

from hand to drum

HAND DRUM TECHNIQUES FROM AROUND THE WORLD



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This month we'll conclude our brief look at Kanjira technique by looking at the bending technique for the left hand, as well as a variety of rhythms and fills using what we've learnt so far. Right then, first the rhythms:

Ex 1

Ex 2

Ex 3

Ex 4

Ex 5

Ex 6

Now the fills:

Ex 7

Ex 8

Ex 9

Ex 10

Ex 11

Ex 12

Now practise using these two formats:

Format 1

Format 2

Now try this procedure:

Rhythm 1 - Fill 1 - Format 1

Rhythm 1 - Fill 2 - Format 1

Rhythm 1 - Fill 3 - Format 1 etc

There are 36 permutations in format 1 (ie. next you would carry on from where I left off above by doing rhythm 1 with fill 4 and so on up to 6. Then you would go on to rhythm 2 with fill 1, rhythm 2 with fill 2 and so on up to 6, then on to rhythm 3 etc.). There are also 36 permutations in format 2.

Just before we go on to the bending techniques, we'll look at a useful exercise to develop strength in the three fingered THA stroke. It's using the four inversions of the well milked paradiddle, juxtaposed but not pasteurised:

Ex 13 (2 bars)

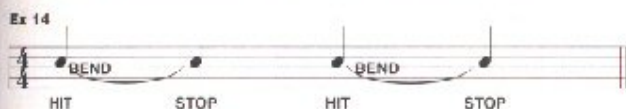
Standard sticking converted on to Kanjira

Right, now for the bends.

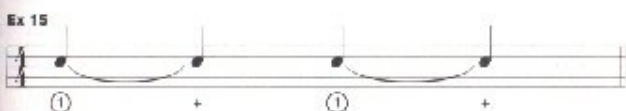
By looking at Fig. 1 we can see the fingers of the left hand off of the head. Play the TUM stroke in this position and evenly move the fingers of the left hand into the position indicated in Fig. 2. This should bend the note to a higher pitch. If you are using a proper Kanjira and it is too highly tuned, it will be impossible to achieve this effect without dampening the inside of the head sufficiently with water. If you are using the Remo Kanjira or even a Tambourine then the head has to be tuned loosely, but

not so there are any wrinkles.

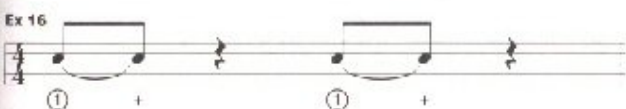
Right, now we're going to hit and bend immediately afterwards. The bend should finish on the second crotchet (see Ex. 14):



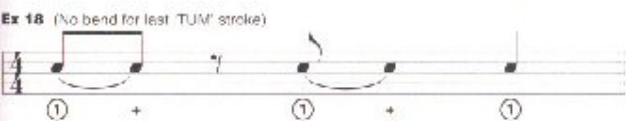
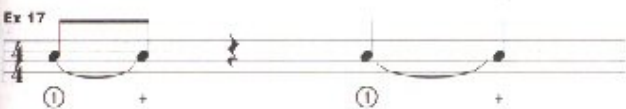
This will be transcribed thus:



Or, we could end the bend earlier (for all you divers out there, I bet you want to end the bends as soon as possible).



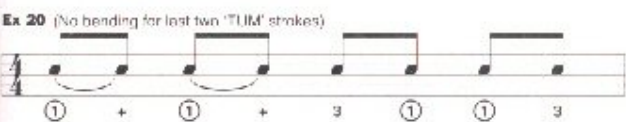
Now some other variations:



Or continuous bending:



Now mixing it with some of the other material we've learnt so far:



The phonetics for this would be this:



Fig. 1

Notice how the bending is not actually spoken as a word. The way it would be represented would be with an inflection of the voice, which would imitate the sound of what is to be played. That's all for now. Experiment and discover but, it's

important to realise that what I've covered in these three articles is really only the tip of the iceberg. Kanjira is without doubt one of the most intricate and complex hand drums in the world, and to make it reach it's potential you would need to pursue some serious study with a good teacher who is concise and logical in their presentation of facts and manner of teaching.

Don't just go to someone who is a good player if they don't open up and help you to become a good player; the motto being that retentive teachers are quite simply inadequate.

The main man to look out for on Kanjira is Sri Hari Shanker who plays with K R. Mani and the Shruti Laya ensemble. Alternatively, many concerts of Carnatic classical music feature Kanjira. You might find the term Kanjira used by North Indian musicians to describe a small hand held tambourine. The technique for this style is radically different, so remember that we've been looking at South Indian technique in these articles.

Right then, basic primer over. Next month we'll be starting on the intricacies of fiddley fingers on frame drums.



Fig. 2

