

## 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 - gas, air, mist, fog

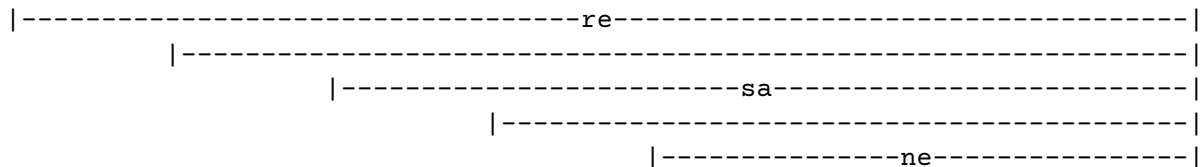
### 2. GET

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

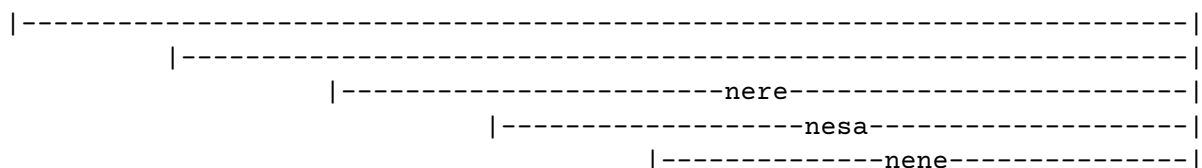
re - is the note furthest from the player, i.e. the lowest in pitch, the longest string. This is furthest and largest, like the sky



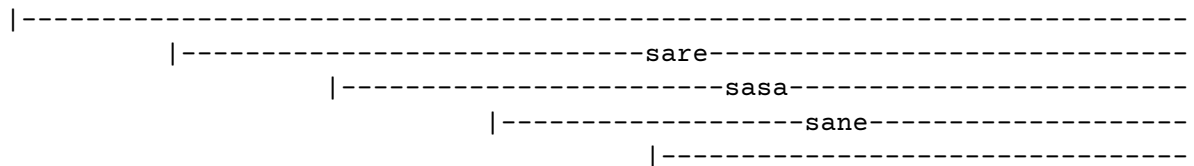
### 3. TEST & SARBA

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

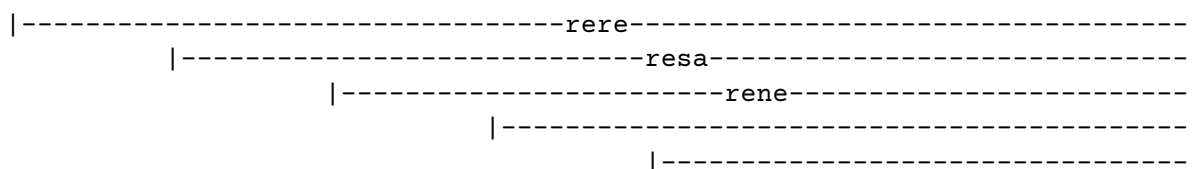
- (i) nene \
- (ii) nesa > NEBA
- (iii) nere /



(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:

	NEBA	SABA	REBA
note 1	nene		
note 2	nesa	sane	
note 3	(nere)	sasa	(rene)
note 4		sare	resa
note 5			rere

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

The colour BLACK is allocated to NEBA.

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 rene

-->           4     3     2  
          sare sasa sane

-->                 3     2     1  
                  nere nesa nene

#### 4. '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.

#### 5. 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:

note 1 to note 4 and vice versa  
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 notes 2 and 5.

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 note preceded note 2. In practice, this means the following successions of notes are not possible:

note 1, to note 2 or 3, to note 4  
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 sarba    nene rere sasa    same sarba as 5

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

## 6. 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 NEBA i.e. notes 1 and 3
GOI SA	the first and third string of SABA i.e. notes 2 and 4
GOI RE	the first and third string of REBA i.e. notes 3 and 5
GOI NERE	the first and last strings of the get i.e. notes 1 and 5
GOI NESARE	the first, central, and last strings of the get 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 GOI NESARE are interpreted as notes 1 or 5, or as note 1 or 3 or 5 respectively.

## 7. 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

5	4	3	2	1	5
-----					
-----					
					C
-----					
				Ab	
-----			G		
-----	Eb				
	D				
	--C--				
		T		$\frac{1}{2}T$	
		2T		$\frac{1}{2}T$	
		2T			

### GET MERÁ

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

# GET POAN

5 4 3 2 1 5

C#

G#

F#

E

D

--C#-

| ½T | T | T | T | 2½T |

# GET MAISIA

5 4 3 2 1

C

Ab

F

D

--C--

| T | 1½T | 1½T | 2T |

# GET BAGAT

5 4 3 2 1

C

Ab

Gb

Eb

--C--

| 1½T | 1½T | T | 2T |

# GET MAZAND

5	4	3	2	1	5	
					C	
					Ab	
			G			
	F					
	D					
	--C--					

| T | ½T | T | ½T | 2T |

# GET RASTAD

5	4	3	2	1	5	
					C	
					Ab	
			G			
	F					
	Eb					
	--C--					

| 1½T | T | T | ½T | 2T |