

DAMIÁ MODAL MUSIC

AN INTRODUCTION

1. NESARE

Nesare is a conception of the universe made up of three elements. You can imagine it as water at the bottom, a mountain in the middle, and the sky arching overhead.

ne — liquid, water, the sea, river, lake

sa — solid, ground, earth, mountain

re — air, mist, gas, fog

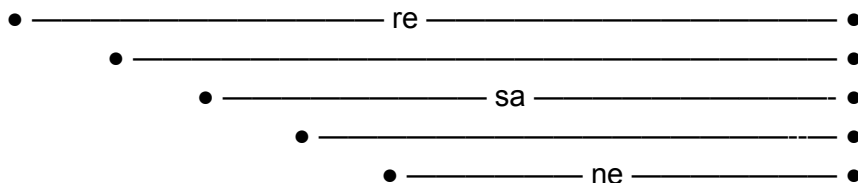
2. GET

A *get* is a Damiá scale or mode and the basis for composition and improvisation or for tuning an instrument. When played on a *davrega*, a five-string box zither, in each *get*:

ne — is the note closest to the player, i.e. the highest in pitch, the shortest string

sa — is a note somewhere in the middle of the range. This is the centre, like the earth.

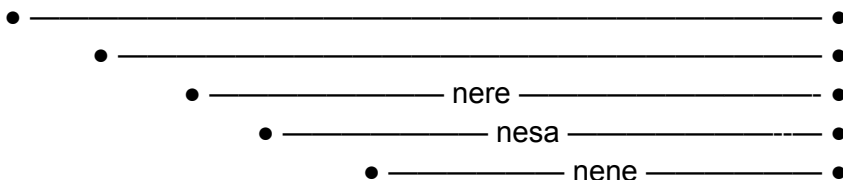
re — is the note furthest from the player, i.e. the lowest in pitch, the longest string. This is furthest and largest, like the sky.



2. TEST & SAR

Each *get* consists of nine positions (*test nartoz*), made up of three triads (*sarba*), going from *nene* the highest note, to *rere* the lowest:

- (i) **nene**
 (ii) **nesa** > **NEBA**
 (iii) **nere**



- (iv) **sane**
 (v) **sasa** > **SABA**
 (vi) **sare**

- (vii) **rene**
 (viii) **resa** > **REBA**
 (ix) **rere**

However, each *get* is only made of five notes (*sar tasi*). This means that each *sarba* overlaps the adjacent one:

NOTE ONE **Nene**

NOTE TWO	Nesa	Sane	
NOTE THREE	(Nere)	Sasa	(Rene)
NOTE FOUR		Sare	Resa
NOTE FIVE			Rere

Note that the names in parentheses are not commonly used, i.e. *sasa* is usually only referred to as *sasa*, and not *nere* or *rene*, unless the *sarba* is being referred to.

The colour BLACK is allocated to *narba*

The colour YELLOW is allocated to *saba*

The colour WHITE is allocated to *reba*

When a *get* is played, all nine positions are played in order with each *sarba* played in turn with a pause in between. The *get* is usually played from the lowest to the highest note — that is, in the following note order 543, 432, 321:

➡	5	4	3	
	rere	resa	rere	
➡		4	3	2
		sare	sasa	sane
➡			3	3 1

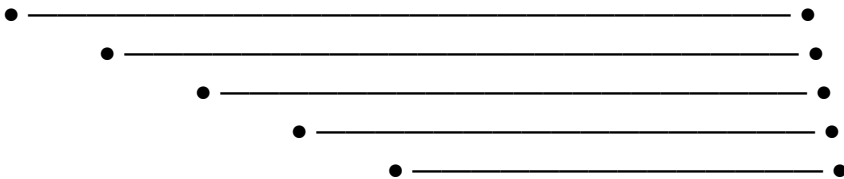
nere nesa nene

3. 'CLOSED' & 'OPEN' GET

There are two broad categories of *get*:

- (i) **get bozi**
CLOSED *get*

In a closed *get*, note one (i.e. *nene*) is exactly one octave (*esba taama*) higher than note five (i.e. *rere*). This means the range of the *get* (its *nere*) is exactly one octave. This means that a closed *get* when each note is played (rather than each position), corresponds to a tetratonic scale.



- (ii) **get parpa**
OPEN *get*

In an open *get*, note one (i.e. *nene*) is less than one octave higher than note five (i.e. *rere*). This means the range of the *get* (its *nere*) is less than one octave. An open *get* is therefore 'closed' by the first note of the next octave. This means that an open *get*, when each note is played, corresponds to a pentatonic scale. Open *get* are more common than closed *get*.

4. RULES OF PLAYING

The following two rules must be adhered to when playing any *get*.

- (i) Each note must be followed by another note in the same *sarba*.
- (ii) Additionally, *nene sasa rere* may also be followed by any of those same three notes.

There are two interpretations of rule (i).

In the first interpretation, each note belongs simultaneously to every *sarba* it sits in. So notes 1 and 5 sit in just one *sarba*, notes 2 and 4 in two *sarba* each, and 3 in all three *sarba*. The result of this interpretation when combined with rule (ii) is that it is possible to move from any note to any note *except* for:

- X** note 1 to note 4 and vice versa
- X** note 2 to note 5 and vice versa

That is to say, notes 1 and 4 are neither in the same *sarba* nor do they both belong to the *nene sasa rere* set. The same can be said for the pair notes 5 and 2.

In the second, stricter interpretation, each note belongs to only one *sarba* at a time. This means that the musician must keep track of which *sarba* a given note belongs to in order to know which next note is possible. In this interpretation, a note 2 may only be followed by a note 4 when the note 2 belongs to *saba* and not *neba*, which in

turn relies on which node preceded note 2. In practice, this means the following successions of notes are not possible:

- X** note 1, to note 2 or 3, to note 4
- X** note 5, to note 3 or 4, to note 2

Further combinations are also prohibited if a piece starts on a note that belongs to more than one *sarba*, i.e. notes 2, 3 and 4, then the musician must know or decide which *sarba* that note belongs to.

In order to move from *sarba* to *sarba* in this interpretation, the *nene sasa rere* movement must be taken advantage of:

E.g.

2 to 3	to 5	to 4
same <i>sarba</i>	<i>nene rere sasa</i>	same <i>sarba</i> as 5

In practice, a given melody may employ either interpretation of rule (i).

5. CHORDS

Each get has five permissible chords (*goi*) which are played by plucking two or three strings at once:

GOI NE	the 1st and third string of <i>neba</i> i.e. notes 1 and 3
GOI SA	the first and third string of <i>saba</i> i.e. notes 2 and 4
GOI RE	the first and third string of <i>reba</i> i.e. notes 3 and 5
GOI NERE	the first and last strings of the <i>get</i> i.e. notes 1 and 5
GOI NESARE	the first, central, and last strings of the <i>get</i> i.e. notes 1 and 3 and 5

Chords may only be played according to the rules of play, i.e. as though they were single notes within the *sarba*, so *goi ne* cannot be followed by note 4. *Goi nere* and *go nesare* are interpreted as notes 1 or 5, or as note 1 or 3 or 5 respectively.

6. SPECIFIC *GET*

There are potentially endless specific *get*, but the following pages explain the seven established *get*. Five are open *get*, i.e. pentatonic scales and two are closed, i.e. tetratonic. They are presented in their traditional order.

GET GIAALE

[SOUND FILE](#)

5	4	3	2	1	5
C	D	E \flat	G	A \flat	C
T	$\frac{1}{2}$ T	2 T	$\frac{1}{2}$ T	2 T	



GET MERÁ

[SOUND FILE](#)

5	4	3	2	1	5
C	D	E	G	A	C
T	T	1½ T	T	1½ T	



GET POAN

[SOUND FILE](#)

5	4	3	2	1	5
C#	D	E	F#	G#	C#
1/2 T	T	T	T	2 1/2 T	

Musical notation for the exercise, showing a sequence of notes (C#, D, E, F#, G#, C#) and their corresponding durations (1/2 T, T, T, T, 2 1/2 T).

GET MAISIA

[SOUND FILE](#)

5	4	3	2	1
C	D	F	A \flat	C
T	1½ T	1½ T	2 T	



GET BAGAT

[SOUND FILE](#)

5	4	3	2	1
C	E \flat	G \flat	A \flat	C
1½ T	1½ T	T	2 T	



GET MAZAND

[SOUND FILE](#)

5	4	3	2	1	5
C	D	F	G	A^b	C
T	½ T	T	½ T	2 T	



GET RASTAD

[SOUND FILE](#)

5	4	3	2	1	5
C	E \flat	F	G	A \flat	C
1½ T	T	T	½ T	2 T	

