

# from hand to drum

## HAND DRUM TECHNIQUES

### FROM AROUND THE WORLD

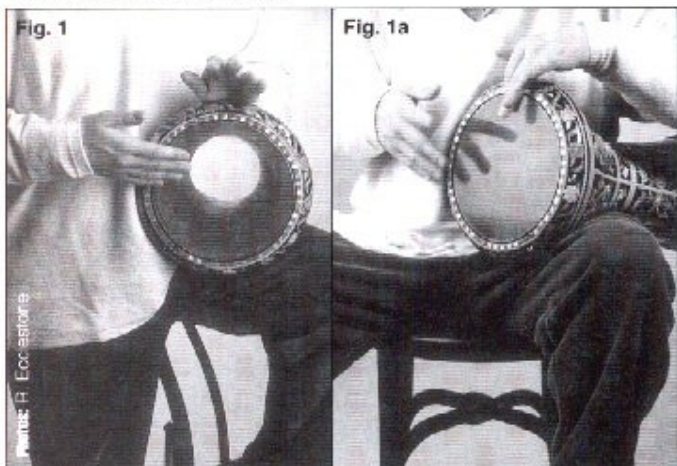


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This month we're going to start work on the Egyptian tabla, sometimes known as *darabuka*. This drum is not to be confused with the Turkish *darabuka* or Indian *tabla*.

If you refer to last month's feature on Egyptian drumming in *Rhythm*, you will get a clearer picture of the styles of Arabian *tabla* and the differences between Egyptian *tabla* and Turkish *tabla* and *darabuka*. This article will be concentrating on the basic playing techniques for the drum.

The first thing to consider is the playing position. Basically, the drum is supported on the left leg with the head facing forwards. It is balanced on the slender part of the shell with the left arm coming over to lock it into place (see Fig. 1). The arm should be relaxed, yet restraining enough to hold the drum in place, close to the back. The left hand should hang over the front top of the drum in a position from which it is easy to strike the rim of the drum at the edge of the skin with the finger tips. To begin with, we will only strike with the ring finger, but later all the first three fingers will be used to strike the drum.



Note: This position can be either standing or sitting as in the photos. Notice the foot resting for the standing position.



The action needs to be sharp and quick with the resultant tone being very high and piercing. The shape of the hand is cupped over the curved edge of the drum (see Fig. 2).

To begin with, we will try a few simple exercises to get used to this sound, which is phonetically represented by the syllable 'tek'.

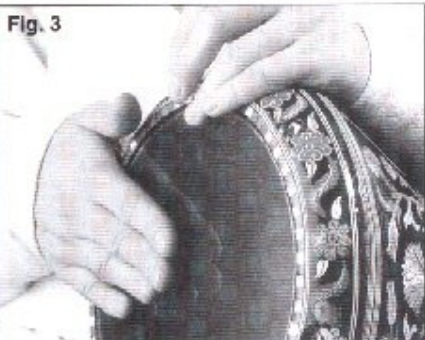
KEY

TEK	SLAP	TEK	DUM
Left	Right	Right	Right

Ex 1

Ex 2

Generally speaking, the left hand plays mainly the 'tek' stroke. The right hand meanwhile, plays the bulk of the 'dum' bass sounds. 'tek' treble sounds and also the slap strokes which construct the main skeletal fabric of the rhythms.



Let's look at the first of these two sounds: the bass 'dum' sound.

This sound is executed by striking the drum with the full hand flat, reaching in towards the middle of the head. The hand should be pulled away from the head immediately after striking to allow the bass tone to resonate (see Fig. 3). When you

are comfortable with this, try these few basic exercises.

Ex 3

Ex 4

Now for a few exercises combining the right hand 'dum' stroke and the left hand 'tek' stroke. It must be noted that these are not traditional rhythms.

Ex 5

Ex 6

Ex 7

Ex 8

Ex 9

Ex 10

Ex 11

Ex 12

Ex 12.5

Ex 14

Ex 15



Fig. 4

We will now look at the 'tek' stroke as played by the right hand. As with the 'tek' stroke played with the left hand, it can be played with any or all of the fingers. To begin with, we will play it with the ring finger only. Move the hand away from the drum before striking

swiftly on the edge of the head, near the rim, with the tip of the finger. The hand should not be resting on the drum as does the left hand. The sound should be as close to the left hand 'tek' as possible (or vice versa, depending upon your philosophical persuasion). See Fig. 4.

Now we'll round off with a few simple patterns which utilise these three sounds with both hands. See you next time for a slap and a stroke.

Ex 16

Ex 17

Ex 18

Ex 19

Ex 20

Ex 21

Ex 22