



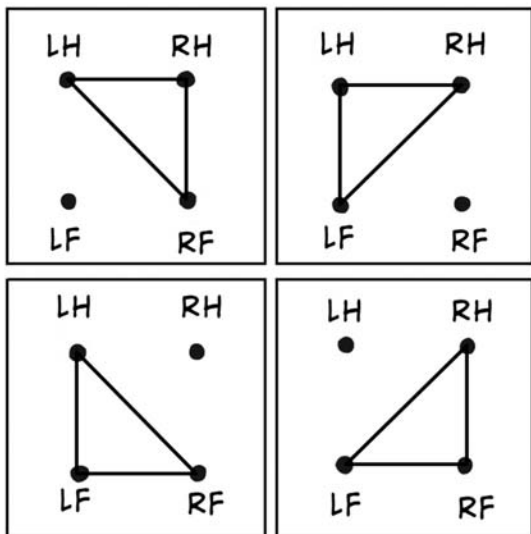
Inner Drumming

Listening With All Four Limbs, Part 2

by George Marsh

In my previous article (April 2012), I explained the concept of listening—or sounding—with each individual limb and the importance of practicing increased internal awareness of the energy flow from limb to limb. The exercises started by focusing on one limb at a time and then progressed to two limbs. The two-limb exercises incorporated both unisons and alternates.

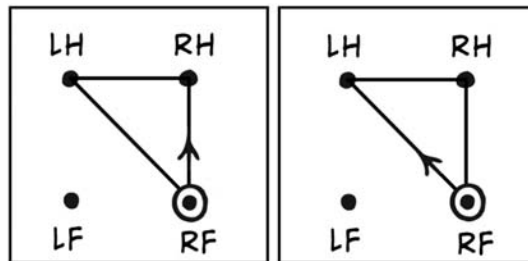
The next step is to work with three limbs at a time. There are four different three-limb combinations, as shown in the diagrams below. As before, I'm using a dot to represent the right foot (RF), right hand (RH), left hand (LH), and left foot (LF).



THREE-LIMB DIAGRAMS: SEQUENTIAL

We'll start with the familiar grouping RF, RH, LH, as shown in the diagrams that follow. These are the three limbs we'll be working with for the rest of this study. You can explore the other groupings on your own, using the same concepts presented here. (If you're a lefty, use LF instead of RF throughout.)

The circled dot indicates the starting point for each flow, and the arrow indicates the direction of the scan. Starting with RF, this grouping can be scanned in a counterclockwise direction (RF-RH-LH) or in a clockwise direction (RF-LH-RH). As with the single- and two-limb studies, take your time. Remember to give yourself permission to feel and listen deeply while doing these exercises. Incorporate internal awareness as an essential part of your sound.

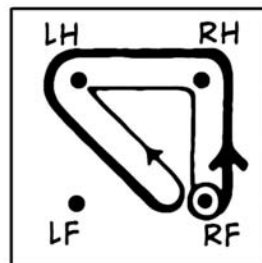


Bring your attention from the center of the earth to your right foot, and play a few strokes. Relax and scan from your right foot to your right hand. Play several notes. (I like to use the floor tom for right-hand strokes.) Move your attention slowly from the right hand to the left hand. Play several notes. Then scan from the left hand to the right foot. This helps establish the map of the particular sequence you're playing.

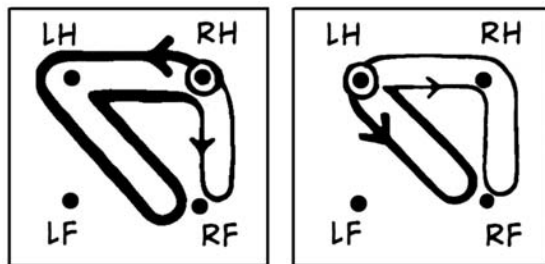
Next, play single strokes with each limb using the same sequence (RF-RH-LH). Let the tempo find itself, and then gradually increase it. Stay relaxed, grounded, and aware of the internal movement as you scan from limb to limb. When you feel it's time, do the same with the clockwise direction, RF-LH-RH.

THE PENDULUM RUDIMENT

The counterclockwise and clockwise sequences can be combined to create what I call the three-limb pendulum rudiment. This six-note sequence is RF-RH-LH-RF-LH-RH. The thick and thin lines are used for visual clarity. I usually start with the thick line first, but you can start with the thin line if you wish, always following the direction of the arrow.

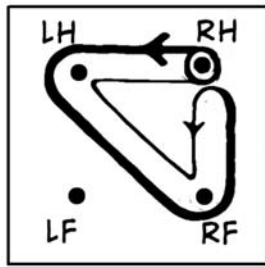


This pendulum rudiment can have a total of three different starting points. It's the same sequence, just starting at different places. Here are the other two.

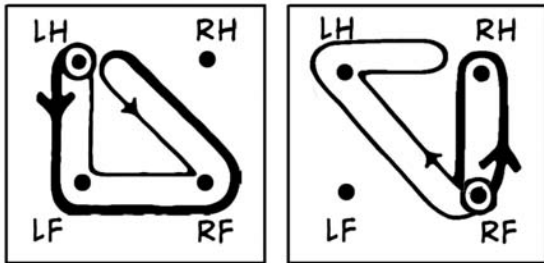


Reprinted by permission of
Modern Drummer Publications, Inc. © 2012
www.modrdrummer.com

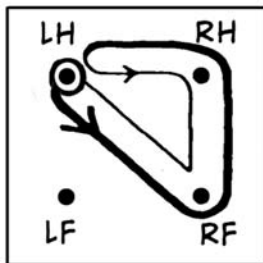
There are two more pendulum rudiments in the RF-RH-LH triangle. Here's one with the sequence *RH-LH-RF-RH-RF-LH*.



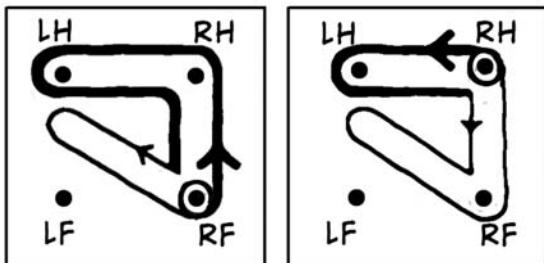
As before, this sequence can have three different starting points. Here are the other two.



Here's the last pendulum rudiment based on the RF-RH-LH grouping. It has the sequence *LH-RF-RH-LH-RH-RF*.



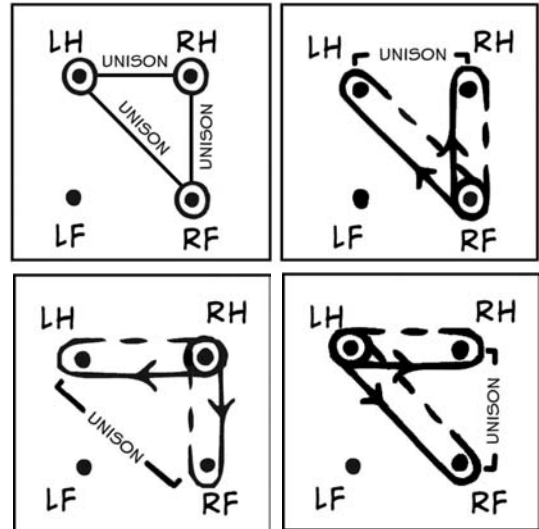
Again, the same sequence can have different starting points. Here are the others.



THREE-LIMB DIAGRAMS: UNISONS

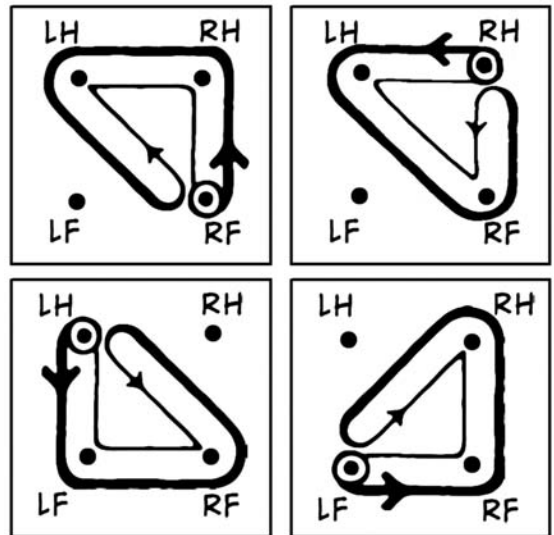
Exploring unisons improves accuracy. Play RF, RH, and LH as one sound. Bring your awareness from the center of your belly to the three limbs simultaneously, and make a stroke. Continue the unisons until you minimize flammings. Let a slow tempo appear, and stick with it until it feels comfortable. Then pick a slightly faster tempo and work with it in the same way. Remember to listen to the three sounds as one.

Next, alternate between RF and a unison combination of RH and LH. This is similar to alternating between two limbs, with the special case here being that the RH and LH are playing unisons. Continue with RH versus RF-LH unisons, and then play LH versus RF-RH unisons.



THREE MORE

This article has focused on the right foot, right hand, and left hand. There are three other three-limb combinations, which gives you a total of four.



As you're exploring these exercises, be sure to plug in your favorite rhythms. And have fun applying Inner Drumming to your own practice. In part three, we'll explore four-limb combinations.

George Marsh is a San Francisco-based jazz drummer/composer currently playing with the David Grisman Sextet. He's recorded with John Abercrombie, Terry Riley, Jerry Garcia, Pauline Oliveros, Denny Zeitlin, Maria Muldaur, and others. Marsh has taught at the University of California at Santa Cruz and at Sonoma State University since 1982, and he maintains a private studio in Santa Rosa, California. For more info, visit marshdrum.com.

