

Tambura



SITA100
Classic



SITA200
Modern



SITA300
Travel

A typical instrument in Indian classical music is the Tambura or Tanpura. In construction it is similar to the Sitar and thus confused quite often by laymen. The Tambura consists of a large round resonating body made from a pumpkin with a long hollow neck. Beautiful inlaid work and carvings give the instrument a very attractive look. Traditionally the Tambura has four strings, nowadays up to six. One is tuned to the basic note of the raga, the other to a fourth or a fifth. The last string sounds in the lower octave. So the tuning creates a harmonious chord that serves as an indispensable accompaniment in Indian music, not only for instrumental music but also for singing. Here in the West this traditional accompanying instrument developed into an independent sound body which has great importance for music therapy, overtone singing and world music.

The strings that start at the base of the resonator pass over a broad bridge up to the intricately carved tuning pegs at the end of the neck. Below the bridge there are tuning pearls that resemble the form of almonds. They provide the fine tuning. The typical snaring sound of the Tambura, rich in overtones, is created by threads placed underneath each string. There is one place on the string where it starts snaring and it has to be adjusted each time before playing.

The musician holds the instrument upright while sitting, preferably with crossed legs. The neck is supported by the left hand, the right hand reaches up to the strings, then the outstretched fingers pass gently and continuously over them. It looks easy but it takes some practice in order to produce an even, sonorous sound without interference.