

## **Master of Arts in Music Performance Portfolio**

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### **Part A - Thesis**

Representing *Tabla* Music:

Defining an Effective Notation System for Indian *Tabla* Repertoire

### **Part B - Performance Materials**

Masters Recital Program Notes and Accompanying DVD Video

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## **Abstract**

The aim of this study is to create a western based musical notation system for the North Indian *tabla* repertoire. The study aims to develop a system that maintains a high degree of accuracy and readability in representing all the musical elements in each of the varied compositional forms within the repertoire. Today *tabla* is increasingly found in non-traditional settings such as formal western education and it has been adopted into the genre of world music. According to this performance based research there is currently no standardised system for the notation of *tabla* music required for it to be used as a reliable teaching tool. Through participant observation technique as well as notational and structural analysis the study identifies the need for a notation system that is coherent throughout each of the compositional forms. It is critical that the notation system not only represents the individual notes and rhythms but also communicates and differentiates between the complexity within each of the compositional forms. Based on more than five years of study and ethnographic fieldwork undertaken in India through the period 2000 to 2010 with *tabla* master Pandit Anindo Chatterjee and musical informant Subhajit Brahmachari, this thesis undertakes a critical review of existing traditional and modern systems and notates examples of the new system in each of the compositional forms along with written analysis of the formal structure.

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## **Statement of Originality**

"I declare that this thesis contains no material which has previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material which has previously been published or written by another person, except when due reference is made in the text of the thesis."

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## Part A – Thesis

Representing *Tabla* Music: Defining an Effective Notation System for Indian *Tabla* Repertoire

### Introduction

This study develops a notation system that represents the virtuosic repertoire of North Indian *tabla* drumming through the use of a hybridized form of traditional drum mnemonics (*bols*) and western staff notation. There is currently no standardised system for the notation of *tabla*<sup>1</sup> music in English. The aim is to create a prescriptive notation system that accurately and effectively communicates the multiplicity of inherent performative aspects in the numerous compositional forms in the repertoire. The development of an effective notation system for *tabla* music is useful as a pedagogical tool given the instrument is firmly established as a popular 'world music' instrument and its appeal is broadening internationally and within Australia. It is essential that pedagogical resources for the instrument are developed that accurately represent *tabla*'s most fundamental musical elements if *tabla* is to develop and maintain a relevant context in Australian education.

There are notable traditional, hybrid and western notation systems of this oral tradition (Gottlieb 1977; Wegner 2004; Courtney 2001) but these systems largely fail to build the bridge between traditional oral methods of learning and the demands of teaching within a western based curriculum. In the absence of a standardised system for the notation of *tabla* music for western based curriculum, each of the main texts that notate the repertoire has used different systems of notation. There is a wide range of issues in the current literature on *tabla* notation. These include the use of highly individualized, overly complex

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<sup>1</sup> *Tabla* is a set of two drums originating from North India.

graphic notations, inaccurate transcriptions and inconsistent layouts. Structural elements such as the *tihai*, a cyclical cadential figure, and the complex rhythmic performative aspects, as evidenced by the poly-rhythmic compositional form known as *chakradar*, have been poorly represented in current publications. This may be partly due to the historical development of *tabla* which is not a single construct but rather represents a variety of styles, differing languages and the strong prevalence of an oral teaching methodology. For this reason, the exact notes to be played on *tabla* drums are often unclear in *tabla* notations. This is due to the fact that the complex relationship between the written *bol*, that is, the drum mnemonic, and the corresponding note to be performed is rarely addressed in notations.

Prescriptive notations of the *tabla* repertoire such as Gottlieb's (1977) transcriptions of individual performances give little indication of the depth and detail of the entire performance practice of a given repertoire. The notations used in this thesis apply a prescriptive approach that documents a broader spectrum of the *tabla* repertoire with a high level of detail, as is the case during practical lessons within the oral tradition. In this way it is hoped that these notations may act as an accurate documentation of the oral tradition.

In compiling the research material for this paper I have spent the past decade, supported by several nationally funded grants conducting ethnographic fieldwork among practitioners of the oral tradition of Indian *tabla* performance. I have specialised in *tabla lehra*, the solo *tabla* repertoire, with one of the great masters of the tradition, Pandit Anindo Chatterjee of the *Farukhabad Gharana*.<sup>2</sup> My research has been further informed by one of Anindo Chatterjee's senior students,

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<sup>2</sup> *Gharana*: stylistic school or tradition, originating in a family lineage. *Farukhabad Gharana* refers to the tradition of *tabla* playing originating in the town of *Farukhabad*, that was later relocated to *Kolkata* (formally *Calcutta*).

Subhajit Bhahmachari.<sup>3</sup> The notation system used in this thesis has been the culmination of systems refined over many years through the Melbourne *Tabla* School. I have established this school to provide a context for *tabla* that reinforces both traditional and modern pedagogical approaches. The school does not rely solely on notation, but it proves extremely useful as a complement to oral teaching methods of *tabla* transmission.

The thesis begins with an analysis and critique of graphic *tabla* notation examples found in each of the major publications of *tabla* notation systems in English. This is followed by a critical analysis of non-standardised systems of drum mnemonics, or *bols*, in the current literature (Wegner 2004; Gottlieb 1977; Courtney 2001). Some of the issues addressed in this analysis include precise rhythmic representation in compositional forms such as *tukra*, that incorporate higher levels of rhythmic complexity; a higher level of specificity regarding *bol* groupings, or musical phrasing; as well as cyclical forms such as the *tihai*, and the relationship of these elements to the crochet beat.

The new notation system designed to address these issues may only be accurately assessed when the system is presented in each compositional form within the repertoire. The final section of the thesis presents example notations of each of the major compositional forms used within the repertoire. In outlining the specific notation issues related to each compositional form a detailed description of each form, accompanies the notations.

The study concludes that none of the current systems of notation for *tabla* drumming represent the repertoire with a level of accuracy and usability required for the materials to be used as a reliable tool for music teaching and development. Representing *tabla* drumming

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<sup>3</sup> Detailed information on Pandit Anindo Chatterjee and Subhajit Brahmachari can be found in Appendix 1.

through the most fundamental aspects of western musical culture, that of repertoire and notation, further legitimises the tradition to a western audience. One of the most accurate methods of representation is a hybridised notation system that utilises western notation and *tabla bols*.

Like all notations, this system is limited in its representation of the *tabla* repertoire. It advantages those who already understand the system of western notation and is therefore specifically relevant within a western pedagogical context. The western notation staff may be superfluous to those who are not familiar with western notation, which doubtless includes a large portion of the source culture in India. With this in mind the system has been carefully designed as to not disadvantage those readers, allowing them to utilise the common method of reading the *bol* line only. While all forms of written music have limitations, the creation of a system of notation moves towards more accurate representation of the totality of the *tabla* music repertoire. My notation creates an alliance between two systems, western staff notation and Indian *bols*, that provides clarity and accuracy in representing Indian *tabla* music.

## Section 1 – The Notation of *Tabla* Music

With a history of musical notation that begins in the *Samaveda* and dates back to between 1000-500 BC, Indian music has a depth of indigenous scholarship. Ruckert explains that Indian *tabla* music is “a feast for the scholar: an interplay of hoary rhythmic traditions featuring complex mathematics and syncopations played with effortless (!) joy by eccentric personalities whose training and artistic heritage weaves them into an ancient and variegated society.”<sup>4</sup> The majority of the academic interest in Indian music has been directed toward *raga*, or the melodic aspects of Indian music. There has been comparatively little attention given to rhythmic aspects of Indian music in academic endeavors.

However, in the past forty years a number of extensive published works on the notation of *tabla* music have appeared, including Robert S. Gottlieb’s monumental work ‘The Major Traditions of North Indian *Tabla* Drumming’ in 1977.<sup>5</sup> While *tabla* players and academics alike are deeply indebted to the likes of Gottlieb, Courtney and Wegner for their contribution to the notation of *tabla* music in English, there remains a great deal of work to be completed in this area, especially in the area of detailed and accurate notations of traditional works.

Notations of Indian music use spoken mnemonic syllables to represent musical elements as an integral part of notation. Melodic notations use a solfege system known as *sargam*<sup>6</sup> to represent the melodic aspect of the music. Percussionists, such as *tabla* players, use a system of syllables to represent rhythm, fingerings and the notes to be played. This system is known as *tabla bol*, a term derived from the Hindi word *bolna*

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<sup>4</sup> Ruckert, G. (1994)

<sup>5</sup> Gottlieb, R. (1977)

<sup>6</sup> The individual notes in Indian melody are called *swaras*, term *sargam* is derived from the first four notes of the scale *sa, re, ga, ma*.

meaning 'to speak'. It is common to hear people refer to *tabla bols* as a reference to spoken *tabla* words or the 'language of *tabla*'.

*Tabla bols* and *sargam* are intrinsic learning methods of Indian music used by musicians to write and remember music. It is the language applied in communication regarding music as well as the medium employed by teachers to transmit music to their students.

While Indian music is predominantly an oral tradition, *tabla* players keep notebooks written in *tabla bols* and all commercially available books on *tabla* use *tabla bols* to notate the music. The majority of these books use only *bols*, some with a system of symbols to aid the accuracy of the notation and others incorporate elements of western notation or special symbols.

### **1.1. Review of Current Literature**

There is currently no standard system for the notation of *tabla* music in Hindi or English.<sup>7</sup> There remains a wide range of notation systems in use and these vary widely with regards to their structure, levels of detail, accuracy and readability. The most common form of notation used in India written in the Hindi language is the *Bhatkhande* system that was established in the early 1900's by Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande. In this system, Hindi characters are used to represent musical notes, in the form of *tabla bols*. The rhythm is indicated by the spacing of the characters and a series of vertical lines. An example of this notation system in a current publication is presented below.

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<sup>7</sup> Hindi is the national and most common language in North India, where the *tabla* originates.

ठाह (एकगुन) की लय में			
धा धा ते टे		धा धा ति ना	
X		२	
ता ता ते टे		धा धा धि ना	
०		३	
दुगुन (दोगुनी) लय में			
<u>धा</u> <u>ते</u> <u>धा</u> <u>ति</u> <u>ना</u>		<u>ता</u> <u>ते</u> <u>धा</u> <u>धि</u> <u>ना</u>	
X		२	
<u>ध</u> <u>धा</u> <u>ते</u> <u>धा</u> <u>ति</u> <u>ना</u>		<u>ता</u> <u>ते</u> <u>धा</u> <u>धि</u> <u>ना</u>	
०		३	

Figure 1. *Tabla* notation in the Hindi language in the Bhatkhande system. Mishra, C. 1981: 46.

Today, there are a variety of notation systems for *tabla* music in use that include English versions of the *Bhatkhande* system, hybrid versions of western staff notation, and a range of independently designed systems. Prominent writers on *tabla* music in English include Gottlieb, Courtney, Wegner, Chatterjee and Kippen, each of whom use their own systems for transcription and examples of these are presented below.

The *Bhatkhande* system that is commonly used in Hindi is rarely translated and used in English. This may be due to the lack of rhythmic detail that is possible to notate within this system. An example of *tabla* notation in English using the *Bhatkhande* system is presented below from Samir Chatterjee's 'A Study of *Tabla*'.

+	1 dhage teTe	2 dhage teTe	3 dhage teTe	4 gheghe te Te
2	5 dhage teTe	6 gheghe teTe	7 gheghe naga	8 tuna ghenā
0	9 dhage teTe	10 gheghe teTe	11 gheghe naga	12 tuna ghenā
3	13 teTe gheghe	14 naga teTe	15 gheghe naga	16 tuna ghenā
- Mudi alike				

Figure 2. The Bhatkhande system of *tabla* notation in English. Chatterjee, 2006: 125.

While Chatterjee presents the material in a clear and readable layout the notations are restricted to simple rhythmic indication due to the limitations of the Bhatkhande system. Notating a rhythmic phrase such as the example shown in Figure 3, that is commonly found in a form called *tukra* within the *tabla* repertoire, is not possible in his system.

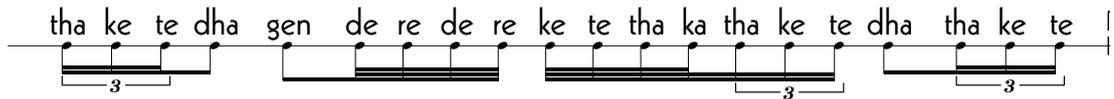


Figure 3. Example rhythmic phrase from a *tabla tukra*.

The Bhatkhande system also does not outline the important element of *bol* groupings, otherwise known as musical phrasing. *Bol* groupings are a fundamental aspect of *tabla* repertoire that creates a form of melodic phrasing that is often syncopated against the meter of the music. For this intrinsic aspect to be effectively represented, notation systems for *tabla* music require *bol* group indication. While Chatterjee's text is lacking in these areas, he has otherwise presented a text that is balanced and thorough in its presentation of the repertoire.

David Courtney designed a new notation system for *tabla* music for his work entitled 'A Focus on the *Kaidas* of *Tabla*'. The text provides detailed analysis of *kaida*, one of the most structurally sophisticated forms, as well as many rare and valuable compositions in the form. Although Courtney's system is designed for educational purposes, the music is presented in long lines of *tabla bols* that lack rhythmic punctuation, beat indication and *bol* groupings. Courtney refers to the rhythm as being 'unspecified' in the text<sup>8</sup>. This may be problematic as the tradition of *tabla* playing demands extremely accurate and specific rhythmic performance. In his text Courtney has also chosen a single English syllable to represent two different Hindi characters

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<sup>8</sup> Courtney 2003: 169

making it extremely difficult for the English reader to understand the indication of the *bol*s.<sup>9</sup> An example of this system appears below.

**Variation #4**

ध ग न ग ती ना क ता ध ग ति ट ध ग न ग ती ना क ता ध ग ति ट  
Dha Ga Na Ga Ti Na Ka Ta Dha Ga Ti Ta Dha Ga Na Ga Ti Na Ka Ta Dha Ga Ti Ta

त ग न ग ती ना क ता त ग ति ट ध ग न ग ती ना क ता ध ग ति ट  
Ta Ga Na Ga Ti Na Ka Ta Ta Ga Ti Ta Dha Ga Na Ga Ti Na Ka Ta Dha Ga Ti Ta

Figure 4. Courtney's *tabla* notation system as presented in 'A Focus on the *Kaidas* of *Tabla*'. Courtney 2003: 201.

The system of notation Gert-Mattias Wegner employed in his monumental work '*Vintage Tabla Repertory*' was based on a grid system for the notation of *tabla* developed by Wegner's teacher, Pandit Nikhil Ghosh.<sup>10</sup> This book is the most substantial, well-informed and complete work on *tabla* repertoire available in English. However, Wegner's system is extremely problematic with regards to readability. The notation uses a grid system with the drumming syllables placed in a series of boxes. In order to read four successive notes, the reader's eyes need to move around the boxes, firstly to the right, then diagonally down and to the left, then again to the right, then directly up. This is contrary to the way written systems of language and music function in western music pedagogy. *Bol* groupings are not indicated in this work and the grid system tends to obscure the grouping by the changing number of notes placed within each box and their relative distances created by the grid. Visual representation of the beat is often unclear as the exact rhythmic value of each box changes according to what is written within it. The grid layout is set in groups of two boxes creating difficulties in determining the rhythm of any music that is not in a duple

<sup>9</sup> Courtney 2003: 14. *Ta* is used to represent two different Hindi syllables throughout the book as shown in the example below.

ता	ता	ति	ट
Ta	Ta	Ti	Ta

<sup>10</sup> Wegner 2004: 55

meter, or rhythms that have been divided into any odd number of subdivisions, including triplets. An example from this text representing a composition in septuplets, divided over eight boxes, is presented below.

### Ṭukḍā in Miṣrā Jātī

Amir Hussain Khan

Dhe	⊙	⊙	ta	kat	dhse	he	te	he	ta	kan	dha	ghan	⊙	ka	dha	o	dhe	re	re	dhe	kat	o
ta	⊙				dhse	ta	⊙				dhi		⊙				dhe	re				
>																						
dhe	re	re	dhe	re	te	te	re	dha	⊙	re	dhan	dhan	dha	⊙	re	tan	tan	ta	⊙	re	dhan	dhan
dhe	re	ta	re	re	te				⊙					⊙						⊙		
>																						
dha																						
>																						
dha																						

Note, Ghunsi used to pull his & h. back suddenly, in order to illustrate the *ḥijāz* change

Figure 5. *Tabla* notation in 'Vintage *Tabla* Repertory'. Wegner 2004: 315

James Kippen's 1998 work, *The *Tabla* of Lucknow: A Cultural Analysis of a Musical Tradition* includes *tabla* notations presented in his own system. Like the other scholars discussed here, Kippen designed the system of notation to suit his particular research approach, in this case, as part of cultural analysis. While the notations provide a valuable insight and overview of the Lucknow repertoire the rhythm and *bol* indication are lacking in clarity due to the layout and a complicated system of numbers and symbols that appear above and below each note. An example from Kippen's work appears below.

<p>X      ●      ●      V</p> <p>ghinā -dhā -ṛā</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1            23</p>	<p>●      V      ●</p> <p>dhā gīṛa naga</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1    1            23</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">V      ●      1</p> <p>gīṛa naga taka</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1            23      x</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">23 1      V      ●</p> <p>tira kiṭa tā</p> <p style="text-align: center;">x</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">23 1      V      ●</p> <p>tiṭe gīṛa naga</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1            23</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">gīṛa naga tiṭe</p>
<p>gīṛa naga taka</p>	<p>tira kiṭa tā</p>

Figure 6. *Tabla* notation in 'The *Tabla* of Lucknow'. Kippen 1998: 188

The first large scale work to employ the use of western rhythmic notation in conjunction with Indian *tabla bols* was Robert Gottlieb's 1977 work 'The Major Traditions of North Indian *Tabla* Drumming'.<sup>11</sup> For readers accustomed to staff notation, the sophisticated rhythmic patterns appear much clearer in this system than in other notational forms previously discussed. Although, as the notations are hand written and descriptive in nature, they lack detail and clear bol indication. Further, the accuracy of Gottlieb's transcriptional work has readily been questioned by both Stewart (1975) and Kippen (2002). However, the work provides a broad and valuable comparative outline of the repertoire used by *tabla* players from different *Gharanas*. An example of the notation system used in this work appears below.

A 1.

+ Dhā tē ge re nā ge    ge re nā ge tē    Dhā Dhā ge re nā ge    tū nā g t t g

2 Dhā tē ge re nā ge    ge re nā ge tē    Dhā Dhā ge re nā ge    tū nā K t t K

----- Bandh -----

0 tū tū Kō so nā Ke    Kō so nā Ke tē    tū tū Kō so nā Ke    tū nā K t t K

3 tū tū Kūnk Kūnk tē    - Kūnk tē - Dhā    Dhā tē - gūng tē gūng tū nā g t t g

Figure 7. *Tabla* notations in 'The Major Traditions of North Indian *Tabla* Drumming'. Gottlieb 1977: 53

Perhaps the most respected book of Indian music notations for a western audience may be considered 'The Raga Guide'. Published in 1999, this book is used as the standard text book for the only degree offered in a western country in *Hindustani* music<sup>12</sup> at the Rotterdam Conservatorium in Holland. Although the text does not notate *tabla* music it is of interest in this topic as it employs a hybrid notation system

<sup>11</sup> Gottlieb 1977

<sup>12</sup> *Hindustani* music is the classical music of North India.

that is similar to the one presented in this thesis. The text indicates the melody through the use of both *sargam*, Indian solfege, and western staff notation. This system may be appealing to both Indian and western musicians as both may read from the same text. It allows western musicians to gain an insight into the Indian system through the use of *sargam* while utilising the precision of western staff notation. An example of this system is presented below.

*Ascent-descent*

S R G P N Ṥ , Ṥ N P G R S

*Melodic outline*

Ṗ Ṅ Ṡ Ṙ<sup>G</sup> , Ṙ Ġ Ṗ Ṙ<sup>G</sup> , Ṙ<sup>S</sup> Ġ—RSṘ , Ġ Ṗ—Ġ Ṗ Ṅ—Ṗ Ṅ Ṥ , Ṗ Ṅ Ṥ

Ṙ—Ṙ<sup>R</sup> Ġ<sup>R</sup> Ṥ<sup>R</sup> , Ṅ Ṗ Ġ Ṗ Ṙ<sup>G</sup>—Ġ<sup>R</sup> Ṡ

Figure 8. Melodic notations in 'The Raga Guide'. Bor 1999: 80.

Analysis of the above literature has indicated that the notes and the rhythm to be played on *tabla* is often unclear in current *tabla* music publications due to the design of the notation systems. In a traditional oral teaching setting these issues are resolved by the teacher. In written notations these issues need to be resolved in the design of the system.

Due to a lack of a standardised notation system for *tabla* music in English each of the main texts that notate large parts of the repertoire have used different systems of notation. These systems have been designed to suit a particular outcome including Courtney's pedagogical approach, Kippen's cultural analysis and Gottlieb's descriptive transcriptions. None of these materials represents the music with enough specificity, accuracy and detail to be used in a western

based pedagogical curriculum. Fundamental aspects of notation such as rhythmic accuracy, clear indication of the *bols* to be performed and *bol* groupings are essential in representing *tabla* music.

## **1.2. Essential Elements in Effective *Tabla* Notation**

Through my ethnographic research in India and analysis of the many texts in English and Hindi of North Indian *tabla* repertoire I have developed a list of essential elements or the effective notation of *tabla* repertoire. This list has been further informed through my experience of teaching the *tabla* tradition to a wide variety of students over the past decade. As part of the research process, I have consulted experts from a wide variety of fields regarding the best method of notation. Informants include academic scholars, full time music transcribers, composers that have knowledge of Indian music and over fifty of my own *tabla* students.<sup>13</sup>

### **Rhythmic Accuracy**

The *tabla* music repertoire, as taught by Pandit Anindo Chatterjee, includes a highly specific, sophisticated and virtuosic approach to rhythm. To accurately represent the tradition, notation systems of *tabla* music require a high degree of rhythmic specificity in their design. As detailed above, the notation systems used in current publications have not accurately represented the rhythmic aspect of the music in the repertoire with a high degree of precision. I argue that this is largely due to the design of the notation systems that have been used to present the material. The notation system presented in this thesis includes western rhythmic notation in order to address this issue. Western rhythmic notation has extremely precise rhythmic

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<sup>13</sup> The list of essential elements does not include elements of the notations that I would consider to be obvious inclusions that I have found are already covered in all currently available texts.

representation and has the further advantage of being the common form of musical notation in western pedagogy.

### **Bol Indication**

*Tabla bols* inform the reader which note is to be played on the drums. In an effective notation system the musical note indicated by the written *bol* should be unambiguous. Due to a variety of accents and spelling systems in use in different parts of India and internationally there remains a lack of clarity regarding exactly which performed note is indicated by the written *bol*. As there are spoken *bols* that represent more than one performed note, the new system includes independent spellings for each *bol* as well as a legend with photographs and descriptions.

### **Bol Groupings and the Beat**

*Bol* groupings, or musical phrasing in *tabla* drumming and its relationship to the crochet beat, is an integral aspect of the tradition of Indian *tabla*. *Tabla* players think in *bol* groupings and their relation to the *matra* and *tal*, that is the equivalent of the beat and bar. Traditional compositions are designed to exploit the melodic movement of the *bol* groupings against the beat. It is common for compositions in the *kaida* form to contain little rhythmic variation, instead utilising *bol* groupings as the main compositional focus. It is extremely important that *bol* groupings are clear in *tabla* notations to allow fluency in reading. Notations without *bol* group indication are difficult to read and can be likened to literary prose written without spaces or punctuation between the words. As indicated above, the majority of notation systems in publication do not indicate the *bol* grouping or the beat. Some methods do not indicate either. In the system in this thesis, the beat is indicated by western rhythmic notation and the *bol* grouping is indicated by a system of clearly visible commas. It should be noted that *tabla* players commonly refer to both

individual *bols*, ie: single strokes such as *dha* or *na* as well as *bol* groupings, ei: multiple strokes such as *dhatidhage*, as a 'bol'.

## **Section 2 – The *Tabla*: Notations and Repertoire**

The most ideal method of learning any instrument, from any culture, is from a player and teacher of that instrument. In situations where it may not be possible to learn this way, or where this type of learning may be assisted through supplementary material on the subject, accurate notations along with detailed information regarding the repertoire is critical.

During my ethnographic research in India I discovered a range of inherent issues associated with the notation and transmission of *tabla* music. I have attempted to address these in the design of a hybrid notation system that includes western staff notation and Indian *bol* mnemonics.

Languages and accents vary widely across India. For this reason there is a level of discrepancy with regards to the pronunciation of spoken syllables used to differentiate notes played on the *tabla* set. Across India, certain strokes are pronounced differently, even though they may be played as the same stroke.<sup>14</sup> Chatterjee laments that “What is pronounced as ‘teTe’ or ‘tere’ in the east will be pronounced as ‘tiTa’ or ‘tira’ in the western part of the country.”<sup>15</sup> The problem here is that the syllables *ti* and *ta* represent two completely different strokes in eastern India, creating confusion for readers. Regardless of which pronunciation is used, there needs to be independent representations for each note in written notations. The performance of each note also

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<sup>14</sup> There are minor differences in the playing techniques used to produce the notes in the different *tabla Gharanas*, such as *tete* played with two fingers in the Delhi *Gharana* and three fingers in the *Banaras Gharana*, but the notes are the same.

<sup>15</sup> Chatterjee 2006: 89.

needs to be clearly defined in the notation system, just as a teacher defines and clarifies the notes intended by their pronunciation during a lesson. This is resolved below with a clearly defined list of notes to be performed with corresponding pictures and definitions. Independent spellings are provided for each note in this new system.

Another inherent notational issue relates to *bols* that are spoken and *bols* that are played on the instrument. While the system of *tabla bols* is highly specific, there are certain inconsistencies between spoken and performed *bols*. Unfortunately, the *bols* that are recited are not always exactly the same as the *bols* that are played. One of the many reasons for this is to allow fluent recitation of the compositions at high speed. Nelson believes the arrangement of strokes to be played follows the logic of the hand, while the arrangement of spoken syllables follows the logic of spoken sound.<sup>16</sup> In most cases the intended *bol* is recognisable for a skilled *tabla* player based on the context of the music, but, this is not always the case and it is certainly not the case for students new to the instrument.

In my fieldwork in India I found it very common for *tabla* students to learn entire compositions using the wrong *bol* due to this issue, only for it to be corrected by the teacher and re-learned. In a traditional oral teaching environment, a teacher constantly clarifies the notes to be performed. In a notation system these issues need to be addressed in the design of the system. The methods used to resolve these issues in the notation system used in this thesis are outlined below.

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<sup>16</sup> Nelson, D. 2008: 3.



throughout the music to indicate *bol* grouping. A standard barline indicates the end of the *tal* (time cycle) and dashed barlines indicate the *vibhag* (sub-sections of the time cycle). The same barline system applies in the *bol* line so that it is possible to read the *bol* line only if the reader prefers. The *tihai* is an important cyclical rhythmic element in Indian music that has been clarified in the notations through a system of bracketed lines underneath the notations that indicate the presence of the *tihai* and its duration.

A system of composition titles has been employed to assist communication regarding particular compositions as traditionally most compositions are not given titles in *tabla* repertoire. The opening *bols* in each composition have been selected as the title as these are commonly used to differentiate between compositions. In the rare case where two compositions have the same opening *bols* another characteristic *bol* of that composition has been used.

## 2.2. Nomenclature and Construction

Illustration 1.1 lists the terms used to identify the tabla's organological construction as referred to in the description of performed notes below. As a variety of terms are used across India in reference to the drum parts, the main terms in current use by *tabla* players are included below. These terms are in the Hindi and Bengali languages of North India.



Illustration 1.1. The traditional Indian *tabla* set

**Tabla:** (Bengali and Hindi) also known as *Dayan* (Bengali) or *Dahina* (Hindi).

**Bayan:** (Hindi and Bengali) also known as *Duggi* (Bengali) or *Duggi* (Hindi).

## Organological Construction

1. *Puri* or *Chhauni* (Bengali and Hindi) [drum head]
2. *Gub* (Bengali) or *Shiyahi* (Hindi) [raised black portion]
3. *Sur* (Bengali) or *Maidan* (Hindi) [main resonating membrane]
4. *Chati* (Bengali) or *Kinar* (Hindi) [annular membrane]
5. *Pagri* or *Gajra* (Hindi terms that are also used in Bengali) [braid]
6. *Chot* (Bengali and Hindi) or *Doyali* (Bengali) or *Baddi* (Hindi) [straps]
7. *Gooli* (Bengali and Hindi) or *Gatta* (Hindi) [tuning pegs]
8. *Bida* (Bengali and Hindi) [positioning cushions]

### 2.2.1 Description of Notes Performed on the *Tabla* Set

Due to the variety of techniques and pronunciation used by tabla players across India it is critical that notations of tabla music clearly define the performed note that the written bol refers to. The following is a list of notes (Illustrations 1.2 – 1.20) that are played on the tabla set, illustrated by photographs and explanations. Tabla bols in the following notations are from the Farukhabad Gharana of tabla playing. The accents used for bol pronunciation and their translated spellings in English are from Eastern India. Each of the images below represents the preparation and execution of the strokes referred to in the text as indicated by (I) and (II). *Khuli* (lit: open) here refers to open resonant strokes on the bayan. *Mudi* or *band* (lit: closed) refers to closed, muted bayan strokes. *Mudi*, or *band* strokes are played during the *khali* section of the compositions. The corresponding *khuli* and *mudi* strokes are as follows:

<b><i>Khuli</i></b>	<b><i>Mudi</i></b>
<i>dha</i>	<i>ta</i>
<i>dhin</i>	<i>tin</i>
<i>dhiin</i>	<i>tii</i>
<i>ge</i>	<i>ke</i>

## 2.2.2 Notes Played on the Bayan Drum

### ***ge* , *ga* or *gi***

The bols written as *ge*, *ga*, or *gi* are performed by alternating the middle and index fingers on the left hand with the forearm resting on the edge of the *bayan*. The fingers move from an out-stretched position as shown in Illustration 1.2 (I) to a bent position shown in (III). The playing finger is horizontal at the moment of impact as shown in (II). The knuckles on each finger remain bent at the moment of impact. The finger is always pulled completely through to the bent position as in Figure (III). This is an open and resonant note referred to as a *khuli* stroke. This note may be pronounced as *ge*, *ga* or *gi* depending on the context, but it is always played the same.<sup>17</sup>



Illustration 1.2. Preparation and execution of the *bol* *ge*, *ga* or *gi*

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<sup>17</sup> The modulation of *bayan* notes, known as *gamak*, is not stipulated in traditional compositions and is therefore not indicated in these notations. The exact modulation applied to each composition is a part of the creative process that varies between musicians. These movements are highly specialised and are learnt during practical lessons. There are, however, a series of specific characteristic movements used to produce the sounds, much the same as the *meend* and *gamak* (glissando ornamentations) that have been classified in the *sitar* repertoire. The classification of *bayan* movements may be an area of further research and development.

## **ghin**

The *bols* *ge*, *ga* or *gi* on the *bayan* are occasionally pronounced *ghin*, where it indicates the note is accented.

## **ke, ka or ki**

In Illustration 1.3, *ke*, *ka*, or *ki* begin with a rotation in the wrist of the left hand (I) and the *bayan* is struck with the whole hand in a flat position (II). The forearm rests on the rim of the *bayan* shell. This is a muted (*mudi*) note. This note may be pronounced as *ke*, *ka* or *ki* depending on the context, but it is always executed in the same manner.

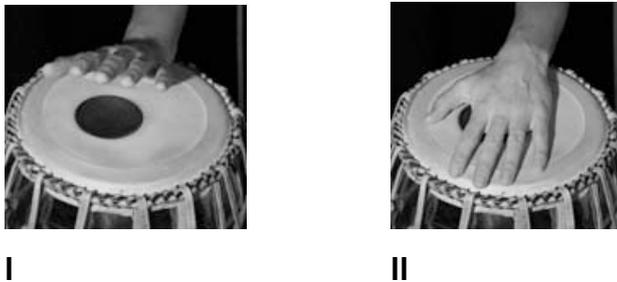


Illustration 1.3. Preparation and execution of the *bol* *ke*, *ka* or *ki*

## **kat**

The *bols* *ke*, *ka* or *ki* may be pronounced as *kat* where it indicates the note is accented.

### **2.2.3 Notes Played on the *Tabla* Drum**

#### ***na* or *ta***

With the ring finger lightly resting on the *sur* section (the main resonating skin) of the *tabla*, the index finger in Illustration 1.4 begins in a raised position (I) and is moved downward to strike the *kinar*, the outer skin of the *tabla* drum (II). The little finger rests on the edge of the *kinar*, close to the ring finger. The note is produced by rotating from the wrist as well as the first knuckle of the index finger. The motion of the wrist is downwards, not twisting. Either *bol*, *na* or *ta*, may be used to represent this stroke, the note performed is the same.



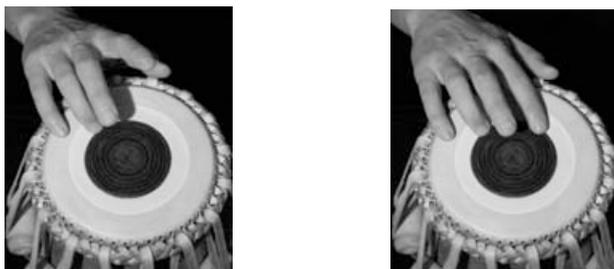
I

II

Illustration 1.4. Preparation and execution of the *bol na* or *ta*

### ***tin***

Illustration 1.5 begins with the same motion used to produce *na* (I), so that the index finger strikes the drum in the *sur* section of the *tabla* (II). The tip of the index finger may touch the edge of the *gub* upon striking. The ring finger is positioned on the *sur* as it is in the *na* stroke.



I

II

Illustration 1.5. Preparation and execution of the *bol tin*

### ***tun* or *tu***

With all fingers raised above the *tabla* (I) the tip of the index finger of the right hand in Illustration 1.6 moves downward to strike the edge of the *gub* (II). The finger is removed very quickly to allow the skin to resonate. The *tu* and *tun* are performed exactly the same, the pronunciation changes according to the context.

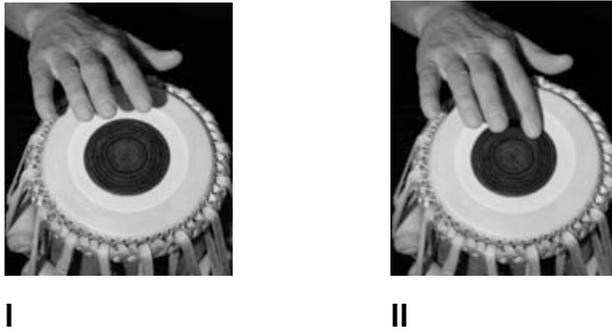


Illustration 1.6. Preparation and execution of the *bol tun* or *tu*

***tii***

The *tii* is played exactly the same as *tun*. This *bol* occurs as the *mudi* form of *dhii*. I.e.; *dhiinedhiina*, becomes *tiinetiina* during the *khali* section.

***te***

The middle, ring and little finger are raised above the tabla (I) and are brought down to strike the centre of the *gub* (II). The note is produced by rotating from the wrist as well as the first knuckle of the fingers. This is a muted note.

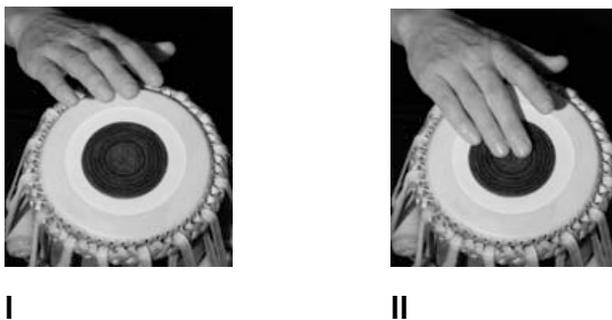


Illustration 1.7. Preparation and execution of the *bol te*

***te***

Using the same motion described in the previous *te*, the index finger, is raised above the *gub* (I) in Illustration 1.8, and is brought down to strike the centre of the *gub* on the *tabla* (II). This is a muted note. Notice that the spelling is the same for this and the previous note as they will always be performed together as in *tete*. An additional spelling change for

such a common note would create unnecessary information. The three-finger form is always played first unless indicated by the word *ulto* (lit: backwards). In the rare instance that *te* is performed alone, as in *thaketedha*, it is always in the three-finger form.

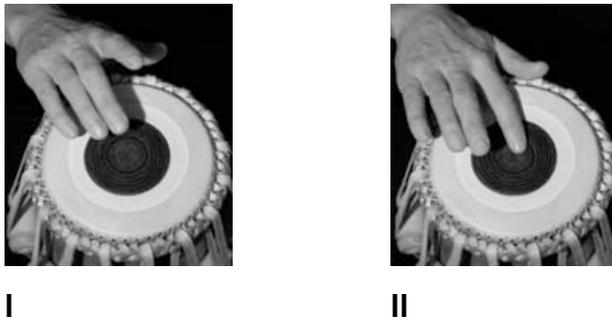


Illustration 1.8. Preparation and execution of the *bol te*

### ***ti***

Beginning with the middle finger raised, in Illustration 1.9, the ring and little finger are positioned on the *maidan* and *kinar* respectively (I). The middle finger alone strikes the centre of the *gub* to produce the *bol ti* (II). This is a muted note.



Illustration 1.9. Preparation and execution of the *bol ti*

### ***ne***

Beginning with the whole hand raised above the tabla (I) in Illustration 1.10 the ring and little finger strike the *maidan* of the *tabla* (II), in the same motion as described for *te*. *Tabla* players commonly think of *ne* as the same stroke as *te*, but without the use of the middle finger.

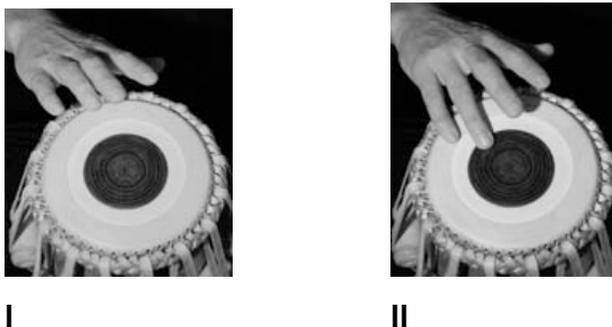


Illustration 1.10. Preparation and execution of the *bol ne*

### **tha**

The *bol tha* is pronounced the same as *ta* but is performed the same as an index finger *te*. It is pronounced this way to assist in the recitation of the *bols*. It is mainly found in phrases such as *tereketethaka* and *thaketedha*.

### **tak**

Beginning with the index finger raised (I) in Illustration 1.11, the finger strikes between the *kinar* and the *maidan* (II) and remains down to create a sharp slapping sound.

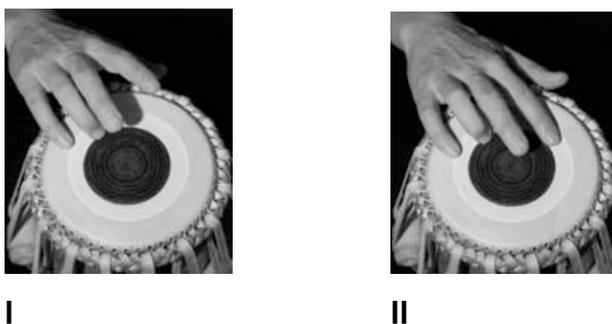


Illustration 1.11. Preparation and execution of the *bol tak*

### **thak**

This note is pronounced the same as *tak* and is performed in Illustration 1.12 with the whole right hand in a cupped position raised above the *tabla* (I) and used in a slapping motion on the *tabla* (II). The stroke is very similar to the execution of a *conga* slap.

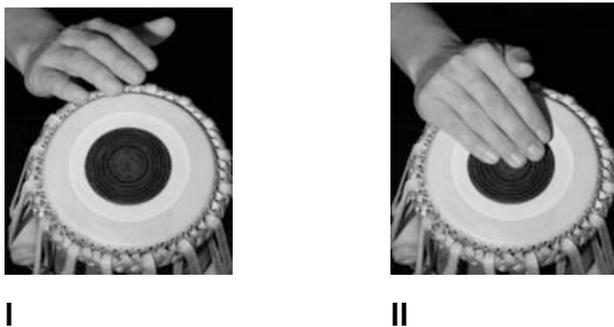


Illustration 1.12. Preparation and execution of the *bol thak*

### ***din***

Originating from the *pakawaj*<sup>18</sup> drum of North India, the *bol din* in Illustration 1.13 is played with the whole right hand, slightly cupped, beginning raised above the tabla (I) and striking the middle of the *tabla* (II). The index fingers are beyond the center and toward the outer edge of the *gub*.

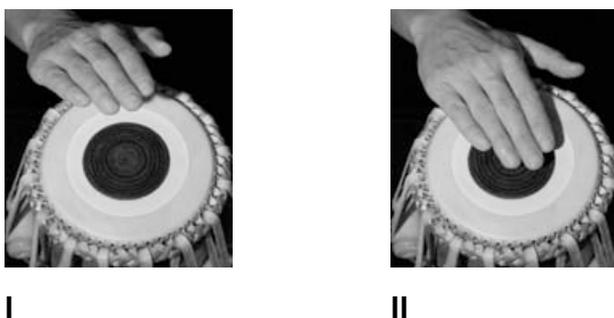


Illustration 1.13. Preparation and execution of the *bol din*

### ***ra***

The spoken *bol*, *ra*, is performed exactly the same as *na*. It is pronounced *ra* for ease of recitation as in, for example, *dhinenaragene*.

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<sup>18</sup> Double ended barrel drum of North India that pre-dates the *tabla*.

## 2.2.4 Notes Played Using Both *Tabla* and *Bayan* Drums

### ***dha***

The note *dha* follows the above descriptions and is produced by the execution the notes *ge* and *na* performed at the same time as in Illustration 1.14.



Illustration 1.14. Preparation and execution of the *bol dha*

### ***dhin or dhi***

The notes *tin* and *ge* are performed at the same time to produce *dhin*. The *bol dhin* may be pronounced *dhi* in some compositions, the note performed is the same.



Illustration 1.15. Preparation and execution of the *bol dhin* or *dhi*

### ***dhiin or dhii***

This *bol* is pronounced exactly the same as *dhiin*, but the notes played combine *tun* and *ge*. The *bol dhiin* is at times pronounced *dhii* depending on the composition, the note performed is the same.



I



II

Illustration 1.16. Preparation and execution of the *bol dhiin* or *dhii*

***dhet* or *dhe***

The *bol dhe* or *dhet* is produced by playing the notes *te* and *ge* at the same time. The three-finger form of *te* is used unless indicated otherwise. This bol may be pronounced *dhe* or *dhet*.



I



II

Illustration 1.17. Preparation and execution of the *bol dhet* or *dhe*

***kran***

*kran* is performed as a 'flam' with both hands playing very close together, but not exactly at the same time using the bols *ka* and *ta*. The *ka* is played slightly before *ta*.



I



II

Illustration 1.18. Preparation and execution of the *bol kran*

### 2.2.5. Notes Played as Combination Strokes

As discussed above, there are a series of note combinations that are pronounced differently when they are performed as a *bol* group. These have been defined below to clarify any issues relating to the spoken and played *bol*.

#### **terekete**

This series of notes is performed as *tetekete*. It is pronounced as *terekete* for ease of recitation.

#### **deredere and therethere**

The advanced stroke *deredere* in Illustration 1.19 is performed with the palm of the hand striking first on the right side (I) and then on the left side (II) of the palm, flat across the entire face of the *tabla*. The right side is pronounced *de* the left side, *re*. The *mudi* form of this *bol* is *therethere*.



I



II

Illustration 1.19. Preparation and execution of the *bol* *deredere*

#### **treke**

Commonly found in the *Farukhabad Gharana*, *treke* is a *bol* in two parts, *tre* and *ke*. The *tre* section is performed by playing *tete* as a flam, the middle, ring and little finger striking just before the index finger. The *ke*, section in *treke*, is performed with a flam of the *bols* *ka* and *te* (middle finger form) with the *ka* sounding slightly before the *te*.

## ***taran***

Found mainly in *tukra* or *gat* forms, *taran* is performed in the same manner as *tete*, except it begins with a raised hand (I) and moves with an outward swinging motion striking the edge of the *kinar* instead of the *gub* first with the middle ring and little fingers (II) then with the index finger (III) as in Illustration 1.20 below.



Illustration 1.20. Preparation and execution of the *bol taran*

### **2.3. Compositional Forms within North Indian *Tabla* Repertoire**

The true merit of a notation systems for *tabla* music can only accurately be assessed if the system is presented in each of the compositional forms of the *tabla* repertoire. Based on the rules of each musical form the repertoire presents a range of challenges and requirements to be addressed in the design of an effective system of notation. Each compositional form is presented with a detailed explanation and example notation. The repertoire used in North Indian *tabla* playing is vast and highly detailed. Therefore it is beyond the scope of this essay to notate an exhaustive comprehensive anthology of all of the compositional forms used within the repertoire. Rather, I have attempted to cover in detail the principal forms. I have included commonly used the forms as well as those that I have found most useful as student and performer.

The *tabla* maintains an extremely important role in *Hindustani* music. Besides the drone instrument, called the *tanpura*, the *tabla* is the only

instrument present in all forms of *Hindustani* classical music. It may well be the most commonly played instrument throughout India. In the classical system, *tabla* players are required to learn four different repertoires: *tabla lehara* (solo *tabla* repertoire), instrumental accompaniment, vocal accompaniment and dance accompaniment. Each of these repertoires is complex and challenging in its own rite. With such a wide range of genres and skills to be learnt, it is not surprising that most *tabla* players focus their training on the most challenging and virtuosic repertoire, *tabla lehara*, the solo repertoire of the *tabla*. It is commonly recognised that the *tabla lehara* repertoire is the best method for gaining the highest standard of skills to prepare the player to perform in all genres.<sup>19</sup> *Tabla* players also focus their studies on the solo repertoire as it has been developed with both educational and performance objectives in mind and presents each fingering and *bol* combination in a progressive order and methodic approach.

It is with each of these aspects that I have focused the following descriptions and transcriptions on the solo repertoire, *tabla lehara*. Where possible I have included information and notations on elements of material also used in accompaniment repertoires, such as *theka*, *tala* and *tihai*.<sup>20</sup> The repertoire is presented in the order usually performed during a recital of *tabla lehara*.

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<sup>19</sup> Pandit Anindo Chatterjee once told me there is no formal system for learning accompaniment, students learn solo *tabla* and all other performance skills come from those abilities. Personal communication, July 2006, Kolkata.

<sup>20</sup> *Theka* is a drum pattern played on the *tabla* to indicate a particular *tala*. *Tala* is a unit of time, a metric cycle or metre. *Tihai* is a cyclical cadential figure used in Indian music.

## 2.3.1 Indian Rhythmic Modes

### I. *Tala* and *Theka*

In its most basic form a *tala* is a rhythmic cycle defined by a series of musical elements.<sup>21</sup> The entire duration of a *tala* or rhythmic cycle, is known as an *avartan*, similar to a bar within the metric frame work of western music. The *avartan* is subdivided into specific groupings known as *vibhag*, or subdivisions of the bar. The pulse or crochet beat, called a *matra*. There is also a structure of accents within the *tal* that is applied in each *vibhag*. These accents are referred to as *tali*, *khali* and *sam*.<sup>22</sup> As an example, the commonly used *tala* known as *tintal* is made up as follows: The *tala* is sixteen *matra* (beats) in duration, there are four *vibhag* (beat groups) each of four beats, (4 + 4 + 4 + 4 = 16). The most accented beat, known as the *sam*, occurs on the first beat, indicated by an X, (as in notation 1.1) secondary accents occur on beats five and thirteen. These are indicated by the numbers 2 and 3 respectively as they are the second and third *tali* (the *sam* is the first *tali*). The unaccented beat, known as *khali*,<sup>23</sup> occurs on the ninth beat and is indicated by the symbol O<sup>24</sup>. In maintaining a high level of readability, the traditional symbols used to define the *vibhag*, *tali*, *khali* and *sam* within each *tal* (X, 2, O, 3) have only been included in the first sections of each composition.

Each *tala* has a corresponding *theka* played on the *tabla*. *Theka* is used in all forms of *tabla* music and may be thought of as the groove, or the feel played by the *tabla* player. Besides its aesthetic appeal, each *theka* is designed with a specific series of notes to outline the above elements within each *tala*. A *tabla* player will use the structure and the notes provided in the *theka* to maintain the *tala*. In

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<sup>21</sup> *Tala* may also be referred to as *tal*.

<sup>22</sup> *Sam* is the beginning of a *tal*, the most accented beat, indicated by a clap.

<sup>23</sup> *Khali* is commonly indicated by the wave of a the hand.

<sup>24</sup> *Tali* and *khali* symbols are derived from the Bhatkhande system of notation.

performance, it is uncommon to hear a *tabla* musician playing only the notes of an original *theka*. Instead, *tabla* players use a variety of embellishments, both rhythmic and melodic, to create their own approach to the *theka* for a given situation. Examples of these embellishments have been notated below in the transcription.

As the main task of the *tabla* player in accompaniment situations is to maintain the *tala* in a musical manner, the *theka* and *tala* are often thought of as one. This performative aspect of rhythm often leads to confusion regarding the important relationship between *tala* and *theka*. If a North Indian musician is asked to describe *tintal* (the above described *tala*) the answer will most certainly be given as the *tabla theka* for *tintal*, “*dha dhin dhin dha, dha dhin dhin dha, dha tin tin na, na dhin dhin dha*”. So the *tabla theka* that outlines the *tala* is often referred to as the *tala* itself.

It is important to note that *tala* is a complex element of Indian music and an attempt to create an all encompassing definition, given the range of variation from any given rule found in the performance of Indian music, is beyond the scope of this article. In his struggle to delineate and define elements of rhythm in Indian music Clayton explains that “*tala* theory is more coherent than the practice it describes.”<sup>25</sup> I believe the most complete conception can be derived from theoretical information in conjunction with notations, practical experience and listening examples.

Below are examples of two *tabla thekas* in notation: *tintal theka* (sixteen beats duration) and *jhaptal theka* (ten beats duration). Each of the examples appear with both the original composition as well as sample variations as discussed above.

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<sup>25</sup> Clayton 2000: 47.

# *Tintal Theka*

Traditional  
16 Matra = 4 + 4 + 4 + 4

Original Theka

16/4

X dha                      dhin                      dhin                      dha

2 dha                      dhin                      dhin                      dha

o dha                      tin                      tin                      na

3 te                      te                      dhin                      dhin                      dha

Variation 1

X dha                      ge                      dhin                      dhin                      dha                      ti

2 dha                      ge                      dhin                      dhin                      dha                      ti

o dha                      tin                      tin                      na

3 te                      te                      dhin                      dhin                      dha                      ti

Variation 2

X dha                      ge                      dhin                      dhin                      kre                      dha                      ti

2 dha                      ge                      dhin                      kre                      dhin                      dhin                      dha                      ti

o dha                      tin                      tin                      na

3 te                      te                      dhin                      dhin                      kre                      dha                      ti

Variation 3

X dha                      dhin                      dhin                      te                      te                      dha                      ti

dha                      ge                      dhin                      kre                      dhin                      dhin                      dha                      ti

o dha                      ge                      tin                      tin                      kre                      ta                      ti

3 te                      re                      ke                      te                      dhin                      dhin                      dha                      ti

Notation 1.1. *Tintal theka* with example variations.



## II. *Tihai*

*Tihai* is perhaps the most iconic aspect of Indian rhythmic theory. *Tihai* is a rhythmic tool used by all musicians in Indian music to conclude compositions, sections of music and solos by performers. It may also be used during performance for musical phrasing as well as a device for interplay between musicians.

Structurally, a *tihai* is a single phrase or *palla*,<sup>26</sup> that is repeated three times and must conclude with the last note of the phrase as the first note of the following section. While the concluding point is usually the *sam*, it is also common for a *tihai* to conclude on *khali* or at the starting point of a melodic composition (often a few beats from the *sam*). Some basic rules may be applied here in definition: a *tihai* must have a phrase which is played, exactly the same, three times; the duration of the phrase and the rests between the repeats must remain the same; and the last note of the *tihai* must be the first note of the intended concluding point. A *tihai* may begin from any point in the cycle and the rest may be of any duration. However, the phrase and rest must be the same length each time. If a *tihai* does not include a rest it is referred to as a *bedum* (lit: without a breath) *tihai*.

Below are notated *tihai* examples in the *tal*, *tintal*. Each example concludes on the *sam*, the first beat. In attempting to make the phrasing as clear as possible, the beams are grouped to outline the *tihai* phrasing. In addition, the notation system has been designed to incorporate commas and brackets in each *tihai* group.

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<sup>26</sup> Gottlieb 1977: 63.

Tihai

# Example Tihai

Original Tintal Theka

$\frac{16}{4}$  dha dhin dhin dha | dha dhin dhin dha

dha tin tin na | te te dhin dhin dha

Example 1

dha dhin dhin dha | dha dhin dhin dha

dha tin tin na | te te ke te dha, te te ke te dha, te te ke te

Example 2

dha dhin dhin dha | dha dhin dhin dha

dha te re ke te dha ti dha, te re | ke te dha ti dha, te re ke te dha ti

Example 3

dha dhin dhin dha | dha dhin dhin dha

dha tin te re ke te dha ti dha, | te re ke te dha ti dha, te re ke te dha ti

Example 4 - Bedum Tihai

dha dhin dhin dha | dha dhin dhin dha

dha ge na dha ge na dha dha te te dha ti dha, dha ge na dha ge na dha

dha te te dha ti dha, dha ge na dha ge na dha dha te te dha ti

Notation 1.3. Tihai examples in the tal, tintal.

### 2.3.2 Theme and Variation Compositional Forms

#### I. *Peshkar*

*Peshkar*, meaning 'presentation' is the first compositional form to be presented in a solo *tabla lehara* performance. There are a variety of *peshkar* compositions and performance approaches currently in use that generally have foundations in the different *Gharanas* of *tabla* playing. There exists between them a wide variety of moods as well as structural and improvisational rules, even though all may be termed *peshkar*. For example, in the *Banaras Gharana*, *peshkar* may be presented in a form that is very closely related to *theka*, while in the *Delhi Gharana* *peshkar* is approached similar to a *kaida* form. Perhaps the most common and famous form of *peshkar* currently in use is that of the *Farukhabad Gharana*.

Originally composed by Ustad Ahmed Jan Thirakwa, the iconic *Farukhabad peshkar* is performed at a very slow tempo. *Peshkar* is often referred to as the *alap*<sup>27</sup> of *tabla* solo and it is within this form that the performer has the greatest amount of improvisational freedom and personal expression in the solo repertoire. Wegner described Thirakwa's composition as "one of the most majestic and magnificent compositions in the entire repertoire".<sup>28</sup> *Peshkar* begins with a long and slow theme that, unlike many other solo *tabla* forms, does not repeat phrasing during the *khali* section. The performer develops the theme through improvisation that is based on the original theme while maintaining the slow, introspective mood of the *peshkar* style. Unlike most other theme and variation forms in the solo *tabla* repertoire, the performer is not required to repeat variations created in the first and second *vibhags* while performing the *khali* section, and is not entirely restricted by the *bols* used in the opening theme. The performer may

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<sup>27</sup> *Alap* is the introductory section of *raga* music that is performed very slowly and with an introspective mood.

<sup>28</sup> Wegner 2004: 39.

use almost any *bol* in *peshkar*, the only form to allow this freedom. Although the details of this aspect is debated between performers, it is commonly accepted that *rela*<sup>29</sup> *bols* such as *dhinegene*, *dheredhere* and even *terekete* should not be used in the development of *peshkar*.<sup>30</sup>

It is common to hear performers of *peshkar* focusing on sophisticated *tihais* that distort the listeners' perception of time, only to reveal the consistent underlying cycle at the *sam*, the first beat of the cycle and the concluding point of the *tihai*. The *peshkar* performance may increase in rhythmic density as it progresses and always culminates in a concluding *tihai*. It is also acceptable for the performer to play the composition in different *jatis* (rhythmic subdivisions such as triplets and quintuplets) as the performance progresses. This means the *peshkar* may begin in a semiquaver subdivision then later progress to a quintuplet, sextuplet or septuplet subdivision. In this case the phrasing, mood and structure of the *peshkar* is maintained, it is only the subdivision that changes. The composition may be divided into any subdivision according to the performer's skills.

It is interesting to note that even though the *peshkar* is performed at a slow speed, many performers consider *peshkar* a very difficult form to master, just as many melodic players consider *alap* to be a very difficult form. Below is a notation of what may be commonly performed during a short *peshkar* improvisation. Notice the crochet beat is performed at 35 beats per minute.

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<sup>29</sup> *Rela* is a theme and variation compositional form of the solo *tabla* repertoire. Lit: rushing, flowing, a torrent. *Rela bols* are *tabla bols* commonly used within the *rela* form.

<sup>30</sup> Anindo Chatterjee, personal communication 2004

# Farukhabad Peshkar

Peshkar

Traditional

1

16/4 dhii kre dhiin na, ∷ dha dhin na, dha ti dha ti, dha dha dhin na,  
 tak ge ge ran ∷ ne dha dhin na, dha ti dha kre dha ti, dha dha dhin na  
 ke te tha ka tun, kre tun na ke re na ka, tii ne tii na ke re na ka, tre ke tii ne tii na ke na  
 tak ge ge ran ne dha dhin na, ge ran ne dha dhin na, ge ran ne dha dhin na,

2

dhii kre dhiin na, ∷ dha dhin na, ∷ dha dhin na, dha dha dhin na,  
 ∷ dha ∷ dha ∷ dha dhin na, dha kre dha ti, dha dha dhin na,  
 ke te tha ka tun, kre tun na ke re na ka, tii ne tii na ke re na ka, te re ke te, dha dhin  
 na, dha tun na, dha dhin na, dha tun na, dha dhin na, dha tun na,

3

dhii kre dhiin na, ∷ dha ge dhin na, ∷ dha ∷ dha ∷ dha dhin na,  
 ∷ dha ge dhin na, ∷ dha ∷ dha, ∷ dha ge dhin na, dha dha dhin na,  
 ke te tha ka tun, kre tun na ke re na ka, tii ne tii na ke re na ka, tre ke tii ne tii na ke na  
 tak ge ge ran ne, dha ge dhin na dha, ∷ dha ge dhin na dha, ∷ dha ge dhin na

4

dhii kre dhiin na, ÿ dha dhin na, ÿ dha dhin na, dha dha dhin na,

ÿ dha ÿ dha ÿ dha dhin na, dha dhin na dha, ÿ dha dhin na,

ÿ dha dhiin na, dha tun na, dha dhiin na dha, tre ke, dha dhiin na, dha

tun na, dha dhiin na dha, tre ke, dha dhiin na, dha tun na, dha dhiin na,

5

dhii kre dhiin na, ÿ dha dhin na, ÿ dha dhin na, dha dha dhin na,

ÿ dha ge dhin na, ÿ dha ge dhin na, ÿ dha ge dha ti ge dha ÿ na dha ge dhin na,

ÿ ta ka tun na ÿ dha ge dhin na, dha dha dhin na, dha ÿ dha ge

dhin na, dha dha dhin na, dha ÿ dha ge dhin na, dha dha dhin na,

6

dhii kre dhiin na, ÿ dha dhin na, dha ti dha ti, dha dha dhin na,

tak ge ge ran ÿ ne, dha tun na, dha dha tun na, dha dha tun na, dha

ÿ tak ge ge ran ÿ ne, dha tun na, dha dha tun na, dha dha tun na, dha

ÿ tak ge ge ran ÿ ne, dha tun na, dha dha tun na, dha dha tun na,

7

dhii kre dhiin na, ⁂ dha ⁂ dha ⁂ dha dhin na, dha dha ge dhin na,

tak ge ge ran ⁂ ne, dha ⁂ dha ⁂ dha ⁂ dha ge dhin na, dha dha dhin na,

ke te tha ka tun, kre tun na te re ke te, dha dhin na, dha ge dhin na dha, te re

ke te, dha dhin na, dha ge dhin na dha, te re ke te, dha dhin na, dha ge dhin na

8

dhii kre dhiin na, ⁂ dha ge dhin na ⁂ dha ⁂ ti ⁂ dha ge dhin na

⁂ dhi ge na dha ge dhin na dha ti dha kre dha ti, dha dha dhin na

ke te tha ka tun, kre tun na ke re na ka, tak ge ge ran ⁂ ne, dha tun na dha te re

ke te, tak ge ge ran ⁂ ne, dha tun na dha te re ke te, tak ge ge ran ⁂ ne, dha tun na

9

dhii kre dhiin na, ⁂ dhi ge na dha, ⁂ dhi ge na dha, dha dha dhin na,

⁂ dhi ge na dha ge dhin na ge na dha ge tre ke dha ti, dha dha dhin na

⁂ ta ka tun kre tun na ke re na ka, tii ne tii na ke re na ka, tre ke tii ne tii na ke na

tak ge ge ran ne dha dhin na dha, ⁂ dha dhin na dha, ⁂ dha dhin na

10

dhii dha, dha dhin na, dha, dha, dha ge dhin na,

dhi ge na dha ge dhin na ge na dhi ge na dha dhi ge na dha dhi ge na

dha kre tun na na tun na, na tun na ta ta tun na

tak ge ge ran ne dha dhin na dha dhin na na dha dhin na

11

dhii kre dhiin dha dha ge dhin na, dha ge dhin na, tak ge ge ran ne dha

dhin na dha, dha dhin na dha, dha dhin na dha tak ge ge ran

ne dha dhin na dha, dha dhin na dha, dha dhin na dha

tak ge ge ran ne dha dhin na dha, dha dhin na dha, dha dhin na

dha

Notation 1.4. Notation of a short performance of *peshkar*.

## II. *Kaida*

*Kaida*<sup>31</sup> is perhaps the most structurally sophisticated compositional form used in the solo *tabla* repertoire. *Kaida* literally means 'a system of rules'. The *kaida* form introduces *tabla* players to each *bol* required to master the instrument in a progressive system that focuses on skills development. The *kaida* form originated in the *Delhi Gharana* of *tabla* playing and Courtney explains that *kaida* "...is the cornerstone of modern *tabla* pedagogy."<sup>32</sup> Kippen explains that, like most aspects of the *tabla* repertoire, the date of origin for the *kaida* form is uncertain, though it does appear in written form in 1895 in Sadiq Ali Khan's *Qanun-e-Mausiqi*.<sup>33</sup>

The form of *kaida* serves three fundamental and very important roles for *tabla* players. The first of these is developmental: presenting one *bol* at a time, *tabla* students learn not only how to play the *bols* and fingerings, but also how to apply them and how to improvise within them. As the *kaidas* progress, students learn more *bols* and most importantly, how to combine *bols* and how each *bol* relates to the other.

The second function relates to improvisation. Through the theme and variations used in the *kaida* form, *tabla* players learn how to develop their improvisations in a progressive, thematic, logical and stylistically appropriate manner. Initially students of the *tabla* are given an entire composition that includes a theme, a series of methodical variations and a *tihai*. With time, students learn to improvise the variations and concluding *tihai* in the style and within the rules of *kaida*. This enables the students to develop the skills required to create their own improvisations in any musical situation in a thematic and musical manner.

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<sup>31</sup> Sometimes spelt *Qa'ida*

<sup>32</sup> Courtney 2002: XI.

<sup>33</sup> Kippen 1988: 161.

The third function is that of performance. A *kaida* should also be a performance event that is filled with musical interest, artistic aesthetics and a variety of musical 'colours and flavours'. The *kaida* system presents performers with a wide variety of moods to express on the set of drums, it is in the hands of the player to produce a musical performance.

The overall structure of a *kaida* can be divided into three sections: an opening theme that includes a *khali* section, a series of variations based on the opening theme and a concluding *tihai*. The main focus during a *kaida* is the thematic development that is achieved through a series of variations, or *palta*. The structure of the variations can be divided into four sections. The first section is a variation of the theme that is created within the rules of the *kaida* system as in Figure 10 below. The second section is the first line of the opening theme, ending with *mudi bols*.<sup>34</sup> The third section is the *khali* section, it is a repeat of the above variation in the first section performed using *mudi bols*. The fourth line is the opening theme performed ending with *khuli bols*.<sup>35</sup>

1. Variation based on <i>kaida</i> theme	(played with <i>khuli bols</i> )
2. Original <i>kaida</i> theme	(ending with <i>mudi bols</i> )
3. Variation repeated	(played with <i>mudi bols</i> )
4. Original <i>kaida</i> theme	(ending with <i>khuli bols</i> )

Figure 10. *Kaida* structure during variation development.

While no definitive list of rules exists for the development of a *kaida*, and there may be different lists according to different *Gharanas* or

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<sup>34</sup> *Mudi* literally means closed, it refers to *bols* played with muted notes on the *bayan*, or where the *bayan* is not played.

<sup>35</sup> *Khuli* literally means open, it refers to *bols* that are played with open resonant strokes on the *bayan*. In the second section, the theme ends with *mudi* notes as it leads into the *khali* section. The last section leads the music back to the *sam* and so is performed with *khuli bols*. See the example notations below for clarification of this aspect.

teachers, there are a series of commonly accepted rules that are applied to all compositions using the *kaida* form.

1. The *kaida* must have the overall structure of theme, variations and concluding *tihai*.
2. Only *bols* that appear in the opening theme may be used during the *kaida* development, no additional *bols* may be added at any time.
3. Variations begin by developing *bols* at the beginning of the theme and progress methodically to the *bols* at the end of the theme.
4. The structure must maintain the above mentioned four sections during development: variation (*khuli*), *kaida* theme, variation (*mudi*), *kaida* theme.
5. The variation performed during the *khali* section must be the same as the original variation and played with *mudi bols* only.<sup>36</sup>

There has been much debate regarding the relationship between the *kaida* and the *tala* (Shepard 1976, Courtney 2003). While the discussion is too lengthy for this article, it should be noted that it is generally accepted, and the performance practice indicates, that the section of the *kaida* is not required to correspond with the *khali* section of the *tala*.

Below is an example notation of a common *kaida*.

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<sup>36</sup> Due to the complex nature of the musical task, during performance of *kaidas* with improvised variations at high speed, it is common to hear slightly different variations performed during the *khali* section.

# Dha ti dha tereketethaka

Kaida X

2

**16**

Palta

1

**1**

2

**2**

3

**3**

2

4

dha ti dha te re ke te ta ka, dha te re ke te ta ka, dha te re ke te ta ka te re ke te,  
 dha ti dha te re ke te ta ka te re ke te, dha ti dha ge tu na ke na,  
 ta ti ta te re ke te ta ka ta te re ke te ta ka ta te re ke te ta ka te re ke te  
 dha ti dha te re ke te ta ka te re ke te dha ti dha ge dhii na ge na

5

dha ti dha te re ke te ta ka, dha ti dha ge dhii na, dha te re ke te,  
 dha ti dha te re ke te ta ka te re ke te, dha ti dha ge tu na ke na,  
 ta ti ta te re ke te ta ka, ta ti ta ke tu na, ta te re ke te,  
 dha ti dha te re ke te ta ka te re ke te, dha ti dha ge dhi na ge na,

6

te re ke te ta ka, dha ti dha ge na, dha ti dha ge dhii na ge na,  
 dha ti dha te re ke te ta ka te re ke te dha ti dha ge tu na ke na  
 te re ke te ta ka, ta ti ta ke na, ta ti ta ke tu na ke na,  
 dha ti dha te re ke te ta ka te re ke te, dha ti dha ge dhii na ge na,

Tihai

dha ti dha ge dhii na, te re ke te ta ka dha, te re ke te ta ka dha, te re ke te ta ka dha, dha ti  
 dha ge dhii na, te re ke te ta ka dha, te re ke te ta ka dha, te re ke te ta ka dha, dha ti dha ge  
 dhii na, te re ke te ta ka dha, te re ke te ta ka dha, te re ke te ta ka dha

Notation 1.5. Notation of a common *kaida* in the traditional formal structure.

### III. *Rela*

*Rela* is a fast and flowing compositional form characterised by simple repeating *bols* designed to be played at high speed. *Rela* literally means 'torrent' or 'flowing'. Common *bols* used for *rela* compositions are *terekete*, *dere dere* and *dhinegene*. While *rela* has a similar form to *kaida* the overall approach to thematic development is different. Beginning with a theme, the *rela* form is developed through a series of variations and ultimately culminates in a concluding *tihai*, much the same as the *kaida* form. Compared to the *kaida* form, the opening theme and variations used in *rela* are less complex, use fewer *bols*, and may include more repetition. While the variations used to develop the music follow the same general rules of the *kaida* form, *rela* offers the performer a greater level of freedom and a less strict approach to the form.

Variations are often created in *rela* performance through changing the relationship of the theme or the phrase with that of the crochet beat or the pulse. Wegner refers to this as 'inversions'.<sup>37</sup> This method is also found very commonly in the *luggi*<sup>38</sup> form in light classical music accompaniment. During inversions, the *tabla* player repeats a phrase, usually short in duration, until the structure and mood of the phrase is considered clear in the mind of the listeners. The performer will then shift the first beat of the *tal* to another position of the phrase, while maintaining the exact order of the *bols* previously used. A simple example may be the phrase *tetegege*, that shifts to *tegegete*, to *gegetete*, and then *getetege*. Depending on the musicians aesthetic choices and skills, this may occur many times, turning the phrase around the beat and around the audiences mind. While turning the phrase, there are some positions that usually feel quite comfortable,

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<sup>37</sup> Wegner 2004: 46.

<sup>38</sup> *Luggi* is a short and usually syncopated phrase designed to be played at high speed during light classical music

such as turning it exactly in half, and there are others that require formidable skill at the *rela* speed, such as turning it by one semiquaver, or a demi-semiquaver. This allows the performer to create a rhythmic tension in the music without changing the volume or speed of the performance. A simple example of this type of variation appears below in Figure 11, as well as Notation 1.6.

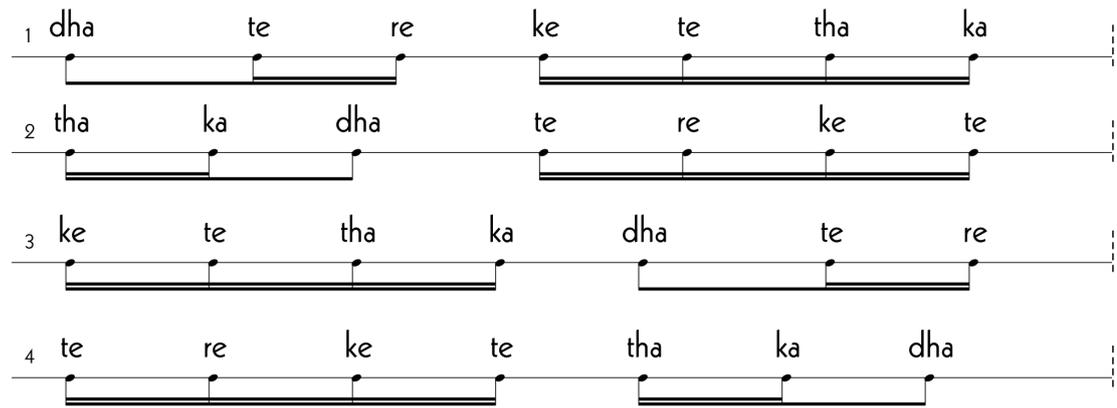


Figure 11. *Relā* variation example

Courtney has described the structure of the *relā* form as being on a continuum from a highly structured form referred to as a *kaida-relā*, to a basically free form referred to as *swatantra relā*.<sup>39</sup> In performance practice the *relā* structure is commonly played somewhere between highly structured and completely free. The exact approach is at the discretion of the performer. An example notation of the *relā* form appears below in Notation 1.6.

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<sup>39</sup> Courtney 2003: 29

# Deredereketethaka

Rela

Traditional

**16**  
**4** dha te re ke tetha ka, de re de re ke tetha ka, dha te re ke tetha ka, tun na ke tetha ka,  
ta te re ke tetha ka, therethere ke tetha ka, dha te re ke tetha ka, dhina ke tetha ka |

Laykari - Turning the bol

**1**  
ke tetha ka, de re de re ke tetha ka, dha te re | ke tetha ka, tun na ke tetha ka, dha te re |  
ke tetha ka, therethere ke tetha ka, ta te re | ke tetha ka, dhina ke tetha ka, dha 7 |

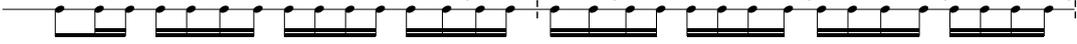
**2**  
tha ka, de re de re ke tetha ka, dha te re ke te | tha ka, tun na ke tetha ka, ta te re ke te |  
tha ka, therethere ke tetha ka, ta te re ke te | tha ka, dhina ke tetha ka, dha te re ke te |

Palta

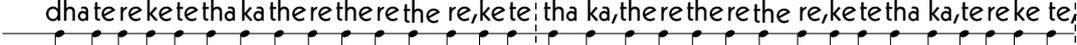
**1**  
dha te re ke tetha ka, de re de re ke tetha ka, dha te re ke tetha ka, de re de re ke tetha ka,  
dha te re ke tetha ka, de re de re ke tetha ka, dha te re ke tetha ka, tun na ke tetha ka, |  
ta te re ke tetha ka, therethere ke tetha ka, ta te re ke tetha ka, therethere ke tetha ka,  
dha te re ke tetha ka, de re de re ke tetha ka, dha te re ke tetha ka, dhina ke tetha ka, |

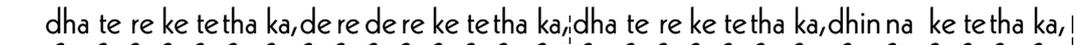
**2**  
dha te re ke tetha ka, de re de re ke tetha ka, de re de re ke tetha ka, de re de re ke tetha ka,  
dha te re ke tetha ka, de re de re ke tetha ka, dha te re ke tetha ka, tun na ke tetha ka, |  
dha te re ke tetha ka, therethere ke tetha ka, therethere ke tetha ka, therethere ke tetha ka,  
dha te re ke tetha ka, de re de re ke tetha ka, dha te re ke tetha ka, dhina ke tetha ka, |

3

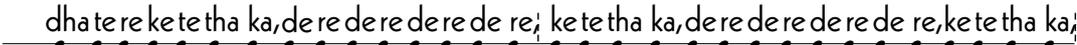
dha te re ke te tha ka de re de re de re, ke te : tha ka, de re de re de re, ke te tha ka, te re ke te,  


dha te re ke te tha ka, de re de re ke te tha ka, dha te re ke te tha ka, tun na ke te tha ka,  


dha te re ke te tha ka, the re the re the re, ke te : tha ka, the re the re the re, ke te tha ka, te re ke te,  


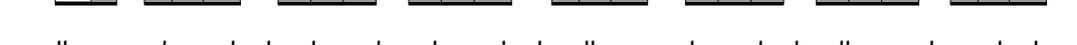
dha te re ke te tha ka, de re de re ke te tha ka, dha te re ke te tha ka, dhin na ke te tha ka,  


4

dha te re ke te tha ka, de re de re de re de re, ke te tha ka, de re de re de re de re, ke te tha ka,  


dha te re ke te tha ka, de re de re ke te tha ka, dha te re ke te tha ka, tun na ke te tha ka,  


dha te re ke te tha ka, the re the re the re, ke te tha ka, the re the re the re, ke te tha ka,  


dha te re ke te tha ka, de re de re ke te tha ka, dha te re ke te tha ka, dhin na ke te tha ka,  


5

de re de re ke te tha ka, de re de re de re, ke te : tha ka dha, de re de re de re, ke te tha ka,  


dha te re ke te tha ka, de re de re ke te tha ka, dha te re ke te tha ka, tun na ke te tha ka,  

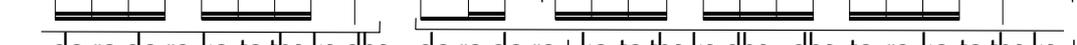

the re the re ke te tha ka, the re the re the re, ke te : tha ka dha, the re the re the re, ke te tha ka,  

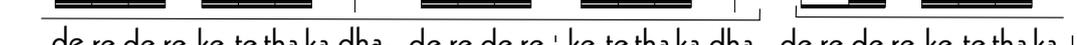

dha te re ke te tha ka, de re de re ke te tha ka, dha te re ke te tha ka, dhin na ke te tha ka,  


Tihai

dha te re ke te tha ka, de re de re ke te tha ka : dha, de re de re ke te tha ka dha,  


de re de re ke te tha ka dha, dha te re : ke te tha ka, de re de re ke te tha ka dha,  


de re de re ke te tha ka dha, de re de re : ke te tha ka dha, dha te re ke te tha ka  


de re de re ke te tha ka dha, de re de re : ke te tha ka dha, de re de re ke te tha ka  


dha,  


Notation 1.6. Example of the compositional form of *rela*.

#### IV. *Chalan*

*Chalan*, (sometimes spelt *calan*) is a compositional form that is particular to the *Farukhabad Gharana* of *tabla* playing. There is much debate regarding a complete definition of the compositional form as it may be performed with a wide scope of variation with regards to the structure and rules of the form. I will define the *chalan* here by both what I have personally learnt in India as well as what I have found in my academic research.

In common performance, a *chalan* is similar in its structure to a *kaida*. One of the principle aspects defining *chalan* as separate from *kaida* is that *chalan* themes include a wider variety of *bols* than those found in the *kaida* form. *Chalan* also includes more rhythmic variation than either *kaida* or *rela* forms. Kippen suggests that for a composition to be termed a *chalan*, it must include some form of 'rhythmic peculiarity'.<sup>40</sup> The *bols* in *chalan* compositions are more similar to those used in the *gat* form than the *bols* of *kaida* or *rela* forms.<sup>41</sup> It may be useful to think that *chalan* straddles the *bol* usage divide between the limited *bols* used in the forms of *kaida* and *rela* and the wide variety of *bols* used in the *gat* and *tukra* forms. Below is a notation of a composition in the *chalan* form.

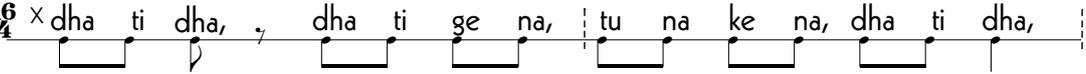
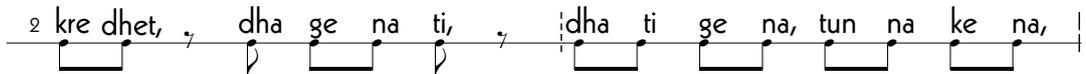
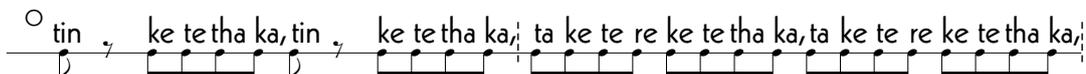
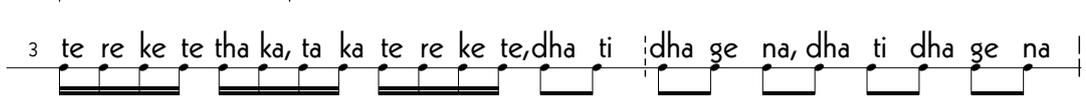
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<sup>40</sup> Kippen 1988: 172.

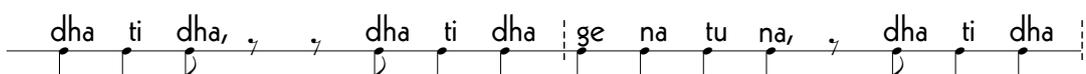
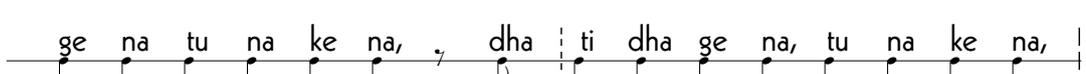
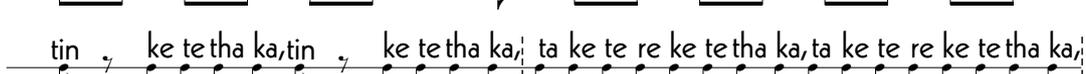
<sup>41</sup> It may be noted here that while *tabla bols* are not strictly restricted to particular forms, such as *terekeṭe* being only for use during *rela* forms, it is common to think of certain *bols* as being from a particular form. As an example, *terekeṭe* is generally considered a *rela bol*, but it is found in almost every compositional form.

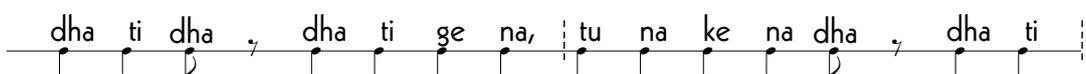
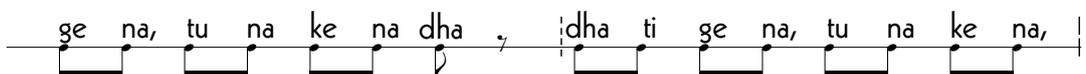
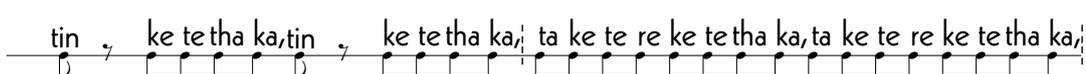
# *Dhatidha dhatigena*

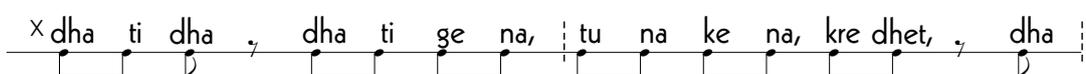
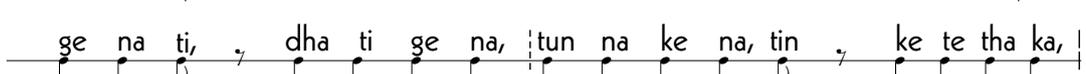
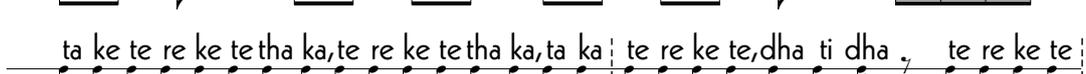
Chalan

**16**  $\times$  dha ti dha,  $\gamma$  dha ti ge na, tu na ke na, dha ti dha, |  
 $\frac{16}{4}$    
 $\frac{2}{2}$  kre dhet,  $\gamma$  dha ge na ti,  $\gamma$  dha ti ge na, tun na ke na, |  
  
 $\circ$  tin  $\gamma$  ke te tha ka, tin  $\gamma$  ke te tha ka, ta ke te re ke te tha ka, ta ke te re ke te tha ka, |  
  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  te re ke te tha ka, ta ka te re ke te, dha ti | dha ge na, dha ti dha ge na |  


Palta

**1**  
  
dha ti dha,  $\gamma$   $\gamma$  dha ti dha | ge na tu na,  $\gamma$  dha ti dha |  
  
ge na tu na ke na,  $\gamma$  dha | ti dha ge na, tu na ke na, |  
  
tin  $\gamma$  ke te tha ka, tin  $\gamma$  ke te tha ka, ta ke te re ke te tha ka, ta ke te re ke te tha ka, |  
  
te re ke te tha ka, ta ka te re ke te, dha ti | dha ge na, dha ti dha ge na |  


**2**  
  
dha ti dha  $\gamma$  dha ti ge na, tu na ke na dha  $\gamma$  dha ti |  
  
ge na, tu na ke na dha  $\gamma$  dha ti ge na, tu na ke na, |  
  
tin  $\gamma$  ke te tha ka, tin  $\gamma$  ke te tha ka, ta ke te re ke te tha ka, ta ke te re ke te tha ka, |  
  
te re ke te tha ka, ta ka te re ke te, dha ti | dha ge na, dha ti dha ge na |  


**3**  
 $\times$  dha ti dha  $\gamma$  dha ti ge na, tu na ke na, kre dhet,  $\gamma$  dha |  
  
ge na ti,  $\gamma$  dha ti ge na, tun na ke na, tin  $\gamma$  ke te tha ka, |  
  
ta ke te re ke te tha ka, te re ke te tha ka, ta ka | te re ke te, dha ti dha  $\gamma$  te re ke te |  
  
tha ka, ta ka te re ke te, dha ti dha  $\gamma$  | te re ke te tha ka, ta ka te re ke te, dha ti |  


4

dha ti dha, 7 7 7 dha ti | ge na, tu na ke na, dha ti  
 dha, kre dhet, 7 dha ge na | ti, 7 ge na tun na ke na,  
 tin 7 tin 7 ke te tha ka, tin 7 | tin 7 ke te tha ka, ta ke te re ke te tha ka,  
 te re ke te tha ka, ta ka te re ke te, dha ti | dha ge na, dha ti dha ge na

5

dha ti dha, 7 7 7 dha ti | ge na, tu na ke na, dha ti  
 dha, 7 kre dhet, 7 dha ge na | ti, 7 dha ti ge na, tu na  
 ke na, tin 7 ke te tha ka, ta ke te re | ke te tha ka, te re ke te tha ka, dha ti dha  
 ge na dha, 7 dha ti dha ge | na dha, 7 dha ti dha ge na,

6

dha ti dha, 7 7 7 dha ti | ge na, tu na ke na, kre dhet,  
 7 dha ge na ti, 7 ge na, | tun na ke na, tin 7 7 7  
 ke te tha ka, tin 7 7 7 ke te tha ka, | tin 7 ke te tha ka, ta ke te re ke te tha ka,  
 3 te re ke te tha ka, ta ka te re ke te, dha ti | dha ge na, dha ti dha ge na

Tihai

dha ti dha, 7 dha ti ge na, | tu na ke na, dha ti dha,  
 kre dhet, 7 dha ge na ti, 7 | dha ti ge na, tun na ke na,  
 tin 7 ke te tha ka, te re ke te tha ka, ta ka | te re ke te, dha ti dha 7 te re ke te  
 tha ka, ta ka te re ke te, dha ti dha 7 | te re ke te tha ka, ta ka te re ke te, dha ti  
 dha

Notation 1.7. Example of the compositional form of *chalan*.

### 2.3.3 Pre-composed Compositional Forms

#### I. *Gat*

*Gat* is a very distinct compositional structure that appears in a wide variety of forms. *Gat* originated in the *Kathak* dance repertoire and is most prevalent in the *Farukhabad* and *Lucknow Gharanas*. Wegner outlines the diversity of the form explaining that “Nikhil Ghosh claimed he knew fifty-two categories of *gat*”.<sup>42</sup> *Gat* compositions are considered the most valued and highly treasured pieces within a *tabla* players repertoire as they include a wide scope of technical and creative possibilities in the interpretation and improvisation within the pieces. Wegner articulates the subject beautifully when he says “These pieces have a majestic, almost heroic expression, are extremely colourful and demand considerable virtuosity from the performer”.<sup>43</sup>

Most *gat* compositions were composed by performers from eastern India and the diversity of rules applied within the different types of *gat* is one of the characteristics of the form. *Gat* compositions may or may not include a *tihai*, have a *khali* section, or be played with variations. They are often performed in multiple tempos. One of the most outstanding features of the *gat* is the way in which it is performed. While *kinar* strokes such as *na*, *ta* and *dha* are used in the recitation and written form, these strokes are all performed on the *sur* section of the *tabla* drum in *gat* compositions. That is, all *dha* strokes are played as *dhin*, and all *na/ta* strokes are played as *tin*. The effect of this is a very sweet, resonant and rounded timbral sound to the composition, even though it may be played quite loud. Below in Notation 1.8 – 1.10 are notated examples of three types of *gat*. The first example in Notation 1.8 is a *gat* that includes variations in the final section of the composition. Notation 1.9 is an example of a *gat* with detailed

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<sup>42</sup> Wegner 2004: 47.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid 2004: 47.

rhythmic complexity and Notation 1.10 is an example of a common *gat* form that has a repeating second and fourth line.

*Thakkete Dhatrekedhiine*

Gat Traditional

**16**  
**4**

thak ke te, dha tre ke dhiin ne dhiin, ge thak ge dhiin ne,  
 ge na ge, tha ke te dhiin ne, dha ge tre ke tu na ka ta,  
 dha ge thak ge dha, tha ke te, dhii ne ta, dhii ne  
 dha, thak ke te dha, de re de re ke te tha ka, ta ke te re ke te tha ka,  
 thak ke te, ta tre ke tiin ne tiin, ke thak ke tiin ne,  
 ke na ke, tha ke te tiin ne, ta ke tre ke tu na ka ta,  
 dha ge thak ge dha, tha ke te, dhii ne ta, dhii ne  
 dha thak ke te dha, de re de re ke te tha ka, ta ke te re ke te tha ka

Alternate endings for the last line, to be played on repeat versions

**1** dha thak ke te dha, dha de re de re ka,  
**2** dha thak ke te dha, de re de re ka, de re de re ka,  
**3** dha, de re de re ka, de re de re ka, de re de re ka, ||

Notation 1.8. Example of a *gat* composition with variations.

*Dhiinnedhagena*

GatTraditional

$\frac{16}{4}$  dhiin ne dha ge ne, dha tre ke, dhiin ne dha, dhiin ne dha,  
ke te tha ka te re ke te, ta kre te te tii tii na na ke te,  
tii ne tii na, na na kre dhii, na na ke te tha ka te re ke te na ge kran,  
ge ge na na, te te ke te, dha ge na, dha ge na ka te, ||

Notation 1.9. Example of a *gat* composition with rhythmic complexity.

*Genage thaketedhete*

GatTraditional

$\frac{16}{4}$  ge na ge, tha ke te dhe te, ge na ge, tha ke te dhe te,  
ge na ge, ge na ge, ga na, dhe ge tre ke tu na ka ta,  
te re ke te tha ka te re ke te tha ka, te te, ga na ge, te re ke te tha ka, te te,  
ge na ge, ge na ge, ga na, dhe ge tre ke tu na ka ta, ||

Notation 1.10. Example of a *gat* composition with a repeating second and fourth line.

## II. *Tukra*

*Tukra* compositions are usually short in length and strong in character. Traditionally performed at full volume and with great speed *tukra* is a virtuosic form usually played in the final section of a solo *tabla* performance. *Tukra* compositions conclude with a *tihai* and make use of a wide range of *bols* to convey the complex themes of the compositions. It is common for a *tukra* to have a particular theme, story or mood associated with the composition. Sometimes these stories are related at the time of performance. They are usually short and simple illustrative themes that are conveyed by the composition, such as 'a cat jumping a fence attempting to escape from a monkey'. It is also common for different stories to be used by each performer for the same composition<sup>44</sup>. There is no restriction on the *bols* to be used for a *tukra*, but it is common to hear *terekete* and *dere dere* *bols* used during the composition and a rhythmically syncopated *tihai*. Below are three examples of *tukra* compositions. The three examples illustrate the different lengths and levels of complexity within the form.

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<sup>44</sup> While these stories are more prevalent in the *tukra* form, they are not limited to *tukra* compositions and may appear in other pre-composed forms as well, especially *gat*.

## *Derederetethaka thaketedha*

Tukra

Traditional

16/4 de re de re ke te tha ka, tha ke te dha, de re de re ke te tha ka, tha ke te dha,  
 tha ke te dha, tha ke te dha, de re de re ka, de re de re ka,  
 ta ge te te ghin ta ran - ne dha  
 ka, de re de re ke te tha ka, de re de re ke te tha ka, de re de re ke te tha ka, dha ||

Notation 1.11. Example of a short *tukra* composition.

## *Tak Tak 2*

Tukra

Traditional

16/4 tak tak dhiin na ke te tha ka, de re de re ke te tha ka, na ge te te kran,  
 dha tu na na ka, dhet te dha ; ne dha  
 dha, tre ke dhet, de re de re de re ke re na ka,  
 tre ke tun na ke re na ka te, }  
 de re de re ka, de re de re ge, de re de re ka, de re de re ge,  
 dha tu na na ka, gen de re de re ke te tha ka, tha ke te  
 dha, tha ke te dha, gen de re de re ke te tha ka, tha ke te dha,  
 tha ke te dha, gen de re de re ke te tha ka, tha ke te dha tha ke te  
 dha, } ||

Notation 1.12. Example of a long *tukra* composition.

# *Dha ketetaka Tun*

Tukra

Traditional

16  $\frac{4}{4}$  dha ke te tha ka tun, na te re ke te tha ke tak kran, dha dhi  
gen ta dha, ke te tha ka, de re de re de re ka,  
dha ke te tha ka, dha dha ke te tha ka, te re ke te tha ka tun,  
ga dhi gin, na te re ke te tha ka, te re ke te tha ka ta, te re ke te,  
ta te re ke te, ta ka te re ke te tha ka, de re de re ke te tha ka dha, ta  
dha, te re ke te, ta te re ke te, ta ka te re ke te tha ka,  
de re de re ke te tha ka dha, ta dha, te re ke te,  
ta te re ke te, ta ka te re ke te tha ka, de re de re ke te tha ka dha, ta  
dha,

Notation 1.13. Example of a rhythmically complex *tukra* composition.

### III. *Paran*

*Paran* compositions originated in the *pakawaj* repertoire and have been transposed and added to the *tabla* repertoire. For this reason there remains a variety of *pakawaj bols* used in these compositions. Bols such as *din*, and *teteketegadigenedha* are common in these compositions. The *Banaras Gharana* features many *paran* compositions and it is common for *tabla* students to learn these compositions early in their studies as they are often compact, simple and satisfying pieces. *Paran* compositions are often performed in the *pakawaj* style, with open hands, loud strokes and at medium tempos. An example of a *paran* composition in Notation 1.14 appears below.

*Din Din tetete*

Paran Traditional

16/4 din din te te te te, ge ge te te, ga dhi ge ne,  
 ta ke te dha, ne dha, te te ka te, ga dhi ge ne,  
 dha, ka te dha, te te ka te, ga dhi ge ne dha,  
 ka te dha, te te ka te, ga dhi ge ne dha, ka te  
 dha

Notation 1.14. Example of a *paran* composition.

#### IV. Mukra and Mohara

*Mukra* and *Mohara* are short compositions, usually played at high speed that lead to the *sam*. Both forms commonly feature the *bol terekete* and may be used in either solo repertoire or accompaniment. *Mukra* compositions almost always finish with a *tihai* and may sound similar to a shortened version of a *tukra*. *Mohara* compositions do not include a *tihai*, they may begin from any point within the *theke* and create a torrent of notes that concludes on the *sam*. In presenting a variety of compositions within the form, three notated examples of the *mukra* form are included below, the last of which does not include a *tihai*. Below these three *mukra* notations is four examples of the *mohara* form in notation, each of different length.

*Dha tuna ketethaka*

Mukra Traditional

Notation 1.15. Example of a *mukra* composition ending with a *tihai*.

Mukra *Kran ketethaka* Traditional

16/4 kran ke te tha ka, ta ka te re ke te tha ka,  
 te re ke te tha ka, de re de re ke te, dha dhin  
 dha kat, gen ta dha,  
 gen ta dha, gen ta  
 dha,

Notation 1.16. Second example of a *mukra* composition ending with a *tihai*.

Mukra *Dha ti Dha terekete* Traditional

16/4 dha ti dha te re ke te dha ti  
 dha te re ke te tha ka, ta te re ke te tha ka  
 te re ke te tha ke, ta ka te re ke te, dha ti  
 dha ge na, dha ti dha ge na  
 dha

Notation 1.17. Example of a *mukra* composition ending without a *tihai*.

*Mohra* Traditional

Mohra Traditional

**16**  $\frac{16}{4}$  <sup>1</sup>

dhin ta ke te ta ka, te re ke te

dha

---

<sup>2</sup>

ke te ta ka, ta te re | ke te tha ka, te re ke te tha ka, ta ka te re ke te

dha

---

<sup>3</sup>

te re ke tetha ka, te re ke tetha ka, ta te re | ke tetha ka, te re ke tetha ka, ta te re ke te

dha

---

<sup>4</sup>

dhin ta ke te ta ka, ta te re | ke te tha ka, te re ke te tha ka, ta ka te re ke te

dha

||

Notation 1.18. Four examples of the *mohra* form in notation.

## V. Dupodi and Tripodi

*Dupodi* and *tripodi* are very distinctive compositional forms particular to North Indian *tabla* drumming. In a *dupodi* composition a relatively short phrase or *bol* group is played twice. In *tripodi* compositions each *bol* group is played three times. The duration of each repeated *bol* group varies according to the composition, leading to an intricate array of rhythmic possibilities. It is common in these compositions for the repeating phrases to create cross rhythms against the pulse and *vibhag* of the *tal*. Due its structure, *dupodi* and *tripodi* compositions do not usually include a *tihai*.

In some cases *tabla* players will create *dupodi* or *tripodi* compositions from existing *tukra* or *gat* compositions. With experience, *tabla* players may create these while playing, without preparation. In this case, the length of the composition is doubled for *dupodi* and tripled for *tripodi*. Notation 1.19 is an example composition in the *dupodi* form. Notation 1.20 is a composition in the *tripodi* form.

*Genadhin*

Dupodi Traditional

16/4 ge na dhin } ge na dhin }

dha ge na ge dhin ne, dha ge na ge dhin ne,

ta ke te dha ta ke te dha

ta ka dhin ne tak ta ka dhin ne tak

ta ka ta ka, te te te te, tin ne tin ne,

na ra na ra, ka ta ka ta, ga di ga di,

ge ge dhin dhin, ge ge dhin dhin,

gin te re ke te ta ka dhet, gin te re ke te ta ka dhet,

Notation 1.19. Example of a *dupodi* composition.

Tripodi

# Dhinedhinedhine

Traditional

$\frac{16}{4}$  dhi ne dhi ne dhi ne, dha ge na dha ge na  
dha ge na, ta ki te ta ki te ta ki te,  
dhi ne ge ne, dhi ne ge ne, dhi ne ge ne,  
tak ke dhi ne, tak ke dhi ne, tak ke dhi ne,  
ta ka, ta ka, ta ka, tin ne, tin ne, tin ne,  
ta ke ne, ta ke ne, ta ke ne, dha tre ke  
dha ge na, dha tre ke dha ge na, dha tre ke  
dha ge ne, ge na ? ge na ? ge na ?

Notation 1.20. Example of a *tripodi* composition

## VI. Tripali

Like *dupodi* and *tripodi*, *tripalai* is a fascinating form of North Indian *tabla* drumming. *Triplai* compositions are designed so that they may be played in three subdivisions of the beat and still conclude at the *sam* of the *tal*. The order of the notes and rests remains exactly the same in each subdivision, as does the relative note values. The only aspect that changes is the relationship between the pulse of the music and the length of notes. For example, if a composition begins in a triplet subdivision, it will then be played in the timing of semiquavers and then in sextuplets. A simplified notation example of how the notes and rhythms relates appears below in Figure 12.

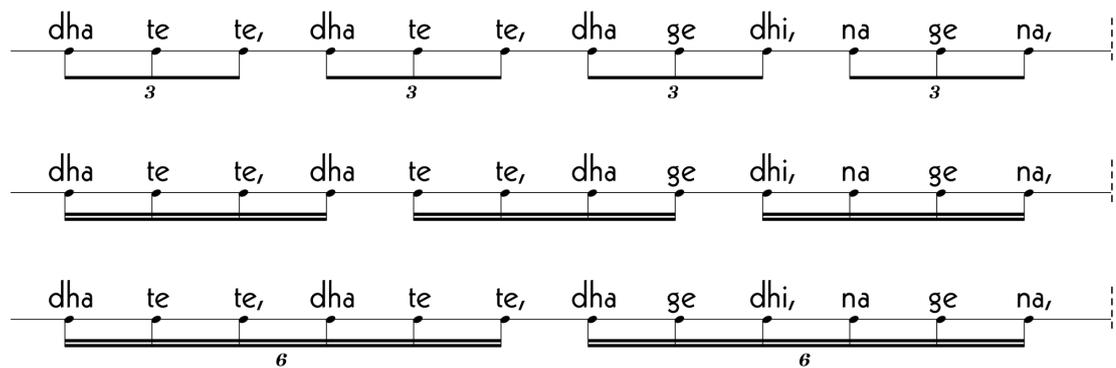


Figure 12. A simplified example of a *tripali* structure

*Tripali* compositions are an entertaining performance tool as well as a valuable educational tool. Clayton refers to the system used in *tripodi* compositions as '*lay bant*' and compares it to the south Indian technique of *trikala*.<sup>45</sup> A complete notation example in the *tripali* form is included below in Notation 1.21. The three sections of the *tripali* are indicated by A, B and C in the notation.

---

<sup>45</sup> Clayton 2000: 159.

# Dha dha nedha

Tripali Paran

Traditional

**A**

16  $\frac{16}{4}$  dha dha ne dha ke te tha ka, tun ke te tha ka, dhet dhet  
 dhet, ke te tha ka, ta ki te dhe te te ka te dhet, ta ka te ga di ge ne  
 dha ke te tha ke ta ki te dhe te te ka te dhet, ta ka te ga di ge ne  
 dha ke te tha ke ta ki te dhe te te ka te dhet, ta ka te ga di ge ne

**B**

dha dha ne dha ke te tha ka tun ke te tha ka dhe dhet dhet ke te tha ka ta ke  
 te dhe te te ka te dhet, ta ka te ga di ge ne dha ke te tha ka ta ke te dhe te te ka te dhet  
 ta ka te ga di ge ne dha ke te tha ka take te dhe te te ka te dhet, ta ka te ga di ge ne  
 dha dha ne dha ke te tha ka tun ke te tha ka dhe dhet dhet ke te tha ka ta ke  
 te dhe te te ka te dhet, ta ka te ga di ge ne dha ke te tha ka ta ke te dhe te te ka te dhet  
 ta ka te ga di ge ne dha ke te tha ka take te dhe te te ka te dhet, ta ka te ga di ge ne

**C**

dha dha ne dha ke te tha ka tun ke te tha ka dhet dhet  
 dhet ke te tha ka ta ke te dhe te te ka te dhet ta ka te ga di ge ne  
 dha ke te tha ka ta ke te dhe te te ka te dhet ta ka te ga di ge ne  
 dha ke te tha ka ta ke te dhe te te ka te dhet ta ka te ga di ge ne  
 dha

Notation 1.21. A complete notation example of a *tripali* structure

## VII. *Chakradar*

*Chakradar* is a complex cyclical form used in Indian music.<sup>46</sup> It is a compositional form within the solo *tabla* repertoire that is played three times and calculated to conclude on the *sam*. *Chakradar* compositions are often composed in a similar style to the *tukra* form, but, instead of being, for example, 16 beats in duration in a *tintal* composition, it may be 11 beats in duration, repeated three times and concluding on the first note of the *tal*. Each repeated section of the *chakradar* will have a *tihai* and the rest between each section will remain the same each time. If there is no rest between the repeated sections, the composition is known as a *bedum chakradar*.

*Chakradar* is commonly considered the most difficult compositional form to perform. For example, the composition may be very complex in its structure and have a duration of more than one cycle in each repeated section. The rest may be a fraction of a beat causing the musician to play the entire section a semiquaver ahead, or behind where it naturally occurs. With this in mind, *chakradar* is often used to conclude a solo *tabla* recital. Below appears notation examples of both *chakradar* and *bedum chakradar* forms.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> The term *chakradar* may also be used to refer to a *tihai* that is played three times, known as a *chakradar tihai*. This type of *tihai* is commonly used to conclude an instrumental recital.

<sup>47</sup> *Bedum*: without a gap, or without a pause. *Chakradar*: composition of the solo *tabla* repertoire that is played three times to conclude on the *sam*.

*Dha dhin ta ketethakadhet*

16/4 [dha dhin ta ke te tha ka dhet dha dhin ta  
ke te tha ka dhet dha te re ke te tha ka dhet dha te re ke te tha ka dhet  
ta ran na ke te tha ka dhet dha te re ke te tha ka te re ke te dha te re  
ke te tha ka te re ke te dha dii gen te  
dha dha te re ke te tha ka te re ke te dha te re ke te tha ka  
te re ke te dha dii gen te dha  
dha te re ke te tha ka te re ke te dha te re ke te tha ka te re ke te  
dha dii gen te dha  
]

The section in brackets is performed a total of 3 times. The second cycle begins on beat 1 1/2, the third on beat 2, the composition resolves and concludes on the sam.

Notation 1.22. An example of a *chakradar* composition. A special system of brackets is used in place of repeats so the repeat begins in the correct position.

*Dha ketethaka Din*

16/4 [dha ke te tha ka, din ke te tha ka, ta ke te tha ka, te re ke te tha ka, ta ka  
te re ke te dha, ka ta ke te tha ka, ta te re ke te tha ka, te re ke te tha ka, ta ka  
te re ke te dha, din gen ta dha, ka ta ke te tha ka, ta te re  
ke te tha ka, te re ke te tha ka, ta ka te re ke te dha, din gen ta dha,  
ka ta ke te tha ka, ta te re ke te tha ka, te re ke te tha ka, ta ka te re ke te dha  
din gen ta dha]

The section in brackets is performed a total of three times. The second cycle begins on beat 6 1/2, the third on beat 12. The composition concludes on the sam.

Notation 1.23. An example of a *bedum chakradar* composition in notation.

## 2.4 Conclusion

The depth and breadth of the North Indian *tabla* repertoire, already known for its virtuosity and excellence, may become an invaluable resource for musicians, percussionists, audiences, academics and music educators throughout the world. For *tabla* to become a fully integrated and accepted instrument of Australian musical culture, a recognised and standardised system of notation is critical to enable western audiences to further appreciate the depth of the tradition. The on-going development of an Indian rhythmic curriculum that incorporates western notational structures diversifies and enhances the fabric of Australian music education while contributing to musico-cultural sensitivity.

The relatively few notations in English of the *tabla* tradition, including Gotlieb (1977), Kippen (1998), Courtney (2001), Wegner (2004) and Chatterjee (2006) have provided a basis for this work. While these sources make a contribution to scholarly literature, each of the notation systems used is highly individualised, using analytical and cultural methodologies towards differing research aims. This reduces accessibility to the broader western audience that increasingly encounters *tabla* music for its performative aspects. As described in my comparative analysis of *tabla* notations, the works fail to clarify the intricate relationship between the written and performed *bol*, include overly complex graphic notations, inaccurate transcriptions and inconsistent layouts. The notation problems evident in these texts are partly due to a range of inherent issues within the *tabla* music repertoire. These include multiple notes that have single spoken syllables as well as an inconsistent relationship between spoken and performed *bols* within the various languages and dialects used in the tradition.

Through extensive ethnographic field research in India with *tabla* master Pandit Anindo Chatterjee, as well as detailed analysis of the

above works, this thesis has presented arguments for, and subsequently developed, a new notation system. The system represents the repertoire in a hybridised form of *tabla bols* and western rhythmic notation that clearly indicates the structural elements within the *tabla* music repertoire. New notational features within this system include notating a high degree of rhythmic accuracy through the use of western staff notation. The system also presents unambiguous indication of which performed *bol* is referred to by the written *bol*. It does this through a specific spelling system and a series of illustrations with detailed descriptions of execution. The spelling system maintains the pronunciations used in the traditional practice of the spoken *bol* while providing independent representations for each individual *bol*. *Bol* grouping, or musical phrasing, that is fundamental to the *tabla* repertoire has been indicated through a system of commas in combination with western rhythmic notation. Finally the new notation system has maintained a high level of accuracy and consistency through the use of an easily readable layout. It has been presented in each of the major forms of the repertoire, which tests the merit and value of the system across the diverse instrumental spectrum of the *tabla* repertoire. This hybridisation between Indian and western staff notation effectively communicates the exact *bol* to be performed as well as the most complex rhythms in the repertoire.

The notation system described in this thesis is the culmination of systems refined over many years through the Melbourne *Tabla* School. It has played an important role in laying the foundations for *tabla* in formal education in Australia and it is now possible to study *tabla* from secondary school to post graduate level in Australia. In 2010, notations from this thesis played a fundamental role in gaining acceptance of *tabla* as an independent instrument in the V.C.E. curriculum for formal study at secondary school level in Victoria. The notation system was also used to establish a syllabus for students to study *tabla* as a performance instrument at TAFE as well as under-graduate and post-

graduate university level in Australia.<sup>48</sup> Without notations that use a formally recognised system of musical notation, the growth and acceptance of *tabla* within education institutions would certainly have been hindered. With a pathway for learning *tabla* in formal education in Australia at the beginning stages, the growth of interest and general level of acceptance will be directly affected by the availability and accessibility of musical notation for the instrument.<sup>49</sup>

All written systems of notation have limitations with regards to the accurate representation of musical performance. After all, notation is one of many technologies that aid the study of music. Elements such as the many different *gamak* (modulations) of the *bayan*, forward and reverse fingerings, dynamics and expression have not been indicated in these notations. These elements have not been included here as they were not stipulated during my traditional training in India. Traditionally, these elements are left to a performer's creativity. During my fieldwork in India I identified a number of musical elements commonly used by performers such as those mentioned above that are yet to be standardised. These elements and more could be added to the notations as well as a source of further research and development in the field.

I am deeply indebted to my informants in India, Pandit Anindo Chatterjee and Subhajit Brahmachari for the practical skills and theoretical information I have gained through my study with them over the past decade. It is my hope that through these notations and the performance skills I have gained I may be able to assist the growth of

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<sup>48</sup> Northern Metropolitan Institute of TAFE (Greensborough, Victoria) and Monash University (Clayton, Victoria).

<sup>49</sup> After many months of work with the board at the V.C.E., most of which was notation related, the *tabla* was accepted for the first time as an instrument of study at the V.C.E. The first student to sit exams on *tabla* will be in 2011. Much the same situation was achieved at the NMIT in Greensborough where a syllabus for *tabla* is now in place based on these notations.

interest in Indian *tabla* in Australia. With the rise in popularity of *tabla* in 'world music' and within international education systems, a definitive, accurate and clear notation system that represents the music with the greatest level of transparency will not only assist in the recognition and growth of the tradition, it may broaden the appeal and accessibility of this amazing tradition to a wider audience.

## Section 3 - Appendix

### 1. Informants

#### **Pandit Anindo Chatterjee**

After five years of *tabla* study with a range of teachers in North India I became a student of Pandit Anindo Chatterjee in 2002. Since then I have undertaken yearly tours to India where I have taken regular lessons from him. He is the principle informant in this thesis.

Anindo Chatterjee is recognized as one of India's most eminent *tabla* players. He was inspired to take up *tabla* by his uncle, the *sitar* player Pandit Biswanath Chatterjee, when he was four years old. At the age of five Anindo was All India Radio's youngest artist. At six he became a disciple of Padmabhushan Gyan Prakash Ghosh and studied with him for over thirty years, some of which ran simultaneously with his extensive international concert career. Gyan Prakash Ghosh was well known for his extensive knowledge of all *tabla Gharanas*, as well as his own *Farukhabad Gharana*. Furthering this Anindo also studied the Lucknow *tabla Gharana* with Ustad Ahfaq Hussain Khan.

At the age of 16, The Government of India awarded Anindo the 'Gold Medal' in the All India Radio Music Competition. In 1990 he became the first *tabla* player to perform in the House of Commons. The All India Critics Association adjudged him as the 'Best Performer of the Year 1997' and in 2003 the President of India crowned Anindo with the prestigious *Sangeet Natak Akademi Award*.

Anindo has carved out a niche market for himself in *tabla* solo performance for which he is one of the most popular and in-demand performers. He has achieved aesthetically satisfying combination of tradition and innovation in this form. As an accompanist, he is known for his sense of balance and proportion, crisp tonal quality, modulation of sound production and rapport with soloists. Anindo has

accompanied the finest Indian musicians and has toured throughout the world with them. Anindo enjoyed a long international touring career with Pandit Nikhil Banerjee and has also toured with Pandit Ravi Shankar, Ustad Ali Akbar Khan, Ustad Vilayat Khan, Ustad Amjad Ali Khan, Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia, and Pandit Shivkumar Sharma to name only those who are the pillars on which Indian Classical Music today rests.

Anindo's ability to weave the most intricate textures with *tabla bols* and to remain uncompromising with crispness and clarity at virtually any speed has seen him adding new dimensions to his instrument.

### **Subhajit Brahmachari**

I first meet Subhajit in 2001 while I was studying *tabla* with his elder brother, Debasis Bharahachari. Since then we have developed a close friendship and Subhajit has acted as a sub-teacher for me, providing detailed insights into the art of *tabla* playing as well as Indian music theory and the cultural aspects of the music.

Disciple of *tabla* maestro, Pandit Anindo Chatterjee, Subhajit Brahmachari is in high demand as a soloist and an accompanist of vocal, instrumental, and kathak dance in Kolkata. Renowned for his tonal quality and expertise in *laykari*, Subhajit has performed widely in India and received numerous nationally funded scholarships.

Born in 1976 to a musical family, Subhajit initially took training in vocal music from his Father, Sri Durgesh Brahmachari, a reputed classical vocalist. He received his first training in *tabla* from his elder brother, Sri Debasish Brahmachari, a disciple of *tabla* maestros Ustad Munne Khan and Krishna Kumar Ganguly. Subhajit later became the youngest *tabla* player in North Eastern States of India to receive the 'B-High' grade from All India Radio and remains today a regular artist of All India Radio and Television.

In 1995 Subhajit stood first in the 'All Assam Music Competition' and represented the state in the first National Youth Festival, held at Bhopal, MP. In 1998 he received a two year scholarship from the Government of Assam to complete further studies in music and he was awarded the prestigious 'National Scholarship for Higher Studies in *Tabla*' in 2000 by the Government of India. Today Subhajit remains under guidance of the *tabla* maestro, Pandit Anindo Chatterjee.

## II. Glossary

<b>alap</b>	beginning section of an instrumental recital
<b>anagat</b>	a composition that concludes before the <i>sam</i>
<b>avartan</b>	complete cycle of a <i>tal</i>
<b>band</b>	<i>tabla bols</i> played with muted notes on the <i>bayan</i> , or where the <i>bayan</i> is absent in the passage of music, also known as <i>mudi</i> , lit: closed.
<b>bedum</b>	without a gap, or without a pause
<b>bol</b>	mnemonic syllables representing <i>tabla</i> or instrumental strokes
<b>chakradar</b>	composition of the solo <i>tabla</i> repertoire that is played three times to conclude on the <i>sam</i>
<b>chalan</b>	theme and variation compositional form of the solo <i>tabla</i> repertoire, particular to the <i>farukhabad gharana</i>
<b>dupodi</b>	composition of the solo <i>tabla</i> repertoire in which each phrase is played twice
<b>Farukhabad Gharana</b>	tradition of <i>tabla</i> playing originating in the town of Farukhabad, later moved to Kolkata (formally Calcutta)
<b>gat</b>	short, virtuosic composition of the solo <i>tabla</i> repertoire
<b>gamak</b>	ornamentation used in instrumental music
<b>Gharana</b>	stylistic school or tradition, originating in a family lineage
<b>jati</b>	rhythmic subdivision, may also be used to classify other musical elements in melodic music, such as sub-categories of <i>ragas</i>
<b>kaida</b>	systematic theme and variation compositional form of the solo <i>tabla</i> repertoire
<b>khali</b>	un-accented beat of a <i>tal</i> , indicates beginning of new <i>vibhag</i> and is marked by a wave of the hand
<b>khuli</b>	<i>bols</i> played with open resonant strokes on the <i>bayan</i>
<b>kinar</b>	outside skin of the <i>tabla</i> drum, on the edge of the drum lit: open
<b>luggi</b>	a short (usually syncopated) phrase designed to be played at high speed during light classical music

<b>maidan</b>	main resonating skin of the <i>tabla</i> drum, also known as <i>sur</i>
<b>matra</b>	the beat, a unit of time
<b>meend</b>	glissando ornamentation as part of the sitar repertoire
<b>mudi</b>	<i>bols</i> played with muted notes on the <i>bayan</i> , or where the <i>bayan</i> is absent in the passage of music, also known as <i>band</i> , lit: closed
<b>mohara</b>	composition of the solo <i>tabla</i> repertoire that does not end with a <i>tihai</i>
<b>mukra</b>	short composition of the solo <i>tabla</i> repertoire ending with a <i>tihai</i>
<b>pakawaj</b>	double ended barrel drum of north India that pre-dates the <i>tabla</i>
<b>palla</b>	sections of a <i>tihai</i> , the phrase that is used to form the <i>tihai</i>
<b>paran</b>	compositions originally from the repertoire of the <i>pakawaj</i> , now included as part of the solo <i>tabla</i> repertoire
<b>palta</b>	variations in a <i>kaida</i> or <i>rela</i> form
<b>peshkar</b>	opening composition of a solo <i>tabla</i> repertoire recital, lit: to present
<b>rela</b>	theme and variation compositional form of the solo <i>tabla</i> repertoire. Lit: rushing, flowing, a torrent
<b>sur</b>	main resonating skin of the <i>tabla</i> drum, also known as <i>maidan</i>
<b>sam</b>	the beginning of a <i>tal</i> , and the most accented <i>tali</i> , marked by a clap
<b>tala</b>	unit of time, metric cycle or metre. Also referred to as <i>tal</i>
<b>tali</b>	accented beat of a <i>tal</i> , indicates beginning of new <i>vibhag</i> and marked by a clap
<b>theka</b>	drum pattern played on the <i>tabla</i> to indicate a particular <i>tala</i>
<b>tihai</b>	cadential figure played three times
<b>tripali</b>	compositional form of the solo <i>tabla</i> repertoire that is played in three different metric divisions
<b>tripodi</b>	composition of the solo <i>tabla</i> repertoire in which each phrase is played three times

- tukra** short composition of the solo *tabla* repertoire played at high speed and high volume
- vibhag** sub-divisions, or sections of a *tal*

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## Part B – Performance Materials

Masters Recital Program Notes and Accompanying DVD Video

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## **Masters Recital Details**

Friday 6<sup>th</sup> August, 2010, 7:30pm

Monash University – School of Music Conservatorium

The 60 minute recital forms part of the requirements for a Master of Arts in Music Performance at Monash University. It is hoped that the following program notes will offer an insight into the specific performance research I have been conducting on Indian *tabla* during this degree. These notes should assist the reader in gaining access to the performance at a deeper level and offer an insight into the choice of recital program.

In presenting a balanced program that is representative of the musical demands of an Australian *tabla* player, this recital will include music from three genres: *tabla lehara* (The solo repertoire of North Indian *tabla* drumming), world music (with the ensemble Fine Blue Thread) and jazz-world music (with the Lisa Young Trio). The performance time for these three genres is divided as 50% *tabla lehara*, 25% world music and 25% jazz-world music. These three genres and the respective performance times are in-line with my recommendations to the V.C.E. board, TAFE and University degrees for *tabla* recitals for Australian students. It is hoped that this recital may act as a precedence and assist in setting a standard for *tabla* recitals in formal education in Australia. Below is an outline of the music to be performed, running schedule and information regarding the tradition of *tabla lehara*.

## Recital Program

<b>Title</b>	<b>Composer</b>	<b>Genre</b>	<b>Duration</b>
<i>Tabla Lehara</i>	Traditional/Evans	solo <i>tabla</i> repertoire	30 min.
To The Boat	Fine Blue Thread: Evans/Mountfort/Soemardjo	world music	10 min.
A Quite Game	Fine Blue Thread: Evans/Mountfort/Soemardjo	world music	5 min.
Internal Pulse	Young Arr:Young/Robertson/Evans	jazz-world music	5 min.
Sa Ri Ga	Young Arr:Young/Robertson/Evans	jazz-world music	5 min.
Misra Chappu	Young Arr:Young/Robertson/Evans	jazz-world music	5 min.

Lisa Young will be performing a recital that forms part of her PhD recitals on the night. In maintaining a well presented concert, there will be a short interval that will be used to change the stage after the third item above. There after Lisa Young we will perform the remaining 3 pieces for my recital and will continue in presenting her recital, without a break. The items for my examination are items 1 – 5 as written above.

## Concert Program

The entire concert program will be as follows:

- |                        |                                |   |                   |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| 1. <i>Tabla Lehara</i> | (solo <i>tabla</i> repertoire) | } | 1 - 6 Sam Evans   |
| 2. To The Boat         | (Fine Blue Thread)             |   |                   |
| 3. A Quite Game        | (Fine Blue Thread)             |   |                   |
| Short interval         |                                |   |                   |
| 4. Internal Pulse      | (Lisa Young Trio)              | } | 4 – 12 Lisa Young |
| 5. <i>Sa Ri Ga</i>     | (Lisa Young Trio)              |   |                   |
| 6. <i>Misra Chappu</i> | (Lisa Young Trio)              |   |                   |
| 7. Free Flow           | (Lisa Young Trio)              |   |                   |
| 8. Speak               | (Lisa Young Trio)              |   |                   |
| 9. <i>Tha Thin Tha</i> | (Lisa Young Trio)              |   |                   |
| 10. The Turning        | (Lisa Young Trio)              |   |                   |
| 11. The Glide          | (Lisa Young Trio)              |   |                   |
| 12. At My Feet         | (Lisa Young Trio)              |   |                   |

Items 1 – 6 are presented as Sam Evans' recital for examination. Items 4 – 12 are presented as Lisa Young's Recital to a separate examiner.

## Program Notes

### Item 1. *Tabla Lehara*

Performers: Sam Evans – *tabla*, Jenny Thomas – *viola* and Helen Mountfort – *cello*.

*Tabla lehara* is the solo repertoire of North Indian *tabla* drumming. This recital will present solo repertoire from the *Farukhabad tabla gharana* as taught to me by Pandit Anindo Chatterjee and Ustad Zakir Hussain. While the most common form of *tabla lehara* has a single unbroken melody played as the accompaniment, it has now become popular in India for the *lehara* part (the accompanying melody) to change during the performance, most notably the live performances of Pandit Suresh Talwalkar. This recital will include aspects of this style of performance as well as Pandit Anindo Chatterjee's use of more than one *tabla* during the performance<sup>50</sup>. The *tabla lehara* performance will include the following compositional forms in order.

1. *Peshkar*
2. *Kaida*
3. *Rela* (x 2)
4. *Chalan*
5. *Chakradah*
6. *Tukra* (x 5)
7. *Gat* (x 4)
8. *Chalan*
9. *Mukra* (x 4)
10. *Bedum Chakradah*
11. *Dupodi* and *Tripodi*
12. *Chakradah*

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<sup>50</sup> Pandit Anindo Chatterjee (2006). Album - *Dreams on Drums*: track 2, *Choutal*. Audiorec India.

I have included below definitions and descriptions of each of these compositional forms.

### **Compositional Forms for *Tabla Lehara* Performance**

Details and explanations of the compositional forms that will be used in the *tabla lehara* performance are listed below.

#### ***Peshkar***

The *peshkar* in this recital will be played in *Chautisrajati* (subdividing the beat into 2, 4 and 8 beats), *Misrajati* (subdividing the beat into 7, 14 and 21 beats) and finish in *Tisrajati* (subdividing the beat into 3, 6 and 12 beats).

*Peshkar*, meaning 'presentation' is the first compositional form to be presented in a solo *tabla lehara* performance. Originally composed by Ustad Ahmed Jan Thirikwa, the iconic *Farukhabad peshkar* is performed at a very slow tempo and allows the performer a great amount of freedom in regards to musical and personal expression in the performance. *Peshkar* is often referred to as the *aalap*<sup>51</sup> of *tabla* solo, and it is within this form that the performer has the greatest amount of improvisational freedom in the solo repertoire. *Peshkar* begins with a long and slow theme. The performer develops the theme through improvisation that is based on the original theme. The performer may use almost any *bol* in *peshkar*, the only form to allow this freedom. It is common to hear performers of *peshkar* focusing on sophisticated *tihais* that distort the listeners' perception of the time, only to reveal the consistent underlying cycle at the *sam*, the first beat of the cycle and the concluding point of the *tihai*. The *peshkar* performance may increase in rhythmic density as it progresses and always culminates in a concluding *tihai*. It is acceptable for the

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<sup>51</sup> *Aalap* is the introductory section of *raga* music that is performed very slowly and with an introspective mood.

performer to play the composition in different *jatis* (rhythmic subdivisions such as triplets and quintuplets) as the performance progresses. In this case the phrasing, mood and structure of the *peshkar* is maintained, it is only the subdivision that changes.

### **Kaida**

*Kaida*<sup>52</sup> is perhaps the most structurally sophisticated compositional form used in the solo *tabla* repertoire, the word literally means 'a system of rules'. The overall structure of a *kaida* can be divided into three sections: An opening theme, a series of variations based on the opening theme and a concluding *tihai*. The main focus during a *kaida* is thematic development that is achieved through a series of variations, or *palta*. The structure of the variations can be divided into four sections. The first section is a variation of the theme. The second section is the first line of the opening theme. The third section is the *kali* section, it is a repeat of the above variation in the first section performed using *mudi*<sup>53</sup> *bols*. The fourth line is the opening theme performed ending with *khuli bols*<sup>54</sup>. A table of these sections appears below.

1. Variation based on <i>kaida</i> theme	(played with <i>khuli bols</i> )
2. Original <i>kaida</i> theme	(ending with <i>mudi bols</i> )
3. Variation repeated	(played with <i>mudi bols</i> )
4. Original <i>kaida</i> theme	(ending with <i>khuli bols</i> )

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<sup>52</sup> Sometimes spelt *Qa'ida*

<sup>53</sup> *Mudi* literally means closed, it refers to *bols* played with muted notes on the *bayan*, or where the *bayan* is not played.

<sup>54</sup> Note that in the second section, the theme ends with *mudi* notes as it leads into the *kali* section. The last section leads the music into sum and so is performed with *khuli bols*. See the example notations below for clarification of this aspect.

## **Rela**

*Rela* is a fast and flowing compositional form that is characterised by simple repeating *bols* that are designed to be played at high speed. *Rela* literally means 'torrent' or 'flowing'. Beginning with a theme, the *rela* form is developed through a series of variations and ultimately culminates in a concluding *tihai*, much the same as the *kaida* form. Compared to the *kaida* form the opening theme and variations used in *rela* are less complex, use fewer *bols* and may include a higher amount of repetition. While the variations used to develop the music follow the same general rules as that of the *kaida* form, *rela* offers the performer a greater level of freedom and a less strict approach to the form. Variations are often created in *rela* performance through changing the relationship of the theme or the phrase with that of the crochet beat or the pulse, commonly referred to as 'inversions'. Depending on the musicians aesthetic choices and skills this may occur many times, turning the phrase around the beat and around the audiences mind.

## **Chalan**

*Chalan*, is a compositional form that is particular to the *Farukhabad Gharana* of *tabla* playing. There is much debate regarding a complete definition of the compositional form as it may be performed with a wide scope of variation as regards the structure and rules of the form.

In common performance a *chalan* is similar in its structure to a *kaida*. One of the principle aspects defining *chalan* as separate from *kaida* is that *chalan* themes include a wider variety of *bols* than those found in the *kaida* form. *Chalan* also includes a wider variety of rhythmic variation than either *kaida* or *rela* forms. Another aspect is that the *bols* to be used in a *chalan* are often closer related to *gat* *bols* than that of *kaida* or *rela* *bols*<sup>55</sup>. It may be useful to think that *chalan* straddles the

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<sup>55</sup> It may be noted here that while *tabla* *bols* are not strictly restricted to particular forms, such as *terekete* being only for use during *rela* forms, it is common to think of certain *bols* as being

*bol* usage divide between the limited *bols* used in the forms of *kaida* and *rela* and wide variety of *bols* that are used in the *gat* and *tukra* forms.

### **Chakradah**

*Chakradah* is a complex cyclical form used in Indian music. A *chakradah* is a composition that is played three times and calculated to conclude on the *sam* (the first beat of the bar). A common duration for *chakradah* is 11 beats in duration, against a cycle of 16 beats it is repeated three times and concludes on the first note of the bar. Each section of the *chakradah* will have a *tihai*. The rest between each section will remain the same each time. Depending on the composition, *chakradah* is usually the most difficult compositional form to perform. For example, the composition may be very complex in nature at take more than one cycle in each repeated section. The rest may be a fraction of a beat causing the musician to play the entire section a semiquaver ahead, or behind where it naturally occurs. With this in mind, *chakradah* is often used to conclude a solo *tabla* recital.

### **Tukra**

*Tukra* compositions are usually short in length and strong in character. Traditionally performed at full volume and with great speed *tukra* is a virtuosic form usually played in the final section of a solo *tabla* performance. *Tukra* compositions conclude with a *tihai* and make use of a wide range of *bols* to convey the complex themes of the compositions. There are no restriction on the *bols* to be used for a *tukra*, but it is common to hear *terekete* and *dere dere* *bols* used during the composition and a rhythmically syncopated *tihai*.

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from a particular form. As an example, *terekete* is generally thought of as a *rela bol*, but it is found in almost every compositional form.

## **Gat**

*Gat* is a very particular compositional form that appears in a wide variety of forms. *Gat* originated in the *Kathak* dance repertoire and are most prevalent in the *Farukhabad* and *Lucknow Gharanas*. *Gat* compositions are considered the most valued and highly treasured pieces within a *tabla* players repertoire as they include a wide scope of technical and creative possibilities. Wegner articulates the subject beautifully when he writes “These pieces have a majestic, almost heroic expression, are extremely colourful and demand considerable virtuosity from the performer”<sup>56</sup>.

Most *gat* compositions were composed by performers from eastern India and the range of rules applied within the different types of *gat* compositions means that *gat* compositions hold a very distinct position within the repertoire. One of the most outstanding features of the *gat* is the way in which it is performed. While *kinar* strokes such as *na*, *ta* and *dha* are used in the recitation and written form, these strokes are all performed on the *sur* section of the *tabla* drum in *gat* compositions. That is, all *dha* strokes are played as *dhin*, and all *na/ta* strokes are played as *tin*. The effect of this is a very sweet, resonant and round sound to the composition, even though it may be played quite loud.

## **Mukra**

*Mukra* are short compositions, usually played at high speed that lead to the *sam*. *Mukra* compositions almost always finish with a *tihai* and may sound similar to a shortened version of a *tukra*.

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<sup>56</sup> Wegner, G. (2004): 47. ‘*Vintage Tabla Repertory: Drum Compositions of North Indian Classical Music.*’ Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers. New Delhi, India.

## **Dupodi and Tripodi**

*Dupodi* and *tripodi* are very distinctive compositional forms that are particular to north Indian *tabla* drumming. In a *dupodi* composition each *bol* is played twice. In *tripodi* compositions each *bol* is played three times. The length of each *bol* to be repeated varies according to the composition leading to an interesting array of rhythmic possibilities. It is common in these compositions for the repeating phrases to create cross rhythms against the pulse and *vibharg* of the *tal*. Due to the structure *dupodi* and *tripodi* compositions do not usually include a *tihai*.

## **Items 2 and 3 - World Music: Fine Blue Thread**

Performers - The ensemble Fine Blue Thread: Sam Evans - multiple *tabla* and percussion, Ria Soemardjo – voice and viola and Helen Mountfort – cello.

It is not possible to maintain a busy performing career in Australia with traditional music alone and world music has become an integral aspect of western *tabla* players performing careers. Further to this world music collaborations may assist the growth of interest in traditional music and traditional instruments. Fine Blue Thread will be performing two pieces from the album Red Mountain. Music from this album was recently included on a BBC/Nascente compilation CD entitled 'A Beginners Guide To The Music Of India'. Fine Blue Thread's music was on the third CD entitled 'India Now'. The CD includes the biggest names in Indian and world music to date: Ravi Shankar, Hariprasad Chaurasia, Nitin Sawhey and Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan to name a few.

Performing in a world music context I have created a new *tabla* set where the *tabla* part has the opportunity to play a melodic role using multiple *tablas*, a percussive role with cymbals and a range of new musical approaches not possible within traditional music.

The second piece, entitled 'To The Boat', was composed by the ensemble in 2009. The piece is in 9/8 and includes an introduction that references the *vilambit ektal* (slow 12 beat cycle) form in the classical vocal tradition of North India. The rhythm of the piece is subdivided as  $2 + 2 + 2 + 3 = 9$ . During climax points the *tabla* part performs this subdivision as semi-quavers creating  $8 + 8 + 8 + 12 = 36$  notes to the bar. This is performed at the same time as a  $3 + 3 + 3 = 9$  subdivision. The piece includes a *tabla* and voice duet and a *tabla rela* from the solo *tabla* repertoire.

The third item, entitled 'A Quiet Game', has been composed by the ensemble in changing time signatures of 7/8 and 8/4. The piece includes an introduction with cymbals that develops into a *tabla* part that plays a melodic role in the piece. A short *tabla* solo is included in this work that draws on the traditional *rela* form of the *tabla* repertoire, subdividing the 7/8 into groups of 14, 21 and 28 note divisions. The piece also includes a short voice and *tabla* duet.

#### **Items 4, 5 and 6. Jazz/World Music: The Lisa Young Trio**

Performers – The Lisa Young Trio: Sam Evans – multiple *tabla* and percussion, Lisa Young – voice and Ben Robertson – double bass.

There are many musical elements and aesthetics that links Indian music with jazz. As jazz has an established audience base, western *tabla* players are constantly performing in jazz situations and there is a long history of collaboration between jazz musicians and *tabla* players. The Lisa Young Trio is a newly formed ensemble that combines jazz musical forms with Indian music. All three members have studied Indian music in India as well as jazz music in Australia. The jazz/world music performed in this recital includes the *tabla* part outlining the chord progressions and accompanying the melody with multiple *tablas*. The use of cymbals and hi-hats in the *tabla* part increases the variety of musical situations the *tabla* can be associated with in this genre.

The fourth item, 'Internal Pulse', explores the role of the *tabla* as a harmonic instrument in outlining the chord progression with multiple *tablas*. The piece is composed in 12/8 and outlines a range of rhythmic possibilities of the time signature, such as phrasing the music in 3, 4 and 6 beats to a bar.

The fifth item, 'Sa Ri Ga', explores the possibilities of an ensemble that has two members reciting Indian percussion vocalisations. Lisa will recite the South Indian system of *konnakol* and Sam the North Indian system of *bols*. The piece includes sections in unison, solos and duets.

The final item, Misra Chappu, is in 7/8. Subdivided as  $2 + 2 + 3 = 7$ , it is the opposite subdivision of the commonly used  $3 + 2 + 2 = 7$  of North India. This piece explores the rhythmic possibilities of the ensemble in 7 with the bar subdivided in 7, 14, 21 and 28 beats.

## **Performers Biographies**

[In order of appearance]

### **Sam Evans - Tabla**

After a decade of study in India, Sam Evans has established himself as a modern voice in the world of *tabla*. His distinctive approach expresses both a sense of spaciousness and the vibrant sophistication of the Indian *tabla* tradition he learnt from Pandit Anindo Chatterjee in India and Ustad Zakir Hussain in America. He has written for documentaries and television, has performed live on Indian and Australian television, on national and international radio, and performed with a variety of bands at numerous international jazz and world music festivals. His latest album with Melbourne trio Fine Blue Thread has received rave reviews in Australia, the album has recently been released in Europe and is currently being featured by the BBC in London.

### **Helen Mounfort - Cello**

Helen Mountfort studied 'cello and composition at Victoria University Wellington New Zealand. Helen moved to Australia in 1986 and soon after joined the band Not drowning, waving. Helen was a founding member of the band My Friend the Chocolate Cake with whom she still records performs, and also a member of gypsy/tango band Cosmo Cosmolino. Helen writes music for film, television, dance and theatre and is in demand as a session musician having recorded with many Australian artists including Missy Higgins, Archie Roach, Paul Kelly, Midnight Oil, Renee Geyer, Mark Seymour and the John Butler Trio.

### **Jenny Thomas - Viola**

Jenny Thomas has had many musical adventures including working with Circus Oz, playing a Norwegian Hardanger solo with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, a solo concert series in Europe

performing Indian classical violin plus playing with ARIA award winning Greek band 'The Habbibis'. Her album "Farewell To Old England Forever", a collection of re-worked Australian folk songs, won a Golden Fiddle Award and inclusion in the Melbourne Herald Sun's top ten CD picks for 2006. Lately she has become obsessed with her post-modern bush band and how to sneak Indian ragas into trad. Australian music.

### **Ria Soemardjo - Voice and Viola**

Ria Soemardjo has established herself in Australia as a unique voice in the world music scene. Born in Melbourne of Australian/Indonesian descent, Ria draws on her deep respect for the Javanese musical tradition in her song writing and collaborative projects. Ria has studied traditional Javanese and Indian vocals intensively in India and Indonesia, funded by the Australia Council for the Arts. Recent performing highlights include The Singapore Performing Arts Showcase, The Biwako Biennale in Japan, The Melbourne International Arts Festival and a live recording for Radio National's Music Deli show.

### **Lisa Young - Voice, Konnakol, Aslatuas**

Lisa Young has studied music across a wide spectrum, from Jazz and Contemporary Improvised music to the aural traditions of India, Africa and Bulgaria. She is renown as an exceptionally creative vocal stylist and improviser incorporating Indian and African elements in her work. In 2003 her composition 'Thulele Mama Ya' (with Coco's Lunch) won Best Folk/World Song in the Contemporary A Cappella Recording Awards in the USA, and in 2007 her jazz quartet's most recent album 'Grace' won *Best Australian Jazz Vocal Album 2007* at the Australian Jazz 'Bell' Awards. In 2009 Lisa received Cultural Exchange funding from Arts Victoria to pursue a cross-cultural collaborative ensemble with Karaikudi Mani and associates in Chennai, India in August 2009. Lisa has thrice travelled to India for advanced konnakol lessons with mridangam virtuoso Kaaraikudi Mani. For 2008-09 Lisa received an

Australia Council Project Fellowship enabling her to further her konnakol study in India with Guru Mani, and compose a new series of works for her quartet - *'The Eternal Pulse'* Lisa is also a founding member of vocal and percussion group Coco's Lunch. They have recorded 6 albums of original music, receiving 2 ARIA nominations in 2007, and have toured extensively throughout Australia, Canada, Europe and Asia.

### **Ben Robertson - Double Bass**

Ben has extensive experience in a broad variety of musical settings. Along with studio recording credits on over 60 jazz and commercial CD releases, many television appearances and national and international tours, Ben also performs in diverse situations with artists such as James Morrison, visiting artists Lee Konitz and American Broadway diva Barbara Cook. He has toured Europe with the Joe Chindamo trio and also with Dane Hans Ulrick. Recently Ben has recorded CD's with the Fiona Burnett trio, Tim Wilson trio, Tim Stevens trio, Don Harpers 'Illawarra' project, Alison Wedding and guested with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra and James Morrison.