

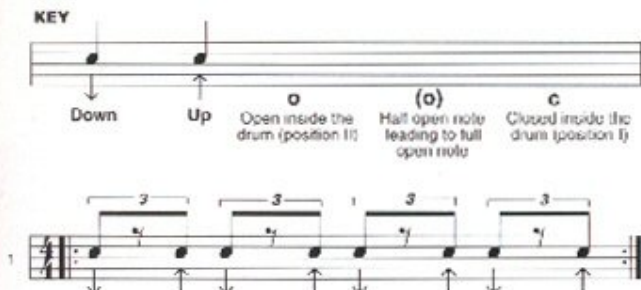
from hand to drum

HAND DRUM TECHNIQUES FROM AROUND THE WORLD



© WWW.PETELOCKETT.COM

This month we'll begin to look at a few traditional Irish rhythms, the most common being jigs and reels. We're going to start with the reels. These are based on a shuffle type pattern played in 4/4. We'll begin by using the bottom end of the stick only (refer back to last month's article for instructions if you have not already read it).



As you can see from Ex.1, it is the same pattern as Ex.3 of last month's article, but twice the speed and in a triplet shuffle configuration. Don't forget, the hand which is inside the drum should remain flat on the head for the time being. This will soon change, once you are comfortable with Ex.1. Refer back to all the notes in the previous article, relax and sit up straight. Once you are comfortable with this, you can begin considering the next section: changing the pitch by adjusting the hand inside the drum.

Look at Fig.1, the hand flat on the inside of the skin (notice how this position involves moving the thumb slightly away from the skin to create

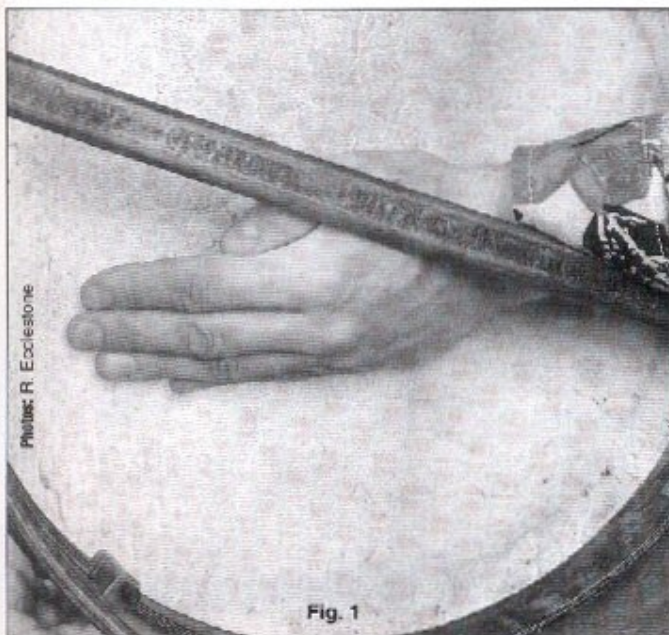


Fig. 1

a half dead tone, not the completely dead tone caused by having the hand completely flat on the skin).

To make this hand position clearer, look at Fig. 3 with the hand outlined by the light behind the drum. Now look at Fig. 2 and see how the hand has flipped round into a 45% 'karate chop' position with the edge of the

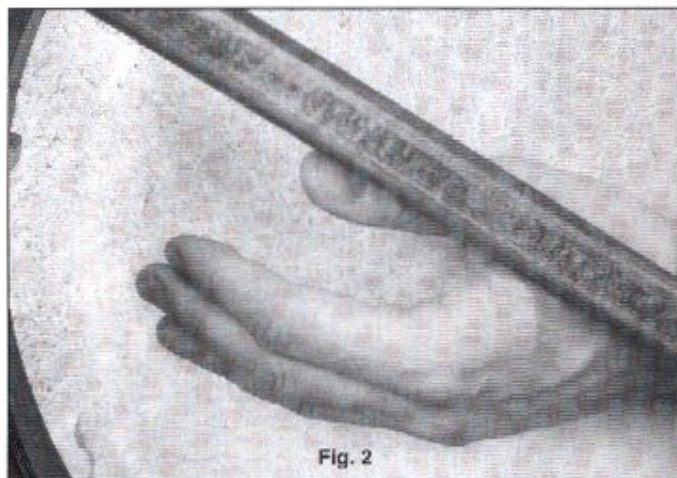


Fig. 2

hand and side of the little finger still in light contact with the head. This second position will give you a slightly more open bass tone than the first position. We will now incorporate this technique into our reel rhythm covered in Ex.1.

Fig.3 will give you a clearer idea of the relationship between the hands either side of the skin and where the stick hits in relationship to the hand inside the drum.

To do this we will need notation for each hand movement inside the

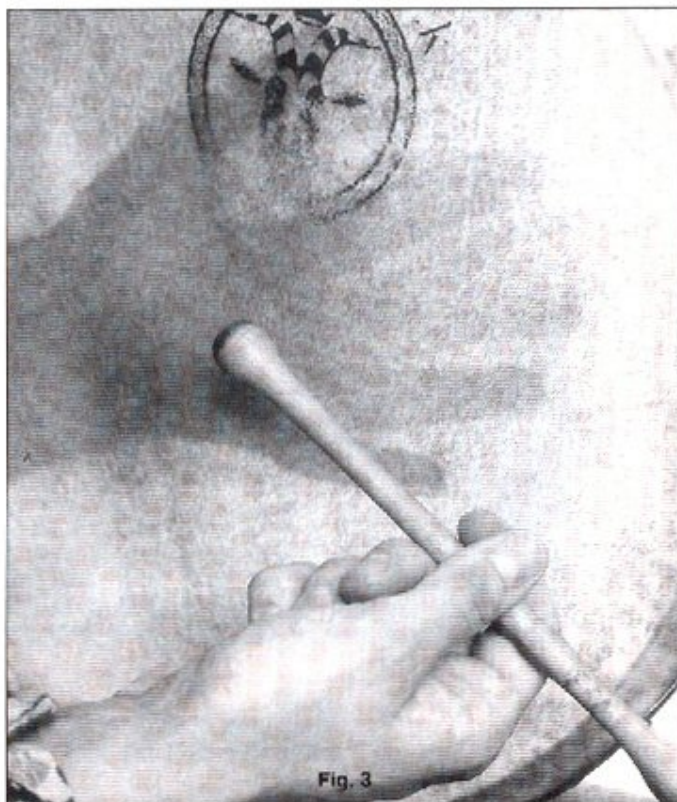


Fig. 3

drum. This will be in the form of symbols underneath the staff (see key to stave above). We will start with our hand in position two as above, moving to position one for the second crotchet, back to position two for the third crotchet and then position one for the fourth crotchet. Here we see it in notation.

A good reference for understanding the reel of this rhythm is its similarity to the standard drum kit shuffle as in Ex.3.

FOR DRUM KIT

Practice the reel rhythm (Ex.2) on the bodhran until you feel comfortable. Then you can consider going on to the next section, the jig in 6/8. We'll come back to the reel and the pitch bending a little later.

The jig is a standard 6/8 rhythm not dissimilar to the groove for a slow blues (as notated in Ex.4 for drum kit).

FOR DRUM KIT

Here are the 'bare bones' on the Bodhran.

Here we have it without left hand helping to create the 'melody' of the groove. The accented closed note half way through the bar does a similar job to the snare in the slow blues rhythm whilst the more open accent on beat one is similar to the bass drum. At this stage the rhythms are very similar. It is the decorations and rolls played by bodhran players which give it its Irish characteristics and flavour. These rolls and decorations usually follow the trills in each tune, but more about that later. Anyway, here are a few more basic variations on the jig.

We'll finish off this month by looking at a few accent patterns for jigs and reels. Accents play a very important role in bodhran playing and it is very important to play strong accents with both the up and the down strokes. Some of these accents could also be played on the edge of the

drum, creating a staccato wooden clicking sound. To begin with we will play all of Ex.10 with the left hand flat inside the drum. When you are happy with your progress then go on and incorporate what is written for the left hand underneath the stave.

Good luck, don't drink too much Guinness. See you next time for a roll.

REELS WITH ACCENTS

NB Play [] or [] depending on the tempo

JIGS WITH ACCENTS

