

Hariprasad Chaurasia:
Life, Work, and the Bansuri

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The essay portion of this project is an attempt to gain understanding of the life and work of Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia. This research explores Chaurasia's long professional history (bansuri performance and otherwise), North Indian raga performance, Hindustani music, and the techniques of playing the North Indian bamboo flute, the bansuri. The second part of this project will be a handbook for flutists to use as a beginning guide to listening to and performing Hindustani music on a Western boehm flute as well as on a bansuri flute. To begin, Pandit Chaurasia Chaurasia will be introduced and his life explored.

Chaurasia, the Early Years

Chaurasia Chaurasia was born on July 1, 1938 in Allahabad, India. In the 1930's and 1940's, Indian classical music was going through many changes, and Allahabad was a hub for public music concerts. Chaurasia reports that his first encounter of the bansuri flute was at the age of ten, when he saw a younger boy playing a small flute in the street. Chaurasia was intrigued by the sounds the flute was making and he followed the boy, and when the boy put the flute down to drink from a fountain, Chaurasia ran away with the flute.

Chaurasia's father was a renowned wrestler and taught Chaurasia about physical engagement. He first began to learn vocal music from Pandit Rajaram, and within a year of vocal study, Chaurasia saw a flute concert of Pandit Bholanath (from Benaras) and immediately asked to be his student, who accepted him. Chaurasia studied the Bansuri with Bholanath from age eleven to age of sixteen. Shortly after the end of Chaurasia's studies with Bholanath, his professional career in music began, but not the way you might imagine.

Chaurasia's Recording Career

At the age of seventeen, Chaurasia began performing at Allahabad's All Indian Radio on children's programs. In 1957, he was hired at All Indian Radio in Cuttack, Orissa, near Bengal as a performer, conductor, and composer. Chaurasia was transferred yet again to the All Indian Radio in Bombay in 1962. At this time, Bombay was booming with music, but while performances of classical music were being attended less, films were being attended in high volumes. Where there were films, there was music, and where there was music, musicians were needed. He was largely self-taught during his years at the All Indian Radio in Orissa, but once he moved to Bombay, Chaurasia made a living performing for film scores and working in the film industry. The bansuri was at a time overshadowed by other North Indian classical instruments such as the sitar and sarod, and the shehnai. However, in the 1960's, the bansuri was gaining popularity as well as a presence in Indian popular film. The bansuri became so popular in Indian film that it was highly sought after and cherished and it became characterized as a film instrument, that all films needed a bansuri in the soundtrack.

Hariprasad Chaurasia's Classical Career

It was after Chaurasia's move to Bombay that he was able to be a student of "the reclusive Annapurna Devi [who] wasn't easy to confront or convince" (Roy, 74). Annapurna Devi helped Chaurasia to enhance his repertoire of ragas and compositions as well as strengthen his career as a classical musician. Also a large influence in Chaurasia's life was Shiv Kumar Sharma, and the two became friends in the film recording studios of Bombay. As Chaurasia's influence and name were growing in the music scene in Bombay, he became loved by classical audiences. Chaurasia traveled extensively to places such as Asia, Australia, Europe, and the

Americas. He gained “critical acclaim from fellow musicians, such as Yehudi Menuhin and Jean-Pierre Rampal” (Roy, 77). Chaurasia is also known for recording with John McLaughlin and Jan Garbarek to produce an international album at Oslo.

Chaurasia taught at the Vrindavan Gurukul, an institute of performing arts in India’s eastern state of Orissa created by Chaurasia himself. He had countless disciples from the Americas, Europe, Pakistan, Japan, and more. Chaurasia also participated in collaboration to the greatest extent. He collaborated with people like Amitabh, Yash Chopra (an Indian filmmaker, film director, screenwriter, and a highly successful Bollywood producer), Alla Rakha, (an Indian tabla player who was a frequent accompanist of Ravi Shankar), and actor Peter Sellers (a British comedian and actor. Perhaps best known as Chief Inspector Clouseau in *The Pink Panther* film series). Chaurasia also collaborated with Ustad Amir Khan (well-known Indian classical vocalist and considered one of the most influential figures in Hindustani classical music and the founder of the Indore Gharana), and Begum Akhtar (a well known Indian singer who was given the title of Mallika-e-Ghazal (Queen of Ghazals)). Chaurasia has also collaborated with Charles Lloyd and Paul Horn. Also, he participated in a project with George Harrison and Ravi Shankar in the 1970’s in a European and American tour of east-west fusion music. Chaurasia also received national honors from President R Venkatraman (the eighth president of India) and performed at venues such as the Osho ashram (a renowned resort for meditation and yoga in Pune, India).

Hariprasad Chaurasia as a Teacher

Catherine Potter the author of “Hariprasad Chaurasia: The Individual and the North Indian Classical Music Tradition” studied with Hariprasad Chaurasia. Hariprasad never charged his students tuition because he himself never payed for his lessons. Potter recounts, “When I first

asked him if I could pay him some fee, he refused, saying that all he expected from me was my blessing meaning, of course, that I must practice hard and do my best for him” (Potter, 48). *“I don’t charge my students for I feel that once the commercial aspect enters art, it cannot survive. Because I don’t take money, my students pay me back with devotion and hard work”* (Chaurasia 1991: p.c.).

Hariprasad bases his teaching methods on his teachings from Annapurna Devi. “She (Annapurna) asked me not to write anything but to write always in your mind and soul. When you write there then you create, but when you always write in your book, then your creative power is dead” (Chaurasia, 1992: p.c.).

The North Indian Raga

The word “raga” is derived from the Sanskrit root *ranj* or *raj* meaning to color or to tinge and is described as an emotional realm in which the performer takes a melody or collection of pitches and creates a theme. That theme is then generally improvised using a set of rules. Some refer to the raga as a melody scheme. “Technically, a raga is characterized by a definite sequence of notes, by particular melodic phrases, by relative duration or stress of notes and by particular ornamentations” (Potter, 14). In North Indian ragas, there is generally a nonmetrical introduction called the *alap*, one or more compositions called a vocal *bandish* or instrumental *gat*, and a rhythmic improvisation (*layakari*) and fast passages (*tana*) or *jor*. There are many different genres of North Indian classical music including *dhrupad*, *dhamar*, *khyal*, *tapa*, *tarana*, and *thumi*. Often in the performance of a raga, a melodic instrument will be present as well as a rhythmic instrument and a drone instrument. The drone is very important in Indian music and highly effects the performance of a raga.

The basic elements of performing a raga include melody (the rag itself), rhythm (the tala), and improvisation and ornamentation. The tala refers to meter and time cycle with a given number of beats. The melody of a composition is set to a tala. Laya refers to the tempo of a piece and the speed at which metered compositions are performed. Vilambit is slow, madhya medium, and drut is fast. The Tabla is the most common accompanying percussion instrument in North Indian classical music. The Tabla usually consists of two drums, a small right handed one which is referred to as the table, which is tuned to the melodic tonic pitch, and the larger left handed drum is referred to as the baya or bass drum which can achieve a range of pitches.

A few basic ornamentations used with the bansuri include mind (or meend): Like portamentos or gliding; Gamak: Guttural-like oscillations between two notes; Kana: Appoggiatura-like grace notes; and Tans: rapid succession of note combinations (important in the Khyal vocal genre). Another large part of performing Hindustani music includes rasa theory and the theory of emotional states while listening to and performing Hindustani music. Rasa theory particularly expands on the aesthetic experience of the listener and their evoked mental states. Bhavas are the emotional states that can be experienced while listening to ragas and if they are expressed artistically, the listener becomes rasa. Bliss is often the word used to describe the feeling of rasa. There are eight rasas: srangara (erotic), hasya (comic), karuna (pathetic), raudra (furious), vira (heroic), bhayanaka (terrible), bibhastsa (odious), and adbhuta (marvellous). Some believe in a ninth; santa (peaceful).

The intonation of a rag includes some of its main characteristics. Indian music refers to 7 swaras (tones) and 22 srutis (microtones). However, srutis are no longer considered practical.

Today, North Indian music has adopted a general scale of 12 semi-tones not of uniform size; North Indian music does not use equal temperament.

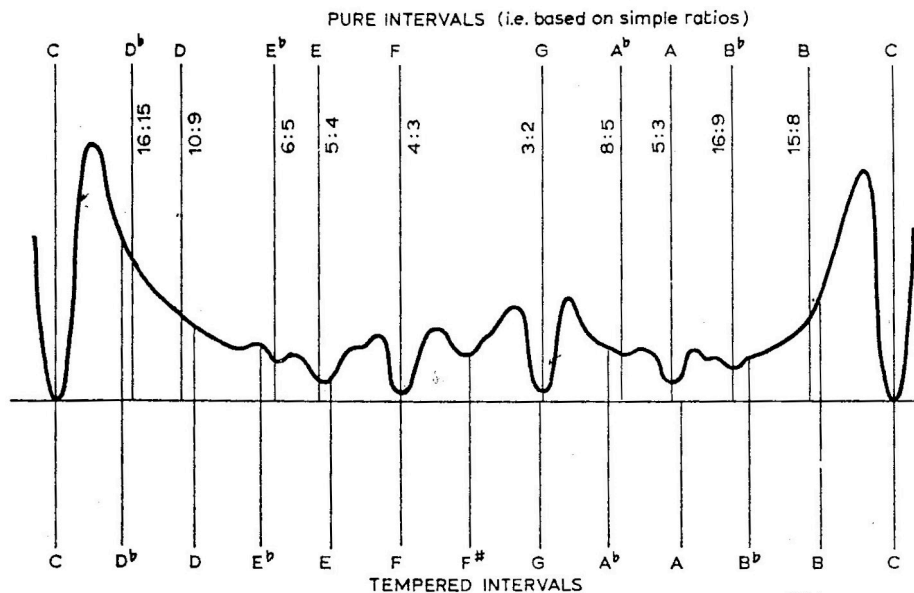
Three octaves are recognized in Indian theory: mandra saptak (the lower octave) which goes below low sa, madhya saptak (the middle octave) which spans the fundamental sa up to but not including the octave sa, and tara saptak (the upper octave) which begins on high sa and goes further upward. North Indian Classical music has a long tradition of oral teaching, so there is no extensive system of notation other than the use of the swara: sa, re, ga, ma, pa, dha, ni, and sa. Drones are used in performance and practice as a reference for intonation and intervals. The drone is almost always the fundamental sa and often includes the fifth (pa) and sometimes other pitches as well.

The Importance of the Drone

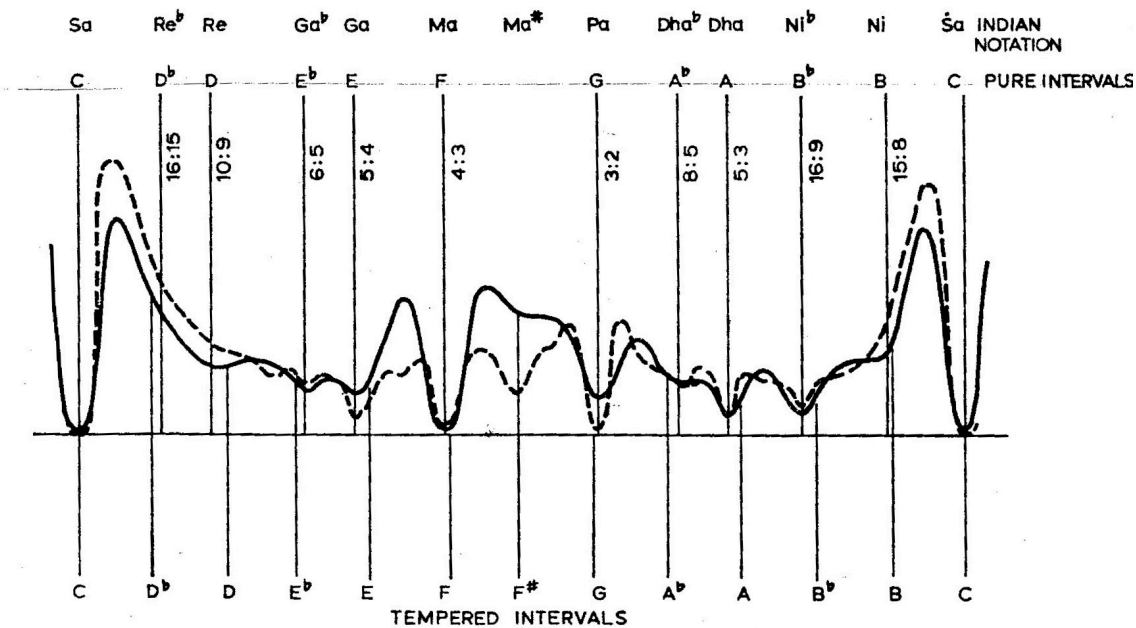
As N. A. Jairazbhoy speak of the drone in his book “The Ragas of North Indian Music: Their Structure and Evolution,” he speaks to the importance of the drone. N. A. Jairazbhoy details in his book that not only the drone, but the details of the drone (such as the number of pitches being played as drone pitches) effect the performance and overall interpretation and presentation of any given raga. The drone is at the minimum performed as the low octave sa, sometimes more pitches are used, and the drone is played throughout the entire performance and is used as a reference for the intervals of the rag. This is important to the performance of a rag because the tuning of the rag depends on the drone, and the tuning of the rag is the defining characteristic of the rag and therefore the piece in its entirety. If thought about in terms height away from the drone, the notes of the raga can then be perceived by their interval from the drone or ground sa instead of in an absolute way as in Western classical music. The relationship of any

note to the ground sa delineates its usage, emotion, dynamic, purpose, and function. The addition of a second drone pitch changes the tendencies of consonance (Pa). When pa is introduced, sa is no longer completely consonant, ga is almost as consonant as ma, and dha is much less consonant. When ma is introduced as a third drone pitch, ga and pa become less consonant. Recently, ga has been added as a supplementary drone to the sa and pa drone pitches, and ga then becomes much more consonant than ma which now has a greatly increased secondary dynamic function in that it leads either to the ga or the pa. The following graphs are taken from N. A. Jairazbhoy's book "The Ragas of North Indian Music: Their Structure and Evolution" which shows the effect of drones:

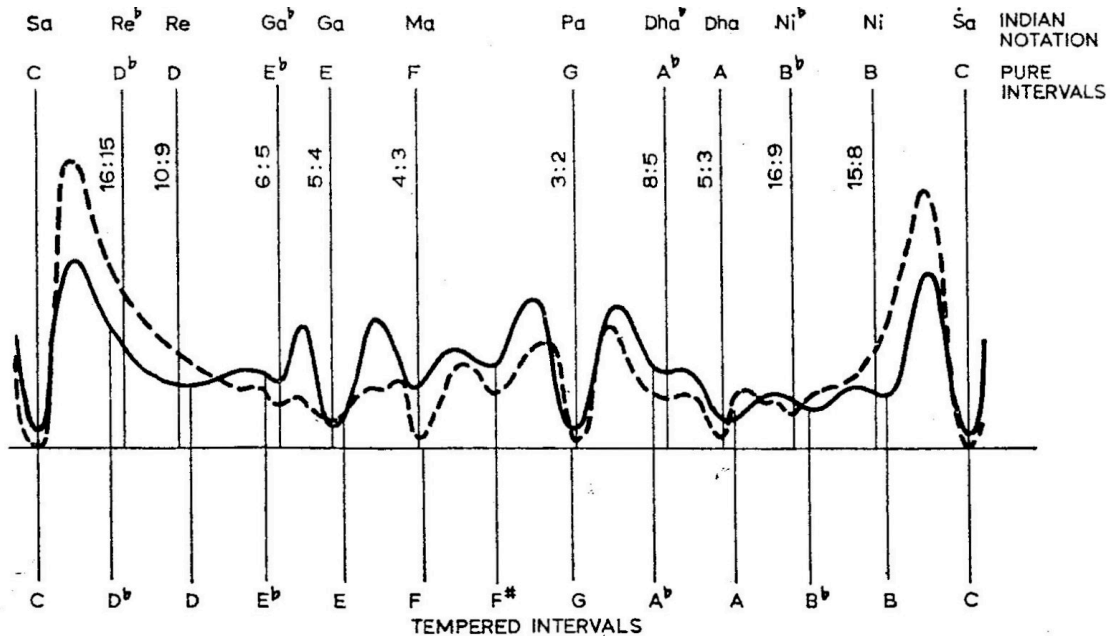
The Effect of Drones



Consonance-Dissonance with C Drone (after Helmholtz)



Consonance-Dissonance with Sa Drone twice as prominent as Ma Drone



Consonance-Dissonance with three Drones, Sa, Pa and Ga; Sa twice as prominent as Pa and Ga

The following is an excerpt from N. A. Jairazbhoy's book "The Ragas of North Indian Music: Their Structure and Evolution" which also amplifies the idea of drones:

"Let us imagine that the consonance-dissonance graphs represent the terrain on which we are walking. As we walk down from a peak into a valley, at a certain point we suddenly recognize the valley and can say this is dha or this is ga. The point of lowest potential energy of this valley is at its bottom, but recognition dawns somewhere on the slopes. The analogy must now be carried into three dimensions if we are to convey the dynamic function of the notes, as the particular valley we are concerned with may be located in the mountains, and a river in this valley will run into a lower valley and continue downwards until it finally reaches the ocean." (Jairazbhoy, 70).

The drone of a raga is not only important to the intervals of the raga pitches, to the overall color and timbre of the raga, but to the entire piece, to the interpretation of the piece, and to the purpose and meaning of the performance.

The Bansuri: A History

Krishna is a Hindu deity, worshipped as an incarnation of Vishnu. Krishna is known as the divine charmer who played flute and through his music, caused many to fall in love with him. Many believe that the North Indian bamboo flute is sacred, and only those who are very blessed and very spiritually inspired can "pick up the most pristine and natural instrument in their mortal hands and go on to make divine music with it" (Roy, 72). Lord Krishna is also called Murlidhar or "the flute-holder" is told of in stories about his flute playing and seduction of women to his divinity. Many in the Hindu faith believe that Krishna's flute playing represents the human soul yearning for union with the divine lover.

The transverse (held across or side blown) flute is found in almost every culture. The bamboo transverse flute is found in Asia and the West Indies. The bansuri is not the only North India bamboo flute, but is commonly the concert-flute or the classical flute of North Indian

music. First millennium BC history cites flute, harp, and drum in Vedic rituals. Vedic text is the oldest layer of Sanskrit literature and the oldest scripture of Hinduism. “The flute is, perhaps, one of the oldest instruments in the world, making an appearance iconographically in Egypt around 4000 BC” (Potter, 30). Buddhist sculptures showed flutes being played by humans, men and women, celestial beings, instrumental ensembles and accompanying vocal music, chamber music and in the court and temples. “The Sufis (members of mystical sects of Islam, the earliest dating from 8th century Persia) believe that the flute and the man of God are one and the same” (Potter, 37). The Santal tribes of North India (the largest tribal community of India) believe that the flute connects the mortal humans with supernatural forces. The flute is a very important instrument in Indian culture; many poets such as Sarojini Naidu wrote about the flute. After the Muslim invasions of India that began in the 12th century, the bansuri disappeared as a court instrument but remained common in the folk tradition the states of Bengal, Orissa, and Assam.

The Bansuri’s Structure

The Bansuri flute is a North Indian classical instrument that may be performed in many different venues, in many different genres, and in many different ensembles. The bansuri is a cylindrical tube with a uniform bore made from a single piece of straight, smooth bamboo that is free of notches. The concert bansuri is usually between 60 and 90 centimeters and 25 millimeters in diameter, but the bansuri flute can be of many different lengths (especially in folk music traditions). The top end is closed (either naturally or with a cork stopper) and the lower end is open. The placement of the finger holes are dependent upon the tuning of the instrument, but there is a mouth hole at the top and usually six finger holes. There is also often a small hole at the end of the flute for tuning. The bansuri can be made in any pitch. Flutes used for folk and

popular music are often higher pitched than classical bansuri flutes, which are often pitched at E-1.

Instrument Making

The bansuri is made from special bamboo that has large cross-sections (large spaces between notches). It is believed that Assam, a state in north-eastern India, produces the highest quality bamboo. The bamboo is cut after the rainy season and left to dry for months. One end is corked after the bamboo is cleaned and holes are pierced by a red hot iron rod. After the mouth hole is created, the finger holes are created in relation to the pitch created from the mouth hole. Sometimes oils, such as mustard and coconut, are used on the inside of the bamboo to keep the instrument from drying out and cracking. According to Catherine Potter, instruments are commonly made by flutists themselves who are self taught. However, there is an American flute maker at the Ali Akbar Khan School of Indian Classical Music in St. Raphael, California who makes some of the best bansuri that are often ordered from professional flutists in India.

Modern Bansuri

The bansuri is used for classical, folk, and popular performances of North India. Often, the bansuri is a solo instrument accompanied by tabla and tanpura, and sometimes a second bansuri becomes an echo of the solo bansuri. The bansuri only became a stage performing instrument in the twentieth century. There are no established stylistic schools of bansuri like with vocalists and stringed instrumentalists. Many of today's great flutists such as Pannalal Ghosh, Vijay Raghava Roa, Hariprasad Chaurasia, and Nityanand Hadipur did not study with flutists but other instrumentalists.

Performing on the Bansuri

The following teachings are based on books by Lyon Leifer who studied with Pandit Pannalal Ghosh and Catherine Potter who studied with Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia. Notation of North Indian classical music is rare because of the depth of their aural tradition. However, the notation that is used is Bhatkande notation using swara syllables. Swara syllables are similar to the western tradition of solfege and include the syllable sa, re, ga, ma, pa, dha, ni, and sa. The bansuri can have six or seven holes. The advantage of seven holes according to the Ghosh/Murdeswar school is as follows: Additional half-step of low range; immensely greater flexibility in treating the register break; and register breaks can make gliding difficult, so the seventh hole is advantageous for ease of register breaks. Lyon Leifer details the advantage of six holes as being only one: Prevents the performer from having to stretch the right hand for the seventh hole. When playing in an ensemble, the other instruments that will play with the bansuri will tune according to the pitch of the given bansuri. The bansuri is played while sitting cross legged, horizontally, either to the left or to the right. The first hand facing in towards the musician and the second hand (furthest away) is palm out. The first three fingers of each hand are used to cover the holes and sometimes the middle part of the finger is used to cover. Microtonal ornamentation and sliding is often used. Bansuri flutes can play at least two and a half octaves, the upper octaves are achieved by overblowing to the harmonics. Bansuri flutes do not have perfect intonation, so tuning is often done with compensation from the embouchure and the turning of the flute in or out to push the airstream further in the hole or further across the hole. Below, is a bansuri fingering chart from Catherine Potter's *Hariprasad Chaurasia: The Individual and the North Indian Classical Music Tradition*.

CHART II Fingering Chart

pitch (approximate)	relative pitch	interval from tonic	fingering
B-0	ṛā	perfect 5th	● ● ● ● ● ●
C	ḍā kōmal	minor 6th	● ● ● ● ● ●
C# (D _b)	ḍā	major 6th	● ● ● ● ● ○
D	ṇī kōmal	minor 7th	● ● ● ● ● ○
D# (E _b)	ṇī	major 7th	● ● ● ● ● ○
E-1	sa	tonic	● ● ● ● ● ○
F	re kōmal	minor 2nd	● ● ● ● ● ○
F# (G _b)	re	major 2nd	● ● ● ● ● ○
G	gā kōmal	minor 3rd	● ● ● ● ● ○
G# (A)	gā	major 3rd	● ● ● ● ● ○
A	mā	perfect 4th	● ● ● ● ● ○
A# (B _b)	mā teevra	aug. 4th	○ ● ● ● ● ●
B	ṛā	perfect 5th	○ ● ● ● ● ●
C	ḍā kōmal	minor 6th	● ● ● ● ● ●
C# (D _b)	ḍā	major 6th	● ● ● ● ● ○
D	ṇī kōmal	minor 7th	● ● ● ● ● ○
D# (E _b)	ṇī	major 7th	● ● ● ● ● ○
E-2	ṣā	tonic	● ● ● ● ● ○
F	ṛē kōmal	minor 2nd	● ● ● ● ● ○
F# (G _b)	ṛē	major 2nd	● ● ● ● ● ○
G	gā kōmal	minor 3rd	● ● ● ● ● ○
G# (A _b)	gā	major 3rd	● ● ● ● ● ○
A	mā	perfect 4th	● ● ● ● ● ○
A# (B _b)	mā teevra	aug. 4th	○ ● ● ● ● ●
B	ṛā	perfect 5th	○ ● ● ● ● ●
C	ḍā kōmal	minor 6th	● ● ● ● ● ●
C# (D _b)	ḍā	major 6th	● ● ● ● ● ○
D	ṇī kōmal	minor 7th	● ● ● ● ● ○
D# (E _b)	ṇī	major 7th	● ● ● ● ● ○
E-3	ṣā	tonic	● ● ● ● ● ○

Staging can often be the ensemble sitting center stage, the tabla player stage left, and two tanpuras behind the bansuri player.

While playing the bansuri, the fingers may cover the holes with second phalanx of the fingers, which facilitates covering the holes that are large distances apart. The holes can be partially uncovered to produce different intonation, slides, microtonal effects. However, there are bansuri players who use the pads of their fingertips to cover the holes of the bansuri, and this may be more comfortable at first for the western flutist when making the shift from the Boehm flute to the bansuri. Below is an image of finger placement on a bansuri using the second phalanx from Catherine Potter’s *Hariprasad Chaurasia: The Individual and the North Indian Classical Music Tradition*.



As stated by Catherine Potter, Chaurasia's idea of a "good bansuri sound" is strong vibrato, full tone, use of dynamics, and the use of sustained tones. According to Potter, tone quality is actually more encouraged in film music rather than classical music, but Chaurasia encourages his classical students to produce full, strong tone quality.

Holding the Bansuri

The bansuri, unlike the Boehm flute, can be held to either the right or left side of the performer. If held to the right, the left hand is placed on the instrument first (first as in closest to the face), palm in, thumb supporting the bansuri away from the palm, index finger straight and angled toward the tone hole. The first three fingers of left hand are placed on the first three holes. Then, the right hand is placed second (furthest away from the face), palm out, fingers flat, some use the tip of the fingers to cover the holes, others use the second phalanx. The little finger of the right hand must angle out from the hand in order to reach the seventh tone hole. The seventh tone

hole is reached by keeping the forearm and hand in-line (wrist not flexed) and rotate them together. Below you will see a picture of hand and finger position from Lyon Leifer's *How to Play the Bansuri*.



Bansuri Ornamentation

There are many different types of ornamentations used in Hindustani music, and many of the instrumental ornamentations are based on vocal genres. However, after listening to many bansuri recordings and watching many videos, I have collected a few ideas: Pitches can be ornamented by physically moving the bansuri up and down and with side to side motions to effect the embouchure placement. Mind (or meend) is produced by slowly rolling the finger in a

circular motion to gradually open and close the hole. Kana is produced by sliding the fingers over or off the hole after blowing. Gamaka is produced by approaching each pitch from above by using the kana technique in combination with embouchure movement and air movement. Gamak is an oscillation between two notes (usually a diatonic step apart) like a tremolo. Taan is improvised variations including rapid variation in accordance with the raga. Below you will see a chart of simple Taans in Raga Yaman from Lyon Leifer's *How to Play the Bansuri*.

X	2								O	3							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16		
<u>ṅrs</u>	<u>ngr</u>	<u>gm'g</u>	<u>m'pm</u>	<u>m'dp</u>	<u>m'nd</u>	<u>pm'g</u>	<u>rsn</u>	Ṇ	G	R	G	S	S	Ṇ	Ḍ		
<u>nsnd</u>	<u>nsn</u>	<u>gm'gr</u>	<u>gpm'g</u>	<u>m'dpm'</u>	<u>dndp</u>	<u>m'pm'g</u>	<u>rsns</u>	Ṇ	G	R	G	S	S	Ṇ	Ḍ		
<u>sndn</u>	<u>rsns</u>	<u>grnr</u>	<u>m'grg</u>	<u>pm'gm'</u>	<u>dpm'd</u>	<u>sndn</u>	<u>rsns</u>	Ṇ	G	R	G	S	S	Ṇ	Ḍ		
<u>nmrg</u>	<u>rgrgm'</u>	<u>gm'gm'p</u>	<u>m'dm'dn</u>	<u>snsnd</u>	<u>ndndm'</u>	<u>pm'pm'g</u>	<u>grgrs</u>	Ṇ	G	R	G	S	S	Ṇ	Ḍ		
<u>ssnd</u>	<u>nndm'</u>	<u>ddpm'</u>	<u>ppm'g</u>	<u>m'm'gr</u>	<u>ggrs</u>	<u>rrsn</u>	<u>ssnd</u>	Ṇ	G	R	G	S	S	Ṇ	Ḍ		
Ṇ	-	Ḍ	P̣	M'	Ḍ	Ṇ	S	<u>nm</u>	<u>rgr</u>	<u>gm'g</u>	<u>m'dp</u>	<u>m'dm'</u>	<u>dnd</u>	<u>ns</u>	<u>ndn</u>		
<u>ns</u>	<u>ndn</u>	<u>dnd</u>	<u>pm'p</u>	<u>m'pm</u>	<u>gm'g</u>	<u>rgr</u>	<u>sns</u>	Ṇ	G	R	G	S	S	Ṇ	Ḍ		

Double note paltas are patterns with a repeated note that is separated by a lower neighbor grace note. Below you will see a chart of double note paltas for use in practicing technique and improvisation from Lyon Leifer's *How to Play the Bansuri*.

CHART THREE
Commonly Used Double-note Paltas

notes per beat

3

4

5

6

7

8

Register shifts are another important ornamentation but considered more of a theme and variations and includes performing one idea and performing it again but in a different register. Andolan is an ornamentation where given scale degrees oscillate between a particular microtonal position of the scale and another, slightly lower position. Andolan is performed by Rocking the finger which produces the relevant scale degree very slightly back and forth in its normal direction of closure and opening. Articulation is another important aspect of not only ornamenting but of the overall performance of a raga. Articulations that are commonly used include: Legato phrasing, pitches connected with meend, single, double, triple tonguing, and slightly detached to staccato.

Performing Raga Yaman

Raga Yaman is commonly used as a beginning raga for those students that are just beginning with North Indian classical music. The following two images are from *The Raga Guide: A Survey of 74 Hindustani Ragas*.

Ascent-descent

Ṇ R G M̄ D Ṇ Ṣ́ Ṇ R G M̄ P D Ṇ Ṣ́ , Ṣ́ Ṇ D P M̄ G R S

or

Melodic outline

S ^{NRDS} Ṇ , Ḍ Ṇ ^G Ṛ G̣—R S , Ṇ ^G Ṛ ^M G̣ M̄ P—M̄ G , G M̄ D N—Ḍ P ,

M̄ D N Ṣ́ , D N ^G Ṛ G̣—Ṛ Ṣ́ , Ṛ N Ṣ́ N—D P , D P—M̄ G , M̄ R G

—R S , Ṇ R G M̄ P—Ṛ G̣—R S

The format of Raga Yaman is as follows: Brief alap, mukhra (which acts as a cue for tabla to get ready to play the theka at the arrival of sam (beat one)), the rest of asthai, (any part of the asthai repeated, ornamented, varied), the barat (continuation of an ongoing development of the raga), then an improvised development begins, general upward direction but remains in the tala, and each improvisation segment ends with a mukhra and enters on sam at the correct time. Next in the format of Raga Yaman is the antara (the key arrival which is emotionally elevated and the section generally keeps going higher in register and later brought to conclusion with descent to low sa). Lastly, final statement of the asthai or asthai's mukhra is given to end the performance.

Composition follows in fast *tintal* (16 counts)

Time 3.39

Song text

एरी आली पिया बिन	<i>Hey friend, without my lover</i>
सखी कल न परत मोहे	<i>I don't find peace</i>
घडी पल छिन दिन ।	<i>At any moment of the day;</i>
सखी जब तें पिया परदेस गवन कीनो	<i>Since my lover went away</i>
रतिया कटत मोरी तारे गिन गिन ॥	<i>I spend my nights counting the stars.</i>

In this famous composition we again encounter the theme of *viraha*, love-in-separation.

The Tala of Raga Yaman

The tala is a cycle of pre-determined beats that includes a pattern of strong and weak beats characterized by the theka or finger strokes of the drum. The tala is also characterized by series of claps and waves. Claps represent strong dividing point in the cycle called the tali, and waves represent strong dividing point in the cycle called the kali. Raga Yaman is performed in Tintal and has sixteen beats in four equal divisions. The period between every two beats is equal. The first beat out of 16 beats is called "sam" and the 9th beat is called "khali" which means "empty." To exhibit the Tintal, there is a clap on the first beat, a clap on the 5th beat, then waves on the 9th beat and lastly again a clap on the 13th beat. The division of the claps and waves makes sense because the word "tintal" derives from Hindi "tin" which means three and Hind "tal" which means clap, so literally Tintal equals to "three claps." Tintal can be illustrated as follows:

clap, 2, 3, 4, clap, 2, 3, 4, wave, 2, 3, 4, clap, 2, 3, 4

clap, 2, 3, 4, clap, 6, 7, 8, wave, 10, 11, 12, clap 14, 15, 16

Improvising

There are many stages of developing a Hindustani musician's improvisation in performance of North Indian classical music. The developing stages of raga improvisation include alap: Asthai and anatra, gamak (new ornamentations, double paltas, etc.), and layakari (the use of taans). Lyon Leifer and his instructional guide "How to Play the Bansuri: A Manual for Self-Instruction: Based on the teaching of Devendra Murdeshwar" is one of the sources for the information presented in this essay and Leifer presents many exercises that can improve technical facility and improvisational skills.

CHART TWO

Common Paltas

notes
per
beat

3

sa ri sa

sa ni sa

sa ga ri

4

sa ri sa ri

sa ni sa ni

sa ri sa ni

sa ni sa ri

sa ri ga ri

sa ni dha ni

5

sa ri sa ri ga

sa ni sa ni dha

sa ni sa ri ga

sa ri sa ni sa

sa ri sa ga ri

sa ga ri sa ri

6

sa ri sa sa ga ri

sa ri sa ri ga má

sa ri sa ni sa ri

sa ni sa ri sa ni

7

sa ri sa sa ri ga ri

sa ri sa sa nidhani

sa ri sa sa ga ri ga

8

sa ri sa ni sa ri ga ri

sa ri sa ri sa ri ga ri

saga ri gasa ri ga ri

Bansuri Fingerings

Again, below is a bansuri fingering chart from Catherine Potter's *Hariprasad Chaurasia: The Individual and the North Indian Classical Music Tradition*.

CHART II Fingering Chart

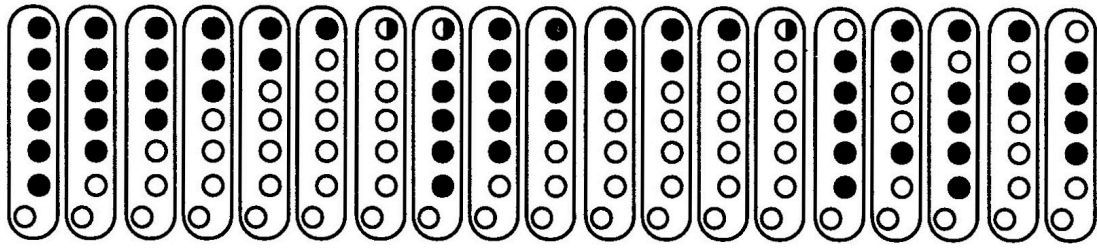
pitch (approximate)	relative pitch	interval from tonic	fingering
B-0	<i>pā</i>	perfect 5th	● ● ● ● ● ●
C	<i>dā komal</i>	minor 6th	● ● ● ● ● ●
C# (Db)	<i>dā</i>	major 6th	● ● ● ● ● ●
D	<i>ṛī komal</i>	minor 7th	● ● ● ● ● ●
D# (Eb)	<i>ṛī</i>	major 7th	● ● ● ● ● ●
E-1	<i>sa</i>	tonic	● ● ● ● ● ●
F	<i>re komal</i>	minor 2nd	● ● ● ● ● ●
F# (Gb)	<i>re</i>	major 2nd	● ● ● ● ● ●
G	<i>gā komal</i>	minor 3rd	● ● ● ● ● ●
G# (A)	<i>gā</i>	major 3rd	● ● ● ● ● ●
A	<i>mā</i>	perfect 4th	● ● ● ● ● ●
A# (Bb)	<i>mā teevra</i>	aug. 4th	● ● ● ● ● ●
B	<i>pā</i>	perfect 5th	● ● ● ● ● ●
C	<i>dā komal</i>	minor 6th	● ● ● ● ● ●
C# (Db)	<i>dā</i>	major 6th	● ● ● ● ● ●
D	<i>ṛī komal</i>	minor 7th	● ● ● ● ● ●
D# (Eb)	<i>ṛī</i>	major 7th	● ● ● ● ● ●
E-2	<i>śa</i>	tonic	● ● ● ● ● ●
F	<i>ṛē komal</i>	minor 2nd	● ● ● ● ● ●
F# (Gb)	<i>ṛē</i>	major 2nd	● ● ● ● ● ●
G	<i>gā komal</i>	minor 3rd	● ● ● ● ● ●
G# (Ab)	<i>gā</i>	major 3rd	● ● ● ● ● ●
A	<i>mā</i>	perfect 4th	● ● ● ● ● ●
A# (Bb)	<i>mā teevra</i>	aug. 4th	● ● ● ● ● ●
B	<i>pā</i>	perfect 5th	● ● ● ● ● ●
C	<i>dā komal</i>	minor 6th	● ● ● ● ● ●
C# (Db)	<i>dā</i>	major 6th	● ● ● ● ● ●
D	<i>ṛī komal</i>	minor 7th	● ● ● ● ● ●
D# (Eb)	<i>ṛī</i>	major 7th	● ● ● ● ● ●
E-3	<i>śa</i>	tonic	● ● ● ● ● ●

The next two images are fingering charts for the bansuri from Lyon Leifer's *How to Play the Bansuri*.

Chart Five

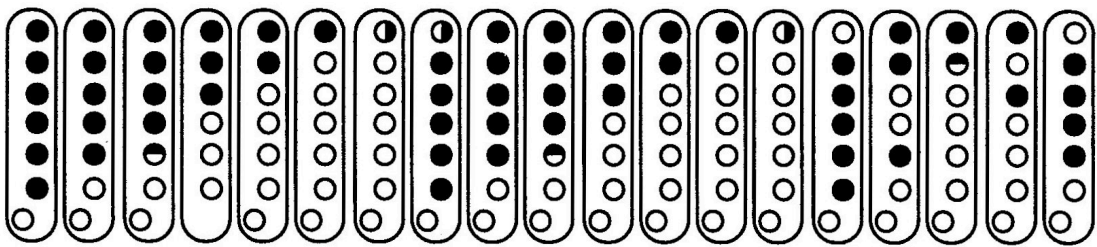
Bansuri Fingerings for the Remaining Scales

B
i
l
a
w
a
l



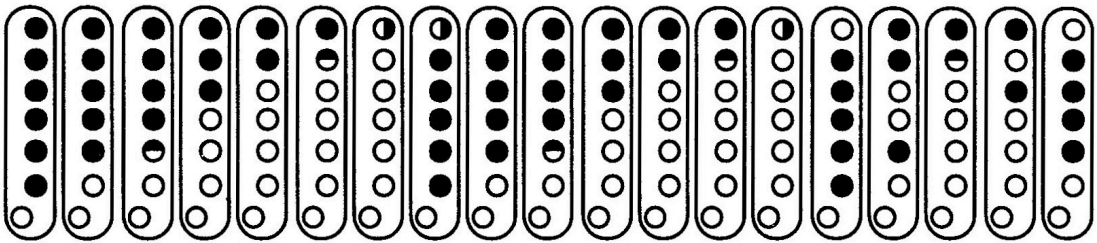
pa dha ni sa ri ga ma pa dha ni sa ri ga ma pa dha ni sa ri

K
h
a
m
a
j



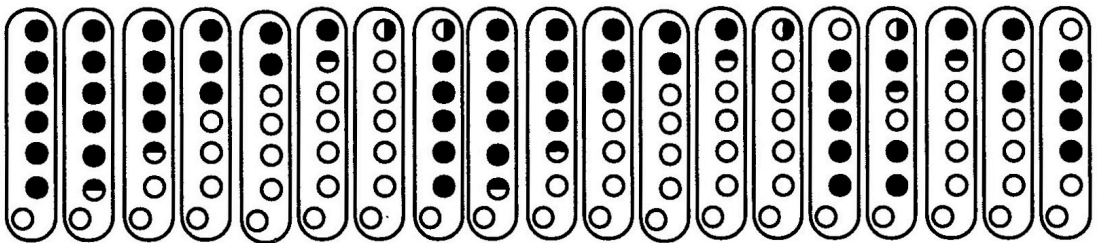
pa dha ni sa ri ga ma pa dha ni sa ri ga ma pa dha ni sa ri

K
a
f
i



pa dha ni sa ri ga ma pa dha ni sa ri ga ma pa dha ni sa ri

A
s
a
w
a
r
i



pa dha ni sa ri ga ma pa dha ni sa ri ga ma pa dha ni sa ri

B
h
a
i
r
a
v
i

padha ni sa ri ga ma padha ni sa ri ga ma padha ni sa ri

T
h
o
d
i

ma'padha ni sa ri ga ma'ma'padha ni sa ri ga ma'ma'padha ni sa ri

P
o
o
r
v
i

ma'padha ni sa ri ga ma'ma'padha ni sa ri ga ma'ma'padha ni sa ri

B
h
a
i
r
a
v

padha ni sa ri ga ma padha ni sa ri ga ma padha ni sa ri

m
a
r
w
a

ma'padha ni sa ri ga ma'ma'padha ni sa ri ga ma'ma'padha ni sa ri

Renowned Performers of the Bansuri

Below is a list of renowned performers of the bansuri, all of whom studied with another renowned guru mentioned in this research.

- Devendra Murdeshwar
- Hariprasad Chaurasia
- Pannalal Ghosh
- Rakesh Chaurasia
- Madhur Kalkarni
- haripada chaudhury
- Pandit V.G. Karnad
- Debu Banergee
- Steve Gorn
- David Philipson
- Anand Murdeshwar
- Nityanand Haldipur
- Ravi Nag
- Gianluigi Sanfratello
- Allaudin Khan
- Ali Akbar Khan
- Pandit Ravi Shankar
- Nikhil Banergee
- Kesarbai Kerkar

Renowned Recordings of the Bansuri

Compact Discs

Raga Darbai Kanada

Dhun In Raga Mishra Pilu

Hariprasad Chaurasia, Bansuri

Fazal Qureshi, Tabla

England by Nimbus Records Limited 1993

Rag Kaunsi Kanhra

Hariprasad Chaurasia, Bansuri

Sabir Khan, Tabla

England by Nimbus Records Limited 1989

Rag Bhimpalasi

Hariprasad Chaurasia, Bansuri

Fazal Qureshi

England by Nimbus Records Limited 1991

Rag Ahir Bhairav

Hariprasad Chaurasia, Bansuri

Sabir Khan, Tabla

England by Nimbus Records Limited 1988

Rag Lalit

Hariprasad Chaurasia, Bansuri

Anindo Chatterjee, Tabla

England by Nimbus Records Limited 1988

Online videos:

1. Dhun in Raga Shivranjani <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7QuDEx3_Ygo>

Prasad Bhandarkar (Bansuri)

Sudarshan Siddhaye (Tabla)

Raga Shivranjani on Bansuri

Raga Shivranjani Description:

<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKXdY7saCYA?>>

2. Raga Yaman: Performer unknown

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O6bPE_6XcH0>

Raga Yaman is an evening traditional Raga. This piece has some free form improvisation and a composition based on a 9 beat rhythmic cycle.

3. Raga Bairagi Bhairav

Flute: Venugopal S Hegde

On Tabla: Allamprabhu Kadkol

Flute Accompaniment: Vaibhav Bhat

“Bansuri Raga Bairagi Bhairav” <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YpXffkbNOTA?>>

Recordings (audio only):

1. Hariprasad Chaurasia: Raag Hamsadhwani

<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VloVAPloX8>>

2. [Hariprasad Chaurasia](#)--Pahadi thumri

<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HkXTJaUYIoI>>

3. Prasad Bhandarkar (Bansuri): Dhun - Vaishnav Jan To (Raga Mishra Khamaj)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OAbFVtIRnMU&feature=watch_response_rev>

4. Pandit Raghunath Seth Bansuri (Flute)

with Ustad Shaik Dawood Tabla accompaniment

Raag Ahir Bhairav

1970

“Pt. RAGHUNATH SETH-FLUTE with Ustad SHAIK DAWOOD-TABLA-AHIR
BHAIRAV”

<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mr8k8401naA&feature=related>>

5. Pandit Pannalal Ghosh (Flute)... Raag Deepavali

<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FtEdAUfoW2o&feature=related>>

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