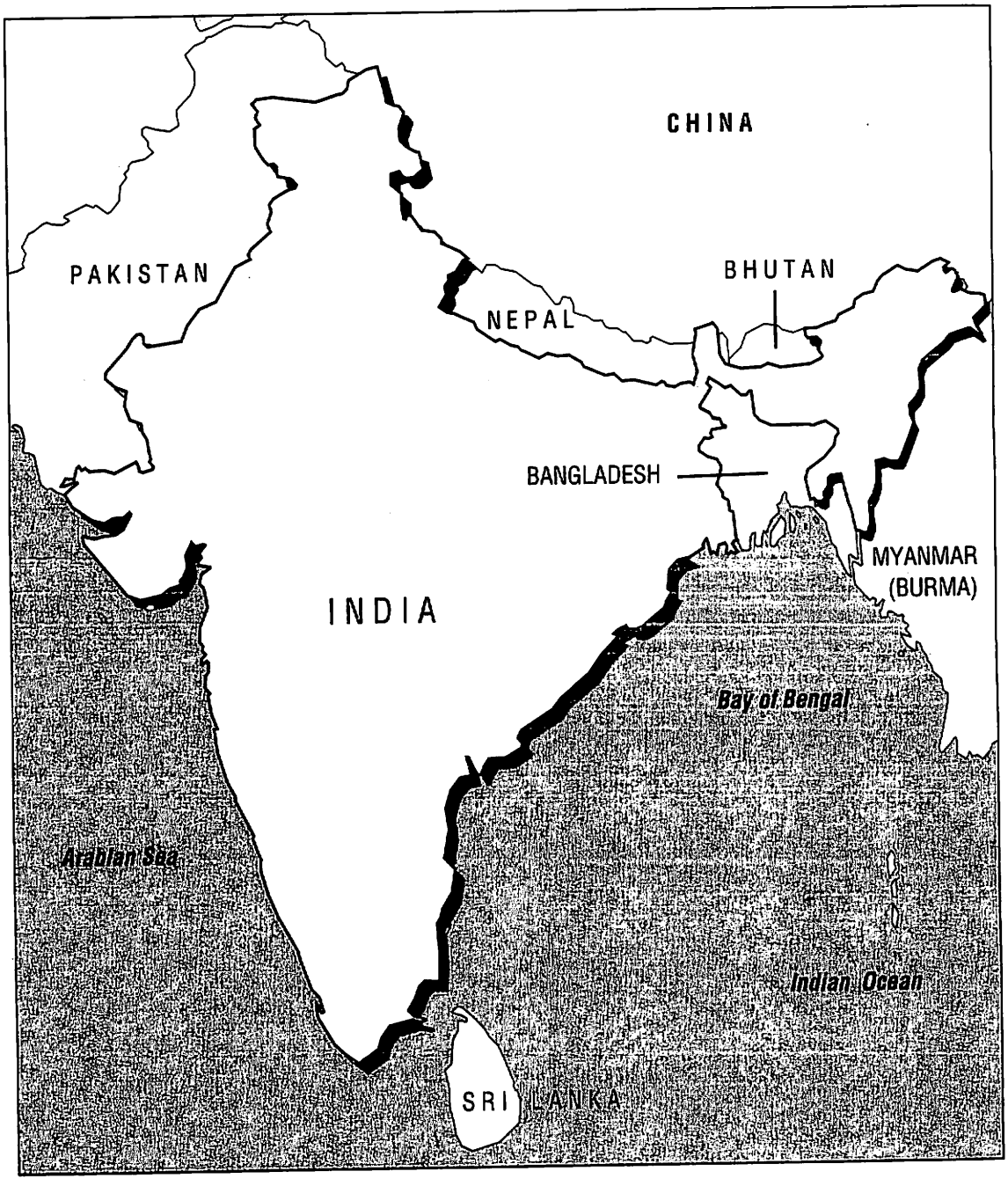

Map of South Asia

CHAPTER 9

SOUTH ASIA: INDIA

by William M. Anderson

Sweeping southward from the world's highest peaks in the Himalayan mountains is the nation of India, the second largest country in Asia. Triangular in shape and often referred to as the subcontinent of Asia, India extends approximately two thousand miles from central Asia to the tropical waters of the Indian Ocean surrounding Cape Comorin and approximately seventeen hundred miles latitudinally from the state of Rajasthan to the eastern border with Myanmar (Burma).

Although positioned just north of the equator, South Asia experiences great variety in weather and climate. The snow-capped peaks in the north provide a welcome coolness from the warmth of much of the subcontinent and at the same time function as the source of the life-giving rivers—the Indus, the Ganges, and the Brahmaputra—that sustain much of the country. As one follows these rivers into the Indo-Gangetic plain of northern India, a huge, fertile river valley area emerges. The rich soil and the warm, humid climate that results from the lower elevation support some of the best agriculture in the country. To the west of this region, in stark contrast, lie the parched desert areas of Rajasthan. Moving farther south and toward the center of the country, one finds a large

and relatively high plateau region known as the Deccan, where the weather is integrally related to the monsoons, or prevailing winds. Stretching southward from the Deccan, the land forms a temperate coastal plain leading to tropical, palm tree-dotted beaches bordering the sea.

Because more than 70 percent of the people living in the subcontinent make their living from agriculture, the weather is an important factor in many lives. Although it lies near the equator, India experiences seasonal changes principally through the action of the monsoons. In April, May, and June, extremely hot weather grips most of the country until the onslaught of the west winds, which bring quenching rains to many parched areas from late June through September. In the winter, the winds reverse, providing a cool, easterly flow of air that may actually make it necessary for those living in the capital city of New Delhi to wear light coats.

India has often been described as a dozen countries in one, a democratic republic that seems to exemplify the doctrine of "unity through diversity." Its twenty-five states and seven union territories form a mosaic of different ethnic groups who have learned to coexist separately. Millions of negrito tribal peoples, who are ethnically related to the aboriginals of Malaysia, the Philippines, and Australia, live in remote jungle areas. In the southern regions of the country are dark-skinned peoples who are descendants of some of the most ancient people on the subcontinent, the Dravidians. Farther north, innumerable invasions from Central Asia, the Near East, and Europe have today made the majority of Indians primarily of Caucasian stock. It is interesting and somewhat overwhelming to realize that India today has a burgeoning population of over 900 million inhabitants, the second largest in the world (exceeded only by China). Certainly this large and ethnically diverse population has made India one of the most fascinating countries in Asia, and nowhere is this more apparent than in languages and religions.

The linguistic diversity of the subcontinent is almost beyond comprehension. Although India is less than half the size of the United States, its inhabitants speak 845 languages and dialects. From this group, fourteen major languages emerge, each being spoken by millions of people. The news on All-India Radio, for example, is broadcast in Hindi, English, Bengali, Oriya, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Punjabi, Marathi, Gujarati, Assamese, Urdu, and Kasmiri. Hindi has been made the official language of the country, but English remains the language of the government and of the educated. It is interesting to note that while the British promoted the English language in this area of the world, many Indian words were adopted by Westerners, including such familiar ones as "bungalow," "dungarees," "punch," "shampoo," and "pajamas."

One of the strongest binding agents in the enormously diverse population has been religion. At least 85 percent of the population is Hindu, with the remainder practicing the Muslim, Jain, Buddhist, Sikh, Parsi, and Christian faiths. The lives of millions of people are closely intertwined with the sanctions and mores of Hinduism. A host of gods and goddesses oversee almost every facet of existence, often providing a common basis for uniting the lives of millions of ethnically diverse peoples. The arts have also thrived under Hinduism, with many striking architectural examples of temples flourishing throughout the country around which sculptors, painters, writers, and musicians have found inspiration.[1] Saraswati, the goddess of music and learning, is usually depicted holding the *vina* (a stringed instrument), and Krishna is typically shown playing the flute. These are two visible symbols of music's close relationship with religion.

In addition to Hinduism, the cultural traditions of India have been enormously influ-

enced by the Islamic religion, which was brought to India by the Muslims over a thousand years ago. Great Muslim courts were established throughout northern India, and spectacular buildings, such as the Taj Mahal in the city of Agra, are vivid examples of Indo-Islamic art.

At about the same time that Columbus was sailing to the New World, the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama arrived in India with hopes of establishing trading posts. India was rich in silk, gems, indigo, and spices, which were much in demand in the West. The Portuguese were soon followed by Dutch, Danish, French, and British traders, who were also attracted to this Eastern paradise. The British gradually took control of the country, bringing about great changes through the development of cities, industries, and transportation.

In 1947, India became an independent nation with many aspirations as the world's largest democracy. Since that time, Indians have become leaders not only in their own country but also throughout the world. Today, India is listed among the world's top ten industrial nations. Indians have made outstanding achievements in all areas of human endeavor, including the sciences, humanities, and arts.

Music has become part of the curriculum of many primary and secondary schools and universities, and such distinguished Indian musicians as Ravi Shankar and Ali Akbar Khan have traveled to Europe and the United States to make Westerners increasingly aware of the sophistication and brilliance of the Indian musical tradition. Interestingly, both Shankar and Khan established music schools in California, where many Americans have studied Indian vocal and instrumental music.

Characteristics

India has one of the world's oldest and most sophisticated musical traditions. Its history may be traced back at least thirty-five hundred years. Since that time, a great variety of vocal and instrumental music has developed, along with two principal stylistic traditions—the *Hindustani* system of North India and the *Carnatic* system of South India. This chapter will focus on music in North India; some general characteristics of this music follow.

Melody

- Melodies are derived from a prescribed series of notes known as ragas.
- There are hundreds of ragas, and each has a particular name and a distinctive structure (see figure 1).

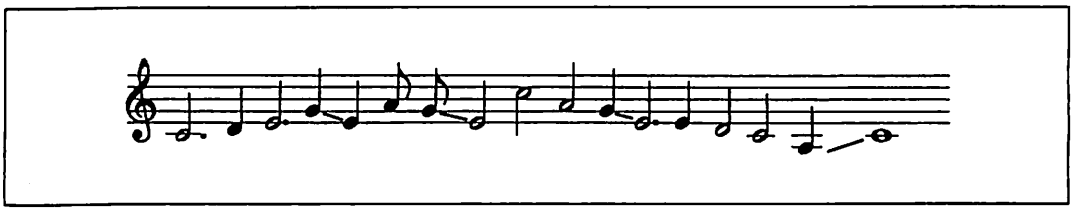

Figure 1. Raga *bhupali*

- Ragas provide the pitches to be used in musical compositions.
- Ragas often indicate the contours (shapes) of melodies. Thus, the notes of ragas do not move straight up and down but in "crooked" melodic fashion.
- The pitches of ragas are often ornamented with subtle "slides" and "shakes." This ornamentation often involves microtonal intervals; that is, intervals that are smaller than a half step.
- Ragas express feelings or emotions.
- To evoke particular emotions most effectively, ragas are designated to be performed at specific times of the day or night or at certain times of the year.

Rhythm

- Rhythm in Indian music may be free/flexible or strictly organized.
- Strict rhythm is organized in a system known as tala; a tala is a cycle of beats. Talas have names and distinctive characteristics, which include overall length and division into subsections. For example, *tintala* is a rhythmic cycle of sixteen beats that is divided into four sections of four beats each (4 + 4 + 4 + 4), while *jhaptal* is a rhythmic cycle of ten beats that is divided into four sections: a group of two beats, followed by a group of three beats, followed by a group of two beats, followed by a group of three beats (2 + 3 + 2 + 3).

Texture

- Some Indian music is monophonic (one melodic line).
- Most music, however, makes use of "drone harmony"; that is, one or more drone pitches sound constantly, over top of which other melodic lines are sung or played.
- The technique of imitation is often used.

Timbre

- A great variety of timbres or tone colors are present in Indian music. In general, singers tend to produce a more nasalized tone color with less vibrato than that which occurs in Western classical singing.
- Sympathetic vibrating strings on many instruments also help to create distinctive timbres.

Dynamics

- Much Indian music is meant for small groups, with soft and medium dynamic levels occurring frequently.

Form

- Many compositions begin with the *alap*, an improvised section in free/flexible rhythm. This section is followed by a precomposed piece of music—known as *chiz* in vocal music and *gat* in instrumental music—that is cast in strict rhythm in a particular tala. The precomposed section is not improvised but rather has been thought out prior to the performance; it is followed by another section featuring improvisation.

Alap	Chiz/Gat	Improvisation
Improvised	Precomposed Strict rhythm with tala	

Sometimes the form is enlarged to include several precomposed and improvised sections, the first in a slow tempo followed by one or more in faster tempos.

Alap	Chiz/Gat	Improvisation	Chiz/Gat	Improvisation
	Slow Tempo		Fast Tempo	

NOTE

1. For good pictures of architecture, sculpture, and painting, see Mario Bussagli and Calembus Sivaramaurti, *Five Thousand Years of the Art of India* (see Bibliography); Marguerite-Maria Deneck, *Indian Art*. London: Paul Hamlyn, 1967; Sherman E. Lee, *Far Eastern Art* (see Bibliography); Eleanor C. Munro, *The Encyclopedia of Art* (see Bibliography); Stuart C. Welch, *India: Art and Culture, 1300–1900* (see Bibliography).

LESSON 1

■ Objectives

Students will:

1. Sing the short Indian composition "Namane Kare Chature" in raga *bhupali*.
2. Add a tambura drone accompaniment to "Namane Kare Chature."
3. Keep track of the tala rhythmic cycle in "Namane Kare Chature."

■ Materials

1. Pictures of musical instruments can be found in Ravi Shankar's *My Music, My Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968) and Bonnie Wade's *Music in India: The Classical Traditions* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1979; reprinted 1987) (see Bibliography)
2. Indian tambura (or makeshift drone played either on a guitar or on a piano)
3. Sixteen-beat tala cycle displayed on a chalkboard or transparency

■ Procedures

1. This lesson is for upper-elementary school students. Have the students design a bulletin board or a chalkboard with information about the music of India. Include pictures of musical instruments. Organize categories of melody, rhythm, texture, timbre, dynamics, and form.
2. Sing the Indian composition "Namane Kare Chature" (see figure 2). First, pronounce the Hindi words with the class. The text is as follows: Namane kare chature shiri guru charana (pronounced *nah-mah-nuh kah-ruh cha-too-ruh shee-ree goo-roo chah-rah-nah*)/ tane mane niremale kare bhave taraha (pronounced *tah-nuh mah-nuh nee-ruh-mah-luh kah-ruh bhah-vuh tah-rah-nah*).

   Translation: Respect your teachers and
   keep a clean body and mind.

   Some students will probably know the word "guru" (teacher). Comment on the text, which focuses on one's guru. You may wish to read and paraphrase for the class

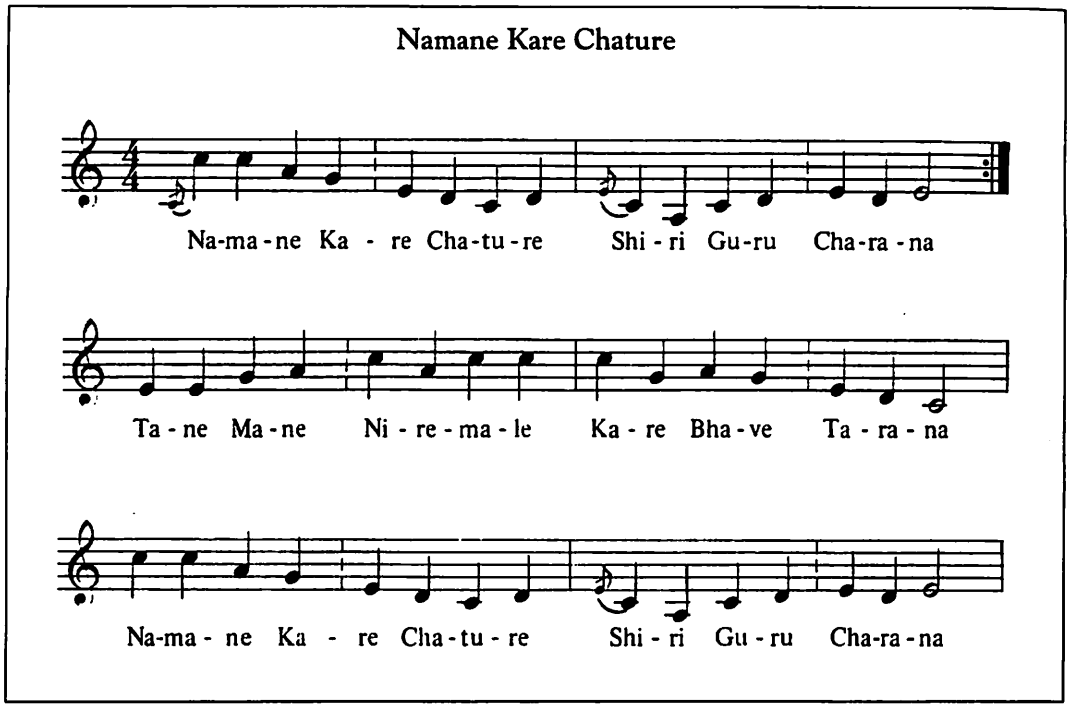

Figure 2. "Namane Kare Chature," a song about one's guru

some of the remarks about the importance of the guru from pages 11–13 of Ravi Shankar's book *My Music, My Life* (see Bibliography). Second, sing the song for the class. Call attention to the repeated phrases (the first line repeats, and the last line is the same as the first). Teach the song phrase by phrase, singing slowly with the students so they can grasp the pitches and the pronunciation of the words. Third, tell the students that singing in India is often accompanied by a stringed instrument known as the tambura, and show the class a picture of a tambura (see figure 3).

Explain that the instrument has a large base made from either wood or a hollowed-out gourd. Extending from this base is a long neck with pegs at the top. Four strings run across the base of the instrument and along the neck to the pegs. The instrument is held in an upright fashion, and the middle and index fingers of the right hand pluck the strings from left to right.

The strings of the tambura are normally tuned to the pitches G3, C4, C4, and C3, and are plucked over and over in a flexible rhythmic style to produce a steady drone. The distinctive tone color of this instrument is produced by small threadlike strings inserted between the main strings and the flat bridge (see figure 4). The effect of this arrangement is to lift the main strings just slightly above the flat bridge. Then, as the strings are plucked, they vibrate against the bridge, producing a distinctive buzzing timbre.

Try to obtain an actual tambura for your students to use. A tambura may be purchased from The House of Musical Traditions or from the Ali Akbar College Music Store (see Discography), or there might be someone in your community who would

Photo by Graeme Vanderstoel

Figure 3. Woman playing the tambura

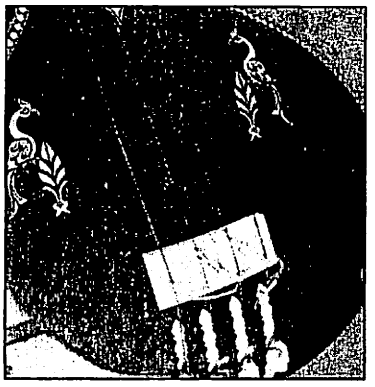

Figure 4. (above) Base of tambura

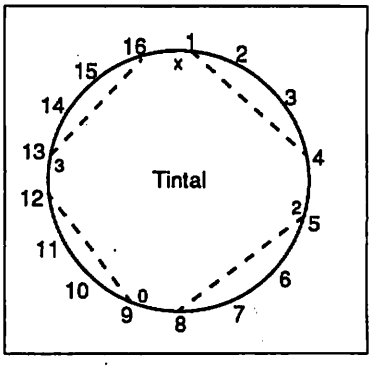

Figure 5. (below) Tintala

lend the school an instrument. If you are unable to acquire the instrument, you may wish to devise a makeshift tambura by tuning the four highest-pitched strings of a guitar to G3, C4, C4, and C3. Position the guitar with the base on the floor and the neck pointing upward.

Have a student pluck the strings one at a time in a repetitive cycle to produce the drone sound. If a guitar is not available, have a student play the tambura pitches over and over on a piano with the damper pedal depressed, which will produce the continuous drone effect.

3. Have the students sing "Namane Kare Chature" with tambura accompaniment. For a follow-up discussion, ask the students if they can think of other types of music that make use of drone harmony. You might start the discussion by using examples such as the bagpipe or Kentucky mountain dulcimer music.
4. Introduce students to talas. Explain that talas are cycles of beats that repeat over and over in a musical composition. Tell them that there are many talas, and that each has a particular name and structure. One of the most common North Indian talas is known as *tintala*. It has sixteen beats, divided into four sections (see figure 5).

   Indians have devised a number of ways to count the beats in talas. A common way to follow *tintala* is to clap lightly on the strong beats (one, five, and thirteen), wave the right hand outward on the weak beat (nine), and count the intervening

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
clap	(Count 2, 3, and 4 by placing right thumb on little, fourth, and middle fingers.)			clap	(Count 6, 7, and 8 by placing right thumb on little, fourth, and middle fingers.)		
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
wave	(Count as 2, 3, and 4 above.)			clap	(Count as 6, 7, and 8 above.)		

Figure 6. A common way of counting the beats in *tintala*

beats by touching the right-hand fingers against the thumb, beginning with the little finger and moving toward the middle finger. Emphasis is placed on the first beat, which is marked with an "X." Count and clap the tala over and over (see figure 6). Have the class count the sixteen beats of the tala over and over and follow the beats by clapping, waving, and counting the intervening beats on the fingers. Start the cycle on another beat, such as nine (the cycle will, in this case, continue through sixteen to finish with counts one to eight). Continue practicing with the class until keeping track of the cycle of beats becomes fairly easy.

5. Divide the class, having half sing the song "Namane Kare Chature" (with tambura accompaniment) while the other half keeps track of the tala, which in this piece is the sixteen-beat *tintala*, as previously outlined. Note that "Namane Kare Chature" begins on beat nine of the tala. After the students have learned to sing the song and keep track of the tala easily, switch the groups so that all members of the class have a chance to follow the tala.
6. Summarize the lesson by having the students place comments on the board (under the appropriate categories) about what they have learned in this lesson: rhythm (cycles of beats known as the tala), texture (drone harmony through use of the tambura), timbre ("buzzing" tone color on the tambura achieved by the use of small threads placed between the main strings and the flat bridge).

LESSON 2

■ Objectives

Students will:

1. Recite rhythmic syllables and then play them either on the tabla (drums) or on a substitute such as the bongo drums.
2. Play the rhythmic syllables for *tintala* on either tabla or bongos.
3. Add a tabla accompaniment to "Namane Kare Chature."

■ Materials

1. Tabla or substitute such as bongo drums

2. The composition "Namane Kare Chature," shown on a transparency
3. Overhead projector

■ Procedures

This lesson is for upper-elementary school students. Explain that the tabla (see figure 7) are the most important drums of North India. Tabla actually consist of two drums: a large, somewhat low-pitched drum made from metal and a higher-pitched drum most often constructed of wood. Both drums have membrane heads with black, circular patches made from a paste of iron filings, flour, and water. Tabla are traditionally played from a sitting position. Sounds are made by striking various parts of the drum heads with the fingers and hands. Memory syllables known as *bols* are learned in order to facilitate the playing of rhythms on the drums. For example, striking the left drum with the third and fourth fingers is identified with the *bol* "dhe"; striking the right drum on the edge with the index finger produces the *bol* "na" or near the center, the *bol* "tin" (see figure 8). If "dhe" and "na" are combined into a single stroke (both left- and right-hand fingers striking at the same time), the *bol* is known as "dha." If "dhe" and "tin" are combined into a single stroke, the *bol* "dhin" is produced.

1. Have the students try to produce the *bols* "dhe, "na," "tin," "dha," and "dhin" either on the tabla or on a substitute such as the bongo drums. Those without drums can practice on desk tops or laps.
2. Have the students play several rhythmic patterns on the drums after reciting the syllables in each line from memory.

Photo by Graeme Vanderstoel

Figure 7. Man playing tabla

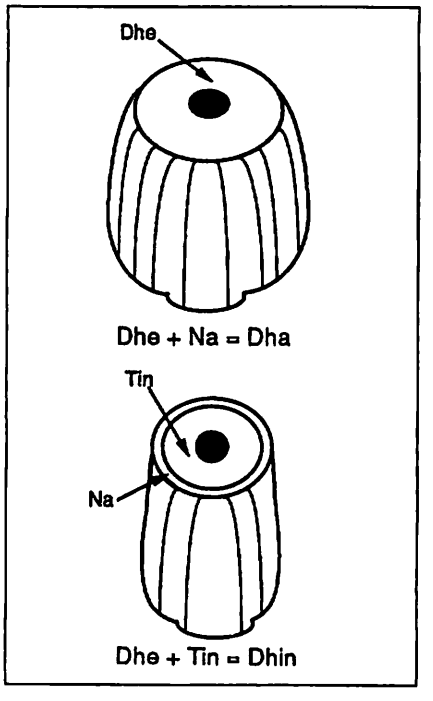

Figure 8. Striking areas on tabla

Dhe Na/Dhe Na/Dhe Dhe Na (repeat)
Dhe Tin/Dhe Tin/Dhe Dhe Tin (repeat)
Dha Dha Na/Dha Dha Na (repeat)
Dhin Dhin Na/Dhin Dhin Na (repeat)
Dha Dhin Dhin Na/Dha Dhin Dhin Na (repeat)
Tin Tin Na/Tin Na/Tin Na (repeat)

Have the class learn the tabla rhythmic syllables for the sixteen-beat tintala. Explain that for each tala there is a standard rhythmic pattern played on the drums. For example, the rhythmic pattern for tintala is as follows:

Dha	Dhin	Dhin	Dha	Dha	Dhin	Dhin	Dha
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Dha	Tin	Tin	Na	Na	Dhin	Dhin	Dha
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16

a. Have the class learn to pronounce the syllables from memory, chanting rhythmically and with vocal inflection. (Note that there are four groups, each with four syllables; call attention to the similarity of groups one, two, and four.)
b. Have one or two students play the rhythmic syllables on a tabla or bongo drums while the rest of the class recites the syllables. Practice until the rhythmic syllables can be played on the drums with ease.
c. Divide the class into three groups: (1) one or two students who play the tabla (or bongos), (2) a large group that recites the drum syllables (Dha, Dhin, Dhin, Dha, and so on), and (3) a large group that keeps track of the sixteen-beat *tintala* by means of hand claps, waving the right hand outward, and counting the intervening beats on the fingers (as outlined in Lesson One).

3. Divide the class into three groups with the first singing the song "Namane Kare Chature," the second keeping track of the tala (*tintala*, beginning on beat nine), and the third comprised of several students playing the rhythm on the tabla or bongos.
4. Summarize the lesson by having the students discuss and add comments to the music section of their Indian bulletin board regarding the following items: Indian drums known as tabla, rhythmic syllables known as *bols*, and the specific *bols* for *tintala*.

LESSON 3

■ Objectives

Students will:

1. Explore Indian ragas by singing the Western major scale and two Indian ragas (*bhairavi* and *purvi*) on a neutral syllable. Students will identify differences in whole- and half-step patterns between an Indian raga and the Western scale. They will learn that ragas have distinctive names and structures.
2. Sing the familiar song "America," first in the Western major scale and then in the ragas *bhairavi* and *purvi*.
3. Create a short, improvised composition on the *jaltarang* in raga *bhupali*.

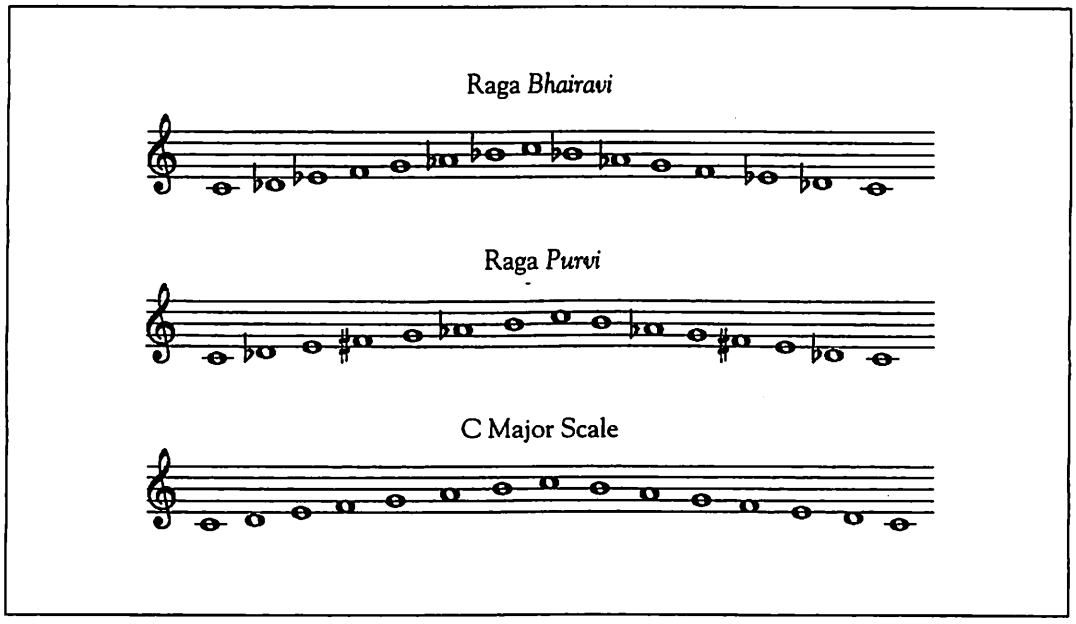

Figure 9. Ragas

■ Materials

1. Two ragas (*bhairavi* and *purvi*), and the C major scale on a transparency or on the chalkboard
2. "America" on transparency—first in a major scale and then in the ragas *bhairavi* and *purvi*
3. Overhead projector
4. Seven glass soup or cereal bowls

■ Procedures

1. This lesson is for upper-elementary or middle school students. Compare several Indian ragas to the Western major scale. Explain that one of the major reasons why melodies in Indian music sound so different to us is that they are developed from ragas, which are an organized series of pitches from which musical compositions are developed. There are hundreds of ragas, and each has a particular name and structure.
2. Figure 9 shows several ragas. Have the class sing each one on a neutral syllable such as "ah" or "loo." Then sing the Western major scale on a neutral syllable. What differences do you see and hear?
3. Write or project transcriptions of "America" as sung in the Western major scale system and the Indian ragas, *bhairavi* and *purvi* (see figure 10). Have the class sing and compare the sound of each example.
4. Improvise short compositions in the ragas *bhairavi* and *purvi* on the *jaltarang* (see figure 11).
   a. The *jaltarang* is an interesting musical instrument consisting of a series of tuned bowls arranged in a semicircle around the performer. The bowls are of different sizes and are tuned precisely to the pitches of various ragas by adding appropriate

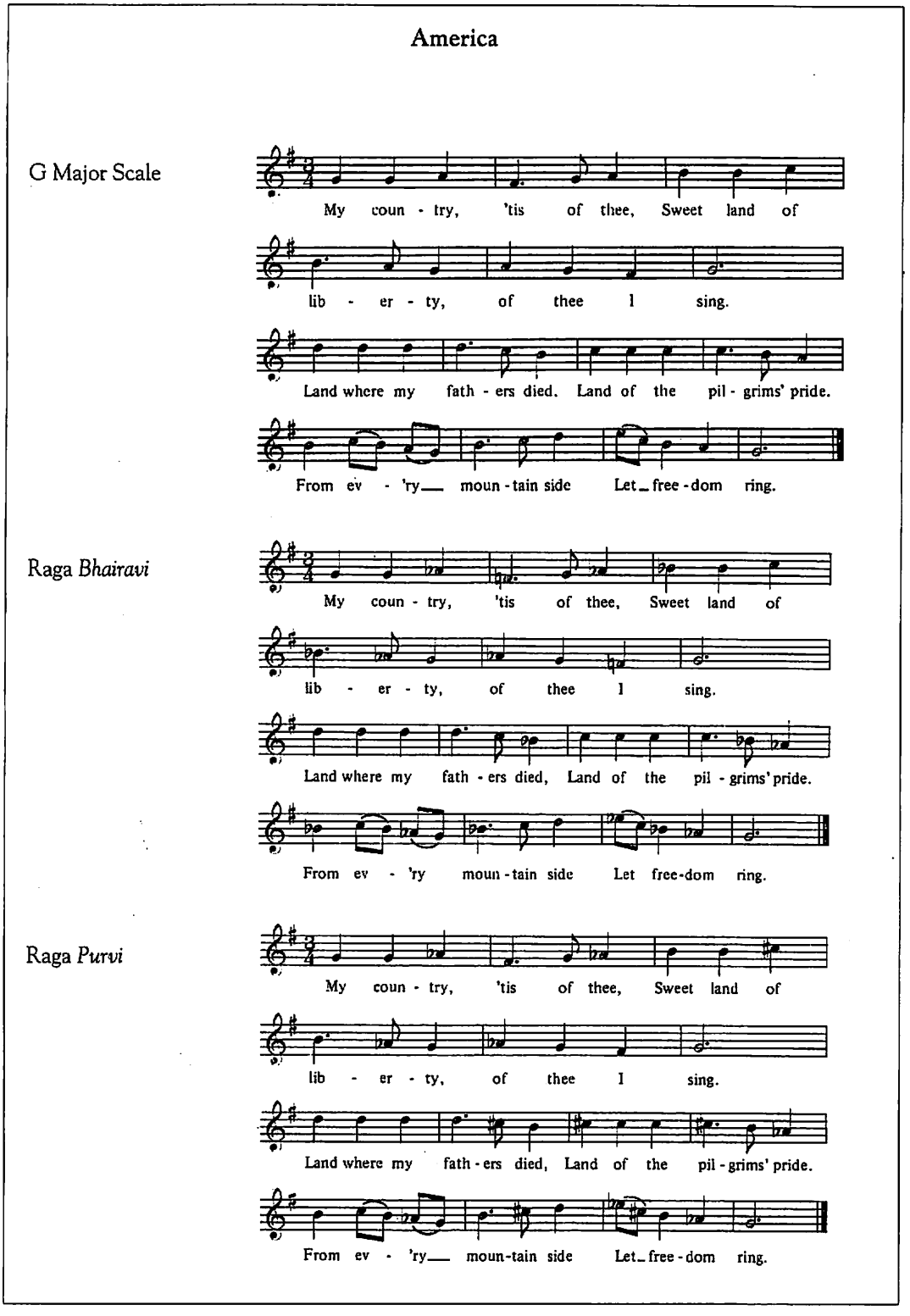

Figure 10. Transcriptions of "America"

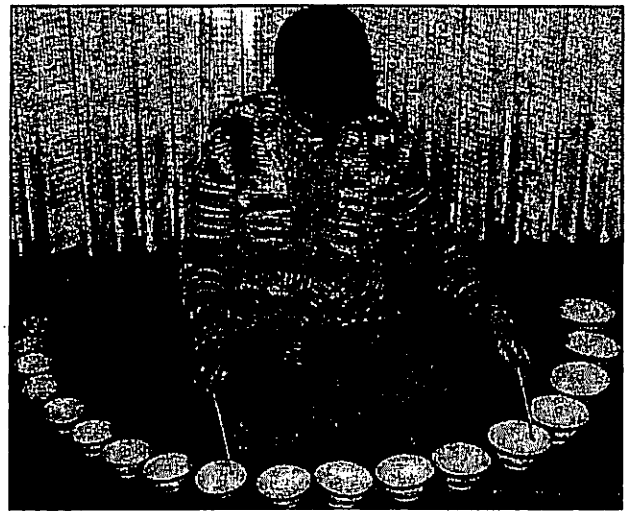

Figure 11. Student playing *jaltarang*

amounts of water. The instrument is played by striking the inside edge of the bowls with two small wooden sticks, one held in each hand.

b. Collect seven glass soup or cereal bowls and devise a *jaltarang*. Tune the various bowls to the pitches in raga *purvi* by filling them with appropriate amounts of water. Using a pair of chopsticks as mallets, create an improvised piece of music in flexible or free rhythm.
   (1) Change the pitches of the bowls to raga *bhairavi* and create another improvised piece of music in flexible or free rhythm.
   (2) Compare the sounds produced by ragas *purvi* and *bhairavi* and the Western scale by creating an improvised composition on the *jaltarang* in the C major scale.

5. Add to the bulletin board chart those things that you have learned in this lesson: the ragas *purvi* and *bhairavi* and the *jaltarang*.

LESSON 4

■ Objectives

Students will:

1. Follow the seven-beat tala known as *rupak* by clapping hands, waving, and counting on their fingers. Learn about the asymmetrical subdivisions of the tala (3 + 2 + 2). Draw parallels to compositions such as Paul Desmond's "Take Five," in which the beats are grouped asymmetrically (3 + 2).
2. Learn to speak the drum (tabla) syllables for *rupak* (tin-tin-na, dhin-na, dhin-na). Keep track of the tala while speaking the syllables.
3. Play the pattern indicated by the drum syllables on tabla or bongo drums.
4. Learn the composition "Ha-Nan-De," which is cast in the seven-beat *rupak* tala. Keep track of the tala and add a tabla accompaniment.
5. Keep track of *rupak* tala in a composition played by a sitar with accompaniment by tabla and tambura.

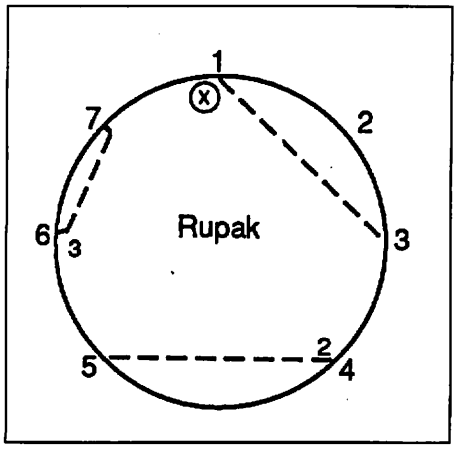

Figure 12. Rupak tala

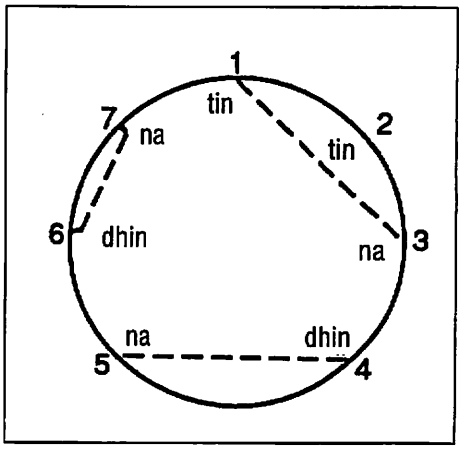

Figure 13. Bols for *rupak*

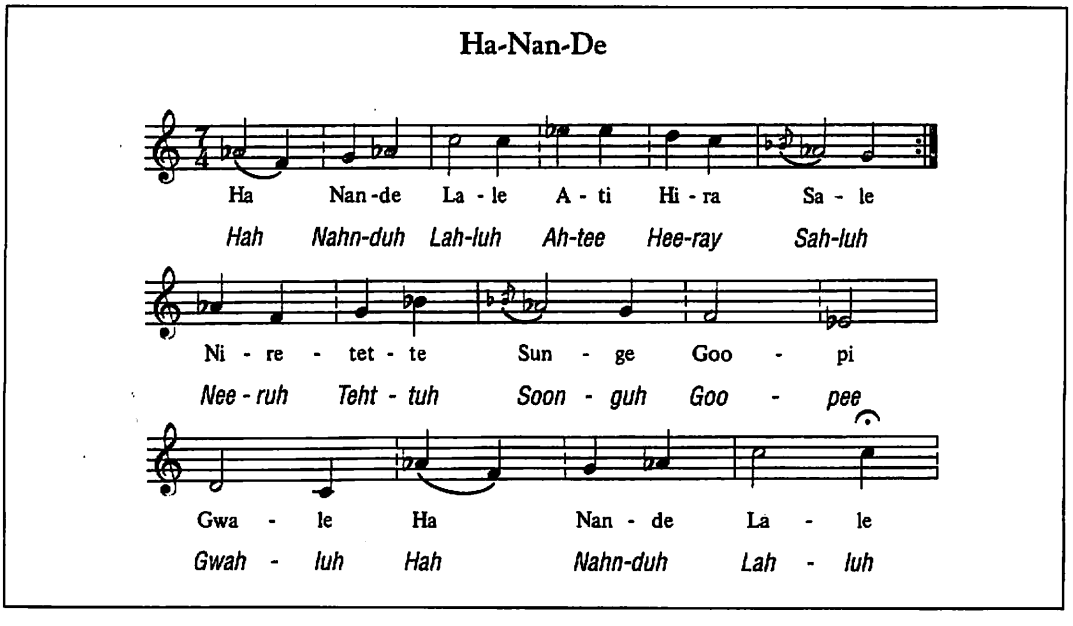

Figure 14. "Ha-Nan-De," a song about the Hindu god, Krishna

4	5	6	7	1	2	3
clap	right-hand thumb placed on little finger	clap	right-hand thumb placed on little finger	wave	right-hand thumb placed on little finger	right-hand thumb placed on fourth finger

Figure 15. A common way of counting *rupak* tala

■ Materials

1. Tabla or a pair of bongo drums
2. Sitar composition in *rupak* tala (*Music Resources for Multicultural Perspectives*, side C, No. 20. Reston, VA: Music Educators National Conference, 1995)
3. "Take Five," from *Time Out: The Dave Brubeck Quartet* (Columbia CK 40585)

■ Procedures

1. This lesson is for middle or junior high school students. Review with the class the rhythmic cycle known as *tintala*, introduced in Lesson One. Have the students follow the beats by clapping and waving their hands on the principal beats and counting the intervening beats on their fingers. Draw particular attention to the four even sections.
2. Explain that in some talas the internal sections are not equally divided. Have the students follow the unequal groupings of beats found in the seven-beat rupak tala. The children should speak the numbers and clap lightly on the beginning of each subdivision (1–2–3, 4–5, 6–7) (see figure 12). Notice the asymmetrical rhythmic feeling of the group of three beats followed by the two groups of two beats (3 + 2 + 2). You may wish to draw parallels to other Western compositions such as Desmond's "Take Five" (referring to 5/4 meter), in which the meter comprises asymmetrical groups of beats (1–2–3, 4–5).
3. Have the students recite the tabla (drum) rhythmic syllables (*bols*) for *rupak* tala:

tin	–	tin	–	na,	dhin	–	na	dhin	–	na.
1		2		3	4		5	6		7

   Then have half the class recite the syllables over and over while the other half counts the numbers.
4. Have several students play the rhythmic syllables on tabla or bongo drums (see figure 13). Sing the song "Ha-Nan-De" (see figure 14).
   a. Pronounce the words with the students. Explain that this song is about the Hindu god Krishna. Show a picture of Krishna.
   b. Point out that the first line of the song is sung twice, the second line is sung once, and then there is a return to a short portion of line one.
   c. To assist the students, provide a tambura accompaniment with either the actual instrument or one of the substitutes suggested in Lesson One.
5. Divide the class in half, with some students singing "Ha-Nan-De" and the others keeping track of the tala. Note that this piece begins on beat four of *rupak* tala, so that the pattern from the beginning is 4 5 / 6 7 / 1 2 3, which is usually kept track of by clapping on beats four and six, waving outward on beat one (an idiosyncracy of this tala), and counting the intervening beats on the fingers. See figure 15.
6. Divide the class in thirds, with some singing "Ha-Nan-De," others keeping track of the tala, and still others providing a tabla accompaniment.

7a. Show a picture of the sitar (see figure 16), and explain that it is one of the principal stringed instruments of India. The sitar has a large base fashioned from a hollowed-out gourd. A long neck supporting a number of curved, movable frets extends from the base. Seven strings run over the top of these frets and are attached to pegs at the upper end of the neck. Some of these strings are used to play melodies and are plucked by a wire plectrum attached to the right-hand index finger. To produce

Figure 16. Student playing the sitar

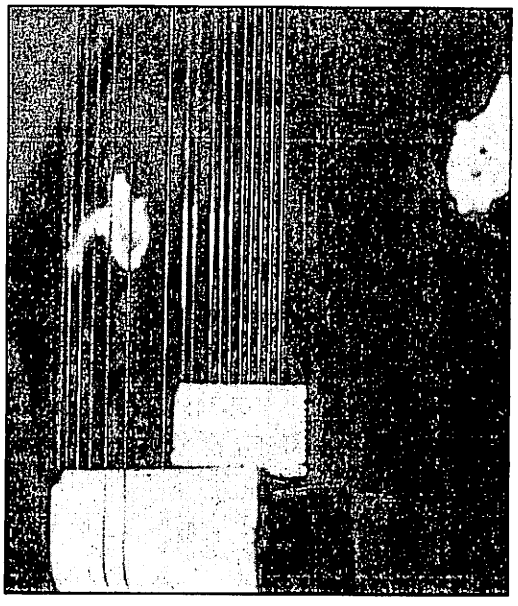

Figure 17. Sympathetic vibrating strings on sitar

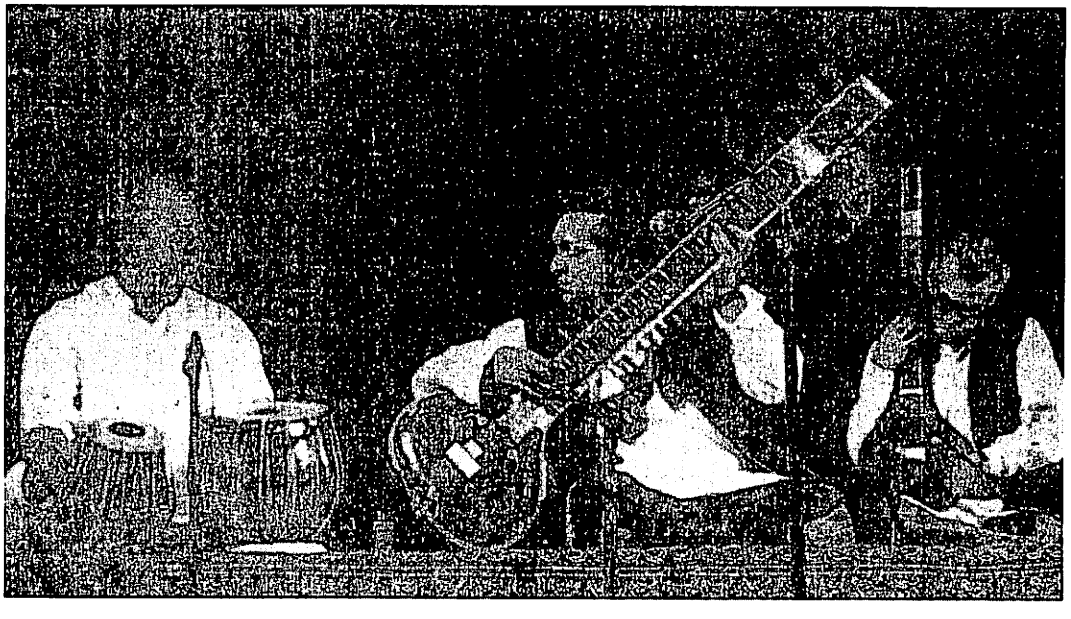

Figure 18. North Indian ensemble; from left: tabla, sitar, and tambura

different pitches, the performer presses the strings against the frets at various points. Several of the strings running over the frets are not used to play melodies but rather are tuned to the drone and are plucked by the performer to provide rhythmic accentuation. An additional group of small metal strings, known as the sympathetic vibrators, are stretched along the neck of the instrument under the frets. As their name suggests, these strings are not plucked but rather oscillate in sympathy when the strings running over the frets are activated (see figure 17).

7b. A common instrumental ensemble of North India features the sitar accompanied by the tabla and tambura (see figure 18). Listen to this ensemble, keeping track of *rupak* tala.

8. Summarize on the board what you have learned in this lesson: *rupak* tala with its unequal subdivisions, drum syllables (*bols*) for *rupak*, vocal and instrumental compositions in *rupak* tala, and instruments (sitar, tabla, and tambura).

LESSON 5

■ Objectives

Students will:

1. Sing the raga *bhupali* and study some characteristics of ragas.
2. Identify the form in a North Indian vocal composition (accompanied by the tambura and tabla) in raga *bhupali* by performing a short, improvised introduction (*alap*) in flexible rhythm, a precomposed segment (*chiz*) in the sixteen-beat cycle *tintala*, and improvised phrases.
3. Follow the form in an Indian instrumental composition (featuring the sitar with tabla and tambura accompaniment) in raga *maru bihag* by listening to an improvised introduction (*alap*) followed by a precomposed piece (*gat*) in the ten-beat *jhaptal* tala and improvised phrases.
4. Listen to the rock composition "Love You Too" by the Beatles, which features both Indian instruments (the sitar and tabla) and Western instruments; follow the "Indian form" in the piece.

■ Materials

1. Transparency with transcriptions of raga *bhupali*, an *alap*, a *chiz*, and improvised phrases
2. Tambura and tabla or appropriate substitutes
3. Pictures (slides) of a sitar, tabla, and tambura
4. Recordings:
   Ravi Shankar, *The Sounds of India* (Columbia CK 09296)
   "Love You Too" from The Beatles, *Revolver* (Capitol Records C41H-90452)

■ Procedures

1. This lesson is for middle or junior high school students. Indian musical compositions are created from prescribed series of notes known as ragas. Have the students study the raga known as *bhupali* as follows: First, sing the raga using the Indian note names:

sa (*sah*), re (*ray*), ga (*gah*), pa (*pah*), and dha (*dhah*) (see figure 19). Explain that ragas have many characteristics. List some of the following characteristics on the chalkboard or bulletin board for discussion:

a. Each raga has a particular name, such as *bhupali*.
b. Ragas provide pitches (notes) that are used in creating musical compositions.
c. Ragas often have a "crooked" movement with different ascending and descending forms, thus indicating some of the shapes of melodies created from the raga.
d. Ragas often have specific ornamentation such as the "slide" in pitch from pa (G) to ga (E), indicated by a straight line in figures 19 and 20.
e. Ragas convey specific moods or feelings; for example, *bhupali* conveys the mood of majesty or grandeur.
f. Ragas are often assigned particular performance times throughout the day and night when it is felt that their mood can best be achieved. *Bhupali*, for example, is an evening raga.

2. Background information: Most Indian musical compositions begin with an improvised section of music known as the *alap*. In the *alap*, the performer uses the notes of a selected raga to create a segment of music in free, flexible rhythmic style.
3. Figure 20 provides a transcription of a short *alap* in raga *bhupali*. The music is improvised and therefore usually not written down, but notation is used here so that the *alap* can be easily followed.
   a. Have the students sing the *alap* in free, flexible rhythm using either the Indian scale degree syllables—sa (*sah*), re (*ray*), ga (*gah*), pa (*pah*), and dha (*dhah*)—or a neutral syllable such as "ah." Assist the class by singing or playing the notes on the piano or melody bells.
   b. The *alap* is generally accompanied by the tambura (as discussed in Lesson One), which produces a drone accompaniment. Try performing the *alap* with accompaniment by a tambura or a substitute instrument on which a drone can be played, such as a guitar or piano.
4. The *alap* is followed by a segment of precomposed music (thought-out beforehand rather than improvised) known in vocal music as the *chiz*. The *chiz* is organized in a tala rhythmic cycle with accompaniment by tabla. The tambura continues throughout this segment.

   Have the class perform the *chiz* (see figure 21). Divide the class in half so that one group sings while another group keeps track of the tala (*tintala*) through hand claps, hand waving, and counting on the fingers. Add a drum accompaniment on either tabla or bongos (see Lessons One and Two).
5. Following the precomposed section, the performer begins to improvise again. The improvisation is often accomplished by taking a portion of the precomposed music (for example, "Namane Kare Chature," transcribed in figure 22) and adding improvised phrases. Encourage the students to try singing, with a neutral syllable such as "ah," the improvised phrases shown in figure 22. Have the students make up some short, improvised phrases by using the first section of "Namane Kare Chature" to create several eight-beat improvised phrases.
6. Follow the form in an Indian instrumental composition in raga *maru-bihag* (pronounced mah-roo-bee-hahg), featuring the sitar (stringed instrument) accompanied by the tabla (drums) and tambura (stringed instrument) (see *The Sounds of India)*.
   a. Show a picture of the sitar (see figure 16, Lesson Four). Explain that the sitar is

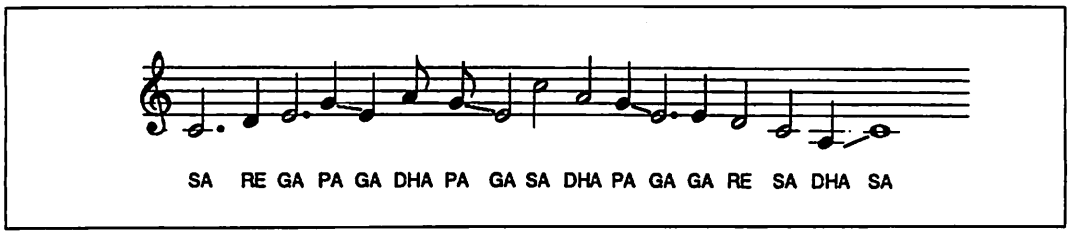

Figure 19. Raga *bhupali*

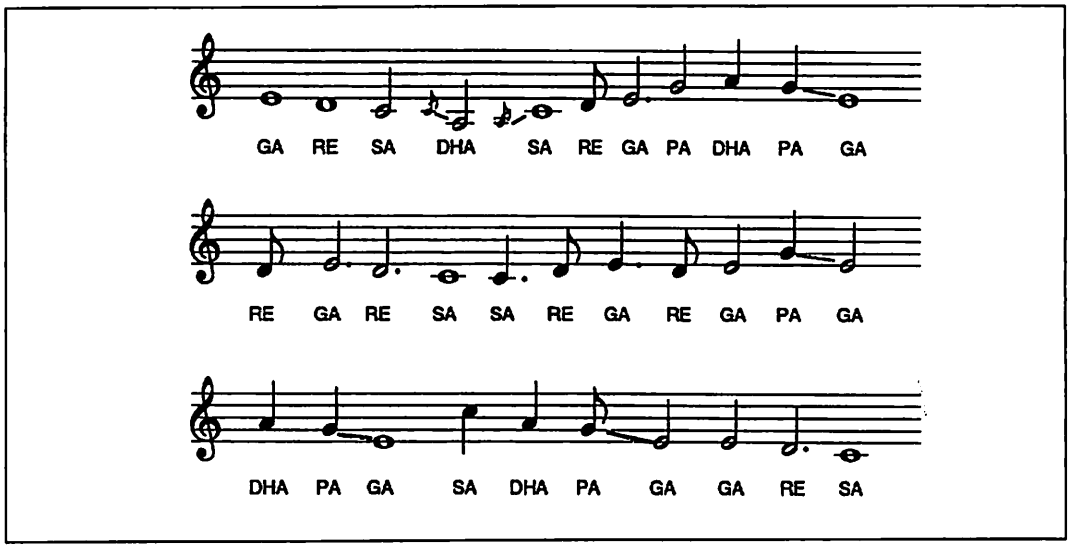

Figure 20. Alap in raga *bhupali*

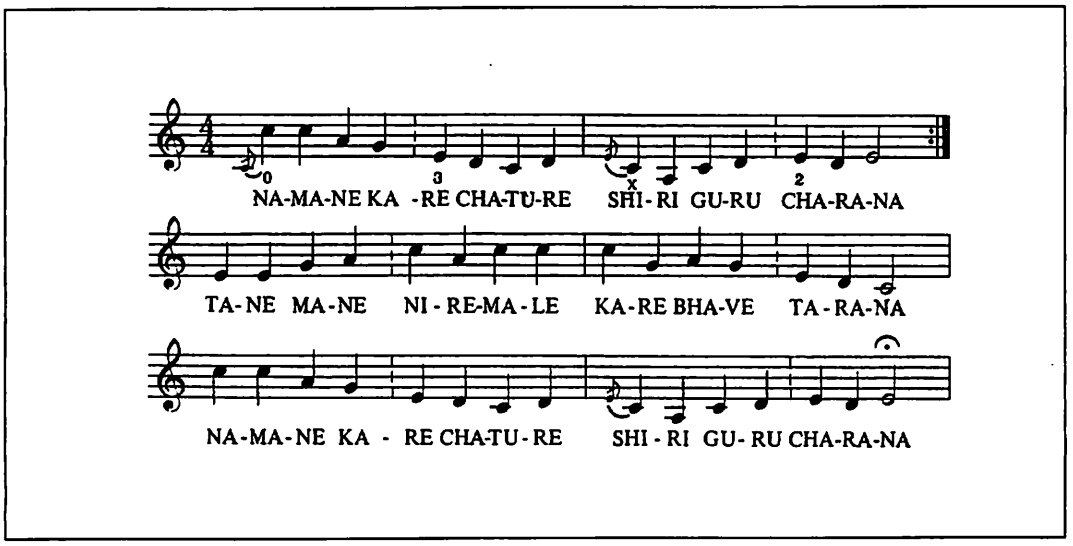

Figure 21. Chiz in raga *bhupali*

one of the principal stringed instruments of India. It has a large base fashioned from a hollowed-out gourd. Extending from the base is a long neck along which are positioned a number of curved, movable frets. Seven strings run over the top of these frets and are attached to pegs at the upper end of the neck. Some of these strings are used to play melodies and are plucked by a wire plectrum attached to the right-hand index finger. To produce different pitches, the performer presses the strings against the frets at various points. Several of the strings running over the frets are not used to play melodies, but are instead tuned to the drone and are plucked so that they provide rhythmic accentuation. The sitar has an additional group of strings known as the sympathetic vibrators. These small metal strings are stretched along the neck of the instrument under the frets. As their name suggests, these strings are not plucked but rather oscillate in sympathy when the strings running over the frets are activated (see figure 17, Lesson Four).

b. Show a picture of the sitar, tabla, and tambura, a common instrumental ensemble of North India (see figure 18, Lesson Four).

c. On the recording, Ravi Shankar illustrates the ascending and descending forms of the raga *maru-bihag*. Listen to the raga and discuss some of its distinctive characteristics: different ascending and descending patterns of notes with "crooked" melodic movement, its ornamentation of particular notes (indicated in figure 23 by a wavy line), and the fact that it is an evening raga, conveying a feeling of melancholy or loneliness.

d. Place a diagram (illustrated in figure 24) on the board for the students to follow as they listen to the music.

(1) In the opening section of the *alap*, the sitar improvises in the raga. Notice the free, flexible rhythmic style. The sitar is accompanied by the tambura, which provides a soft drone background.

(2) The *alap* is followed by a precomposed section of music known in instrumental music as the *gat*. The *gat* is cast in strict rhythm, and is shown here in figure 25 in a tala known as *jhaptal*. *Jhaptal* has ten beats that are divided into four subsections (2 + 3 + 2 + 3). Make sure that the class understands the asymmetrical quality of this tala. Have the class follow the tala by speaking the numbers and clapping lightly on beats one, three, and eight; waving the right hand outward on beat six; and counting the intervening beats on their fingers (see figure 26).

(3) The sitar player begins to improvise again. Listen for the increasingly elaborate melodic phrases and the faster tempo.

7. Listen to "Love You Too" from the album *Revolver* by The Beatles.

a. Listen for the combination of Indian and Western instruments and the "Indian" form:

Free/flexible rhythm introduction	*Strict rhythm, main segment*
Slow tempo	Medium tempo
Sitar playing main melody	Singers accompanied by sitar, tabla, and Western guitars

8. Summarize on the board what you have learned in this lesson. List some characteris-

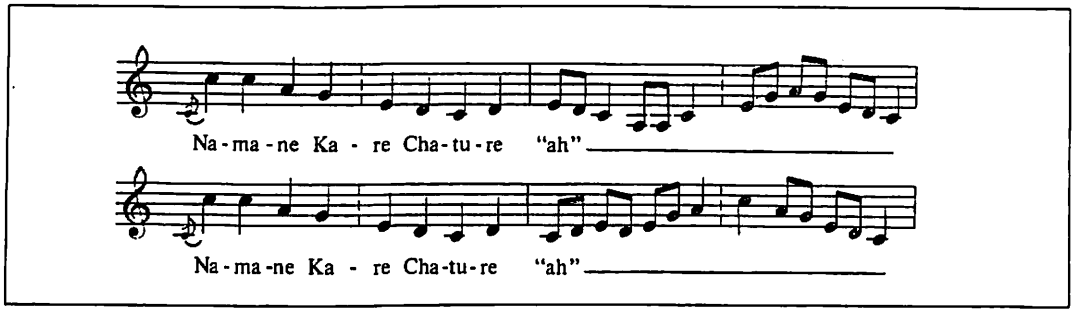

Figure 22. "Namane Kare Chature" with improvisation

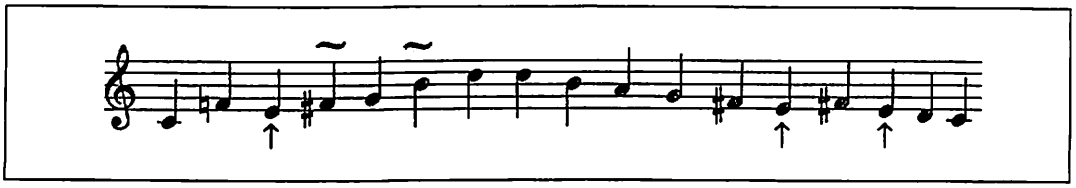

Figure 23. Raga *maru-bihag*

Alap Section	*Gat* Section	Improvisation
Sitar plays melody →		→
Tambura plays drone accompaniment →		→
Flexible, free rhythm →	Change to steady beat of tala *jhaptal* →	→
	Tabla enters →	→

Figure 24. A diagram and listening guide for raga *bhupali*

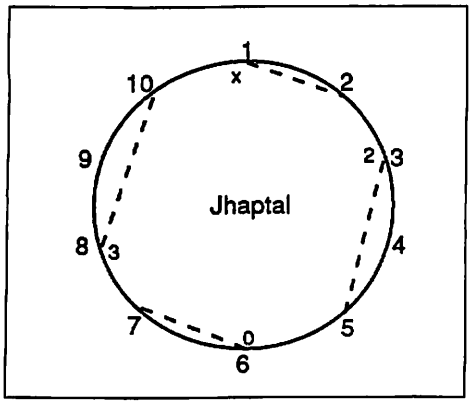

Figure 25. Jhaptal

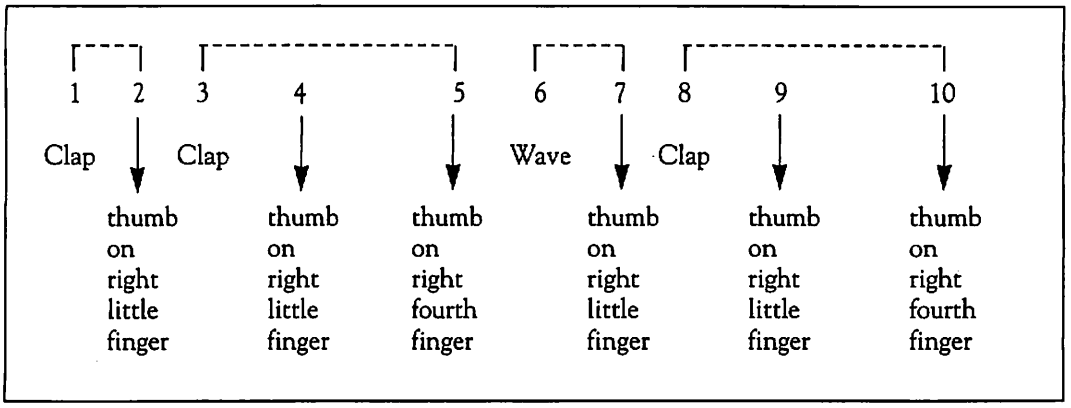

Figure 26. Counting the beats of *jhaptal*

tics of ragas, including distinctive ascending and descending forms, ornamentation, moods, and performance times. Describe the form in Indian compositions, beginning with *alap*, followed by *chiz* (in vocal music) and *gat* (in instrumental music), in turn followed by increasingly elaborate improvised phrases. Also discuss *jhaptal* with ten beats subdivided into unequal groups of (2 + 3 + 2 + 3) and Western popular music that combines Indian and Western musical traits.

Integrating music with other studies

Developing the proper cultural context is an important part of any program of teaching Indian music. Students tremendously enjoy learning about other peoples and their customs and crafts, their architecture, sculpture, painting, literature, dance, and music. Through an interrelated study of many aspects of a culture, they develop new and important understandings of other peoples. They also begin to realize the integral place of the arts in many aspects of a society.

The following are some suggestions to assist teachers in placing the study of music in a broader cultural context:

1. Plan a study of Indian geography. Using a globe, have the students locate India. Compare its size to that of the United States. Develop a bulletin board with a map of India in the center. Have the students draw (or trace) the map and identify with stick-pin flags some of the most important cities. Study the various kinds of terrain found throughout the country, including the gigantic mountains in the North (the Himalayas), the fertile river valley areas such as the Ganges, the parched desert areas such as those in Rajasthan, and the balmy seacoast areas such as those found in Kerala. Look for pictures of different geographical areas. *National Geographic* magazine provides good sources for pictures (see the Bibliography).
2. Look for pictures of Indian architecture, sculpture, and painting. These should include Hindu and Muslim temples, the Taj Mahal, sculptures of Hindu gods and goddesses, and the intricately designed, multicolored "miniature" paintings. Place these on the bulletin board.
3. Encourage students to visit the library and find books about India. They will read

about the country's various cultural groups. Encyclopedia articles, such as those found in the *World Book Encyclopedia*, are good sources of information.

4. Invite Indians living in the community to come and speak to your students. If possible, have them bring native dress and musical instruments.
5. Have the students study the two largest Indian religions—Hinduism and Islam—and discuss with them some of the most important beliefs of these religions. Children are particularly fascinated to learn why certain animals, such as cows, are held in such high regard. As a good introduction to this subject, teachers may enjoy reading Veronica Ions's *Indian Mythology* (see Bibliography). Since Hindu temples and Muslim mosques are now found in the United States, it might be possible to arrange a visit to one of these centers.
6. A number of Indians now living in the United States have had training in their native dance. Search your Indian community for someone who might perform for your students. Also view some of the videotapes on dance listed at the end of this chapter.
7. Show videotapes or films on Indian music (an annotated list appears in the Filmography). India also has one of the largest movie industries in the world, and many Indian films are now shown in the United States, particularly in metropolitan areas. Students may enjoy attending these.

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DISCOGRAPHY

Festival of India: A Hindustani Sampler. Music of the World (MOW) CDT-121. An excellent CD featuring a number of North Indian musical compositions.
Hariprasad Chaurasia, Flute Concert. Bainbridge RSC-22. This recording features two of India's most outstanding contemporary performers: Hariprasad Chaurasia, flute, accompanied by Zakir Hussain, tabla, performing in raga *madhuvanti*.
Zakir Hussain–Super Percussion of India. World Music Library CD 5113. This is a recording by one of India's most distinguished tabla performers.
Improvisations, featuring Ravi Shankar (sitar) and Paul Horn and Bud Shank (flutes). Bainbridge RSC-6. This recording combines Indian melodic and rhythmic modes and jazz to produce an exciting contemporary musical ensemble.

Percussion of India. World Music Library CD 5168. This is an excellent compact disc featuring a variety of India's percussion performers.

G. S. Sachdev—*Flights of Improvisation*. Lyrichord LYRCD 7416. This recording features two of India's most outstanding artists, G. S. Sachdev, flute, with accompaniment by Zakir Hussain, tabla.

Shivkumar Sharma and Zakir Hussain—Music for Santur and Tabla. Nimbus NI 5110. This recording features Shivkumar Sharma on the *santur* (struck zither) accompanied by Zakir Hussain on tabla.

The Sounds of India: Ravi Shankar. Columbia CK 09296. This recording contains four North Indian instrumental compositions performed by Ravi Shankar; an explanation of the raga and tala used is given before each performance.

Editor's note: Schwann/Spectrum Recordings (published quarterly by Stereophile, Inc., 208 Delgado Street, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501) lists, among other things, the currently available recordings of Indian music. In addition, an excellent selection of compact discs, audiocassettes, and videotapes is provided by the World Music Institute, 49 West 27th Street, Suite 810, New York, NY 10001, and the Ali Akbar College Store, 215 West End Avenue, San Rafael, CA 94901.

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Classical Music of North India. 33 minutes, color. Available from the University of Washington, Educational Media Collection, 35 Kane Hall, Seattle, WA 98195; phone: 206-543-9909. This film features the distinguished *sarod* performer Ali Akbar Khan.

Discovering the Music of India. Videocassette. 22 minutes, color. Available from West Music Company, 1208 Fifth Street, PO Box 5521, Coralville, IA 52241. This film contains excellent examples of both North and South Indian music. South Indian examples include the flute (*venu*), the drum (*mridangam*), the violin, and the tambura. Featured instruments from North India are the sitar and tabla. A short example of Indian dance is also included.

The JVC Video Anthology of World Music and Dance. Available from Rounder Records, 61 Prospect Street, Montpelier, VT 05602. This video anthology contains three tapes (11, 12, and 13) devoted to Indian music and dance, along with an accompanying book.

Kathak: North Indian Dance. Videocassette. Available from The Asia Society, Performing Arts Department, 725 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10021. Birju Maharaj and Company appear in this presentation, which includes *vandana* (prayer dance), a *kathak* solo demonstration of pure dance movement and intricate rhythms, and *Geetopadesh*, the gambling scene between the Pandava and the Kaurava princes as depicted in a story from the Mahabharata.

Kathakali: South Indian Dance-Drama from the Kerala Kalamandalam. Videocassette. Available from The Asia Society, Performing Arts Department, 725 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10021. Dating from the sixteenth century, *Kathakali* dance-drama is India's most dynamic epic theater form. *Kathakali* performance technique stems in part from a vigorous martial arts tradition. The form is a fascinating combination of music, a sung text, mime, and dance with rich costume and elaborate makeup.

Sitara. Videocassette. Available from The Asia Society, Performing Arts Department, 725 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10021. India's most celebrated *Kathak* dancer, Sitara, performs an invocation to the elephant god Ganesha, as well as *Tora Tukra*, a pure dance form emphasizing time measure and different rhythmic patterns; *Mayur Nritya*, the dance of the peacock; and *Tatkar*, in which the intricate footwork displays *Kathak*'s complicated and varied rhythms.

Yamini Krishnamurti: South Indian Dance. Videocassette. Available from The Asia Society, Performing Arts Department, 725 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10021. A virtuoso of South Indian dance, Yamini Krishnamurthi performs in two classical styles. In the *bharata natyam* style, she presents "Navarasa Slokam" ("The Nine Classical Sentiments"), and in the romantic, ebullient style of *Kuchipudi*, she dances "Manduka Sabdam" ("The Frog Who Became a Queen"). The program ends with "Tillana," a pure, abstract, *bharata natyam* dance.