INDIAN RHYTHMIC CONCEPTS FOR DRUM SET PART 17

This month we'll look at another way of manipulating our basic five beat Kandam unit (TA TI KI DA TUM).

Firstly we'll make each individual beat three semi quavers long.

Example 1

TA   TI   KI   DA   TUM

OTHERWISE WRITTEN

Next, two semi quavers long.

Example 2

TA   TI   KI   DA   TUM

Last but not least, each beat becomes one semi quaver long.

Example 3

TA   TI   KI   DA   TUM

Now we'll put these three examples together and see what comes out. Notice how the first beat of each group is accented and how the second group has been thrown off beat by the length of the first group. The format runs like this;

1 x ex 1...1 x ex 2...3 x ex 3.

This all adds up to a bar of 10/4.

Example 4

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

We can make this fit into 4/4 by playing 1$\frac{1}{2}$ bars of 4/4 time before we play it. This will then fill up 4 bars of 4/4. This will be our basic working framework for this article. It looks like this.

Example 5

We can now look at a number of different ways of playing this on the kit. It is all about thinking about what you are going to play before you play it. It is very common in Indian percussion to use pre-conceived compositions, particularly if they go wildly across the bar lines with specific intent to end in a particular place. Of course, this all has to be balanced with spontaneity and things that just happen. Here are three different ways of playing within the framework. The rhythms written are optional.

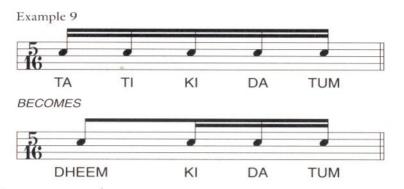Example 6

Example 7

Example 8

For the rhythm in ex 8, the right hand is playing the hi hat and the left hand plays the snare. Coming back into this rhythm after the fill may mean missing the first note on the hi-hat so as to avoid playing three right hand notes in quick succession. This will depend on the tempo.

For the final variation all the gaps in the first two units have been filled with the bass drum. The third unit meanwhile has been changed as below.

Example 9

TA   TI   KI   DA   TUM

BECOMES

DHEEM   KI   DA   TUM

The final result looks like this;

Example 10

Try not to drown out the flams by playing the bass drums too hard. When you play the drum kit, bear in mind that you are playing a variety of different drums and cymbals, all of which have different volumes. It is important to balance all these different volumes into one even sound.

To finish off we'll go back to examples 6, 7, 8 and 10 and play more time before we take the fill. To make it fit at the end of a thirty two bar block we need to play $28^{1}/_{2}$ bars time. Counting is essential. When you've done this, calculate how to make it fit at the end of these time spans;

8 bars, 12 bars, 16 bars, 24 bars.

It is always a good musical idea to work in these sort of time lengths because, at the end of the day, you will come across a lot of music which uses them. There is little musical value in doing things as if they were exercises, ten or a hundred times, as if one were doing squat thrusts.

Of course, there is also a lot of music written in odd groupings of bars. Even when you count these off you can work in quadruple numbers, for example, $13 = 3 \times 4 + 1$. 11 would be $2 \times 4 + 3$.

To count off the $29^{1}/_{2}$ bars mentioned earlier, I would approach it like this; $16 + 8 + 4 + 1^{1}/_{2}$ (+ fill)

Once you get used to counting in units comprising of groups of four, you can switch off from it and begin thinking more about the music.