

from hand to drum

HAND DRUM TECHNIQUES

FROM AROUND THE WORLD



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This month we are going to be looking at a few latin American techniques applied to the udu drum from Nigeria. The techniques we will be referring to are mainly the conga 'heel-tip' technique from Cuba, and the Pandiero technique from Brazil. Some knowledge of these techniques will be necessary to get the full benefit from this article. We're going to start with the 'heel-tip' technique.

Sit either on a chair or on the floor cross-legged with the udu drum in your lap. The spout should be vertical with the hole on the side to the left. The first example entails using the basic 'heel-tip-heel-tip: L L R R' configuration, as notated in Ex. 1. The heel of the left hand will come down over the hole as it strikes, creating the bass sound on beat one of our rhythm. As the heel comes down, so the fingers of the same hand come up, ready to strike. This will be a noticeably sharper sound although some displacement of air will occur causing a slight bass tone underneath the slap of the finger tips hitting the side of the pot. The heel stroke of the right hand will be noticeably quieter whilst the finger tip stroke of the right hand will be somewhat sharper. Stay with this exercise for a while, gradually building up speed whilst also concentrating on getting a full bodied bass tone from the left hand heel stroke.

KEY

Right hand over/bass on top hole
Thumb on side of pot

Left hand over/bass on side hole
Sharp sound on side of pot
Pitch bend with right hand over the top hole (from closed to open)

H = Heel of hand
T = Tip of fingers
F = Flat hand stroke
TH = Thumb (side of thumb)

Brush down
Brush up

1

Next we're going to introduce a sharp slapping sound played with the side of the thumb. It is similar to the way the thumb is used in both



Fig. 1

Ghaleam pot playing and Pandiero playing. Hold your right hand palm downwards with the thumb poking out slightly above the point on the side of the pot which you will hit (see Fig. 1). The fingers should be slightly curled. Quickly turn the hand 90° so the thumb is on top. This is the position from which we will strike. Now, whack the thumb sharply onto the side of the pot, causing a high pitched 'ding'. It hurts, doesn't it? This is our thumb stroke. Good Luck. Now try these few ex-

amples using the strokes we have so far:

Now a bit of Pandiero technique with the right hand whilst the left hand builds up the rhythm with a bass pattern. Firstly the Pandiero technique:

- Thumb stroke as before.
- Tip of fingers with fingers slightly curled.
- Heel stroke as before.
- Tip of fingers as in B.

6

Now for the independence:

Now we are going to work on Pandiero technique with both hands, but with the intention of splitting it up as in the 'heel-heel-tip-tip' technique (in Ex. 3). Firstly, both hands together:

10

TH TH T T H H T T TH TH T T H H T T

11

H H T T TH TH T T H H T T TH TH T T

12

To finish off with, we'll use the brushing technique as discussed in previous frame drumming articles (*Hand To Drum* Parts 4-6). The brushing is achieved by rubbing up and down on the side of the pot with the fingertips as in Ex. 12.5:

12.5

R R R R

Now for the added bass tone:

14

15

16

17

