Chapter: 1

History of Indian Music and Tabla
1:1 Sangeet: Music

'Sangeet' means Music. In our Hindu culture, in 'Vedas' music is compared with Nad Brahma. When any sound or sound in group is systematically mixed, then whatever is the outcome is called 'Sangeet' 'Music'.

Music, basically involves the creation of emotionally pleasing effects by means of sound. At its broadest, music can be regarded as a medium for expressing thought and feeling through tone and time. The basic elements of music that combine to achieve this effect are melody, rhythm, and harmony. Their combination gives rise to musical form.[1]

Music is a part of our whole life. It's in our body. The music is as old as the existence of a living being. The 'Music' has two bases 1) 'Laya', 2) 'Swar'.

'Laya' – The 'Laya' is in every living being, from our birth, heart beats at a particular pace (Laya) It is one type of 'Laya'. So we can say that a human being follows 'Laya' from his birth. It is not an exaggeration if music is being compared with our existence. 'Laya' is in everything. From breathing to blood circulation in our body; from flying of birds to a train running on its track, and a movement of a fish in water etc., in all above we find 'Laya'.

'Laya' has a specific type. We call it as 'Rhythmic Pattern'. These we name as 'Slow Laya' (Vilambit), 'Medium Laya' (Madhya), and 'Fast Laya' (Dhrut). The 'Laya' is classified above three types.

The ‘Laya’ is the basic element of classical music. That is the basic reason why African Tribal, Tribal’s from Gujarat and many other tribes all over the world have specific ‘Laya’ in their songs. Their folk music is known and is famous because of ‘Laya’. Many ‘Laya pradhan’ instruments play an important role in music. These instruments are called ‘Percussion Instruments’ or ‘Rhythmic Instruments’. Under this category, following instruments are well known – Tabla, Dhol, Nagara, Pakhawaj etc. Without Laya existence of music is impossible.

Swar: Now let us talk about ‘The Swar’, another important component in Classical Music. There are basic seven ‘Notes’ and five subsidiary notes. That makes total twelve notes. The complete music is based on these twelve notes. These twelve notes ‘Swars’ are so wide and deep in themselves that since ages the different style of music revolve around them and will keep developing due to them. The group of these seven notes is called ‘Saptak’. They are bifurcated in three basic groups; as ‘Mandra’, ‘Madhya’, and ‘Taar’. The combination of words from languages and the notes in Rhythm used to be the basic for wonderful creations in music. It has divided in many ways.

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There are many other types of dancing, singing and instruments.
Music is one of the most important parts of our life style and it keeps us healthy. But due to the technological development and change in our life and in the race of our own existence, music merely has become a tool for giving happiness through entertainment.

The study of ancient holy texts and Vedas has always proved that music has the capacity of therapeutically healing. If music is used in a systematic manner it makes our body and soul healthy.

The people during age of Veda knew that music has hidden spiritual value in it. Every living being has music within. We just need to find it out by research. Now the research is going on towards the direction in developing music as Therapy. The scientists have already started working on increasing the production capacity of plants, fruits and flowers. Mulching animals are given Music Therapy to increase Milk production as well as their better health.

The Psychological treatment is also given by using a systematic Music Therapy. According to the Chinese Medical Study, Music and Medical treatment has many similar principles. The Rhythm that gives happiness to the body and soul, same Rhythm helps to keep our body healthy. In ancient Indian scripts, and Vedas there is a special mention about importance of classical Music can be used as Music Therapy.

1:2 Hindustani Classical Music

1:2:1 Introduction

Hindustani or North Indian style of Indian classical music is found throughout the northern Indian subcontinent. The style is sometimes called North Indian Classical Music or Shāstriya Sangeet. It is a
tradition that originated in Vedic ritual chants and has been evolving since the 12th century CE, primarily in what is now North India and Pakistan, and to some extent in Bangladesh, Nepal and Afghanistan. Today, it is one of the two subgenres of Indian classical music, the other being Carnatic music, the classical tradition of South India.

The tradition was born out of a cultural synthesis of several musical traditions the Vedic chant tradition, dating back to approximately one thousand BCE, the equally ancient Persian tradition of Musiqi:e assil, and various folk traditions prevalent in the region.

for performers who have reached a distinguished level of achievement to be awarded titles of respect; Hindus are usually referred to as Pandit and Muslims as Ustad. An aspect of Hindustani music going back to Sufi times is the tradition of religious neutrality: Muslim ustads may sing compositions in praise of Hindu deities, and vice versa.

Around the 12th century, Hindustani classical music diverged from what eventually came to be identified as Carnatic classical music. The central notion in both these systems is that of a melodic mode or raga, sung to a rhythmic cycle or tala. The tradition dates back to the ancient Samaveda, (sāma meaning "ritual chant"), which deals with the norms for chanting of srutis or hymns such as the Riq Veda. These principles were refined in the musical treatises Natya Shastra, by Bharata (2nd–3rd century CE), and Dattilam (probably 3rd–4th century CE).

In medieval times, the melodic systems were fused with ideas from Persian music, particularly through the influence of Sufi composers like Amir Khusro, and later in the Moghul courts. Noted composers such as Tansen flourished, along with religious groups like the Vaishnavites. After the 16th century, the singing styles diversified into different gharanas patronized in different princely courts. Around 1900, Pt.
Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande consolidated the musical structures of Hindustani classical music, called *Ragas*, into a number of *Thaats*. Indian classical music has seven basic notes with five interspersed half notes, resulting in a 12 note scale. Unlike the 12 note scale in Western music, the base frequency of the scale is not fixed, and intentional gaps (*temperament*) may also vary; however, with the gradual replacement of the *sarangi* by the *harmonium*, an *equal tempered* scale is increasingly used. The performance is set to a melodic pattern called a raga characterized in part by specific ascent (*aroha*) and descent (*avaroha*) sequences, which may not be identical. Other characteristics include "king" (*vadi*) and "queen" (*samavadi*) notes and characteristic phrases (*pakad*). In addition each raga has its natural register (*ambit*) and *portamento* (*meend*) rules. Performances are usually marked by considerable improvisation within these norms.

**1:2:2 History**

_Music_ was first formalized in India in connection with preserving the *sruti* texts, primarily the four _vedas_, which are seen as _apaurasheya_ (meaning "not created by man"). Not only was the text important, but also the manner in which they had been enunciated by the immortals. Prosody and chanting were thus of great importance, and were enshrined in the two _vedangas_ (bodies of knowledge) called _shiksha_ (pronunciation, chants) and _chhandas_ (prosody); these remained a key part of the Brahmanic educational system till modern times.

The formal aspects of the chant are delineated in the _Samaveda_, with certain aspects, e.g. the relation of chanting to meditation, elaborated in the _Chandogya Upanishad_ (ca. 8th century BC). Priests involved in these ritual chants were called _samans_ and a number of ancient
musical instruments such as the conch (shankh), lute (veena), flute (bansuri), trumpets and horns were associated with this and later practices of ritual singing. [1]

1:2:3 Sanskriti Tradition

The Samaveda outlined the ritual chants for singing the verses of the Rigveda, particularly for offerings of Soma. It proposed a tonal structure consisting of seven notes, which were named, in descending order, krusht, pratham, dwitiya, tritiya, chaturth, mandra and atiswar. These refer to the notes of a flute, which was the only fixed frequency instrument. This is why the second note is called pratham (meaning "first", i.e., produced when only the first hole is closed).

Music is dealt with extensively in the Valmiki Ramayana. Narada is an accomplished musician, as is Ravana; Saraswati with her veena is the goddess of music. Gandharvas are presented as spirits who are musical masters, and the Gandharva style looks to music primarily for pleasure, accompanied by the soma rasa. In the Vishnudharmottara Purana, the Naga king Ashvatara asks to know the svaras from Saraswati.

The most important text on music in the ancient canon is Bharata’s Natya Shastra, composed around the 3rd century CE. The Natya Shastra deals with the different modes of music, dance, and drama, and also the emotional responses (rasa) they are expected to evoke. The scale is described in terms of 22 microtones, which can be combined in clusters of four, three, or two to form an octave. [2]


While the term raga is articulated in the Natya Shastra (where its meaning is more literal, meaning "colour" or "mood"), it finds a clearer expression in what is called jati in the Dattilam, a text composed shortly after or around the same time as Natya Shastra. The Dattilam is focused on Gandharva music and discusses scales (swara), defining a tonal framework called grama in terms of 22 micro tonal intervals (sruti) comprising one octave. It also discusses various arrangements of the notes (murchhana), the permutations and combinations of note sequences (tanas), and alankara or elaboration. Dattilam categorizes melodic structure into 18 groups called jati, which are the fundamental melodic structures similar to the raga. The names of the jatis reflect regional origins, for example andhri and oudichya.[1]

Music also finds mention in a number of texts from the Gupta period; Kalidasa mentions several kinds of veena (Parivadini, Vipanchi), as well as percussion instruments (mridang), the flute (vamshi) and conch (shankha). Music also finds mention in Buddhist and Jain texts from the earliest periods of the Christian era.

Narada’s Sangita Makarandha treatise, from about 1100 CE, is the earliest text where rules similar to those of current Hindustani classical music can be found. Narada actually names and classifies the system in its earlier form before the Persian influences introduced changes in the system. Jayadeva’s Gita Govinda from the 12th century was perhaps the earliest musical composition sung in the classical tradition called Ashtapadi music.

In the 13th century, Sharngadeva composed the *Sanaita Ratnakara*, which has names such as the *turushka todi* ("Turkish todi"), revealing an influx of ideas from Islamic culture. This text is the last to be mentioned by both the Carnatic and the Hindustani traditions and is often thought to date the divergence between the two.[1]

1:2:4 Medieval Periods: Persian Influence

The advent of Islamic rule under the Delhi Sultanate and later the Mughal Empire over northern India caused considerable cultural interchange. Increasingly, musicians received patronage in the courts of the new rulers, who in their turn, started taking increasing interest in local music forms. While the initial generations may have been rooted in cultural traditions outside India, they gradually adopted many aspects from their kingdoms which retained the traditional Hindu culture. This helped spur the fusion of Hindu and Muslim ideas to bring forth new forms of musical synthesis like gawwali and khyal.

The most influential musician of the Delhi Sultanate period was Amir Khusrau (1253–1325), sometimes called the father of modern Hindustani classical music. A composer in Persian, Turkish, Arabic, as well as Braj Bhasha, he is credited with systematizing many aspects of Hindustani music, and also introducing several ragas such as *Yaman Kalvan, Zeelaf* and *Sarpada*. He created the gawwali genre, which fuses Persian melody and beat on a dhrupad like structure. A number of instruments (such as the *sitar* and *tabla*) were also introduced in his time.

Amir Khusrau is sometimes credited with the origins of the khval form, but the record of his compositions does not appear to support this. The compositions by the court musician Sadarang in the court of Muhammad Shah bear a closer affinity to the modern khyal. They suggest that while khyal already existed in some form, Sadarang may have been the father of modern khyal.

Much of the musical forms innovated by these pioneers merged with the Hindu tradition, composed in the popular language of the people (as opposed to Sanskrit) in the work of composers like Kabir or Nanak. This can be seen as part of a larger Bhakti tradition, (strongly related to the Vaishnavite movement) which remained influential across several centuries; notable figures include Jayadeva (11th century), Vidyapati (fl. 1375 CE), Chandidas (14th–15th century), and Meerabai (1555–1603 CE).

As the Mughal Empire came into closer contact with Hindus, especially under Jalal ud Din Akbar, music and dance also flourished. In particular, the musician Tansen introduced a number of innovations, including ragas and particular compositions. Legend has it that upon his rendition of a nighttime raga in the morning, the entire city fell under a hush and clouds gathered in the sky, and that he could light fires by singing the raga "Deepak", which is supposed to be composed of notes in high octaves.

At the royal house of Gwalior, Raja Mansingh Tomar (1486–1516 CE) also participated in the shift from Sanskrit to the local idiom (Hindi) as the language for classical songs. He himself penned several volumes of compositions on religious and secular themes, and was also responsible for the major compilation, the Mankutuhal ("Book of Curiosity"), which outlined the major forms of music prevalent at the time. In particular, the musical form known as dhrupad saw considerable development in
his court and remained a strong point of the Gwalior gharana for many centuries.[1]

After the dissolution of the Mughal empire, the patronage of music continued in smaller princely kingdoms like Lucknow, Patiala, and Banaras, giving rise to the diversity of styles that is today known as gharanas. Many musician families obtained large grants of land which made them self sufficient, at least for a few generations (e.g. the Sham Chaurasia gharana). Meanwhile the Bhakti and Sufi traditions continued to develop and interact with the different gharanas and groups.

1:2:5 Modern Eras

Until the late 19th century, Hindustani classical music was imparted on a one-on-one basis through the guru shishya tradition. This system had many benefits, but also several drawbacks; in many cases, the shishya had to spend most of his time serving his guru with a hope that the guru might teach him a "cheez" (piece or nuance) or two. In addition, the system forced the music to be limited to a small subsection of the Indian community. To a large extent it was limited to the palaces and dance halls. It was shunned by the intellectuals, avoided by the educated middle class, and in general looked down upon as a frivolous practice.

Then a fortunate turn of events started the renaissance of Hindustani classical music.

First, as the power of the maharajahs and nawabs declined in early 20th century, so did their patronage. With the expulsion of Wajid Ali Shah to

Calcutta after 1857, the Lucknavi musical tradition came to influence the music of renaissance in Bengal, giving rise to the tradition of *Ragpradhan gan* around the turn of the century.

Also, at the turn of the century, two great stars emerged on the horizon Vishnu Digambar Paluskar and Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande. Independent of each other, they spread Hindustani classical music to the masses in general, and the Marathi middle class in particular. These two gentlemen brought classical music to the masses by organizing music conferences, starting schools, teaching music in classrooms, and devising a standardized grading and testing system, and by standardizing the notation system.

Vishnu Digambar Paluskar emerged as a talented musician and organizer despite having been blinded at age 12. His books on music, as well as the *Gandharva Mahavidyalaya* music school that he opened in Lahore in 1901, helped foster a movement away from the closed gharana system.

Paluskar's contemporary (and occasional rival) Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande recognized the many rifts that had appeared in the structure of Indian classical music. He undertook extensive research visits to a large number of gharanas, Hindustani as well as Carnatic, collecting and comparing compositions. Between 1909 and 1932, he produced the monumental four volume work *Hindustani Sangeetha Padhathi*, which suggested a transcription for Indian music, and described the many traditions in this notation. Finally, it consolidated the many musical forms of Hindustani classical music into a number of *thaats* (modes), subsequent to the Melakarta system that reorganized Carnatic tradition in the 17th century. The ragas as they exist today were consolidated in this landmark work, although there are some inconsistencies and ambiguities in Bhatkande's system.
In modern times, the government runs All India Radio, Bangladesh Betar and Radio Pakistan helped to bring the artists to public attention, countering the loss of the patronage system. The first star was Gauhar Jan, whose career was born out of Fred Gaisberg's first recordings of Indian music in 1902. With the advance of films and other public media, musicians started to make their living through public performances. As India was exposed to Western music, some Western melodies started merging with classical forms, especially in popular music. A number of Gurukuls, such as that of Alauddin Khan at Maihar, flourished. In more modern times, corporate support has also been forthcoming, as at the ITC Sangeet Research Academy. Meanwhile, Hindustani classical music has become popular across the world through the influence of artists such as Ravi Shankar and Ali Akbar Khan.\[1\]

1:2:6 Principles of Hindustani Music

The rhythmic organization is based on rhythmic patterns called tala. The melodic foundations are called ragas. One possible classification of ragas is into "melodic modes" or "parent scales", known as thaats, under which most ragas can be classified based on the notes they use.

Thaats may consist of up to seven scale degrees, or swara. Hindustani musicians name these pitches using a system called Sargam, the equivalent of the Western movable do solfege:

Sa (Shadaj) = Do

Re (Rishab) = Re

Ga (Gandhar) = Mi

Ma (Madhyam) = Fa
Pa (Pancham) = So
Dha (Dhaivat) = La
Ni (Nishad) = Ti
Sa (Shadaj) = Do

Both systems repeat at the octave. The difference between sargam and solfege is that re, ga, ma, dha, and ni can refer to either "Natural" (shuddha) or altered "Flat" (komal) or "Sharp" (tivra) versions of their respective scale degrees. As with movable do solfege, the notes are heard relative to an arbitrary tonic that varies from performance to performance, rather than to fixed frequencies, as on a xylophone. The fine intonational differences between different instances of the same swara are called srutis. The three primary registers of Indian classical music are mandra (lower), Madhya (middle) and taar (upper). Since the octave location is not fixed, it is also possible to use provenances in mid register (such as mandra: madhya or madhya taar) for certain ragas. A typical rendition of Hindustani raga involves two stages

Alap: a rhythmically free improvisation on the rules for the raga in order to give life to the raga and flesh out its characteristics. The alap is followed by a long slow tempo improvisation in vocal music, or by the jod and jhala in instrumental music.

Bandish or Gat a fixed, melodic composition set in a specific raga, performed with rhythmic accompaniment by a tabla or pakhavaj. There are different ways of systematizing the parts of a composition. For example
Sthaavi: The initial, *rondo* phrase or line of a fixed, melodic composition.

Antara: The first body phrase or line of a fixed, melodic composition.

Sanchaari: The third body phrase or line of a fixed, melodic composition, seen more typically in *dhrupad bandishes*.

Aabhog: The fourth and concluding body phrase or line of a fixed, melodic composition, seen more typically in *Dhrupad bandishes*.

There are three variations of bandish, regarding tempo:

**Vilambit bandish:** A slow and steady melodic composition, usually in largo to adagio speeds.

**Madhyalaya bandish:** A medium tempo melodic composition usually set in andante to allegretto speeds.

**Drut bandish:** A fast tempo melodic composition usually set to allegretto speed or faster.

Hindustani classical music is primarily vocal centric, insofar as the musical forms were designed primarily for vocal performance, and any instruments were designed and evaluated as to how well they emulate the human voice.[1]

1:2:7 Types of Compositions

The major vocal forms or styles associated with Hindustani classical music are dhrupad and khval.

1:2:7:1 Dhrupad

Dhrupad is an old style of singing, traditionally performed by male singers. It is performed with a tambura and a pakhawaj as instrumental accompaniments. The lyrics, some of which were written in Sanskrit centuries ago, are presently often sung in brajbhasha, a medieval form of North and East Indian languages that was spoken in Eastern India. The rudra veena, an ancient string instrument, is used in instrumental music in dhrupad.

Dhrupad, the performing art, evidently developed from the migration of an older tradition of devotional songs performed in the Vaisnava temples to the secular environment presided over by the feudal aristocracy in medieval north India. Because of this background, it retained its bias in favor of the poetic form. The Dhrupad genre is therefore anchored to the melodic-poetic axis, in contrast to the Khayala genre, which revolves around the melodic-rhythmic axis giving the literary component only a subordinate role.\[1\]

Dhrupad music is primarily devotional in theme and content. It contains recitals in praise of particular deities. Dhrupad compositions begin with a relatively long and acyclic alap, where the syllables of the following mantra is recited:

"Om Anant tam Taran Tarini Twam Hari Om Narayan, Anant Hari Om Narayan".

The alap gradually unfolds into more rhythmic jod and jhala sections. These sections are followed by a rendition of bandish, with the pakhawaj as an accompaniment. The great Indian musician Tansen sang in the dhrupad style. A lighter form of dhrupad, called dhamar, is sung primarily during the festival of Holi.

Dhrupad was the main form of northern Indian classical music until two centuries ago, when it gave way to the somewhat less austere khyal, a more freeform style of singing. Since losing its main patrons among the royalty in Indian princely states, dhrupad risked becoming extinct in the first half of the twentieth century. However, the efforts by a few proponents from the Dagar family have led to its revival and eventual popularization in India and in the West.

Some of the best known vocalists who sing in the Dhrupad style are the members of the Dagar lineage, including the senior Dagar brothers, Nasir Moinuddin and Nasir Aminuddin Dagar; the junior Dagar brothers, Nasir Zahiruddin and Nasir Faiyazuddin Dagar; and Wasifuddin, Fariduddin, and Sayeeduddin Dagar. Other leading exponents include the Gundecha Brothers, who have received training from some of the Dagars. Leading vocalists outside the Dagar lineage include the Mallik family of Darbhanga tradition of musicians; some of the leading exponents of this tradition were Ram Chatur Mallick, Siyaram Tiwari, and Vidur Mallick.

A section of dhrupad singers of Delhi Gharana from Mughal emperor Shah Jahan's court migrated to Bettiah under the patronage of the Bettiah Raj, giving rise to the Bettiah Gharana, Bishnupur Gharana.
Khyal is a Hindustani form of vocal music, adopted from medieval Persian music and based on Dhrupad. Khyal, literally meaning "thought" or "imagination" in Hindi: Urdu, is unusual as it is based on improvising and expressing emotion. A Khyal is a two to eight line lyric set to a melody. The lyric is of an emotional account possibly from poetic observation. Khyals are also popular for depicting the emotions between two lovers, situations of ethological significance in Hinduism and Islam, or other situations evoking intense feelings.

The importance of the Khyal's content is for the singer to depict, through music in the set raga, the emotional significance of the Khyal. The singer improvises and finds inspiration within the raga to depict the Khyal.

The origination of Khyal is controversial, although it is accepted that this style was based on Dhrupad and influenced by Persian music. Many argue that Amir Khusrau created the style in the late 16th century. This form was popularized by Mughal Emperor Mohammad Shah, through his court musicians. Some well-known composers of this period were Sadarang, Adarang, and Manrang. [2]

1:3 the Evolution of Rhythmic Instruments

1:3:1 The Evolution

Rhythmic instruments must have started appearing quite early in man's life. In fact they may be presumed to be as old as mankind itself. Musical notes and their awareness or knowledge came much later. Early man found that Rhythm was not only a part of himself or his being, but also in his surroundings, as in "nature'. It could be said that the "Clap" of the hands was the first rhythmic instrument. Man may have experienced rhythm when he stamped his feet on the ground, in glee or even anger, at regular intervals. Beating his chest or abdomen or slapping his thighs at regular intervals could have also given him the same experience. This could have happened even before he realized that he could produce sounds orally to duplicate the pleasant sounds he heard around himself. In due course he must have utilized his resourcefulness and intelligence to create instruments that produced more enjoyable sounds. [1]

1:3:2 Tabla

The most popular percussion instrument in recent times, Tabla is a combination of two instruments, viz; 'Tabla' or "Daayaan" and "Dugga" or "Baayaan". The Dayan i.e.: right hand instrument s made up of a hollow tapered cylindrical block of wood. The bottom is solid and tapered in the reverse direction. The open top is mounted by a skinhead or “Pudi”, made of goat skin, having a black layered application of “Shaayee” in the center, quite similar to that in the

Pakhawaj. This Pudi is woven around the “Khod” or the wooden vessel by means of straps of hide called “Vaadi”. The Vaadi straps are interspersed with wooden blocks called “Guttas” all around the outer diameter of the Khod. The Guttas are used for rough tuning of the Tabla. The finer tuning is carried out closer to the “Pudi”. The Gajra is the outer diameter of the Pudi and is got by the twining or weaving of the ends of the Goat skin with thinner straps of the Vaadi.

The Dugga is an inverted dome shaped pot made of cooper, brass or clay, whose open and wider top is mounted by the Pudi just as in the Tabla. However, the Pudi mounted on the Dugga has the Shaayee applied eccentrically, generally at a distance of about the thickness of four fingers from one side.

The Dugga provides the “Bass” and the Tabla provides the “Treble”.\[1\]

1:3:3 The Genesis of Tabla

Tabla must have been in existence in India for many many years: at least during the region of Allaauddin Khilji (1296 to 1316). It is believed that Tabls is contentious issue, as we know that the Pushkar was in existence long before even the Pakhawaj. It is quite likely that an instrument resembling the Tabla was in existence even before the Mughal rule, when Dhruvpad (Dhrupad) tradition of singing gradually gave way to Khayal singing. The Dhruvpads were songs, all in praise of the pantheon of Hindu Gods. These were replaced by Khayal singing in which the compositions sung were mainly in praise of the King and

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were not robust as Dhrupad singing. This entailed a softer and subtler accompaniment. This is where the Tabla got its importance.

The word Tabla has come from the Arabic word “Tabl” which is the equivalent name for percussion instruments. Hence, we have verities of instruments having names like “Tabl Balaadi’, “Tabl Turky”, “Tabl: Jung”, “Tabl Saami”, “Tabl Mirgi”, etc.

Tabla must have come into greater use during the period 1210 to 1247, which also happens to be the period in which the “Sangeet Ratnakar” was written by Sharang Dev, the son of a Minister in the Kingdom of Devgiri.[1]

1:3:4 Gharanas in Tabla

The way is now paved to a more detailed discussion of the gharanas (traditional family: school) of table playing. They made their first appearance about seven centuries back. We may define a gharana as a musical lineage, more or less similar to real blood relationships, through which musical techniques, compositions and even approaches to music are transmitted in the main, orally from one generation of musicians to the next. The initiators of gharanas were so particular about keeping their art confined within their own families that they freely encouraged inter marriages between their own members. Therefore, it should not surprise us that even today it is not at all easy for an ‘outsider’ to gain free access to the distinctive repertoire of a gharanas, or to receive the benefit of personal training under one of its leading maestros. Luckily, however, there have always been some

Indian classical music is tradition based. This art has been preserved and propagated by person to person contact and teaching. This is what is called “Gurumukhi Vidya” i.e. knowledge through mouth of Guru to his sons or disciples, thereby establishing their identity or stamp on the style of playing and/or the compositions that were passed in. since this is the Hindi equivalent of Family or Lineage. 

By common consent, Delhi Gharana is considered as the parent Gharana as it was in Delhi that Tabla first took roots under the Mughals in their courts. Although Tabla is believed to have come into existence in the period 1200 to 1300 A.D., its Gharanas came about much later. Solo Tabla playing may have begun in the late 15th or early 16th century in Delhi. During Amir Khusro period i.e. : 1196 to 1316 A.D., Tabla was mainly used to accompany “Khayal” style of vocal musical compositions. But side by as a solo instrument and heard and appreciated as well. It was after this that various Gharanas such as “Ajrada”, “Farrukhabad”, etc. developed.

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The development of Tabla and Khayal singing went on almost at the same time. Hence, we find that Tabla solo recitals are presented in almost the same format as that of khayal singing.

The term “Baaz” comes from the Hindi/Urdu word “Bajaanaa” – to play (an instrument) or “Baajaa” which means instrument. There are two distinct styles of playing Tabla viz. “Khula Baaz” and “B’nd Baaz”. [1]

1:3:5 Delhi Gharana

Among all Gharanas prevalent today, Delhi Gharana is considered to be the oldest or the first one. Delhi, being highest seat of the Mughal Emperors, having great wealth and musicians of the caliber of Amir Khusro and Miyan Tansen, became an attraction for musicians from all over India. They came and settled there trying to catch the eyes and ears of the influential courtiers of Tabla took place in Delhi, especially during the reign of Emperor Akbar. [2]

Delhi Gharana’s style of playing is called the Delhi. Baaz or the Chaanti Baaz. Sidaar Khan Daadhi is acknowledged as the founder of the Delhi Gharana. Some of the other stalwarts of this Gharana are Ustad Chaand Khan, younger brother of Sidaar Khan, Bugraa Khan, Ghasit Khan and a third one (name unknown), who later founded the

Lucknow Gharana (all sons of Sidaar Khan), Kallu Khan, who later founded Ajrada Gharana. Ustad Gaami Khan and his son Ustad Inam Ali Khan, Ustad Boli Baksh and his son Nathu Khan. Besides these there are also others who have contributed to the propagation of this Gharana and some other who have had an undeniable influence of this Gharana on their playing.

1:3:6 Ajrada Gharana

This gharana is commonly regarded as an offshoot of the Delhi gharana because its founding brothers, Ustad Kallu Khan and Miru Khan, had learnt table under the guidance of the Delhi maestros. However, on returning to their birthplace, Ajrada, the two brothers, both thoroughly conversant with the riches of the Delhi baaj, composed numberless new patterns of bols; and their creations soon won them recognition as the progenitors of a quite new gharana. Most of their compositions were set in tisra jati and would appear to evoke, when properly played, the semblance of an undulating flow.

Some of the prominent personalities to have left their mark are Ustad Bugra Kha and Ustad Sitab Khan, (son and grandson respectively of Ustad Sidhar Khan daadhi), Ustad Kallu Khan, Ustad Chaand Khan, Ustad Habibuddin Khan and Pandit Sudhir Kumar Saxena. [1]

1:3:7 Lucknow Gharana

This is also known as the Poorab Gharana and the style of playing is known as Poorab Baaz or Khulaa Baaz. The Lucknow Tabla players tried

it contribute the outstanding characteristics of the Pakhawaj with those of the Tabla, thereby giving rise to the Khullaa Baaz or the Poorab Baaz. With this evolution in the playing style, Tabla totally dominated the Pakhawaj so far as Dance accompaniment was concerned.

The eminent stalwarts of this Gharana are Ustad Modu Khan and Bakshu Khan, Ustad Abid Hussein Khan, Ustad Wajid Hussein Khan and his son Ustad Afaq Hussein Khan and Ustad Jahangir Khan of Indore, A direct Disciple of Ustad Abid Hussein Khan. Two Other prominent Stalwarts of this Gharana were Pandit Ram Sahay, a disciple of Ustad Modu Khan and Pandit Biroo Mishra, a disciple of Ustad Abid Ali Hussein Khan. These two later laid the foundation of the Benares Gharana.\(^1\)

1:3:8 Farrukhabad Gharana

This Gharana came into existence around the same time as the Ajrada Gharana i.e. 1700 to 1750 A.D. The main feature of this Gharana is its adaption of the Pakhawaj style of playing, as in the Poorab Gharana. Some of the other prominent Stalwarts of this Gharana are Ustad Salari Khan, Ustad Munir Khan, Ustad Masit Khan, his son Ustad Karamat Khan and grandson Ustad Sabir Khan, Ustad Ahmedjaan Thirakwa, Ustad Shamsuddin Khan, his disciple Pandit Taranathji, Pandit Ravi Bellare, Pandit Shashi Bellare, Ustad Amir Hussein Khan, Pandit Subbarao Ankolekar and Pandit Gyan Prakash Ghosh who had learnt under Ustad Masit Khan and later, under Ustad Karamat Khan.\(^2\)

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\(^1\) Book: Theory and Practice of Tabla/Writeen by- Sadanand Naimpali /Publish by-Popular Prakashan Pvt.ltd/1st edition /2005/page no: 44,45

\(^2\) Book: Theory and Practice of Tabla/Writeen by- Sadanand Naimpali /Publish by-Popular Prakashan Pvt.ltd/1st edition /2005/page no: 46,47
1:3:9 Benares Gharana

This is a Gharana in which both the B'nd Baaz and the Khula Baaz are in evidence. Tabla players of this Gharana play Kaidas, Relas, Peshkaars of Delhi and Ajrada Gharana. But the influence of their neighbor Lucknow Gharana is evident in their style of playing. Eminent Tabla players of the Benares Gharana are its founder Pandit Ram Sahayji, a disciple of Ustad Modu Khan of Lucknow, Pandit Bhairav Sahayji, Pandit Pratap Maharajji, Pandit Baldev Sahayji, Pandit Biru Mishra, Pandit Anokhelal, Pandit Kanthe Maharaj, Pandit Kishen Maharaj, Pandit Samta Prasad (Gudai Maharaj) and Pandit Sharada Sahay.[1]

1:3:10 Punjab Gharana

The originator of this Gharana was the son of a noted Pakhawaji. He was born at a time when the Pakhawaji father was at an advanced age. Before the father passed away, he left his young son in the care of two of his senior disciples, to train him as a Pakhawaji. However, the youngster, as he grew up, felt that he was not getting the respect due to him as the “Khalifa” or Chief that family. He thus decided to change course and with whatever knowledge of Pakhawaj he had, coupled with his own skill and imagination decided to wield the Tabla. He created new compositions and achieved such name and fame that even his father’s disciples, who had earlier refuse to recognize him as their “Khalifa”, now did so. Thus it is that one finds the influence of Pakhawaj on the style of Tabla playing in the Punjab Gharana.

Peshkars and Kaidas are recent occurrences in this Gharana. One finds more of Gaths, Gath Parans, Todas and Relas. Some prominent Tabla players of this Gharana are Lala Bhavani das Pakhawaji, the originator, his disciple Ustad Qadir Bux, Pandit Baldev Sahay of Benares Gharana, Ustad Shaukat Ali Khan, Ustad Allahditta Khan, Ustad Allarakha Khan and his son Ustad Zakir Hussein Khan.[1]