

from hand to drum

HAND DRUM TECHNIQUES FROM AROUND THE WORLD



WWW.PETELOCKETT.COM

Mounted Frame Drum

This month we're going to integrate a few new techniques into the system we've been working on.

One very important thing to consider when approaching hand percussion techniques is the hybrid nature of many players in the field. Take people like John Bergamo and Glen Velez, for example. Both players incorporate hand drumming styles from all over the world into the music they make with their instruments. Even if you look at traditions themselves, they are very often transformed by the hybrid influences of historical events in the past. Using Indian music as an example, the Muslim invasion from the north was an enormous influence on what is today known as classical North Indian Hindustan music. Before that, the music would have been much more akin to South Indian Carnatic music of Hindu origin. (The Hindus were pushed south to about as far as the Hindu River which is why there is such a marked difference between North and South Indian music.)

Fig. 1 'Three fingered 'Te' (Right Hand) closed rim

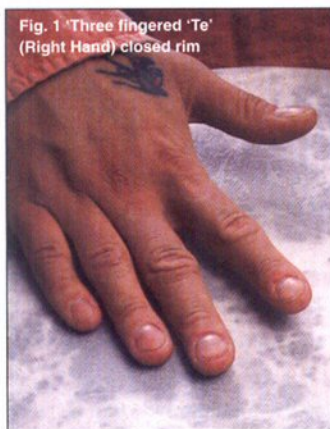


Fig. 2 One fingered 'Te' (Right Hand) closed rim

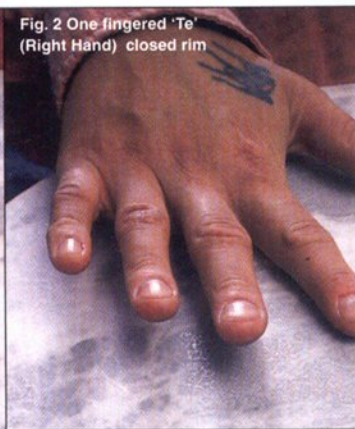
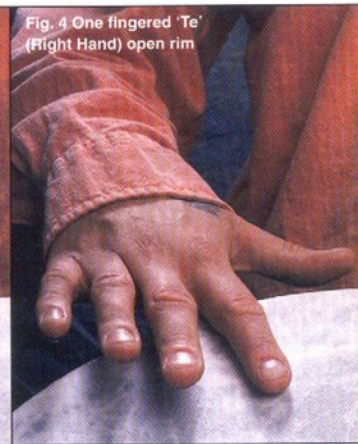


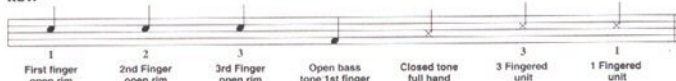
Fig. 3 'Three fingered 'Te' (Right Hand) open rim



Fig. 4 One fingered 'Te' (Right Hand) open rim



KEY:



Ex 1



Fig. 5 Muting with left hand thumb (close-up)



Fig. 6 Muting with left hand thumb (far)



Anyway, a few additional strokes are in order. Firstly, our favourite hand technique, utilised by dividing the fingers into two striking units. In Fig. 1 we see the three-finger striking unit, and in Fig. 2 we see the one-finger striking unit. This is without doubt one of the most effective techniques available to the hand percussionist. Refer back to the article on kanjira for a more detailed gander explanation.

Figs. 3 and 4 show the same striking units with the other hand. Both units can strike the drum either open or closed. For the closed stroke, the fingers should strike flat and remain in contact with the head after impact (but only for a millisecond).

Right then, on to some music...

Ex 2



Ex 3



Ex 4



Ex 5



Ex 6



Ex 7



Ex 8



Ex 9



Let's look briefly at a muting technique closely akin to that of the bongos. By muting with the thumb, as in Fig. 5 and 6, and striking the rim of the drum with the other hand, an interesting harmonic can be created. Try moving the muting thumb backwards and forwards between the positions in Fig. 5 and 6 to see the different pitches that can be obtained. Experiment. This is the most important thing in developing your own voice as a musician. How predictable and tedious to want to sound like anyone other than yourself...