

New World Rhythmatisms

Deep Play With Drum, Dance, & Chant



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New World Rhythmatism

everyone leads
no one follows
everyone follows
no one leads

between structure and spontaneity
freedom thrives
life is renewed

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Opening Invocation:

*drum, dance, and chanting meditations
are the rhythmic explorations
of our many diverse relations
evolving towards the one*

*discovering themes on our variations
we honor the voices of many nations
creating artistic revelations
of our unity*

Preface to the 5th Edition

In the years since we first published this guidebook to NWR, the method has continued to grow and deepen. As with any creative practice, time reveals what is most useful and enduring, as well as those elements that do not serve our goals of beauty and connection. More than anything, our years of NWR have shown us just how much can be done with simplicity. It is in that spirit, that we decided to reorganize the guidebook into a focused manual for drummers, and to make special efforts to reach out to the specific needs of the beginning student. The dance portion of NWR has also grown tremendously, but it has become more evident than ever that dance instruction is best shared through other media.

For those who are familiar with versions of our original guide book, you will note that the sections specifically addressed to the dancers have been omitted. We retained the discussion of the three core elements, (drum, dance, and chant) but have focused this book on the drum side of the ensemble. In addition, the calls have been further developed and refined, a more useful and expanded collection of vignettes are included, and there are a few changes to the core rhythm selections. Some of the very advanced polymeter material has been removed, along with a portion of the multi-surface playing methodology. The section of exercises for beginning students and ensembles has been greatly expanded. The organization of the book has also shifted to better reflect these changes and our goal of providing a resource that will be of real use students interested in bringing these powerful tools to their own ensemble of friends.

Most importantly, we decided to provide this manual at low cost in electronic format so that everyone who was interested would have access to this revolutionary way of playing and creating together. We wish you bountiful satisfying journeys of laughter, love, and artful discovery in this New World of Rhythmatism.

– Joshua and Deborah, June 3, 2014

Introduction

New World Rhythmatism (NWR) is a collaborative approach to community percussion, dance, and chant that utilizes a shared set of calls, gestures, and generalized structures to create refined group improvisations. Each individual in the ensemble participates as both leader and follower, applying NWR methods to co-create complex musical ideas and group choreographies that spontaneously unfold over the course of each session.

A session is a convergence of rhythmatists who contribute the gifts of their practice to inspire, provoke, and nurture each other in a shared exploration of artful relationship.

NWR's emphasis on dynamic interactions between drummers, dancers, and singers (chanters) results in a collaborative experience that combines self-expression and group creativity in an endless process of discovery. The interdependence between these three arts propels the action from moment to moment as participants inspire, support, challenge, and adjust to each other's experimentations. The quality of relationship and depth of practice that grows out of this creative communion becomes the emotional content of the art. In NWR, the beauty is as much a reflection of how we play together, as it is an expression of technical skill.

If you are new to the worlds of drum, dance, and chant, New World Rhythmatism provides a map of the wide territory before you. It also offers the tools to pursue further studies within traditional cultural styles. If you are an experienced musician, singer, or long time drummer or dancer, New World Rhythmatism is a unique method that you can use to reinvigorate or build a flourishing artful circle of your own.

NWR can be applied to any drum or dance form that combines a defined vocabulary with improvisation and group participation. A defined vocabulary means that there are specific rhythmic phrases or movements that *can be learned*. Improvisation means that the vocabulary is amenable to spontaneous rearrangements and the production of new phrases. Group participation simply refers to the involvement of multiple people at once.

Some Background

The following background material is provided to help place New World Rhythmatism in the wider context of similar community based rhythmic arts. Developing a deeper understanding of NWR's distinctive approach requires some discussion of its intentions, aesthetics, and relationships. If you're ready to move on to the method, feel free to skip this section.

"I remember... Your hands are waving like strange butterflies, transparent and delicate as wings of sylvan paper. They are shadows of flesh and light in the orange flicker of the circle fire. I recall, with the quality of motion slowed to the rhythm of the crescent moon, the crack and the grumble, the watery undulation of the drum as it echoes against the dancing flames. From above, all is moving, a blur on the surface of eternity, but there is an awesome stillness below. Boundaries of mind and flesh have become porous and the sound of all being flows through you like a breeze between the ripe stalks of the harvest field. You are luminous and complete in the vast circle of the drum. You have cultivated its magic. You have unveiled its wings and disappeared between the spaces of image, word, and memory." – Joshua Levin from The Tree, The Drum, and the River

For those who have felt and responded to the call of the drum, the entire world pulses beneath our feet. Every day is filled with the rhythms of life and every encounter echoes the textures and relationships of song and dance. This fusion of living and playing not only makes sense to the rhythmatist, but actually becomes the content of sense itself. It begins to color our perceptions and shape our daily movements. A circle of players and dancers blends into a circle of friends and acquaintances. The shifting patterns of a drummer's tapestry reemerge in the winding rivers of everyday speech. The enthusiastic solo of an office co-worker recalls a moment of fireside ecstasy, while the troubled grind of a lover's quarrel contains the strange echo of sonic chaos in the ensemble.

We discover this elegant correspondence because drum, dance, and chant mirror daily experience by creating similar but alternative kinds of relationship to self, others, and the environment. Instead of toiling in our conflicting emotions and energies, we play, sing, or dance them. Instead of negotiating the labyrinth of speech, we soar in each other's ocean of song. Instead of sitting separately, we move, breathe, and dance together. Instead of remaining within the familiar environments of our everyday lives, we seek and create spaces of inspiration within circles of candlelight and beneath the incomparable starlit sky. As we learn from playing in this way, the mysteries of rhythm become embodied experiential metaphors that are good to think with. They point from the microcosmic experiences of these rhythmic arts to the macrocosm of social life and personal history. Within a safe container of collaborative creativity, drumming, dancing, and chanting teach lessons of connection and conflict, change and stability, mastery and practice, as well as judgment and unconditional positive regard.

Decades have passed since Mickey Hart and Jay Stevens began to put words to the mysteries that so many were rediscovering in the late 80's and early 90's (see Hart and Stevens, *Drumming at the Edge of Magic*). Today, this revolution of rhythm is passing into a new stage of growth. Together with the liberation of expressive song and dance, a wellspring of rhythmic arts have begun to gush with refreshing potential. Contained within the great waves of this long collaborative groove, rhythms within rhythms join life to life, culture to culture, and part to whole, weaving out from the source to satori in a polyrhythmic mandala of affirmation, empowerment, and discovery.

There are, in this kaleidoscope of rhythm, as many bridges as there are rivers to cross, and each offers its own glimpse of the mystery that pervades the one. Yet, it is also this diversity that is, and will continue to emerge as the principle challenge to the unifying, transcendent ideals of the drum, dance, and chanting circle. The Western circle is a product of a diffusion of knowledge and technologies from a wide range of cultures. The instruments, aesthetics, technical skills, and rhythmic fragments that find their way to the circle are far removed from their original social and temporal contexts. This fact has important consequences for participants. The Western circle lacks the shared social

relationships and aesthetic expectations that make coherent production of traditional music and dance possible. With the exception of a core of devoted players, most people don't know each other's songs or dances. By way of contrast, learning to drum in village Africa, Asia, or the Middle-East, is deeply connected to, if not inseparable from, ethnic, family, religious, and age based relationships.

Some circles have responded to these challenges by looking to and emphasizing traditional cultural styles. This solution is encouraged through classes, workshops, and other kinds of formal instruction. Classes in African, Middle-Eastern, Balkan, Latin, Cuban, South Asian, and even Japanese styles of rhythm and dance attempt to translate these diverse, socially embedded musical traditions, into educational contexts that will be accessible to Western students.

Except for rare instances of highly controlled and facilitated circles, this turn towards tradition breaks down when students from diverse backgrounds converge at the circle with vastly disparate expectations concerning what and how to play with one another. The challenges of cultural diversity are further exacerbated by wide disparities in the skill and experience of the participants. In addition, the size of Western drum circles can far surpass the standard size of any traditional ensemble. In North America, it is not uncommon to witness a drum circle with more than ten jembe drums and four or more dunduns being played at once. In contrast, African, “Jembe performances can range from a minimal ensemble of one jembe and one dundun, as is sometimes the case in Bamako marriage celebrations, to a full ensemble of one lead jembe, two or more accompanying jembes, and three dunduns, as is typical in Guinean ballet troupes. One or two dunduns is the norm in Mali; in Guinea three dunduns are more common” (Charry 2002: 222). Taken together, these aspects of diversity and size, help to explain much of the organization as well as the chaos that can be observed in the open Western circle. At the same time, the inclusiveness of Western drum circles is an essential part of their appeal. The circle calls out for all to join. All are welcome to transcend the boundary of the audience and to become an active participant in the creation of life made visible through rhythm, song, and dance.

It is this inclusiveness, this quest for unity out of diversity that is the central challenge of the circle. And it must be so, for is it not the experience of isolation and difference that is the central challenge to unity in life itself? This is as true for the African diaspora as it is for post-modern North Americans. As this reality begins to come into focus within the cultural nexus of the Western drum circle, the music is teaching us new ways to reach out to each other, to find common ground, to learn each other's aesthetic languages, to listen... to listen... to listen... for the word, for the rhythm, for the smile, that joins me to you, and we to all. People are beginning to gather and teach not of "the way," but of "a way" of drumming and dancing together across the great divide. When the fancy licks and fiery moves have at last burned away, when there is nothing left to lose or prove, we shall find that it is the community that we play, not the drum or the dance, and it is in this music of friends and family that the real magic thrives.

“I can say that producing good music from a cultivated voice can be achieved by many, but the art of producing that music from the harmony of a pure life is achieved only rarely” (Mohandis K. Gandhi, 1958, cited in 2006, Weidman).

New World Rhythmatism

New World Rhythmatism is an approach to community percussion, dance, and chant that combines flexible structures with a giant helping of improvisation. It is a way of playing together that works with, rather than against, the fragmented multicultural realities of our modern world. Describing the emergence of the distinctly American art of Jazz, renowned instrumentalist Wynton Marsalis explains, “Jazz objectifies America... The real power of Jazz, the innovation of Jazz is that a group of people can come together and create art, improvised art, and can negotiate their agendas with each other. And that negotiation *is* the art” (Ken Burns, *Jazz*, Episode 1: Gumbo).

Like Jazz or Blues before it, New World Rhythmatism transcends the individual cultural roots that inspired its creation. While honoring traditional forms of drum and dance, NWR

is a distinctly modern method for people to play and explore together as co-creators on an endless journey of discovery, growth, and beauty. It provides a means for devoted lay people, rather than lifetime professionals, to make art out of their own negotiated agendas, and to make community out of their art. It also offers a perspective that nurtures the insights and possibilities of deep rhythmic experiences. *At its heart, New World Rhythmism is a method for creating dynamic loving relationships through the rhythmic arts.*

Unlike almost all of the other systems for learning these arts, New World Rhythmism is not so much about what to play. Instead, it's about how we can have tremendous fun learning to play, connect, and grow together through collaborative rhythmic creativity.

"The power of music depends on how it is defined and used in social and intellectual life, as much as on its musical structure... The ultimate goal is personal and social transformation: music-making must be used to enhance personal consciousness and experience in community" (Blacking 1987).

New World Rhythmism includes Drum, Dance, and Chant

While it is possible to do each of these in isolation, drumming, dancing, and chanting are interdependent strands in the web of rhythmic arts. Indeed, these three elements are repeatedly found together in the diverse cultures of the world. Wherever one looks, drum, dance, and chant consistently appear as three keys to the gates of ecstasy and wonder. This does not mean that your own practice must combine all three, or even that every culture includes them all. Each one of these arts is a world unto itself. But the methods of New World Rhythmism are designed to integrate each of these into one spontaneously unfolding experience. When all three are effectively combined, the power accessed by each one is magnified. Keeping in mind that drum, dance, and chant have been essential spices in the most magical musical meals of the world's cultures, feel free to include as much or as little of each element as you choose.

For the purposes of this guidebook, chanting is assumed to be one of the activities engaged in by both drummers and dancers. It is not treated as a physically separate area of the ensemble. However, this does not mean that the chanters can't have their own space. In fact, Beth Quist, one of the extraordinary artists who tours with Bobby McFarren's all vocal Voicestra, describes their process of singing together in a way that shares a very close kinship with the ideals of New World Rhythmatism. In the case of the Voicestra, which performs all vocal improvisational chant, the ensemble creates their musical magic without any practice or planned themes at all. Bobby simply starts a musical idea and the ensemble members build on it together in the moment. These musicians are able to achieve this free-flowing fountain of musical expression because they have all spent many years working within rigid forms of structured improvisational music. New World Rhythmatism provides a way for drummers and dancers to join with chanters in creating a group improvisational experience of similar depth, artistry, and relationship.

Why Drum?

Drums offer endless opportunities to integrate, celebrate, recreate, innovate, discover and experience a wide range of human relationships. In addition, they provide a means to explore these connections without the frustrations, misunderstandings, and distractions of words. At its very best, drumming transcends the limitations of language and brings the musician into embodied relationship with her world.

When we play a drum for ourselves, we find that a fitful stream of thoughts and worries may dissolve, or be momentarily realigned in response to the unifying engagement of rhythm. When we play in a particular environment, we find that the voice of the drum demands that we adjust to the specifics of the context. We respond to the quality of the room, the field, and the company we are in. And when we play with others, we discover that rhythm connects us in extraordinary ways. In each of these three relationships, the drum invites us to become one with ourselves, our context, and our community.

This is the power of what drummers refer to as entrainment, and what is otherwise known as integrity; that is, a state of being in which all aspects are in alignment. When we are in synch with ourselves, our environment, and each other- when we become one with all of these elements, we partake in the energy and the many-faceted gifts of the whole. This is the insight within the adage that, “the sum is greater than its parts.” When we join together in rhythm, our individual light is multiplied by the radiance of that sum. The drummer soon discovers that she will fly far higher when she is in step with her friends and her world, than she will ever fly alone. To know this in one's bones is extraordinary wisdom.

Why Dance?

Dance is so close to the heart of living that it blends into life itself. Although we may not regularly perceive ourselves as dancing across space and time, we are all weaving our bodies through strange and unpredictable lands. It is but a small step to embrace this movement as the very nature of being in the world. If rhythm describes energy, dance describes energy in motion. If chant is poetry, then dance is poetry in motion. Dance completes the circle of these arts by embodying and expressing our inner energy and the poetry of life's essential relationships. Dance transcends the metaphor of *art as living*, and emerges as *life itself*. The depth and power of dance flows from its fusion of body and mind with the mysterious energies of life.

When dance and drum are brought together, cross-cultural archetypes of unity and multiplicity are reproduced and resolved. Drumming and dancing reveals the unity of energy and form as well as the countless wonders of their creative synergy. To drum and dance is to participate in a timeless ritual that mirrors the universal mysteries of matter and motion. On a more direct level, practicing dance is practicing being in embodied relationship with our selves, each other, and our environments.

Why Chant?

Chant harmonizes mind to body and body to rhythm. With chant, we call upon life's breath to creatively express the mysteries of living. As we do so, we dissolve the veil that separates the experience of *watching* life from the experience of *being fully alive*. In chant, we become enchanted, and our voice, so often a fit of starts and stops, is unleashed in a river of sound. Chant is here distinguished from song, in that the process and passion of its production is given greater priority than the aesthetic quality of the final product. In other words, the value of the chant is sought first in the internal experience for the artist.

When we combine chant with meaningful words and phrases, we crystallize the emotional energy of rhythm and movement into focused concrete intention. Our words become the vehicles by which the passions of dance and music are given specific identities. In this way, chants are like prayers or spells that are carried into the world on the wings of sound. Chant unleashes the power and the limitations of names, the possibilities of affirmations, and the productive focus of intentions, hopes, and dreams. In the Middle-East, it is sometimes said that music without words is like, "religion without scripture" (Broughton 1999). In contrast, South Asian classical tradition views words as distractions from the musical essence of life. For the rhythmist, each of these represents different potentials. We may surrender to the infinite inclusive power of essential sound, or we may draw upon the focused worldly transformation that is contained within the word.

New World Rhythmism: Method

supporting video tutorials at:

<http://www.mythfits.com>

...NWR is a martial art with all of art and none of the martial...

When playing through the ideas this guidebook, it is essential that you don't become too lost in your conscious, thinking mind. Work with an idea for a while and then put the book aside so that you can listen, feel, and internalize. The conscious mind helps us get it in there, but we must surrender to our deeper selves if we wish to make and experience the magic.

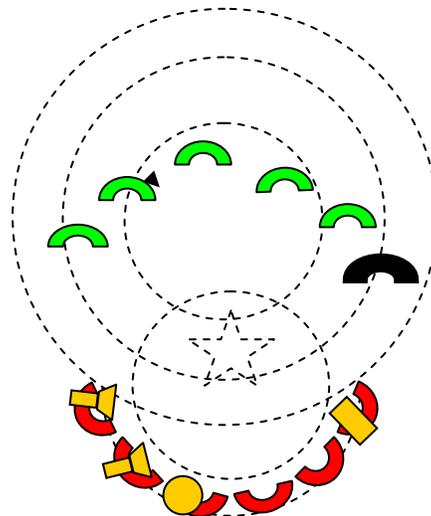
Ensemble Formation

It is essential that both drummers and dancers are arranged so that they can clearly see, hear, and respond to calls and changes. Several formations meet this requirement and serve as the basis for creative variation while sustaining the necessary organization to practice New World Rhythmatism.

Basic Formation – Single Ensemble and Dancers’ Arc

Diagram II

Six dancers in arc formation.
Six percussionists (Instrumentation is flexible).



The Basic Formation:

In order to maintain relationship with the drummers, ensemble dancers are generally positioned along an arc. The drummers are also arranged in an arc (between 90° and 110° angle) that maximizes eye contact and listening between the players, while also connecting them to the dancers. For purposes of making calls and developing interesting variations, both drummers' and dancers' arcs can be subdivided into left and right sides.

The particular location of instrumentation within the ensemble is variable depending upon the desires, tastes, and interests of the group. There are different advantages to different arrangements. Three layers of instrumentation corresponding to three lines of rhythmic relationship are apparent in the configuration of drum ensembles around the world. These are: 1) bass; 2) midrange/lead; and 3) wood/shaker/bells. Each of these elements supports and enhances the others, and each provides creative opportunities for variations in expression. Players also change their instruments in response to the needs of the moment.

Increasing numbers of players require additional creativity in organizing the ensemble.

Talking About Time:

NWR makes important distinctions between “measures” and “cycles.” This is the result of the larger phrases that become established during a fruitful session. For example, when an ensemble mate calls, “Beladi three, Gawazee one, cycle,” a four-measure cycle has been initiated (Beladi and Gawazee are each rhythms with a duration of four beats per measure. See the section “Ensemble Rhythm Rudiments” for notation). The rhythmists are now thinking in terms of this longer unit. If one of them were to call “Gawazee” again, this rhythm would not begin until the end of the four-measure cycle. Furthermore, the call would reset the length of the cycle to one four-beat measure of Gawazee. This flexibility also applies to rhythms of different lengths. The phrase, “Chiftitelli, Beladi, cycle,” would initiate a repeating phrase that would span a total of three, four-beat measures. This is because Chiftitelli is two bars in length (eight quarter notes) and Beladi is one.

The ability to produce and follow longer phrases sometimes requires additional cues to properly communicate the beginning and duration of the cycle. This can be achieved by calling “**one**” at the beginning of a phrase, *and then repeating this call when the cycle comes round again. Note that the length of the cycle is not apparent until the second “one” is spoken.* For clarity the call, “one,” is usually repeated three or more times. At the other end of the spectrum, when a cycle is too short or fast to properly insert a call, the duration can be extended by using “one” to establish a longer phrase. This provides the necessary time to make any desired changes. Anyone in the ensemble may call, “**show me one,**” to request help identifying the beginning of the phrase. In this case, a playmate will respond with a verbal “one” at the appropriate spot in time. Dancers can establish the duration of a cycle by using the call “one” in the same manner as the drummers.

Drum and Dance Calls

Each of the calls and improvisational structures introduced here represent a microcosm for your exploration. Cultivate each one carefully and separately as a part of ongoing ensemble practice. Years of fertile material is covered in just a few short pages. The music and the ecstasy come from savoring the qualities of each element rather rushing to taste them all. Eat slowly and enjoy.

The following calls produce an enormous range of expressive possibilities. *The calls can be sung or spoken by any ensemble member, including the dancers* (note that all rhythmists must be tuned in to each other in order to make calls that are appropriate to the moment). *The ability to play or dance while making calls is an acquired skill.* It takes practice. In the beginning, or when executing a complex series of calls, you may wish to mindfully stop by finding a smooth way to integrate your silence or stillness into the dynamics of the moment. Once you are still or silent, practice making these calls and exploring their effects. Beginning dancers might also practice making calls by first returning to the comfort and ease of a simple repetitive movement.

Changes in rhythm always begin on the first beat of the measure immediately following the rhythmic cycle in which the call was completed. For example, if the ensemble is playing an eight beat cycle, and the call is made on beats six and seven, the change is made on beat one of the next cycle. If the ensemble was playing in an eight beat cycle, and the call did not complete until beat two of the next cycle, the change would not initiate until the entire cycle in progress was completed. It is easiest for ensemble mates to follow a transition when the call is initiated on the first beat of the cycle.

In order to make these transitions in the moment, ensemble members must be present and attentive to each other, maintaining connectivity and awareness with their brothers and sisters in the circle. The process of making calls for the circle is, in itself, a rewarding and illuminating activity. When we make calls, we explore and cultivate our preferences.

We discover what works and what does not. We also develop greater awareness of the interaction between all of the elements in the ensemble. This in turn, influences the way that we play our own parts. In addition, the opportunity for everyone to lead changes in the circle unleashes new creative possibilities. For example, a bass drummer can be making calls directed to members of the bass section, while someone in the midsection is making a complementary but different call. Meanwhile, the dancers are engaged with each other's changes and are initiating their own improvisational structures. The permutations are infinite, and all of this unfolds without choreographing the dance or scoring the music.

A basic premise of all calls and NWR structures is that ***everything is relative to now.*** ***Any changes are made in relationship to wherever the ensemble is at the moment.*** This minimizes the necessity of keeping track of ideas that passed by long ago, and helps to keep awareness in the present. For example, a call to double the tempo, "double-time," is understood in relationship to the current tempo. The tempo at which the jam began is irrelevant. Except for the rare instance that remembering is unavoidable, this principle is sustained throughout NWR.

Drum Calls

Notes: 1) **A** and **B** may refer to individuals, sections, or groups of instruments. If a group specification is omitted, all musicians are included; 2) “#” refers to cycles, “N” refers to subunits like quarter or eighth notes.

Fundamentals

Function	Call	Description	Duration=	Conclusion
Converge in the River	A to the River	Play unison subdivisions of the pulse without any time signature or stylistic variation (<i>see expanded discussion</i>).		Indefinite
Play a rhythm, rhythm series, or named content break	R1#, R2#, R3#...or play#	Play named rhythm 1 for # of cycles before moving on to rhythm 2, etc. If numbers are not given, the cumulative cycle is played indefinitely. If a number is given, the sequence will end upon completion unless the call "cycle" is added at the end. "Play" is sometimes used in combination with another call. In this case, "play" refers to the existing cycle.	Cycles	Unique event / Indefinite
Match	A match B	A copies what B is playing. If A is omitted, all drummers match B. B may continue to subtly modify the pattern.		Indefinite
Match caller's rhythm	matchme	drummers match the caller's rhythm and cycle.		Indefinite
Cycle	Cycle	Sustain the current sequence of rhythms and calls indefinitely.		Indefinite
Home	A go home	Return to the core unembellished structure of the rhythm or established cycle.		Indefinite
Go back one call	Return	Play whatever structure or series of calls immediately preceded the current one.		Indefinite
Set the beginning and ending of an undefined cycle	one	Designate the location and duration of a cycle by repeating "one" at the beginning of the cycle.		Indefinite
Ask for help finding the one	show me one	Ask for the location of the first beat of the cycle. One of the ensemble mates will call out "1" at the appropriate spot in time.		Unique event

Vocalize the cycle	singit #	Music pauses and the entire ensemble sings the cycle that is being played. If the number is omitted the duration is one cycle.	Cycles	Unique event
Tighten Up	tighten up	Reconnect with each other, the groove, and dancers.		Indefinite
Bring attention to emotion and musicality	sweeten it	Mindfully attend to the emotional content of the moment and the relationships in the music and the dance.		Indefinite
Ornament the cycle	A weave it	Ornament and embellish the cycle. <i>(See expanded discussion).</i>		Indefinite
Exclude individual or section from call	all but A	Exclude an individual or section from a call.		Unique event
Repeat the last call sequence	again	Repeat the last sequence of calls.		Unique event
stall for time	and...	Putting “and” at the end of a call lets the ensemble know that the call is not complete. Members will wait to execute the call until the final elements have been added.		Unique even
Individual time-out/in for dance calls	A’s out or A’s in	Exclude or include A from improvisational changes or interactions with the dancers. All individuals are assumed to be in if this is unstated.		Indefinite
Substitute one element for another	Swap A for B.	Exchange element A for element B. The variables can refer to almost anything, rhythms, individuals, instruments, etc.		Indefinite
Basic Variations				
Function	Call	Description	Duration=	Conclusion
Staggered beginning	A layer in	A start playing at staggered separate intervals. This call can also be used to create gradual transitions from one rhythm or call to another, i.e., “layer into the river.”		Unique event
Staggered ending	A layer out	A stop playing at staggered separate intervals.		Unique event
Fade in to start	A sail in	A quietly begin and slowly increase volume. Pace is set by caller.		
Fade out to end	A sail out	A slowly decrease volume into silence. Pace is set by caller.		

End abruptly	A cut in #	A abrupt ending in # number of cycles.	Cycles	Unique event
Steady	steady	Hold the current tempo / volume indefinitely. Or, keep playing through the upcoming calls/changes.		Indefinite
Speed Up	Sup	All musicians slowly increase tempo. Pace is set by caller.		Unique event
Slow Down	Slowit	All musicians slowly decrease tempo. Pace is set by caller.		Unique event
Set New Tempo	Reset	Stop and let the caller count in a new tempo, "4,3,2,1." The caller may choose to count down from the cycle length. This is helpful when using this cue to start a new rhythm. Example: "reset Beladi"		unique event
Volume Up	A level up	Increase volume and stabilize. Pace is set by caller.		Unique event
Volume Down	A level down	Decrease volume and stabilize. Pace is set by caller.		Unique event
Equalize Volume	A match levels	Match the instrument volume levels so they are neither above or below the levels of the other rhythmatis.		Unique event
Highlight someone's playing.	Shine on A	Support an individual's creative expression (adjust volume, hold steady). This could be an accompanied "solo," or simply embellishment.		Indefinite
Unaccompanied Solo	A taxim	Unaccompanied solo, possibly arrhythmic. The soloist can call for specific support accompaniment.		Indefinite
Low line only	breathe # or lowline #	Play the bass fundamental of the rudiment. If the # is omitted, breathing continues indefinitely.	Cycles	Unique event / Indefinite
High line only	hold your breath # or highline #	Play the high line of the core structure. If the # is omitted, the high line continues indefinitely.	Cycles	Unique event / Indefinite
Punctuation				
Function	Call	Description	Duration=	Conclusion
Break	A break #	A pause the music.	Cycles	Unique event
More detailed break	A count #	A pause in the music.	Quarter notes	Unique event
Down beats	N downs	Drummers play N number of quarter note down beats in unison.	Quarter notes	Unique event

Up beats	<i>N ups</i>	Drummers play <i>N</i> number of quarter note up beats in unison.	Quarter notes	Unique event
Double down beats	<i>N double-downs, or d-downs</i>	Drummers play <i>N</i> number of 16 th note pairs on the down beats in unison.	Quarter notes	Unique event
Triple down beats	<i>N triple downs</i>	Drummers play <i>N</i> number of 16 th note triads on the down beats in unison.	Quarter notes	Unique event
Double up beats	<i>N double-ups, or d-ups</i>	Drummers play <i>N</i> number of 16 th note pairs on the up beats in unison.	Quarter notes	Unique event
Triple up beats	<i>N triple-ups</i>	Drummers play <i>N</i> number of 16 th note triads on the up beats in unison. If the last beat lands on the one it becomes the first beat of the next phrase.	Quarter notes	Unique event
Roll	<i>N rolls</i>	Drummers fill <i>N</i> number quarter notes with 32 nd notes in unison.	Quarter notes	Unique event
Half-time roll or "the river"	<i>N half rolls, or N h-rolls</i>	Drummers fill <i>N</i> number quarter notes with 16 th notes in unison.	Quarter notes	Unique event
Triplet rolls	<i>N trips</i>	Drummers fill # number quarter notes with 24 th note triplets in unison.	Quarter notes	Unique event
Half-time trips	<i>N half trips, or N h-trips</i>	Drummers fill # number quarter notes with 12 th note triplets in unison.	Quarter notes	Unique event
Gimme	<i>gimme N (rising or falling)</i>	Drummers play <i>N</i> number of 8 th notes in unison from pianississimo to crescendo (rising) or reverse (falling), and then rest for a number of eighth notes necessary to complete the closest multiplication of 8 (<i>See expanded discussion</i>).	eighth notes	Unique event
Nail-it	<i>Nail-it N</i>	Drummers play <i>N</i> number of whole notes. <i>N</i> is usually omitted and the call continues indefinitely.	whole notes	Unique event
Advanced Variations				
Function	Call	Description	Duration=	Conclusion
Double Time	double-time	Double the tempo.		Indefinite
Half Time	half-time	Half the tempo.		Indefinite

Metamorphosis	A, B, metamorphose	A and B copy what each other are playing. When they have established a pleasing and stable match, one of them modifies the pattern and the other matches again. This process continues indefinitely. If no individuals are identified, the entire ensemble explores the transformation (See <i>expanded discussion</i>).		Indefinite
Create a polyrhythm	A spread out	Play a <u>different part</u> that complements the core structure (See <i>expanded discussion</i>).		Indefinite
Compose a polyrhythm together	Weave it together	One by one, drummers add their own <i>repeated</i> spacious phrase/rhythm. Each additional phrase complements the one's already in progress.		Indefinite
Change an ornament/ phrase / rhythm / instrument	X Change it or X change the Y	Drummer X changes the Y. If Y is omitted, the call refers to the ornament or phrase. Useful in combination with the calls "weave it together, and spread out."		Indefinite
Add an element to the end of a cycle	add A	Add a rhythm, # of beats, or other element to the end of the established cycle.		Indefinite
Drop an element from the cycle	drop A	Remove a rhythm, # of beats, or other element from the established cycle (See <i>expanded discussion</i>).		Indefinite
Create a named rhythm or cycle	name it A	This attaches a named title to the cycle in progress, enabling it to be simply called, or recalled by name.		Unique event
Embed a rest in a call	# of # or N of N	Play # of a call and then hold silent until the second # is reached. Example, "3 of 4 downs," would mean play 3 downs and then hold silent for the forth quarter note. Similarly, "3 of 4 Beladi," would initiate a cycle with three measures of Beladi and one measure of rest.		Indefinite
Align pulse with one meter in a polymeter rhythm.	switch pulse	Switch the pulse to the other sided side of the polymeter (see <i>advanced concepts</i> section for details).		Unique event
Restructure phrase	half-it and cap-it, or 2nd half-it and cap-it	Play the first (or second) half of the rhythm twice, and then play the whole rhythm once.		Indefinite
Conversational Elements				

Function	Call	Description	Duration=	Conclusion
Duet	A#, B#, Duet, or A, duet	Call and response duet. If the number is omitted, the caller sets the duration of the cycle by clearly articulating the length of the phrase. If the second name is omitted, the caller is the duet leader. The rest of the ensemble levels down. The duet participants can either play or be silent between their parts. Drums that are excluded from A and B, play throughout the cycle.	Cycles	Indefinite
Assign or claim the lead for interaction with dancers	A get it, or I got it.	A drummer assigns himself or drummer, A, to interact with an individual dancer, a group of dancers, or the full arc.		Indefinite
Call and Response	A, B, c#,r#	Sections A and B alternate playing and being silent. A calls for # number of cycles, B responds for # number of cycles. If the number is not specified, the duration is one cycle.	Cycles	Indefinite
Echo	echo A N	Drummers copy an improvised phrase played by A before returning to the established cycle. If N is not defined, the length corresponds to the current cycle.	Quarter notes	Unique event
Catch	catch A#	Entire ensemble, including the dancers, listens to and then copies A's phrases. If # is omitted, continue indefinitely.	Cycles	Unique event / Indefinite
Give an unaccompanied solo break to A	N to A	Individual gets N number of beats to fill while the ensemble is silent. This call can also be used to give other elements to an individual. Example: "4 downs to A"	Quarter notes	Unique event
Pass an element around the circle	pass it	Pass an improvised element from the person making the call to the right. Return to the left when the end of the ensemble is reached. Combines with other calls. Examples: "# to A and pass it," or "A fill it and pass it," or "4 downs to A and pass it."		Indefinite
Fill / ornament a break in the cycle	A fill it	"A" fills an established recurrent break in the cycle.		Unique event

Stop and layer in from left to right	cascade A to B	Drummers stop and then layer in, in series from A-B. The number of cycles is set when the second player chooses to layer in. If A and B are not given, the cascade begins on the left side of the bridge.	Cycles	Unique event
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Some basic examples (see “Vignettes” below, for many more. See “Ensemble Rhythm Rudiments” for reference to the specific rhythms being used):

1) **Goal:** Play a repetitive cycle of Beladi for three measures and Maksum for one measure:

Call: “Beladi three, Maksum one, cycle”

Result: infinite repetition of: (Beladi, Beladi, Beladi, Maksum)

2) **Goal:** Play Beladi for one measure and Maksum for one measure:

Call: “Beladi”

Result: infinite repetition of Beladi

Call: “add Maksum”

Result: infinite repetition of (Beladi, Maksum)

Ending Solos and other Structures

Many of the NWR processes have no predetermined ending. Endings or transitions are made by initiating a new call. For example, when a soloist has completed his exploration, she might begin by playing a familiar rhythm and then calling, “layer in.” Similarly, two players engaged in a duet might complete their duet by calling “go home” as they finish an appropriate phrase.

Drum Calls: Expanded Descriptions

Downs, Ups, Double Downs, etc.: If no finite number of beats is given, drummers play the call indefinitely, e.g., “downs” would direct all drummers to play quarter notes until a new call was made. The ensemble sustains the length of the cycle as they play so that

the transition point (the one) remains available. For example, if the ensemble is playing a four beat cycle when they are called to “downs,” the drummers will keep track of the one as they play the stream of quarter notes. If a new rhythm or transition is called, it will begin on the one as usual without having to reestablish the beginning of the cycle.

Weave: Weaving the rhythm means elaborating and embellishing the core structure of accented beats. A weave tends to be more filled in than the rudiment, but nevertheless continues to express the essential identity of the rhythm. The key distinctive accents are sustained in a preponderance of the measures. Ornamentation can be woven within a single measure or across a longer cycle. This kind of stylistic elaboration is an important part of the rhythmic traditions that extend from S. Asia through the Middle-East, the Maghreb, and into Spain. In an NWR ensemble, weaving creates opportunities for melodic interaction between rhythmists as various ornaments are placed in relationship to each other. For example, one player might insert a roll between beats in the first half of a measure, while another player comments on this with a different roll at the end of the measure. Similarly, there is nothing to stop one ensemble member from copying or joining in on another’s weave. In other words, we can weave with each other as well as within our own phrase. Ornaments are inserted and dropped in accordance with the rhythmist’s musical sensibilities. When too many people are weaving without remaining sufficiently connected and in tune with one another, ensemble mates will gently call them back “home.”

Spread Out: This device facilitates the creation of layered rhythm and the discovery of novel rhythmic ideas. Spread out assumes that the ensemble is already unified in a rhythm. When the call to spread out is made, drummers are invited to construct new rhythmic parts that compliment and empower the established idea. The creation of a new supportive part depends on a thorough familiarity with the mood, feel, and direction of the core rhythm. Not all additions are complementary, and it is easy for the rhythm to become cluttered and directionless. If the new layer is discordant, ensemble mates are expected to call the innovator back to the root with a friendly, “go home.” If a rhythmist hits upon a

particularly engaging complimentary part, she might invite a few or all of her playmates to match her.

Gimme # (# of #/rising/falling): Under normal circumstances, drummers will play N number of 8th notes in unison from pianississimo to crescendo (rising) or reverse (falling), and then rest for a number of eighth notes necessary to complete the closest multiplication of 8. For example,

- 1) “gimme 9”
- 2) all of the drummers will play nine 8th notes and rest for seven 8th notes before returning to the one of the established cycle. The total of sixteen is determined by the fact that 16 is the nearest next multiplication of eight after nine (the number that was called).

In other words, *in a cycle of any duration, the ensemble assumes that they will count eighth notes to the nearest upcoming multiple of eight.* Another example:

- 1) ensemble is established in a cycle of Beladi-Ayoub
- 2) “gimme 5 rising”
- 3) drummers play a crescendo of five 8th notes, and is silent for three 8th notes before returning to the Beladi-Ayub cycle.

There are occasions, such as when the ensemble is playing an odd time signature, such as 5, 7, or 9, beats to the measure, that a multiple of eight is particularly inappropriate. In order to exercise more control over the “gimme,” the caller can denote a second number indicating the total beats in the “gimme.” Fore example:

- 1) “gimme 9 of 14”
- 2) drummers play nine out of fourteen 8th notes before returning to the one of the established cycle.

Add and Drop

Add will attach a rhythm or other element to the end of the established cycle. Drop will remove a rhythm or other element from wherever it is located in the established cycle.

Examples:

- **Goal:** The ensemble is already sustaining a cycle of Beladi, Maksum, and you want to add Gawazee to the end of the cycle.

Call: “add Gawazee” while playing the cycle.

- **Goal:** The ensemble is already sustaining a cycle of Beladi, Maksum, Gwazee, Maksum, and you want to drop both of the Maksum from the cycle.

Call: “drop two Maksum”

Result: infinite repetition of (Beladi, Gawazee)

- **Goal:** The ensemble has been playing Masmoudi for some time, and you want to alter the rhythm by dropping the last half of it.

Call: “drop the last four beats”

Result: only the first half of Masmoudi will be played

Special Percussion Ensemble Calls:

The River: A call “to the river” is an invocation of the transcendent power of inclusion, drawing ensemble members back from their wanderings to reunify in the purity of pulsing 110-150bpm synchrony: simple, rapid, even, 16th notes. When all ensemble members play this pulse together they become pure entrainment. No individual stands apart from any other, and the rhythmic possibilities are without limit. From within this river of beats, the tempo can be modulated, any time signature is available (as the count is both one and infinity), and consequently, any rhythm can be initiated. In New World Rhythmism we often use the *river* as a means of flowing smoothly from one rhythmic terrain to another. Taking care to not establish a fixed cycle, the river can be dynamically modulated in unison by collectively changing the color and texture of the tones being made. For example, drummers who are closely connected to each other can produce delicate, drawn

out fluctuations in volume, skillful shifts from high to low tones, and other sonic wonders arising from deep entrainment.

There's poetry in it:

"Time is the substance from which I am made. Time is a river that carries me along, but I am the river; it is a tiger that devours me, but I am the tiger; it is a fire that consumes me, but I am the fire." – Jorge Luis Borges

"The rhythmist lives between here and eternity. We float on the coils of the great river of time, and it is us who count the measures with lives that hardly span the breadth of a dream. For there is no moment like this moment, and still this instant knows no end save the veils of thought that we draw down upon it. The river, at once changing and changeless, rushes out from a wellspring of cosmic fire, a single beat exploding in a pool of endless silence. From within these waters of light, the children of the river draw handfuls of liquid time up unto the Sun and declare, 'behold this stream that flows within us, that is us. See how it seems to dance in and between these hands. We are as this wave rolling out from the one stone in the one pool at the center of the one thing. Our hands strike like that stone and the heads of our drums open like that pool. We echo in the reflection of these waters and our hearts pound with gladness.'

So it is that all rhythm begins in the silence of the ever present, ever flowing river of time. At the moment that the second beat is played, we have drawn our selves up from these undifferentiated waters and planted a seed on the bank of the river. This first seed is the flash of consciousness, the awakening of a new life. It is the self that has emerged from the selfless and that will ultimately grow back towards its unspeakable source. The first seed is the pulse; the fundamental abstraction that subdivides eternity so that it may take fruit in the present. As the life's blood of the drum, the pulse defines segments of consciousness that are just long enough to contain all the primary beats of what may grow into a sublime tree of rhythm. Although it is defined by fixing a duration, a specific quantity

of liquid time, its count is both one and infinity. It is the measure of the eternal now. It laps upon the shore in endless waves, a cosmic heartbeat that echoes into the abyss.”

– Joshua Levin, *The Tree, The Drum, and The River*

Metamorphosis and Rhythmana: Subtle Transformation in the Moment

The drum call, “metamorphosis,” initiates a process of rhythmic evolution that transcends all rules and conventions within the drum ensemble. It points to rhythmic destinations that are well beyond the capabilities of verbal explication. ***Metamorphosis is radical entrained symbiotic rhythmic evolution.*** The method is simple, but its mastery is not.

Metamorphosis is initiated from the stability of the river or any unified rhythm. Out of this entrained foundation, a drummer adds a clear, simple, lyrical variation on the preexisting theme. The other drummers then match this variation to the best of their ability.

Differences in the match derive from disparities in skill, the particular instruments being played, and eventually, subtle stylistic choices that are intended to enhance the shifting rhythmascape.* Once the new variation is established in the collective groove, another variation is initiated. Variations can grow from any of the drummers, in any direction, extending well beyond volume, tempo, and beat, towards the expansion of a single measure into long lyrical phrases. This cycle of stability and change continues indefinitely, with the rhythm evolving into entirely unknown realms. Eventually, the known beats of an ordinary caterpillar become the unknown and extraordinary rhythms of a unique butterfly. When the metamorphosis reaches its musical completion, or the ensemble members collapse in the maelstrom of transformation, all return to the unity from which the process began. A drummer may also lead the way out of metamorphosis with a new call.

This process can happen within measures or minutes. It all depends on: 1) how well the group is entrained; 2) how skillfully and naturally the variations are introduced; 3) the particular melodic ideas that are emerging; 4) whether it is necessary to recover or stabilize after each transformation. A tight group of players who know each other and who share wide vocabulary and comparable skills, can rapidly and spontaneously evolve

rhythmic ideas with the kind of fluidity that is usually reserved for written, orchestrated, pieces of music.

Begin practicing metamorphosis by limiting participation to a few chosen players. The rest of the ensemble holds the root rhythm, or river, while the smaller group explores and transforms around it.

The full expression of metamorphosis requires that all drummers are able to: 1) hear and identify all rhythmic variations while holding their own rhythm; 2) fluently place a beat or a rest in any space in time. If we can't first hear and match each other's rhythms, we can't metamorphosis. Complete mastery of these skills represents the highest technical achievement for any rhythmist, and consequently, has only been recounted in myth and legend. For the rest of us, a solid ability to hear and approximate rhythmic variations is sufficient to begin exploring this subtle path to rhythmia.

When ensemble members become adept at metamorphosis, even its fluid structure dissolves. Rather than attempting to directly copy a change that was initiated by an ensemble mate, an advanced drummer is able to intentionally create a new part that is nevertheless a perfect complement to the change. If this advanced technique is poorly executed, the ensemble will sound like a fragmented, chaotic mess, so try it only when the basic process of metamorphosis through imitation has been mastered. In the end, there is no substitute for depth of relationship between ensemble mates. Shared vocabulary and musical mileage give life to the rhythms of change.

Vignettes (call combinations)

NWR call combinations function as tools for: 1) *punctuating moments in time*; 2) *creating rhythmic dialogue, sharing, or teaching ideas in the moment*; 3) *creating artful sonic spaces and temporal journeys with particular kinds of mood, motion, and atmosphere*. It is this last function of combined calls — suggesting a short scene or a sketch — that inspired the name “vignette” in the Hawaii NWR ensemble.

Vignettes are written in the order that the calls are made, with each new bulleted line indicating that a call is being made while the previous call is being executed. Each numbered line represents an undefined period after the completion of the previous line. For readability, commas are placed between calls that are on the same line.

Example:

- 1) Beladi
- 2) Four downs
 - Four double downs
 - Break
- 3) Masmoodi

In this example, the ensemble is called to Beladi. At some undefined point, “four downs” are called. During the execution of the downs, “four double-downs” are called. During the execution of the double downs, a break is called. After the break, the ensemble returns to Beladi. At some undefined point, “Masmoodi” is called.

The following vignettes are examples to help provide a brief introduction to some of the things that can be done with combined calls. In order to be used and available in the moment, we’ve found that it is helpful to have practiced internalizing the vignette just like we memorize and embody a rhythm. It takes time and repetition. The more we do it, the more fluid and spontaneous they become. Over time, certain combinations simply become part of your repertoire.

Punctuating Moments in Time

Endings

A. Four measures of Beladi and end:

- 1) Beladi 4, cut

...or if Beladi was already the established cycle:

- 1) play 4, cut

...or simply “cut” during the fourth measure.

B. Match in 16th notes and fade to an end

- 1) River to sail out

Note: Whether or not a final beat is played on the one of the next measure depends on the musicality of the moment. In the following vignette, the final beat would be played even though it is not identified in the call (talk through it and you will hear the need for the last beat on the one of the final measure).

C. Four down beats, four double down beats, and end:

- 1) 4 downs, 4 double downs, cut

D. Four down beats, eight eighth notes, and end:

- 1) 4 downs, gimme 8, cut

E. 1) 13 rising, cut

F. 1) 4 triple ups, nail it

- again
- again, cut

G. 1) 4 trips, 4 half trips, nail it

- Again
- again and cut

H. 1) 4 trips, nail it

- 4 half trips, nail it
- again
- again and cut

I. 1) 4 trips, 4 half trips, nail it

- again
- again and downs
- roll
- sail out

- J.** High energy ending:
- 1) ayoub, sup
 - 2) one (set a four measure cycle)
 - 3) eight trips, cut

- K.** 1) 3 drum bell 1, gimme 3 of 4
- again
 - again, cut

- L.** End in waves
- 1) sail out
 - 2) sail in
 - 3) sail out...etc...

Note: Some rhythms, or parts of rhythms can make for good endings. Here are two examples of this:

- M.** The ensemble is playing up-tempo Saidi, Malfuf, Maksum, etc.
- 1) 3 Bolero, cut

- N.** Another version of the same idea:
- 1) Places and Spaces, cut

...or

- 1) 3 Places and Spaces, cut

- O.** Elaboration of the same idea:
- 1) Places and Spaces
 - 2) Drop last four (drop last four beats)
 - (wait for third cycle) cut

Breaks and Transitions

- A.** Play a cycle comprised of one measure of Chiftitelli and a break lasting four counts:
- 1) Chiftitelli, count 4, cycle

...or

- 1) Chiftitelli
- 2) add count 4

...or

- 1) Chiftitelli
- 2) add break 1

- B.** Play one instance of the current cycle and add a break lasting the duration of the current cycle:
1) play 1, break 1, cycle
- C.** Play three instances of the current cycle and add a break lasting the duration of the current cycle:
1) play 3, break 1, cycle
- D.**
1) 4 h-rolls, 1-bo's beat, break 1
- E.**
1) Samba 1, clave 1
- F.**
1) 4 downs, gimme 8
- G.**
1) 4 downs, gimme 8, 4 H-rolls
- H.**
1) gimme 8, break, gimme 8, break, 4 trips
- I.**
1) 4 trips, count 4
- J.**
1) 4 H-trips, 4 trips, count four
- K.**
1) 4 down, count 2, 2 H-rolls
- L.**
1) count 4, 2 down, 2 H-rolls rising ("rising" is borrowed from "gimme")
- M.**
1) 2 H-rolls, gimme 6 of 6
- N.**
1) 3 H-trips, 1 trip
2) again
- O.**
1) four trips, four rolls, count four, Ayoub

P.

- 1) gimme 12 of 12, H-roll 2

Q.

- 1) 6 H-rolls, 2 trips

R.

- 1) gimme 8, break, gimme 8 break
 - again
 - 4 trips, break, 4 trips break
 - again
 - 12 trips rising

S. Nine-Toe's Tower of Indefatigable Luminescence – Reprise – P. Billings

- 1) 4 down (1 or 2 cycles pass)
- 2) 4 down, 4 up (1 or 2 cycles pass)
- 3) 4 down, 4 up, gimme 8 rising (1 or 2 cycles pass)
- 4) 4 down, 4 up, gimme 8 rising, clave

Creating Rhythmic Dialogue, Sharing, or Teaching Ideas in the Moment

Exactly the same only different

- 1) cut (if necessary)
- 2) A weave Beladi 8, pass it, and cycle

Passing plays (pass # of beats for improvisation around the ensemble)

- 1) # to A, pass it

Or...

- 1) add break #, A fill it, pass it

Tripping on you

- 1) four half trips, four trips, four to A

Echo Pass (call and response is passed around, with each call initiated by a new drummer)

- 1) Echo me 4, pass it

Duet to it

- 1) Saidi, Gawazee, cycle
- 2) A,B (*dancers*) duet
- 3) C (*drummer*) duet

Match Me, Echo Me/Cycle

“match me,” “echo, cycle,” and “echo, match me,” are particularly useful tools for communicating and introducing new elements into the ensemble in the moment. In the process of weaving or spreading out, a drummer may hit upon a particularly interesting variation. She can then use *match me* to call one or more of her ensemble mates to join in this new variation. Matthew Connors wrote a vignette that uses this idea:

- 1) Maksum
- 2) self (your name), spread out (call spread out for yourself)
 - 1.2.3.4.5.6.7.8.
 - drummer plays DD.kD.K.Dk.DD.K.
- 3) match me (remaining drummers join in on this variation)
- 4) name it, “Makdum.” (over time, we might become familiar with this and revisit it)
- 5) breathe
- 6) A, weave one, pass it
- 7) layer into Maksum (return to where we started).

The repeated use of *match me* will produce a kind of controlled metamorphosis as matched variations lead further away from the core structure of the original cycle.

Echo provides an even more direct way to share or teach a musical idea; *Echo* clears a space to hear the concept without any competing parts, and then directs the ensemble to repeat the idea. If *echo* is combined with *cycle*, “***echo me, cycle***,” a call-and-answer pattern is initiated in which a single idea or series of ideas can be introduced and practiced in the moment:

- 1) echo me, cycle (on one, the drummers stop, the lead plays a phrase lasting one cycle, drummers repeat it, and then the lead plays again, etc. Use this to teach / share new riffs).
- 2) “hep” (call the vignette to a close)... or “match me/it” to establish the new phrase as the rhythmic cycle.

Creating Artful Spaces and Temporal Journeys

Ensemble breathe

- 1) ensemble, low line (drummers and dancers all play/dance the low line).

Moving in Stereo – *P. Billings*

- 1) left side low line, right side high Line
- 2) layer to percussion (gradually shift to playing percussion instruments in the appropriate low or high lines)
- 3) Left side, Right side: C2R2, Cycle

Basic BellyDance Set

- 1) Beladi, Gawazee, cycle
- 2) gimme eight, Chiftitelli
- 3) slowit
- 4) four half-trips, eight trips, Malfuf
- 5) sup

The Ocean – *P. Billings*

- 1) level down (if necessary)
- 2) level up slowly, level down slowly, cycle
- 3) breathe
- 4) drummer A: weave it 1, pass it

Journey's Twilight – *M. Conners*

- 1) breathe
- 2) all but bass, layer to percussion
- 3) percussion, spread out
- 4) A, hand drum (call one of the percussionists to pick up a drum)
- 5) shine on A
- 6) layer into the river

Belly Phone

- 1) Saidi 2 (establish 2 measure cycle)
- 2) dancers, eight to A (lead dancer), and pass it
- 3) drummers, eight to B, pass it (each drummer highlights each dancer)
- 4) Saidi

Heavy Light

- 1) low bass illuminati 1, break 1, cycle
- 2) block or bell layer in
- 3) bass / block steady, A fill it and pass it (around and around until saturated)
- 4) hand drums, fill it with the river rising (crescendo's of sixteenth notes in the space)
- 5) Illuminati
- 6) sup

Beladi Fractals

- 1) Beladi 4
 - (on fourth cycle of Beladi) Masmoodi
 - (on second cycle of Masmoodi) halftime
 - (on first cycle of Masmoodi) double-time
 - (on second cycle of Masmoodi) Beladi
- 2) one, cycle (on first beat of Beladi)

Nine in mind

- 1) Masmoodi
- 2) gimme 9
- 3) count 9 double-time
- 4) gimme nine of nine to double-time karsilamah

Example Set II

- 1) Beladi, dancers bring it up
- 2) Gawazee, eight to A (dancer), pass it
- 3) shine on A (drummer)
- 4) dancers, go home, bring it in
- 5) Malfuf, dancers turn it
- 6) sup
- 7) 8 trips, count 4
 - Chiftitelli, slowit
- 8) slowit, sail out

In Times of Trouble...Fix it with a call

In life and NWR there are no “do-overs.” There is no call for “erase” or “delete.” Instead, music teaches us that we must learn to adapt to our flaws and mistakes in the moment, turning mishaps into magnificence through an endless practice of skillful recovery. When you are participating in the ensemble and something is amiss, a call is botched, or you are crashing into a wall of rhythmic chaos, *keep playing and use your NWR tools to reestablish harmony in the flow.* Over time, you will find that these corrections become integral to the process. As much as possible, keep the negotiations inside the music, the dance and the flow. It is tempting and familiar to stop playing and revert to intellectualizing about what should or shouldn't have happened. Save these discussions until after the session, and focus for the time being on the most graceful recovery possible. These moments of uncertainty energize our awareness and awaken our senses to the moment. Genuine human ingenuity is called forth to snatch order and beauty from the jaws of chaos and confusion.

**Concepts, Methods, Examples, and Practice:
Learning to Play and Learning to Play Together**

New World Bridges: Two Great Rivers of Rhythm

From the vantage point of our global village, it is possible to discern two distinct but overlapping approaches to rhythm that have spread across the continents of S. Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Americas. The first approach, call it the Northern route, is based on a conversational, dialogic, or lyrical model. The second approach, the Southern route, is rooted in a relational model. In the North, we have the rhythm cultures of India, Central Europe, the Middle-East, Maghreb (North Africa), and Iberia. The South includes the vast cultural territories of Africa, from south of the Sahara to the African-Diaspora in the West Indies and the Americas. In general, but with numerous detailed exceptions, these two distinct streams have conceptualized and practiced the rhythmic arts in ways that are very different from each other, but are remarkably consistent within these global regions.

In the North, rhythmic cycles are produced through the skillful manipulation of discrete linguistic elements. Syllables that often correspond directly to percussive sounds are combined in limitless permutations to produce rhythmic languages that parallel melody, poetry, and human conversation. As with these linguistic analogies, rhythmic phrases can become enormously extended, in some cases taking minutes to repeat or conclude. The S. Asian classical traditions of *konnakol*, which will be familiar to many in the spoken *bol*s that accompany tabla performance, provide excellent examples of this. Consistent with the expectations of a dialogic model, there is a general tendency towards unison, that is, towards playing and interacting with— rather than counter to— the other musicians. The tabla, the dombek, and the cajon are often expected to match the precise phrases of their respective instrumentalists or dancers. Hossam Ramsey, renowned master of the Egyptian dombek, expresses these ideas clearly:

“As a tabla [*Egyptian dombek*] player, when I play my drums to a song, I pay very close attention to every musical phrase that is being played. As a member of the group, I should definitely know what the rhythm is and I must know when the rhythm changes, slows down, speeds up, stops, accents or changes any way. I must listen to every musician playing and make sure that what I am playing

compliments what he/she is playing, be it a solo or part of the orchestration. When the full orchestra is belting out a string part, I have to compliment that and rise with them, and express that part, but when the music is only played by a soloist, I play very quietly, just enough to accompany him, while still keeping the timing of the music and holding the rhythmic part, I may also very gently decorate the little accentuations that he does every now and then in order to keep the whole thing aesthetic and artistic, and keeps the communication flowing between the two of us. This same attitude applies to all instrumentalists performing on the same piece of music. Or the whole thing becomes a shamble of un-related mesh” (Ramsey 2005).

In the Northern paradigm, one percussionist is often sufficient to express the essential character of the rhythm, and for those who are listening, there is an expectation that the percussionist is “saying” something that compliments the song or dance piece in progress. In some cases, this art of speaking through the drum is developed to the point that the drum becomes the solo melodic instrument. Again, the S. Asian tabla solo exemplifies this usage, but it is also evident with the Persian tonbak, a doyre solo, or the dombek solo in classical Egyptian dance.

When a Northern-influenced ensemble involves multiple percussionists, they regularly play in unison, or produce complementary variations of the core rhythm. When there is only one accompanying percussionist in an ensemble, improvisation is tightly constrained by the necessity of sustaining the key accents. In either case, solo or group, the rhythm section is expected to play a theme and variations while sustaining flexible and responsive communication with the dancers and other instrumentalists.

In the polyrhythmic South, cycles are produced through the combination of interdependent patterns. Each of these patterns is incomplete without its related counterparts. When they are played together, the combined effect is a kind of rhythmic landscape or territory that parallels the relationships of a traditional integrated community. The relationships between the parts are as important, if not more important, than the individual parts themselves. The individual is subsumed by the collective, and each person must

successfully sustain their part in order for the rhythmic landscape, the song, the dance, or the community, to be complete. This emphasis on the group shifts focus away from a dialogue between individuals and towards collective creative expression of traditional forms. This means that rhythmic organization in the Southern mode is constructed around distinct contrasting rhythmic phrases. Individuals play different lines, but they play them together, each contributing a fragment to the whole. The success of this approach depends upon a vast store of traditional knowledge concerning which parts properly fit together, as well as how each of these parts can be effectively modified without destroying the fabric of the unified piece.

To complicate matters further, these polyrhythmic compositions are often also *polymeter*. This means that multiple time signatures are combined so that one individual will play with three or six subdivisions to the measure while another is playing with two or four subdivisions in the same space of time. In fact, it is common for a single individual to play in polymeter, with different time signatures distributed to each hand. These complex lines are then combined with other interdependent polymeter lines in the ensemble to produce an extremely complex rhythmic environment. Dancers and soloists work their way around and through the various relationships that are created by these polyrhythmic soundscapes.

The Southern approach may also include a soloist or lead drummer that will perform some of the dialogic functions found in the North, but the lead is not generally sustaining the rhythm. He is playing on top of it, and is dependent upon the rhythmic foundation of the whole group to support his phrasing. Without the ensemble, the lead part is as incomplete as any of the other lines. This interdependence helps to account for the importance of rhythmic devices such as the concept of *clave*, which provides the ensemble in general, and the lead in particular, with a useful landmark.

Within this relational paradigm, the solo percussionist is rarely the focus of attention, and we do not see the same elevation of the drum to melodic independence that sometimes emerges in the North. In the South, the interlocking polyrhythmic model extends beyond

the drums to include the community. Just as the individual is subsumed by the ensemble, the ensemble is subsumed by the dance, the chant, and further, by the secular or ritual context of performance. Underscoring these ideas, Eric Charry provides this telling reflection regarding drums within the Mande region:

"In Mali and Guinea the local music industry has released hundreds of cassettes of traditional and modern music to an adoring public, but one genre of music is conspicuously absent: drumming. There are virtually no local cassettes of jembe drumming available. Drumming is not for listening; it is for dancing" (Eric Charry: Guide to the Jembe— an unedited expanded version of the article published in Percussive Notes, vol. 34, no. 2, April 1996, pages 66-72. Last updated Oct 2000).

While there are an enormous number of exceptions and caveats concerning these two broad generalizations about world rhythm, anyone acquainted with the rhythmic practices of these regions will easily recognize the overall contours that have been outlined here: the melodic dialogic North and the relational polyrhythmic South. The regional dimension of these differences is illuminated and reinforced by the geographic and historical relationships that have framed cultural interactions and the movement of people in these vast areas. Put simply, the polyrhythmic similarities between Africa and the Americas are direct result of cross-fertilization emerging out of the slave trade and the African Diaspora. Similarly, the conversational elements found in the North reflect complex patterns of trade and migration in this region.

The differences between Northern and Southern models of rhythmic composition have important implications for how individuals approach playing together. At the most basic level, the Northern perspective encourages a musician to identify the theme and to match it as best as he or she can. In contrast, the Southern approach contains the assumption that a drummer will play counterpoint to whatever part is already established. In addition, because the Southern model is dependent on learning specific traditional parts, it does not necessarily teach the skills necessary to properly identify a theme and compose an appropriate compliment in the moment. Without these essential skills, students of the

Southern region tend to draw a piece from their known store of rhythmic fragments and overlay it against the theme in progress. If they are extraordinarily lucky, and there are only two or three of them playing together, they may hit upon a novel and interesting polyrhythm. It is much more likely, however, that they will produce the “shamble of unrelated mesh” that was so well described by Hossam Ramsey. Keep in mind as well, that in addition to specifying the parts, the traditional African or Afro-Diasporic ensemble also manages the complexity of its rhythmic relationships by limiting the number of players. The challenges of polyrhythm multiply exponentially as the number of musicians in the ensemble increases.

The complex interdependent polyrhythmic, and often polymetric parts that are essential in the South, often require a kind of *resistive listening* in order to sustain them against the tension created by the other parts in the ensemble. While both North and South pursue an ideal of being able to hear and respond to all variables at once, the technical demands of the polyrhythmic South put this goal beyond the reach of all but the most advanced players. If a student is not raised within the sphere of this music, she will spend years training to resist the influence of the other rhythmic parts so that she can competently sustain her own. As a result, these drummers are less prepared to listen, discover, and empower an established theme when they find themselves outside of their traditional framework of rhythms.

By way of contrast, the Northern approach encourages drummers to listen carefully to the other musicians, the context, and the dancer, and to stay in close communication with these individuals throughout the piece. Nevertheless, when a player trained in the Northern approach is invited to play in a polyrhythmic context, he immediately searches for the theme, but is challenged by an apparent confusion of divergent rhythms and meters. Although he makes a concerted effort to listen, he has not been sufficiently prepared to decipher the compound melodies and polymeter relationships that characterize the South. Caught between time signatures, he often hears six pulses when there are four and four pulses when there are six, and he may not be able to identify the beginning of the cycle at all.

This profound collision of cultural expectations provides fertile soil for rhythmists to transcend the limitations of either North or South, and to include the insights and expression of both. To this end, New World Rhythmism encourages a fusion of dialogic and polyrhythmic practice. This is best reflected in drum calls to “spread out,” “match me,” and “metamorphosis.” It is also embedded in the method and process of learning to play drums and percussion within the NWR ensemble.

Playing Together in the New World Ensemble

Corresponding to the two great rivers of global rhythm, there is a pair of essential bridges between the dialogic North and the polyrhythmic South: 1) the ability to listen, match, mirror, and unify; 2) the ability to multitask, critique, compliment, and diverge. It is worth noting that these are also the essential principles of reflective listening; we hear what another has said, we reflect it back to them, and we *simultaneously* consider, sustain, and express our own inspired views.

In NWR, these bridges are developed along with the various skills associated with learning to play mono and polyrhythmic parts, making calls, attending to instrumentation, getting in-step, and playing while chanting.

Ensemble Rhythm Rudiments

NWR rhythmic explorations are built around the elaboration of a single rhythmic figure. This is referred to variously as the, “core rhythm,” “core structure,” or sometimes, “home rhythm.”

What follows are a set of these core rhythms. The majority are modified versions of Middle-Eastern rhythms. True to the nature of rudiments, these rhythms have been pared down to the most simplified structures. They are included here as reference for further discussion of various principles of NWR methods. Although these are the core set of rhythms that Deborah and Joshua use in their ensembles, it is not necessary for you to use them in your own group. They are merely a starting point for discussion and exploration.

In addition, it is important to keep in mind that written rhythmic charts like these are essentially modern inventions. Rhythms were first aural and then oral traditions. Their written forms represent efforts to codify and contain extremely diverse and fluid structures. In a very real sense, written notation of traditional music is both a cause of and a response to cultural fragmentation. Rhythmic charts facilitate the flow of rhythmic ideas around the world, but they also remove the flavor, meaning, and mood of ideas that were present in the original cultural context. In addition, these charts misrepresent local realities by identifying a particular rhythmic variation as **the** correct form. Change, diversity, and creativity are fundamental realities of world rhythm. While there are important cross-cultural archetypes— rhythmic ideas and structures that appear around the world— they are all interpreted through local accents and the lens of local culture.

The rhythmist responds to this shifting terrain by becoming a part of it. Rhythms are not simply to be known and played like quotes from an old book. Rather, they are to be discovered and nurtured like a new friend. Each rhythm contains musical mysteries that must be unveiled through physical engagement with a rhythm’s essential structure. The rhythmist is continually diving back into the possibilities of a rhythm, experimenting with

the relationships between the beats, playing with the accents, and searching for different permutations of the groove that sleeps within. As individuals and ensembles engage in these rhythmic journeys, they become the authors of their own local variation. The rhythm takes on the accent and identity of the players, and a new tradition, a new world of rhythm is born.

Rhythmatists are therefore careful that they do not take any rhythm for granted. Like an old friend, we remember that we must continually nurture the relationship in order for it to grow and shine. Old rhythms are no different. If we remain open and engaged, our understanding and approach to them grows as we do. There are no boring rhythms, only individuals who have fallen asleep at the wheel. Whether it is an old friend or an old rhythm, new inspiration always awaits your return to the source with fresh ears and a beginner's mind.

Note: *While the rhythms in the following section are rooted in various Northern musical traditions, they are employed here as inspiring vehicles for our own growing rhythmaculture. Out of respect and appreciation for the varied cultures and masters who have, over the course of centuries, cultivated fertile gardens of world music, we do not claim cultural authenticity or continuity with these traditions. We are but humble beat farmers in our own land, pursuing our own sustenance with the precious tools available to us.*

How to read the rhythms:

The rhythms presented here are written in a combination Philip Harland and James Koetting's TUBS (Time Unit Box System) and increasingly common SWAT (Standard Width Alphanumeric Tablature). These are both simple and direct methods for communicating rhythm in writing. Within these systems, each cell or period represents an equal subdivision of time. ***In order to decipher the rhythm, keep an even pulse by tapping a pen or pencil. As you tap, point to each cell or period, moving from left to right in time with your tapping. When you reach the end, return to the beginning while still keeping the pulse. When you can perform this procedure while keeping steady time, you are ready to decipher the rhythm. All you have to do now is speak the drum syllable that you are pointing to and leave a rest when you are pointing to an empty cell or a period. As long as you keep perfectly even time, you cannot fail. You will be able to do it.*** Go slow at first, and then speed up. Eventually you will be able to say the rhythm much faster than you can point. Let go of the pointing and pay attention to the spoken phrase. You will have transferred the rhythm from the page to your voice. Now all that is left is to embody it in the drum, the dance, or the chant.

Key

Element	Spoken Syllable	Drum Sound
d	“doum,” “doom,” “dun”	Bass tone
k	“ka” or “kah”	Rim tone, open
t	“tek”	Rim tone, other hand, open
tk	“teka” like “teck ahh”	Two even rim tones, alternate hands in
C	“cha”	accented closed tone, ranging from soft grab to
K, T, D		Capital means that this note is accented
v and ^	“sha” and “la”	Scratch down and scratch up on the drum head
(t)	“tek”	These are almost silent grace notes. They appear rhythms with a strong accented swing.

Note: While the “K” often refers to the left hand and “T,” the right, this is not always the case. Different ways of playing and speaking the same rhythm have different advantages and disadvantages that become part of an individual’s particular style. The key is to get the high notes and low notes in the right place at the right time.

Free MP3 practice tracks for most of these rhythms are available at <http://www.mythfits.com>. In addition, you will find links to traditional and contemporary examples of songs that demonstrate versions of these rhythms in musical context.

Ayoub

1 . . . 2 . . .
D . . kD . K .

Pulse	1	.	&	.	2	.	&	.
Rudiment:	D			k	D		K	

Karatshi

1 . . . 2 . . .
T . . kT . D .

Pulse	1	.	&	.	2	.	&	.
Rudiment:	T			k	T		D	

Malfuf

1 . . . 2 . . .
D . . K . . K . (3-3-2)
D . tK . kT k (3-2-3)

Pulse	1	.	.	.	2	.	.	.
Rudiment (3-3-2):	D			K			K	
Rudiment (3-2-3):	D		t	K		k	T	k

Maksum

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
 D . K . . . k . D . . . K . . .

Pulse	1	.	2	.	3	.	4	.
Rudiment	D	K		k	D		k	

Saidi

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
 D . C . . . D . D . . . C . . .

Pulse	1	.	2	.	3	.	4	.
Rudiment 1:	D	C		D	D		C	

Beladi

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
 D . D . t . k . D . t . k . . .

Pulse	1	.	2	.	3	.	4	.
Rudiment:	D	D	t	k	D	t	k	

Gawazee

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
 T . D . t . D . D . . . T . . .

Pulse	1	.	2	.	3	.	4	.
Rudiment:	T	D	t	D	D		T	

Bolero

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
 D . kkT . kkD . k . D . k .

Pulse	1	.	2	.	3	.	4	.
Rudiment 1	D	kk	T	kk	D	k	D	k

Zaffah “big zaffah”

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
 D . D . D . T . tktkt . T .

Pulse	1	.	2	.	3	.	4	.
Rudiment 1	D	D	D	t	tk	tk	t	t

Masmoodi

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5 . . . 6 . . . 7 . . . 8 . . .

D . . . D . . . tk tk T . . . D . tk tk T . tk tk T . . .

Pulse	1	.	2	.	3	.	4	.	5	.	6	.	7	.	8	.
Rudiment	D		D		tk	tk	T		D	tk	tk	T	tk	tk	T	

3 Beat Masmoodi

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5 . . . 6 . . . 7 . . . 8 . . .

D . . . D . . . D . tk T . . . D . tk tk T . tk tk T . . .

Pulse	1	.	2	.	3	.	4	.	5	.	6	.	7	.	8	.
Rudiment	D		D		D	tk	T		D	tk	tk	T	tk	tk	T	

Laz

1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 5 . 6 . 7 .
 D . k . D . k . D . k . k .

Pulse	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Rudiment	D	k	D	k	D	k	k

Karshlimah 9/8

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5 . . . 6 . . . 7 . . . 8 . . . 9 . . .
 D T D t . . . t . . . t . . .

Pulse	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Rudiment	D		T		D		t	t	t

Samai 10/4

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5 . . . 6 . . . 7 . . . 8 . . . 9 . . . 0 . . .
 D . tkT . k . t . k . T . tkt . k . D . k . D . k . T . . . tkt . t . tk

Pulse	1			2			3			4			5		
Rudiment	D	t	k	T		k	t		k	T		t	k	t	k
Pulse	6			7			8			9			10		
Rudiment	D	k		D		k	T			t	k	t		t	t k

New World Grooves

A few new rhythms from North American innovators

Trolly – *Billy Woods*

1 . . . 2 . . .

D . . . T . T . *The “Teks” are best played as flams.

Pulse	1	.	.	.	2	.	.	.
Rudiment	D				T		T	

Big Trolly – *J. Levin*

Two downs, two ups, two trolly, cycle

Sumak – *J. Levin*

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .

C . kt . kD . D . kt . kD .

Pulse	1	.	.	.	2	.	.	.	3	.	.	.	4	.	.	.
Rudiment	C		k	t		k	D		D		k	t		k	D	

Trigen

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . .

D . DkT kD . Dkt .

Pulse	1	.	.	.	2	.	.	.	3	.	.	.
Rudiment	D		D	k	t	k	D		D	k	t	

Shala – Michael Wall

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
 v^vkD.D.C..kD.D.

Pulse	1	.	.	.	2	.	.	.	3	.	.	.	4	.	.	.
Rudiment	v	^	v	k	D		D		C			k	D		D	

Chakamakaan – Daveed Korup

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5 . . . 6 . . .
 D.tkTkT...tkD.tkT.tkD.t.

Pulse	1	.	2	.	3	.	4	.	5	.	6	.
Rudiment	D	tk	tk	T		tk	D	tk	T	tk	D	t

Bo's Beat - Unknown

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5 . . . 6 . . . 7 . . . 8 . . .
 D.tkD.tk.ktkT.TkD.tK.KtkD.D.T.tk

Pulse	1	.	&	.	2	.	&	.	3	.	&	.	4	.	&	.
Rudiment	D		t	k	D		t	k		k	t	k	T		T	k
	5	.	&	.	6	.	&	.	7	.	&	.	8	.	&	.
	D		(t)	K	(t)	K	t	k	D		D		T		t	k

Illuminati – J. Levin

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5 . . . 6 . . . 7 . . . 8 . . .

D.tkC.tkD.D.tkD.D.tkC.tkTkD.TkD.

Pulse	1	.	2	.	3	.	4	.	5	.	6	.	7	.	8	.
Rudiment	D	tk	C	tk	D	D	tk	D	D	tk	C	tk	Tk	D	Tk	D

Eye Bridge – J. Levin

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5 . . . 6 . . . 7 . . . 8 . . .

D.tkCK.kD.tkCK.kD.tkCK.kD.D.tkD.

Pulse	1	.	2	.	3	.	4	.	1	.	2	.	3	.	4	.
Rudiment	D	tk	CK	tk	D	tk	CK	tk	D	tk	CK	tk	D	D	tk	D

Regs

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .

D.k.T.k.D.k.T.kk

Pulse	1	.	.	.	2	.	.	.	3	.	.	.	4	.	.	.
Rudiment	D		k		T		k	k	D		K		T		k	

Tamba – J. Levin

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .

D.D.t.kD.D.t.ktk

Pulse	1	.	.	.	2	.	.	.	3	.	.	.	4	.	.	.
Rudiment	D		D		t		k	D		D		t		k	t	k

Roots – J. Levin

1.2.3.4.5.6.7.8.9.0.1.2.3.4.5.6. (16 beats)

DktDtkD.D...tkD.D...tkD.D.tkt.tk

Pulse	1	.	2	.	3	.	4	.	5	.	6	.	7	.	8	.
Rudiment	D	k	t	D	t	k	D		D				t	k	D	
	9	.	10	.	11	.	12	.	13	.	14	.	15	.	16	.
	D				t	k	D		D		t	k	t		t	k

Alawa – J. Levin

1...2...3...4...5...6...7...8...

Ck.kD.D.Dk.kT...Ck.kD.kD.DD.t.tk

Pulse	1	.	&	.	2	.	&	.	3	.	&	.	4	.	&	.
Rudiment	C	k		k	D		D		D	K		k	t			
	5	.	&	.	6	.	&	.	7	.	&	.	8	.	&	.
	C	k		k	D		k	D		D	D		t		t	k

Little Wa – J. Levin

1...2...3...4...

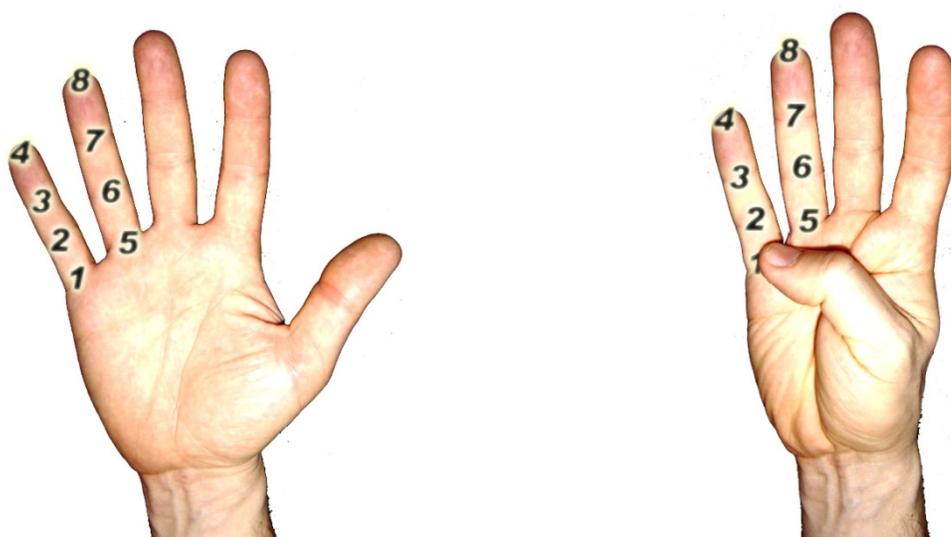
Ck.kD.D.Dk.kT...

The Hand of Tal (Time): Your “Digital” Calculator

The Hand of Tal is powerful tool for: 1) accurately translating written notation into proper phrases and drum beats; 2) identifying the time signature of a rhythm; 3) locating beats in time; 4) checking the length of rhythmic phrases and creative ideas. It is a complement to the TUBS and SWAT notation.

The Hand of Tal works by using a single hand to count the pulse against a spoken (or heard) rhythm. The lines and the tip of your fingers mark divisions of any unit of time (whole notes, quarter notes, eighth notes, boxes or dots in TUBS or SWAT notation). The images below depict quarter notes.

To begin finding your place in time, establish the pulse by using the tip of your thumb to gently tap on the first joint of your little finger. Once your tapping is perfectly even, move each tap forward along the lines of your fingers to your finger tips, just as you pointed to cells or dots in the TUBS or SWAT notation. When you get to the tip of a finger, start at the next finger over. When you get to the end of the index finger, begin again at the base of the pinky. Remember to keep perfect time as you go.



When this is comfortable, begin counting with each pulse. Try different kinds of counts: “1,2,3,4” or “1, and 2, and 3, and 4.” Notice that you can exaggerate the opening of your

hand between each pulse, so that there is a count on the beat when the thumb points to a line or fingertip, and a count off the beat, when the thumb is between pulses.

The real power of this method of becomes clear when you match your silent hand count to the sound of the rhythm that you are interested in deciphering. In order to do this, speak the syllables of your rhythm at the same time that you count the pulse on your hand.

When you reach the end of the rhythm, your thumb should return to beat one of the cycle, at the base of your little finger, while still keeping perfectly even time.

Try the Hand of Tal by working out the rhythmic relationships in Maksum:

- 1) Establish an even pulse with you thumb against the base of your little finger
- 2) Begin to keep a four beat count, emphasizing the “ands” between the downbeats
- 3) While silently holding the count, recite the phrase for Maksum in time with your pulse: “Doum Kah – kah Doum – Kah – “

Maksum in standard “box” notation

Pulse	1	.	2	.	3	.	4	.
Rudiment	D	K		k	D		K	

Example: Counting Maksum with the Hand of Tal

Count:	1	&	2	&	3	&	4	&
point:								
Speak:	Doum	Kah		kah	Doum		kah	

Notice that if you stop at any moment, you know precisely where you are in time. By simply looking at your hand, you know that there is a clear rest on the “and” of beat three.

Here are some of the basic ways that you can apply this technique:

- 1) Use the Hand of Tal to decipher live or recorded rhythms. If you go to an Indian Classical concert, you will notice that audience members are often subtly keeping time and following the rhythmic changes by using this technique.
- 2) Use the Hand of Tal to correctly translate written rhythms. Identify where the beats are in relationship to the pulse. Keep the pulse with your hand, and speak the beats out loud when your thumb points to the right moment in time. You can even write the syllables on your hand, treating the lines on your fingers like the periods in SWAT notation or the box's in TUBS.
- 3) Use the Hand of Tal to create or check the length of rhythmic phrases and ideas. When you are working on different licks, check to see how many beats they take up at different tempos. Use the hand to experiment with moving your rhythmic phrases to different locations in time.
- 4) Use the Hand of Tal to explore the relationships between the pulse and the rhythmic phrase. For example, keep a count of twelve with your hand (returning to one when you reach the end of your middle finger). Once you are keeping this cycle evenly, recite "1, 2, 3," against the count that you are keeping on your hand. Notice how the "1" of your recitation changes position against the four beat divisions of your fingers. Now try vocally emphasizing the numbers (1, 2, and 3), that fall on the 1st, 4th, and 8th, beats of the cycle.

Beginning Drummers: Skill Development and Accessing the Rhythms

video tutorials at: <http://www.mythfits.com>

Playing drums requires the extensive development of often neglected muscles and the neural circuitry associated with diverse combinations of rhythmic movement. *You will have to work out your drumming muscles and rhythmic dexterity in order to grow and be satisfied by your playing.* This is a never ending process, and the more that you do to develop the health and vitality of your rhythmic body, the better you will be at expressing your self through music.

*"...ten thousand hours of practice is required to achieve the level of mastery associated with being a world-class expert—in anything. In study after study, of composers, basketball players, fiction writers, ice skaters, concert pianists, chess players, master criminals, and what have you, this number comes up again and again. Ten thousand hours is equivalent to roughly three hours a day, or twenty hours a week, of practice over ten years... no one has yet found a case in which true world-class expertise was accomplished in less time" (Levinton, *This is Your Brain on Music*, 2006: 193).*

Perhaps the more interesting number derived from these studies is that the serious "amateur" has accumulated 2000 hours of practice (Ericsson 2002).

The following keys and exercises will help you to:

- 1) internalize and embody rhythm
- 2) develop stamina, dexterity, and memory
- 3) stabilize your internal clock
- 4) learn how to play a collection of core rhythms
- 5) learn how to make variations on core rhythms
- 6) learn how to make extended rhythmic phrases
- 7) practice the fine art of practicing
- 8) balance focus and relaxation

Key: Work and Play With a Metronome

Not always, but sometimes. A metronome will help to simulate the challenges of playing along with others. When we play alone, without a metronome, we often waver, drag, or speed up. Drummers who haven't practiced with a metronome, are often surprised to find that the elements they played successfully on their own, are not working when they are together in the ensemble. This is usually because they are not yet adept at matching their rhythms and licks to a tempo that they do not set themselves. **Keeping good, even time, is at the heart of all we hope to do.** The more you practice with and without a metronome, the better your internal clock will become.

It is helpful to walk or step in time with a metronome. You can also do this while playing the beats on a frame drum or idiophone (shaker, bell, clave). Moving your body in time helps you to internalize the meter. In addition, a metronome can be a great tool for developing our speed, stamina, and dexterity.

Exercise – Stepping in Time

Stepping in “box” formation:



Set your metronome between 60-80 beats per minute and step along with it as shown above. As you step, your feet will mark the corners of an imaginary box. This pattern is useful because it will both visually and physically remind you where the beginning, the “one” is, in a four beat measure.

It is most important that in all of your stepping exercises, you begin by equalizing the duration of each step. Don’t move on to an additional challenge until you can comfortably keep pace with the metronome without thinking too much about it. In addition, take some time to be attentive to how you are stepping. Notice how your feet connect with the ground. You are playing the drum of the Earth. Let each beat be full of presence and intention. Cultivate the sense that each step is exactly where you want to be at that precise moment.

Once you are stepping comfortably, experiment with stomping a bit on the second and fourth steps. This begins to awaken the “backbeat” feeling of rock-n-roll. In addition, explore how it feels to put a bit of bounce or dance in your step. Each of these things will help you to more fully embody this essential component of musical rhythm.

Exercise – Clock it.

Set your metronome to keep tempo so that each click represents a quarter note. Practice playing the *river* (16th notes), that's four notes for every click. Record the fastest tempo at which you can do this comfortably and accurately for one minute. With practice, you will find that your speed and comfort improves. You will also get a better sense of your limitations. Once you can easily keep up and stay in near perfect time, try increasing the speed of your metronome a bit, or changing the duration from one to two minutes or more. This technique can be used for practicing all kinds of rhythmic elements in addition to the *river*.

Key: Practice in front of a mirror

Observe how you hold your body and your drum while you move or play. Notice where you are tense, where you are relaxed, where you are striking the instrument, and how you move as you do these things. Check-in with your breathing too; see that you are inhaling and exhaling smoothly. You will find that it is often necessary to focus on one observation at a time. This is fine.

Take care to appreciate what you are doing well. Notice those aspects that please you. Let these bits of personal satisfaction sink in as part of the reward for your practice.

Mirrors are also outstanding tools for helping us note and correct our mistakes. When we properly identify an ineffective thought or behavior, we are able to fix bad habits or assumptions and internalize better ones. While we do learn from reinforcing our good work, highlighting success is proven to be less effective at helping us to grow than seeking out the challenges of our perceived limitations. When we model the success of others, we are actually correcting our own errors in an attempt to match their superior form.

This focus on your mistakes should be more fun than painful. If you can make it so, you will certainly have an advantage in any learning activity. As you observe yourself play, see if you can notice areas for improvement without also experiencing disappointment or frustration. When you observe something that can be changed or refined, you have actually found a bit of treasure. As one artist recently said to me, “it’s when you can’t see what’s wrong with it, that you’ve truly come to the end of your abilities.” The ability to identify the “problem,” is the first step towards a solution and greater mastery. If you find that you can’t seem to let the negativity go, try saying, “I am learning,” in place of the more critical thoughts you might be having. Over time, you will come to see the truth of it: you are learning, and there is never any shame in that. It is, in fact, something to be proud of.

When you practice in front of a mirror, you will be in the company of your own gaze. Perhaps you will notice a pattern to the kinds of things that you observe and say to yourself. This can be instructive in many ways, and it is useful to simply reflect on how you talk to yourself as you practice. If you notice that you have a habit of overly emotional self critical judgment, or conversely, overindulgent pride that obscures more than it reveals, you might take a moment to try and look into the mirror without telling any story at all. In other words, see yourself as you would any other part of nature. When we can be witness to ourselves as we are in the moment, free of our past, unbound by the future, liberated from the weight of our hopes and our fears, we are best able to learn, grow, and transform. Practicing in front of a mirror can help facilitate this useful activity.

Finally, when you are working with a mirror, **see what happens when you smile**, even slightly, as you play, dance, or sing. Notice the profound change that this has on everything. Consider the influence it may have on others as well.

Exercise – Vocalizing Spots in Time

One of the most important ways to embody rhythm is to vocalize it. “If you can say it, you can play it,” is a common maxim among rhythmists. In addition to showing you what beats to play when, vocalizations can also help you locate various subdivisions in time. The following exercise will teach you to identify and internalize the four primary locations in duple meter time. You will use a S. Asian vocalization that is pronounced, “Dah-tee-gay-nah,” and is abbreviated: Dha, Ti, Ge, Na. Use the chart below to practice vocalizing each sound as you step in time with a metronome. Take note of where the steps and the sounds overlap. Practice lines A, B, and C until they are comfortable and precise. When you can do each one alone, complete the entire chart by repeating each line twice, and then moving to the next one without stopping.

- a)  . . .  . . .  . . . 
 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
 Dha. . . Ti . . . Ge . . . Na . . .
- b)  . . .  . . .  . . . 
 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
 Dha. Ti . Ge . Na . Dha. Ti . Ge . Na .
- c)  . . .  . . .  . . . 
 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
 DhaTi Ge Na DhaTi Ge Na DhaTi Ge Na DhaTi Ge Na
- d)  . . .  . . .  . . . 
 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
 Dha. Ti . Ge . Na . Dha. Ti . Ge . Na .
- e)  . . .  . . .  . . . 
 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
 Dha. . . Ti . . . Ge . . . Na . . .

When you are comfortable stepping and speaking through these, add a clap of your hands to each vocalization.

Exercise – Basic Bells, Crafting a Healthy Pulse

We can use the vocalizations in the previous exercise to locate and play the following fundamental subdivisions of the pulse. Step in time with your metronome, vocalizing “Dah-tee-gay-nah” for each step, and then clap the “X’s” through each of the following exercises twice. Take note of the bolding on the vocalizations, this shows where the spoken sounds and the claps overlap.

Downs:

a)    

1	.	.	.	2	.	.	.	3	.	.	.	4	.	.	.
X	.	.	.	X	.	.	.	X	.	.	.	X	.	.	.
DhaTi	Ge	Na		DhaTi	Ge	Na		DhaTi	Ge	Na		DhaTi	Ge	Na	

Ups:

b)    

1	.	.	.	2	.	.	.	3	.	.	.	4	.	.	.
.	.	X	.	.	.	X	.	.	.	X	.	.	.	X	.
DhaTi	Ge	Na		DhaTi	Ge	Na		DhaTi	Ge	Na		DhaTi	Ge	Na	

Double Downs:

c)    

1	.	.	.	2	.	.	.	3	.	.	.	4	.	.	.
X	X	.	.	X	X	.	.	X	X	.	.	X	X	.	.
DhaTi	Ge	Na		DhaTi	Ge	Na		DhaTi	Ge	Na		DhaTi	Ge	Na	

Double-Ups:

d)    

1	.	.	.	2	.	.	.	3	.	.	.	4	.	.	.
.	.	X	X	.	.	X	X	.	.	X	X	.	.	X	X
DhaTi	Ge	Na		DhaTi	Ge	Na		DhaTi	Ge	Na		DhaTi	Ge	Na	

Shuffle:

f)    

1	.	.	.	2	.	.	.	3	.	.	.	4	.	.	.
X	.	X	.	X	.	X	.	X	.	X	.	X	.	X	.
DhaTi	Ge	Na		DhaTi	Ge	Na		DhaTi	Ge	Na		DhaTi	Ge	Na	

Gimme's:

g)    

1	.	.	.	2	.	.	.	3	.	.	.	4	.	.	.
X	.	X	.	X	.	X	.	X	.	X	.	X	.	X	.
DhaTi	Ge	Na		DhaTi	Ge	Na		DhaTi	Ge	Na		DhaTi	Ge	Na	

Once you get the idea of how this works, memorize the parts so that you can work through the exercise without interruption. This will strengthen your internal clock and decrease your dependence on an external source.

When you have mastered this exercise while clapping, pick up a frame drum, bell, shaker, or clave/woodblock, and play these instruments in place of the clap, but don't forget to vocalize as you do so. At this point you will be well into establishing a home in the heartbeat of rhythm. You will also have memorized many of the fundamental pulse based parts that are used in NWR and rhythm around the world.

There is an additional part, sometimes called the "get-ups," that is not included in this cycle, but is good to know about and play with.

 1 . . .  2 . . . 3 . . .  4 . . .
 . X X . . X X . . X X .
Dha**Ti** **Ge** Na Dha**Ti** **Ge** Na Dha**Ti** **Ge** Na Dha**Ti** **Ge** Na

Exercise – Hand Variations in Three or Six

Working with cycles of three is particularly good for our physical development because the odd count provides an invitation to alternate leading with each hand: 1-Left, 2-Right, 3-Left, and then 1- Right, 2- Left, 3-Right. In addition, the constant alternation opens the way for playing at faster tempos.

When you focus your practice on emphasizing accents with your non-dominant hand, you will be creating a foundation for playing syncopated grooves that depend on being able to place emphasis on the “off” beat.

Alternate, beginning with your right and left hands for each the following variations. Start off slow, and then gradually increase speed until you reach your maximum tempo, which is as fast as you can play *while still keeping perfect time and maintaining your initial volume*.

- | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) | T | k | t | T | k | t |
| b) | D | k | t | D | k | t |
| c) | t | D | t | k | D | k |
| d) | t | k | D | t | k | D |
| e) | D | D | D | t | t | t |
| f) | D | D | t | D | D | t |

When you can play each of the above smoothly, play four of each and then go on to the next variation without stopping in between. Playing one or more of these phrases together also produces some interesting rhythms that you can use in your ensembles.

Exercise – Dexterity, Memory, and Stamina Warm Ups.

Make sure that you always alternate left and right hands when you play the following exercise. Work on each line individually. *Once you have learned the line, cover the page so you aren't looking at the notes while you are playing.* When you can play each of them individually, work through them again together from top to bottom. Now do it without looking.

a) 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
D k t k t k t k D k t k t k t k

b) 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
D k t k D k t k D k t k D k t k

c) 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
D k D k t k t k D k D k t k t k

d) 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
D k t k D k t k D k D k t k t k

When you are comfortable playing through these top to bottom, try the following phrase:

Phrase: $[(a \times 1, b \times 1) \times 2,$
 $(c \times 1, d \times 1) \times 2] \times 2$

Exercise – Basic Bell Archetypes One, Two, and Three

There are only so many ways that patterns of single and double notes can be played in time. This fact results in the appearance of these patterns in music around the world. They are archetypes, fundamental structures in the geometry of rhythm and music. There are an enormous number of things that we can create with them. Here we introduce the three most obvious variations. Note that the eight note pattern is only two beats long. We repeat each pattern twice so that we have four steps in the cycle.

Bell One (easy to remember because the single strike is in the 1st position)

a)

			
1	2	3	4
X	.	.	.
.	X	X	.
Dha	Ti	Ge	Na

DhaTi Ge Na DhaTi Ge Na DhaTi Ge Na DhaTi Ge Na

Bell Two (easy to remember because the single strike is in the 2nd position)

b)

			
1	2	3	4
X	X	.	.
.	X	X	.
Dha	Ti	Ge	Na

DhaTi Ge Na DhaTi Ge Na DhaTi Ge Na DhaTi Ge Na

Bell Three (easy to remember because the single strike is in the 3rd position)

c)

			
1	2	3	4
X	X	.	.
.	X	X	.
Dha	Ti	Ge	Na

DhaTi Ge Na DhaTi Ge Na DhaTi Ge Na DhaTi Ge Na

Exercise – Making Calls While Playing

Learning to sing and speak while playing an instrument can be a delightful challenge. There is real satisfaction and amazement that comes with the discovery that we are actually able to do this extraordinary bit of multi-tasking. People often think that speaking and playing involves being able to do one thing while thinking about another. For musicians who have been doing it for a long time, it does become rather like this; the mouth works independently of what the hands are doing. However, the path to that kind of freedom begins by consciously connecting and integrating hands and mouth together. This means learning to speak as *part of*, rather than separate from, the rhythm. You've already been working on this by stepping, clapping, and speaking. This exercise will help you to further develop this skill.

Part 1: Repeat a cycle of three beladi on your drum, followed by 4 claps on the down beats. On the first of the four claps, (while you are clapping), practice loudly making these calls: cut, break, sup, slowit, breathe. The goal is to keep clapping while you are making the call, and then successfully return to the beginning of the cycle on your drum.

Part 2: Continue with the same exercise, but now practice making the calls for: level up, level down, beladi, and gawazee. Notice that the additional syllables make it a bit more challenging. Try speaking in time with your clapping.

Part 3: Repeat a cycle of 8 gimmes followed by 3 beladi. Practice making the calls while you play the 8 gimmes. This adds another layer of time keeping (memory) to the practice.

Part 4: Using the skills you've developed here, try making the calls while playing Beladi. Notice that the first two "Doums" of Beladi are the same as two "gimmies." This means that if you could make the calls with the gimmies, you will be able to do it with Beladi too.

Exercise – Weaving With Beladi / Gawazee

- a) "Beladi 3, Gawazee 1"
 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 .
 D D t k D t k . D D t k D t k . D D t k D t k . t D t D D t k .
- b) "Beladi 3, Gawazee 1"
 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 .
 D D t k D t k tkD D t k D t k tkD D t k D t k tkt D t D D t k tk
- c) "Beladi, Gawazee"
 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 .
 D D t k D t k tktkD t D D t k tk
- d) "Gawazee 2, Beladi, Gawazee"
 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 .
 tkD tkD D . k . tkD tkD D . k . D D t k D t k tktkD tkD D . k .
- e) "Gawazee 2, Beladi, Gawazee"
 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 .
 tkD t D . t k . tkD t D . t k . D D t k D t k tktkD tkD D . k .
- f) "Beladi, Gawazee, Beladi, Gawazee"
 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 .
 D D . . D D . D D . . . D D . . D . . . tkD t D D t k tk

Phrase 1: a x 1, b x 1

Phrase 2: e x 1, f x 1

Phrase 3: c x 2, d x 1

Phrase 4: (c x 2, d x 1) x 2, e x 1

Exercise – Basic Bell Archetypes, Half-Time

The quick eighth note double strokes in our bell parts often make it difficult to keep up with rhythms at faster tempos. Whenever this happens the drummer must either simplify their part, and there's not much left to simplify with these, or they must drop the tempo of the part to half-time. In other words, rather than taking two beats (four steps) to play the part, it will now take four.

Half-Time Bell One

a)    
 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
 X . . . X . X . . . X . X . . .

Half-Time Bell Two

b)    
 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
 X . X . . . X . . . X . X . . .

Half-Time Bell Three

c)    
 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
 X . X . . . X . . . X . . . X . . .

When you have mastered these, try playing them back along with the bells at their original home tempo:

- 1) 2 bell 1, 1 half-time bell 1, cycle
- 2) 2 bell 2, 1 half-time bell 2, cycle
- 3) 2 bell 3, 1 half-time bell 3, cycle

Now put all three bells together, first at home tempo, then at half-time:

- 1) 2 bell 1, 2 bell 2, 2 bell 3, 1 half-time bell 1, 1 half-time bell 2, 1 half-time bell 3

Finally, try adding the half-time bells onto the whole string of basic bells, and bell archetypes. You can do it!

Exercise – Ayub / Chiftitelli

a) "Ayub 3, 1 down, count 1"

1 . 2 . 1 . 2 . 1 . 2 . 1 . 2 .
D .kD k D tkD k D .kD k D . . .

Phrase 1: a x 1, Chiftitelli x 1

b) "Chiftitelli"

1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 5 . 6 . 7 . 8 .
D . k T . k T . D k D k T .kD k

Phrase 2: a x 1, b x 1

c) "Chiftitelli"

1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 5 . 6 . 7 . 8 .
D . k T . k T . D .kD k T .kD k

Phrase 3: a x 1, c x 1

Phrase 4: b x 1, c x 1

Phrase 5: Chiftitelli x 1, a x 1, b x 1, a x 1

Phrase 6: Chiftitelli x 1, b x 1, c x 1, a x 1

d) "Chiftitelli"

1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 5 . 6 . 7 . 8 .
D .kD K .kD K . D . D .T .kD k

Phrase 7: d x 3, a x 1

Phrase 8: d x 1, Chiftitelli x 1, d x 1, a x 1

Phrase 8: c x 1, d x 1

Exercise – Malfuf Through the Roof

This exercise weaving Malfuf integrates alternating hand coordination, and helps develop the syncopation that is used for swing, rock, and groove. In order for this exercise to be effective it is essential that you: 1) follow the hand directions for Left (L) and Right (R) that are located below the beats, and; 2) make sure that you accent the bold "K" and "T."

a) 1 . . . 2 . . . 1 . . . 2 . . .
D . . k . . k . D k t K
R L L R L R L

b) 1 . . . 2 . . . 1 . . . 2 . . .
D . . k . . k . D k t K . . k .
R L L R L R L L

c) 1 . . . 2 . . .
D k t K . k T k
R L R L L R L

Phrase b x 3, c x 2

d) 1 . . . 2 . . .
D k t K . K T k
R L R L L R L

Notice the change in accent.

Phrase: c x 2, d x 2

Exercise – Ornamental Trips (rolls).

It is common practice to create interest with ornamental rolls in triple meter. The following exercises help to develop this skill. Triplets are created by subdividing a unit of time into three or six slices rather than two or four. In the lines below, notice how the same amount of time is subdivided into four, three, and six pulses (count the periods between each beat).

4 pulses	1	2	3	4
3 pulses	1	2	3	4
6 pulses	1	2	3	4

When we weave and embellish a rhythm, we often use triplets as a way of shifting the feel of a tempo without actually changing speed. In the following exercises, the Dun's are located in duple time and the "triplet" licks are in triplet time. Note that the four pulses are shown above and the six pulses are indicated below.

Begin by practicing this basic 4 stroke "triplet" roll. One beat is divided into six pulses (third line down in the diagram above). The final ka of the roll lands the 4th pulse of six. Practice repeating this "lick" over and over at different speeds. It should eventually begin to feel like a single word that you can speak on your drum. Learning to vocalizing "ta ka ta kah" at different speeds, is also helpful.

a) t k t k . .
 1

Beladi with trip ornament

b)	1	2	3	4
	D . D .	t k t k .	D . .	t k . . .
	1	2	3	4

Six stroke trip- "ta ka ta Kah ta ka." Again, practice this repeatedly at different speeds.

c) 1 2
 t k t k t k D

d) 1 2 3 4
 D . D . t k t k t k D . . t k
 1 2 3 4

e) 1 2 3 4
 D . D . t . k . D . t k t k
 1 2 3 4

f) 1 2 3 4
 D . D . t k t k t k D . t k t k . t k
 1 2 3 4

For the following phrases, begin the triplet roll with your opposite (non-dominant) hand.

g) 1 2
 D . . k t k t k t k
 1 2

h) 1 2 3 4
 D . D . t . k . D . . k t k t k t k
 1 2 3 4

For the following exercise, begin the first trip with your dominant hand and the second with your opposite (non-dominant) hand.

i) 1 2 3 4
 D . D . t k t k t k D . . k t k t k t k
 1 2 3 4

Exercise - Trigen

This exercise weaving Trigen builds on the preceding exercise and introduces a rhythm in three. Don't forget to follow the (L) and (R) hand instructions and be sure to accent the bold "**K**" where appropriate.

a) 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . .
 D . D k T k D . D k t . D . D k T k D
 R R L R L R R L R R R L R L R

b) 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . .
 D . D k T k D D . D k T k D
 R R L R L R R R L R L R

c) 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . .
 D . D k T k D k D **K** t k
 R R L R L R L R L R L

d) 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . .
 D k D k **T** k D k D **K** t k
 R L R L R L R L R L R L

e) 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . .
 D k D k T k D **K** D **K** t **K**
 R L R L R L R L R L R L

f) 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . .
 D D D **K** t k D . D k T .
 R L R L R L R R L R

Advanced Concepts

Weaving the Rhythm: Creating Variations on a Rhythmic Theme

Communicative rhythmic development depends upon continuity, repetition, and skillful, collaborative elaboration. Clarity and continuity require the practiced selection, manipulation, and repetition of specific rhythmic elements. Key among these elements are combinations of notes such as “tkt,” or “D.D.” These basic building blocks of rhythm parallel the linguistic phonemes that constitute spoken sounds in human languages. In South Asian classical music, these elements are collectively referred to as “bols.”

The following five techniques are used, independently or in combination, to weave and adorn a rhythm:

- 1) emphasize or accent particular beats in a rhythm
- 2) vary the tones within a bol or rhythm
- 3) add, subtract, multiply the bols
- 4) increase or decrease the length of the cycle
- 5) reorganize and elaborate on key bols

Key

Element	Spoken Syllable	Drum Sound
d	“doum” “doom”	Bass tone
k	“ka” or “kah”	Rim tone, open
t	“tek”	Rim tone, other hand, open
tk	“teka” like “teck ahh”	Two even rim tones, alternate hands in succession
C	“cha”	accented closed tone, ranging from soft grab to slap
K, T, D		Capital means that this note is accented
v and ^	“sha” and “la”	Scratch down and scratch up on the drum head
(t)	“tek”	These are almost silent grace notes. They appear rhythms with a strong accented swing.

When playing through the ideas in a guidebook like this one, resist becoming lost in your conscious, thinking mind. Work with an idea for a while, and then put the book aside so that you can listen, feel, and internalize. The mind helps us get it in there, but we must surrender to our deeper selves if we wish to make and experience the magic.

1) Emphasize or accent particular beats

In the following example, the bold denotes various ways to emphasize parts of the rhythm without actually adding or removing any of the beats.

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
T . D . t . D . D . . . t . . . (unadorned)
T . D . t . D . D . . . t . . .
t . D . **T** . D . D . . . t . . .
t . D . T . **D** . **D** . . . t . . .
t . D . T . D . D . . . **T** . . .
..etc

Although this is one of the easiest methods to embellishing a phrase, it should not be underestimated. Emphasizing some notes while deemphasizing others is particularly communicative when multiple playmates are exploring different accents together.

2) Vary the tones within a bol or rhythm

You can exchange one accent for another can to ornament a rhythm; exchange a press or a slap tone for an open tone, or a snap (S) for a rim tone. As with all variations, care must be taken to remain connected to the essence of the rhythm.

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
D . G . . . D . D . . . t . . . (unadorned)
D . t . . . D . D . . . G . . .
D . G . . . D . D . . . S . . .
D . D . . . t . G . . . D . . .
...etc

Some styles of drumming, such as the Middle-Eastern tabla (doubek) or the Persian tombak, are particularly attentive to the wide range of hand techniques that can be used to create pleasing communicative variations of tone within a given rhythm. Study in these traditions includes many, many, hours cultivating various feats of unusual dexterity: snaps, pops, finger rolls, scratches, bends, knocks, etc. Each provides one more color in the musician's palette of ornamentation. Simply adding one more technique to your repertoire and then moving that accent around within the rhythm, will produce a reservoir of new musical possibilities.

3) Add, subtract, or multiply the bols within a rhythm

A great many variations are created by adding, subtracting, and multiplying the various bols within a rhythm. The following charts use some of the core rhythms in this guidebook to provide examples for the application of this technique.

Maksum

- | | 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . | |
|----|--|---------------------|
| a) | D . t . . . t . D . . . t . . . | |
| b) | D . t . . . t . D . D . t . . . | add |
| c) | D . t . . . t . . . D . t . . . | drop |
| d) | D . t . . . t . D . D . t . D . | add |
| e) | D . k . t k t . D . k . t . . . | multiply, add |
| f) | D . k . t k t . D . k . t k D . | multiply, add |
| g) | D t . D . D . t k D . | drop, multiply, add |

Beladi

1...2...3...4...

- a) D.D.t.k.D.t.k...
- b) D.D.tkt.D.t.k.tk
- c) D.D.t.k.D.tkt...
- d) D.D.t.k.D.....t.
- e) D.D.tktkD.tkt.tk
- f) D.D.....D...t.tk
- g) DDD.tkDDD.tkt.tk
- h) DkDktktkDktktktk

Ayoub

1...2...

- a) D..kD.k.
- b) D.tkD.k.
- c) D.tkDDk.
- d) DktkD.k.

Chiftitelli

1...2...3...4...5...6...7...8...

- a) D...k.T...k.T...D...D...T.....
- b) D.....T.....T...D...D...T.....
- c) D.....T.....T...D.D.D...T.....tk
- d) D...tkT...tkT.tkD...D...T.....
- e) D...t.K...t.K.tkD...D...tktkT.tk

Gawazee

1...2...3...4...

- a) T.D.t.D.D...T...
- b) T.D.t.D.D.....
- c) T.D.tkD.D...T.tk
- d) TkD.tkD.D.tkT.tk
- e) TkD.tkDDD.tkT.tk

Saidi

1...2...3...4...

- a) D.C...D.D...C...
- b) D.C.tkD.D...C...
- c) D.C.tkD.D.tkC.tk
- d) D.C.tkDDD.D.C.tk
- e) D.C.tkD.D.D.C.tk

Malfuf

1...2...

- a) D..k..k. (3-3-2)
- b) D.tK.kTk (3-3-2)
- c) D.tK.Ktk (3-2-3)
- d) D.tK.KD. (3-2-3)

Some variations with triplets:

1 2

1 . . . 2 . . .

- e) D . t k t K . T k
- f) D . t k t t k t T k

Bolero

1...2...3...4...

- a) D.tkT.tkD.k.D.k.
- b) D.tkT.tkD.k.T.k.
- c) D.tkT.tkDDD...tk
- d) D.tkT.tkDDD.tkD.
- e) D.tkT.tkDkt.Dkt.

Masmoodi

1...2...3...4...5...6...7...8...

- a) D...D...tktkT...D.tktkT.tktkT...
- b) D...D...tkT...D...T...tkT.tk
- c) D...D...tktkT...D...tktkTtktkTtk
- d) D...D...D.tkT...D...tktkTtktkT..
- e) D.tkD.tkD.tkT.tkD..k..k.D.D.T.tk

Continued multiplication of bols eventually results in ornamental rolls within a rhythm. This can be clearly demonstrated with Beladi:

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .

D . D . t . k . D . t . k . tk (unornamented Beladi written in 8th notes)

In order to follow the multiplication in notated form, we need to expand the number of pulses between the beat:

1 2 3 4 (Beladi in 32nd notes)

D . . . D . . . t . . . k . . . D . . . t . . . k . . . t . k . (unornamented)

D . . . D . . . t . k . t . k . D . . . t . k . t . k . t . k . (“tk” multiplied)

With sufficient multiplication, the distinct beats in a rhythm dissolve into ornamental drum rolls:

D . . . D . . . t k t k t k t k D . . . t . k . t . . . t . k .

It is common practice to create further interest by shifting these ornamental rolls into triple meter:

1	.	.	.	2	.	.	.	3	.	.	.	4	.	.	.
Dun.		Dun.		t k t k				Dun.		t k					
1	.	.	.	2	.	.	.	3	.	.	.	4	.	.	.

1	.	.	.	2	.	.	.	3	.	.	.	4	.	.	.
Dun.		Dun.		t k t k t k				Dun.		t k					
1	.	.	.	2	.	.	.	3	.	.	.	4	.	.	.

See- *Advanced Concepts in Time*- for more information on triple meter rolls.

Multiplication and subdivision of the whole rhythm: Tempo Fractals

The fourth edition of the American Heritage Dictionary defines a fractal as, “A geometric pattern that is repeated at ever smaller scales to produce irregular shapes and surfaces that cannot be represented by classical geometry. Fractals are used especially in computer modeling of irregular patterns and structures in nature.” Rhythmatisers are particularly fond of fractals because of their micro/macrocosmic rhythmic relationships. They are rhythms within rhythms; a stone at the foot of a mountain looks like the mountain itself when we view it from a beetle’s perspective. The veins in a leaf look like the patterns of a branch that in turn parallel the shape of a tree. Similarly, a dancer can become absorbed in the movements of her eyebrow, discovering the micro dance of her face, or she can reflect upon the transformation of her dance over the course of ten years. Rhythms grow in layers of time, and as rhythmatisers, we can actively investigate and use the relationships between these layers.

In the preceding set of exercises, we worked with multiplications of bols within the rhythm. We can carry this approach further into the multiplication and subdivision of the rhythms themselves. Without changing the basic tempo, take any rhythm that you know and play, dance, or sing it at double-time. When you have successfully doubled the time without wavering the tempo, double the time again. Note that if your original tempo was too fast to begin with, you cannot make the jump to triple-time. Try working backwards; start the rhythm at your top speed and then, without dropping the tempo, fall to half-time, and then half-time again.

As you work forward and backward through these tempo fractals, pay attention to how the feel of the rhythm changes. A piece played three times its normal speed often sounds like a completely different animal than the rhythm at its root. The stone and the mountain, the leaf and the tree, the child and the adult, and many other wonders of nature share in these mysterious nested relationships.

Note that if you switch to half-time from the tempo that is currently in progress, you will effectively double the length of the cycle. This brings us to the fourth basic method for weaving the rhythm.

4) Increase or decrease the length of the cycle

Just as words produce sentences when they are mindfully strung together, rhythm transforms into a kind of melody when it is multiplied and varied across time. This should come as no surprise; melodies and sentences often require a bit of time to develop. They need space to gather momentum and come to a point. By extending a rhythmic cycle beyond the short durations that are familiar in the West (often two, three, and four beats), the rhythmist creates opportunities for involved and intricate ideas to flourish. Longer cycles also provide space for more elaborate kinds of symmetry. As the cycle lengthens or modulates between periods where it is shorter and periods where it is longer, patterns within patterns emerge like words in sentences, sentences in paragraphs, paragraphs in chapters, chapters in books, books in libraries, libraries in lives, etc... All this begins by simply multiplying the duration of the cycle and varying one of the measures:

Gawazee (core structure)

a) **1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .**
 T . D . t . D . D . . . T . . .

Gawazee (multiplied and varied)

b) **1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5 . . . 6 . . . 7 . . . 8 . . .**
 T . D . t . D . D . . . T . . . tkD . tkDDD . tkt . tk

Changing the cycle from one to two measures and then varying the second measure, makes this rhythm much more interesting than it would be if either was played alone.

When you are weaving the rhythm, you can change the length of the cycle in which you are weaving without expecting that the ensemble change with you. In other words, you can play across their cycle as long as you remember to return to the established cycle when a change is called, or when you are done with your excursion.

NWR also provides many ways to actually extend the cycle for the whole ensemble. You can call longer cycles from the beginning, i.e., “Malfuf 4, cycle.” You can add on to the end of a cycle with “add xyz.” You can set a longer duration by calling “one” and waiting the desired number of measures before repeating it. You can weave a longer cycle and then call the “one” to suit your extended idea.

Shortening a longer cycle can also have dramatic melodic effects. For example, suppose you have been playing a variation of Masmoodi that has three low beats in the front:

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5 . . . 6 . . . 7 . . . 8 . . .

a) **D . . . D . . . D . tkT . . . D . . . tktkTtktkT . .**

This has gone on for some time and you can hear the need for a change. If you shorten the cycle and omit the second half of the rhythm, you’ll have a fresh, but naturally connected transition. Here’s a vignette to achieve this:

- 1) (weave the new variation while the ensemble continues to play the long version)
 - 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
 - D . tkD . tkD . tkT . T .
- 2) match me (this will be easy because the ensemble is already playing something similar half the time).
- 3) “one” (set the new cycle at half the time).

Or more simply...

- 1) “drop last 4” (the ensemble will drop the last four beats and you’ll be in the new shorter cycle).

Cycles of different lengths are open to different kind of symmetry. You can experiment with organizing rhythms and variations together in different permutations of poetic structure: ABAA, BAAA, AABA, AAAB, ABAB, AABB, ABAC, ABACAD etc. These cycles can then be combined in even larger structures:

- 1) AABB (Beladi, Beladi, Gawazee, Gawazee)
- 2) ABAB (Beladi, Gawazee, Beladi, Gawazee)
- 3) CCCB (Saidi, Saidi, Saidi, Gawazee)
- 4) BBCB (Gawazee, Gawazee, Saidi, Gawazee)

5) Reorganize and elaborate on the key bols within a rhythm

Another way to develop a rhythmic idea is to take essential elements from the rhythm and present them in new relationships that still reflect the character of the original composition. To demonstrate this powerful and limitlessly complex practice, let's begin with a simple example using a woven version of Beladi.

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .

a) D.D.tkt.D.t.k.tk (theme)

Bols (D.D), (tkt), (D.t.k.), (tk)

From here, we make variations by reorganizing and emphasizing key bols in this rhythm:

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .

b) D.D.tkt.D.D.tkt.

c) D.t.k.tkD.t.k.tk

d) D.D.tkt.tkt.tkt.

e) D.t.k.tkD.D.tkt.

f) D.D.tkD.D.tkt.tk

The preceding five variations barely scratch the surface of the possible permutations available by reorganizing the bols in this rhythm. Experiment with others and try applying this technique to your own rhythms and creative improvisations. Pay attention to the way that different arrangements feel in relationship to the original.

In addition to producing variations within the given cycle, much more elaborate phrasing and rhythmic poetry emerge when we develop this improvisational technique across a longer period of time. The following example integrates the preceding variations into a standard couplet form with each rhythmic theme followed by one of the alternates (the variations are bolded). This common practice creates elegant symmetries that are interesting, emotionally varied, and easily apparent to ensemble mates and other

listeners. It follows a familiar poetic structure of: ABAB, ACAC, ADAD, AEAE, AFAF (note that the them “A” provides continuity throughout):

- | | 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . | 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . |
|----------|--|---|
| 1) ABAB: | D.D.tkt.D.t.k.tk | D.D.tkt.D.D.tkt.
D.D.tkt.D.t.k.tk D.D.tkt.D.D.tkt. |
| 2) ACAC: | D.D.tkt.D.t.k.tk | D.t.k.tkD.t.k.tk
D.D.tkt.D.t.k.tk D.t.k.tkD.t.k.tk |
| 3) ADAD: | D.D.tkt.D.t.k.tk | D.D.tkt.tkt.tkt.
D.D.tkt.D.t.k.tk D.D.tkt.tkt.tkt. |
| 4) AEAE: | D.D.tkt.D.t.k.tk | D.t.k.tkD.D.tkt.
D.D.tkt.D.t.k.tk D.t.k.tkD.D.tkt. |
| 5) AFAF: | D.D.tkt.D.t.k.tk | D.D.tkD.D.tkt.tk
D.D.tkt.D.t.k.tk D.D.tkD.D.tkt.tk |

Now take the same variations, but alter the poetic structure: AABA, AACA, AADA:

- | | 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . | 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . |
|----------|--|--|
| 1) ABA: | D.D.tkt.D.t.k.tk | D.D.tkt.D.D.tkt.
D.D.tkt.D.t.k.tk D.D.tkt.D.t.k.tk |
| 2) AACA: | D.D.tkt.D.t.k.tk | D.t.k.tkD.t.k.tk
D.D.tkt.D.t.k.tk D.D.tkt.D.t.k.tk |
| 3) AADA: | D.D.tkt.D.t.k.tk | D.D.tkt.tkt.tkt.
D.D.tkt.D.t.k.tk D.D.tkt.D.t.k.tk |

Adding Polyrhythm and Multi-Surface Instrumentation

Having introduced a variety of core rhythms as they are played and developed on single-surface drums, the next task is to address how these rhythms can be effectively translated onto the diverse range of instruments in the ensemble.

This involves the introduction of polyrhythm, or the layering of interdependent rhythmic parts. A variety of instruments are designed to take advantage of this kind of rhythmic play, and many more are amenable to it. Multiple surface instruments, such as bass drums, drum and bell / block, and shaker combinations are all happy candidates, as are shakers and dancing feet. Implicit in this, and in all ensemble play, is the assumption that care is taken to distribute instrumentation so that there is a mix of timbres. For example, a pair of bass-range drums tuned a fourth apart, (e.g., C and F), can be a delicious element in ensemble orchestration.

In NWR, establishing polyrhythmic parts for multi-surface instruments is achieved through systematic modifications of the core rhythm. The following guidelines explain how these polyrhythmic lines are easily derived.

Core rhythms for single surface drums can generally be divided into ***patterns of low and high tones***. This provides a natural means for producing a set of interdependent lines. Let's look at the following example using the rhythm Beladi:

1...2...3...4...

D.D.t.k.D.t.k.tk single-surface instruments

1...2...3...4...

D.D.....D..... low tones

1...2...3...4...

....t.k...t.k.tk high tones

Without any further modification, this simple analysis of the core rhythm results in three separate interlocking parts. When two individuals play the core, while the remaining parts are distributed to respective high and low drums, the result is a simple polyrhythm with four players expressing a single rhythmic idea in the form of a compound melody.

Further elaboration and multiplication of the polyrhythm requires the introduction of techniques for improvising while still maintaining the essence, the key tones, that define the rhythmic idea. If we take a single note that is essential to a given rhythm and consider the options for improvising on it, there are essentially two solutions: we can either **multiply the note as we play away from the beat, or we can multiply the note as we shuffle toward the beat:**

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .

D The essential eighth note in question.

DD Variation 1 (multiplication *away from the beat*)

D D Variation 2 (multiplication *shuffle to the beat*)

When these two principles are applied to an actual rhythm, there are an enormous number of permutations for even the simplest rhythmic structure.

	1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .		1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
low core:	D.D D	high core:	. . . . t.t . . . t.t.tt
variation:	D.DD D	variations:	. . . . t.tt . . . t.t.t.
	DDD D . . . . .		. . . . ttt . . . t.t.t.
	D.D DD . . . . .		. . . . tt.t . . . tt.t.t.
	D.D D D		. . . . tt.t . . . tt.t.tt
	D.DD DD . . . . .		. . . . t.tt . . . ttt.t
	DD.D D . . . . .		. . . . t.t . . . t.ttt.
	D.DD DD D		. . . . tt.t . . . tt.t.t
	etc . . .		etc . . .

All of these variations sustain the character of the core rhythm. Nevertheless, with the application of these two simple principles, polyrhythmic complexity expands enormously. When we include additional instrumentation, such as low and high bell parts that also

correspond to these principles, we now have a full fledged multi-layered polyrhythmic ensemble of no less than five parts:

- 1) single surface drummer (weaving the rhythm)
- 2) low tone drum (improvising toward and from the low notes)
- 3) low tone bell (improvising toward and from the low notes)
- 4) high tone drum (improvising toward and from the high notes)
- 5) high tone bell (improvising toward and from the high notes)

Further notes on identifying the high and low parts in a core rhythm:

The essential low notes in any given rhythm are usually readily discernable. In addition, these bass notes are usually grouped loosely enough to translate directly to the bass drum or low bell. The high notes, on the other hand, are often grouped in much more rapid and inconsistent packets. The individuals playing the high notes must work to distill these packets into a series of key accents that can be expressed on their own instruments. For example, a drummer with a rebola (Brazilian bass drum) tuned for the high line is listening to the doumbek player define the core rhythm:

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .

D . C . Tk D . D . t k t . t k the core played on the doumbek

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .

. . C . Tk t k T . t k the actual high notes played by the doumbek

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .

. . t . t t . t . . an effective translation to the rebola

. . t . t t t . t . t . another effective translation to the rebola

The high notes in a rhythm are often more complex and less definitive of the rhythm's essential structure than the low bass tones are. Variations in interpretation will reflect the player and help define the unique character of the ensemble's rendition of the rhythm.

Single and Multi-Surface Instruments: Polyrhythm for One

Single surface drums refer to instruments that generally require the percussionist to use both hands on the same striking area. Common examples would include: doumbek/darbouka, tombak, djembe, ashiko, conga, and frame drum. In NWR, single surface drums are often used to express all of the essential beats and accents of a rhythm. As a result, these drums are the most easily identifiable reference for the rhythm being played. If the rhythm is unnamed or unknown to other ensemble members, they do well to first look and listen to the single surface drums to identify the key features of the cycle.

In contrast, **multiple surface instruments** invite the percussionist to combine the tones produced from entirely different surfaces or objects. Examples include, dundun, rebolo, congas, as well hand percussion such as bells, shakers, and clave. The latter are included in this category because they are: 1) often played in conjunction with another instrument; and 2) even when played alone, their use is consistent with the role of these multiple surface instruments.

Note that these two categorical differences in instrumentation also correspond well with the North-South approaches to rhythm that were described earlier. *Becoming an accomplished flexible rhythmist requires that we attend to the skills and outlook appropriate to both single and multiple surface instruments.*

In the remainder of this section, we will address issues related to these competencies as well as the methods for integrating them into the NWR ensemble.

Creating Complementary Polyrhythms On One Multi-Surface Instrument:

Up to this point, we have described the creation of individual parts that produce polyrhythm for the whole ensemble: a low drum, a high drum, a low bell, high bell, shaker, etc. Taking this a step further, *a single individual who is working with two surfaces at the same time can develop his or her own polyrhythm within the overall structure outlined above. In this case, separate parts for the low drum and low bell, are distributed to the left and right hands:*

	1...2...3...4...		1...2...3...4...
bell hand:	t.t.....t.....	drum hand:	D.D.....D.....
variations:	t.t.....tt.....	variations:	D.DD....D.....
	t.t.....tt.....		DDD.....D.....
	t.t.....t.....		D.DD...DD.....D
	t.tt...tt.....		D.D.....D.....D
	ttt...tt.....		D.D.....DD.....
	t.t.....tt.....t		DD.D....D.....
	etc...		etc...

The same approach to the distribution of polyrhythmic parts applies for the high drum, high bell combination, or any other multi-surface combination. If you play through these, you will note that each variation has its own challenges and particular feel. While it is useful to layout charts like this for practice, rhythmatisers strive to be able to improvise variations in the moment based off of the rudiment and the principles of playing towards or away from the key accents.

Complexity can be self defeating. For all instruments, rhythmic structure, continuity, and groove depend upon repetition. Multi-surface players do well to repeat and sustain a variation for a number of measures or cycles before making another change. When combined with all of the other elements taking place in an NWR session, you will want to keep your parts simple enough to: 1) support the ensemble; 2) attend to the dancers; 3) make and respond to ensemble calls. The more skilled you become, the more complexity you can sustain while also holding up your part of the circle of relationships.

Further Polyrhythmic Development Around the Pulse:

An alternative and additional approach to polyrhythmic parts in NWR is to organize one surface, or one instrument around the metric pulse. There are a limited number of ways to compose these *pulse based* variations. All of them involve shifting combinations of one and two beats. The core options are presented below in order of increasing difficulty.

Down beats:

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
x . . . x . . . x . . . x . . .

Up beats:

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
. . x . . . x . . . x . . . x . . .

Down beat eighth notes:

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
x . x . x . x . x . x . x . x .

Down beat doubles:

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
x x . . x x . . x x . . x x . .

Up-beat doubles:

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
. . x x . . x x . . x x . . x x

Mixed down beat example:

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
x x . . x . . . x x . . x . . .

Mixed Up-beat example:

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
. . x . . . x x . . x . . . x x

Mixed Up-beat example:

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .

. . x x x x . . x .

Shuffle:

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
x . . x x . . x x . . x x . . x

Eighth note bell archetype one (1, then 2, then 2):

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
x . x x . x x . x . x x . x x .

Eighth note bell archetype two (2, then 1, then 2):

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
x x . x . x x . x x . x . x x .

Eighth note bell archetype three (2, then 2, then 1):

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
x x . x x . x . x x . x x . x .

Eighth note bell archetype four:

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
x . x . x x . x x . x . x x . x

Eighth note bell archetype five:

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
x . x x . x . x x . x x . x . x

*These pulse based lines are essentially rhythmic archetypes. They are conceptualized independently from the particulars of the rhythm being played. As a result, they create a kind of fabric, or rhythmic ground. To this extent, they parallel the “river” that is a part of the NWR lexicon and practice. Because they are separate from the specifics of the rhythm and yet retain archetypal relationships to the pulse, they are often useful polyrhythmic devices. Each one has a unique rhythmic circuitry, and simply changing the archetype will radically alter the feel of the underlying rhythm. On the other hand, *these parts can easily become monotonous*, muddling and distorting the distinct character of a specific rhythmic cycle. While musical tastes vary, *we recommend that there be no more than one or two instruments of the same timbre playing pulse-based parts at any given time.**

In the context of multi-surface instruments, these pulse-based parts can be learned as the polyrhythmic compliment to the core set of beats in the particular rhythm. In other words, one hand plays the pulse-based line while the other hand plays and improvises on the core. Again, using “Beladi” as our example:

		1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .	
bass	hand:	D . D D	drum parts
bell	hand:	x . . . x . . . x . . . x . . .	down beats
bell	hand:	x . x . x . x . x . x . x .	down beat eighth notes
bell	hand:	. . xx . . xx . . xx . . xx	up beat doubles
bell	hand:	x . xx . xx . x . xx . xx .	1-2-2 eighth note archetype

Learning to smoothly play and shift between polyrhythmic parts like these requires a great deal of practice. Each new set of overlapping rhythms introduces different places and spaces in the flow of time. As we explore them, our ability to hear and access variety of rhythmic relationships deepens. This kind of practice is valued for both its musicality and its profound effects on our consciousness. Indeed, in the larger world of percussion, the ability to play four independent parts with all four limbs while simultaneously singing, is an extraordinary expression of human creative potential. Within the extensive domain of the southern rhythmic region (Africa south of the Sahara, and across to the West Indies and the Americas), the mysteries of this kind of rhythmic multitasking are multiplied by the addition of polymeter. In this case, the arms and legs of a single individual are simultaneously playing different parts in different time signatures. This combination creates complex grooves and mysterious shifts in awareness. No one has yet been able to fully explain how our bodies and brains can actually achieve these wonders. We simply know that with practice, we can become a multi-tasking nexus of rhythm and motion.

Combining Pulse and Part in a Single Line:

Having introduced parts that are constructed around the high or low tones of the core rhythm, as well as parts that are organized around the pulse, it is now possible to address the integration of these two approaches. This technique is reserved for individuals who are playing multi-surface polyrhythms. The rhythmist that is exclusively playing bell, shaker, or block should choose between a rhythm-based (high or low) or pulse-based part.

In order to combine rhythm and pulse in a single bell or bass line, the drummer begins with the rhythm and then adds some variation on the pulse where appropriate:

		1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .	
1) bass	hand:	D . D D	bass rudiment
2) bell	hand:	x . x x	low bell rudiment
3) bell	hand:	x . x <u>xx</u>	low bell variation
4) bell	hand:	x . x . <u>xx</u> . . <u>xx</u> . . <u>xx</u> . .	low bell variation with additional pulse notes on two and four.

As this example demonstrates, both hands begin with the appropriate core part (1&2). The line in the bell hand is then varied according to the NWR approach (3). Finally, additional pulse based notes are added on the second and fourth beat of the measure (4). This is just one example of an infinite variety of rhythmic explorations and permutations available to the multi-surface rhythmist. Furthermore, all of these improvisational options sustain close relationship to both the low and high fundamentals of a given rhythm; *the rhythm binds, yet sets us free.*

Polyrhythmic Skill Development: "Traditional" Method

Use the following charts to develop your facility at placing the bell pattern in different spots in time while sustaining the low or high lines of the core rhythm. The first line of each group represents the bell hand. The low and high parts represent the bass hand.

Beladi:

	1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
Down Beats	x . . . x . . . x . . . x . . .
Compound Rhythm	D . D . t . k . D . t . k . t k
Low Part	D . D D
High Part	. . . . t . k . . . t . k . t .

	1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
Up-Beats	. . x . . . x . . . x . . . x .
Compound Rhythm	D . D . t . k . D . t . k . t k
Low Part	D . D D
High Part	. . . . t . k . . . t . k . t .

	1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
Eighth Notes	x . x . x . x . x . x . x . x .
Compound Rhythm	D . D . t . k . D . t . k . t k
Low Part	D . D D
High Part	. . . . t . k . . . t . k . t .

	1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
Down-Beat Double	x x . . x x . . x x . . x x . .
Compound Rhythm	D . D . t . k . D . t . k . t k
Low Part	D . D D
High Part	. . . . t . k . . . t . k . t .

Gawazee:

	1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
Down Beats	x . . . x . . . x . . . x . . .
Compound Rhythm	t . D . t . D . D . . . t . t k
Low Part	. . D . . . D . D
High Part	t . . . t t . t .

	1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
Up-Beats	. . x . . . x . . . x . . . x .
Compound Rhythm	t . D . t . D . D . . . t . t k
Low Part	. . D . . . D . D
High Part	t . . . t t . t .

	1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
Eighth Notes	x . x . x . x . x . x . x . x .
Compound Rhythm	t . D . t . D . D . . . t . t k
Low Part	. . D . . . D . D
High Part	t . . . t t . t .

	1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .
Down-Beat Double	x x . . x x . . x x . . x x . .
Compound Rhythm	t . D . t . D . D . . . t . t k
Low Part	. . D . . . D . D
High Part	t . . . t t . t .

Chiftitelli:

1...2...3...4...5...6...7...8...
 Down Beats x...x...x...x...x...x...x...x...
 Compound Rhythm D...t.k...t.k...D...D...t.....
 Low Part D.....D...D.....
 High Partt.k...t.k.....t.....

1...2...3...4...5...6...7...8...
 Up-Beats ..x...x...x...x...x...x...x...x...
 Compound Rhythm D...t.k...t.k...D...D...t.....
 Low Part D.....D...D.....
 High Partt.k...t.k.....t.....

1...2...3...4...5...6...7...8...
 Eighth Notes x.x.x.x.x.x.x.x.x.x.x.x.x.x.x.x.
 Compound Rhythm D...t.k...t.k...D...D...t.....
 Low Part D.....D...D.....
 High Partt.k...t.k.....t.....

1...2...3...4...5...6...7...8...
 Down-Beat Double xx..xx..xx..xx..xx..xx..xx..xx..
 Compound Rhythm D...t.k...t.k...D...D...t.....
 Low Part D.....D...D.....
 High Partt.k...t.k.....t.....

1...2...3...4...5...6...7...8...
 Up-Beat Doubles ..xx..xx..xx..xx..xx..xx..xx..xx..
 Compound Rhythm D...t.k...t.k...D...D...t.....
 Low Part D.....D...D.....
 High Partt.k...t.k.....t.....

Moroccan 6/8:

	1...2...3...4...5...6...
Down Beats	x...x...x...x...x...x...
Compound Rhythm	D..t.kD...t.D..t.kD.t.T.
Low Part	D.....D.....D.....D.....
High Part	...t.k...t...t.k..t.T.

	1...2...3...4...5...6...
Up-Beats	..x...x...x...x...x...x.
Compound Rhythm	D..t.kD...t.D..t.kD.t.T.
Low Part	D.....D.....D.....D.....
High Part	...t.k...t...t.k..t.T.

	1...2...3...4...5...6...
Eighth Notes	x.x.x.x.x.x.x.x.x.x.x.x.
Compound Rhythm	D..t.kD...t.D..t.kD.t.T.
Low Part	D.....D.....D.....D.....
High Part	...t.k...t...t.k..t.T.

	1...2...3...4...5...6...
Down-Beat Double	xx..xx..xx..xx..xx..xx..
Compound Rhythm	D..t.kD...t.D..t.kD.t.T.
Low Part	D.....D.....D.....D.....
High Part	...t.k...t...t.k..t.T.

	1...2...3...4...5...6...
Up-Beat Doubles	..xx..xx..xx..xx..xx..xx
Compound Rhythm	D..t.kD...t.D..t.kD.t.T.
Low Part	D.....D.....D.....D.....
High Part	...t.k...t...t.k..t.T.

Afro-Cuban Influences and Polymer

4 pulse/beat 1...2...3...4... duple meter
Clave D..D..D...D.D...

4 pulse/beat 1...2...3...4... duple meter
Rhumba D..D...D..D.D...

4 pulse/beat 1...2...3...4... duple meter
2/3 Clave(Nos) ..D.D...D..D..D.

4 pulse/beat 1...2...3...4... duple meter
Samba D.D.DD.D.D.DD.D.

2 pulse/beat 1.2.3. duple meter
2/3 poly(meter) D.D.D. (2 line) 3 side
 x..x.. (3 line) 2 side
 1..2.. triple meter

4 pulse/beat 1...2...3... duple meter
4/3 poly(meter) D...D...D... 3 side (North side)
 x..x..x..x.. 4 side (South side)
 3 pulse/beat 1..2..3..4.. triple meter

***NOTE:** The duple meter is listed first because duple is the unifying meter line in NWR. The same rhythm is more often referred to as 3/4 polymer.*

2 pulse/beat 1.2.3.4.5.6. duple meter
Short bell D.D.DD.D.D.D
 3 pulse/beat 1..2..3..4.. triple meter

2 pulse/beat 1.2.3.4.5.6. duple meter
Long bell D.D.D.DD.D.D
 3 pulse/beat 1..2..3..4.. triple meter

Beginning Your Own Ensemble:

If you have learned to play drums or dance within a traditional form, your training is likely to have included a heavy emphasis on parts and pieces. You have learned specific rhythms and choreographies, and specific parts for specific songs. You were told what is appropriate and what is inappropriate within the particular tradition that you were studying. New World Rhythmatism invites you to shift your consciousness from learning parts, pieces, songs, and dances, to learning and cultivating rhythmic relationships that transcend regional, ethnic, and historical boundaries. This is part of the rhythmattist's modern project. We live in a world of blended cultures and arts that are empowered by the synergy of this diversity.

In practical terms, this means that ***you are free to create or choose the primary rhythmic vehicles, the foundational rhythms and dance phrases that you will build on in your ensemble*** (If you are looking for examples, or would like to start fresh, a set of the basic rhythms and exercises that have been useful to our work are included in the chapter on “Concepts, Methods, Examples, and Practice”). Whatever the case, the primary rhythmic vehicles that you choose will become the shared basis, or themes, for creative development within your group. Dancers will learn the key movements, drummers will learn the core rhythms, and chanters will teach each other their songs. Given that these themes will become an axis around which the ensemble variations will turn, there are a few points to keep in mind when making these decisions.

General considerations for all three arts:

- 1) **Simplicity first**— complex variations rapidly evolve out of simple foundations.
- 2) **Unison first**— polyrhythm, polyphony, and solo improvisation second. The ability of ensemble players to mirror each other's parts is essential for the kind of organic flexibility that drives change and growth within any given session. The most fundamental kind of mirroring is unison. When all drummers, dancers, and chanters are playing in unison, they are empowered by the resulting entrainment and the

confidence that is evident in perfect symmetry; all are the same, all are correct, all are in sync. This space of groove and confidence empowers subsequent explorations and complex variations on the theme, including polyrhythms, polyphony, and improvisational movement. In addition, polyrhythm and polymeter tends to encourage a degree of resistant listening as individuals attempt to hold their parts *against* those played by others in the group. Particularly in the case of beginning and intermediate rhythmists, this can lead awareness away from co-creation, adjustment, and adaptation, and towards an unshakable focus on a fixed structure.

- 3) **Begin in one time signature.** The integration of drum, dance, and chant, as well as the flexible movement within and between rhythmic relationships is most easily achieved within a single meter. All time signatures are possible, but each requires significant energy investments to achieve desired flexibility. For this reason, it is helpful to begin simply. Add alternate time signatures after you have established a solid practice with your ensemble.

In addition to these three general considerations, ensemble dancers will want to establish a common vocabulary of clearly defined movements that can be comfortably sustained in unison.

When we looked carefully at the general and specific considerations described above, it was clear that rhythms and movements *based* in Middle-Eastern music and dance traditions comfortably satisfied our needs. Many of the rhythms are relatively simple to master and easy to communicate. Rhythms and movements from West-African or Afro-Cuban traditions require more initial modification because of their heavy emphasis on polymeter relationships and fixed parts. S. Asian rhythmic ideas also require a bit more initial adjustment due to their length and complexity. Nevertheless, any source, from Balinese gamelan to American rock and roll, can be used *to inspire* foundational themes. As you define your own, you will discover the rhythms and movements that suit your ensemble's skills, tastes, and goals. Those who have played traditional parts outside of formal performance or practice will note that this is essentially what is already taking place when these elements are infused into the melting pot of a drum circle. NWR brings

coherence to this stone soup, by providing tools to focus and developing particular themes.

Note: Out of respect to the traditions, as well as the cultures and masters who carried these arts, it is important to make a clear distinction between our use of ideas that were inspired by traditional forms, and the actual traditions themselves. Rhythmartists learn from traditional arts and artists, but have the humility to realize that they are not representatives of these cultures or traditions. This point is so important, that a separate discussion of this issue has been included at the end of this guidebook.

Once you have decided upon the core movements and rhythms that you will use, drummers and dancers practice together with their respective groups in order to share and master these themes. You might find it advantageous to have a dance technique class that meets outside of the ensemble in order to work on these movements, explore dance calls, and learn rhythms. If possible, it is useful and fun to also bring the two groups together to begin building the larger circle of relationships. This is most simply achieved by having the drummers play one of their established rhythms while the dancers practice leading and following in the arc.

This initial phase of NWR practice is also directed towards observing and nurturing healthy artful relationships within the ensemble. Ultimately, the drummers will want to be familiar with the dancers' movements and calls, and the dancers will want to know the drummers' rhythms and calls. This familiarity begins by simply playing or dancing while shifting the focus of our attention. Drummers lift their heads up, open their eyes, and watch the dancers. Dancers engage with the drummers and feel how the music inspires their movement. In the beginning, this can be quite challenging for both groups. Feelings of self-consciousness combine with the technical difficulty of executing the movements and rhythms. With repetition, focus, and good humor, this will quickly diminish. Simply stay on task and feelings of comfort, acceptance, and safety will grow.

With the drummers and dancers together, there is also opportunity to share a chant or two. This creates a bridge for the entire ensemble to entrain with each other in common cause. We end our ensemble practice with the chant that concludes this guidebook. It is a unifying moment for the whole group.

Contemplations for Rhythmatists: Insights from the Mirror of Rhythm

The following contemplations provide an opportunity for you and your playmates to delve deeper into the transformative power of your rhythmic practice. In Joshua's courses at the College, students respond to some of these contemplations in an online discussion group. This is particularly effective, as it gives each person an opportunity to not only reflect on their personal experiences, but to also learn from the insights and revelations of others. The conversation extends and deepens the intimacy of the ensemble, as well as nurturing the growth of individual rhythmatists. If you choose to explore these contemplations with your ensemble, consider using a discussion group rather than email list. Either way, create a separate topic for each contemplation. This makes it easy for people to read what others have written.

Contemplation: It's About the Process, Not the Product (Rhythmatism is Deep Play)

As beautiful as drumming, dancing, and chanting can be, the external reflection of these arts is but a glimmer of the inner radiance that comes from participating in them ourselves. It is not outside appearance, but inner experience that fuels the rhythmist's way. After all, how much drum music, chant, or dance video do you really watch and listen to anyway? And if the answer truly is, "a great deal," I'm willing to bet that you are a drummer, dancer, or chanter who looks to these materials for inspiration in your own practice. The rhythmist falls in love with the process and the practice.

From a process perspective, the rhythmic arts— drum, dance, and chant— are vehicles, tools, or doorways to the revelation of deeper mysteries. There are, of course, many other vehicles available in our grand world of metaphors. Some people see life as a great game of cards or chess with all the associated implications of strategy and bluff. Others view it as a battle or a war. To some, life is a race, while still others find in life, a garden. There are those who think of life as a hunt, and those who see their lives in the poetry of ships at sea. For the rhythmist, life comes into focus through the lens of rhythm, song, dance, and the circle that combines them all.

All human activities are can become metaphors for life. It is the conscious choice to see them in this light that transforms a mundane activity, a shallow game, or a lifeless ritual into a practice of enormous depth and consequence. When we make the choice to reflect upon the world in terms of the metaphors we live by, we experience an expansion of consciousness. We find that we are able to move from the familiar microcosm of a chess game to the uncharted and infinite macrocosm of life itself. The lessons we learn in chess are made available as we encounter life's unpredictable challenges. As a result, it makes a tremendous difference whether or not we take the time to really consider these metaphors. The rhythmist remains mindful of this insight. As the familiar proverb goes, "when your only tool is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail." Our metaphors, and

the practices that inform them, define our relationship choices. If we live as warriors, can we help but find ourselves expecting, planning for, preparing for, and perhaps even finding ourselves at war? Similarly, if we live as beings of rhythm, can we help but find our place in the flow?

"When you make the two one, and when you make the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside, and the above like the below, and when you make the male and the female one and the same...then will you enter [the Kingdom]." – Gospel of Thomas

Deep play means contemplating our practice and asking how it informs our lives. Further, deep play means using this practice to explore new options and opportunities for improving our relationships. When the song, dance, or rhythm is not going well, it mirrors life that is not going well. The difference is that we have an extraordinary opportunity to gaze safely into this mirror, and if we choose to, we may even try something new to improve the situation. *The rhythmist knows that explorations within the music and the movement can deeply inform journey through life itself.*

The focus here is on creating great relationships, not on making great art— at least not in the familiar sense of that word. Indeed, New World Rhythmism is premised on the observation that great relationships are beautiful in themselves. It is the process: the creating, the relating, through both the struggles and the successes that is of highest value. The product is secondary. Technical excellence that is produced at the expense of undue emotional, physical, or mental health is counterproductive. When we examine the history of arts in the non-western world, we quickly discover that this process-oriented view is most common. Throughout the world, the arts are vehicles for relationship first, and products for prestige, power, and sale, second. Cultural notions of beauty flow from the extent to which a work of art serves its function in the ongoing rituals of life. The chant, the music, the mask, and the rhythm are all in service of something deeper, and this is where their value resides.

The traditional role of art as process over product is clearly articulated by Fodeba Keita, who was responsible for creating the much lauded Ballets Africains. Among the most well-known drum and dance ensembles in the world, the Ballets are virtuosic, multiethnic, high-energy performance troops. They were originally created by Keita in the late 1940s. In 1958, he wrote, "...the stage being different from life, it is necessary to resort to a certain amount of stage adaptation to make ourselves understood by a foreign public. In our African villages, the same dance may last a whole night without tiring anyone. **The dances are, moreover, executed in the middle of a ring of spectators who also take part almost as much as the dancers and musicians. On the stage new conditions have to be created** by means of different devices in order, on the one hand, to retain the freshness and reality of the dance, and on the other, **to destroy the monotony which is quick to arise due to the non-active participation of the audience.** That is the reason why we must take our dances only at their culminating point, shorten them and cut out a thousand details which are not important except in the public place of the village" (F. Keita 1958: 176 cited in Charry 2000: 212 [emphasis added]).

Writing Exercise for Contemplation:

Before you write, reflect upon the metaphors you live by. If you were to compare life to some activity, what would you compare it to? Spend a day observing the connection between this metaphor and your daily experience. How does your metaphor apply to your interactions? In which cases does it prove helpful, and in which cases does it not apply? Write about your observations.

Now consider the idea that life is like a rhythm, a dance, or a song. Spend a day observing the connection between these metaphors and your daily activities? Do they apply to your experience? To the extent that life is like a dance or a rhythm, how might singing, playing drums, or dancing help you flow and grow through the rhythms of your life? What skill would you like to develop in your life that you might practice and refine through your art?

Contemplation: You Make Life Happen

“Never underestimate the power of a few committed people to change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” – Margaret Meade

*“Drummers play rhythms that give people strength and courage before or during a trial and honor them when they have passed through it. Drumming is above all a communal event that demands participation from all present in the form of dancing, hand clapping, and singing. By participating, one honors those being celebrated, whether a bride and groom or children about to go into, or returning from, the bush” (Eric Charry, *Mande Music*, 2000:198).*

Of all the people that you encounter in the world, how many of them are actually engaged creators: people who produce ideas, things, and experiences that genuinely enhance the lives of others? Now consider the people you know who spend most of their time consuming others' creativity. This is an illuminating reflection. The extraordinary potential that we have to create imaginative brilliant lives is matched only by the degree to which we forgo this gift and rely upon the ingenuity of a precious few. Yet, we are fundamentally creative and powerful. This is one of the key principles of brilliant rhythmism:

“I make life happen. I am a creator. Creation depends upon my personal engagement. The more I give, the more I get.”

This basic position, **“I Make It Happen,”** is a distinctive feature of a rhythmist's way in the world. It is interesting to compare this principle to the way that the rhythmic arts are most commonly taught in the West. In North America and Europe, the vast majority of workshops in drum, dance, and song, are organized around taking people on pleasurable guided journeys. There is a workshop leader or a facilitator, and he or she brings the participant on an extraordinary and often transformative ride. In contrast, New World Rhythmism dissolves this role of leader or facilitator, and empowers all participants to be

co-creators. Given our knowledge of entrainment and the power of rhythm, this makes sense; as co-creators we can go further and deeper than any one brilliant individual can take us alone.

There are, however, two challenges to embracing this powerful perspective: 1) We are challenged to take personal responsibility for our experience; 2) It takes skill in order to “make it happen” the way we’d like it to.

Taking personal responsibility for our own experience is among the most vulnerable things we can do. It means that we must look to ourselves in order to understand, forgive, accept, or transform our pain, frustrations, embarrassments, shortcomings, perceived failures, fears, and even our own boredom. Of course, it is the powerful opportunity to soothe these sufferings, and further, to nurture our lives with happy, healthy relationships that make this vulnerability worth the risk and effort. Taking responsibility for our own struggles is a first step in creating the lives we dream of living.

In the microcosm of the drum and dance circle, this means that you are a creator of sound and movement. You are in relationship with others. You shape the experience. When we realize that we are these creators, we also discover that our ability to “make it happen” is directly connected to what we bring to the circle. If we bring the expectation that we will be led, we find ourselves blowing along like leaves in the wind. If no one arrives with the intent to “make it happen,” then there is no wind at all, and the leaves sit silently on the floor of a dark forest. If, on the other hand, we arrive having prepared our minds and practiced our arts, we are able to offer these skills and intentions to the circle.

It really is that simple: when we recognize that we are creators of life, we are immediately encouraged to develop the skills that will enable us to produce the lives we wish to live. If we desire to have days filled with juicy drumming, dancing, and chanting, then it is clear that we must cultivate these skills, and bring these arts to our lives and the juice to these arts. If we wish to live relationships of depth, then it is similarly clear that we will need to bring depth to our relationships.

“We must be the difference we want to see in the world.” – Mahatma Ghandi

“You can do anything you want to. It’s all a matter of balancing the old equation of resistance vs. desire.” – Randy Crafton

Writing Exercise for Contemplation:

Reflect upon one of your ensemble experiences. What did you bring to the circle in terms of your mental and emotional state? What did you bring in terms of your skills and intentions? How would you like to prepare for the next circle? What will you bring?

If you have not had sufficient ensemble experience to reflect upon, consider another group or gathering that you have participated in (recall that every circle of relationships can be observed from the metaphorical perspective of the interrelationships between rhythm, music, and movement). Once you have settled on an experience to consider, answer the same questions that were addressed to your ensemble experience: What did you bring to the circle in terms of your mental and emotional state? What did you bring in terms of your skills and intentions? How would you like to prepare for the next circle? What will you bring?

Contemplation: Practice is the Beginning and the End of Transformation

"There's no success like failure, and failure's no success at all." – B. Dylan

If we speak to a class of first graders and ask who among them can make up a song about a zebra on roller-skates... if we ask who among them likes to sing, we will be greeted by a forest of waving hands. But within a few short years a child can bury their potential, believing that a flaw in their song was a flaw in them, rather than an invitation to practice.

*"Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up."
– Pablo Picasso*

Only you can know where you got the idea that you can't draw, or dance, or sing, or write well, or creatively, or speak eloquently, or keep rhythm. Only you can excavate the social pressures, humiliation, and shame that rained on the natural parade of your confident creative expression. Only you can heal these wounds and rejuvenate the ecstatic garden of creativity that sleeps within. But *you can do so with certain knowledge that, if you want to, you can become excellent at something that you love.* **This is our birthright. As human beings, we are guaranteed excellence in return for our practice.**

Consequently, anyone who practices *instantly* begins the journey from consumer-of-others'-creativity to producer. Those who practice add value to their very being, and this makes them valuable to all their relations. We can practice the drum. We can practice being a good friend. We can practice opening our hearts. As long as we practice, growth is inescapable. **Self-help manuals, workshops, retreats, and wonder diets must all wait at the back of the line, for practice is the essence of personal transformation.**

This is not wishful thinking, it is fundamental to the nature of life itself; the more energy that is put into a system, the more organized and complex it will become. If you clean your

house for a little while, it gets a little bit cleaner. If you clean house for a month, it gets a lot cleaner. Your brain and your body work the same way. The more time and energy you invest, the greater the return. Of course, there is an art to practicing itself, but there's no point in worrying over these subtleties until practice is an integrated part of our daily lives. Before we can practice at practicing, we must first practice.

"There is a vitality, a life force, a quickening that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all time, this expression is unique. If you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and be lost. The world will not have it.

It is not yours to determine how good it is; nor how it compares with other expressions. It is your business to keep the channel open.

You do not even have to believe in yourself or your work. You have to keep open and aware directly to the urges that motivate you. Keep the channel open.

No artist is ever pleased. There is no satisfaction whatever at any time. There is only a queer divine dissatisfaction; a blessed unrest that keeps us marching and makes us more alive than the others." -Martha Graham to Agnes De Mille

Writing Exercise for Contemplation:

What kinds of thoughts, things, or activities keep you from your practice? If you knew with certainty that the only thing between you and your goals was practice, if you knew you could surmount all challenges and momentary failures, would you practice? If not, why not, and what would you do instead? What do you do instead?

Contemplation: The Center is Everywhere

“We are one, yet not the same, we must carry each other...” – Bono, U2

Immersed in the rhythmic field of the ensemble, we find ourselves at a nexus of overlapping waves of energy. Percussive rhythms, movement, and chant all splash against our senses while we simultaneously produce our own rhythms, movement, and song. The seductions of entrainment from multiple directions are all calling upon our nervous system. If we are chanting while we are dancing or playing, there is an additional layer of overlapping cross-rhythms to negotiate. This is the great dance, the song of songs, the “aum” of all energies rushing together. Our joyful task is to become the rhythm at the convergence of these waves of emotion in motion.

Cultivating this state of open consciousness requires a balance between listening and speaking, receiving and giving, consuming and producing. When we learn to comfortably embrace each other in the rhythm, we can hear, see, and feel our playmates’ expression, while remaining deeply rooted in our own creative part. This open consciousness enables us to respond to external influences without losing ourselves in them. When we can hear and see each other without letting go of our own place in space and time, we are empowered to choose how we will blend our energies within this flow.

In general, when we first encounter these challenges, we either allow our own voices and creativity to dominate others, or we allow our voice and creativity to be dominated by others. In the macrocosm, the big circle of life, this corresponds to extroverts who don’t bother to ask the opinions of their quieter compatriots, and introverts who don’t work up the courage to ensure that their valuable ideas are heard. In the ensemble, this tension between self and other is clearly evident; no matter what your skill level, you can literally feel the energy of the cross-rhythms pulling you towards them, sucking you into their field, calling forth agreement and entrainment with their particular flows. Part of our practice is

finding the balance between giving-in to the energies of others, and drawing others towards our own.

When this sublime balance is achieved, the tension disappears altogether; it becomes an effortless conversation, an organic blossoming of art. The leader and the follower, the horse and the rider, father and mother, male and female, fire and water, heaven and earth, all become one. The distinctions between what we commonly experience as “my expression” and “your expression” dissolve. There is only one center, and that center is everywhere.

"The Force is what gives a Jedi his power. It's an energy field generated by all living beings. It surrounds us, penetrates us. It binds the galaxy together."

– Obi-Wan Kenobi a.k.a., George Lucas, *Star Wars: A New Hope*

Writing Exercise for Contemplation:

If it takes practice and skill to play or dance and listen to others at the same time, does it also take skill to think, respond, listen, and question others in a conversation? Observe yourself as you talk with someone. What kind of balance do you strike between listening and speaking? Where do you fall in the continuum between these two aspects of relationship? What parts of verbal interaction do you find most challenging? How does your communication style show up in the arts of the ensemble?

How would you like to improve the balance in the ensemble? What could you practice that would help to make these changes?

Contemplation: Practice Is Not Preparation

Although excellence is guaranteed to all who practice, it is not the reason, the goal, or the destination of our studies. I observed this most clearly from my efforts to learn to play the S. Asian tabla. Any student of this complex instrument is inevitably exposed to the most extraordinary and extreme stories of rigorous practice. One of my gurus described how he was tied with his instrument to a tree, and another spoke of his teacher being locked in his room for months as a boy because he had refused to practice his music. In order to regain some measure of freedom, as well as his father's trust, he spent the days practicing on his wooden bedpost to demonstrate his earnest desire to learn. Other teachers talked of bleeding fingers and broken relationships that were sacrificed for musical excellence. I remember one story about a famous maestro whose infant son died. When his wife came crying to the practice room to let him know what had happened, the maestro did not respond with grief or compassion, but instead, told her not to interrupt his practice. Embellished and embroidered for appropriate drama, all of these stories were related as cautionary tales about the rigorous training of traditional cultural artists, as well as what happens when we place excellence in art above the life that the art is meant to nurture. These anecdotes challenge us to make mindful choices about the goals, expectations, and meaning of our practice.

As much as I enjoyed listening to these strange and sometimes terrible tales of *extreme* musicianship, I encountered the most compelling story of this type during a lesson with Swapan Chaudhuri at the Ali Akbar College of Music. It was just after the break for Summer session. I was spending the semester in San Francisco, and was myself practicing eight or more hours a day. Swapanda, as we affectionately called him, had just returned from giving many celebrated concerts in Europe. I was anxious to find out how they had come off. After greeting him in the formal respectful manner, touching his feet and then touching my forehead, I asked for his impressions of the tour. At first he seemed a bit irritated by my question. He kind of waved it away. When I persisted, he looked at me

and said, “of course they went well, but it doesn’t matter. A concert is a concert. They are in the way of the practice.”

I think that Swapanda’s response deserves some extra reflection. Here is an artist who personifies excellence and mastery in his rhythmic art, one whose skills far exceed a student’s highest hope for achievement, but who offers the insight that it is not the product but the practice that counts. His comment reminded me that practicing to become excellent is like waking up to go to sleep. When we practice we discover that the past and the future are illusions, distractions from the depth of the music that is right before us. The only certainty is who we are in this moment, and who we are is brought to light in the focused reflection of our practice. In other words, when we practice, being and becoming are brought together as one.

“Learning is movement from moment to moment.” – Krishnamurti

To be at peace and joy in our own practice is to be at peace and joy in the creative company of our selves.

Writing Exercise for Contemplation:

We have all met someone in our lives who only “comes to life” when they are being watched. Their motivation, their energy, seems to be entirely external, and when they are alone, or among close friends and family, their smile, wit, enthusiasm, and curiosity all fade. Imagine that this person has asked you to help them with this. Prescribe a rhythmic arts practice that could help such a person to savor the time when there is no audience. Give this person advice as to how he or she might approach the practice, and specifically what he or she could actually do in order to follow your prescription.

Contemplation: Opening the Gates of Inspiration

by Michael Wall

When I first began drumming, it occurred to me that the sounds I was learning to shape with my hands were like letters in an alphabet. My goal was to learn to clearly articulate each sound so that I could combine them into complete words, or rhythms.

Over time, I began to understand that each rhythm, each groove, is like a word in a vocabulary unique to the culture of the drum being studied. As students of Mande (West African) drumming, the group I played with often learned long “breaks” – extended rhythmic “sentences” that the entire ensemble used as bridges between one rhythm and another, or as a sort of rhythmic re-set before a new solo, song, or dance began.

The more I gave my full attention to playing each of the rhythms and breaks I was learning, the more I began to recognize those phrases being played within the solos of the more advanced players.

One day, I booked a private class with my new teacher. When he asked me what I wanted to learn, I explained that I wanted to learn how to solo (It’s interesting to note that I didn’t ask him to teach me solo phrases, which is what opened the door up to the lesson that followed). My teacher asked me if I needed to warm up. I said no, as I had been practicing for a while before he arrived.

He began to play a steady roll of 32nd notes (i.e. FAST!) and said for me to join him. Eagerly I jumped in, and we rolled...and rolled...and rolled. First my forearms started to burn, then my biceps, then my shoulders started to tighten up, and then my neck. After what seemed like an eternity of struggling to hang on (but was likely about 60 seconds), I had to stop. My teacher smiled, just kept rolling, and said, “come on!” So, I gamely tried again, only to succumb to the burning pain once more.

My teacher smiled and just kept calmly rolling along at the same blistering pace. He said, "Most soloing means that you will be playing double time to the rhythm a good percentage of the time. Before you are concerned with what to play, you'll want to open the physical and energetic conduits in your arms to free them up to be *able* to play. The more you can develop your speed and stamina, the easier it will be for your own unique musical ideas to be able to pour out of you in the moment. If you want to learn to solo, it's simple... roll like this every day for as long as you can, and the next day... roll a bit longer!"

So, humbled again, I settled back into the patient persistence required to grow another seed of musical magic. Here's what I discovered through the simple act of rolling and rolling and rolling....

- Tension will eventually cause pain, and will inevitably slow you down. Bring your attention to the places in your body where there is tension and relax those areas as you play.
- Subtly shifting the angle of my wrist, arm, shoulder or torso would often move the "work" of making the motion to a different section of the same muscle group – and result in less tension, and more energy.
- Breathing (or the lack of it!) affected both tension and stamina
- There are what I can only describe as energetic conduits in my arms, and visualizing energy flowing like a warm soothing fluid *through* muscles or joints where I felt blocked, helped to relax and open up those areas.
- There was a whole level of physical, muscular development beyond that gained by the many years of playing that I had already done. At tempos well beyond what the group would play as foundational rhythms, this new growing edge-would never be addressed by playing in class.

- My partnership with my drum machine was rekindled – as my reliable, accurate friend who could maintain speeds higher than the tempo plateau I had reached. The difficulty of staying just 5 beats per minute faster than my top tempo often dissolved into relaxed certainty after only a few sessions.
- ...and some of those original rhythm “words” started showing up in my solos – double time!

I still roll whenever I find the time – pauses at traffic lights are great– and if you do it at the checkout stand at the market, you might get a smile from a secret drummer!

Writing Exercise for Contemplation:

Consider drumming or dancing from the perspective of an athletic pursuit that invites you to increase your health and vitality. What can you do to increase your strength, speed, and stamina *besides* playing your drum? Where does tension or pain show up in your body as you play, and how do you relate with it? What does this reveal to you about your typical approaches to pain or tension in other areas of your life? There’s an old saying, “no pain, no gain” – what does this phrase suggest to you about the process of skill development, or growing, in general?

Contemplation: On the Difference between Being and Being Inhibited

“The job of the artist is always to deepen the mystery.” – Francis Bacon

For years, I hid behind my drum at the various circles I attended. I had no intention of doing this; I simply fell into the seductive embrace of my own ego and the security of my comfort zone. When I was behind the drum, I was valued, safe, and contributing to the energy and beauty of the moment. Everyone seemed happy to have me there, and I loved to play. As time went by, I began to realize that even my own skills and talents could be in the way. When I thought honestly about my feelings, I noticed that I was afraid of many things in the circle, and that by playing my drum, I would hide from my fears. I was afraid of moving, of singing, of dancing, of connecting directly with people. My fears were speaking to me, they were whispering of so much more to explore and feel in life. They were challenging me to open up to new dimensions of myself. The drum taught me that if I practiced I would certainly grow, but now I was learning that I would have to stop playing my drum, at least temporarily, because it was in the way of my real practice. While it had once taught me so much about release, presence, and connection, it had become an obstacle to learning deeper lessons about these very same things.

There is a difference between being and being self-conscious. In the rhythmist's circle, being means choosing freely. When we can rest in the rhythm without pushing or pulling, without being pushed or pulled, we can hear the energies of inspiration and choose when and how to follow them. When we cannot rest, when we are driven by the hungers and fears of our egos, we become deafened by the clutter of our own anxieties. This self-consciousness descends like a shroud over the possibilities of the moment. Entangled in our own webs of fear and need, we are unable to respond or be inspired by the expressions of others.

Fortunately, the circle is a safe place to work out these internal struggles. If we mindfully witness these anxieties, if we take some time to contemplate them, we can physically

transform these feelings by doing something different in the circle, or in our lives. We can get up from our drum, we can change the way that we play, we can practice new calls, we can start a chant, we can sit and listen at the perimeter, we can get in-step, *we can intentionally focus on witnessing and responding to others*. New World Rhythmism offers a microcosm in which we are lovingly expected and encouraged to practice learning how to open up, to free ourselves from false limitations, and to feel brilliantly, ecstatically, alive. The more we practice, the easier it becomes, and the easier it is to take these lessons beyond the microcosm and into the circle of our daily lives.

“Most days, I fall short of ecstasy, but the days I hit it make up for all the rest. Some days, my experience is purely physical, as I explore the terrain of my body. Other days, I pass through deep emotional states or get caught in my head and ride a mental wave right out of myself. But, whatever happens, I continue to show up and work with what is true for me. My experience of ecstasy. When I do experience it, is enriched by the process of all those less-than-blissful days.”

– (Gabriel Roth, *Maps to Ecstasy*, 1998: 3).

“We learn to do something by doing it. There is no other way.” – John Holt

Writing Exercise for Contemplation:

Consider your growing edge in this practice. What makes you uncomfortable, frustrated, tired, board, angry, anxious, etc., when you are participating in the ensemble? What is it in you that is stirred by the edge? What stories and feelings lay behind your anger, exhaustion, boredom, etc.? Do you desire to grow through these feelings? If so, what specific actions can you take to work on this in the ensemble? If not, why not, and what will you choose to do when these feelings come up?

Contemplation: The Meaning is the *Massage*

In the nineteen-sixties, a communications professor by the name of Marshall McLuhan predicted much of our modern multimedia environment. As our society transformed from a world of writing, to a world of radio, and then television, film, and even computers, he proclaimed that, “the medium is the *massage*.” This wonderful turn of phrase, in which the sensual word, “massage,” is substituted for the intellectual abstraction, “message,” was able to simultaneously express and explain the very idea that it referred to; McLuhan invited a whole generation to look beyond the surface of words and into the ways that they are conveyed.

I grew up in a household in which it was perfectly normal to scream at the top of our lungs from one room to the other. I was also raised to think that a high intensity emotional disagreement was a loving activity. It took at least twenty years for me to realize that other people did not regularly communicate this way, and that in fact, they found this kind of loud aggressive interaction to be uncomfortable. It didn't matter whether I was insightful or correct, if I was raising my voice and waving my hands about wildly, no one would listen to me anyway. The meaning, as they saw it, was not in my words, but in my behavior.

Rhythm, dance, and chant breathe art into these ideas. Consider the difference in feeling between West African and South Asian percussion or dance. Without even referring to a specific style, tradition, or rhythm, we can immediately feel differences in the emotional and aesthetic qualities of these cultural forms. It is not the specific songs or dances, but *the approach* to them that conveys the feeling at this level of listening. In McLuhan's terms, the djembe and dun dun *massage* us in a different way than the tabla or mrdangam. Within each of our arts, there are many, perhaps infinite ways to massage each other with the messages of our hearts. We can scream our ideas out to the world with hands flying wildly, or we can whisper them with the subtle flutter of eyelashes and a slight curl to the lip.

As we explore our instruments, be they body, voice, or drum, we discover that there is a bounty of expressive options contained in the particulars of each rhythm, movement, or chant. Indeed, if we move slowly enough, we find that there is a whole bouquet of colors contained in each sound or step. In order to find and release this palette of emotions, it is helpful to spend time searching for them in our practice. What does each artistic phrase actually communicate? How does it flow, and how does that flow change when it is played, sung, or danced differently? What happens when each part is very slowly and carefully articulated? What happens when the phrase is pushed aggressively or made to swing on a syncopated beat?

Our ability to express ourselves is directly proportional to the depth of our lived experience and the degree to which we have explored the expression of that experience through our instruments, rhythms, dances, chants, or other arts.

Writing Exercise for Contemplation:

Choose two or three simple steps, rhythms, movement phrases or chants, and experiment with how they change when you give them different kinds of emotional content. How do you express joy, sorrow, fear, anger, sensuality, humor, embarrassment, love, through these vehicles? Do some steps and rhythms lend themselves more easily to a particular feeling? What kinds of feelings do you most enjoy expressing? What can you do to magnify these feelings in your art?

A mirror can be a very useful tool for exploring these emotional possibilities. Practice in front of a mirror and notice what happens when you smile, scowl, or even stare blankly, while you play. Write about your discoveries.

Contemplation: Mastery, Mystery and the Two Faces of Practice

“I try to be prepared for the moment, through understanding and being warmed up, knowing all about chords and scales, so I don’t even have to think and I can get right to what it is I want to say” – Pat Metheny (Quoted in Sudo 1998:110)

“It’s as much about surrender as it is about control” – Billy Bardo

Mastery and mystery are the two great seductions of the arts. Each of them calls to the rhythmist in different ways, and each can imprison as much as they can liberate. On the one hand, we seek mastery so that we may speak our hearts and rise to any rhythmic challenge. On the other hand, we seek to dwell in the mystery, so that the rhythm that flows through us reflects the depth of an infinite well of universal spirit.

Western formal education, in both music and the arts, has tended to represent mastery as the exclusive path to excellence and beauty. This is everywhere obvious in formal art education. Students are trained to have total control over their bodies and their voices. In addition to the possibility of wealth and fame, the achievement of this kind of control is rewarded with the highest praise. Similarly, the smallest flaw in execution becomes an exaggerated target for the cruelest cuts of social condemnation, shame, and failure. An overemphasis on mastery nurtures a deep core of fear within aspiring artists of all types. *The technical mastery that is essential to the full expression of human creativity can also become a neurotic instrument for defending against insecurity by attempting to conquer all risk and fear through absolute control.* This degree of mastery is of course, unobtainable; change, imperfection, and variation are fundamental to the nature of all living things. The neurotic focus on mastery accounts for a wide range of diseases in contemporary art. From the tragedy of anorexia among ballet dancers, to the use of computers to pitch-correct live singers, the obsessive quest for mastery seeks to transform natural beauty into unobtainable mechanistic humanity. The person is subjugated to the ideal, rather than discovering the ideal in the reality of the person.

Throughout the small-scale cultures of the world, beyond the elite circles of power that define legitimacy in large complex societies, the pursuit of communion with life's mystery has itself been a recognized and admired path of practice. Among these traditional cultures, it is not control, but the courage and presence to fully release and surrender to the moment that is most exalted. Art, in these societies, is prayer that flows through the artist (who is often not viewed as an artist at all). The dancer practices to open the way to spirit. Instead of choreographing a dance, the dancer tunes in to the symbols and rhythms of mystery or spirit as they are represented in his or her culture. The mind is turned towards life, not towards art, and as a result, life exhibits its full presence in the art. Excellence on the path of mystery is every bit as difficult as the path of mastery. Consider how long it actually takes to learn how to really let go. Consider how long it takes to transcend our fears, egocentrism, and self consciousness. How long is required to really learn to trust the beauty and power that flows through us, and to allow that energy to be fully expressed through our arts?

This path of mystery does have its parallels in large-scale complex societies as well. For example, the combination of Zen Buddhism and all manner of activity, from archery, to flower arranging and brush painting, are all oriented around the rigorous practice of awakening fully to the present moment. The Zen painter practices to become the essence of his subject. And when he feels as the mountain feels, the mountain pours forth through his brush. By contrast, the formally trained Western painter has been taught to think in terms of mastery and control: shape, line, color, shade, composition, etc. There are, of course, important parallels to expressing the mystery in the West as well. Avant Garde movements such as Dada, or more recently, blues and rock and roll, have drawn their power more from free exploration, *improvisation* on and about life's mysterious passions, than mastery of technical forms. Depending on the artist and the time, one might well argue that jazz, at its best, is a blend of these two.

Although it rarely has the opportunity to become so in the West, the exclusive practice of mystery can be as limiting as a single-minded focus on mastery. While the artist on the

path of mastery struggles to conquer fear through the seduction of control, the artist on the path of mystery is enticed to deny fear by pretending that mastery doesn't matter. The mystic artist is tempted to dismiss shortcomings in skill development as inconsequential, validating free expression and improvisation to the exclusion of discipline and technical excellence. Like all fear-driven beliefs, this kind of denial undermines the very goal of artful release into mystery. Unless this fear is faced directly, an artist lacks both the skills necessary to fully express the depth of universal mystery, and the courage to fully surrender to the naked expression of her soul truth.

The rhythmist sees that mystery and mastery as the drum is to the dance: the two are inseparable partners on one rhythmic journey towards fluid expression of the infinite creative force within us. We honor the excellence that grows alongside both of these paths, and we know that structure and improvisation are the warp and the weft in the fractal tapestry of our living universe. To become that tapestry, to consciously weave ourselves into the blossoming of generations, we invite a practice that balances the passion of surrender with the power of control.

Writing Exercise for Contemplation:

Consider your own relationships to mastery and mystery. Which do you emphasize in your practice? How do you actually practice mastery? What are the specific routine, disciplined steps you take to refine your practice? How do you actually practice awakening and surrendering to the creative mysteries that flow through you? What are the specific activities you engage in to prepare your ability to tap in and turn on to this creative current?

Contemplation: The Groove is the Gift

By Michael Wall

I recall that my first year as a “serious” drum student was a time of much practice, lots of growth, improvements in technique, sound, ambidexterity and stamina. I remember being proud and excited by my accomplishments... and I recall my impatience. Like many drummers, I had been inspired to take up the instrument by the power of the drum in the hands of a fiery soloist. I was eager to step out and really let my new-found chops soar! Unfortunately, my teacher at the time never provided opportunities for this kind of expression to anyone except the most advanced, long time students.

Our class met outdoors at a beach park, under the shade of a giant banyan tree. One afternoon, my teacher and I arrived early for class. Summoning up my courage, I humbly asked him when I would get an opportunity to solo. He turned to me with a sly smile on his face, and simply said.... “watch”.

With that, he picked up his drum and began to play the simplest of rhythms – a version of what many NWR students know as Ayub. He played with no embellishments, frills or solo fills. In retrospect, I realized that all he did was settle into a deep groove. He focused his complete and total attention on bringing the full inner essence of that unique rhythmic feel to life.

As I watched and listened, I was puzzled. So what? I could play *that* rhythm; I even knew a few variations and could imagine myself playing a solo over the top! My puzzled expression revealed to him that I didn’t understand how his playing answered my question about soloing. He looked me in the eyes and said, “look around you.”

So, I began to look around the park. Everything seemed normal... there was a family enjoying a picnic at a table nearby. There was a group of college students playing volleyball on the lawn. People were walking between the beach and their cars. It was a typical day in the park.

And then I noticed.... Mom, Dad, and the kids at the picnic table were ALL unconsciously tapping a foot, swaying side to side, or somehow responding to the beat. They weren't looking at, or consciously listening to the rhythm, but each was being moved by the sound! Some of the volleyball players were bobbing to the groove as they waited for the next serve. I saw a woman at least 75 yards away walking to the beat, and clapping her hands as she spoke with a friend.

All around me, people in the park were moving to the sounds of this simplest of rhythms.

I realized in that moment that I had missed something very important about music making – that the sounds I made influenced other people on the unconscious level. My teacher said, “The groove is more important than anything, because it’s what moves people. You have the power to make people dance, to put a bounce in their step, to bring a smile to their face. Without the groove, you don’t have a thing”.

Here’s an interesting definition of the word “groove” that I once found on a Wikipedia search: “An infectious feeling of rightness in the rhythm, of being perfectly centered”. “Perfectly centered” – as in being present in this moment, putting my full attention into injecting the sounds I make with intention.

I came away from that moment of realization and began to understand that some drummers just played along with the other drummers around them at class. Other drummers were *the source* of the “infectious feeling of rightness in the rhythm.” These players embodied the difference between someone who knew what sounds to make at what spots in time – and someone who could breathe life, juiciness, vibrancy and spirit into those same sounds and spots in time. I resolved to become the kind of player whose playing would provoke bodies to move, release voices to sing – and who would provide the deep, reliable, stable, and energized foundation upon which more experienced players could add other layers of musical magic.

The payoff for the act of service inherent in playing simple rhythms suddenly became more than the obvious benefits of improved time, technique and performance. I was serving people's delight! I was serving the world around me by reminding it to dance!

Writing Exercise for Contemplation: Consider when and where in your practice that eagerness or impatience to achieve might be blinding you to deeper lessons. When you are playing a rhythm you have already "mastered," where is your attention? What energy, emotion or intention might you inject into the sounds you are making? Ask yourself what your purpose might be as a blossoming musician; what are you serving beyond your own growth? Give examples of how you can apply the principles you are exploring in this contemplation to other areas of your life, like school, work your relationships.

Contemplation: Mean What You Say and Say What You Mean

“Before you speak, consider whether what you have to say is an improvement on silence.” - Unknown

“Play some places and leave some spaces.” – Unknown

“The real art of conversation is not only to say the right thing in the right place, but... to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment.” – Dorothy Nevill

It is only after much practice, when we are finally able to make the different sounds on our instruments and execute the different moves on our bodies that we can take on the biggest challenge of all: the process of discovering what we will actually express with these new-found tools.

Paradoxically, we can't really help but express ourselves; as soon as we play, dance or sing anything, indeed, with every move we make, we reflect aspects of our identity. Perhaps this is really the difference between the artist and the audience; the artist fully realizes that life is a stage, and so she plays her parts mindfully, expressing precisely what she chooses to share of her heart.

As we evolve as artists, our efforts to convey feelings and ideas are informed by the ways that others have been effective in communicating to us. It is therefore interesting and useful to look around the circle at any given moment and consider what each person seems to be saying with their art.

By examining the apparent focus of our playmates' attentions, we discover a great deal about the content of their communication. Where do your playmates direct their gaze? Where is their focus? Are they engaging with others or are they self-absorbed? Are they consumed by the technical challenges of their art? Are they aware of what others are doing? Do they share the space, giving room for other voices and other expressions? Do

they empower those around them, or do they become complacent or lazy when they are not the center of activity? How do they hold their bodies? Are they loose and fluid or rigid and inflexible? As you watch and listen, notice how these aspects of being in the process contribute to the content of the art that is expressed.

When you look and listen more directly to your playmates' intentional and unintentional patterns of communication, can you identify particular emotions that are coming through their arts? What do you sense? Do you feel excitement, joy, love, mischief, celebration, passion, satisfaction, frustration, boredom, anger and rage, jealousy, fear, or shame? As you notice a particular emotional expression, can you identify the aspects of the individual's behavior that communicates these feelings? Is it their face, their smile or frown, their eyes, their body, their voice, their volume, or their position? Is it the speed of their movement and the intricacy of their licks? Do you find their message in the spaces they leave, the places they fill, or the combination of the two?

All of these variables, and so many more, communicate the content of our arts. In addition, each individual's emotional state is also multiplied and modified by the feelings that are being expressed by others in the circle. Many levels of communication are taking place at any given moment. Even the person who has stopped for a drink or a physical adjustment, is communicating and producing the emotional quality and flavor of the circle. What would happen if every person in your ensemble was skilled, sensitive, and mindful of their contribution to the moment? What would happen if every person in your life behaved this way?

Writing Exercise for Contemplation:

Observe your playmates at your next ensemble practice. Look for the content of their expression. See if you can identify the specific aspects of their expression that communicate their thoughts and feelings to you. Write down your observations. Now consider your own participation. What are you expressing with your engagement in the circle? How are you communicating these feelings? What would you like to express?

Contemplation: The Silence Defines the Sound

“The silence defines the sound. The stillness distills the dance.” – Mz. Imani White

In the circle of rhythm, a drummer’s inner battles are sometimes reflected in the absence of silence. The rhythm is as relentless as their anxieties. A dancer, as well, can be tossed and turned like some strange marionette dangled on the strings of anxious expectations; their movements are chaotic and disjointed, stillness is never given a place in the dance, and release is sought in exhaustion. Troubling emotions are not so much transformed as they are driven into the ground, smashed to bits in the thunder and the stampede, screamed into an abyss of sound.

Rather than being driven, mindful creativity is essentially a matter of choice. When we are moving, talking, or thinking, we are like the foam at the crest of a wave. Pushed by currents and rhythms that reach far out to sea, we rush forward on the momentum of decisions and events that took place long ago and far away. Seized by these moving walls of energy, any attempt to make decisions is blurred and distorted by the force of our own emotions in motion. The opportunity to choose rests on our ability to be unmoved, silent, and still enough to see, hear, and feel the options before us.

A rhythmist will sometimes use their arts as a means of quieting and focusing their minds. A complex polyrhythm, a whirling dance, or simple repetitive chant, can occupy all of our attention, settling nervous anxieties into the soothing canter of a deep groove. This peaceful meditative state of mind reveals special insights that were formerly hidden by a fearful clutter of thoughts and psychological defenses. Similarly, the stillness of body and mind that emerges at the end of these rhythmic meditations clears space for the soft whisper of personal insight and vision. The silence and the stillness give way to free choice, free action, emotional sensitivity, and visionary revelation.

From this still point, the rhythmatist can create mindfully. We can choose to drive our anger into the stomping of feet, or we can soothe it with a chant. We can read the relationships between our emotions and the motion of the circle, and we can respond artfully— navigating an individual river of rhythm into the ocean of the ensemble. From this stillness, the rhythmatist can transcend the chains of mind altogether, and become a fluid expression of the moment, rising and falling at the convergence of all energies, magnifying and illuminating the brilliant unfolding of timeless mystery.

Writing Exercise for Contemplation:

Option 1: Find a comfortable, quiet place and sit still for half an hour. Release all thoughts and focus on observing your breathing. When you find yourself thinking about something, gently let go of the thought and return to observing your breathing. When a half hour has passed, take note of your feelings and consider how any mental activity that you observed might be affecting your participation in the ensemble.

Option 2: Write thoughtfully about why you don't want to try option 1.

Option 3: Try sustaining a rhythmic meditation of some form for half an hour: a polyrhythm, simple even sixteenth notes at 100 bpm, a whirling dance, a gentle sway, a simple chant. Release all thoughts and focus on your rhythmic meditation. When you find yourself thinking about something, gently let go of the thought and return to observing your meditation. When a half hour has passed, take note of your feelings and consider any insights or emotions that might have emerged.

In writing, reflect upon your experience. In addition, see if you can identify some ways that you could bring focus and stillness, choice, and freedom, to your awareness in the ensemble.

Contemplation: The Fire on the Inside

By Deborah Levin

In college, I took a course titled, "Beginning Ballet with Experience." When class began, I found myself in a huge studio space with about forty other people. The instructor was an older gentleman dressed in slacks and a tidy white button-down shirt. In the first few minutes of his course introduction, he proclaimed, "Unless you perform well enough to be noticed, you will receive a 'C,' which means that you are average. As long as you are average," he continued, "I will not bother to learn your name."

With that, he began to teach, but instead of dancing, his arms drew together in front of him, palms flexed with fingers extended. It was immediately apparent that we were to view these appendages as if they were his legs. As the first waves of confusion washed over me, his hairy fore-limbs quickly jutted out to the side, reconvened, and changed places in a strange sort of dance shorthand. All the while, he called out the corresponding ballet terms. To a French speaker, these terms are actually quite straight forward, *plie'* means bend, *releve'* means lift, etc., but if you don't speak French, they are one more layer between you and the movement. My confusion dissolved into utter astonishment as everyone began to put this dictation on their bodies.

I eventually worked out the translations between dance, French, and forearms, and at just about the moment that I had begun to find my step, the pressure rose again as we moved from the center of the floor to the *barre* (more French). I wound up at the end of the line where I was relieved to be able to follow all those dancers in front of me. I had forgotten that being at the end also means that for the other side of the exercise I would be leading everyone else. I wished for invisibility and wondered whether I might spontaneously burst into flames.

This learning environment was light years away from the dancing I had been doing. Over the preceding four years, I had been moving and creating with people so closely and intimately, that we could finish each others' sentences. Throughout my semester in ballet,

I sorely missed the connection of the dance, both to my own body and to my sisters and brothers in the movement. At the same time, I knew that I needed the technical skills to go deeper into the joys of this highly stylized dance. So I diligently struggled and practiced, but in the end, I earned a disappointing “C,” and the teacher still didn’t “bother to learn my name.”

I was battered and humbled, and if I hadn’t had years of dance behind me, I’m sure I would have stopped there. But the past lessons of my practice had taught me that I *could* dance and that I could learn and grow beyond the awkwardness that comes with new movements and higher expectations. Determined, I decided to retake the course and face the challenge of my perceived failure.

This time however, I decided to shift my focus and change my strategy. From day one, I resolved that I was going to *dance*; I set an intention to really allow myself to feel and embody the movements from the inside out. I opened up to the fantasy of feeling like the beautiful stage ballerina, and I spent less time anxiously stressing about the precision and rectitude of my movements. I resolved to let my energy flow into and be guided by the grace of the dance, rather than obsessing over my own or others critical evaluations. Finally, I reminded myself that regardless of my skills, I dance because it makes me happy and healthy. I do it because I love it and I feel the spirit of life through it. I would no longer let the desire to succeed, to be noticed and receive approval, make my art so stressful that it got in the way of these good feelings. In a class that only seemed to emphasize excellence— there was never any talk of being alive in the movement— I was going to *live it*. At least that’s what I told myself. Of course, it can be an entirely different matter when one surrounded by other beautiful dancers and the professor is shouting French and twiddling his arms about.

So there I was again, my second semester, in my usual space in the corner at the back of the room, when the instructor abruptly halted the frenzy of his dancing arms and erupted in disgust, “I don’t know what you people are doing!” In the fearful silence that followed, he cleared a space at the front of the room and proceeded to fill it with victims. My heart

leapt to my throat when he pointed in my direction and shouted, “you!” I looked around despairingly, searching for the person that he was really talking to. There was no one else. With a second, “you in the grey,” for emphasis and nameless clarification, I made my way to the humiliation zone at the front.

“These are the only people in this room who are dancing,” he explained. It took a moment for me to actually hear what he had said, and a few more for the meaning to make its way through my anxious defenses. I still didn’t really have any ballet chops, but at that special moment, it felt like the glory of heaven was pouring down through the light of the studio windows. The muse of dance seemed to speak to me as he explained that there was more to this practicing than simply making shapes with our bodies. He wanted us to be alive inside them, to fill them with our feelings and our intentions. As he looked upon our class, he had seen through my faltering, beginner’s technique. He had seen the spark of my inner dance peeking through.

That semester my instructor learned my name, and I learned that the energy of embodiment smoothes and polishes the rough edges of our limitations. When we fully inhabit our lives they will shine throughout. Even our mistakes will convey the beauty of the full and loving heart that makes them. Over the years, I have delightfully noted a turning point in my friends and students when they make that personal commitment. How precious is that second when a woman or man becomes their dance? It is at these moments, regardless of our skills, that we offer up our deepest blessings. Own it. It’s yours. No one else can do it for you.

Writing Exercise for Contemplation:

How do you react when you are struggling, or fumbling in your music or your dance? What do you feel, and how would you like to respond to these inevitable challenges? Consider what it would mean to embody or take ownership of your creative experience. Write about this. If you have difficulty doing this, what kinds of thoughts or feelings keep you from fully investing in what you play, dance, say, or do? How might this relate to other areas in your life?

Honor and Respect in the Study and Sharing of Cross- Cultural Arts

The recent growth of rhythmic arts in the West has depended upon the creativity of many indigenous peoples who have been colonized by Western nations. This fact only emphasizes an already pressing question of conscience for every modern global artist: "how can I participate in respectful cross-cultural relationships?"

There are so many relationship paths to choose from: studying, using, borrowing, stealing, consuming, sharing, destroying, honoring, transforming, representing, empowering, misrepresenting, ignoring, forgetting, remembering, loving....

Anthropologists use the term *cultural appropriation* in reference to disrespectful forms of relationship that involve the acquisition of cross-cultural knowledge, belief, materials, and symbolism.

It is essential to remember that cultural appropriation takes place within a historical context of unfathomable colonial brutality. In America, we thrive at the banks of a long bloody river. Millions have lost their lives, their languages, their lands, their health, their center, and they continue to face the prospect of losing their cultures- only to buy and sell them back at the mall.

Just as there are no easy answers in our efforts to heal our own interpersonal relationships, there are no easy answers in our efforts to purify this river of suffering. Surly, in both instances, humility, hard work, sensitivity, patience, sacrifice, and love must guide our way.

If we create our relationships out of humility, we begin from a place of respect and honor. We start, not by assuming that we know and that we have a right, but rather, that we do not know, that we may learn, and that we are blessed with the opportunity to discover.

This also means that we may not like what we see or, more importantly, we may not like the responsibility that comes with seeing.

So, who gets to decide what is respectful?

In our personal relationships we recognize each person's individuality and try to honor their individual boundaries. It seems appropriate that within the limitations of mutual health, safety, and cooperation, this same standard should be applied to the cultures and peoples of the world. In other words, assuming that they are not causing great harm, it seems only reasonable to honor their right to define their own path and their own boundaries of sharing and intimacy. This is the idea behind respecting a people's right to "self-determination." Is this not part of what we mean by the word "honor?"

The alternative to self-determination is other-determination, and this means that more powerful people and groups get to decide which boundaries they wish to respect and ignore. This is why cultural appropriation can appear to be so similar to past colonial abuse, and why oppressed, or formerly oppressed peoples refer to these behaviors as "neo-colonialism."

When joined together, these thoughts suggest that we cannot be respectful if we do not first understand the cultural implications of the cross-cultural relationships that we engage in. The difference between using, stealing, borrowing, and honoring hinges upon the meaning of our activities to the people who have created, sustained, and lived the tradition and practice in question. They decide, not us. This also means that sometimes we don't like their decisions.

There is another very important part to this discussion, and this has to do with how we represent our knowledge and relationships of other cultures. It would be difficult at best, to not be inspired and transformed as we brush against the people and ideas of our radiant world. Nevertheless, it is helpful to remember that inspiration is many miles away from actually living their lives, sharing their struggles, and feeling their truths in the marrow of

our own bones. We may play their drums, and even learn some of their movements, but we cannot pretend that we are exponents of their drumming or their dancing unless we have actually lived their lives. The meaning of these arts, like our own, is inseparable from the historical, geographic, and cultural contexts in which they are produced.

Self-determination asserts that each person should be empowered to speak her truth. This also means that someone else cannot speak her truth for her, and especially not without her consent. Each person, each culture, has a right to determine how they will tell their own myth. To trespass upon that right by misrepresenting one's own creativity as though it were the authentic wisdom of others, is to steal their identity, their voice, and their breath. It is to appropriate the art of their very soul for one's own gain.

There is a vast difference between being inspired by the symbols, words and stories, the rites, rhythms, rituals, dances and songs of other cultures, and believing or professing that our own understanding of these things are one in the same. To be inspired by aboriginal art is not to do aboriginal art. Inspiration invites us to meet them, to learn about them, to create relationship with them, but it is only the beginning. When we witness a master artist or the richness of a cultural practice, we may be inspired to become more, but we are confused if we are inspired to become them. As we gaze into the mirror of another person or another culture, we see ourselves in a new light, but we remain our selves just as they remain Other. In the end, the authenticity we seek shall only be found within, and this is precisely where the mirror invites us to look. Each of us is empowered to do our own thing and to find authenticity in the experience, the practice, the art itself.

We offer these thoughts with deepest respect for your own right to self-determination, and with love for the humanistic ideals that you nurture in both word and deed. It is our highest hope that these ideas will serve to bring even more beauty and depth to the precious light that is your artful practice.

There are many books on this subject. Deborah Root's, "Cannibal Culture: Art, Appropriation, & the Commodification of Difference," offers a particularly clear and

provocative discussion. If you're looking for a powerful indigenous voice to speak to these issues, check out writing by Vine Deloria, or *Indians are Us*, by Ward Churchill. For an excellent discussion of cultural appropriation and misrepresentation in relationship to all things Middle-Eastern, you might tackle Edward Said's, *Orientalism*.

Authors, Background, and Gratitude

This guidebook is the culmination of twenty-five years on the trail of rhythm. Looking back upon our journeys, we are both happy to acknowledge that it is through these arts that the most wonderful experiences, lessons, and friendships have come into our lives. We were not born of music or dance, we did not inherit the depth of a tradition that would transmit these mysteries. Instead, we were children of a shrinking world, global wonderers in search of life's honey. Along the way we found the music, and through the music, each other. We have spent the last two decades together, applying the lessons of our arts, of dance, rhythm, and song, to the great art of our relationship. In the process, we have sought to share the health and joy that we have discovered together with an ever growing circle of community, family, and friends. Throughout this adventure, we encountered many precious teachers who influenced our work in the creation of both *New World Rhythmatism* and the more flexible *Sacred Arts Circles*. It is impossible to name all of these people, but it simply does not seem right to present this guidebook without acknowledging some of those dear ones who have been essential to our growth: Norman Allard, Wade Baca, Chris Balsey, Achyut Ram Bandaris, Ty Burhoe, Eva Cernik, the Family of Fire, Randy Crafton, Tonya Goodwin, Carolena Nerrico, the mavericks and rabble rousers of Drum Camp and Wonderlust in the late 80s and 90s SCA in New Mexico, Jenna Gracia, Zakir Hussain, Swapan Chaudhuri, Shyam Prasad Khadgi, Shireen Malik, Cameron Powers, George Price, Rajendra Shresta, Jay Trollinger, Jeff McBride, the loving visionaries of the Vegas Vortex, and Billy "Sylvanus" Woods. Special appreciation goes to the Community College of Southern Nevada and the Department of Human Behavior, for supporting Joshua's ongoing work on culture, rhythm, art, and community. Thank you as well, to the intrepid members of the first year of NWR ensemble in Las Vegas: Morgan Baum, Phaedra Bennett, Susan Breen, Paul Billings, Nina Castenada, Nicolle Christiani, Heather Corral, Norma Gratrix, Suzanne Mikols, William Raymond, and Cindy Spagna. Further appreciation goes to the Rhythmatists of NWR Hawaii. We are deeply grateful for Tara Severns' meticulous editing and thoughtful feedback on the 3rd draft of this text. Her ideas and careful eye lifted us higher and cleared many paths through thickets of verbal confusion. As our, "A-team refinement

patrol,” Matthew Connors, Paul Billings, Christopher Neff, Eric Price, Laurice Asima, Megan Beers, Devon Phillips, Delphine Brisepierre, and Abigail McBride have applied their ideas, patience, and exceptional talents to deepening the experience while simplifying the method. NWR has grown so much sweeter at your hands and feet. We also wish to honor our families, who provided plenty of space and encouragement as we pursued roads that are much, much, less traveled. Finally, it is essential to express deep gratitude to our brother rhythmist, Michael Wall, who was instrumental in encouraging and helping to refine our creative projects. Michael’s love and ideas are woven throughout this book.

The rhythm teaches that we are all connected, that ownership of an idea or a song is mostly an illusion. From ancient cultural traditions to the quick insightful comment of a stranger, art flows through us on infinite streams of inspiration. A few people may, for a time, become the face or voice of an idea, but it is merely shorthand. The source is always the circle of relations and we collectively create both the ecstasy and the sorrows of the time we spend together.

Joshua Levin, Ph.D. is a full-time cross-training cultural creative. He is a tenured professor of anthropology at the College of Southern Nevada, an award winning visual artist, professional musician, poet, writer, educator, and happy family guy. With a lifetime of balanced interests in science and art, Joshua has focused his energies on using the creative process as a means to empower healthy and meaningful relationships to self, society, and the environment. He loves to share and collaborate in these arts of living and has had the good fortune to do so across the U.S. and internationally. His popular anthropology classes include special topics courses on rhythm, art, and culture.

Joshua began his professional life exploring issues of identity, education, and change in Native America, Nepal, Mongolia, and Honduras. Over the last fifteen years, he refocused these interests on the application of creative activity to holistic education and personal growth. Essential to this work has been sustained intensive practice in the arts, and extensive involvement in ritual as a social context for collaborative creative engagement.

Joshua has helped to design and facilitate art happenings for more than twenty years, and is most recently a co-creator of Illumination and the Alchemifire Ritual. Both are cutting edge formats for personal/interpersonal exploration and deep play. He served as resident artist with Firedance during its founding four years, as musical director for Fires Rising, and as a regular collaborator and faculty member at the McBride School of Magic. Together with Deborah Levin, he is the co-founder of Sacred Arts Circles and New World Rhythmatism, which are collaborative community based art forms.

Joshua has performed in a range of musical contexts and configurations from the traditional Middle-Eastern music ensemble Sherefe, to the eclectic Seeds of Time, the contemporary NWR ensemble, The Sweet Ride To Heaven Jubilation and Wonderment Band, and kirtan accompaniment for Saul David Raye, Steve Ross, Sylvia Nakkach, Wynne Paris, Brenda McMarrow, and Jagadeesh. He plays South Asian tabla, doumbek/darbouka, and is an endorsee for Cooperman Framedrums. His music can be heard on a variety of CDs and DVDs.

As a visual artist, Joshua has shown his artwork and painted alongside many of the leading figures in the visionary/fantastic realism art movements. His paintings and sculptures participate in a long history of cross-cultural traditions that engage mythological and visionary consciousness as an integral part of human life and experience.

Deborah Levin, B.A., NCMT. has been pursuing her passion for community music and dance for the past 27 years. Using the arts of music and dance in order to deepen connections both within ourselves and to one another is the key motivator in her work. Fusing movements from Oriental belly dance and American Tribal Style belly dance, she has developed a system of cues and structures to bring the best of these two worlds together into one form. NWR, which she co-created with her husband, Joshua Levin, includes the freedom of the solo dancer in spontaneous relationship to a drummer or drummers while still maintaining the beautiful entrainment of refined group improvisation. Her other creative passion is to nurture and watch things grow such as; Jazz, her 8 year old son, her garden, and her 1st through 3rd grade reading students.

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Blank grids for writing your exercises.

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Notes:

Closing Invocation

*we honor each other
as we flow with one another
in the rhythm*

*we are the convergence of the universe's energies
made manifest into physical form through rhythmic movement
may our thoughts
our voice
our hearts
and our dance
do honor to our selves
and each other*

*we honor each other
as we flow with one another
in the rhythm*