

NOTES FROM NETWORK OF SPARKS ALBUM ONE

BEAT DISPLACEMENT AND TIHAI CONCEPTS USED IN THE KANJIRA SOLOS AND THE FRAME DRUM VOCALISATIONS



Five Main Rhythmic Units				
No. Of Beats	Words	Subdivision	Name	
3 beats	takita	---	tisram	
4 beats	takadime	---	chaturusram	
5 beats	tati kidatum	2 + 3	kandam	
7 beats	takita takadime	3 + 4	misram	
9 beats	takadime tatikidatum	4 + 5	shankeernam	

In the early stages of lessons in South Indian drumming, students learn to juxtapose units from this set and speak them aloud while clapping a steady quarter-note pulse. Let's do something similar by using a simple device for throwing the rhythm off beat. The following example employs the syllables of the 4-beat unit three times, followed by the 3-beat unit played once. This is a repeated cycle, with each syllable being a 16th note in duration.

1a

ta ka di me ta ka di me ta ka di me ta ki ta

Now let's clap quarter notes against this cycle. The whole pattern will go off beat after the first cycle and will take four repeats to get back on beat again. (The cycle is fifteen quarter notes long.)

1b

ta ka di me ta ka di me ta ka di me ta ki ta ta ka di me ta ka di me ta ka di me ta ki ta ta ka di me ta ka di me ta ka di me ta ki ta ta ka di me ta ka di me ta ka di me ta ki ta

To make this phrase fit into 4/4, we will employ a device common to North and South Indian drumming. It is a form of rhythmic cadence whereby a piece of rhythmic work is brought to its conclusion by repeating a motif three times, calculating it in such a way as to make the last note of the third phrase become the first note of the following bar. This is called a "tihai" (or sometimes "arudie" in the South).

In example 2A we can see that the form is made up of our original phrase (three times) plus our rhythmic cadence. This is now sixteen quarter notes long. Try speaking the passage through in a cycle while clapping quarter notes.

2a

ta ka di me ta ka di me ta ka di me ta ki ta ta ka di me ta ka di me ta ka di me ta ki ta ta ka di me ta ka di me ta ka di me ta ki ta ta ka

di me ta ka di me ta ka di me ta ki ta ta ti ki da tum ta ta ti ki da tum ta ta ti ki da tum

Example 2B shows the construction of the rhythmic cadence of the three phrases. Each pattern is best thought of as a group of five (tati kidatum) plus an accented note that is an 8th note long.

2b

ta ti ki da tum ta ta ti ki da tum ta ta ti ki da tum ta etc.