

Abstract

The Tabla Solo Repertoire of Pakistani Panjab: an Ethnomusicological Perspective

by

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The solo *tabla* (drum) music of Pakistani Panjab offers a rich area of study that heretofore has remained virtually unrecognized in the field of South Asian ethnomusicology. Unlike the highly developed, modern context of art music in the Republic of India, musical life in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan has retained many of the rituals, performance spaces and hereditary musician groups of the erstwhile patronage system of Hindustani art music that was prevalent up to the mid twentieth century.

The neofeudal sociomusical context of Pakistani Panjab has directly affected the tabla solo repertoire, evinced by an eclectic set of performance practices, the lack of a rarefied music theory as codified in a body of written musical literature, and the inclusion of folk-derived sources that push the boundaries between lowbrow and highbrow musical genres.

This thesis explores the sonic and social dimensions of the tabla solo repertoire of Pakistani Panjabi tabla players through written textual sources, ethnographic fieldwork and an exhaustive survey of recorded musical compositions by recognized performers from the region. The result is an alternate model of Hindustani music culture that exposes and challenges the normative, nationalist framework as found in modern India.