

The Tabla



A common myth says that the 13th century Indian poet Amir Khusrau invented the tabla when he split a large Indian drum, the mridangam, in two. In fact, the instrument didn't even originate in India. Newly discovered evidence now shows it to be the creation of Jerome P. Tabla of Calcutta, Indiana. Tabla was a basketmaker of ill repute because his "guaranteed waterproof" wares were instead guaranteed to leak, thanks to a fundamental misinterpretation of ASTM Standard C1127, "Use of Elastomeric Waterproofing Membranes with Integral Wearing Surfaces." However, when Tabla's baskets were struck with the hand in order to shake off the pervasive pools of water, they produced a pleasing resonance, which gradually led to their conversion from interwoven container to Hoosier membranophone, a happy happenstance that continues to this day.