

the fabric of time

INDIAN RHYTHMIC

CONCEPTS FOR DRUM SET PART 20



Stylistically there are two very different styles of Tabla playing, Folk and Classical. They are different both in nuances of the playing and the sort of compositions played. The most noticeable difference, however, comes in the way the bass tabla (called the Duggi or the Byha) is played. The style adopted by most folk players relates to Dholak playing (double ended folk drum from North India), and involves very quick movements with the hand across the bass head creating a characteristic glissando from low to high. Classical players, on the other hand, claim to be far more articulate with the bass drum, using slower glissandos and more subtly controlled open tones. This control is extremely difficult and stands as one of the main characteristics of a great Tabla player.

As far as compositions are concerned, the classical would learn far more intricate traditional pieces (often kept secret by the top players of the main Tabla schools – called Gharans – in India) and have a much wider technical vocabulary.

Learning classically seems to put the emphasis on developing a solo technique, while folk playing has the more direct goal of learning to accompany light tunes. However, three things that classical and folk players have in common is their ability to play in odd meters; their articulation of speed on the drums and the facility of being able to convert compositions from one time signature to another while retaining the character of the original feel. For example, let's take a standard snare drum rudiment, the single ratamacue (written in 12/8):

Ex 1

LLR L R L RRL R L R

I'm going to convert it by removing the dot from the crotchet. This will make it 10/8, which in North India would be called Jhap Tal.

Ex 2

DHI NA DHI DHI NA TI NA DHI DHI NA

Here's the single ratamacue in Jhap Tal:

Ex 3

LLR L R L RRL R L R

It's easier to decipher when written in 5/4:

Ex 4

LLR L R L RRL R L R

We'll now add the bass drum playing a pattern derived from the South Indian clapping cycle called Khanda Jhapu:

Ex 5

LLR L R L RRL R L R

With our rudiment it looks like this:

Ex 6

LLR L R L RRL R L R

Now for the addition of the hi-hat foot:

Ex 7

LLR L R L RRL R L R

Next we'll incorporate the toms into this pattern:

Ex 8

LLR L R L RRL R L R

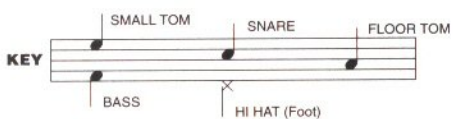
Ex 9

LLR L R L RRL R L R

Ex 10

LLR L R L RRL R L R

Now we'll go on to a Swiss rudiment called Pataflafla. If you've never heard of this before, don't despair, neither have 99% of the population of Switzerland. Here it is:



Ex 11

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

Converted into 7/8 it becomes this:

Ex 12

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

It's easier to understand in 7/16

Ex 13

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

Now for our bass drum and hi-hat pattern, this time based on the South Indian seven-beat clapping cycle called Misra Jhapu.

Ex 14

With the converted Pataflafla it looks like this:

Ex 15

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

To finish off with we'll play all the left hand grace notes on the small tom and all the right hand grace notes on the floor tom.

Firstly our standard Pataflafla:

Ex 16

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

Now the Pataflafla conversion:

Ex 17

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

I know it's a dragadiddle, but that's all for this month. See you next time.