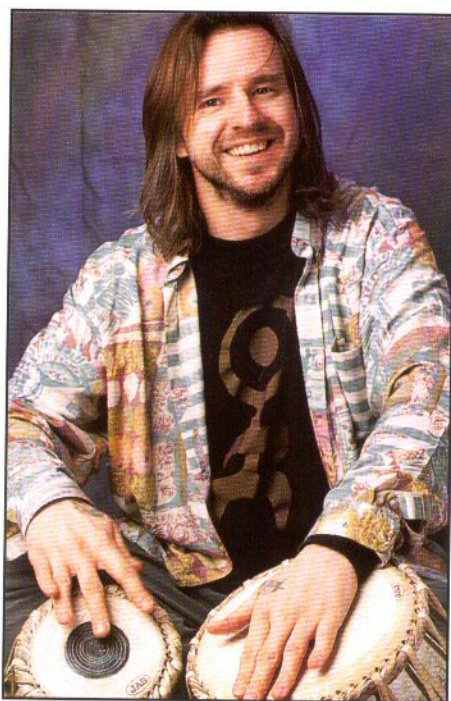


# TABLAMANIA!

The tabla is one of the most richly expressive percussion instruments in the world of music. It's also flippin' hard to play. This month, **PETER LOCKETT** wraps up his ground-breaking three-part series. Let's see those fingers!

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## TABLAMANIA!

Ex 4

A

TA TI TA TI TA TI TA TI

B

TA TA TI TA TA TI TA TI

C

TA TI TA TA TI TA TA TI

D

TI TA TA TI TA TA TI TA

E

TA TA TI TA TI TA TA TI

Ex 5

A

DHA TI DHA TI TA TI DHA TI

B

DHA DHA TI DHA DHA TI TA TA TI TA TA TA TI DHA TI

C

DHA TI DHA DHA TI DHA DHA TI TA TI TA TA TI DHA DHA TI

Ex 6

A

DHA TI DHA DHA DHA THUN NA NA TA TI DHA DHA DHA THUN DHA NA

B

DHA THUN DHA NA DHA THUN DHA NA DHA THUN DHA NA DHA THUN DHA NA

DHA TI DHA DHA DHA THUN NA NA TA TI DHA DHA DHA THUN DHA NA

TA THUN TA NA TA THUN TA NA TA THUN TA NA TA THUN TA NA

DHA TI DHA DHA DHA THUN NA NA TA TI DHA DHA DHA THUN DHA NA

This is where we come across our first ambiguous use of phonetics. Often an identical syllable is used to indicate two different sounds, or else it could be that one sound can be represented by different syllables. It would be an over-simplification to say that this exists to help the rhythmic compositions flow off the tongue, but it is certainly a relevant factor. Suffice it to say, the more you get into the system, the more obvious these ambiguities become, in the same way that words pronounced the same in the English language are easily understood when placed in a context – eg 'threw' and 'through'. Figures 9 and 10 show the two different strokes sometimes represented by the same syllable.

## NEW BOL

Let's add two more bols to our repertoire and go on to our first 'Laggi' (a folk-style composition that is characteristic of Dholak playing). The first new sound will be 'Ti'.

This sound is played on the treble drum with the second finger, the finger that is held in the air as for the 'Na' stroke. Place your hand on the drum, with your fingers resting on the edge of the black spot. Lift your index finger and second finger about two inches from the head, leaving the third and fourth fingers resting on the edge of the black





Fig 9 'Ta' on black spot (gab).



Fig 10 'Ta' on rim of drum (kani).



Fig 11 'Ti' pre-strike.



Fig 12 'Ti' strike.



Fig 13 'Thun' pre-strike.



Fig 14 'Thun' strike.

## Ex 6 cont

C

DHA	THUN	NA	DHA	THUN	NA	DHA	THUN	NA	DHA	THUN	NA	DHA	THUN	NA	DHA	THUN	NA
DHA	TI	DHA	DHA	DHA	THUN	NA	NA	TA	TI	DHA	DHA	DHA	THUN	DHA	NA		
TA	THUN	NA	TA	THUN	NA	TA	THUN	NA	TA	THUN	NA	TA	THUN	NA	TA	THUN	NA
DHA	TI	DHA	DHA	DHA	THUN	NA	NA	TA	TI	DHA	DHA	DHA	THUN	DHA	NA		

D

DHA	TI	DHA	THUN	NA	DHA	TI	DHA	THUN	NA	DHA	TI	DHA	DHA	THUN	NA		
DHA	TI	DHA	DHA	DHA	THUN	NA	NA	TA	TI	DHA	DHA	DHA	THUN	DHA	NA		
TA	TI	TA	THUN	NA	TA	TI	TA	THUN	NA	TA	TI	TA	TA	THUN	NA		

► spot, as in **Figure 11**. We will call this figure the 'resting' position.

From this position, instead of bringing the index finger down onto the rim, just leave it in the air, and then bring the second finger down sharply onto the edge of the black spot as in **Figure 12**. This should sound like a slightly softer version of 'Te' – ie, it is a non-resonant stroke. Notice how we can now access both the 'Na' and the 'Ti' sound from our resting position.

There are some districts in India who articulate most of their playing on the treble drum with these two fingers. This style of playing is called 'Dwunglie' (meaning 'two fingers' – the polite version). Let's prepare for our Laggi (folk-style pattern) with some exercises in **Example 4**.

After this, try some similar exercises with the bass tabla in **Example 5**.

From here, we can go on to our next bol: 'Thun', which is needed for the 'Laggi' (**Example 6**).

The bol 'Thun' is played with the index finger on the treble drum. It is one of the most resonant and ringing sounds on the instrument. To get into position, place your hand on the drum with the fingers on the edge of the black spot.

Now lift your hand slightly away from the head by approximately one inch as in **Figure 13**.

Next strike with your index finger, leaving the second, third and fourth fingers away from the head. The finger should strike flat – not just the tips, but the whole finger, moving away from the head quickly, allowing it to ring (see **Figure 14**).

The difficulty of this stroke is in returning back to our 'Na' resting position without the damping fingers making a noise. Unless otherwise indicated, all the 'Thun' sounds should be played at the same time, with a soft 'Ke' sound to reinforce it.

## Let's revise the set of bols we have so far:

Ge	Bass drum, resonant stroke, fingered 3 or 1.
Ke	Bass drum dosed stroke, whole hand flat.
Te	Treble drum dosed sound, fingered 3 or 1.
Ta	Treble drum, same as TE, but using all four fingers.
Na/Ta	Treble drum, rim sound with index finger; second finger raised, third and fourth fingers damping.
Dha	Na + Ge
Dhe	Te + Ge
Thun	Thun (+ Ke optional)
Ti	Second finger on treble drum, third and fourth fingers down, index finger raised. Sounds similar to Te.

We can now start on the Laggi (**Example 6**). ♦