

Prepared for GGF by Kamala Sankaram, Kelley Rourke, and Nick Richardson

Welcome

Greetings, Glimmerglass.

This dramaturgy packet explores topics related to Kamala Sankaram and Kelley Rourke's *The Jungle Book*, which has its world premiere as part of the 2022 Glimmerglass Festival.

If there are any topics you're interested in exploring more deeply, don't hesitate to reach out.

Kamala, Kelley, and Nick

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Meet the Creators

Kamala Sankaram, composer (Artist in Residence)

Praised as "one of the most exciting opera composers in the country" (Washington Post), composer Kamala Sankaram moves freely between the worlds of experimental music and contemporary opera. Recent commissions include works for the Glimmerglass Festival, Washington National Opera, the PROTOTYPE Festival, and Creative Time, among others. Kamala is known for her operas fusing Indian classical music with the operatic form, including Thumbprint, A Rose, Monkey and Francine in the City of Tigers, and the forthcoming Jungle Book. Also known for her work pushing the boundaries of the operatic form, recent works include The Last Stand, a 10-hour opera created for the trees of Prospect Park, Brooklyn; Only You Will Recognize the Signal, a serial space opera performed live over the internet; Looking at You, a techno-noir featuring live datamining of the audience and a chorus of 25 singing tablet computers; all decisions will be made by consensus, a short absurdist opera performed live over Zoom; and The Parksville Murders, the world's first virtual reality opera.

As a performer, Kamala has been hailed as "an impassioned soprano with blazing high notes" (Wall Street Journal). A frequent collaborator with Anthony Braxton, she has premiered his operas Trillium E and Trillium J, as well as appearing on his 12-hour recording GTM (Syntax) 2017. Other notable collaborations include Meredith Monk's Atlas with the LA Philharmonic, The Wooster Group's La Didone (Kaaitheater, Brussels; Edinburgh International Festival; Rotterdam Schouberg; Grand Théâtre de la Ville, Luxembourg; St. Anne's Warehouse, NY; REDCAT, Los Angeles), and the PROTOTYPE Festival's production of her composition Thumbprint (Baruch Performing Arts, NY; REDCAT, Los Angeles). Kamala is the leader of Bombay Rickey, an operatic Bollywood surf ensemble whose accolades include two awards for Best Eclectic Album from the Independent Music Awards, the 2018 Mid-Atlantic touring grant, and appearances on WFMU and NPR. Awards, grants and residencies: Jonathan Larson Award, NEA ArtWorks, MAP Fund, Opera America, HERE Artist Residency Program, the MacDowell Colony, and the Watermill Center.

Dr. Sankaram holds a PhD from the New School and is currently a member of the composition faculty at SUNY Purchase. http://www.kamalasankaram.com/

Kelley Rourke, librettist (Resident Dramaturg)

Kelley Rourke is a librettist, translator and dramaturg. Original libretti include Lucy, Natural Systems, and Stay (with John Glover); Wilde Tales and And Still We Dream (with Laura Karpman); The Beekeeper (with Wang Lu); The Jungle Book (with Kamala Sankaram); and Odyssey and Robin Hood (with Ben Moore). Her modern English adaptations of numerous standard and not-so-standard operas have been hailed as "crackingly witty" (The Independent, London) and "remarkably well wedded to the music and versification in arias" (New York Times). She has written libretti for four youth operas, with performances across the country. Her adaptation of Massenet's Cendrillon premiered at The Metropolitan Opera in 2021 and was simulcast to movie theaters around the world.

Her work has been commissioned and performed by the Metropolitan Opera, Washington National Opera, English National Opera, Welsh National Opera, The Glimmerglass Festival, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Boston Lyric Opera, Young People's Chorus of NYC, Seattle Opera, Minneso ta Opera, Carnegie Hall, Urban Arias (Washington, DC), Met LiveArts, Houston Grand Opera's HGOco, San Francisco Conservatory, Milwaukee Opera Theatre, American Opera Projects, Atlanta Opera, Kentucky Opera, Walnut Hill School for the Arts, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, and Nautilus Music-Theater, among others.

Youth Opera at Glimmerglass

Under the leadership of Francesca Zambello, The Glimmerglass Festival has commissioned three previous youth operas: <u>Odyssey</u> (Ben Moore/Kelley Rourke), <u>Wilde Tales</u> (Laura Karpman/Kelley Rourke), and <u>Robin Hood</u> (Ben Moore/Kelley Rourke). These operas have gone on to be performed by young people across the country at organizations including Young People's Chorus of New York City, Minnesota Opera, Coral Reef Cuda Chorus, Seattle Opera, Walnut Hill School for the Arts, Opera Santa Barbara, Houston Grand Opera, and West Chester University. The Glimmerglass Youth Ensemble has also been featured in Glimmerglass productions of the little match girl passion (David Lang), Noah's Flood (Benjamin Britten), The Little Prince (Rachel Portman/Nicholas Wright) and more.

Listen

Last year, Glimmerglass produced a digital companion to <u>The</u> <u>Jungle Book</u>, featuring artwork by Tharanga Goonetilleke and excerpts from the opera.

<u>Taking Up Serpents</u>, which Kamala wrote with librettist Jerre Dye, will appear at Glimmerglass this summer in a double bill with Damien Geter and Lila Palmer's *Holy Ground*. Chicago Opera Theater produced a recording of <u>Taking Up Serpents</u> in conjunction with its 2020 production.

<u>Miranda</u> is a 60-minute steampunk murder-mystery chamber opera in which the six instrumentalists play, sing, and act all the parts. Through a lush score inspired by diverse genres such as Baroque opera, Hindustani music, tango, hip-hop, and found-sound audioscapes, Miranda's story unfolds in song, sound, movement, video, and dialogue.

Sankaram is a member of <u>Bombay Rickey</u>, a five-piece band with a unique sound evocative of 1960s movie soundscapes. The group plays both covers and original music that borrow equally from the worlds of surf rock, cumbia, spaghetti-Western, and Bollywood, balanced out with soaring operatic vocals.

Kelley has been engaged as a guest lecturer at Boston University, Carnegie Mellon University, NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, Walnut Hill School for the Arts, and University of Maryland College Park; and as librettist mentor for Washington National Opera's American Opera Initiative. She was founding editor of Opera America magazine and a contributor to the New Grove Dictionary of American Music. Kelley is resident dramaturg for The Glimmerglass Festival. Last year she created adaptations of Trovatore, The Magic Flute and La Périchole for the Festival's Lawn Stage.

Upcoming premieres include *Eat the Document*, an opera with music by John Glover based on the novel by Dana Spiotta, and an English adaptation of Korngold's *Die Tote Stadt* for English National Opera.

Synopsis

As the opera opens, it is dusk in the forest. Raksha, the wolf matriarch, leads the cubs in song ("The Power of the Pack"). A roar interrupts, and the wolves begin sing of the mean, loner tiger ("Sh-Sh-Shere Khan"). Mowgli, fleeing Shere Khan, runs straight into the middle of the pack; Shere Khan enters moments later. The pack closes around Mowgli and faces Shere Khan down; when they present a united front, he is no match for them, and he slinks away.

The wolves part to take a look at Mowgli, noting how different she is from them ("Little Frog"). Mowgli tells the story of how Shere Khan surprised her in the forest and her mother bravely sacrificed herself ("I was playing at the edge of the village").

The cubs argue about whether Mowgli should be allowed to stay with the pack ("She doesn't look like us"). Baloo appears and they ask him to settle the argument. After conducting his own inspection, Baloo advises the cubs that Mowgli could be useful. Mowgli, more confident now, shows off ("These hands of mine"). Baloo is just about to exploit Mowgli's capabilities when Hyena shows up. She mocks the wolves and Mowgli ("I hear") and runs off to report to Shere Khan. Bagheera enters and tells of living among the humans ("It was early morning").

Baloo leads the cubs in a lesson ("If you want to run with the best kind of pack"). The cubs play together ("Hey Mowgli, can you do this?") and realize their differences make them stronger ("The Heart that Beats").

Shere Khan lurks around the edge of the pack, but the united group of wolves stands tall, and he dares not approach. Mowgli wonders why Shere Khan never came into the village, and Bagheera sings of the red flower. Raksha tells the cubs it's time to nap ("The palm leaves rustle"). Mowgli decides to run to the village and obtain the red flower. Little Sister sees her go and alerts the other cubs, who begin to argue again ("She doesn't look like us" reprise).

Suddenly, Shere Khan is among the pack, which is now divided—and vulnerable. He seizes one of the cubs. Mowgli appears, holding the red flower high ("The Red Flower"), and Shere Khan yields to him. As Shere Khan cowers, Little Sister remembers something Raksha once said—Shere Khan is mean because he has no pack of his own. She suggests they can be his pack. The entire ensemble sings of how their differences make them stronger.



Tharanga Goonetilleke created the conceptual artwork for the world premiere production of The Jungle Book. Tharanga is a visual artist and a Juilliard trained Opera singer. She is a native of Sri Lanka. Tharanga has been drawing and painting ever since she was a child, taking after her mother who is a visual artist herself. In the recent years her work has been shown in New York, Brooklyn, Jersey City and in Bayonne. In 2017, She won third place for water color and Ink category organized by the Art Circle of Bayonne. This year she received an Honorable Mention in the Global Warming International Online Art Competition. Her visual arts career highlights have been "Her Space Time" series of portraits of women in science commissioned by Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo Canada, Illustrations for soon to be published " Love and Dreams" book of poetry by Andrew Nemr and solo exhibition at The Bridge Art Gallery in Bayonne, New Jersey in 2019. Tharanga will be showing in a two-women Art show at Casa Colobo, Jersey City in October 2020. Tharanga continues to have a singing career as well as one in the visual arts with hope of collaborating disciplines and with the intention of breaking boundaries, labels and stereotypes. Tharanga was named a TED Fellow since 2015. In 2020 Tharanga was given an Honorable mention by Art Impact International, for her piece "The Last Chance".

 $That ang a \'s\ conceptual\ artwork\ is\ featured\ throughout\ this\ packet.$



Rudyard Kipling's The Jungle Book

John and Alice Kipling moved from England to India in 1864. Their first child, Rudyard, was born one year later. When he was six, he was sent back to England for schooling, but he returned to India as a young man to rejoin his family and begin a career as a journalist. He also began publishing poetry and short stories, and he quickly gained a popular following.

In 1892, Kipling moved to Brattleboro, Vermont, where he began writing a series of short stories set in the jungle around Seoni, a city in the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh. These stories would eventually be collected as two volumes of <u>The Jungle Book</u> (1894-5). The first Mowgli story was the main source for the opera. You can read it here.

Now this is the Law of the Jungle—as old and as true as the sky; And the Wolf that shall keep it may prosper, but the Wolf that shall break it must die.

As the creeper that girdles the tree-trunk the Law runneth forward and back— For the strength of the Pack is the Wolf, and the strength of the Wolf is the Pack.



Bengal Tiger

Wash daily from nose-tip to tail-tip; drink deeply, but never too deep; And remember the night is for hunting, and forget not the day is for sleep.

The jackal may follow the Tiger, but, Cub, when thy whiskers are grown, Remember the Wolf is a hunter—go forth and get food of thine own.

Keep peace with the Lords of the Jungle—the Tiger, the Panther, the Bear; And trouble not Hathi the Silent, and mock not the Boar in his lair.

When Pack meets with Pack in the Jungle, and neither will go from the trail, Lie down till the leaders have spoken—it may be fair words shall prevail.



Bengal Tiger

When ye fight with a Wolf of the Pack, ye must fight him alone and afar, Lest others take part in the quarrel, and the Pack be diminished by war.

The Lair of the Wolf is his refuge, and where he has made him his home, Not even the Head Wolf may enter, not even the Council may come.

The Lair of the Wolf is his refuge, but where he has digged it too plain, The Council shall send him a message, and so he shall change it again.

(Continued...)



Sloth Bear

If ye kill before midnight, be silent, and wake not the woods with your bay, Lest ye frighten the deer from the crops, and the brothers go empty away.

Ye may kill for yourselves, and your mates, and your cubs as they need, and ye can; But kill not for pleasure of killing, and SEVEN TIMES NEVER KILL MAN.

If ye plunder his Kill from a weaker, devour not all in thy pride; Pack-Right is the right of the meanest; so leave him the head and the hide.

The Kill of the Pack is the meat of the Pack. Ye must eat where it lies; And no one may carry away of that meat to his lair, or he dies.

The Kill of the Wolf is the meat of the Wolf. He may do what he will, But, till he has given permission, the Pack may not eat of that Kill.

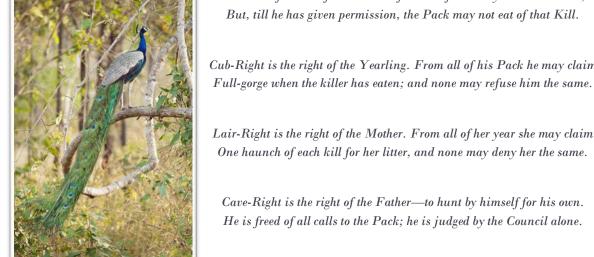
Cub-Right is the right of the Yearling. From all of his Pack he may claim Full-gorge when the killer has eaten; and none may refuse him the same.

One haunch of each kill for her litter, and none may deny her the same.

Cave-Right is the right of the Father—to hunt by himself for his own. He is freed of all calls to the Pack; he is judged by the Council alone.

Because of his age and his cunning, because of his gripe and his paw, In all that the Law leaveth open, the word of the Head Wolf is Law.

Now these are the Laws of the Jungle, and many and mighty are they; But the head and the hoof of the Law and the haunch and the hump is—Obey!



Peacock



Pack Structure

Because of the ways in which wolves have evolved and the special demands of their way of life, wolves have become one of the most highly social of all carnivores. Wolves live in packs - groups of animals that are usually related by close blood ties. A hierarchical order exists within the pack; every animal knows its place in that order.

packs. Pack life ensures the care and feeding of the young, and allows wolves to defend their common territory. Wolves live in packs because cooperation allows them to bring down larger prey.

(Source: Wolf Haven International)



Striped Hyena



Mowgli

In the original story, the "human cub" named Mowgli is a small child, barely old enough to walk. We wanted our Mowgli to be old enough to have some vocal solos, so we made her a bit older. Her? That's right. In the world premiere production of The Jungle Book, Mowgli is cast as a girl. But Mowgli – and most of the characters in the opera – can be played by either a boy or a girl.

The Hyena

In Kipling's Jungle Book, Tabaqui the Jackal runs about making mischief and gossiping. Like wolves, jackals are canines — wild relatives of domesticated dogs. And like wolves, jackals communicate with howls and barks. We wanted our gossipy mischief-maker to have a very different sound from the wolves, so we chose the Hyena, which is closer to a feline than a canine. Our hyena's sound is one part laughing hyena, one part "valley girl."



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The Wolf Cubs

Choral numbers are the backbone of our Jungle Book opera. We envisioned The Jungle Book as not only the story of Mowgli, but also the journey of the young wolf pack as they decide what to do with a stranger in their midst. Some of their songs, such as the lesson on the laws of the jungle, are directly based on material in Rudyard Kipling's book; other scenes were invented for the opera.

Shere Khan

In the famous films of *The Jungle Book*, Shere Khan is a terrifying figure who fills the screen – his appearance causes a shiver to run down your spine. We wanted to make Shere Khan sound as different as possible from the rest of the animals, so we put two singers into one costume, allowing Shere Khan's voice to come out as eerie harmony.



The Red Flower

For the wolves and other animals in the story, a fire is a strange and terrifying sight. But a setting a large fire onstage is not a very good idea. When the "fire" enters the story, Kamala used the sound of the harmonium, an instrument associated with colonial India, to create a dramatic change in the sound world. The harmonium has a keyboard, similar to a piano, but it is played with a bellows—like a bellows used to fan the flames of a fire.



From Page to Stage

In a book, the characters come to life through a combination of words (the author's) and imagination (yours). The narration helps readers "see" anything the author can dream up.

When a book is turned into a movie, we see the world of the book through the filmmaker's eyes. A film uses a lot less words than a book – images do most of the work of storytelling. (Think about how many words it would take to describe a complicated five-minute chase scene!)

When a composer and librettist work together to make an opera, they think about how music can help the audience "see" the story. Sometimes, small adjustments in the characters or story help make room for music as a storytelling tool.

Setting the Scene

Our scenic artists have been hard at work building and painting our sets for the opera.



The Music of the Jungle

by Kamala Sankaram

The music in this opera is based on Indian classical music. India has a long and rich musical tradition, reaching all the way back to before opera was even invented!

This part of the study guide is here to help you learn a little bit more how the music works. You can read it all the way through or just read the sections that are most interesting to you. Along the way, I've included some practice exercises for those of you who'd like to try playing and singing some classical Indian music. There are also QR codes that will take you to music and video examples. I hope you have lots of fun and that it will inspire you to keep learning about music from India (and other places)!

A Little Bit of History

India is a large country in South Asia with a history dating back thousands of years. In fact, people were living in the Indus Valley (which is where India gets its name from) when the pharaohs of ancient Egypt built the pyramids. Much of India's culture comes from the *Vedic* period, which was when some of the earliest Hindu texts, the *Vedas*, were written. Hinduism is probably the oldest currently practiced religion in the world, and the Vedas are a collection of philosophy and guidance for living (including the very first form of yoga). Indian music initially developed as a way to share these Vedic texts through melodic chanting. Many of the characteristics of Indian music later evolved through its association with Sanskrit plays, particularly as written in Bharata Muni's *Natya Shastra*, which was a guidebook for how to create good theater. Most importantly, Indian classical music as we know it now was very much affected by the influence of invaders in the northern part of the country. For various reasons, most of these invaders didn't make it all the way to the south. And this is why we start to see a divide between music in northern and southern India: both have the same roots and the same approach to rhythm and pitch, but the cultural influences from outside of India led to differences in the exact rhythms and pitches that are used, in the instruments that each use, and in the kinds of songs that are performed in the north versus the south.



Rhythm (Tal)

In Indian classical music, rhythm is called *tal*. The way that this kind of music handles rhythm is a little bit different than the way that European classical music does: instead of thinking of musical time as a straight line, musical time is a circle! This means that the first beat and the last beat of the cycle are the same. This very important beat is called *sam*. In Indian music, one of the ways that you keep track of where you are in the cycle is through clap patterns, similar to what you are doing in *The Jungle Book*.

Tal is typically learned through vocal percussion (which we'll learn more about in a little bit).

Pitch (Swara) and Raga

The notes that are used are called *swara*. The *swara* are the building blocks of a *raga*.

What is a raga? The word "raga" means "color," and this is a good way to think about it!

The choice of raga colors the music with a particular mood by using specific notes in specific order. The most similar example from European classical music is the difference between a major and minor scale. In both major and minor, you can start on any note and the scale will have the same pattern of steps.

Here's C major, with the pattern of whole steps and half steps:

Notes	С		D		E		F		G		A		В		С
Intervals		whole		whole		half		whole		whole		whole		half	
And here's C m	ninor:														
Notes	C		D		ЕЬ		F		G		$\mathbf{A}b$		ВЬ		C
Intervals		whole		half		whole		whole		half		whole		whole	

The different patterns give us a different feeling and a different sense of mood — we tend to think of minor scales as a little darker than major scales. Composers will sometimes use minor scales when the mood is scary or sad. The raga system also uses different patterns of notes to create different moods, but there are many other things to also think about. For example, ragas may use a different pattern when a melody is going up (called *aaroha*) than when it's going down called *avroha*). To really know a raga, you have to know the pattern for up, the pattern for down, which notes are most important, how the notes can be played in relationship to each other, how to ornament the note in order to show its beauty, and more! How do you learn all of this?

Indian classical music isn't usually written down. Instead, you learn the music by ear. Part of the way you do this is by learning the ragas using their note names (which is called *sargam*). Do you know the song "Do, a Deer"? "Sa Ri Ga" is just like "Do Re Mi!"

Instead of "Do Re Mi Fa Sol La Ti Do," we say:

Sa Ri Ga Ma Pa Da Ni Sa

There is some sargam at the very beginning of *The Jungle Book*, when the cubs are waking up – see if you can find it in your score.



Both kinds of Indian classical music use improvisation, which is when the musician is composing the music in real time during the performance. You'll often hear an Indian classical singer improvising using sargam.

So now that you know a little more about Indian classical music in general, let's look at the difference between the north and south!

Music in the South (Carnatic)

In Carnatic music, vocal percussion is called *solkattu* (also called *konnakol* when it is performed). You'll especially hear it during a performance of the South Indian classical dance *bharatanatyam*. Let's learn the vocal percussion for a Carnatic tal called *adi tal*.

Adi tal has 8 beats in the cycle. The clap pattern uses your pinky, ring, and middle fingers, and a wave (W) as well as a clap (C).

Beat	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Clap	C	pinky	ring	middle	C	W	C	W
Solkattu	ta	ka	di	mi	ta	ka	jo	nu

Once you have this pattern down, try the next level up where you keep the clap the same but use two solkattu syllables for each beat:

Beat	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Clap	C	pinky	ring	middle	C	\mathbf{W}	C	\mathbf{W}
Solkattu	taka	dimi	taka	jonu	taka	dimi	taka	jonu

And once you get this, you can try the third level: four syllables per beat! (ta=t, ka=k, di=d, mi=m, jo=j, nu=n)

Beat	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Clap	C	pinky	ring	middle	C	W	C	\mathbf{W}
Solkattu	tkdm	tkjn	tkdm	tkjn	tkdm	tkjn	tkdm	tkjn

You can see all three levels in this video:



Tal is also played on percussion instruments. Traditionally, Carnatic music has used drums like the mridangam, a barrel shaped drum, and the ghatam, which is a clay pot!

You can see examples of both here:

<u>Mridangam</u>



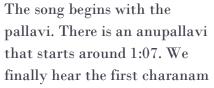
Ghatam



Most of the Carnatic music you'll hear was written by one of three composers (sometimes called the "Carnatic trinity"): Thyagaraja, Muthuswami Dikshitar and Syama Sastri. A typical composition is called a *kriti* and it has verses and choruses just like you hear in your favorite songs. The verse is called *charanam* and the chorus (or main theme) is the *pallavi*. You may sometimes also get a second main theme called the *anupallavi*. The soloist (usually a singer), will play around with the melody using ornaments called *gamaka*.



You can hear all of this in performance of the kriti "Appa Rama Bhakti" by Thyagaraja:





at 1:47. Listen to how the singer's voice wiggles and winds around the notes of the melody. Can you hear when the pallavi comes back?

In addition to singing, Carnatic music will often include instruments like the *veena*, which is a string instrument.

It looks a little bit like a giant guitar, but you play it by bending the strings as well as plucking them. You can see a performance of the veena here:



Music in the North (Hindustani)

In Hindustani tal also uses vocal percussion, but it's a little bit different than solkattu. Hindustani vocal percussion is inspired by the sound of the instrument, the *tabla*. The tabla are actually two drums, one pitched high, and one very deep. To perform the vocal percussion (called *bol*), a musician makes sounds that imitate the sound of the tabla.

Let's learn a few of the bols!

Dhi – This is both of the drums being hit at the same time. How deep can you make your voice as you say the word "dha"?

Na – This is just the higher drum. Say the word "na" a little higher and shorter than "dhi."

Ti - Also the higher drum, but a little more mellow than "na."

When the bols are combined together into a pattern, it's called a *theka*. Let's put the bols we just learned into the theka called *jhap tal*.

Jhap Tal: a 10-beat cycle divided into 2 + 3 + 2 + 3

Bol	Dhi na	Dhi dhi na	ti na	Dhi dhi na
Clap	C	C	\mathbf{W}	C

Now watch this wonderful video of Ustad Alla Rakha and Ravi Shankar demonstrating Jhap Tal:

During the reign of the Mughal Emperor Akbar, the famous court musician Tansen wrote a lot of the music that is still played in northern India. Unlike Carnatic music, Hindustani music doesn't have choruses. Instead, there are short melodic themes and a lot of improvisation. Let's hear how this works by learning one of my favorite ragas, Raga Jog (which you'll hear during the Lullaby in the Jungle Book). I've given you the sargam and the note names if we use C as Sa. I', using the apostrophe (') to show when we're an octave higher.



Raga Jog (to be performed late at night, between 9pm-12am)

Aaroha (for melodies going up)	Sa	Ga	m	ıa	Pa	ni		Sa'
C scale	С	G	F		G	$\mathbf{B}\flat$		C'
Avroha (for melodies going down	a) Sa'	ni	Pa	ma	Ga	Sa	ga	Sa
C scale	C'	$\mathbf{B} \flat$	G	${f F}$	G	\mathbf{C}	ЕЬ	C



Now that you know the raga, <u>listen to Ravi Shankar play it on the sitar</u>, which is a string instrument related to the veena. Listen to how he begins with a slow improvisation called *alap*. As he continues to play, the improvisation becomes more rhythmic and gets faster.

I hope you've enjoyed spending some time with Indian classical music and that you're inspired to learn even more! See you in the Jungle!

