

Hindustani Music and Carnatic Music - An Overview of Differences

During the medieval period, Indian classical music was generally based on two traditions, the Carnatic music prevalent in South India and the Hindustani classical music in North India. This article gives a brief introduction of Hindustani and Carnatic Music and then goes on to cover the important differences between Hindustani and Carnatic Music and then culminates with their similarities.

Aspirants would find this article very helpful while preparing for the IAS Exam.

Hindustani and Carnatic Music - Introduction

1. Indian Music is part of Art and culture which have a rich legacy.
2. Before the 13th Century, there was only one classical music in India.
3. Post 13th Century Classical Music has been separated into two different styles. In North India, Persian and Mughal influence began creating its place very intensely with Amir Khusro.
4. Tansen and his contemporary musicians mostly performed in Dhrupad sort and later Khayal singing was promoted by Sadarang and Adarang.
5. On the other hand, Carnatic Music was evolved mainly by Shyama Shastri, Tyagraja, Muthuswamy Dikshitar, and Saint Purandardas.
6. Currently, most of the classical training revolves around Kritis composed by these great saint musicians.
7. The history of Indian music can be derived from Natya Shastra, written by Bharatha Muni, a Musicologist. The Natyashastra deals with the basic theory of Music, dance and drama called "Natya Shastra". Under this, there were 22 notes in an octave. The idea of 'Sruti' was presented to permit individuals to select a suitable reference 'root' pitch based on the musicians' ease. A set of 'Rasas' and 'Bhavas' or expressions were recognized.

Classical Music

Hindustani and Carnatic music systems developed from a common ancestor.

Carnatic Music originated in the Bhakti movement, while Hindustani music originated during the Vedic period. Therefore both have a great link with religion. Both the music developed with Sanskrit language scripts in itself and through Vedic traditions.

The main vocal forms of Hindustani music are Dhrupad, Khayal, Tarana, Thumri, Dadra, and Gazals. The Carnatic music embraces much creativity comprise of Alpana, Niraval, Kalpnaswaram and Ragam Thana Pallavi.

Classical Music - 2 Categories

1. Hindustani Music is practised in Northern Parts of India
2. Carnatic Music is practised in the Southern Parts of India

Difference between Carnatic and Hindustani Musi

The below tables gives the areas of difference between Carnatic and Hindustani Music.

Difference Between Carnatic and Hindustani Music	
Carnatic	Hindustani
72 ragas	6 major ragas
Veena, Mridangam and Mandolin	Tabla, Sarangi, Sitar and Santoor
Indigenous	Afghan Persian and Arab
Only one particular prescribed style of singing	Several sub-styles
Freedom to improvise	Scope to do variations and improvise
Both have equal importance	More importance to vocal music

Similarities between Carnatic and Hindustani Music

1. Both the Carnatic and Hindustani styles give principal prominence to the melody.
2. Both have one leading swara or Vadi swar in every Raga
3. Both use Sampoorana Scale (with all 7 notes) to describe Janak Thaata or Raga to make Janya Raga.
4. Both use a Tanpura or Drone with one or two notes to signify Pitch and base in Raga version.