

the fabric of time

INDIAN RHYTHMIC

CONCEPTS FOR DRUM SET PART 12



© WWW.PETELOCKETT.COM

In this month's article we are going to look at a traditional South Indian compositional system called 'CORVAY.' Corvays tend to be long and elaborate rhythmical compositions which can be constructed in a number of ways. Each corvay has a theme which has to be resolved with a rhythmic phrase which repeats three times, ending on the first beat of the time cycle. It works in a similar way to the 'Chuckradah' and 'Tukra' systems in Northern India (See February's Rhythm).

To begin with we'll build a corvay using our 5, 6 and 7 beat phrases from last month. Here they are, just in case you've forgotten.

Example one (A, B, C)

A TA DI KI DA TUM

B TA DI KI DA TUM

C TA DI KI DA TUM

Now we'll adjust them slightly

Example two (A, B, C)

A TA DI TA KI DA TUM

B TA DI TA KI DA TUM

C TA DI TA KI DA TUM

Now we can construct our corvay. The object of this composition will be to repeat each unit three times as to end on the first beat of a 32 beat time cycle. To do this, a number of rests will need to be added... The finished composition will look like this. We will play it on the snare to begin with

Example three

Composition Ends Here
/ Time Resumes

The basic format runs like this...

7 + 7 + 7 + 1 + 4 rests

6 + 6 + 6 + 1 + 4 rests

5 + 5 + 5 + (1... First beat of time cycle)

This all adds up to 65, thus ending on beat 1 of a 32 beat time cycle.

This may seem unnecessarily complicated but, it is actually quite easy, so long as you think of it as a composition of its composite parts. An important part is the gap. It is vital to think of the single note and the four rests as one unit, as in example four.

Example four

Now we can take it onto the whole kit. To do this we'll go back to last month's way of playing our phrases. Here they are again.

Example five

Example six

Example seven

► Now you can use these units to build a piece the same shape as in example three. This time, I'm not going to do it for you. It will help to spend some time writing this out yourself. Doing this will lead you to a fuller understanding of the concept. All you have to do is follow the format as in example three and work out where the bar lines and rests come.

When you've done this you can go on to the next example, which is written for snare, bass and one crash cymbal. You may notice I'm using the timing from example three.

Example eight

Example eight musical notation showing rhythmic patterns for snare, bass, and cymbal. The notation includes notes with accents and rests, with rhythmic patterns indicated by letters L and R below the notes.

Time Resumes ->

To finish off with, we'll do a bit on the congas... our basic phrases will look like this.

Example nine

Example nine musical notation showing a phrase on the congas. The notation includes notes with accents and rests, with rhythmic patterns indicated by letters L, R, S, and O below. A legend defines S = Slap and O = Open.

Example ten

Example ten musical notation showing a phrase on the congas. The notation includes notes with accents and rests, with rhythmic patterns indicated by letters L, R, S, and O below.

Example eleven

Example eleven musical notation showing a phrase on the congas. The notation includes notes with accents and rests, with rhythmic patterns indicated by letters L, R, S, and O below.

The whole thing will look like this...

Example twelve

Example twelve musical notation showing a full phrase on the congas. The notation includes notes with accents and rests, with rhythmic patterns indicated by letters S and O below. A legend defines S = Slap and O = Open.

Time Resumes ->