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INDIAN RHYTHMIC

CONCEPTS FOR DRUM SET Part 27

Having had such an enthusiastic response about the articles analysing songs by using the South Indian system, I feel it only too necessary to wind down this series of Fabric of Time with a similar analysis of a slightly more complex tune. The track in question is from the Steve Khan album entitled *Public Access*, and has David Weckl on drums.

This may sound terribly back to front, but if you want to work out the drum part for a particular track then the last thing you should listen to is the drums. Why?... Because the first things you should listen to are the melody, the bass part, the song's form and the feel etc. In this instance the track begins with a rhythmic guitar riff. Before you work out what the drummer plays when he comes in, you need to work out its form. In this instance the riff is in 17/8 and looks like this:

1 RHYTHM OF GUITAR INTRO



If we use the Indian system to analyse it we could divide it like this; 7 + 1 1/2. (It's easier to think of this as a slow seven and a quick three.) Here it is with the Indian bols:

2 SOUTH INDIAN VOCAL KEY 7 & 1.5



Another approach would be to think of it as 8 + 9:

3 SOUTH INDIAN VOCAL KEY 8 & 9



Yet another approach would be 4 + 4 + 4 + 5:

4 SOUTH INDIAN VOCAL KEY 4 & 4 & 4 & 5

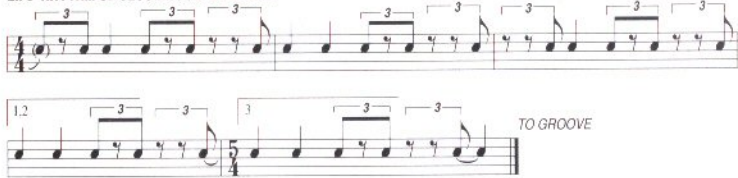


It's entirely up to you to find ways of dividing this rhythm, these are not the only ways. Once you are comfortable with a particular way, try reciting the words and playing over the top. Better still, keep the words and the melody of the tune in your head whilst playing over the top. The concept behind the drumming on this part of the track is focused on embellishment of the phrases rather than playing time. The drumming comes in waves which lead around to the first beat of the riff in a similar way to time cycles in Indian music.

After the entry of the bass we get a build of intensity up to an accented stop which introduces the second guitar riff in 4/4 triplets for eight bars. This is punctuated with stops on bass and drums (see accents on Ex. 6 and Ex. 7) before building into a

repetitive groove. Here is the rhythm of the second guitar riff from its entry after the stop:

EX 5 RHYTHM OF SECOND GUITAR PHRASE



What we have to listen to next is the bass part. In this instance, once the full groove has come in, the bass pins the whole thing down more than the drums. Here is the rhythm of the bass part:

EX 6 RHYTHM OF BASS PART FOR GROOVE



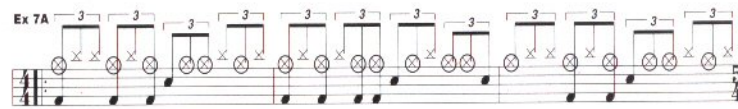
Here are the bare essentials of the full drum groove played over this. It's starting point is similar to an Elvin Jones-style Afro Cuban 6/8, but in 4/4 triplets with an odd bar added. It's important to start with the basics of a groove, ie. the melody between the bass and snare. On the recording there are a lot of 'diddle bits' between the bell of the cymbal, the hi hat and the snare. If you go for these before you understand the basic groove then you may never understand the groove properly. It's also worth noting that if the bass was playing a more complex part then the drums might well have to be simplified:

EX 7 BARE ESSENTIALS OF BASIC DRUM GROOVE MELODY BETWEEN BASS AND SNARE



Now try adding your own thing on top of this. Here are some possible ways of approaching it:

1. Standard shuffle with the hi hat whilst the other hand plays the snare.
2. Right hand plays the ride, left hand hi hat and snare. The right hand will follow the bass pattern whilst the left will fill in on the hi hat as well as play the snare beats notated. It will look like this.



Now we will use some idiomatic South Indian phrases in 5/4 to give us some ideas for changing the 5/4 bar in the groove. The 'A' part of these three examples is the rhythmic base whilst the 'B' part is in the interpretation on the drum kit:

VARIATIONS FOR THE 5/4 BAR

Ex 9A

Ex 9B

Ex. 9 has the last 12 notes divided into three groups of four:

Ex 9A

Ex 9B

Ex. 10 is divided into three groups of five:

Ex 10A

Ex 10B

Now we'll look at some ways of manipulating Ex. 2. If we refer back, we'll see that it comprised seven crotchets plus three quavers. With this as our basic idea, we'll change the length of the crotchet section to build some new frameworks. Here are a few ideas. The first example is the same as the Middle Eastern rhythm, Karsillamas:

Ex 11A

Ex 11B

Ex 11C

Ex 11D

Now, some ways of adapting these for use on the kit. These will be played as quavers and semi quavers:

Ex 12

Ex 12.5

Ex 14

Ex 15

If you listen carefully to Ex. 15 you will hear its ambiguity. This pattern could be written in 3/4. It would look like this:

Ex 16

Here are the two patterns juxtaposed in what can only be described as typical Indian fashion:

Ex 17

Here is a vocal key to understanding the groove change. Try speaking the bols and clapping the Thalum. It's worth noting that the clapping at the 9/16 level is just a continuation of the straight crotchet clap during the 3/4 level. Don't be fooled:

Ex 18

That's all for this article and this series of Fabric of Time. I hope it has spurred off a lot of ideas in you all. See you soon for some intricate hand drumming.