

from hand to drum

HAND DRUM TECHNIQUES FROM AROUND THE WORLD



© WWW.PETELOCKETT.COM

The Mridangam

Last month we covered the four basic beginner's strokes on mridangam, namely 'Tha', 'Thi', 'Tum' and 'Nam'. This month we will add the stroke 'Ki', alias 'Ka', and incorporate it into some idiomatic stroke combinations.

It must be noted that these articles are merely an introduction to the drum and are in no way to be considered a full study. The complexities of South Indian drumming and techniques on drums such as the

mridangam, could fill a set of encyclopedias many times over. This set of articles is merely a snapshot.

Fig. 1 and 2 show two angles of the 'Ki' (alias 'Ka') stroke. Quite often in both North and South Indian drumming, the same stroke is indicated by a different phonetic syllable. It is also common for the same syllable to be represented by a different stroke. It sounds complicated but becomes contextually self-evident in the same way that in the English language, if I were to say

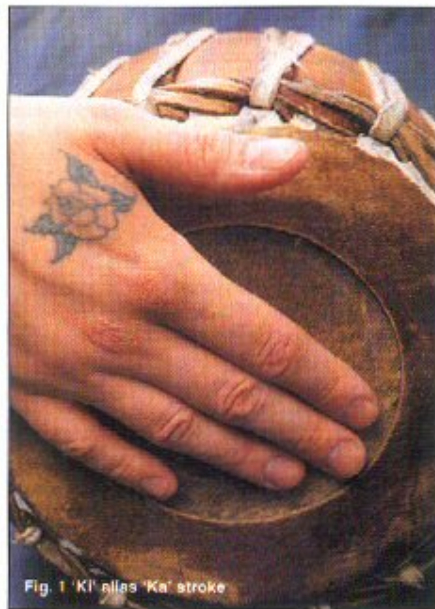


Fig. 1 'Ki' alias 'Ka' stroke

'through', it would not be evident whether I had said 'through' or 'threw' without it being applied to a context.

The 'Ki' stroke is played with all four fingers flat on the bass end of the drum. They should hit just inside the thick rim of the drum and be left on the head for a millisecond, unlike the 'Tum' stroke. The hand should move backwards and forwards between the strokes. The drum should remain firmly in the playing position. See Fig. 3 for an overhead view of the playing position.

Right then, on to some music...

© Peter Lockett 1997



Fig. 2 'Ki' alias 'Ka' stroke (viewed vertically to show cupped hand)



Fig. 3 Aerial view of playing position

Note to Ex 1 & examples using 'KI DA TA KA' :-
 'KI' & 'KA' ARE THE SAME: DA = THA TA = THI

Ex 1

THA THI THA THI THA THI THA TUM TUM THA KI DA TA KA

Ex 2

THA THI THA THI THA KA THA TUM TUM THA KI DA TA KA

Ex 3

THA KA THA THI KI DA TA KA NAM THA TUM TUM KI DA TA KA

Note to Ex 4 & examples using 'THA RI KI DA' :-
 RI = THI DA = THA ... Sorry!!! That's just how it is.
 Even so, I'm making it as simple as possible.

Ex 4

NAM THA TUM TUM THA RI KI DA THA TUM KI DA TA KA

Ex 5

KI DA TA KA THA RI KI DA NAM THA TUM TUM THA RI KI DA

Ex 6

TUM THA TUM TUM THA TUM TUM THA NAM THA TUM TUM THA RI KI DA

Ex 7

THA RI KI DA THA RI KI DA NAM KA THA KA THA RI KI DA

Note to Ex 8 & examples using 'THA RI KI DA' :-
 RI = THI

Ex 8

NAM THA KI DA TA KA THA RI THA RI KI DA TA KA