



**James Kippen, *Gurudev's Drumming Legacy: Music, Theory and Nationalism in the Mrdang aur Tabla Vadanpaddhati of Gurudev Patwardhan***

Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2006. xiv + 346 pages, 10 b&w illustrations, 7 line drawings and 1 map. Hardback, £60.00. ISBN 978-0-7546-5424-7.

THIS important study is a critical edition and translation of Gurudev Patwardhan's tabla manual, a deeply informed, musical reading of his tabla and *pakhāvaj* styles, and an erudite analysis of the historical contexts for the first and second editions. While recent scholars have done much to further our understandings of how nationalism and the colonial encounter gave rise to transformations in the theory and representation of south Asian art music, Kippen has gone beyond all of them in grounding his analysis in the musical details of a specific repertoire.

Gurudev Patwardhan was a Brahmin born in 1870 in the princely state of Meraj (Deccan). After first studying with Rambhau Gurav, he was “encouraged” by the musical reformer and Hindu nationalist Vishnu Digambar Paluskar to learn from Vamanrao Chandvadkar—a court musician in Hyderabad who may have been the first to teach him *pakhāvaj*. G. Patwardhan shared Paluskar's cause of uplifting the music they believed to have become degraded under the influence of Muslim hereditary musicians in Lahore and elsewhere; part of their strategy was to notate music in as precise a manner as possible—presumably to offset the corrupting influences of oral tradition. Paluskar left Meraj for Lahore in 1898, where in 1901 he founded the Gāndharva Mahāvidyāla—supported by Hindu nationalist organizations like the Arya Samaj and Sanatn Dharm Sabha. That year, G. Patwardhan became the school's first vice principal and worked closely with Paluskar to fulfill their mutually shared vision. G. Patwardhan's and Paluskar's similar notational systems were an outgrowth of this association.

G. Patwardhan published *Mrdang aur Tabla Vadanpaddhati*, the first publication to provide detailed drumming notation in Hindustani music, in 1903. The one-hundred-and-forty-page book detailed the strokes for tabla and *pakhāvaj*, attempted to connect historical discussions of rhythm to modern notions of *lay* and *tāl*, and contained notations for eighty-seven compositions for tabla and sixty-four for *pakhāvaj*. G. Patwardhan followed Paluskar to Bombay, where Paluskar founded a second Gāndharva Mahāvidyāla. Owing probably to poor health, G. Patwardhan retired at age forty-three, returned to Meraj, and died several years later.

In 1938, G. Patwardhan's nephew Vinayakrao Patwardhan published a second edition of the manual. The sixty-four main pages of this text contained only one hundred and twenty-eight of the original compositions and added forty-one new ones. The notational system is vastly simplified, and V. Patwardhan bolsters the text with additional music theory, a somewhat incompetent reading of Sanskrit music treatises filtered through the work of Narayanrao Khare (a disciple of Paluskar).

Kippen lays out the historical context and the physical details for these Hindi editions, analyzes the notation systems of Paluskar, G. Patwardhan, and V. Patwardhan, and presents a new type of notation that transliterates their notations for the purpose of this study. Chapter 6 introduces Hindustani rhythmic theory in a way useful for a general musical audience and also for the specialist. Drawing on his own insights as a tabla player, Kippen considers Hindustani rhythmic theory in light of useful discussions by Rebecca Stewart, Martin Clayton, Gibb Schreffler, and his own theory of tabla *tāls* growing out of what he calls “folk grooves” (rhythmic-accentual patterns rooted in bodily movement). He also lays out critical issues with regard to the development of rhythmic theory in India—in particular, the change in the meaning of *mātra* as denoting a fixed unit of measure to denoting a flexible duration. This turns out to be important in understanding the structures of *tāl* in G. Patwardhan’s first edition of the manual as opposed to their transformations in V. Patwardhan’s second edition. The small quibble I have in this section is the vagueness of the notion of “folk” and “tribal” (the latter taken from Schreffler). Although the term “folk groove” is well-defined as an analytic term, just what the sources are for such folk grooves is never spelled out. Which “non-classical” traditions are important in this regard, and which instruments?

Chapters 7 and 8 lay out G. and V. Patwardhan’s rhythmic theories respectively, the former relying on a fixed durational notion of the *mātra* and the second, an inconsistent one that specifies the invariant length of the *mātra* as the “length of the call of the winged blue jay” (113) and proceeds to contradict that with notations that imply the length of *mātra* is flexible (119–20). During this apparent shift in rhythmic thinking in the history of Hindustani music, an additional grounding notion of *ṭhāb* (*ṭhā* or *ṭhāy*, deriving from *sthān*, “place”) emerged, referring to base tempo. Reference to such a base tempo continues in regional traditions of tabla, *ḍhol*, and *nagāra* playing in modern south Asia.

Chapter 9 is a deep exploration of the repertoire for tabla and *pakhāvaj* in both editions. This chapter, the heart of the book in some ways, will mainly engage the specialist. Kippen refrains from dry description; each analysis is couched in a conversation with Rebecca Stewart and south Asian performers and theorists, such as Natthu Khan, Muhammad Ishaq Dehlavi, and Sadiq Ali Khan. Some of the findings of this chapter are that terms such as *qāida*, limited to Delhi at the time, did not yet pervade the theory of Hindustani music; G. Patwardhan used the term *gat* to mean the same thing, namely an elaborative pattern keyed to the structure of the tabla *tāl*. The *pakhāvaj* was associated with a different rhythmic-metric system based on through-composed patterns called *gatparans*, which drive toward rhythmic resolution on the first beat of the cycle. The repertoire of G. Patwardhan shows the degree to which the latter type of rhythmic conception had begun to infiltrate the tabla repertoire.

Part II of Kippen’s work is a translation of the first edition, followed by a translation of additions in the second edition.

As a whole, this book will be of use to historians searching for a musically grounded view on the transformations taking place in the theory, practice, and representation of Hindustani music in the twentieth century. It will enrich the

understanding of south Asian music scholars in the emergence of today's common practice on the tabla. It is also a model of modern ethnomusicological scholarship in south Asia, combining careful archival research, close readings of texts, versatility in the language and terminology of relevant treatises, and a toolbox of musical expertise built from practical performance experience and some thirty years engagement with India as a field researcher.

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