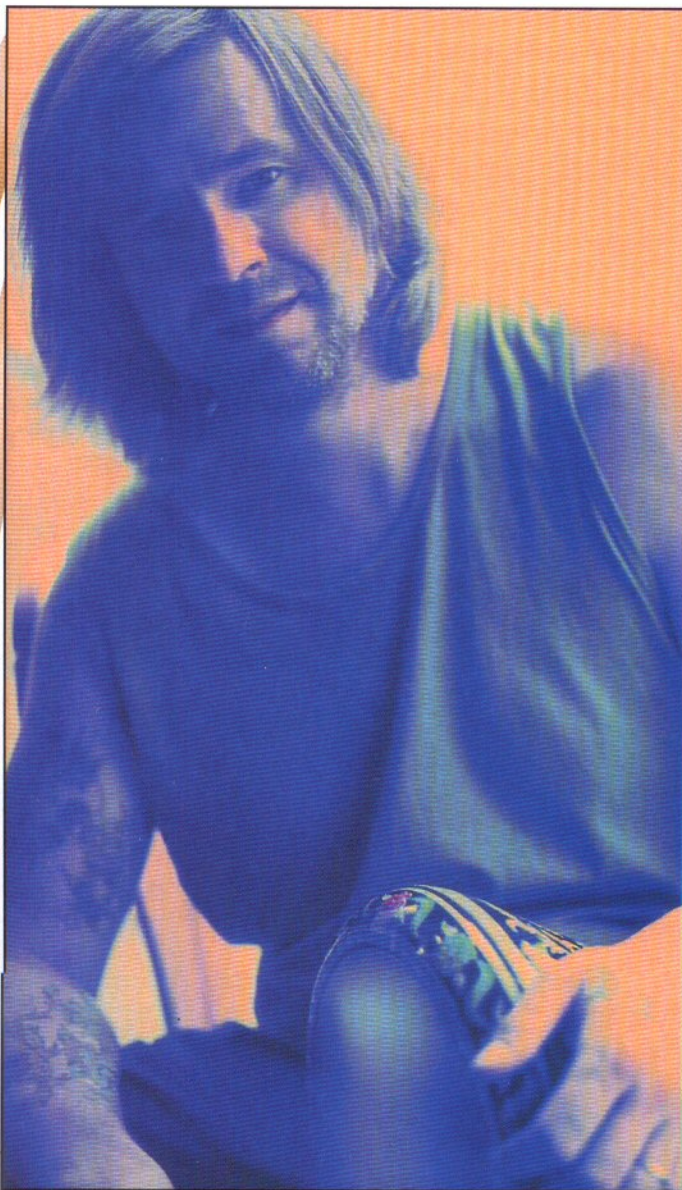


PICK UP THE PIECES



Part 5: Peter Lockett demonstrates the fine art of getting funky with a cabbasa

This month we'll start off with that indispensable percussion instrument, the cabbasa. Like many small hand percussion instruments, it looks and sounds easy to play but, when it boils down to it, its staccato, cutting sound highlights any little error. Again, as with the shaker and

the tambourine, the most oft-utilised pattern is the sixteenth note pattern. There are two ways to play this on the cabbasa. To begin with we will look at the 'twisting in the hand' method'.

The holding position is illustrated in **Figure 1**. The handle of the instrument is held in the hand, up near the head, which is



FIGURE 1 - THE ALL-IMPORTANT HOLDING POSITION

held in the other hand. The instrument is then twisted while the beads are held in place in the palm of the hand. The instrument is twisted approximately 45 degrees for each note and then back to the original starting position. This would articulate the second note.

Example 1 utilises this technique, going up through a number of time shifts. The accents are achieved by pushing in slightly harder with the twisting hand.

Examples 2 and 3



FIGURE 3 - MOVE THE CABBASA SHARPLY BACK TOWARDS YOU

look at a few slightly broken patterns. This is a very effective way to employ the cabbasa, and is very popular as a little punctuation on top of a rhythm which may already sound quite complete.

Example 4 begins to look at a few accents added to the continuous sixteenth note level. Again, this can really begin to add a bit of momentum to a rhythm track.

Example 6 takes a broken rhythmic framework for the first four bars and, keeping the contours of the rhythm, goes to the sixteenth note level with the same groove being picked out as accents. The alternative method with the cabbasa is the 'shaker method'. This produces a very clearly defined and tight shaker pattern which sounds great when it is punctuated with little



FIGURE 2 - HOLDING POSITION FOR THE FORWARDS STROKE

demi-semi-quaver ruffs and pick-ups. Again, the instrument is held by the handle up near the head, as in **Figure 2**, which also shows the position for the forwards stroke. The cabbasa is

FIGURE 4 - COWBELL FOOT PEDAL



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FIGURE 5 - TAMBOURINE FOOT PEDAL

moved sharply away from you, as in **Figure 2**, to create the first stroke, and then sharply back towards your body (as in **Figure 3**) to create the return stroke. This movement, when carried out at the sixteenth note level, is very similar to the shaker pattern (**Example 6**). With the cabbasa, however, by accelerating this movement in short sharp bursts we can create ruffs, as in **Example 7**.

Examples 8 and 9 look at a few varieties in employing this ruff. To finish off with, we'll add a bit of contrary rhythm with the cowbell foot pedal (**Figure 4**) or the tambourine foot pedal (**Figure 5**).

This can be a real liberator, freeing up your hands to play more spacious patterns. There are two approaches to the foot pedal. You can either use it as an anchor and play quarter notes and regular pulse to act as a base for off-beat hand work, or else you might want a looser pattern with the feet and something more regular with the hands. For the truly ambitious, loose and syncopated patterns with the hands and the feet would be a must. I've given two fairly straightforward examples with the foot pedal (either bell or tambourine) playing clave and the cabbasa playing the straight

patterns (**Examples 10 and 11**). **Examples 12-14** give two patterns which can be used with all the examples in this shown here, excluding the 3/4 example. One thing to bear in mind with the cabbasa is that there are times when just one note in a bar will be enough. Don't be afraid to be sparse. Bye for now. ♦

KEY

In Hand Cabbassa twist backwards

In Hand Cabbassa twist forwards

Shaken Cabbassa forwards

Shaken Cabbassa backwards

Foot pedal (Either bell or tambourine)

Ex 1

Ex 2

Ex 3

Ex 4

Ex 5

Section A

Section B

Section C

Section D

2 Pick Up The Pieces

Ex 6

Ex 7

Ex 8

Ex 9

Ex 10

Ex 11

Ex 12

Ex 13

Ex 14