

HAND OVER HAND

Syner Hanesworth and his brothers Byron and Andrew were the people who passed this along to me about 35 years ago. On a visit to Cuba in the 1980s I heard a group singing this song to more complex triplet drumming patterns.

Bass tone tone Bass tone tone Bass tone tone Bass tone tone Bass tone tone
R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R
Ay My My So To So To Ye

Quite a few people at any age or stage of ability may have trouble "getting" this very simple way of playing triplets. Steady alternation of hands, all beats have equal time value, and you reach out to the other side of the drum to make basses and do your tones on the half of the drum nearest you. Start slow and see if it is easy for you or the person you are trying to teach. Some people "get it" in seconds and are happily imprinting their synapses and mylinating their nervous system pathways with a primordial 12/8 path rhythm -- no trouble at all.

Anyone not getting it can go super slow until it feels o.k. and then let it speed up very gradually.

Another way in might be to do many R L R triplets with a pause after each Bass tone tone. Then do as many L R L units of three. Now alternate units of 3s.

Once into this rhythm an easy song to sing along with it as you drum is:
Ay My My Soto Soto Ye

Again, if this is easy for you, just sing along with your instructor or with any recorded example (eventually, the CD in the back of the book).

The first three syllables coincide with the right hand beats, the Soto's coincide with the first two beats of the next two triplets and the last Ye falls on a Right bass. You don't sing for the next three triplets at first, but this hole can be filled by a soloist singing "Ay My My Soto So" with the first syllable "Ay" overlapping the last syllable "Ye" of the chorus. This is called "overlapping call and response" and once started is hard to stop. The "call" could be instrumental or vocal. Ditto the response. We do this with horns and drums in some 12/8 Path bands.

From this foundation various 6/8 and 12/8 bell beats can be added. One bell beat will do, but two interlocked patterns creates a lot more excitement and entrancing possibilities. A sekere part, or shakers going back and forth in doubles rather than triplets, can also deepen the groove and enhance the possibility of trance.

Pat Campbell:

Imagine holding on to a rhythm for 35 years--What a way to go, Charlie! But then, so it is with so many parts of our daily doings that, through repeated practice, develop into the habits and behaviors that are us, personified. My piano teacher, Jonas Svedas, taught me techniques, positions, fingerings for passages that I will never shake but always remember. It is inspiring, contemplating that we could do so well as the

brothers Hanesworth and Mr. Svedas, leading our own students to music that is blazed in their memories as unforgettable to them. Their immediate sensory perception of a musical phrase or pattern, or a turn of the fingers and a twist of the lips (in an embouchure), is a first step in that journey of making music memorable—indelible—to them. Repeated experiences (i.e., practice) draws concepts and skills into the short-term memory which, over further experiences (i.e., extensive practice) will become embedded in the very long-term memory. Hand-over-hand, and finger-by-finger, music finds its way into a kind of permanence within us.

While on the subject of making music memorable, it is fascinating to consider how music is learned, stored, retrieved and recalled at later times of our lives. An introduction to the phenomenon is found in Bob Snyder's Music and Memory (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000). As well, there is a useful review article by Andrea R. Halpern and James C. Bartlett (Aging and memory for music, in Psychomusicology 2002, 18: 10-27) and a model of how memory works in musical circumstances (Berz, William A., Working memory in music, in Music Perception 1995, 12, 353-364).

Again, almost any book by Oliver Sacks will have some moments when something like permanent muscle memory comes into play: a toe twitches in time to an Irish jig and a leg long paralyzed is on its way to recovery; after three generations of visual-literal "phonetic sign language" promoted as "progress" the more holistic and primary peoples' sign language finally resurfaces in *Seeing Voices*.