutes - Ceremonial/Ritual function - Community participation	- Vocal focus - Melodic and Rhythmic elements - Heterophony - Oral transmission - Communal function
SHARED ELEMENTS & KEY CONCEPTS	- Oral Tradition/Transmission (predominant over written notation) - Apprenticeship (Guru-Shishya, Master-Student models) - Community Participation (music integrated into ritual, life) - Melodic and Rhythmic Focus (over complex Western harmony) - Modal Frameworks (Raga, Maqam, Pentatonic scales) - Heterophony and Drone elements - Unique Cultural Functions (Spiritual, Social, Storytelling)	

Box 1.3 Comparative features of selected traditions



Pilot questions 1.3

1. Name one distinctive feature of American Indigenous music.
2. What are ragas and talas in Indian music?
3. Which modal system is used in Arabic music?
4. Which scale is commonly used in Chinese and Japanese traditions?
5. How do Nordic traditions reflect their cultural identity?

Series Summary

This Series has introduced you to the scope and significance of non-Western musical traditions, highlighting their diversity and cultural importance. We began by defining non-Western music and explaining why it is essential to study traditions beyond Africa and the Western world. We then explored the historical and cultural contexts, focusing on the role of music in society and the ways knowledge is transmitted across generations. Finally, we examined distinctive features of selected traditions, including American Indigenous, Indian, Arabic, Chinese, Hebrew, Japanese, and Nordic music, while also identifying shared elements and differences.

By completing this Series, you should now be able to define non-Western musical traditions, analyse their cultural contexts, explain methods of transmission, and compare distinctive features across selected traditions. These outcomes align directly with the Series Learning Objectives, equipping you with a solid foundation for appreciating and engaging with world music beyond Africa and the West.

Glossary of Terms

- **Arabic maqam:** A modal system in Arabic music that uses microtones to create distinctive melodic patterns.
- **Hebrew music:** Musical traditions combining liturgical chants and folk practices, often centred on worship and community.
- **Indian raga:** A melodic framework used in Indian music for improvisation and composition.
- **Indian tala:** A rhythmic cycle in Indian music that structures timing and metre.
- **Japanese koto:** A traditional Japanese string instrument, often used in ensemble and solo performance.
- **Non-Western music:** Musical traditions originating outside Africa and the Western world.
- **Nordic folk music:** Traditional music from Nordic countries, often modal and linked to landscapes and legends.
- **Oral transmission:** The passing of musical knowledge through spoken instruction, storytelling, or communal participation.
- **Pentatonic scale:** A five-note scale commonly used in Chinese and Japanese music.



- **Transmission:** The process of passing musical knowledge across generations, often through oral or communal methods.

Concept Check Questions [Series 1]

Objective questions

1. What does non-Western music refer to? (Linked to SLO 1.1)
2. Which cultures are included in the survey of non-Western traditions? (Linked to SLO 1.1)
3. What is a raga in Indian music? (Linked to SLO 1.3)
4. Which scale is commonly used in Chinese and Japanese traditions? (Linked to SLO 1.5)
5. What does the Arabic maqam system employ to create its distinctive sound? (Linked to SLO 1.5)

Short-answer questions

6. Explain why studying non-Western traditions is important. (Linked to SLO 1.2)
7. Describe one way music functions in non-Western societies. (Linked to SLO 1.3)
8. How is musical knowledge transmitted in Japanese traditions? (Linked to SLO 1.4)

Long-answer questions

9. Analyse the role of music in non-Western societies, giving examples from at least two cultures. (Linked to SLO 1.3)
 - Basic response: Music functions in rituals, storytelling, and community identity.
 - Value-added response: Outstanding learners may discuss specific examples, such as Indian music in religious ceremonies and Arabic music in poetry, showing how these roles preserve cultural heritage.
10. Evaluate the similarities and differences between Indian and Arabic musical traditions. (Linked to SLO 1.5)
 - Basic response: Both use modal systems and microtones, but Indian music is based on ragas and talas, while Arabic music uses maqam.
 - Value-added response: Outstanding learners may explore how improvisation differs in each tradition and how cultural contexts shape their musical structures.

Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 1]

- Non-Western music refers to traditions outside Africa and the Western world.
- American Indigenous, Indian, Arabic, Chinese, Hebrew, Japanese, and Nordic traditions are examples.
- Studying non-Western traditions is important for cultural awareness and creativity.
- Ragas are melodic frameworks and talas are rhythmic cycles in Indian music.



- Studying non-Western music contributes to creativity by exposing learners to new scales and rhythms.
- In Chinese traditions, music is associated with philosophy and the balance of nature.
- Transmission means passing musical knowledge across generations.
- Oral tradition and apprenticeship are two methods of transmission.
- Oral tradition is important because it preserves cultural identity and lived experience.
- American Indigenous music uses chants and percussion.
- Indian music is built on ragas and talas.
- Arabic music uses the maqam system.
- Chinese and Japanese traditions often use pentatonic scales.
- Nordic traditions reflect cultural identity through folk melodies and instruments like the fiddle.

References and Attributions [Series 1]

- Figure 1.1: Suggested AI prompt “Create a diagram of a world map highlighting regions such as India, China, Japan, Middle East, Nordic countries, and Indigenous America to show non-Western musical traditions.” Search string: “world map non-Western musical traditions OER diagram.”
- Plate 1.1: Suggested AI prompt “Generate an image of musicians from India, China, and the Middle East performing traditional music together.” Search string: “musicians performing traditional non-Western music OER image.”
- Box 1.1: Suggested AI prompt “Generate a table summarising benefits of studying non-Western musical traditions including cultural awareness, creativity, analysis, and global perspective.” Search string: “benefits of studying non-Western music OER table.”
- Plate 1.2: Suggested AI prompt “Generate an image of a traditional cultural ceremony with musicians performing as part of a ritual.” Search string: “traditional ceremony music role society culture OER image.”
- Figure 1.2: Suggested AI prompt “Create a diagram showing oral tradition, apprenticeship, and community participation as methods of transmitting music.” Search string: “transmission of musical knowledge oral tradition apprenticeship OER diagram.”
- Box 1.2: Suggested AI prompt “Generate a table summarising oral tradition, apprenticeship, and community participation in non-Western music.” Search string: “methods of transmission non-Western music OER table.”
- Figure 1.3: Suggested AI prompt “Create a diagram summarising distinctive features of American Indigenous, Indian, Arabic, Chinese, Hebrew, Japanese, and Nordic music.” Search string: “distinctive features non-Western music traditions OER diagram.”
- Plate 1.3: Suggested AI prompt “Generate an image of musicians from different cultures performing together, showing shared rhythm and melody.” Search string: “shared elements non-Western music traditions OER image.”
- Box 1.3: Suggested AI prompt “Generate a table comparing distinctive features and shared elements of American Indigenous, Indian, Arabic, Chinese, Hebrew, Japanese, and Nordic music.” Search string: “comparative features non-Western music traditions OER table.”



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Proposed Outline for Series 2

Part 2.1 American and Indian musical traditions

- 2.1.1 Distinctive features of American Indigenous music
- 2.1.2 Ragas and talas in Indian music

Part 2.2 Arabic and Chinese musical traditions

- 2.2.1 Modal systems in Arabic music (maqam)
- 2.2.2 Pentatonic scales and instruments in Chinese music

Part 2.3 Hebrew, Japanese, and Nordic musical traditions

- 2.3.1 Liturgical and folk elements in Hebrew music
- 2.3.2 Timbre and silence in Japanese music
- 2.3.3 Folk melodies and instruments in Nordic traditions



Introduction

In the last Series, we surveyed non-Western musical traditions and considered their cultural contexts. This Series takes us further by exploring selected traditions in detail, focusing on American Indigenous, Indian, Arabic, Chinese, Hebrew, Japanese, and Nordic music. Each of these traditions offers unique features that enrich our understanding of world music.

The aim of this Series is to examine the distinctive characteristics of these traditions, to highlight their cultural significance, and to provide learners with practical insights into their musical systems.

We shall commence this Series by studying American Indigenous and Indian traditions, focusing on chants, percussion, ragas, and talas. Next, we will explore Arabic and Chinese traditions, considering modal systems and pentatonic scales. Finally, we will wrap up by examining Hebrew, Japanese, and Nordic traditions, looking at their liturgical, timbral, and folk elements.

Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- **SLO 2.1** describe the distinctive features of American Indigenous music,
- **SLO 2.2** explain the role of ragas and talas in Indian music,
- **SLO 2.3** analyse the modal system of Arabic music (maqam),
- **SLO 2.4** identify the use of pentatonic scales and instruments in Chinese music,
- **SLO 2.5** evaluate the liturgical and folk elements of Hebrew music,
- **SLO 2.6** explain the importance of timbre and silence in Japanese music,
- **SLO 2.7** describe the folk melodies and instruments characteristic of Nordic traditions.



2.1 American and Indian Musical Traditions

2.1.1 Distinctive features of American Indigenous music

American Indigenous music refers to the traditional music of Native peoples across the Americas. It is often characterised by repetitive chants, strong rhythmic patterns, and the use of percussion instruments such as drums and rattles. These musical forms are deeply connected to rituals, storytelling, and community gatherings. The chants are usually performed in groups, reinforcing unity and collective identity. Music in this context is not primarily for entertainment but for spiritual and cultural expression.

Fill in the blank: American Indigenous music is often characterised by repetitive chants and strong _____ patterns.



Plate 2.1 American Indigenous music in ritual practice

2.1.2 Ragas and talas in Indian music

Indian music is built on two fundamental concepts: **ragas** and **talas**. A **raga** is a melodic framework that provides a set of notes and rules for improvisation and composition. Each raga is associated with specific moods, times of day, or seasons. A **tala** is a rhythmic cycle that structures the timing and metre of a piece. Talas can be simple or highly complex, with cycles ranging from a few beats to over a hundred. Together, ragas and talas create a rich and intricate musical system that allows for both structure and improvisation.

Fill in the blank: A raga is a melodic framework, while a tala is a _____ cycle.



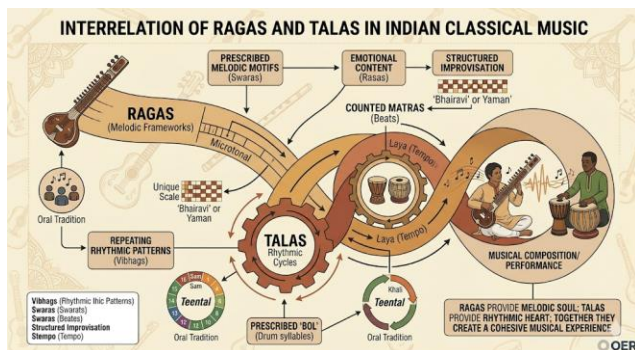


Figure 2.1 Ragas and talas in Indian music

COMPARATIVE OVERVIEW OF MUSICAL TRADITIONS		
KEY FEATURE	AMERICAN INDIGENOUS TRADITIONS	INDIAN CLASSICAL TRADITIONS
MELODIC FOUNDATION	- Vocal-driven - Chant Focus - Repetition	- Ragas (Melodic Modes) - Microtones - Structured Improvisation
RHYTHMIC STRUCTURE	- Percussion-focused - Stable Pulse - Communal Rhythm	- Talas (Rhythmic Cycles) - Hand Counts, Polyrythms - Intricate Bol patterns
KEY INSTRUMENTS	- Hand Drums, Rattles - Flutes • Vocals	- Sitar • Tabla, Flute - Vocals, Harmonium
PERFORMER & TRAINING	- Oral Tradition • Generational Storytelling - All community members participate in song	- Guru-Shishya parampara (Apprenticeship) - Intensive master-student lineage - Virtuosity-focused training
PRIMARY USE & FUNCTION	- Ritual and Ceremony • Spiritual Connection - Social Gatherings • Healing	- Art Music (Performance) • Meditation - Storytelling • Spiritual devotion (Bhakti)
COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP	Music IS social life and ritual; full community participation	Audience-performer relationship; structured performance for listening and appreciation

Box 2.1 Key features of American and Indian traditions

Pilot questions 2.1

1. What are the main characteristics of American Indigenous music?
2. Which instruments are commonly used in American Indigenous traditions?
3. What is a raga in Indian music?
4. What is a tala in Indian music?
5. How do ragas and talas work together in Indian music?

2.2 Arabic and Chinese Musical Traditions

2.2.1 Modal systems in Arabic music (maqam)

Arabic music is built on the concept of **maqam**, which is a modal system defining scales, characteristic phrases, and emotional expression. Unlike Western scales, maqam often uses microtones, which are intervals smaller than a semitone, giving Arabic music its distinctive sound. Each maqam is associated with particular moods or occasions, and performers use it as a framework for improvisation. The maqam system demonstrates how music can be both structured and expressive, balancing rules with creativity.



Fill in the blank: The modal system in Arabic music is called _____, and it often uses microtones.

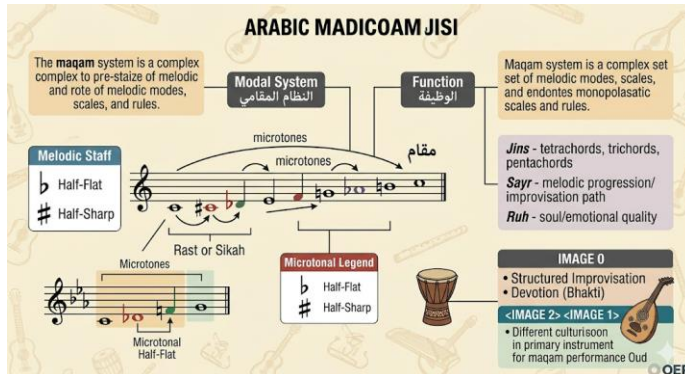


Figure 2.2 Structure of maqam in Arabic music

2.2.2 Pentatonic scales and instruments in Chinese music

Chinese music is often based on the **pentatonic scale**, a five-note scale that creates a distinctive melodic sound. This scale is widely used in traditional Chinese compositions and is associated with harmony and balance in philosophy. Instruments such as the **guzheng** (a plucked zither), **erhu** (a two-stringed bowed instrument), and **dizi** (a bamboo flute) are central to Chinese music. These instruments produce timbres that reflect the cultural emphasis on nature and simplicity. Together, the pentatonic scale and traditional instruments give Chinese music its unique identity.

Fill in the blank: The pentatonic scale used in Chinese music consists of _____ notes.



Plate 2.2 Traditional Chinese instruments in performance



COMPARATIVE OVERVIEW OF ARABIC AND CHINESE MUSICAL TRADITIONS		
MUSICAL FEATURE	ARABIC MUSIC TRADITIONS	CHINESE MUSIC TRADITIONS
MELODIC FOUNDATION MODAL SYSTEM	(R) Maqam system (melodic modes), microtones, specific scales (e.g., Rast, Bayati) with defined progressions (Sayr).	(L) Pentatonic scales (<i>wu sheng</i> - five core tones), five distinct modes (e.g., Gong, Shang), associated with elements.
RHYTHMIC STRUCTURE RHYTHMIC CYCLES	(R) <i>Iqa'at</i> (rhythmic patterns), defined meters, complex cycles.	(L) Simpler, stable duple or quadruple meters, influenced by yin-yang balance.
KEY INSTRUMENTS PRIMARY INSTRUMENTS	(R) Oud (plucked lute), Ney (flute), Qanun (zither), Violins, Darbuka/Riqq (percussion).	(L) Guzheng (zither), Erhu (bowed lute), Dizi (bamboo flute), Pipa (plucked lute), Guqin (zither), Drums/Gongs.
TEXTURE & PERFORMANCE MUSICAL TEXTURE	(R) Heterophonic (variations on a single melody), drone elements, improvisational focus (Taqsim).	(L) Homophonic or Heterophonic (melody-focused), ornamentation, structured performance, less individual improvisation.
PHILOSOPHY & CULTURE MUSICAL PHILOSOPHY	(R) Spiritual devotion (Bhakti), connection to Arabic poetry, emotional expression (Ruh), social function (e.g., weddings).	(L) Social hierarchy balance, individual virtue (Confucianism), reflection of natural cycles, Taoist concepts, connection to poetry (Xiaoling).
TRANSMISSION & USE TRANSMISSION METHODS	(R) Oral Tradition, intensive apprenticeship (Master-student relationships).	(L) Oral Tradition, apprenticeship, structured court and ritual function, recent standard notation.
SHARED CONCEPTS & GLOBAL INFLUENCE	• Dominance of Oral Tradition over written notation. • Importance of Master-Student apprenticeship (linear transmission). • Melodic focus (over complex Western harmony).	• Connection to poetry, nature, and spirituality. • Adaptation of instruments and forms across vast regions. • Recognition as major non-Western classical traditions.

Box 2.2 Key features of Arabic and Chinese traditions

Pilot questions 2.2

1. What is the modal system used in Arabic music?
2. What makes maqam different from Western scales?
3. How many notes are in the pentatonic scale?
4. Name two traditional Chinese instruments.
5. How does Chinese music reflect cultural philosophy?

2.3 Hebrew, Japanese, and Nordic Musical Traditions

2.3.1 Liturgical and folk elements in Hebrew music

Hebrew music combines liturgical chants used in religious worship with folk traditions that reflect community life. Liturgical chants are often sung in synagogues, following ancient melodic patterns that preserve cultural and spiritual identity. Folk music, on the other hand, includes songs for celebrations, storytelling, and daily life. Together, these elements show how Hebrew music bridges sacred and secular contexts, reinforcing both faith and cultural heritage.

Fill in the blank: Hebrew liturgical chants are often sung in _____, preserving cultural and spiritual identity.

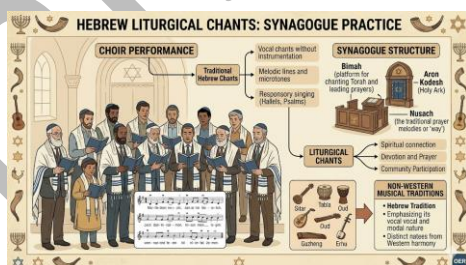


Plate 2.3 Hebrew liturgical music in worship



2.3.2 Timbre and silence in Japanese music

Japanese music places great emphasis on **timbre**, which refers to the unique quality of sound produced by instruments, and on silence, which is considered an essential part of musical expression. Instruments such as the **koto** (a plucked zither) and **shakuhachi** (a bamboo flute) produce delicate tones that highlight subtle variations in sound. Silence is often used to create space and reflection, making Japanese music deeply meditative. This approach demonstrates how music can be shaped not only by notes but also by the absence of sound.

Fill in the blank: In Japanese music, silence is considered an essential part of _____ expression.

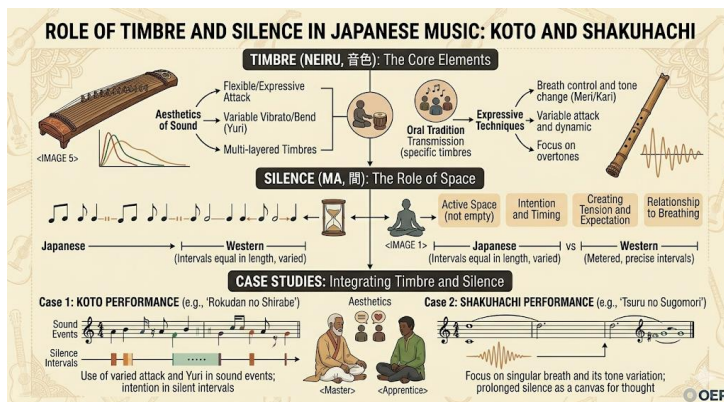


Figure 2.3 Timbre and silence in Japanese music

2.3.3 Folk melodies and instruments in Nordic traditions

Nordic music is rooted in folk traditions that reflect landscapes, legends, and community life. It often uses **modal melodies**, which are scales different from the major and minor systems of Western music. Instruments such as the fiddle, hardanger fiddle, and jaw harp are commonly used, producing sounds that evoke rural life and natural surroundings. Nordic folk songs often tell stories of heroes, myths, and seasonal cycles, making them both cultural records and artistic expressions.

Fill in the blank: Nordic music often uses modal melodies and instruments such as the _____ fiddle.

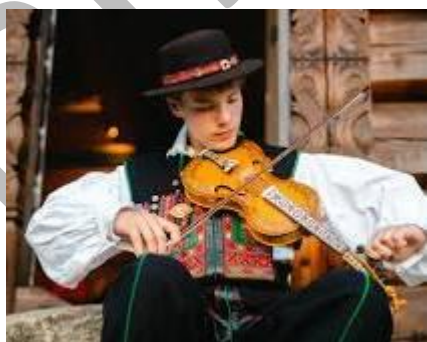


Plate 2.4 Nordic folk music traditions

COMPARATIVE OVERVIEW: HEBREW, JAPANESE, AND NORDIC MUSICAL TRADITIONS			
TRADITION	KEY FEATURES	INSTRUMENTS	CULTURAL CONTEXT & USE
HEBREW MUSICAL TRADITIONS	- Focus on vocal: Liturgical Chants (Nusach, Cantillation), Folk Songs - Modal frameworks, Microtonality (<IMAGE 2>, <IMAGE 3>, <IMAGE 4>) - Oral Tradition Transmission (<IMAGE 5>)	- Vocals (primary) - Shofar - Lyre - Tambourine - Organ/Harmonium (later)	- Liturgical: Devotion, Prayer, Ritual (Shakli/Divine connection) - Folk: Storytelling, Social gatherings, Identity
JAPANESE MUSICAL TRADITIONS	- Timbre (Neiru) is fundamental: Unique attack, Variable tone (<IMAGE 6>) - Silence (Ma) as a crucial element: Space between notes creates tension and meaning (<IMAGE 7>) - Precise and subtle expression - Transmission through direct master-apprentice (<IMAGE 8>, <IMAGE 9>, <IMAGE 10>)	- Koto (zither) - Shakuhachi (bamboo flute) - Shamisen (lute) - Taiko (drum)	- Art Music (Gagaku, Koto, Shakuhachi): Aesthetics, Meditation, Ritual - Narrative (Kabuki, Bunraku): Theatre and Storytelling
NORDIC MUSICAL TRADITIONS (Scandinavia & Sámi)	- Modal Melodies (distinct from Western major/minor), flexible tunings - Folk Instruments with unique qualities - Polyrhythms in dance music - Drone polyphony (<IMAGE 3>) - Strong Storytelling and Narrative elements (<IMAGE 11>) - Vocal traditions: Folk songs, Joik (Sámi chanting)	- Fiddle (especially Hardanger Fiddle, <IMAGE 12>) - Jaw Harp - Keyed Fiddle (Nyckelharpa) - Kantele	- Dance: Weddings, Social Gatherings, Celebrations - Folk Songs: Work, Ritual, Family history - Narrative: Storytelling and Preserving Lore
SUMMARY (Key Connections)	- Dominance of Oral Tradition. - Focus on Melodic and Rhythmic elements over complex Western harmony.	- Integrated role in society, ritual, and culture. - Adaptability of instruments and forms over centuries.	

Box 2.3 Key features of Hebrew, Japanese, and Nordic traditions

Pilot questions 2.3

1. Where are Hebrew liturgical chants commonly performed?
2. What is timbre in Japanese music?
3. Why is silence important in Japanese musical expression?
4. Name two instruments used in Japanese music.
5. Which instruments are commonly used in Nordic folk traditions?

Series Summary

This Series has explored selected non-Western musical traditions in greater detail, focusing on American Indigenous, Indian, Arabic, Chinese, Hebrew, Japanese, and Nordic music. We began with American Indigenous and Indian traditions, highlighting chants, percussion, ragas, and talas. We then examined Arabic and Chinese traditions, considering the maqam modal system and the pentatonic scale with its associated instruments. Finally, we studied Hebrew, Japanese, and Nordic traditions, looking at liturgical chants, timbre and silence, and folk melodies.

By completing this Series, you should now be able to describe the distinctive features of American Indigenous music, explain ragas and talas in Indian music, analyse the maqam system in Arabic traditions, identify the pentatonic scale and instruments in Chinese music, evaluate Hebrew liturgical and folk elements, explain timbre and silence in Japanese music, and describe Nordic folk melodies and instruments. These achievements align directly with the Series Learning Outcomes, equipping you with practical insights into diverse musical systems.



Glossary of Terms

- **Arabic maqam:** A modal system in Arabic music that uses microtones and characteristic melodic patterns.
- **Erhu:** A two-stringed bowed instrument used in Chinese music.
- **Guzheng:** A plucked zither, one of the main instruments in Chinese traditional music.
- **Hebrew liturgical chant:** Ancient melodic patterns sung in synagogues as part of worship.
- **Indian raga:** A melodic framework in Indian music used for improvisation and composition.
- **Indian tala:** A rhythmic cycle in Indian music that structures timing and metre.
- **Japanese koto:** A plucked zither used in Japanese traditional music.
- **Japanese shakuhachi:** A bamboo flute used in Japanese music, producing delicate tones.
- **Pentatonic scale:** A five-note scale commonly used in Chinese music.
- **Timbre:** The unique quality of sound produced by an instrument or voice.

Concept Check Questions [Series 2]

Objective questions

1. What are the main characteristics of American Indigenous music? (Linked to SLO 2.1)
2. What is a raga in Indian music? (Linked to SLO 2.2)
3. Which modal system is used in Arabic music? (Linked to SLO 2.3)
4. How many notes are in the pentatonic scale? (Linked to SLO 2.4)
5. Which instruments are commonly used in Nordic folk traditions? (Linked to SLO 2.7)

Short-answer questions

6. Explain the role of talas in Indian music. (Linked to SLO 2.2)
7. Describe how maqam differs from Western scales. (Linked to SLO 2.3)
8. Identify two traditional Chinese instruments and their cultural significance. (Linked to SLO 2.4)
9. What is timbre in Japanese music, and why is silence important? (Linked to SLO 2.6)

Long-answer questions

10. Analyse the cultural significance of Hebrew music, considering both liturgical and folk elements. (Linked to SLO 2.5)
 - Basic response: Hebrew music combines liturgical chants with folk traditions, reinforcing faith and community.
 - Value-added response: Outstanding learners may discuss how Hebrew music preserves identity across generations and adapts to modern contexts.



11. Evaluate the similarities and differences between Japanese and Nordic musical traditions.
(Linked to SLO 2.6, SLO 2.7)

- Basic response: Japanese music emphasises timbre and silence, while Nordic music uses modal melodies and folk instruments.
- Value-added response: Outstanding learners may explore how each tradition reflects its environment, with Japanese music linked to meditation and Nordic music tied to landscapes and legends.

Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 2]

- American Indigenous music is characterised by chants and strong rhythmic patterns.
- Drums and rattles are commonly used in American Indigenous traditions.
- A raga is a melodic framework in Indian music.
- A tala is a rhythmic cycle in Indian music.
- Ragas and talas work together to structure melody and rhythm.
- The modal system in Arabic music is called maqam.
- Maqam differs from Western scales because it uses microtones.
- The pentatonic scale has five notes.
- Guzheng, erhu, and dizi are traditional Chinese instruments.
- Chinese music reflects cultural philosophy by emphasising harmony and balance.
- Hebrew liturgical chants are commonly performed in synagogues.
- Timbre refers to the unique quality of sound in Japanese music.
- Silence is important in Japanese music because it creates space and reflection.
- The koto and shakuhachi are instruments used in Japanese music.
- Fiddles, hardanger fiddles, and jaw harps are commonly used in Nordic traditions.

References and Attributions [Series 2]

- Plate 2.1: Suggested AI prompt “Generate an image of Indigenous American musicians performing with drums and rattles during a ritual.” Search string: “Indigenous American music ritual drums rattles OER image.”
- Figure 2.1: Suggested AI prompt “Create a diagram showing ragas as melodic frameworks and talas as rhythmic cycles in Indian music.” Search string: “ragas talas Indian music framework cycle OER diagram.”
- Box 2.1: Suggested AI prompt “Generate a table summarising key features of American Indigenous and Indian music traditions.” Search string: “American Indigenous Indian music features OER table.”
- Figure 2.2: Suggested AI prompt “Create a diagram showing the structure of a maqam scale with microtones indicated.” Search string: “Arabic maqam modal system microtones OER diagram.”
- Plate 2.2: Suggested AI prompt “Generate an image of musicians performing with guzheng, erhu, and dizi in a traditional Chinese setting.” Search string: “Chinese traditional instruments guzheng erhu dizi OER image.”



- Box 2.2: Suggested AI prompt “Generate a table summarising key features of Arabic and Chinese music traditions.” Search string: “Arabic Chinese music features maqam pentatonic instruments OER table.”
- Plate 2.3: Suggested AI prompt “Generate an image of a synagogue choir performing traditional Hebrew chants.” Search string: “Hebrew liturgical chants synagogue OER image.”
- Figure 2.3: Suggested AI prompt “Create a diagram showing timbre and silence in Japanese music with koto and shakuhachi examples.” Search string: “Japanese music timbre silence koto shakuhachi OER diagram.”
- Plate 2.4: Suggested AI prompt “Generate an image of Nordic musicians playing fiddles and jaw harps at a folk festival.” Search string: “Nordic folk music fiddle jaw harp OER image.”
- Box 2.3: Suggested AI prompt “Generate a table summarising Hebrew, Japanese, and Nordic music traditions with key features.” Search string: “Hebrew Japanese Nordic music traditions OER table.”



Course Code: MUS 242

Course Title: Music of other World Cultures

Course Credit Load: 2 Units

Series 1: Survey of Non-Western Musical Traditions

Series 2: Exploring American, Indian, Arabic, Chinese, Hebrew, Japanese, and Nordic Music

Series 3: Characteristics of Musical Cultures Beyond Africa and the Western World

Series 4: Types of Vocal Music Across World Cultures

Series 5: Classification and Functions of Musical Instruments in Global Contexts

Proposed Outline for Series 3

Part 3.1 Melodic and rhythmic systems

- 3.1.1 Modal and scale structures
- 3.1.2 Rhythmic cycles and patterns

Part 3.2 Cultural functions of music

- 3.2.1 Ritual and spiritual roles
- 3.2.2 Social and communal functions

Part 3.3 Performance practices and transmission

- 3.3.1 Instruments and vocal styles
- 3.3.2 Oral tradition and apprenticeship



Introduction

In the last Series, we explored specific non-Western traditions such as American Indigenous, Indian, Arabic, Chinese, Hebrew, Japanese, and Nordic music. This Series shifts the focus to the broader characteristics that define these musical cultures, helping us to see patterns and principles that cut across traditions.

The aim of this Series is to highlight the distinctive melodic, rhythmic, cultural, and performance features of non-Western musical cultures, and to show how these features shape identity and continuity.

We shall commence this Series by examining melodic and rhythmic systems, including modal structures and rhythmic cycles. Next, we will consider the cultural functions of music, focusing on its ritual, spiritual, and social roles. Finally, we will wrap up by studying performance practices and transmission, looking at instruments, vocal styles, and methods of passing knowledge across generations.

Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- **SLO 3.1** describe modal and scale structures in non-Western musical cultures,
- **SLO 3.2** explain rhythmic cycles and patterns used in non-Western traditions,
- **SLO 3.3** analyse the ritual and spiritual roles of music in cultural contexts,
- **SLO 3.4** evaluate the social and communal functions of music,
- **SLO 3.5** identify instruments and vocal styles characteristic of non-Western traditions, and
- **SLO 3.6** explain how oral tradition and apprenticeship transmit musical knowledge across generations.



3.1 Melodic and Rhythmic Systems

3.1.1 Modal and scale structures

Modal systems are frameworks of notes and intervals that define the melodic character of a musical tradition. In non-Western cultures, these systems often differ from the major and minor scales familiar in Western music. For example, the **maqam** in Arabic music uses microtones, while the **raga** in Indian music provides melodic frameworks associated with moods, times of day, or seasons. Similarly, Chinese and Japanese traditions frequently employ the **pentatonic scale**, a five-note system that creates a distinctive sound. These modal structures shape the identity of each culture's music and guide both composition and improvisation.

Fill in the blank: The pentatonic scale commonly used in Chinese and Japanese traditions consists of _____ notes.

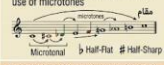
COMPARATIVE VIEW OF NON-WESTERN MODAL SYSTEMS: MAQAM, RAGA, AND PENTATONIC			
MODAL SYSTEM	STRUCTURE	KEY FEATURES & AESTHETICS	EXAMPLE & USE
MAQAM (Arabic/Middle Eastern)	Uses a complex system of tetrachords (jins), flexible tuning, and essential use of microtones 	- Focus on melodic progression (Sawr), specific modes evoke specific emotional moods (Ruh) - Intricate ornamentation - Oral Tradition (IMAGE 3-) - Oral transmission from master 	- Case: Maqam Bahari (an example melodic path with specific rules) - Used in Taqsim (instrumental improvisation, IMAGE 2-) and vocal music (liturgical or secular)
RAGA (Indian Classical)	- Uses a specific ascending (Arohana) and descending (Avarohana) pattern of seven notes - Rhythmic cycles (Talas) are integral 	- Deep connection to specific emotional moods (Rasas), associated with times of day and seasons - Includes specific ornamentation (Gamakas) and structured improvisation (IMAGE 4-) - Oral Tradition (IMAGE 3-) - Guru-Shishya lineage transmission - Shared concept with Maqam: Structured improvisation 	- Case: Raga Yaman (evening raga of calm mood) - Used in elaborate performance forms (Khyal, Dhrupad)
PENTATONIC SCALE (Diverse World Systems)	- Built on exactly five notes per octave - Most common is anhemitonic (no half-steps) 	- Simplicity and clarity - Stable and lacks dissonance - Less focused on complex ornamentation or intricate rules than Maqam/Raga - Community participation: Widespread adaptation for folk, popular, and ceremonial music - Shared concept with Raga: - Pentatonic structure used in many ragas 	- Case: Chinese (Gong mode), Japanese (Yo mode), Andean folk melodies - Used in vast folk music, early children's music, and diverse world traditions.

Figure 3.1 Modal systems in non-Western music

3.1.2 Rhythmic cycles and patterns

Rhythmic cycles are repeating patterns of beats that structure timing in music. In Indian traditions, **talas** are rhythmic cycles that can range from simple to highly complex, sometimes extending over dozens of beats. African-influenced traditions often use polyrhythms, where multiple rhythms are played simultaneously, creating layered textures. In Japanese music, rhythm is often flexible, allowing silence and pauses to play an expressive role. These rhythmic systems demonstrate how cultures use time and repetition to shape musical experience.

Fill in the blank: In Indian music, rhythmic cycles are called _____.





Plate 3.1 Rhythmic cycles in performance

Feature	Modal Systems (Pitch & Melody)	Rhythmic Cycles (Time & Meter)
Primary Frameworks	Maqam, Raga, Pentatonic Scales	Tala, Polyrhythm, Flexible Timing
Core Concept	Provides a collection of notes, specific melodic movements, and emotional "moods."	Provides a repeating pattern or "cycle" that governs the underlying pulse.
Melodic Characteristics	Often incorporates microtones (intervals smaller than a half-step) and specific ornaments (glides, vibrato).	Focuses on the relationship between "stressed" and "unstressed" beats within a cycle.
Rhythmic Characteristics	Melody is often fluid and can be independent of a strict, metered beat.	Can involve multiple simultaneous rhythms (polyrhythm) or cycles of varying lengths.
Examples	Maqam: Arabic system using tetrachords.	Tala: Indian cycles (e.g., <i>Teental</i> - 16 beats).



Feature	Modal Systems (Pitch & Melody)	Rhythmic Cycles (Time & Meter)
	Raga: Indian system tied to times of day. Pentatonic: 5-note scales (Chinese, Japanese, Indigenous).	Polyrhythm: Sub-Saharan African traditions. Ma: Japanese concept of "active" silence.
Transmission	Primarily through Oral Tradition and master-student apprenticeship.	Learned through imitation, mnemonic syllables (e.g., <i>bols</i>), and community participation.

Box 3.1 Key features of melodic and rhythmic systems

Pilot questions 3.1

1. What is a modal system in music?
2. Name one modal system used in Arabic music.
3. How many notes are in the pentatonic scale?
4. What are rhythmic cycles called in Indian music?
5. Why is silence important in Japanese rhythmic practice?

3.2 Cultural Functions of Music

3.2.1 Ritual and spiritual roles

In many non-Western cultures, music plays a central role in **rituals** and **spiritual practices**. Ritual music is often used to mark important life events such as births, marriages, and funerals. Spiritual music, on the other hand, is closely tied to worship and meditation. For example, Indian devotional songs known as *bhajans* are sung in temples, while Arabic traditions use chants in religious ceremonies. These practices show that music is not only an artistic expression but also a means of connecting with the divine and reinforcing cultural identity.

Fill in the blank: Indian devotional songs sung in temples are called _____.





Plate 3.2 Ritual and spiritual roles of music

3.2.2 Social and communal functions

Music also serves important **social functions**, bringing communities together and strengthening bonds. In American Indigenous traditions, communal singing and drumming are used to tell stories and celebrate heritage. In Nordic cultures, folk songs are performed at festivals to mark seasonal changes and community gatherings. These examples highlight how music fosters unity, preserves traditions, and provides a shared sense of belonging. Music in this context is a living record of cultural values and collective memory.

Fill in the blank: In Nordic cultures, folk songs are often performed at _____ to mark seasonal changes.



Figure 3.2 Social and communal functions of music



Function Category	Specific Role	Cultural Application & Examples
Ritual & Spiritual	Worship & Devotion	Used to communicate with the divine or ancestors. Examples include Hebrew liturgical chants, Arabic <i>Bhakti</i> or Sufi devotional music, and Indian <i>Bhajans</i> .
	Meditation & Trance	Facilitates internal reflection or altered states of consciousness. Examples include the Japanese <i>Shakuhachi</i> for Zen meditation or Sufi <i>Whirling</i> ceremonies.
	Life Cycle Events	Marks significant transitions such as births, coming-of-age ceremonies, weddings, and funerals. Common in American Indigenous and Nordic folk traditions.
Social & Communal	Storytelling & History	Acts as an oral "archive" to preserve history and lineage. Examples include the Nordic <i>Joik</i> (Sámi) or West African griot traditions.
	Community Bonding	Encourages collective participation where the line between "performer" and "audience" is blurred. Examples include Indigenous drum circles or Chinese community opera.
	Festivals & Seasonal	Aligns the community with natural cycles (harvests, solstices) and religious calendars. Examples include Indian <i>Holi</i> songs or Nordic Midsummer celebrations.

Box 3.2 Cultural functions of music

Pilot questions 3.2

1. What is the difference between ritual and spiritual music?
2. Name one example of spiritual music in Indian traditions.
3. How does music function in American Indigenous communities?
4. In Nordic cultures, when are folk songs commonly performed?
5. Why is music considered a living record of cultural values?



3.3 Performance Practices and Transmission

3.3.1 Instruments and vocal styles

Non-Western musical cultures are distinguished by their unique **instruments** and **vocal styles**. Instruments often reflect the materials available in a region and the cultural values attached to sound. For example, the **erhu** in Chinese music produces a lyrical tone, while the **shakuhachi** in Japanese traditions creates meditative sounds. In Nordic cultures, the fiddle and hardanger fiddle are central to folk performance. Vocal styles also vary widely: American Indigenous traditions use group chanting to reinforce community, while Hebrew liturgical chants preserve ancient melodic patterns. These practices highlight the diversity of sound production and performance across cultures.

Fill in the blank: The erhu, used in Chinese music, is a two-stringed _____ instrument.



Plate 3.3 Instruments and vocal styles in non-Western traditions

3.3.2 Oral tradition and apprenticeship

Oral tradition refers to the passing of musical knowledge through spoken instruction, storytelling, and communal participation. In many cultures, music is not written down but learned by listening, repeating, and performing. Apprenticeship is another key method, where learners study directly under masters. For example, Japanese music often relies on master-apprentice relationships, while Indian traditions use oral transmission to teach ragas and talas. These methods ensure that music remains deeply connected to cultural identity and lived experience, rather than being confined to notation.

Fill in the blank: In Japanese traditions, musical knowledge is often passed through _____ relationships.



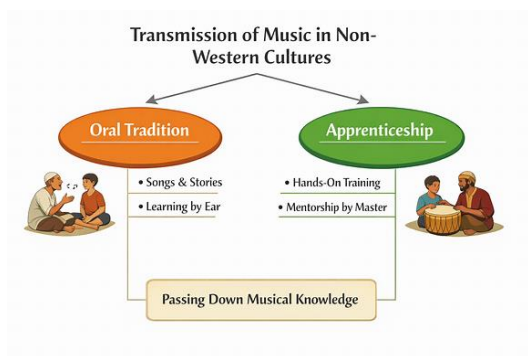


Figure 3.3 Transmission of musical knowledge

Practice	Core Elements	Cultural Context & Examples
Instruments	Primary reliance on wood, skin, and string (lutes, zithers, flutes).	Indian: Sitar, Tabla. Chinese: Guzheng, Erhu. Arabic: Oud, Qanun. Nordic: Hardanger fiddle, Nyckelharpa.
Vocal Styles	Focus on microtonal nuance, chanting, and unique timbres.	Hebrew: Liturgical cantillation. Indigenous American: Monophonic chanting.



Practice	Core Elements	Cultural Context & Examples
		Sámi (Nordic): Joik (vocal portraiture). Japanese: Focus on breath and <i>Ma</i> (silence).
Oral Tradition	Preservation of music through memory rather than notation.	Essential for American Indigenous and Nordic folk traditions to maintain ancestral history and storytelling through generations.
Apprenticeship	Intensive, long-term master-student relationships.	Indian: <i>Guru-Shishya parampara</i>. Arabic: Systematic study of <i>Maqam</i> logic and improvisation (<i>Taqsim</i>) under a master.

Box 3.3 Performance practices and transmission

Pilot questions 3.3

1. Name one instrument used in Chinese music.
2. What is the role of chanting in American Indigenous traditions?
3. Define oral tradition in the context of music.
4. How is musical knowledge transmitted in Japanese traditions?
5. Why is apprenticeship important in non-Western music?



Series Summary

This Series has focused on the defining characteristics of non-Western musical cultures, helping you to recognise the systems and practices that shape their identity. We began by examining melodic and rhythmic systems, including modal structures such as maqam and raga, as well as rhythmic cycles like tala and polyrhythms. We then explored the cultural functions of music, considering its ritual, spiritual, and social roles in community life. Finally, we studied performance practices and transmission, looking at instruments, vocal styles, and the importance of oral tradition and apprenticeship.

By completing this Series, you should now be able to describe modal and scale structures, explain rhythmic cycles, analyse ritual and spiritual roles, evaluate social functions, identify instruments and vocal styles, and explain how oral tradition and apprenticeship transmit musical knowledge. These outcomes align directly with the Series Learning Objectives, equipping you with a comprehensive understanding of the cultural and structural features that define non-Western musical traditions.

Glossary of Terms

- **Apprenticeship:** A method of learning music by studying directly under a master performer.
- **Erhu:** A two-stringed bowed instrument used in Chinese music.
- **Liturgical chant:** Ancient melodic patterns sung in religious worship, often in Hebrew traditions.
- **Maqam:** A modal system in Arabic music that uses microtones and characteristic melodic phrases.
- **Modal system:** A framework of notes and intervals that defines the melodic character of a tradition.
- **Oral tradition:** The passing of musical knowledge through spoken instruction, storytelling, and communal participation.
- **Pentatonic scale:** A five-note scale commonly used in Chinese and Japanese music.
- **Polyrhythm:** The simultaneous use of two or more contrasting rhythmic patterns.
- **Raga:** A melodic framework in Indian music associated with moods, times of day, or seasons.
- **Tala:** A rhythmic cycle in Indian music that structures timing and metre.
- **Timbre:** The unique quality of sound produced by an instrument or voice.

Concept Check Questions [Series 3]

Objective questions

1. What is a modal system in music? (Linked to SLO 3.1)
2. How many notes are in the pentatonic scale? (Linked to SLO 3.1)
3. What are rhythmic cycles called in Indian music? (Linked to SLO 3.2)



4. Name one ritual use of music in non-Western cultures. (Linked to SLO 3.3)
5. Which instrument is central to Nordic folk traditions? (Linked to SLO 3.5)

Short-answer questions

6. Explain the difference between ritual and social functions of music. (Linked to SLO 3.3, SLO 3.4)
7. Describe the role of chanting in American Indigenous traditions. (Linked to SLO 3.5)
8. How is musical knowledge transmitted in Japanese traditions? (Linked to SLO 3.6)

Long-answer questions

9. Analyse the cultural functions of music in non-Western societies, giving examples from at least two traditions. (Linked to SLO 3.3, SLO 3.4)
 - Basic response: Music serves ritual, spiritual, and social roles, such as worship and festivals.
 - Value-added response: Outstanding learners may discuss specific examples, such as Indian devotional songs in temples and Nordic folk songs at seasonal festivals, showing how music reinforces identity and continuity.
10. Evaluate the importance of oral tradition and apprenticeship in preserving non-Western musical cultures. (Linked to SLO 3.6)
 - Basic response: Oral tradition and apprenticeship ensure music is passed down without written notation.
 - Value-added response: Outstanding learners may explore how these methods preserve cultural identity, adapt to modern contexts, and maintain authenticity across generations.

Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 3]

- A modal system is a framework of notes and intervals defining melodic character.
- Maqam is a modal system used in Arabic music.
- The pentatonic scale has five notes.
- Rhythmic cycles in Indian music are called talas.
- Silence is important in Japanese rhythmic practice because it creates space and reflection.
- Indian devotional songs sung in temples are called bhajans.
- Music in American Indigenous communities functions through communal singing and drumming.
- In Nordic cultures, folk songs are performed at festivals to mark seasonal changes.
- Music is considered a living record of cultural values because it preserves traditions and collective memory.
- The erhu is a two-stringed bowed instrument used in Chinese music.
- Chanting in American Indigenous traditions reinforces community and storytelling.
- Oral tradition is the passing of musical knowledge through spoken instruction and participation.
- Musical knowledge in Japanese traditions is transmitted through master-apprentice relationships.



- Apprenticeship is important because it preserves authenticity and cultural identity.

References and Attributions [Series 3]

- Figure 3.1: Suggested AI prompt “Create a diagram comparing modal systems: maqam with microtones, raga with moods, and pentatonic scale with five notes.” Search string: “modal systems maqam raga pentatonic scale OER diagram.”
- Plate 3.1: Suggested AI prompt “Generate an image of musicians performing with drums and percussion instruments to illustrate rhythmic cycles.” Search string: “Indian tala rhythmic cycles percussion OER image.”
- Box 3.1: Suggested AI prompt “Generate a table summarising modal systems and rhythmic cycles in non-Western music.” Search string: “non-Western music modal systems rhythmic cycles OER table.”
- Plate 3.2: Suggested AI prompt “Generate an image of a religious ceremony in India or the Middle East where music is performed as part of worship.” Search string: “religious ceremony music ritual spiritual role OER image.”
- Figure 3.2: Suggested AI prompt “Create a diagram showing social functions of music including storytelling, festivals, and community bonding.” Search string: “social functions of music storytelling festivals community OER diagram.”
- Box 3.2: Suggested AI prompt “Generate a table summarising ritual and social functions of music in non-Western cultures.” Search string: “cultural functions of music ritual social OER table.”
- Plate 3.3: Suggested AI prompt “Generate an image of musicians performing with erhu, shakuhachi, and Nordic fiddles.” Search string: “non-Western instruments erhu shakuhachi Nordic fiddle OER image.”
- Figure 3.3: Suggested AI prompt “Create a diagram showing oral tradition and apprenticeship as methods of transmitting music in non-Western cultures.” Search string: “oral tradition apprenticeship non-Western music OER diagram.”
- Box 3.3: Suggested AI prompt “Generate a table summarising instruments, vocal styles, oral tradition, and apprenticeship in non-Western music.” Search string: “performance practices transmission non-Western music OER table.”



Course Code: MUS 242

Course Title: Music of other World Cultures

Course Credit Load: 2 Units

Series 1: Survey of Non-Western Musical Traditions

Series 2: Exploring American, Indian, Arabic, Chinese, Hebrew, Japanese, and Nordic Music

Series 3: Characteristics of Musical Cultures Beyond Africa and the Western World

Series 4: Types of Vocal Music Across World Cultures

Series 5: Classification and Functions of Musical Instruments in Global Contexts

Proposed Outline for Series 4

Part 4.1 Sacred and ritual vocal music

- 4.1.1 Liturgical chants and devotional songs
- 4.1.2 Ritual and ceremonial singing

Part 4.2 Folk and communal vocal music

- 4.2.1 Storytelling and oral traditions
- 4.2.2 Festival and celebratory songs

Part 4.3 Artistic and theatrical vocal music

- 4.3.1 Classical and court traditions
- 4.3.2 Vocal performance in theatre and opera-like forms



Introduction

In the last Series, we explored the defining characteristics of non-Western musical cultures, focusing on their melodic systems, cultural functions, and performance practices. This Series now turns to vocal music, which is one of the most universal forms of musical expression across cultures. Vocal traditions reveal how societies use the human voice to convey spirituality, identity, and artistry.

The aim of this Series is to introduce you to the diverse types of vocal music found across world cultures, highlighting their sacred, communal, and artistic functions.

We shall commence this Series by examining sacred and ritual vocal music, including liturgical chants and ceremonial singing. Next, we will explore folk and communal vocal traditions, focusing on storytelling, oral traditions, and celebratory songs. Finally, we will wrap up by studying artistic and theatrical vocal music, considering classical court traditions and vocal performance in theatre and opera-like forms.

Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- **SLO 4.1** define liturgical chants and devotional songs as forms of sacred vocal music,
- **SLO 4.2** explain the role of ritual and ceremonial singing in cultural contexts,
- **SLO 4.3** describe how storytelling and oral traditions are expressed through folk vocal music,
- **SLO 4.4** analyse the function of festival and celebratory songs in community life,
- **SLO 4.5** identify features of classical and court vocal traditions across cultures, and
- **SLO 4.6** evaluate the role of vocal performance in theatre and opera-like forms.



4.1 Sacred and Ritual Vocal Music

4.1.1 Liturgical chants and devotional songs

Liturgical chants are vocal pieces performed in religious worship, often following ancient melodic patterns that preserve spiritual and cultural identity. In Hebrew traditions, chants are sung in synagogues, while in Christian traditions, Gregorian chant is a well-known example. These chants are usually monophonic, meaning they consist of a single melodic line without harmony, which enhances their meditative quality. **Devotional songs**, such as Indian *bhajans*, are sung in temples and homes to express faith and devotion. They often use simple melodies and repetitive structures to encourage participation and reflection.

Fill in the blank: Liturgical chants are usually _____, consisting of a single melodic line without harmony.



Plate 4.1 Liturgical chants in worship

4.1.2 Ritual and ceremonial singing

Ritual singing refers to vocal music performed during ceremonies marking important life events such as births, marriages, and funerals. These songs often carry symbolic meaning and are passed down through generations. For example, American Indigenous communities use group chanting and drumming in rituals to strengthen communal bonds and connect with spiritual traditions. **Ceremonial singing** may also accompany seasonal festivals, reinforcing cultural identity and continuity. In many cultures, the human voice is considered the most direct medium for expressing sacred emotion, making ritual singing central to spiritual life.

Fill in the blank: In American Indigenous traditions, ritual singing is often accompanied by group _____ and drumming.





Figure 4.1 Types of sacred vocal music

Category	Primary Characteristics	Cultural Function	Examples
Liturgical Chants	Often monophonic (single melody), unmetrical, and focused on sacred text delivery.	Formal worship, strictly following religious law or scripture.	Hebrew Cantillation, Gregorian Chant, Islamic <i>Adhan</i> .
Devotional Songs	Emphasis on faith, emotional expression, and often use of repetition.	Individual or group expressions of piety and personal connection to the divine.	Indian <i>Bhajans</i> , Arabic <i>Qawwali</i> , Christian Hymns.
Ritual Singing	Tied to specific actions or rites; often involves communal participation.	Marking life transitions (birth, marriage, death) and spiritual healing.	Indigenous American Healing Chants, Nordic <i>Joik</i> for spirits.
Ceremonial Singing	Focus on cultural identity, history, and grand-scale celebration.	Reinforcing community bonds during festivals or state events.	Chinese Operatic ritual, Japanese <i>Gagaku</i> (Imperial court).

Box 4.1 Key features of sacred and ritual vocal music

Pilot questions 4.1

1. What are liturgical chants, and where are they commonly performed?



2. What is the main characteristic of liturgical chants in terms of texture?
3. Give one example of a devotional song in Indian traditions.
4. How does ritual singing function in American Indigenous communities?
5. Why is the human voice considered central to sacred and ritual music?

4.2 Folk and Communal Vocal Music

4.2.1 Storytelling and oral traditions

Folk vocal music often serves as a vehicle for **storytelling**, passing down myths, legends, and historical events through generations. In American Indigenous traditions, group chanting is used to recount stories of ancestors and cultural origins. Similarly, African and Asian folk songs preserve oral traditions, ensuring that knowledge and values are transmitted without written records. The human voice becomes a living archive, carrying memory and identity across time.

Fill in the blank: Folk vocal music often serves as a vehicle for _____, passing down myths and legends.



Plate 4.2 Storytelling through folk vocal music

4.2.2 Festival and celebratory songs

Festival songs are performed during communal celebrations, marking seasonal changes, harvests, or social milestones. These songs are often lively, encouraging participation through call-and-response or group singing. In Nordic traditions, folk songs accompany festivals that celebrate the natural cycles of the year. In Indian communities, celebratory songs are sung during weddings and other joyous occasions. Such music strengthens social bonds and provides a sense of belonging, reminding participants of their shared heritage.

Fill in the blank: Festival songs often use _____-and-response structures to encourage group participation.





Figure 4.2 Functions of communal vocal music

Category	Primary Function	Performance Context	Key Characteristics
Storytelling & Oral Traditions	Preserving history, myths, and moral lessons across generations.	Evening gatherings, family circles, or educational rituals.	Narrative-driven, often featuring a solo lead with repetitive structures to aid memory.
Festival Songs	Aligning the community with seasonal cycles and nature.	Harvests, solstices, and religious or agricultural calendars.	Highly communal, often involving call-and-response and rhythmic synchronization.
Celebratory Songs	Marking personal and social milestones.	Weddings, births, and transitions into adulthood.	High energy, emotionally expressive, and often tied to specific dances or social customs.

Box 4.2 Key features of folk and communal vocal music

Pilot questions 4.2

1. How does folk vocal music preserve oral traditions?
2. What role does chanting play in American Indigenous storytelling?
3. What is the purpose of festival songs in Nordic traditions?
4. Which occasions in Indian communities often feature celebratory songs?
5. Why are call-and-response structures important in communal singing?



4.3 Artistic and Theatrical Vocal Music

4.3.1 Classical and court traditions

Classical vocal music in non-Western cultures often developed within royal courts or scholarly circles. These traditions emphasise refinement, technical skill, and adherence to established forms. For example, Indian classical music includes vocal performances of ragas, which demand mastery of pitch, rhythm, and improvisation. In Chinese court traditions, vocal music was closely linked to poetry and philosophy, reflecting harmony and balance. Such performances were not only artistic displays but also symbols of cultural sophistication and prestige.

Fill in the blank: In Indian classical traditions, vocal performances of _____ demand mastery of pitch, rhythm, and improvisation.



Plate 4.3 Classical vocal performance in Indian tradition

4.3.2 Vocal performance in theatre and opera-like forms

Theatrical vocal music combines singing with drama, dance, and storytelling. In Japanese traditions, *Noh* and *Kabuki* theatre use vocal performance to convey emotion and narrative, often accompanied by instruments. Chinese opera, such as *Peking opera*, integrates stylised singing, elaborate costumes, and symbolic gestures. These forms highlight how the human voice can be adapted to theatrical contexts, blending artistry with cultural storytelling. Opera-like traditions across cultures demonstrate the versatility of vocal music in expressing both entertainment and deeper cultural meaning.

Fill in the blank: In Japanese theatre, _____ and Kabuki use vocal performance to convey emotion and narrative.





Figure 4.3 Artistic and theatrical vocal traditions

Category	Primary Focus	Vocal Characteristics	Cultural Context & Examples
Classical Art Traditions	Intellectual and spiritual refinement; technical mastery.	Precision in microtonal intervals, complex ornamentation, and breath control.	Arabic: <i>Tarab</i> (emotional ecstasy). Indian: <i>Hindustani</i> and <i>Carnatic</i> classical singing.
Theatrical Traditions	Integration of music, dance, and drama to convey character.	Highly stylized, ranging from deep guttural tones to sharp, rhythmic speech-singing.	Japanese: <i>Noh</i> (minimalist, chanted) and <i>Kabuki</i> (dramatic, melodic).
Opera-like Forms	Stylized narrative performance with elaborate costumes and symbolism.	High-pitched falsetto (often used for female roles), nasal resonance, and distinct "arias."	Chinese Opera: Including <i>Beijing Opera</i> (Jingju) and various regional styles.

Box 4.3 Key features of artistic and theatrical vocal music

Pilot questions 4.3

1. What is the role of classical vocal music in non-Western cultures?
2. Which tradition in India involves vocal performances of ragas?



3. How was vocal music linked to philosophy in Chinese court traditions?
4. Name two Japanese theatrical forms that use vocal performance.
5. What are the main features of Chinese opera?

Series Summary

This Series has examined the defining characteristics of musical cultures beyond Africa and the Western world, helping you to recognise the systems and practices that shape their identity. We began by exploring melodic and rhythmic systems, including modal structures such as maqam and raga, as well as rhythmic cycles like tala and polyrhythms. We then considered the cultural functions of music, focusing on its ritual, spiritual, and social roles in community life. Finally, we studied performance practices and transmission, looking at instruments, vocal styles, and the importance of oral tradition and apprenticeship.

By completing this Series, you should now be able to describe modal and scale structures, explain rhythmic cycles, analyse ritual and spiritual roles, evaluate social functions, identify instruments and vocal styles, and explain how oral tradition and apprenticeship transmit musical knowledge. These outcomes align directly with the Series Learning Outcomes, equipping you with a comprehensive understanding of the cultural and structural features that define non-Western musical traditions.

Glossary of Terms

- **Apprenticeship:** A method of learning music by studying directly under a master performer.
- **Erhu:** A two-stringed bowed instrument used in Chinese music.
- **Liturgical chant:** Ancient melodic patterns sung in religious worship, often in Hebrew traditions.
- **Maqam:** A modal system in Arabic music that uses microtones and characteristic melodic phrases.
- **Modal system:** A framework of notes and intervals that defines the melodic character of a tradition.
- **Oral tradition:** The passing of musical knowledge through spoken instruction, storytelling, and communal participation.
- **Pentatonic scale:** A five-note scale commonly used in Chinese and Japanese music.
- **Polyrhythm:** The simultaneous use of two or more contrasting rhythmic patterns.
- **Raga:** A melodic framework in Indian music associated with moods, times of day, or seasons.
- **Tala:** A rhythmic cycle in Indian music that structures timing and metre.
- **Timbre:** The unique quality of sound produced by an instrument or voice.



Concept Check Questions [Series 4]

Objective questions

1. What is the main characteristic of liturgical chants in terms of texture? (Linked to SLO 4.1)
2. Which Indian devotional songs are sung in temples? (Linked to SLO 4.1)
3. Festival songs often use which structure to encourage participation? (Linked to SLO 4.4)
4. Name one Japanese theatrical form that uses vocal performance. (Linked to SLO 4.6)
5. Which Chinese tradition integrates stylised singing with costumes and gestures? (Linked to SLO 4.6)

Short-answer questions

6. Explain the role of ritual singing in American Indigenous communities. (Linked to SLO 4.2)
7. Describe how storytelling is preserved through folk vocal music. (Linked to SLO 4.3)
8. What is the cultural significance of celebratory songs in Indian communities? (Linked to SLO 4.4)

Long-answer questions

9. Analyse the importance of sacred vocal music in cultural identity, giving examples from two traditions. (Linked to SLO 4.1, SLO 4.2)
 - Basic response: Sacred vocal music preserves spiritual identity through chants and ritual singing.
 - Value-added response: Outstanding learners may discuss Hebrew liturgical chants and Indian bhajans, showing how they reinforce both faith and communal participation.
10. Evaluate the role of artistic vocal traditions in expressing cultural sophistication. (Linked to SLO 4.5, SLO 4.6)
 - Basic response: Artistic vocal traditions such as Indian classical ragas and Japanese theatre highlight technical skill and cultural storytelling.
 - Value-added response: Outstanding learners may compare Chinese opera and Kabuki, explaining how these forms blend vocal artistry with philosophy, drama, and symbolism.

Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 4]

- Liturgical chants are performed in religious worship, commonly in synagogues or churches.
- They are monophonic, consisting of a single melodic line.
- Bhajans are devotional songs in Indian traditions.
- Ritual singing in American Indigenous communities strengthens communal bonds and connects with spiritual traditions.
- The human voice is considered central because it directly conveys sacred emotion.



- Folk vocal music preserves oral traditions by transmitting myths and legends through song.
- Chanting in American Indigenous storytelling reinforces cultural memory.
- Festival songs in Nordic traditions mark seasonal changes and community gatherings.
- Celebratory songs in Indian communities are sung during weddings and joyous occasions.
- Call-and-response structures encourage group participation.
- Classical vocal music symbolises refinement and cultural sophistication.
- Vocal performances of ragas are central to Indian classical traditions.
- In Chinese court traditions, vocal music was linked to poetry and philosophy.
- Noh and Kabuki are Japanese theatrical forms using vocal performance.
- Chinese opera features stylised singing, elaborate costumes, and symbolic gestures.

References and Attributions [Series 4]

- Plate 4.1: Suggested AI prompt “Generate an image of worshippers singing liturgical chants in a synagogue or church setting.” Search string: “liturgical chants worship synagogue church OER image.”
- Figure 4.1: Suggested AI prompt “Create a diagram showing types of sacred vocal music: liturgical chants, devotional songs, ritual singing, ceremonial singing.” Search string: “types of sacred vocal music chants devotional ritual ceremonial OER diagram.”
- Box 4.1: Suggested AI prompt “Generate a table summarising liturgical chants, devotional songs, ritual singing, and ceremonial singing.” Search string: “sacred ritual vocal music features OER table.”
- Plate 4.2: Suggested AI prompt “Generate an image of a community gathering where a storyteller sings or chants traditional tales.” Search string: “folk vocal music storytelling oral tradition OER image.”
- Figure 4.2: Suggested AI prompt “Create a diagram showing functions of communal vocal music: storytelling, oral tradition, festival songs, celebratory singing.” Search string: “communal vocal music storytelling festival celebratory OER diagram.”
- Box 4.2: Suggested AI prompt “Generate a table summarising storytelling, festival songs, and celebratory songs in folk vocal traditions.” Search string: “folk communal vocal music features OER table.”
- Plate 4.3: Suggested AI prompt “Generate an image of a vocalist performing Indian classical music in a traditional setting.” Search string: “Indian classical vocal music raga performance OER image.”
- Figure 4.3: Suggested AI prompt “Create a diagram showing artistic vocal traditions: classical court music, theatre, and opera-like forms.” Search string: “artistic vocal traditions classical theatre opera OER diagram.”
- Box 4.3: Suggested AI prompt “Generate a table summarising classical, theatrical, and opera-like vocal traditions.” Search string: “artistic theatrical vocal music features OER table.”



Course Code: MUS 242

Course Title: Music of other World Cultures

Course Credit Load: 2 Units

Series 1: Survey of Non-Western Musical Traditions

Series 2: Exploring American, Indian, Arabic, Chinese, Hebrew, Japanese, and Nordic Music

Series 3: Characteristics of Musical Cultures Beyond Africa and the Western World

Series 4: Types of Vocal Music Across World Cultures

Series 5: Classification and Functions of Musical Instruments in Global Contexts

Proposed Outline for Series 5

Part 5.1 Systems of classification

- 5.1.1 The Hornbostel–Sachs system
- 5.1.2 Indigenous and cultural classifications

Part 5.2 Functions of instruments in society

- 5.2.1 Ritual and spiritual functions
- 5.2.2 Social and entertainment functions

Part 5.3 Instruments in performance and identity

- 5.3.1 Symbolism and cultural identity
- 5.3.2 Innovation and adaptation in modern contexts



Introduction

In the last Series, we explored vocal traditions across cultures, focusing on sacred, communal, and artistic forms. This Series now turns to musical instruments, which are essential in shaping sound, performance, and cultural meaning. Instruments not only produce music but also reflect the values, identities, and innovations of the societies that create and use them.

The aim of this Series is to introduce you to the classification systems used to organise instruments and to highlight the diverse functions they serve in global contexts.

We shall commence this Series by examining systems of classification, including the Hornbostel–Sachs system and indigenous approaches. Next, we will explore the functions of instruments in society, considering their ritual, spiritual, social, and entertainment roles. Finally, we will wrap up by studying instruments in performance and identity, focusing on their symbolism, cultural significance, and adaptation in modern contexts.

Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- **SLO 5.1** define the Hornbostel–Sachs system of instrument classification,
- **SLO 5.2** explain indigenous and cultural approaches to classifying instruments,
- **SLO 5.3** analyse the ritual and spiritual functions of instruments in society,
- **SLO 5.4** evaluate the social and entertainment roles of instruments,
- **SLO 5.5** describe how instruments symbolise cultural identity, and
- **SLO 5.6** assess how instruments adapt and innovate in modern contexts.



5.1 Systems of Classification

5.1.1 The Hornbostel–Sachs system

One of the most widely recognised methods for classifying instruments is the **Hornbostel–Sachs system**, developed in the early 20th century. This system organises instruments based on how sound is produced rather than cultural context. It identifies five main categories: **idiophones** (instruments that produce sound by vibrating themselves, such as xylophones), **membranophones** (instruments that use a stretched membrane, such as drums), **chordophones** (stringed instruments like violins), **aerophones** (wind instruments such as flutes), and **electrophones** (instruments that produce sound electronically, such as synthesisers). This classification is widely used in ethnomusicology and museum collections because it provides a universal framework for comparing instruments across cultures.

Fill in the blank: Instruments that produce sound by vibrating themselves, such as xylophones, are called _____.



Figure 5.1 Hornbostel–Sachs classification of instruments

5.1.2 Indigenous and cultural classifications

While the Hornbostel–Sachs system is widely accepted, many cultures have their own ways of classifying instruments that reflect local values and traditions. For example, in Indian music, instruments are grouped into categories such as **tat** (stringed instruments), **sushir** (wind instruments), **avanaddh** (percussion with membranes), and **ghana** (solid instruments like cymbals). Similarly, Chinese traditions classify instruments according to the materials they are made from, such as silk (strings), bamboo (winds), or metal (bells). These indigenous systems highlight the cultural significance of instruments, showing that classification can be both scientific and symbolic.

Fill in the blank: In Indian music, percussion instruments with membranes are classified as _____.





Plate 5.1 Indigenous classification of instruments

Hornbostel–Sachs Category	Indian (Natya Shastra)	Chinese (Bayin/Eight Sounds)	Primary Characteristic
Idiophones	Ghana (Solid)	Metal, Stone, Clay, Wood	The body of the instrument vibrates (e.g., bells, gongs, woodblocks).
Membranophones	Avanaddh (Covered)	Skin	A stretched membrane vibrates (e.g., drums, tabla).
Chordophones	Tat (Stretched)	Silk	Stretched strings vibrate (e.g., zithers, lutes, sitar).
Aerophones	Sushir (Hollow)	Bamboo, Gourd	A column of air vibrates (e.g., flutes, trumpets).
Electrophones	N/A (Modern addition)	N/A (Modern addition)	Sound is produced via electrical means (e.g., synthesizers).

Box 5.1 Key features of instrument classification systems

Pilot questions 5.1

1. What is the Hornbostel–Sachs system based on?
2. Name the five categories of instruments in the Hornbostel–Sachs system.



3. What are idiophones, and give one example.
4. How are instruments classified in Indian traditions?
5. In Chinese traditions, which material category includes stringed instruments?

5.2 Functions of Instruments in Society

5.2.1 Ritual and spiritual functions

Musical instruments often play a central role in **rituals** and **spiritual practices**. In many cultures, drums, bells, and flutes are used to accompany ceremonies that mark births, marriages, funerals, or seasonal festivals. For example, in African traditions, drums are believed to connect the physical and spiritual worlds, while in Indian temples, instruments such as the conch shell and tabla are used to signal worship and devotion. These instruments are not only tools for making sound but also symbols of sacred power and continuity.

Fill in the blank: In African traditions, drums are believed to connect the _____ and spiritual worlds.



Plate 5.2 Ritual and spiritual functions of instruments

5.2.2 Social and entertainment functions

Instruments also serve important **social functions**, bringing people together for entertainment, celebration, and community bonding. In Nordic cultures, fiddles are played at festivals to accompany dancing, while in Latin American traditions, guitars and percussion are central to communal gatherings. Entertainment functions highlight the joy and unity that instruments bring, whether through lively rhythms or melodic accompaniment. These roles show that instruments are not only sacred but also social, enriching everyday life and reinforcing cultural identity.

Fill in the blank: In Nordic cultures, fiddles are commonly played at _____ to accompany dancing.





Figure 5.2 Functions of instruments in society

Function	Primary Objective	Typical Contexts
Ritual	To facilitate formal rites and rites of passage.	Ceremonies: Funerals, initiations, and weddings where specific rhythms signal transitions.
Spiritual	To establish a connection with the divine or ancestral realm.	Worship: Invoking deities, meditative practices, or providing a "voice" for the spirit world.
Social	To foster community bonding and identity.	Festivals: Commemorating historical events, agricultural cycles, or collective work songs.
Entertainment	To provide pleasure, recreation, and aesthetic display.	Gatherings: Secular dances, storytelling accompaniments, and virtuoso performances.

Box 5.2 Key functions of instruments in society

Pilot questions 5.2

1. What role do drums play in African spiritual traditions?
2. Name one instrument used in Indian temples for worship.
3. How do fiddles function in Nordic festivals?
4. Which instruments are central to Latin American communal gatherings?
5. Why are instruments considered both sacred and social in cultural contexts?



5.3 Instruments in Performance and Identity

5.3.1 Symbolism and cultural identity

Musical instruments often carry deep **symbolism**, representing cultural identity and heritage. For example, the sitar in India is not only a musical instrument but also a symbol of classical tradition and spirituality. In Japan, the koto is associated with elegance and refinement, while in Africa, the talking drum conveys messages and reinforces community ties. Instruments can embody national pride, spiritual values, or social status, making them powerful markers of identity.

Fill in the blank: In Africa, the _____ drum is used to convey messages and reinforce community ties.



Plate 5.3 Instruments as symbols of cultural identity

5.3.2 Innovation and adaptation in modern contexts

Instruments are not static; they evolve through **innovation** and **adaptation**. Traditional instruments are often modified to suit modern genres, while new technologies create hybrid forms. For instance, electric guitars blend traditional chordophone principles with electronic amplification, and digital keyboards simulate sounds from multiple cultures. In many societies, traditional instruments are incorporated into contemporary music, ensuring continuity while embracing change. This adaptability demonstrates how instruments remain relevant, bridging past traditions with modern creativity.

Fill in the blank: Electric guitars blend traditional chordophone principles with _____ amplification.





Figure 5.3 Innovation and adaptation of instruments

Category	Instrument Examples	Cultural Significance & Impact
Traditional Symbolism	Sitar (India)	Represents the spiritual and philosophical depths of Hindustani classical music; often symbolizes national pride and Vedic tradition.
	Koto (Japan)	A symbol of Japanese refinement and elegance; its physical form is traditionally compared to that of a dragon.
	Talking Drum (West Africa)	Acts as a surrogate for the human voice; symbolizes communication, communal authority, and the preservation of tonal languages.
Modern Innovation	Electric Guitar	Transformed global music in the 20th century; symbolizes rebellion, youth culture, and the fusion of blues with rock and

Box 5.3 Instruments in performance and identity

Pilot questions 5.3

1. What does the sitar symbolise in Indian culture?
2. Which Japanese instrument is associated with elegance and refinement?
3. What is the role of the talking drum in African traditions?
4. How do electric guitars represent innovation in instrument design?



5. Why is adaptation important for instruments in modern contexts?

Series Summary

This Series has focused on the classification and functions of musical instruments in global contexts, helping you to understand both the scientific and cultural ways in which instruments are organised and valued. We began by examining systems of classification, including the Hornbostel–Sachs framework and indigenous approaches such as those found in Indian and Chinese traditions. We then explored the functions of instruments in society, considering their ritual, spiritual, social, and entertainment roles. Finally, we studied instruments in performance and identity, highlighting their symbolism, cultural significance, and adaptation in modern contexts.

By completing this Series, you should now be able to define classification systems, explain indigenous approaches, analyse ritual and spiritual functions, evaluate social and entertainment roles, describe instruments as symbols of cultural identity, and assess their innovation and adaptation in modern contexts. These outcomes align directly with the Series Learning Outcomes, equipping you with a comprehensive understanding of how instruments shape and reflect cultural life worldwide.

Glossary of Terms

- **Aerophone:** An instrument that produces sound by vibrating air, such as flutes or trumpets.
- **Avanaddh:** A category in Indian classification for percussion instruments with membranes, such as drums.
- **Chordophone:** A stringed instrument that produces sound through vibrating strings, such as violins or guitars.
- **Electrophone:** An instrument that produces sound electronically, such as synthesisers.
- **Ghana:** A category in Indian classification for solid instruments, such as cymbals.
- **Hornbostel–Sachs system:** A universal classification system for instruments based on how sound is produced.
- **Idiophone:** An instrument that produces sound by vibrating itself, such as xylophones.
- **Koto:** A Japanese stringed instrument associated with elegance and refinement.
- **Membranophone:** An instrument that produces sound through a stretched membrane, such as drums.
- **Sitar:** A stringed instrument from India symbolising classical tradition and spirituality.
- **Sushir:** A category in Indian classification for wind instruments, such as flutes.
- **Talking drum:** An African drum used to convey messages and reinforce community ties.
- **Tat:** A category in Indian classification for stringed instruments.



Concept Check Questions [Series 5]

Objective questions

1. What is the Hornbostel–Sachs system based on? (Linked to SLO 5.1)
2. Name the five categories of instruments in the Hornbostel–Sachs system. (Linked to SLO 5.1)
3. In Indian traditions, percussion instruments with membranes are classified as what? (Linked to SLO 5.2)
4. Which Japanese instrument is associated with elegance and refinement? (Linked to SLO 5.5)
5. Electric guitars blend chordophone principles with what type of amplification? (Linked to SLO 5.6)

Short-answer questions

6. Explain how instruments are classified in Chinese traditions. (Linked to SLO 5.2)
7. Describe the role of drums in African spiritual practices. (Linked to SLO 5.3)
8. What is the cultural significance of fiddles in Nordic festivals? (Linked to SLO 5.4)

Long-answer questions

9. Analyse the ritual and spiritual functions of instruments, giving examples from at least two cultures. (Linked to SLO 5.3)
 - Basic response: Instruments are used in ceremonies and worship to connect with spiritual traditions.
 - Value-added response: Outstanding learners may discuss African drums as mediators between worlds and Indian temple instruments such as the conch shell, showing how they symbolise sacred continuity.
10. Evaluate how instruments symbolise cultural identity and adapt in modern contexts. (Linked to SLO 5.5, SLO 5.6)
 - Basic response: Instruments like the sitar or koto symbolise tradition, while electric guitars show innovation.
 - Value-added response: Outstanding learners may compare the talking drum's role in African identity with digital keyboards simulating global sounds, demonstrating continuity and modern adaptation.

Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 5]

- The Hornbostel–Sachs system is based on how sound is produced.
- The five categories are idiophones, membranophones, chordophones, aerophones, and electrophones.
- Idiophones are instruments that produce sound by vibrating themselves, such as xylophones.
- In Indian traditions, instruments are classified as tat, sushir, avanaddh, and ghana.



- In Chinese traditions, stringed instruments are classified under silk.
- In African traditions, drums connect the physical and spiritual worlds.
- The conch shell and tabla are used in Indian temples for worship.
- Fiddles in Nordic festivals accompany dancing.
- Guitars and percussion are central to Latin American communal gatherings.
- Instruments are considered both sacred and social because they connect communities spiritually and socially.
- The sitar symbolises classical tradition and spirituality in India.
- The koto is associated with elegance and refinement in Japan.
- The talking drum conveys messages and reinforces community ties in Africa.
- Electric guitars represent innovation by blending chordophone principles with electronic amplification.
- Adaptation is important because it ensures instruments remain relevant in modern contexts.

References and Attributions [Series 5]

- Figure 5.1: Suggested AI prompt “Create a diagram showing the Hornbostel–Sachs system with idiophones, membranophones, chordophones, aerophones, and electrophones, including examples.” Search string: “Hornbostel Sachs instrument classification diagram OER.”
- Plate 5.1: Suggested AI prompt “Generate an image of Indian and Chinese instruments grouped according to indigenous classification systems.” Search string: “Indian Chinese indigenous instrument classification OER image.”
- Box 5.1: Suggested AI prompt “Generate a table comparing Hornbostel–Sachs categories with Indian and Chinese indigenous classifications.” Search string: “instrument classification systems Hornbostel Sachs Indian Chinese OER table.”
- Plate 5.2: Suggested AI prompt “Generate an image of a ritual ceremony with drums and flutes used in spiritual practice.” Search string: “ritual ceremony drums flutes spiritual functions OER image.”
- Figure 5.2: Suggested AI prompt “Create a diagram showing functions of instruments: ritual, spiritual, social, and entertainment, with examples.” Search string: “functions of instruments ritual social entertainment OER diagram.”
- Box 5.2: Suggested AI prompt “Generate a table summarising ritual, spiritual, social, and entertainment functions of instruments.” Search string: “functions of musical instruments ritual social entertainment OER table.”
- Plate 5.3: Suggested AI prompt “Generate an image of musicians using sitar, koto, and talking drum to symbolise cultural identity.” Search string: “sitar koto talking drum cultural identity OER image.”
- Figure 5.3: Suggested AI prompt “Create a diagram showing traditional instruments evolving into modern adaptations: sitar fusion, electric guitar, digital keyboard.” Search string: “instrument innovation adaptation sitar electric guitar digital keyboard OER diagram.”



- Box 5.3: Suggested AI prompt “Generate a table summarising symbolism and innovation in instruments across cultures.” Search string: “instrument symbolism innovation cultural identity OER table.”

