ARBiT
it happens here...



It is National French Toast Day!

One amazing blend of foods is perfectly able to make a morning fantastic, and it's a blending of eggs, milk, and cinnamon with bread dipped in. There's something about the savory-sweet smell of it, and the anticipation of having it painted with butter and drizzled with syrup, with a side of breakfast sausage or bacon and a tall glass of orange juice. The promise of this deliciousness will help to get a person out of bed on even the worst of days. National French Toast Day is one that honours this amazing breakfast delight and encourages everyone to enjoy it for breakfast (or lunch, or even dinner!) either alone or with a few friends or family members.

राष्ट्रदूत
SATURDAY
28 November 2026
A-B





A Piece Of Collectible Art



Vikram Joshi
Textile Technologist & Historian

The building was pulled down/demolished by its previous owners. Instead of letting the material disappear with the building, he turned it into something new. The wood he salvaged carried memories of the past in scratches, stains, and variations that, according to him, were not imperfections but part of the history.

When I first met Diwik Singh Chhalani at a party at 'Vanasharaya,' it wasn't the speakers he makes that caught my attention, but the story behind them. Diwik doesn't talk about speakers as objects; he talks as if they are friends. Here was someone who connected the two worlds: he took the idea of old, charming vintage radios from a forgotten era to rebuild a speaker using the latest modern sound technology, which he imports from the most advanced sound machine company. This immediately intrigued me as I have spent much of my working life with local artisans, reviving old, forgotten traditional technologies. One thing I have learnt is that the most innovative ideas begin with curiosity: looking at an old forgotten object of no use or some disappearing skill and asking a simple question: what if?

This is probably how Diwik discovered an old grandfather's radio lying somewhere forgotten and non-functional. He tried repairing it but couldn't find the components and, most importantly, someone who could fix it. The easiest way to bring it back to life was to replace the old technology of Valves and analogue components with Bluetooth technology and modern speakers compatible with newer technology, and it worked. This not only played the music but also hit the cord. He just started picking up old radios from random sources and replacing the inner circuits with locally available Bluetooth speakers until he ran short of radios, but not of ideas.

This is where he sought the help of local talented artisans and technicians to start building his signature-styled speakers. He was fortunate enough to find a carpenter, Manoj Suttar and Mainuddin, who became his trusted team and understood the passion and devotion required to take this project forward.

Bikaner is full of artisans, old havelis and mansions, which nurtured Diwik's creative sensibility. He started sourcing old wood because he thought his speakers could sense more by using recycled wood. He found a large amount of old wood from an old mansion called 'Kastur Niwas,' which stood opposite his childhood home.



#BY PARTS



It isn't a factory where you can see thousands of identical speakers, but a piece of collectible art for a customer who is a conventional music lover. This is why Diwik takes one year to deliver the speakers to his/her customers, with whom he builds a bond that stays tuned for years.

This building was pulled down/demolished by its previous owners. Instead of letting the material disappear with the building, he turned it into something new. The wood he salvaged carried memories of the past in scratches, stains, and variations that, according to him, were not imperfections but part of the history. The same philosophy extends to the people who work with him. The making of a Diwiks speaker involves craftsmen whose knowledge has been acquired through generations of working with wood and traditional techniques.

Diwik's work opens up other possibilities where the technology can remain invisible, allowing the skills and the human touch of the craftsmen to remain visible. Diwik's speakers, called 'Diwiks,' may carry the most sophisticated modern technology circuits and speakers, but the outer body consists of the warmth of human touch. This is why each speaker is custom-made, allowing customers to decide the material, colour, proportions, finish, and most importantly, a special space for the speaker in their home.



It isn't a factory where you can see thousands of identical speakers, but a piece of collectible art for a customer who is a conventional music lover. This is why Diwik takes one year to deliver the speakers to his/her customers, with whom he builds a bond that stays tuned for years. He is interested in making speakers that his customers live with for a long time in an era where the old is usually replaced when it becomes outdated. Diwik seems to be working in the opposite direction; his speakers take the prime spot in the room, become part of the house, and eventually, a very important part of the family story.

This is what Diwik Speaks

The shift from restoring radios to designing our own sound systems gave me the freedom to think about the speaker as a whole, rather than just the electronics inside it. We use Norwegian coaxial drivers, custom made for us, with carefully matched amplification and hand assembled crossovers using high quality components, including air core inductors and carefully selected capacitors and resistors. The enclosure is equally important. Its volume, internal bracing and port geometry are worked out in relation to the drivers because even the finest components cannot compensate for a cabinet that has not been properly designed.

For me, this is where the engineering becomes interesting. The crossover, the enclosure and the materials all influence one another, and the final sound comes from getting those relationships right.

At Diwiks, I want to bring the best of these elements together without making the technology the centre of attention. The components matter enormously, but I see them as part of the design process rather than features to be displayed. The real achievement is when all that technical thought disappears into the finished object, leaving you with something that is as considered in its form as it is in its sound.

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#RISHAB RIKHIRAM SHARMA

The Hidden Meaning Behind the Rhythmic Syllables

The origins of tarana are traditionally associated with Amir Khusro, the celebrated thirteenth-century poet, musician and Sufi mystic who lived from 1253 to 1325

Some music speaks through words. Other music reaches us through rhythm, repetition and sound. In Chanakya, sitarist and composer Rishab Rikhiram Sharma explores the powerful relationship between Indian classical music, rhythmic vocalisation and spiritual expression.

The track opens with an intense, rhythmic vocal chant. Rapid syllables rise and fall over the music, creating a sound that feels almost like a language of its own. To a listener unfamiliar with Indian classical traditions, these sounds might appear to be meaningless phrases. But rhythmic syllables have a long and fascinating history in Indian music, where sound itself can become an instrument of expression.

One musical form that helps explain this tradition is the tarana.

What Is a Tarana?

A tarana is a form of Hindustani classical vocal composition that uses rhythmic syllables instead of conventional lyrical sentences. Rather than telling a story through ordinary words, a singer performs combinations of sounds such as tanana, dare, tadeem and yalali, arranging them into intricate rhythmic patterns.

These syllables are not necessarily intended to communicate a literal sentence. Their beauty lies in how they interact with melody, rhythm and musical phrasing. The voice becomes almost like a percussion instrument, producing patterns that complement the tabla and other instruments.

This is one reason tarana can sound so mesmerising. The listener does not need to understand a language to experience the energy, precision and emotion of the performance. Indian film music has also drawn on tarana-like vocal patterns and classical rhythmic syllables. Songs such as *Ghar More Pardesiya* demonstrate how classical vocal techniques can be incorporated into contemporary cinematic arrangements, although the song itself is not simply a traditional tarana.

Amir Khusro and the Birth of Tarana

The origins of tarana are traditionally associated with Amir Khusro, the celebrated thirteenth-century poet, musician and Sufi mystic who lived from 1253 to 1325.

One popular historical account tells of Khusro listening to the celebrated musician Nayak Gopal perform complex compositions at a royal court. Unable to understand the language of the original performance, Khusro supposedly reproduced its musical patterns using rhythmic syllables of his own. This story is often told as an explanation for the emergence of tarana, although historians caution that the details are disputed.

Whether or not the story happened exactly as tradition describes, it captures something essential about this musical form: music can communicate beyond the boundaries of language.



A listener may not understand the words, but can still feel the movement of a melody, the excitement of a rhythm and the emotional intensity of a voice. Khusro is also remembered for bringing Persian and Indian cultural influences into conversation. His legacy is deeply connected with the development of Indo-Persian poetry and Sufi musical traditions, even though the precise origins of individual musical forms remain debated.

Ustad Amir Khan: Looking for Meaning in the Syllables

The story takes another fascinating turn with Ustad Amir Khan (1912-1974), one of the most influential vocalists in Hindustani classical music. Khan devoted considerable attention to tarana and advanced the idea that at least some of its apparently nonsensical syllables might preserve words or phrases derived from Arabic and Persian, with possible spiritual meanings. His interpretations gave listeners another way to approach the form: not merely as rhythmic virtuosity, but as a potential expression of devotion. In interpretations associated with Ustad Amir Khan, certain syllables are given meanings such as these:

"O Dani" - interpreted as a reference to the one who knows.

"Tu Dani" - interpreted as "You know."

"Yala" - associated with "Ya Allah."

"Yali" - associated with "Ya Ali."

"Tanan Dar Aa" - interpreted in this tradition as "Enter my body."

These translations are not universally accepted linguistic explanations for every tarana syllable. Many syllables function primarily as rhythmic sounds, and researchers disagree about how many can reliably be traced to Persian or Arabic words. Nevertheless, Khan's interpretations offer a compelling spiritual reading of the form. Under this interpretation, the voice becomes a form of prayer. The performer is not simply arranging sounds to entertain an audience; the sounds can be understood as expressing surrender, longing and a desire for union with the divine.



"Come Inside My Body and Make Me Yours"

Consider the interpretation of Tanan Dar Aa as an invitation to enter the body. Read through a Sufi spiritual lens, this can suggest something far deeper than a physical request. It evokes the longing of a seeker who wishes to dissolve the boundaries between the self and the divine. The body becomes a vessel. The heart becomes a place of devotion. Music becomes the means through which the individual reaches towards something greater than the individual self.

In this reading, repeated syllables such as dheem, ta, dare and tana are not necessarily a literal sentence with a single agreed translation. Instead, their repetition and musical intensity can reinforce the feeling of spiritual longing. The idea is beautiful: sometimes, a person cannot fully express devotion through ordinary language. Rhythm, breath and melody can communicate emotions that words struggle to contain. That is the spiritual possibility explored by this interpretation of tarana, not a universally established translation, but a way of hearing rhythmic music as a conversation between the human soul and the divine.

How This Connects to Chanakya

Returning to Chanakya by Rishab Rikhiram Sharma, the opening rhythmic chant invites us to listen beyond the surface.

The force of the voice, the repetition of syllables and their interaction with the instrumental arrangement can create a sense of urgency, discipline and intensity. These qualities suit a composition bearing the name *Chanakya*, which evokes strategy, intellect and political wisdom in Indian history.

It is important, however, to distinguish the musical effect from a verified translation: without an authoritative explanation from Sharma or the track's creators, we cannot conclude that every syllable in Chanakya carries the specific Sufi meanings attributed to some traditional tarana syllables.

What we can appreciate is the larger musical connection. Indian classical traditions have long used rhythmic vocalisation to transform the human voice into an instrument. Such sounds can carry emotional, aesthetic, and sometimes, devotional significance, even when they do not form an ordinary sentence. This is one of the remarkable strengths of Indian music. It can draw on ancient techniques while presenting them in a contemporary form, allowing new audiences to experience traditions that have evolved over centuries.

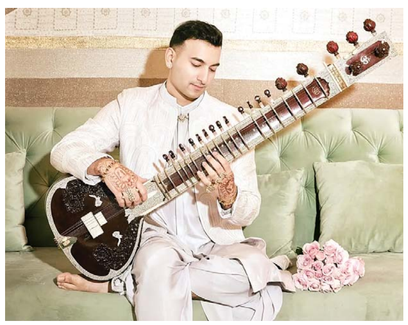
The Deeper Message: Music Beyond Words

The next time you hear a tarana or a rhythmic chant in a composition such as Chanakya, listen carefully.

Notice how the syllables rise and fall. Listen to the spaces between the sounds, the precision of the rhythm and the way the voice becomes inseparable from the music. Some syllables may have linguistic origins. Others may exist primarily for their rhythmic beauty. Some performers may interpret them spiritually, while others may focus on musical expression.

All these possibilities can coexist without requiring every sound to have a hidden translation.

Perhaps, that is the most interesting lesson: music does not always need to tell us something in words to make us feel that it means something. In the world of tarana, the voice can become rhythm, rhythm can become emotion, and emotion can become devotion. And when a contemporary composition draws on these traditions, it creates an opportunity to hear an old musical language with fresh ears.



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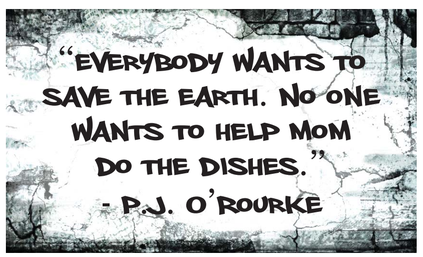

BABY BLUES

By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



ZITS

By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

