

from hand to drum

HAND DRUM TECHNIQUES FROM AROUND THE WORLD



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We'll finish off our brief look at this style of frame drumming by looking at a few traditional Middle Eastern rhythms involving the strokes we've learnt over the last two articles.

To begin with we'll reduce each rhythm to its skeletal structure and build them up in stages. I've split these stages into four levels. Level One is the 'base' or basic skeletal structure. Level Two is what I've called the 'open' level where all the gaps in the previous level have been filled with ghost notes but the rhythm still feels spacious and open. Level Three is the 1/2 closed level where we are beginning to add a few extra notes at strategic points in the rhythm (this level is based on what a DEF player might play.) Level Four is the closed level where all the unstressed semi quavers are played.

Our first rhythm will be a popular Middle Eastern rhythm called BALLADI or FALLAHI.

Ex 1 Balladi or Fallahi

Base $\frac{4}{4}$: D T T D T

Open $\frac{4}{4}$: D T (T) T D (T) T (T) R L R L R L R L R L R L

1/2 closed $\frac{4}{4}$: D T T T T D T T T T R L R L R L R L R L R L

Closed $\frac{4}{4}$: D T T T T T T T D T T T T T T R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

(1/2 closed, using Dum, Tek & Slap)

$\frac{4}{4}$: D T T T S D T T S T T R L R L R L R L

Next we'll look at the common Middle Eastern 9/8 called KARSILLAMAS.

Ex 2 Karsillamas

Base $\frac{9}{8}$: D T T D T T

Open $\frac{9}{8}$: D (T) T (T) T (T) D T T R L R L R L R L

1/2 closed $\frac{9}{8}$: D T T T T T T D T T T R L R L R L R L R L R L

Closed $\frac{9}{8}$: D T T T T T T T T T D T T T T R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

Next a rhythm well associated with Eastern European music. It's called KOPANITSER and it is in 11/8.

Ex 3 Kopanitsa (Divided 2/2/3/2/2)

Base $\frac{11}{8}$: D T T D T

Open $\frac{11}{8}$: D T T T T T T D T T T R L R L R L R L R L R L

1/2 closed $\frac{11}{8}$: D T T T T T T D T T T T R L R L R L R L R L R L

Closed $\frac{11}{8}$: D T T T T T T T T T T T T T T T T R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

Now we'll go on to some simple 7/8 patterns. Remember, the melody and phrasing of the rhythm comes from the subtlety of the unstressed notes, allowing the strong beats to sing out. Don't try to achieve this by forcing the stressed beats too much.

Ex 4 (7 beat rhythms using Dum, Tek & Slap)

A $\frac{7}{8}$: D T T D T S T R L R L R L

B $\frac{7}{8}$: D T T S T T T R L R L R L

C $\frac{7}{8}$: D T T T T D T S R L R L R L

D $\frac{7}{8}$: D T D T S D T R L R L R L

E $\frac{7}{8}$: D T T D T S T D T D T S D T R L R L R L

F

G

(Four beat phrase from Ex 4 displaced)

A

B

C

D

Before I finish this article I'll briefly cover the speaking tone as played on

the frame drum. This can be a particularly interesting sound, either incorporated into rhythms or used as a sound effect. To achieve this sound we first need to brace the thumb against the inside lip of the second finger as in Fig. 1.

The finger will need to be moistened, either with water, or with the substance bank tellers use to count £50 notes. This later substance would be of benefit if you were playing an Indian drum because it is deemed bad form to lick your finger and touch a drum. It is also bad form in Indian circles to touch drums with your feet. It's interesting



to note how each culture has its own taboos. For example, in Japan, it's bad form to tap drum sticks together or to hit drums without fully preparing 'spiritually' beforehand.

Anyway, the erect moist finger, braced by the rigid thumb, is rubbed firmly across the skin causing friction and hopefully the desired tone. It really is a matter of trial and error. Look at the photo and manoeuvre you moist pinkie in an inspired way.

Hasla luego, it's midnight, my train has just left Valladolid and I'm knackered. If anybody knows where this place is, then you could win the original manuscript for this article, yes, the original manuscript. Answers should be written on a £50.00 note

