

Guide to the pronunciation of Indian music terms¹

The sounds of Indian music terms are the same as the majority of the Indic languages, including Sanskrit. In order to facilitate accurate pronunciation, the transliteration scheme that is used in *Indian Takeaway* is the International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration (IAST), which allows the accurate Romanisation of Indic scripts, as employed by Sanskrit and related Indic languages. Only those sounds that either appear in Indian Takeaway or likely to be used in Indian music are covered in this section.

Please note the following pronunciations:

Vowels

- **a** the short **a** is pronounced like the **u** in drum
the long **a**, written with an accent (**ā**), is pronounced like the **a** in harp
- **e** is pronounced like the **e** in pennywhistle
- **i** the short **i** is pronounced like the **i** in timpani
the long **i**, written with an accent (**ī**), is pronounced like the **ea** in ice-cream
- **o** is pronounced like the **o** in glockenspiel.
- **u** the short **u** is pronounced like the **u** in pull
long **u**, written with an accent (**ū**), is pronounced like the u in flute

The semivowels – **y**, **r**, **l**, and **v** – are pronounced as in *Yaman*, *rāg*, *Lalit* and *vibhāg*, respectively.

Consonants

The cerebral consonants – **ṭ**, **ṭh**, **ḍ**, **ḍh** and **ṇ** are pronounced with the tip of your tongue turned up and drawn back against the dome of your palate:

- **ṭ** is pronounced as in **tambourine**
- **ṭh** is pronounced as in **light-heart**
- **ḍ** is pronounced as in **double-bass**
- **ḍh** is pronounced as in **red-hot**
- **ṇ** is pronounced as in **ṇut**.

The dental consonants – **t**, **th**, **d**, **dh** and **n** – are pronounced in the same way as the cerebral consonants, except that the top part of the tip of your tongue touches the back of your upper front teeth:

- **t** is pronounced as in *tīn tāl* (the popular time-cycle consisting of 16 *mātrā*)
- **th** is pronounced as in *thāt* (one of ten different scales in North Indian classical music)

¹ Swami A.C. Bhaktivedanta Prabhupada *KRSNA The Supreme Personality of Godhead : A Summary Study of Srila Vyasadeva's Srimad Bhagavatam, 10th Canto* Krishna Books Incorporated (2012)

- **d** is pronounced as in **dāhinā** (the smaller, higher-pitched, of the two drums of the *tablā*)
- **dh** is pronounced as in **dhā** or **dhin** (the two *tablā bol*)
- **n** is pronounced as in **ni** (the seventh *svar* of the Indian music scale)

The guttural consonants – **k**, **kh**, **g**, **gh** and **ñ** - are pronounced from the throat in much the same manner as in English:

- **k** is pronounced as in **cor anglais**
- **kh** is pronounced as in **Eckhart**
- **g** is pronounced as in **guitar**
- **gh** is pronounced as in **dig-hard**
- **ñ** is pronounced as in **song**.

The labial consonants – **p**, **ph**, **b**, **bh** and **m** – are pronounced using your lips:

- **p** is pronounced as in **piano**
- **ph** is pronounced as in **upholstery**
- **b** is pronounced as in **bol**
- **bh** is pronounced as in **Bhupāli**
- **m** is pronounced as in **mātrā**.

The palatal consonants – **c**, **ch**, **j**, **jh**, and **ñ** – are pronounced with your tongue touching the firm ridge behind your teeth:

- **c** is pronounced as in **chimes**
- **ch** is pronounced as in **staunch-heart**
- **j** is pronounced as in **jazz**
- **jh** is pronounced as in **hedgehog**
- **ñ** is pronounced as in **canyon**.

The sibilants – **ś**, **ṣ** and **s** – are pronounced, respectively as in **shore** and **sore**.