

Ganesh
Anandan



THE INNER PULSE

a workshop on rhythm
for beginners, intermediate or advanced

Duration – 3 hours (with a 20 min. break)

Based on South Indian classical percussion or Karnatic percussion, the following workshop including mnemonic exercises and rhythms are adapted to western musical practices and notation. Percussion is communicated orally by the use of sound syllables which are used to form phrases, rhythmic combinations and compositions. The sound syllables or **Solkattu** were developed to resemble the actual sounds of a drum called mrdangam. In the workshop they are adapted to frame drums and to suit the needs of a group.

THERE ARE 2 TYPES
OF WORKSHOPS :

1. Basic Rhythm and Konogol
2. Kanjira and frame drums

1. Basic Rhythm and Konogol

In this workshop I teach the participant to do three functions simultaneously namely: **Konogol**, vocal repetition of a rhythmic phrase. **Tala** or time cycle, counting and walking exercises in a specific foot pattern. **Clapping** a rhythmic phrase or playing a simple percussion instrument like shakers and wood blocks.

During the course of the workshop a simple composition with several parts is taught. The group is divided into 1 or 2 sub-groups each with their own parts to clap and vocalise while everyone is united doing the same foot pattern. The simple rhythmic parts become complex when the sub-groups lock into each other and people have fun doing it.

The first part is walking a specific foot pattern either in a 3, 4 or 5 step pattern. This exercise helps to get familiar with the concept of Tala and the repetition of a given time cycle. I also use the traditional Karnatic or South Indian method of counting Tala with the use of fingers and specific hand gestures.

The second part is getting acquainted with the repetition of phonetic syllables or Solkattu in the form of rhythmic phrases while simultaneously counting Tala or time cycle.

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The third part is clapping a specific rhythmic pattern while walking the Tala or time cycle.

The fourth part is playing an instrument and interpreting the Solkattu or rhythmic phrases. Each phrase contains melodic, timbral and technical information that are interpreted on the drum. They are equally helpful to a melodic instrumentist as well.

2. Kanjira and Frame drums

In this workshop I use a variety of approaches depending on the level and needs of the group. A simple Tala or time cycle is chosen and explained by the use of Solkattu or vocal mnemonic phrases. The structure of each Tala is often subdivided into smaller units and the counting is done by a method using finger counts, claps and waves. Each Tala has a different counting pattern and this system of counting is discussed in detail.

The second step is playing the instrument using the fingering techniques contained in each solkattu. As mentioned before each solkattu phrases have technical, timbral and melodic information and have often been compared to paradiddles. These phrases are adapted and played on the frame drum such as the Bodhran. (my book and dvd based on this subject is called Solkattu – South Indian drumming techniques for Bodhran is also available).

For this part of the workshop I recommend a 16 inch to 22 inch frame drum or Bodhran built for finger drumming (not the traditional Irish bodhran played with a tippie). Some participants may sometimes bring other types of tambourines such as riqq, tar etc and these drums are adapted in the tambourine section of the workshop.

In this section I use the South Indian kanjira technique as the main reference. For this purpose I suggest the participants bring a kanjira or a small hand held tambourine. In the case where there are group of mixed tambourines, I use kanjira and adapted playing techniques.



www.fingerworks.org

ganesh@fingerworks.org

PRODUCTION NOTE

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