

the fabric of time



INDIAN RHYTHMIC

CONCEPTS FOR DRUM SET PART 22

This month we'll look at some different ways of rearranging some simple rhythmic phrases to make them more interesting. I came across this method in South Indian drumming. It is used to avoid too much repetition of similar phrases and to add some spice to long rhythmic compositions called 'Corvays' (or 'Jhatis' in North India). To begin with we'll take a simple six beat phrase, very common in South Indian percussion.

Example 1

Ex1

TA DI KI DA TUM

Now we'll play it three times.

Example 2

Ex2

TA DI KI DA TUM TA DI KI DA TUM TA DI KI DA TUM

It's not difficult to notice that the maths of this is 6 + 6 + 6. The obvious thing to do is to take one beat off of our first unit and add it on to our last unit. We will then have 5 + 6 + 7. This is our basic concept. It looks like this.

Example 3

Ex3

TA DI KI DA TUM TA DI KI DA TUM TA DI KI DA TUM
(1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5 6 1 2 3 4 5 6 7)

Note to Ex3

Unit 1; 5

TA DI KI DA TUM

Unit 2; 6

TA DI KI DA TUM

Unit 3; 7

TA DI KI DA TUM

Let's now adapt this for use as fills on the kit. You may have noticed it's an odd length so for 4/4 it will not start on beat one. It fills up nine quavers, so we'll have to count off seven quavers before the fill. It will start on the '&' of beat four of the last bar we play before the fill. This skeletal structure of four bars will show you the starting place. For this I've used the 6/6/6 format.

Example 4

Ex4

TA DI KI DA TUM TA DI KI DA TUM TA DI KI DA TUM

Now with some time written in and a minor exploration around the kit for the fill.

Example 5

Ex5

Now, to hell with the 6/6/6 - we're going to go for the 5/6/7.

Example 6

Ex6

TA DI KI DA TUM TA DI KI DA TUM TA DI KI DA TUM

Now for some time and a bit of involvement for the bass drum in the fill. It is important to state the three different phrases, otherwise it just becomes a linear semi-quaver phrase. This is the mistake a lot of western musicians make when they learn Indian music. They don't listen to the phrases, they go by the bar line and the pulse.

Example 7

Ex7

A1 (4/4/4)

A2 (3/4/5)

A3

B1 (5/5/5)

B2 (4/5/6)

B3

C1 (7/7/7)

C2 (6/7/8)

C3

C4 (6/7/8 But using phrases)

TA DI KI DA TUM TA DI KI DA TUM TA DI KI DA TUM

You can do this with any phrase you might like to repeat three times. Here are some different ones, firstly written in their basic repetitive format, then in their altered format and finally within the four bar skeletal structure which shows you where to start

were you to use them as a fill within a 4/4 rhythm. Have fun and be creative with these. See how many different ways you can play them around the kit. Become your own judge as to whether what you come up with is good or bad.