

# Notes and Planets

Shivala Morfoisse [dhruvad.fr@gmail.com](mailto:dhruvad.fr@gmail.com)  
Bertrand Canac [bcanac@gmx.fr](mailto:bcanac@gmx.fr)

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This article studies the connections between the notes in Indian music and the planets in Vedic astrology.

## Context

Veda (knowledge) is reputed to be the oldest tradition of knowledge on earth. In recent decades, thanks to the Indian sage Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Veda has been restored to its true meaning. Much more than a tradition of knowledge, Maharishi presents Veda as "the constitution of the universe" or "the plan of creation".

Just as the seed contains all the information of the tree, just as our DNA contains all the knowledge of the organization, mechanisms and structure of our body, Veda contains all the knowledge of the laws that build and operate the universe.

## The universe as an expression of the Veda

The various Vedic sciences, which are extensions of the Veda, express how the laws of nature, initially unified at their source, diversify and manifest themselves in the diversity of the universe. The universe is thus an expression of the Veda.

To scientifically validate this fundamental discovery, Maharishi asked a neurologist, Dr. Tony Nader, to research the Veda and Vedic literature in human physiology.

The results of 10 years of research by Dr. Tony Nader under Maharishi's guidance show an incredibly accurate correlation of Vedic literature and human physiology, both in structure and function.

These fundamental findings for science were published in the book *"Human Physiology: Expression of Veda and the Vedic Literature"*.

With the same goal of showing how the cosmos is an expression of the Veda, in 1998 Maharishi asked the Music and Gandharva Veda Department at Maharishi University of Management (MUM), Fairfield, Iowa, USA, to research the correspondences between musical notes, astronomy, astrology, and science. Shivala was then a student and head of the music department at MUM.

## A raga is a "solar system".

An article from an astronomy research paper was of great interest to Shivala. In summary, the research showed that there is a deep underlying harmony in the structure of our solar system.

Researchers have shown that if a single planet were to be moved artificially from its orbit, even slightly, the delicate balance that links the planets together would be disrupted and the entire solar system would be upset.

Many years later, after studying and understanding the functioning of the scales of the Dhrupad (the purest and oldest known form of Vedic music or Gandharva Veda), Shivala discovered that each Raga, which is basically a scale, can be compared to a solar system whose notes are the planets. The beauty and harmonizing effect of the raga is produced by the harmonious relationship of all the notes of the scale to each other, resulting from the very precise position of each note. If even one note of the scale is off, even slightly, the beauty and harmony of the raga is destroyed.

*Note: today 150 ragas are still played in India (out of 300), that is 150 different scales.*

## Music and astrology

Recently, Shivala and Bertrand Canac have discovered striking correspondences between the notes and the planets as described in Jyotish (Vedic astrology).

**The ratio of 7 to 12** is at the heart of both music and Vedic astrology.

To understand the intimacy of this **7/12** relationship, it is necessary to know some common points and differences between the Western scale and the Indian scale.

*Note: in this article the terms "Indian music", "Vedic music" and "Gandharva Veda" are synonymous.*

### Common points of Western and Indian music

1. The scale has 7 notes, **7 names of notes** to be more precise. These names differ according to the countries:

- Countries of Latin languages: DO, RE, MI, FA, SOL, LA, SI
- Anglo-Saxon countries: A, B, C, D, E, F, G
- Indian music: SA, RE, GA, MA, PA, DHA, NI

2. These 7 notes are distributed on a scale of 12 steps, either positioned every 2 steps (interval of 1 tone), or every step (interval of  $\frac{1}{2}$  tone).

3. To obtain the complete scale of 12 semitones (chromatic scale), 2 **alterations** are added to the notes: diminution and augmentation.

A note can thus be natural, or decreased by  $\frac{1}{2}$  tone or increased by  $\frac{1}{2}$  tone.

### Names of alterations

Alteration	Western music	Indian music
Without	Natural	Shudh (pure)
Decreased by $\frac{1}{2}$ tone	Flat (b)	Komal ( <u>RE GA DHA NI</u> )
Increased by $\frac{1}{2}$ tone	Sharp (#)	Tivra (MA)

### Differences between Western and Indian Music

*A careful comparative study shows that Western music has its roots in Indian music and that over time many subtleties have been lost.*

*In order to stay in the context of the article, we will see only the differences that interest us.*

#### Western music

- The **TONIC** can be any note (C, D, E, F...)
- All notes can be altered. As a result a note can have several names. For example **C sharp = D flat...** Not a very systematic system!

#### Indian music

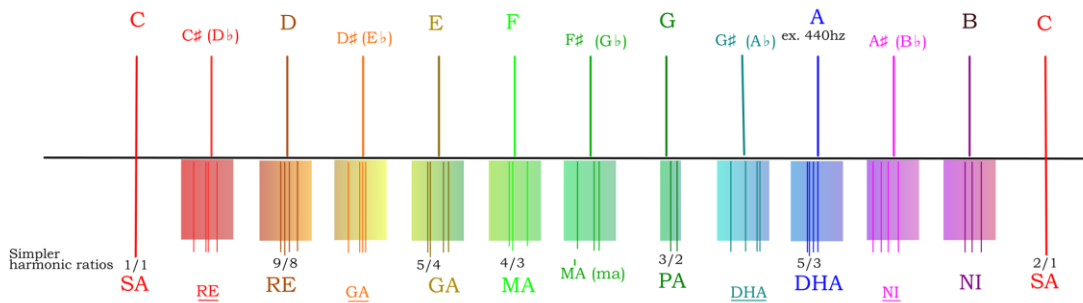
- **SA** is not only the first note of the scale. Unlike C in the western scale, **SA** is always the **reference note, the TONIC**. Being the reference note, it can neither be diminished nor augmented.
- Also PA, (the dominant or fifth) which is the second most important note of the scale cannot be altered.
- MA (the fourth) can be increased (Tivra) but not decreased.
- RE, GA, DHA, NI can be decreased (Komal) but not increased.

It is this very systematic character of the Indian scale that allows the notes of Indian music to be precisely linked to Vedic astrology.

## Difference between Western and Indian musical scales

### Western Music

Only one scale - One position non harmonic for the 12 notes distributed equally (vertical lines)



### Indian Music

More than 300 scales (Raga) - The 12 notes always on harmonic ratios have more than 100 positions (vertical lines are examples)

The 3 "accidentals" :

Shudh (natural) SA RE GA MA PA DHA NI

Komal (flat) RE GA DHA NI

Tivra (sharp) ṀA (ma)

**Jyotish** (Vedic astrology) has **7 Graha** (translated as planets, although sun and moon are not planets) and **12 Rashi** (signs).

Each of the 12 signs is ruled by 1 planet, who is his Lord.

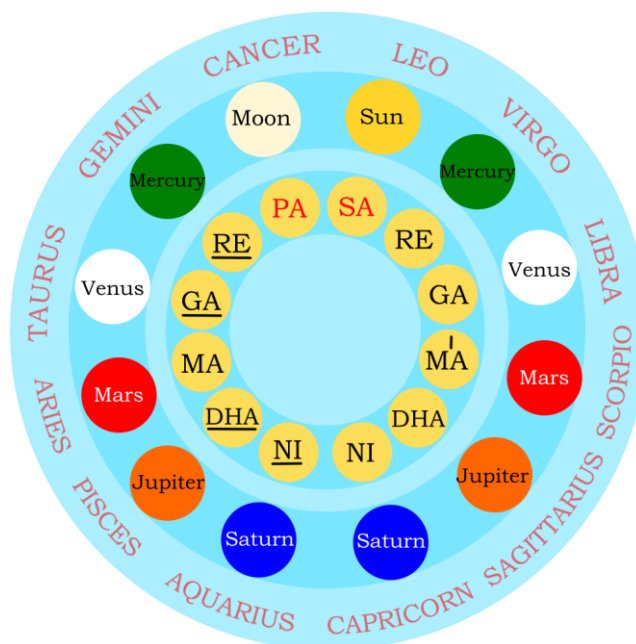
The 2 most important "planets", **sun and moon**, are **Lord of only one sign**.

**Each of the 5 other planets is Lord of 2 signs**.

Jyotish tradition says Surya (the sun) is the king, and Chandra (the moon) is the queen. They chose their home side by side. **The sun chose the sign Leo** and **the moon the sign Cancer**. Then the sun and the moon have each allocated to each of the planets one sign on their respective side.

Thus, there is an **exact correspondence between**:

- The **2 most important planets** (sun and moon) and **the 2 most important notes** (SA and PA) which occupy only **1 position**,
- The 5 other planets and the 5 other notes that occupy each 2 positions.



Sign	Note	Planet	Characteristic	Sign	Note	Planet	Characteristic
Cancer	Pa	Moon	Mind	Leo	Sa	Sun	The Self
Gemini	<u>Re</u>	Mercury	Intellect	Virgo	Re	Mercury	Conceptualization
Taurus	<u>Ga</u>	Venus	Emotions	Libra	Ga	Venus	Balance, weighing pros and cons
Aries	Ma	Mars	Action	Scorpio	Ma	Mars	Transformation
Pisces	<u>Dha</u>	Jupiter	Wisdom	Sagittarius	Dha	Jupiter	Spreading knowledge
Aquarius	<u>Ni</u>	Saturn	New ideas	Capricorn	Ni	Saturn	Return to the self
ŚA - New Cycle							

The association we make in these tables of each note with a planet and a sign has no scientific basis yet. However, it should be noted that the pure and augmented notes on the right have a more luminous and joyful energy, therefore solar, and correspond to the major scale in Western music. Similarly, the diminished notes on the left are more sentimental or nostalgic, thus lunar, and correspond to the Western minor scales.

### Important technical note

*"Precision" in the position of the notes in Indian music does not mean that there is a unique position per note as in Western music. In Indian music, a note is always a harmonic relationship with the tonic, expressed mathematically by a ratio. Many possible ratios for the same note give an incomparable richness to Indian music. One can compare a Raga (a scale) to a Yoga in Vedic astrology (a combination of specific positions of certain planets that produces a specific influence). Another comparison to help understand this very important point is to compare the different possible ratios of a note to the different degrees of position of the planets in the signs.*

### Conclusion

This demonstration, with the help of the 7/12 ratio, showing a very precise correspondence between music and astrology contributes to our understanding that Vedic sciences were not invented but are based on universal constants which are the laws of nature.

Another very interesting element: the 7 notes and 12 semitones of the scale can also be understood in terms of **cycles** by including the octave (8<sup>th</sup> note). We then obtain the ratio 8/13 which represents the golden number, another constant in nature.

To add a poetic touch (and much more), Maharishi said that the movement of the planets is the way it is because **the planets love this movement**. And Mozart said, *"My job is to put together the notes that love each other"*.

After all, planets like notes are made of consciousness and therefore are living and sensitive beings...

*"Gandharva music is the eternal melody of Nature, spontaneously sung in all levels of creation, from the most minute to the huge, enormous, ever-expanding universe."*  
- Maharishi Mahesh Yogi

### References

- Shivala site: <http://dhrupadmusic.com/>

- Book by Dr. Tony Nader: *"Human Physiology: Expression of Veda and the Vedic Literature"* Maharishi Vedic University, 2000 - 610 pages