



CARNEGIE HALL presents  
GLOBAL ENCOUNTERS  
**MUSIC OF INDIA**

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A Program of The Weill Music Institute at Carnegie Hall

TEACHER GUIDE

 The Weill Music Institute  
at Carnegie Hall

**CARNEGIE HALL**

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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

### **Contributing Writer / Editor**

Daniel Levy

### **Consulting Writer**

Samita Sinha

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The Weill Music Institute at Carnegie Hall  
881 Seventh Avenue  
New York, NY 10019  
212-903-9670  
212-903-0925  
weillmusicinstitute.org

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## GUIDE TO THE TEXT FORMATTING

Throughout this curriculum, we have used different text formats to help simplify the directions for each lesson. Our hope is that this format will allow you to keep better track of your steps while you are on your feet in class teaching a lesson.

There are two main formatting types to recognize.

- 1) Any “scripted” suggestions—especially all questions—appear in “blue” with quotation marks.
- 2) Basic action headings are set in ***bold italic***. (Options are in parentheses.)

Note: For CD tracks, we list the track number first, then the title.

For example:

### MEET THE ARTIST

- ***Read*** Sameer Gupta’s Meet the Artist handout (out loud).
- ***Summarize*** what the artist has said (on paper).
- “Based on what we know about Sameer, what might his music sound like?”
- ***Listen*** to CD Track 1, Sameer Gupta’s “Yaman.”
- “Now that you have heard the music, were your guesses right?”
- ***Transition:*** Sameer Gupta is an expert at working with musical freedom and structure. To get to know his work, we will need to become experts on freedom and structure.



## ACTIVITY 4: FREEDOM AND STRUCTURE PROJECTS

**AIM:** What are our ideas regarding freedom and structure in global studies, English, music, and visual arts?

**SUMMARY:** Students work individually, in small groups, or with the entire class to create a research project.

**MATERIALS:** Citi Global Encounters India CD, Project Support Materials

**TIME REQUIRED:** At least two class periods (possibly more depending on the depth of your class's project)

**NYC AND STATE STANDARDS:** Blueprint: Making Connections; NYS Social Studies: 2.3

We encourage teachers and students to create Freedom and Structure Projects using the knowledge and experience they have gained from studying Sameer Gupta and Indian classical music. Teachers will decide whether students will work on these projects individually, in small groups, or together as a class. Regardless of the size of the group(s) within the class, teachers will choose only one subject area—global studies, English, music, or visual arts, as outlined in the Project Example materials on the following pages—to be the content of their project.

Please use the Project Example materials on the following pages as a guide for your classroom work, but also feel free to let the projects take form according to your own interests and expertise.

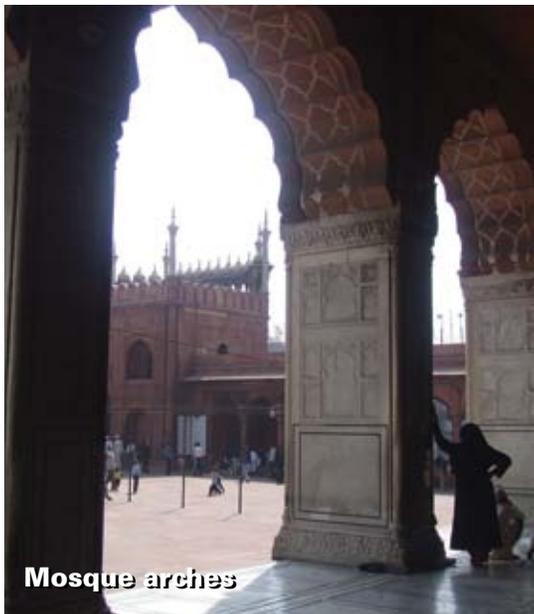
### PROJECT PARAMETERS FOR FREEDOM AND STRUCTURE PROJECTS

All projects

- can be created by individual students, small groups, or the entire class
- should include creating an artifact or documentation that can be shared both in class and at the final concert
- should involve a minimum of two class periods of work
- can involve collaboration with arts specialists in your school

Original projects or project variations created by classroom teachers

- should include some of the ideas about freedom and structure that are at the center of our guiding question (see page 4)
- should include a connection with Indian classical music or culture



Mosque arches

The materials on the following pages present some project possibilities for the following subject areas:

- global studies (pages 27–28)
- English (pages 29–32)
- music (pages 33–34)
- visual arts (pages 35–36)



## PROJECT EXAMPLE: ENGLISH

**AIM:** How are traditional Indian spiritual beliefs expressed within musical structures?

**SUMMARY:** Students create a mystical persona and life structure modeled after the life of the Indian mystical poet Mira.

**TIME REQUIRED:** 90 minutes, two or three class periods

### PART 1: THE MYSTICAL POETRY OF MIRA (25 minutes)

- **Students define** mysticism in their own words.
- **Students read** “What Is Mysticism” and “Other Mystic Traditions” (page 31 of the Teacher Guide).
- “Suppose someone entered class and announced he or she was a mystic. How do you think a mystic practices belief in God?”
- **Transition:** The Hindu, Muslim, and Sufi religious traditions are all active in India today, and each is connected with a mystical tradition with poems and songs of devotion.
- **Students read** “Mira’s Story” (page 31 of the Teacher Guide) and “Mira’s Poem” (page 32 of the Teacher Guide).
- “Do you know of any mystics in your religious tradition?”
- “What is Mira telling us through her poetry?”
- “What are the poetic structures she uses to deliver this message?”

### PART 2: THE MYSTIC IS YOU (45 minutes)

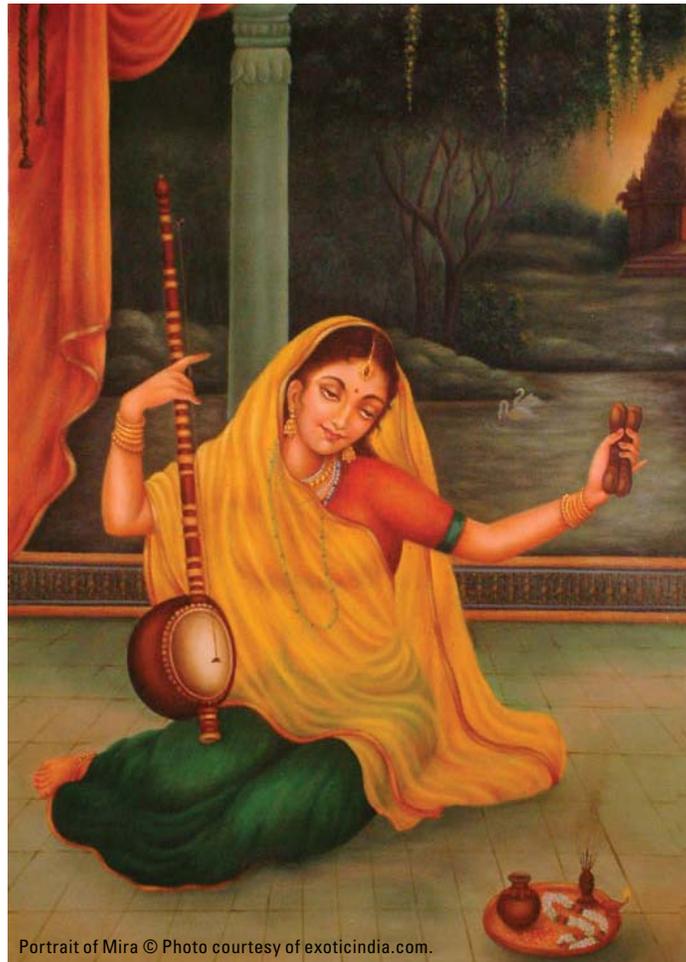
Lead students through the following activities, in which they reinvent themselves as mystics and outline structures and strategies for delivering their message to the world.

- Define your vision of what is ultimately most important in this world.
- Imagine yourself as a mystic like Mira. You must forsake your family and vocation so that you can dedicate all of your time and energy to delivering your message.
- Give yourself a new name with a secret meaning. Create a detailed outline of how you will structure your mystical activities with the serious intent of bringing your vision of the world to other people, and what freedoms will result from people embracing your point of view.
- **Encourage** different types of exploration. Some students may want to approach the idea broadly, using a larger structural framework to convey a mystical message (for example, a certain art form, such as poetry, music, or visual art, or social and political structures). Other students may want to focus on smaller structures (for example, inventing a new poetic form that mirrors something about a belief system).
- **Students share** their mystic profiles.



### PART 3: CONNECTING TO THE MUSIC (20 minutes)

- Listen to CD Track 3, Mira's "Payoji Maine Nama Ratana Dhana Payo."
- Refer to Mira's lyrics while you listen (page 32 of the Teacher Guide).
- "What words would you use to describe the energy of this music?"
- "How does this energy relate to your understanding of Mira's vision?"
- Students document their mystic profiles and responses to the song in a final, presentable form.



Portrait of Mira © Photo courtesy of exoticindia.com.



## SUPPORT MATERIALS FOR ENGLISH PROJECT EXAMPLE

### WHAT IS MYSTICISM?

Mystics believe there is a deeper, more fundamental state of existence hidden beneath the appearances of day-to-day living (this routine living may become superficial, according to mystics). For the mystic, unity is both the internal and external focus as one seeks the truth about oneself, one's relationship to others, and overall reality (both the physical and non-physical, divine world). Mystics' motivations for achieving this sort of unity varies, according to their cultures. To attain this unity, a mystic utilizes purification processes of prayer, meditation, contemplation (communion with reality), and a wide variety of other means, seeking to transcend any constraint to a direct experience of the divine.

SG12

### OTHER MYSTIC TRADITIONS

China: Taoism

Christianity: Gnosticism, German mysticism

Indian Hinduism: Vedanta, the Naths, the Natha, Siddhar, Nagas

Islam: Sufism

Judaism: Kabbalah

Tibetan Buddhism: Vajrayana

West African Diaspora: Voodoo

### MIRA'S STORY

Mirabai—also known as Mira—lived from about 1498 to 1546 CE as a poet, singer, and saint. She is one of the most remembered and quoted women in India's history. Her songs are sung throughout India to this day, and she appears as a subject in films, books, dances, plays, and paintings. Indian spiritual and political leader Mohandas Gandhi has praised Mira as exemplary of a woman's right to chose her own path, forsake a life of luxury, and find liberation in nonviolent resistance.

Mirabai belonged to the aristocracy of Rajput, one of the major Hindu groups of India. From an early age, she worshiped the image of Krishna, a Hindu deity, influenced by male relatives who were devotees of a mystical form of Hinduism called Bhakti. Devotees of the Bhakti tradition approached their god through pure love, without any restrictions of caste, color, or gender. Many Bhakti followers gave up their worldly lives and left their families to become wandering teachers or to live together in like-minded communities. They usually spread their message through deeply personal poems, in which they conversed with their chosen god. Female devotees who aspired to live the Bhakti life also had to give up their husbands and family, and live among people from a variety of castes—including those considered forbidden. In spite of what many felt were subversive acts, some who overcame obstacles to follow their spiritual quests in time were respected and even revered.

For many reasons, Mira's life resonates in the hearts of Indians today. Her words of female liberation express beauty and joy; these lyrics also speak to the poor, as she disdainfully rejected wealth. Indians consider Mira's rebellion—her choice to pave her own path outside of constricting tradition—to be a fight against injustice within family and other groups in general. While valuing women as mothers above all, Indians also revere Mira's self-expression, as a childless woman who rebelled against her husband and in-laws.



SG13

MIRA'S POEM: "Payoji Maine Nama Ratana Dhana Payo" ("Yes, I Have Found the Wealth of the Gem of Chanting the Holy Name")

- (1) *payo ji, maine nama ratana dhana payo*
- (2) *bastu amolaka di mere satguru, krpa kari apanayo*
- (3) *janama janama ki punji pai, jaga men sabai khovayo*
- (4) *kharcai nahin koi, cora na levai, dina dina badhata savayo*
- (5) *sat ki nava khevatiya satguru, bhavasagara tara ayo*
- (6) *mira ke prabhu giridhara nagara, harakha harakha jasa gayo*

TRANSLATION

- (1) I have found, yes, I have found the wealth of the gem of chanting the Holy Name.
- (2) My true spiritual master gave me a priceless thing. With his grace, I accepted it.
- (3) I found the treasure of my several births; I have lost the whole rest of the world.
- (4) No one can spend it, no one can steal it. Day by day it increases one and a quarter times.
- (5) On the boat of truth, the boatman was my true guru. I came across the ocean of existence.
- (6) The Lord of Mira Bai is the Courtly Lord Giridhara, of whom I merrily, merrily sing His glories.

*Lyrics printed with the permission of Krsna Kirtana Songs (kksongs.org).*

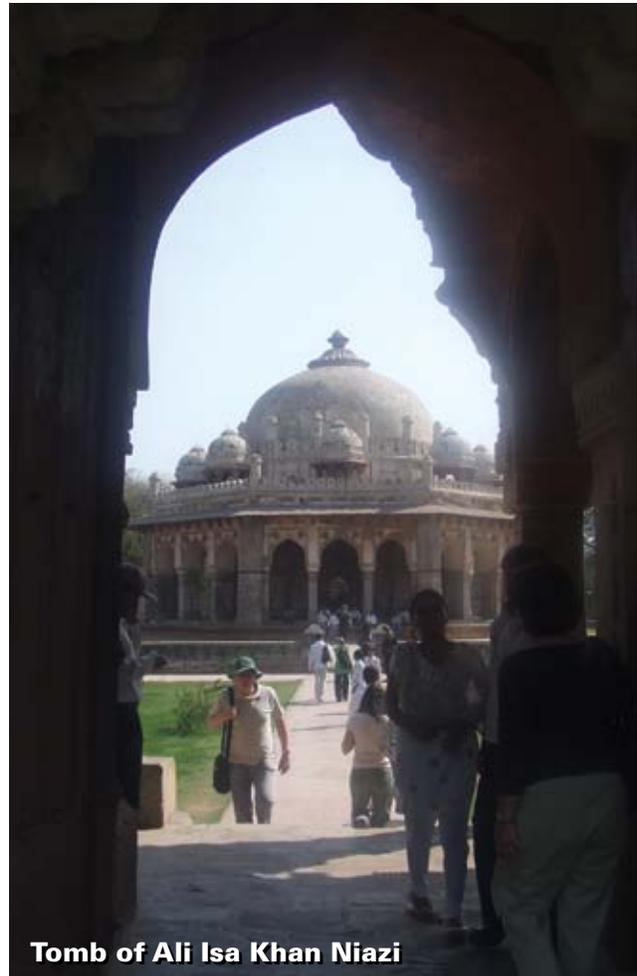
GUIDE TO HINDU DEITIES IN THE POEM

There are many variations of practice and iconography within the Hindu faith. While each of the following three deities has a different place within these pantheons, they are significant in every sect.

**Lord Giridhara:** Another name for Krishna, which means the Lord who holds the mountain Govardhana, referring to a legend in which he lifted a mountain to protect the people from Indra's rage.

**Krishna:** A Hindu deity, usually depicted with blue skin and playing a flute. In some traditions an avatar of Vishnu, in others the Supreme Being. From the Sanskrit word meaning "black," "dark," or "dark-blue."

**Vishnu:** A Hindu deity, the all-pervading essence of all beings, the master of the past, present, and future. Vishnu is the creator and destroyer of all existences, one who supports, sustains, and governs the universe and originates and develops all elements within.



**Tomb of Ali Isa Khan Niazi**