

POPULAR & FILM MUSIC (HINDI)

Specialism Syllabus

For use within the Music Performance qualification framework

1. Syllabus overview

The syllabus develops conceptual understanding and practical vocal skill in contemporary Indian popular and film music, with a supporting foundation in Hindustani classical vocal practice. It is designed to build progressively from basic awareness of swara, rhythm, vocal range and raag through to advanced interpretation, ornamentation, improvisation, stylistic control and performance.

The repertoire is principally Hindi popular and film music, while later stages draw on classical, folk, Sufi and non-film traditions to broaden stylistic awareness and performance capability.

1.1 Progression structure

Stage	Indicative guided learning	Popular & Film Music progression	Qualification position	Status
Preparatory	12 hours	Foundation skills	Developmental pathway	Included
Intermediate	24 hours	Levels 1-2 content	Developmental pathway	Included
Proficient	96 hours	Levels 3-6 content	Developmental pathway	Included
Advanced Level 1	Part of 120-hour Advanced stage*	Merged Levels 7-9 content	Grade 8 / RQF Level 3	Included

1.2 Use of external benchmarks

References to other music frameworks are presented as contextual curriculum benchmarks only. They should not be interpreted as formal credit transfer, regulatory equivalence or automatic exemption unless separately approved within the relevant qualification arrangements.

2. Preparatory stage

Indicative guided learning: 12 hours

Aim: to develop general awareness of Indian classical music and establish basic facility in vocal music skills.

- Introduction to Swara and Naad.
- Aaroh-Avroh and basic Alankars using 2-3 note patterns.
- Introduction to types of Swara and varieties of Sargam.
- Understanding octaves and exploring vocal range.
- Rudiments of rhythm: Taal and musical time.

- Introduction to Raag and Thaati.
- Swargeet based on a Raag.
- Exploration of Raag-based film songs.

3. Intermediate stage

Indicative guided learning: 24 hours

3.1 Classical foundation

Indicative benchmark: partly aligned to Prarambhik-level Hindustani classical vocal study.

Raag Durga

- Introduction to the characteristics of Raag Durga.
- Swargeet and Bandish practice.
- Swar Vistar, Alaapchari and Bol Banaav techniques.
- Taan practice using Sargam and Akaar Taan.
- Commercial applications of Raag Durga.

Raag Bhoopali

- Introduction to Raag Bhoopali and its Swargeet.
- Introduction to Rupak Taal.
- Bandish and Swar Vistar practice.

3.2 Popular & Film Music

Stage 1 - Vocal apparatus activation

- Open up the voice and create a clear, strong tone.
- Develop basic vocal mechanics for handling a broader range.
- Voice science focus: understand how energy-driven singing activates resonance and strengthens the voice.
- Repertoire focus: energetic, medium-paced songs with a limited pitch range and minimal detailing.

Stage 2 - Vocal activation with range discovery

- Build confidence for higher-range songs and more complex melodies.
- Develop stronger vocal throw and volume.
- Introduce ornamentation techniques.
- Voice science focus: differentiate between vocal tone quality and physical singing mechanics to improve control and range flexibility.
- Repertoire focus: medium-paced, fuller-range songs with consonant clusters and simple ornamentation.

4. Proficient stage

Indicative guided learning: 96 hours

4.1 Classical foundation

Indicative benchmark: aligned in scope to Praveshika-1 level study.

Raag Bhoopali (continued)

- Advanced Bol Banaav and other improvisation practices.
- Total performance and commercial applications of Bhoopali.

Raag Kaafi

- Introduction, Swar Geet and Bandish in Madhyalaya.
- Hori, Swar Vistar and Taan practices.
- Commercial applications of Raag Kaafi.

Raag Khamaj

- Introduction to Raag Khamaj.
- Introduction to Jhaptal and exploration of Bandish in Jhaptal and Teentaal.
- Improvisation in Sthaayi and Antara.
- Commercial applications of Raag Khamaj.

Raag Bhimpalasi

- Introduction to the basics of Hindustani notation.
- Palta, Swar Vistar, Bandish and other improvisational techniques.
- Commercial applications of Raag Bhimpalasi.

Raag Bageshri

- Introduction to Bageshri and detailed Alaap practice through Swar Vistar.
- Bandishes in Madhyalaya and Drut Laya.
- Rhythmic improvisation and listening sessions.

Raag Des

- Introduction to Raag Des and Madhyalaya Bandish.
- Bol Banaav and improvisation practices.

Raag Yaman

- Introduction and Vistar techniques.
- Bandish and Taan in Madhyalaya.

4.2 Popular & Film Music

Stage 3 - Introduction to Harkats & Taans

- Develop vocal strength and agility and gain finer control.
- Sing complex melodies with a more assured performance approach.
- Voice science focus: activate the vocal apparatus for expression and resonance; improve vocal projection and propulsion; introduce Gamak as an expressive oscillation.

- Repertoire focus: energetic, medium-paced songs containing multiple notes within single vowels, with basic Harkats and Taans.

Stage 4 - Developing softer tone

- Develop breath support for extended, gentle tonal expressions.
- Develop phrasing and pitch management for controlled, softer renditions.
- Voice science focus: apply a four-part breathing technique; understand musical phrase structure; manage the pitch graph through controlled propulsion and dynamics.
- Repertoire focus: simple, softer melodies with limited ornamentation, emphasising tonal clarity and emotional subtlety.

Stage 5 - Seamless transition to stronger vocal skills

- Enhance vocal precision, agility and dynamics.
- Develop adaptability across diverse melodic and rhythmic contexts.
- Voice science focus: use consonant management to support Harkats; develop high propulsion with controlled volume while maintaining vocal balance.
- Repertoire focus: medium-complexity, energetic melodies based on Raag moods without being wholly confined to a Raag framework.

Stage 6 - Transition to Ghazal-based singing

- Introduce distinctive stylistic elements of Ghazal singing.
- Progress towards complex, softer singing with enhanced ornamentation.
- Voice science focus: understand nasal airflow and resonance; improve tonal precision and smooth vertical transition across registers, keys and octaves.
- Repertoire focus: complex, soft and iconic melodies with Ghazal-inspired structures.

5. Advanced stage

Indicative guided learning: 120 hours across the Advanced pathway as a whole.

5.1 Advanced classical foundation

Indicative benchmark: partly aligned to Praveshika-2 level Hindustani classical vocal study.

Raag Alhaiya Bilawal

- Madhyalaya Bandish, Alaap and Taan construction.

Raag Bhairav

- Introduction and Madhyalaya Bandish in Teentaal.
- Swar Vistar, Bol Banaav and the concept of Meend.
- Morning Riyaz, decoding maestros and total performance design.

Raag Bihag

- Introduction and Madhyalaya Bandish in Teentaal.
- Swar Vistar, Alaapchari and Taan practices.
- Shruti, Vakra Swar and commercial applications.

Raag Kedar

- Introduction and Madhyalaya Bandish in Teentaal.
- Alaapchari, Bol Banaav and Tarana practices.
- Swami Haridas biography and listening sessions.

Raag Tilak Kamod

- Introduction and Gat Bhav Thumri.
- Improvisation in Thumri, Tarana in Teentaal and Jhumra Taal, exploring its semi-classical essence.
- Gamak, decoding maestros and commercial applications.

Raag Vrindavani Sarang

- Introduction and Madhyalaya Bandish in Teentaal/Ektaal.

Raag Asaavari

- Introduction and Madhyalaya Bandish in Teentaal/Ektaal.

Raag Bhairavi

- Introduction and Madhyalaya Bandish in Teentaal/Ektaal.
- Listening and decoding maestros with commercial applications.

Raag Jaunpuri

- Introduction and Madhyalaya Bandish in Teentaal.
- Swar Vistar, Alaapchari and ornamentation.

Raag Malkauns

- Introduction and Madhyalaya Bandish in Teentaal.
- Swar Vistar, Taan practices and commercial applications.

Raag Hameer

- Introduction and Madhyalaya Bandish in Teentaal.
- Swar Vistar, Alaapchari and Taan practices.

Raag Deshkar

- Introduction and Madhyalaya Bandish in Jhaptaal.
- Swar Vistar and Alaapchari.

Raag Kalingda

- Introduction and Drut Bandish in Ektaal.
- Swar Vistar, Taan practices and Sooltaal.

Raag Patdeep

- Introduction and Madhyalaya Bandish in Ektaal.

Raag Tilang

- Introduction and Madhyalaya Bandish in Teentaal.

5.2 Advanced performance - Grade 8 / RQF Level 3

This stage combines the former advanced Popular & Film Music stages 7-9 into a single coherent progression. Learners should demonstrate secure technical control, stylistic understanding, musical interpretation and confident performance across contrasting repertoire.

The Classical Realm

- Gain familiarity and develop competence with Raag-specific and Raag-characterised phrasing.
- Repertoire focus: classical Raag-based songs that do not require complex Taans or the most advanced classical techniques.

Bollywood Sufi & Folk Classical

- Blend classical roots with film and folk traditions.
- Repertoire focus: Bollywood Sufi songs and folk-classical melodies.

Non-film compositions

- Explore deeper connections between non-film music and the Bollywood/film-music ethos.
- Repertoire focus: iconic non-film songs.

5.3 Folk music supporting study

The Advanced pathway also develops wider awareness of Indian folk music, its regional traditions, rhythmic language, performance contexts and contemporary adaptations.

Understanding folk music and its roots

- Explore the cultural significance of folk singing traditions.
- Discuss examples of folk songs and their cultural stories.

Difference between folk and classical music

- Explain key differences in structure, style and purpose.
- Compare a folk and classical piece through guided listening.

Regional variations in Indian folk music

- Highlight the diversity of regional folk traditions across India.
- Analyse key features of selected regional styles.

Evolution of folk music in modern India

- Examine how folk music has adapted to contemporary contexts.
- Discuss the impact of fusion and popular culture on folk traditions.

Baul tradition of West Bengal

- Study spiritual themes and improvisation in Baul songs.
- Learn and practise a Baul composition.

Rhythmic festivities of Bihu (Assam)

- Explore Bihu rhythms and their celebratory character.
- Practise rhythmic patterns and melodies.

Lavani of Maharashtra

- Learn Lavani's fast tempo and storytelling characteristics.

- Perform basic Lavani verses.

Garba of Gujarat

- Study Garba's distinctive rhythmic patterns and festive context.
- Explore types of Garba and practise traditional melodies.

Bhawageethe of Karnataka

- Understand its poetic essence and emotional themes.
- Practise Bhavageethe compositions.

Rajasthani folk (Kalbeliya)

- Learn Kalbeliya's rhythmic vibrancy and lyrical playfulness.
- Practise a Kalbeliya folk song.

Gond songs of Madhya Pradesh

- Explore tribal melodies with a focus on nature and ritual themes.
- Learn and practise a Gond folk song.

Pahadi music of Himachal Pradesh

- Study the melodic simplicity and emotional depth of Pahadi songs.
- Practise a Pahadi melody.

Tamil folk (Villupattu)

- Explore Villupattu's rhythmic storytelling style.
- Practise basic Villupattu singing.

Punjabi folk

- Learn the rhythmic, celebratory nature of Punjabi folk.
- Practise a traditional Punjabi Gidda or Bhangra song.

Rabindra Sangeet

- Study the lyrical beauty and philosophical themes of Tagore's compositions.
- Practise a Rabindra Sangeet melody.

Tribal songs of North-East India

- Explore distinctive tribal melodies, rhythms and cultural contexts.

Fusion folk: contemporary interpretations

- Discuss and practise modern adaptations of traditional folk styles.

Devotional folk songs

- Explore spiritual and devotional aspects of folk traditions across India.

Basics of recording and creating performances

- Learn to record audio and video using accessible tools such as smartphones.
- Practise creating short performance clips.

Enhancing recorded performances

- Practise creating engaging audio or video samples.
- Apply techniques to improve presentation and style.

Introduction to folk Taals

- Explore common folk rhythms including Dadra, Keherva, Jhaptaal and Roopak.
- Learn to identify and sing in these Taals.

Application of folk rhythms

- Practise singing folk songs with rhythmic precision.

Collaborative singing with rhythms

- Practise group singing or call-and-response using folk rhythms.

Introduction to Indian folk instruments

- Learn about instruments such as Ektara, Dotara, Dhol, Sarangi and Tumbi.
- Understand their roles in enhancing folk music.

Demonstration and use of folk instruments

- Explore how folk instruments accompany songs.

World folk music traditions

- Explore global folk traditions such as Celtic, African and Appalachian music.

Cultural significance of world folk music

- Discuss how folk music reflects culture and community globally.

Fusion and influence of world folk music

- Explore how Indian folk music has fused with and influenced global music.
- Handle complex melodies and rhythm with agility and confidence.
- Develop advanced vocal agility through classical-based preparation and improvisation.
- Repertoire focus: classical songs designed in the manner of classical performances, featuring Taans, Tihais, Layakari and other intricate techniques.

6. General performance expectations

The detailed assessment requirements remain those of the relevant music qualification. Within this specialism, evidence should enable learners to demonstrate musical knowledge and practical performance at the appropriate grade or level.

- Accurate pitch, rhythm and melodic control appropriate to the selected repertoire.
- Secure breath management, tone production and vocal projection.
- Increasing control of ornamentation, phrasing, range and dynamic expression as the learner progresses.
- Stylistic understanding appropriate to Hindi popular, film, classical-influenced, folk, Sufi and non-film repertoire.
- Application of relevant Raag, Taal and improvisational concepts where required by the repertoire.
- Confident, communicative and musically coherent performance.

7. Terminology and syllabus conventions

Indian music terminology has been retained where it is integral to the syllabus. Spelling variants may occur in established teaching traditions; centres should use consistent terminology within teaching and assessment.

- Raag/Raga: melodic framework used in Indian classical music.
- Taal: rhythmic cycle.
- Sargam: Indian solfège syllables.
- Alaap/Alaapchari: melodic exploration and improvisation.
- Bandish: fixed composition in Hindustani classical music.
- Taan: rapid melodic passage or improvisatory pattern.
- Bol Banaav: expressive elaboration using the text of a composition.
- Meend: glide between notes.
- Gamak: oscillation or forceful ornamentation.
- Layakari: rhythmic variation or manipulation of tempo/subdivision.
- Tihai: phrase repeated three times, typically resolving on a structural beat.