

Orchestrating the World

- a manual of intercultural music making

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Darabuka



Darabuka - This is a goblet drum played all over the Arabic world. It provides rhythmic accompaniment for classical Arabic ensembles and orchestras as well as for popular musical forms such as belly-dancing. Its body is made from fired clay or metal, and the drum head of animal or fish skin, or more recently, synthetic materials. It is also known as a Dumbek, in imitation of its two primary sounds: 'Dum' (a low bassy sound) and 'Tek' (a biting high pitched sound).

Basic Sound Words

As in many hand drumming traditions all over the world, there is a lexicon of `sound words`, which can be utilized, together with western note heads and stems, to indicate the strokes on the darabuka, and to create rhythmic phrases.

<u>Sound Word and Stroke Symbol</u>	<u>Description of Stroke</u>
dum, du	open sound of drum (no symbol appended)
tek, te, ke, ma	rim sound (no symbol appended)
tak p	pressure stroke - one hand stays in contact with the head while the other strikes the rim area
tok Sn	snap stroke - executed by snapping the middle finger against the rim area
> tak Gr	grab stroke - a sharp sound, always accented (some dumbek players may call it a slap stroke)

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Additional Notational devices and variations

open (°) and closed (×) strokes - the style of stroke can be indicated, as the composer wishes

frr - a finger roll; usually indicated by a triplet grace ; can be executed as a triplet or a roll, at the discretion of the performer. It is also left to the performer's discretion to execute the triplet grace on the beat (measured) or as an ornament (unmeasured).

Fng. - played with a finger technique rather than the whole hand.

T-----> D - the right hand executes its strokes proceeding in steps from the *Tek* (rim) position to the *Dum* (middle of drum) position.

D-----> T - the right hand executes its strokes proceeding in steps from the *Dum* (middle of drum) position to the *Tek* (rim) position.

Sn Sn Sn
Tok, Tak, Tek - snap strokes; can be open (°) or closed (×); if it is not specifically notated it is left to the performer's discretion.

tek, te, ke, re, ma, ta, ka - *Tek* (rim) strokes

dum, du, do, u, o - *Dum* (middle of drum) strokes

×
>
tak - the right hand plays a hard *Tek* while the left hand applies pressure to the head to close the stroke.

×
Sn
>
tak - an accented, closed snap stroke.

>
sak - a sharp *Dum* stroke, also known as a grab stroke.

tuk, tak, tek, tik - pitched strokes, here ordered from low to high, played by placing pressure on the head with one hand while striking the drum head with the other. By shortening the surface area of the head between the pressure producing hand and the striking hand, the pitch rises.

trrr - fast roll, usually executed by the fingers

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Related instruments

Tonbak - (also written tombak, donbak, dombak; and also known as **Zarb**) is a goblet shaped drum made of wood and covered with lamb or goat skin. It is the chief percussion instrument of Persian art music. The technique of play utilizes much finger articulation, and snapping sounds, which are typical of the sound of the instrument. The syllables of its name imitate the two prominent sounds of the drum: *tom* – a deeper sound produced in the middle of the drum head, and *bak* – a higher sound produced by striking nearer the rim. It is related to other goblet drums of the Middle Eastern world, especially the Darabuka (also known as **Dumbek**) of the Arabic musical tradition.

There are many variations of the darabuka, and the body can take several shapes. There are also other names that are used to refer to the drum, such as: Darbuka, Derbeki, and many others. The Djembe of North Africa is also a related instrument, indeed any goblet shaped drum is of the same family. The ways in which the instruments are played vary according to the musical culture in which they are native.