Rhythmic improvisation

Improvisation is at the heart of North Indian classical music, both rhythmically and melodically. The simplest way to improvise a *tukḍā* is by using repetition. The following is an example of how to extend the *ṭukḍā* that we've learned into one that is four times the original length using three basic rules:

Step one

As we've discussed earlier, this *tukḍā* is in *teen tāl,* a time-cycle of 16 *mātrā*. It begins and finishes on the first *mātrā*, which takes the total length of the *tukḍā* to 17 *mātrā*.

Firstly repeat the *bol* of the first four *mātrā*, one *bol* at a time:
- the *bol* of the first *mātrā* becomes *dhā dhā dhā dhā*
- the second *bol* of the second *mātrā* doubles up to *tin tin tin tin*
- the third is *nā nā nā nā*
- and finally, the *bol* of the fourth *mātrā* becomes *te ṭe te ṭe te ṭe te ṭe*

The rest of the *tukḍā* is played in exactly the same as way as the original, hence increasing the total length of the amended *tukḍā* to 21 *mātrā.* This is a *tukḍā* in its own right, as it begins with a *teen* and ends with a *tihāi.* However, in order to begin and end on the first *mātrā* of *teen tāl*, two more steps are required.

Step two

Next, further extend the composition by repeating the entire amended *tukḍā* three times to make it 63 *mātrā* in length (21 *mātrā times three*, as seen by the end of step one).

Step three

Finally, keep a one-*mātrā* gap between repetitions one and two and between repetitions two and three of the 21-*mātrā tukḍā*; the result is a *cakkardār tukḍā* of 65 *mātrā* in length.

This *cakkardār tukḍā* fits into a time-cycle of 16 *mātrā* as four times 16 is equal to 64 *mātrā* and the 65th *mātrā* coincides with the first *mātrā* of the fifth *āvartan* (time-cycle) of *tīn tāl.*

Advice to 'take away': you might ask yourself if it's simpler to remember the above three rules in order to create the *cakkardār ṭukḍā* or remember the entire composition, as notated in its entirety – we think you know the answer to this question.