

North Indian Hindustani Music

Instrumental Form

Two categories underlie all forms: anibadh (unbound)=no measured rhythm
nibadh (bound)=measured rhythm

Range

mandra saptak: lowest group of 7 tones; octave
madhya saptak: middle octave
tara saptak: high octave

Improvisation on the raga: small, precomposed fragments of the rag are performed in a graduated series from low saptak to high.

The A section of a composition is the **Asthai**, the main octave, controlled by the low-mid range
The B section of a composition is the **Antara**, controlled by the high range (listen for a heightened degree of tension)

In the North, the drum syllables are called **bols**. The first beat of the tal is still **sam**, but the divisions that begin with a clap is **tali**, while the divisions that begins with a wave is called **khali**. The most popular tal is tintal: 16 matras, or beats, divided 4 + 4 + 4 + 4:

:	sam	tali	khali	tali	:
	dha dhin dhin dha	dha dhin dhin dha	na tin tin ta	ta dhin dhin dha	

Patterns that repeat three times are called **tihais**. Patterns that don't naturally fit are altered to end on sam by adding "dha," a rest, or displacing a beat. For instance, given this 7 beat pattern:

Dha ka te ra ki ta dha

It can be repeated 3x to encompass two cycle of **Jhaptal** (10 matras divided 2 + 3 + 2 + 3):

1	3	6	8	1	3	6	8	1
sam	tali	khali	tali	sam	tali	khali	tali	sam

Dha ka te ra ki ta dha Dha ka te ra ki ta dha Dha ka te ra ki ta dha

In **Rupak** tal (7 matras divided 3 + 2 + 2), you might begin the pattern on beat two to encompass three cycles:

1	4	6	1	4	6	1	4	6	1
sam	khali	tali	sam	khali	tali	sam			sam
(rest) Dha ka	te ra	ki ta	dha Dha ka	te ra	ki ta	dha Dha ka	te ra	ki ta	dha

In **Ektal** (12 matras divided 2 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 2), you might add a rest to each pattern, making it eight beats long to cover two cycles:

1	3	5	7	9	11	1	3	5	7	9	11
sam	khali	tali	khali	tali	tali	sam	khali	tali	khali	tali	tali
(2 rests)	Dha ka	tera	ki ta	dha (rest)	Dha ka	te ra	ki ta	dha (rest)	Dha ka	te ra	ki ta
											dha

A tihai of tihais is called a **chakradar tihai**; with this 7-beat pattern repeated 3x (21 beats) you could add 3 beats to get 65 beats that would cover 4 cycles of tintal.

The Art of unfolding the Raga:

At first you avoid sa, and save the “sensitive” notes for latter in the Alap. You present each tone as if it were a “character,” using idfferent ornamentation for each “halo” of harmonics (especially on high sa). The form is defined by a process in which swaras are progressively unfolded to culminate in high sa. The aesthetic underlying the performance is that the “incomplete seeks the complete”; the scale is only “heard” when its complete character is revealed.