

Heroic Journey

In this type of composition, we improvise, or expand upon a main theme. I call it a *Heroic Journey*, but, this is not my composition. This comes from Farukhabad school of tabla playing. The temperament of this particular composition is “I am here to win it”. Phrases are primarily in 4, except for the end phrases of the second and fourth lines which are in 6. The time signature is 4/4, and the whole composition is set to 16-beat time cycle or *tintala*.

Improvisational tabla compositions have two major parts. I call them male and female from the old Hindu concept of *purusha* and *prakriti* of Sankhya Philosophy. This concept of dualism is very Eastern. It is also present in Chinese philosophy as *yin* and *yang*.

The following composition is divided right in the middle. First two lines are male and last two lines are its female counter part. Next, each male and female parts are subdivided in identical process. These subdivisions add up to 8 and 8+8 is 16. In this composition, 8 is divided as 5+3. Further division is now required to see the anatomy of the rhythm of the whole. 5 is divided as 1+1+1+1+1, where each 1 has 4 notes. 3 is $1\frac{1}{2} + 1\frac{1}{2}$. Each $1\frac{1}{2}$ phrase has 6 notes.

This kind of mathematical phrase arrangement expresses heroic mood. Character of notes used are also important, however, if the theme with its specific meaning is clear in composer's heart then the notes simply pop up in mind to articulate his/her thoughts. We, students of music, then practice maestro's creations diligently to improve our understanding of the deeper meaning of abstract sounds.

There are:

1. three compound notes -- Dha, Dhe and The. Both hands are required to produce them. These are deep due to the use of bass drum, although, The is a non-resonating sound. It is the female counter part of Dhe.
2. one flam – Kre. Flams are beautiful but create a feeling of confusion. As if the artist is not sure about which note to play.
3. two long syllables – Thinge and its male counter part Dinge. These are called long because they cover twice as much time in a movement as a short syllable.
4. two ghost notes – Ne and Rhe. These notes are produced same way on the tabla with extra subtlety. They have different names for the phonetical reason and not for musical reason.
5. one neuter phrase – Te Te. This phrase is neuter because it does not ever change to male or female.
6. two silent notes – Ka sound of Ta _{ch} Ka in the second line and Ga sound of Ta _{ch} Ga in the fourth line. The purpose of their existence in writing and verbal recitation is to feel the proper stress necessary on Ta note.

Parentheses are used to mark the phrases. I am assuming that tabla students know how to produce these notes and the meaning of the numbers (2, 1) written underneath. Non-tabla people simply ignore those numbers. | – vertical line is the symbol of metronomic beat. We clap on those lines. - indicates $\frac{1}{4}$ note rest. The notes in the composition are easy to pronounce for everybody. To grasp the composition rhythmically, clap at metronomic speed 30 and recite the composition the way it is written. We will call it single speed. If for some reason clapping at 30 seems difficult then clap at 60. In that case recite two notes per clap.

(Dha₂ Ge₁ Te Te) (Kre Dha₂ Te Te) (Ghe₂ Rhe Na Ra) (Ghe₂ Rhe Dhe₁ Ne)

(Dha₂ Ti Ghe₁ Ne) (Dha₂ Ra Ge₁ Ne Ta_{ch} Ka) (Thinge - Na Ra Ke Ne)

(Ta Ke Te Te) (Kre Tha Te Te) (Ke Rhe Na Ra) (Ke Rhe The Ne)

(Dha₂ Ti Ghe₁ Ne) (Dha₂ Ra Ge₁ Ne Ta_{ch} Ga) (Dinge₂ - Na Ra Ge₁ Ne)