

01 / MELODY

Carnatic music.

Core concepts.

An introduction to the melodic, rhythmic and compositional frameworks of South Indian classical music. Use it as a listening and study companion.

The 72 Melakarta ragams

The parent scales are arranged in **12 chakras of six ragams**. Each uses all seven swaras in both ascent (arohanam) and descent (avarohanam). The two halves differ in their form of Madhyamam.

Suddha Madhyamam (M1) / Ragams 1-36

CHAKRA	MELAKARTA RAGAMS
01 / Indu	1. Kanakangi / 2. Ratnangi / 3. Ganamurthi / 4. Vanaspati / 5. Manavati / 6. Tanarupi
02 / Netra	7. Senavati / 8. Hanumatodi / 9. Dhenuka / 10. Natakapiya / 11. Kokilapiya / 12. Rupavati
03 / Agni	13. Gayakapiya / 14. Vakulabharanam / 15. Mayamalavagowla / 16. Chakravakam / 17. Suryakantam / 18. Hatakambari
04 / Veda	19. Jhankaradhvani / 20. Natabhairavi / 21. Keeravani / 22. Kharaharapiya / 23. Gowrimanohari / 24. Varunapiya
05 / Bana	25. Mararanjani / 26. Charukesi / 27. Sarasangi / 28. Harikambhoji / 29. Dheerasankarabharanam / 30. Naganandini
06 / Rutu	31. Yagapiya / 32. Ragavardhani / 33. Gangeyabhushani / 34. Vagadheeswari / 35. Shoolini / 36. Chalanata

Familiar examples: Hanumatodi (8) and Mayamalavagowla (15).

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Prati Madhyamam (M2).

Chakras 7-12 / Ragams 37-72

CHAKRA	MELAKARTA RAGAMS
07 / Rishi	37. Salagam / 38. Jalarnavam / 39. Jhalavarali / 40. Navaneetam / 41. Pavani / 42. Raghupriya
08 / Vasu	43. Gavambhodhi / 44. Bhavapriya / 45. Shubhapantuvrali / 46. Shadvidamargini / 47. Suvarnangi / 48. Divyamani
09 / Brahma	49. Dhavalambari / 50. Namanarayani / 51. Kamavardhani / 52. Ramapriya / 53. Gamanashrama / 54. Vishwambhari
10 / Disa	55. Shamalangi / 56. Shanmukhapriya / 57. Simhendramadhyamam / 58. Hemavati / 59. Dharmavati / 60. Neetimathi
11 / Rudra	61. Kantamani / 62. Rishabhapriya / 63. Latangi / 64. Vachaspati / 65. Mechakalyani / 66. Chitrambari
12 / Aditya	67. Sucharitra / 68. Jyotiswarupini / 69. Dhatuwardhani / 70. Nasikabhushani / 71. Kosalam / 72. Rasikapriya

Familiar examples: Shanmukhapriya (56) and Mechakalyani (65).

Beyond the parent scales: janya ragams

A much larger family of derived ragams grows from these frameworks. Notes may be omitted, ascending and descending paths may differ, or phrases may follow curved or zigzag movements. Bilahari and Mohanam are familiar examples.

A ragam also lives in its characteristic phrases and gamakas (ornamentation). A scale is a starting point for listening.

Names follow the modern 72-Melakarta list. This edition corrects the supplied guide at 55 (Shamalangi), 70 (Nasikabhushani), 71 (Kosalam) and 72 (Rasikapriya). Transliteration spellings vary.

02 / RHYTHM

Seven patterns. Five ways to count.

The Suladi Sapta Talam system combines seven patterns with five jaathis to give **35 varieties**. The jaathi changes the length of the laghu.

L - Laghu: a tap followed by finger counts; 3, 4, 5, 7 or 9 counts in total.

D - Drutam: a tap and a wave; 2 counts.

A - Anudrutam: a single tap; 1 count.

TALAM	ANGAS	Tisra 3	Chaturasra 4	Khanda 5	Misra 7	Sankeerna 9
Dhruva	L D L L	11	14	17	23	29
Matya	L D L	8	10	12	16	20
Rupaka	D L	5	6	7	9	11
Jhampa	L A D	6	7	8	10	12
Triputa	L D D	7	8	9	11	13
Ata	L L D D	10	12	14	18	22
Eka	L	3	4	5	7	9

Each number is the total count in one cycle, not a subdivision count. Jaathi describes the laghu length; nadai or gati describes the subdivision of a beat.

Recognising familiar cycles

Adi talam: Chaturasra-jaathi Triputa, $4 + 2 + 2 = 8$.

Misra-jaathi Jhampa: $7 + 1 + 2 = 10$.

Tisra-jaathi Triputa: $3 + 2 + 2 = 7$.

Khanda-jaathi Ata: $5 + 5 + 2 + 2 = 14$.

Chapu talams

Outside this 35-variety matrix, Chapu cycles use their own unequal groupings and rhythmic feel. **Misra Chapu** is commonly counted as $3 + 2 + 2$ (7); **Khanda Chapu** as $2 + 3$ (5).

03 / FORM

Practice becomes repertoire.

Exercises establish control. Compositions give it shape. Improvisation opens it out. These forms offer a route through the repertoire, with depth at every stage.

Sarali & Janta Varisais

Foundational exercises

Sarali builds fluency through ordered swara patterns. Janta develops paired-note articulation, steadiness and control.

Geetham

Beginner repertoire

A short, continuous composition that brings melody, text and tala together without the elaborate development of a kriti.

Swarajati

From study to performance

Combines swara passages and sahityam (lyrics). Raaravenu is a familiar learning example; the form also includes demanding concert works.

Varnam

Study & concert repertoire

Develops raga phrases, rhythmic command and technique. Common sections include pallavi, anupallavi, muktayi swara, charanam and ettugada swaras. Often heard at the start of a concert.

Kriti

Core concert repertoire

A major composed form, often devotional, commonly organised as pallavi, anupallavi and charanam. Sangatis and interpretive detail bring its melodic ideas to life.

Ragam Tanam Pallavi

Advanced improvisation

An extended exploration of raga and rhythm: free melodic elaboration, rhythmic tanam and development of a pallavi theme. It is a major setting for manodharma, or creative improvisation.

Reading notes & references

Adapted from the supplied Carnatic Music Core Concepts Guide. The web page and this reference share the corrected chakra list and consistent jaathi counts.

[karnATik: Melakarta raga chart](#)

[karnATik: the 35 tala varieties](#)

[NIOS: Carnatic Music learning materials](#)

[CBSE: Carnatic percussion reference](#)