Musical Instruments of India

Indian music has countless musical instruments including those used in classical, folk and tribal music.

A. Indian Stringed Instruments

1. Sitar - the most common instruments in India.
   - has seven strings. Each end of the strings is used to play drones. Drones - is a sustained sound or repetition of a two notes.
   - can be used as accompaniment and also used for solo parts in a composition.
SITAR
2. Tambura (Tanpura, Tamboura or Taanpura)
   - is a long-necked plucked instrument, has round body and long handle. The body shape of the tambura somewhat resembles that of the sitar, but it has no frets – and the strings are played open.
   - It has four strings made of metal.

One or more tamburas may accompany other musicians or vocalists. An electronic tanpura is often substituted in contemporary Indian classical music performance.
Tambura
3. Veena or Vina (carnatic)

- is one of the most ancient string instruments of India.
- is 1.5m long and is made from jackwood. It has a large, round body with a thick, wide neck, the end of which is carved into the head of a dragon.
- a small resonator is attached to the underside of the neck.
- it has 24 metal frets embedded in hardened bees-wax, mixed with charcoal powder.
4. Sarangi

-is a fretless bowed, short-necked string instrument of India.

- can be played for solo or with accompaniment.

- has 3 main strings and a number of sympathetic strings made of steel on the left and right set.
Sarangi
B. Indian Percussion Instruments

1. **Tabla** - are two drums for the left and right hands of the player. - can play the tonic chords (I) and dominant chords (V).
Tabla
2. Mridangam

- is another drum instrument with both ends being used. The player has to set the instrument in his/her lap to make it easy for him/her to play. To ensure the correct pitch, the player replaces tuning materials whenever there is a performance.
3. Big Gongs
- produced high and low pitched sounds. The big gongs play the accented beats and the rhythm accompaniment.

4. Pakhawaj
- a two faced barrel drum with shell made of holled wood.
- is almost similar to mridangam in structure.
Pakhawaj
C. Indian Wind Instruments

1. Shehnai (hindustani)

-a double-reeded, tubular gradually widening towards the outer end, with a metal tunnel.
- has eight holes but only upper seven are used. The eight is for regulating the pitch by applying wax.
2. Ottu

- is a south Indian drone instrument. It is very similar to the nadaswaram or the shehnai in construction. It is usually somewhat longer than the nadaswaram. It has a bell, usually of metal like the shehnai.
- It has four or five holes.

This instrument does not play a melody, but merely provides the drone for temple ensembles.
Ottu
3. Nadaswaram (carnatic)

- a double-reeded that has two distinct parts of wooden tubular body fitted with a large wooden belly at the lower end.
- it has eight finger holes and four vent holes on the side.

The reed is made of wood. A must in the temples and all religious and social functions. It is essentially an open air instrument but in recent times has been muffled to be used in concerts.
Nadaswaram
4. Bombashi

-is a fipple flute found in Bangladesh. It is used in a variety of folk music, and accompaniment of traditional folk theatre.
- it is made of a body of bamboo with a detachable round mouthpiece.
- it has eight holes.