

the fabric of time

INDIAN RHYTHMIC

CONCEPTS FOR DRUM SET



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PART 1

Many readers will be aware of the importance of Vocal Percussion in Indian music. Each drum has a vocabulary of words which represent the possible strokes that can be played.

In Northern India the words are slightly different for each respective drum, but in the South there is a common language that can be rendered on any classical South Indian drum.

This article will address the building blocks of this language and how to adapt these concepts to our kit and percussion playing.

There are five main units, from which almost everything in South Indian music percussion is constructed.

3) TA KI TA (called 'TISRAM')

4) TA KA DI ME (called 'CHATURUSRAM')

7) TA KI TA TA KA DI ME (called 'MISRAM') 3+4

5) TA KA TA KI TA (called 'KANDAM') 2+3

9) TA KA DI ME TA KA TA KI TA (called 'SHANKEERNAM') 4+5

Now, let's take the first step towards adapting this for other percussion. Let's change each unit into a respective sticking pattern: 3) R L L; 4) R R L L; 7) R L L R R L L; 5) R L R L L; 9) R R L L R L R L L.

Right then, calculators at the ready, and let's start building – firstly, bars of 4/4.

$7 + 5 + 4 = 16$ and becomes:

EXAMPLE 1



Try familiarising yourself with the word sequence, then try the sticking pattern. It may be an idea to sing the words whilst you play.

EXAMPLE 2



Next we'll put it onto the kit. Right hand plays the hi-hat and left the snare. With a few bass drum notes and an accent on the left hand we're almost in danger of sounding modern.

EXAMPLE 3



Let's go back to our units and build another bar, this time in 5/4:

$3 + 5 + 7 + 5 = 20$ and becomes:

EXAMPLE 4



Again, familiarise yourself with the words first.

EXAMPLE 5

R L L R L R L L R L L R R L L R L R L L

Now let's adapt it to the kit. The right hand part is played by the bass drum, left hand on the snare. We don't want the right hand to feel lazy having had its role pinched by the bass, so we'll give it some quavers to play on the hi-hat:

EXAMPLE 6

Finally, we will change our five basic units from sticking patterns into rhythmic patterns.

EXAMPLE 7

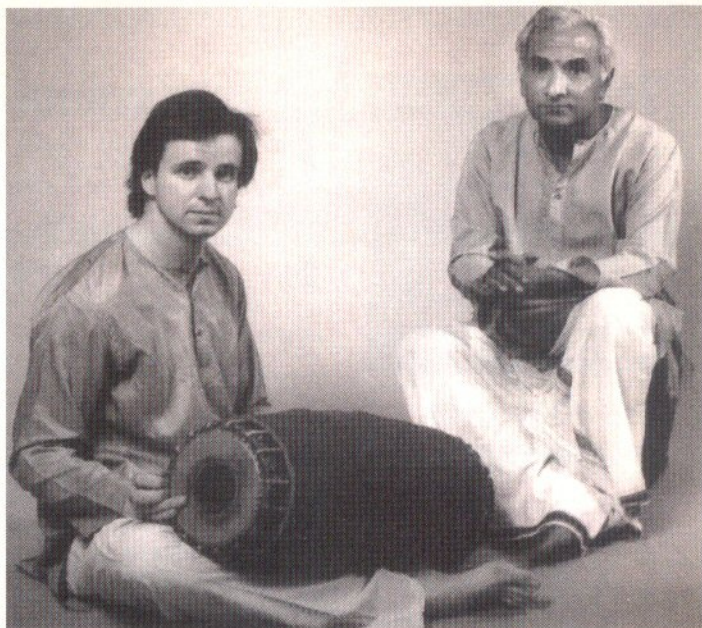
(A) TA KI TA (B) TA KA DI ME (C) TA KA TA KI TA (D) TA KI TA TA KA DI ME (E) TA KA DI ME TA KA TA KI TA

Now, let's build a four-bar sequence... $(4 \times 5) + (4 \times 3) = 32$:

EXAMPLE 8

KA TA KI TA TA KI TA TA KI TA TA KI TA TA

Once we have learnt the words then we can go on to the four-bar break. The break sounds like this:



Sri Peter Lockett and guru Karaikudi Krishnamurthy, principal of the Musical Academy of Dance Rhythms and Songs

EXAMPLE 9

Try playing it in the following ways... 1) Both hands together (left hand snare/right hand floor tom) playing all the written notes whilst the bass drum fills in all the gaps. 2) Right hand plays crotchets whilst the written pattern is split between the bass and snare (see example 10).

EXAMPLE 10

Obviously, the possibilities are endless, as are the ways of applying them to your kit playing. These are only a few ideas; try some of your own,