

Dorian Scale Ragas - Two pentatonics

The Dorian scale raga Kharaharapriya probably has the most number of popular child ragas. We will see some of them below. We already played some phrases of Raga Kanada and Raga Reethigowlai in a previous section.

Major to Dorian Minor – Two Notes Change

The Dorian minor pattern is something we have already seen. It is useful to learn the patterns by comparing them with the major scale, the melodic minor scale, or other scales we already know.

Melodic minor is formed by flattening the 3rd note of the major scale. Dorian is formed by flattening the 6th note of the melodic minor scale.

That means, to play the Dorian scale, play the major scale with the 3rd and 6th notes flattened.

It may feel redundant and repetitive, but we need to have these patterns pop up under our fingers the moment we want them. We cannot become too familiar with them.

C Major Scale: C D E F G A B

C Melodic Minor Scale: C D Eb F G A B

C Dorian Minor Scale: C D Eb F G A Bb

Notice that the C melodic minor scale has the Eb note, while the C Dorian has both Eb and Bb.

Revise the pattern from the previous sections where we covered the Dorian scale and some of its raga patterns.

Dorian Pentatonic – Raga Shivaranjani (Sad)

It is interesting how skipping some notes and using particular melodic patterns changes the mood and ambiance of the sound completely, compared to playing the entire scale.

Raga Shivaranjani uses notes from the Dorian scale — only five of them.

The intervals are: Root – M2 – m3 – 5 – M6

Swaras: Sa – Ri2 – Ga2 – Pa – Dha2

R – m3 – 5 – M6 is the formula for the minor 6th chord, which has a characteristic strong emotional sound that can be interpreted as sad, strong, furious, or filled with suspense, depending on the musical context.

As you see, Raga Shivaranjani has the same notes as the minor 6th chord, plus the M2 interval.

Here is the first line from the well-known song "*Kurai Onrum Illai*," set in *Raga Shivaranjani*.

8 *f* ku rai on rum il lai ma ra moor thi kan na

TAB 4/4 5 8 8 7 8 8 7 8 8 8 8 4 4 10 8 10 8 10 8 4 8 4 4

f

3 ku rai on rum il lai kan na aa.. aa..

3 4 5 7 7 2 5 5 8 7 8 7 5 gliss. 2 2 3 2 0

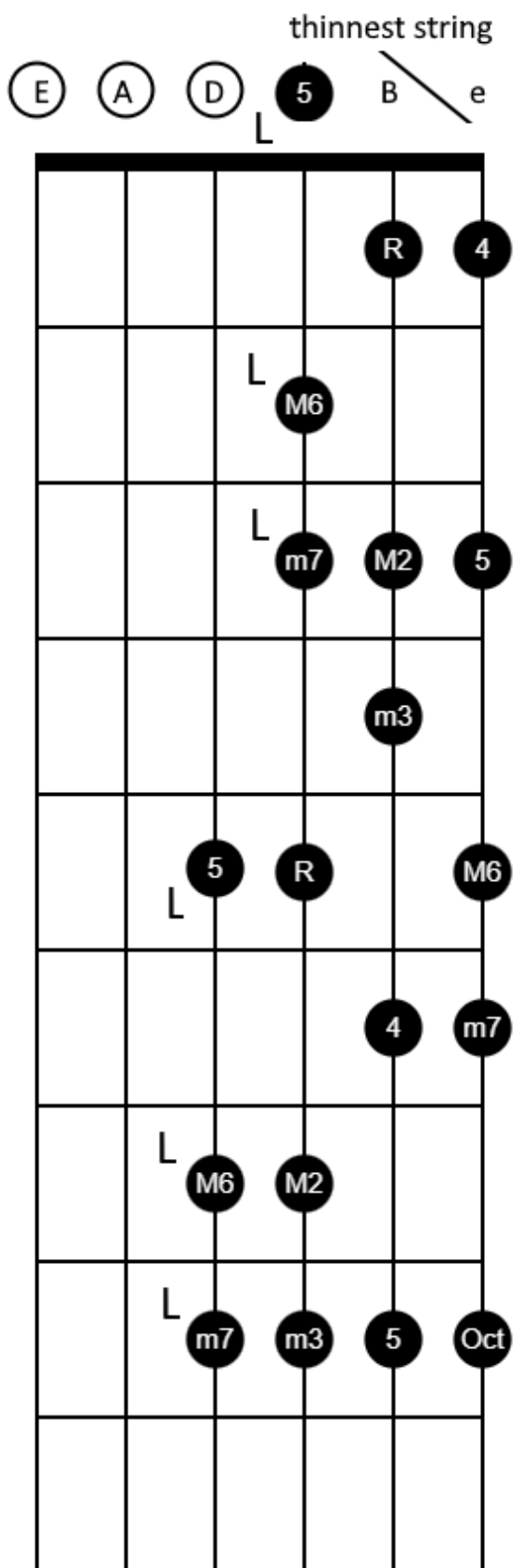
5 ku rai on rum il lai go o vin da

7 5 7 5 7 4 3 4 8 8 7 5 7 2 5 5

Notice that only the notes C D Eb G A, from within the dorian scale are used.

They are spread over the fretboard to the lower octave too, played on the 4th and 3rd strings. The below image shows the fret string positions of the dorian scale from which we can choose and find the right spots to play the music above.

Fretboard pattern for the dorian scale



If we use the 4th note F instead of the 5th note G, we get a different pentatonic raga sound, another child raga based on the dorian scale.



Dorian Pentatonic Raga Abhogi

In the last section, we saw *Raga Shivaranjani*, which uses five notes of the Dorian scale:

Root – M2 – m3 – 5 – M6

Swaras: Sa – Ri2 – Ga2 – Pa – Dha2

Raga Abhogi also uses five notes from the same Dorian scale, with just one difference.

Instead of Pa, the 5th note, Raga Abhogi uses Ma, the 4th note.

Raga Abhogi intervals:

Root – M2 – m3 – 4 – M6

Swaras: Sa – Ri2 – Ga2 – Ma – Dha2

C Abhogi: C, D, Eb, F, A

One note is different, and the sound changes.

Ma–Dha–Sa forms a major chord. In the key of C, this gives the F major chord (notes: F, A, C). This movement is often used in the raga.

Below is the first line from the well-known Evvari Bodhana varnam in Raga Abhogi. Notice that the notes extend to the lower octave Ma (F note), located on the fourth string, third fret. The notes are played in different red screen positions to allow sliding between them and to enable efficient movement with minimal horizontal shift.

ri ga ga ri sa sa ri sa sa dha ma dha

ma dha sa dha sa dha sa ri ga ma ga ga ri sa

Only the notes C, D, Eb, F, and A from the C Dorian scale are used.

The Ga in the beginning is a good example of how, in ragas, the swara is more than and different from the note. The Ga is played as an oscillation between the ri and the ma.

The slides, like the 5\2/5\2 for dha, in the second line, have to occupy the same time as if you were to hit the note without the slides. Fast enough. Often in such cyclic slides, not moving the thumb too much, is useful. If you find it difficult to fit the slides into the time, reduce the number of slides in the first round, get the timing right, then add more slides.