

the fabric of time



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INDIAN RHYTHMIC

CONCEPTS FOR DRUM SET PART 3

In this month's article we will concentrate on one basic time unit from South Indian percussion and see how we can use it to build larger phrases. This time unit is five notes long and is called Kadam. The 'bols' are TA KA TA KI TA.

The first thing we will do is to compose a short Arudie (see February's article) by repeating it three times as in Example 1.

TA TI KI DA TUM TA TI KI DA TUM TA TI KI DA TUM THA

As you can see, we've started one semi-quaver into the bar so as to end in the correct place. So far so good; let's venture towards the kit and see what comes up. We will play the basic Kadam unit like this.

L R L R

Practise this for a while, trying if possible to recite the bols as you go. An alternative sticking would be: R R L R bass.

Having gone this far, we can now build a fill-in.

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

A minor alteration to this would be to fill in the gap on 'one' with a note on the bass.

This is an effective fill, but if your favourite drummer peers dismissively at you, then you can always resort to the following measure. Bear with me for the maths. If one Kadam unit equals five semi-quavers, then two would equal ten semi-quavers or, for the sake of this example, five quavers. Logical enough, but if in the space of these five quavers we put semi-quaver triplets we will end up with fifteen notes, into which we can put our Kadam unit three times... Er, it looks like this;

TA TI KI DA TUM TA TI KI DA TUM TA TI KI DA TUM TA

As you can see, it's quite clear really, 3 in the space of 2. It is a very effective gear change when played accurately. The accents are very important. Try these steps for quick progress:

1) With a metronome (apologies, but it really helps). Play the notes as written on the snare without accents or bols. (I said 'bols'.)

2) Add accents

3) Put the sticks down, leave the metronome ticking and clap crotchets in time whilst you recite the bols. It helps to accent your voice on the first 'Ta' of each unit. Leave one bar's rest between each attempt.

4) Have a cup of tea.

5) Pick up the sticks and go to the whole kit. You will recognise the pattern from Example 2. It looks something like this:

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

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Another way we can use our Kandam unit stems from a technique used on the South Indian drum called Kanjira (I'm playing one in the photo). This small wooden drum is approx 7"x1/2" and is covered with lizard skin. It has one jingle and is played single handed by the percussionist. Anyone who has not seen a master performance on this drum has really missed out. The man to watch is South India's very own Sri Hari Shankar who without doubt is one of the very top drummers in the world.

A very common way of playing the Kandam unit on the Kanjira is as follows:

TA DI TA KI DA TUM

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Try it like this:

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We will alter it one stage further to make it more interesting for our kit playing.

L R L R L R

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To finish off with, we will build a fill in the same manner as Example 5. We can use the same practice procedure as before, but don't drink too much tea!

Don't forget, two bars of C fit into the same tie space as one bar of 4/4.

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

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