



Raga Labs Collaboration Process

Welcome!

The goal of Raga Labs collaborations is to create full-fledged, complete productions that would be worthy of professional production at Raga Labs.

Nature of the Collaboration Process

At Raga Labs, we operate with a sense of urgency and a bias for action. Successful candidates would prioritize this opportunity to produce high-quality productions, and make sure they stay on top of email responses, deadlines etc. They would also not spend too much time in discussion and deliberation, and will get straight to execution and iteration. Our most successful productions have been ideas that came up quickly and efficiently.

Please note that Raga Labs is not for Beginners. It is designed for those who are at an Advanced or Intermediate stage in their learning and ready to perform in high quality productions. If you note a Beginner being part of the team despite our rigorous selection process, please notify info@indianraga.com immediately before getting started.

Criteria for Selection and Success in Raga Labs

At a very fundamental level, we are looking for candidates who will excel at performing in high quality videos, which requires a very different skill set than live performance. To be selected and to feature in a video that they will be proud of, candidates must at a bare minimum record themselves at home (both audio and video) using simple equipment like phones and cameras, and observe if their foundations are strong. The IndianRaga Certification is an excellent tool for this to gain feedback from a global panel of experts, and IndianRaga-Certified candidates will automatically have an edge over other participants just in terms of having gained strong feedback and practice.

Once shortlisted in the Raga Labs process, candidates will be matched with those who are at similar caliber of skill. For music, groups will have a mix of vocal, instrumental and percussion candidates based on the applications and their preferences (Pure classical, fusion, instrumental, etc). For dance, groups will either have dancers of the same genre or different based on the applications and their preferences.

The Raga Labs Selection Panel must feel that each artist's contribution in the piece is substantial enough that the production cannot happen without him/her – there are no lead singers or lead dancers or lead of anything in a Raga Lab. Please note that we do not see 'accompaniment' in the traditional sense even in core classical pieces – instrumentalists and percussionists at Raga Labs play an equal role as others, and are expected to demonstrate creativity and innovation in how their instrument adds layers and arrangement to the piece.

Please note that creative talent is just one component that goes into a production. For successful productions, the ability to work in a team, be organized and efficient, think through audio-video production elements like screenplay, look, audio structure and layers is equally critical, and we believe this process offers a practical education experience in this regard.

Getting Started

We strongly recommend reviewing the extensive library of previous Raga Labs and Indian Raga Fellowship productions, available both on YouTube and Facebook. In addition, successful collaborations in the past have also taken inspiration from other widely viewed, critically acclaimed videos available on social media.

Role of the Creative Lead

Advanced category teams will not be provided with a Creative Lead by Raga Labs. The team themselves will be putting their creative piece together with feedback from our panel. The team will nominate one person to be the Creative Lead amongst them, who will bring together the piece drawing upon creative support of each team member.

For all Intermediate category teams, Raga Labs will provide a Creative Lead remotely for music and in-person for dance, who will conduct a series of sessions to help the team put the piece together. There will be a maximum of 6 sessions with the Creative Lead, and teams have to use that time effectively to get the piece ready to our panel's satisfaction.

The Creative Lead will not be tasked with any administrative responsibilities, which are entirely the team's responsibility with their Coordinator (Please see next section).

To aid the process, the Creative Lead will support the Coordinator on leveraging the following resources:

1. Raga Labs Idea Bank – This is a list of ideas put together for different genres as a reference and to stimulate ideas. The Creative Lead must use these as reference and come up with their own concept.
2. Concept Submission – This is a form that the Coordinator will fill in, with support from the Creative Lead, to propose the concept that the team would like to work on, and get feedback and approval from the Raga Labs panel before starting full-fledged rehearsals
3. Draft Submission – This is a form that the Coordinator will fill in, with support from the Creative Lead, to share a draft video of the piece, and get feedback and approval from the Raga Labs panel before they get a confirmed production slot
4. Production Scheduler - After whatever iterations it takes to get the Draft Submission approved, the Coordinator will get the green signal to fill the Production Scheduler. Production will NOT be scheduled unless the draft is approved AND Production Scheduler is submitted by the Coordinator, without exception.

Role of the Coordinator

Each team will have a Coordinator who is a volunteer – ideally one of the participants or a parent. Their role is entirely administrative, and to project manage the team so that the scheduling, logistics and planning takes place smoothly. It is their responsibility to ensure that the team uses the following resources and liaises with the Creative Lead to ensure the team is on track:

1. Raga Labs Idea Bank – This is a list of ideas put together for different genres as a reference and to stimulate ideas. The coordinator must use these as reference and come up with their own concept.
2. Concept Submission – This is a form that the Coordinator will fill in, with support from the Creative Lead, to propose the concept that the team would like to work on, and get feedback and approval from the Raga Labs panel before starting full-fledged rehearsals

3. Draft Submission – This is a form that the Coordinator will fill in, with support from the Creative Lead, to share a draft video of the piece, and get feedback and approval from the Raga Labs panel before they get a confirmed production slot
4. Production Scheduler - After whatever iterations it takes to get the Draft Submission approved, the Coordinator will get the green signal to fill the Production Scheduler. Production will NOT be scheduled unless the draft is approved AND Production Scheduler is submitted by the Coordinator, without exception.

Coordinators will also be expected to support the pre-production planning, production and post production process for the piece in terms of screenplay, production plan on who will record first and coordinate with the audio/video engineers, and prepare teams for the video shoot.

Creative Brief, or Goal of Collaborations

All pieces should be designed for a max 5-min timeframe. Please note that the average watchtime of videos on social media is 2 mins, so even 5 mins is already a lot. If the team wishes to go beyond 5 mins, an additional charge of \$75 per participant per minute (Outside India) or INR 2500 per participant per minute (In India) will be incurred to account for extra post-production effort, and the team must be prepared for very low viewership on the piece when it is released as is the case with long videos.

Our goal is to develop collaborations that are either strong innovations in highly traditional concepts, or ground-breaking viral-worthy pieces. We seek to avoid the space in between.

Examples from previous IndianRaga and Raga Labs productions include [KaaVaaVaa](#), [BruhiMukundethi](#), [Charukeshis](#), [Mallari](#), [Shiva Shambho](#), [EDM Alarippu](#), [VahanaAlarippu](#). (More references are given later in this document). You can see that each of these pieces is centered around classicism even though the structure and accompaniment might be new-age or innovative. These are meant for discerning audiences who marvel at the technique and complexity that has been showcased in these pieces, and the themes tend to be more spiritual, philosophical or technique-focused. Produced or arranged music is not provided in this tier of Raga Labs, so please do not reference videos where the base tracks are produced by an audio engineer. Likewise, pitch correction and quantization is not done in Raga Labs in editing, so participants have to be pitch perfect and on perfect beat.

The package includes 2 hours of audio recording in a studio. If the quality of audio is still not up to the mark due to individual difficulties or lack of experience, they can either go and record on their own and submit, or Raga Labs reserves the right to adjust volume balances where there are mistakes.

What Not to do

Examples of what **NOT** to do would be:

1. Do NOT pick up two songs in different genres and just perform them one after the other and call it a mashup. A mashup is always a creative, interesting blend, it is never a sequential performance of pieces
2. Do NOT try to condense something that is designed for a 30 min or longish performance and try to condense to fit into 5 mins. For example a 5-min RagaThanamPallavi or Bandish presentation.
3. Do NOT pick a song from a different culture and just add some Indian classical alaaps to it and call it fusion.

4. Do NOT pick up a popular jugalbandi by two maestros and try to give your own spin.
5. Do NOT take a song from a different culture and simply choreograph Bharatanatyam or Kuchipudi to it.
6. Do NOT work on ideas that involve both musicians and dancers in the same video. Dancers are dynamic in movement, and musicians are static, and most often we will be focusing on one or the other so the dance movement will be lost a bit when the musicians are showcased so the planning gets extremely complex.
7. If you are taking extremely intense themes then do NOT simply choreograph a story around it or show lots of pathos and sadness or 'preachy' choreography to it, it will be rejected instantly. Always think of what would be engaging and interesting to a common, lay audience, not to a connoisseur, for pieces like this, because there is no point in preaching to the choir.
8. Do not mix a devotional/spiritual theme with a funky/romantic theme – this tends to happen especially when teams want to blend classical music with film or western genres in the same ragam.

Additional Raga Labs References

Carnatic Classical

San Diego Raga Labs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mji0N6cXnjA>

San Jose Raga Labs: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dn6E_3YM0io

Cleveland Raga Labs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JsjcDcZzrDI>

Hindustani Classical

Bengaluru Raga Labs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JKZhsbFh7vs>

San Jose Raga Labs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BqBaiwdZlv4>

Fusion/Jugalbandi

UK Raga Labs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbr8NYJumEQ>

San Jose Raga Labs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dbwbQs0Jcxs>

World Music

Minneapolis Raga Labs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0pQlaxlKMcl>

Dallas Raga Labs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8qxS-Z-BGg>

Produced Tracks (Premium Labs)

Mumbai Raga Labs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=glyNDzMbovw>

Mumbai Raga Labs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6zVkokwp6iQ>

Mumbai Raga Labs: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ESxd_fEMDZw

Classical Dance

Virginia Raga Labs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hnCQ53M8uCY>

Singapore Raga Labs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w1RiUeV3b5U>

Singapore Raga Labs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ef-eGHmZuVI>

Fusion/Semi-Classical/Contemporary Dance (Premium Raga Labs)

Mumbai Raga Labs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wOwHVio4gmw>

Munich Raga Labs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rw2QS5sXU44>

Mumbai Raga Labs: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D18jZrgON_I

Mumbai Raga Labs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B9fzjreYRkQ>

Submission Timelines

1. Stage 1: Concept Submission: Right after the first team meeting in person or remotely. Teams must discuss ideas that they wish to produce and submit using this form:

<https://indianraga.com/labs/concept-submission/>

Please note that you can submit as many as three options at this stage.

2. The Coordinator will review with the Raga Labs team and respond with feedback on the ideas and which one is selected to move forward with changes/suggestions.
3. Rehearsal sessions will now start based on the schedule with the Coordinator.
4. Stage 2: Draft Submission: After a few rehearsal sessions, Draft Submission form is to be submitted by the Coordinator. Few rehearsal sessions is defined as whatever time is needed for the team to create the first proper complete draft of the piece, keeping in mind that the piece might change substantially after the Raga Labs panel feedback. Hence, we recommend filling this in sooner than later to avoid substantial delays in the Labs process. The form for Draft Submission can be found here:

<https://indianraga.com/labs/draft-submission/>

If the draft is not approved by the Raga Labs panel, the team is expected to revise and resubmit based on their feedback. After whatever iterations it takes to get it approved, the Coordinator will get the green signal to fill the Production Scheduler. Production will NOT be scheduled unless the draft is approved and Production Scheduler submitted by the Coordinator, without exception.

5. Stage 3: Production Scheduler: This should be filled by the Coordinator after discussing with Creative Lead and participants. Exact spellings of names must be included along with the description of the piece and other information that is asked, keeping the references and style guides in mind. If this segment has to change later, there will be substantial delay in release, because the panelist who verifies this information may or may not be available when needed. So please do not assume that this information can be corrected later after the video draft is shared. Here is the link to the form to be submitted:

<https://indianraga.com/labs/production-scheduler/>

The Central Raga Labs Coordinator will add the information on Audio Recording, Audio Mixing, Video Shoot and Video Edit before sending credits info to Video Editor.

Additional Comments :

Over the past four years, the Raga Labs team has developed a detailed process for creation of collaborations to ensure the highest standards of production and content. We ensure this process is followed strictly so that the final

productions are worth the time and talent of everyone involved. Often candidates who are not familiar with the rigor it takes to create high quality pieces underestimate the effort, and it results in wasted time, frustration and dissatisfaction for others in the team. Our goal with the process is to ensure that candidates are not only able to prioritize this opportunity but also know what it takes to be good collaborators – so in that sense this round is more about execution ability, commitment, teamwork and creativity than pure skill or technical ability.

If you face difficulties with any team member(s), please do not hesitate to let us the City Chapter head or the central IndianRagateam know at info@indianraga.com and we will address it sensitively. We wish to doubly emphasize that if you face issues with something and do not let us know in advance, there is nothing we can do once it is too late. There is no point waiting or putting up with problems till the last minute and then using that as an excuse for delays or inability to deliver. In the unlikely event that this process gets too overwhelming for you, we will help you alter your number of productions, or help you back out and re-apply at a later time.

We also want to make it clear at this point that only the applicant should be involved in this process. If any team members notice any interference by anyone other than the applicant, please notify us immediately and the applicant may be disqualified based on the same.

We expect all material, ideas, conversations generated during this process including names of other candidates to be kept confidential. We reserve the right to exclude candidates who do not respect the sanctity of this process.

Wish you all the best!
The Raga Labs Team