

# from hand to drum

## HAND DRUM TECHNIQUES FROM AROUND THE WORLD



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Following last month's analysis of the basic strokes on the North Indian dholak, we will now begin to look at some basic folk rhythms on the instrument. Some of you might notice some similarities between the rhythmic structures on this drum and the North Indian dhol drum covered recently in the *Hand To Drum* series. This is inevitable with both drums coming from the North Indian folk idiom.

To recap, we have our 'Ge' 'Ke' 'Na 1' and 'Na 3' strokes. For explanation of these strokes, refer back to last month's article where they are covered in detail. As with many forms of folk music from around the world, 6/8 and

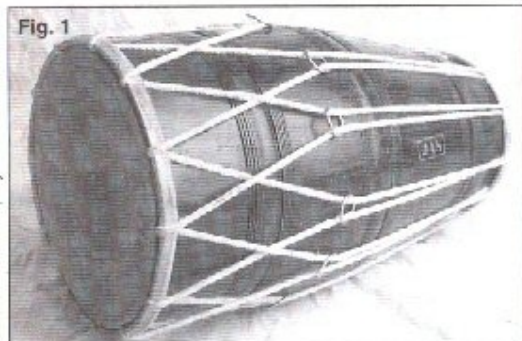


Fig. 1

4/4 are very common time signatures. We will begin by looking at a few simple examples utilising these rhythms. Firstly, the 4/4 rhythm known as *kherba* in North India.

To simplify things, I have minimised the use of the phonetic syllables which represent the strokes on the drum, concentrating instead on staff notation. This is because there are many ambiguous phonetic terms ('bols' in Indian) used in the system. One thing that does need to be reiterated from previous articles is that you can have single bols using only one stroke, or compound bols using combinations of two strokes. You can find out more about this in previous articles from the *Hand To Drum* series. If you decide to take your study of dholak playing further then I suggest you research in detail the phonetic representations.

**KEY**

GE KE NA 1 NA 3

### VARIATIONS ON KHERBA

**Ex 1**

**Ex 2**

**Ex 3**

**Ex 4**

**Ex 5**

**Ex 6**

**Ex 7**

**Ex 8**

Many of you will be aware of the glissando techniques used on the bass tones of many Indian drums. To begin with, I would advise that you avoid this until you have a strong, clear open bass tone with the left hand. The worst thing that can be done is to rush incorporating this into the technique; this will only lead to habitual and inadequate impersonation of the sound. It is a technique which takes a lot of patience and perseverance and comes primarily from listening and watching very closely. I'll be talking about the glissando technique later on, but for now concentrate on a big, open bass sound. It is the potential of this open sound which makes the 'lull bodied glissando' possible.

Now for a few examples involving the 6/8 rhythmic cycle known as *dadra*

### VARIATIONS ON DADRA

**Ex 7**

**Ex 8**

**Ex 9**

1 3 3 1 3 3

Ex 10

1 1 3 1 1 3

Ex 11

1 1 3 1 1 3

Ex 12

1 1 3 1 1 3

1 1 3 1 1 3

7/8 and 5/8 are not so common on the dholak, but here are a few examples of rhythms involving those time signatures.

**SEVEN BEAT RUPAK TAL**

Ex 12.5

1 1 3 1 3 1 3

N.B.  
This 7/8 rhythm is the only common talā without a bass drum note in the first section.

Ex 14

1 1 3 1 3 1 3

Ex 15

1 1 3 1 3 1 3

**TEN BEAT JHAP TAL**

Ex 16

1 3 1 1 3 1 3 1 1 3

Ex 17

1 3 1 1 3 1 3 1 1 3

Ex 18

1 3 1 1 3 1 3 1 1 3

Ex 19

1 3 1 1 3 1 3 1 1 3