

Finger Drumming Techniques through MIDI Controllers

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The Why

- Controllers are often inexpensive
- App Culture is common-place
- Fairly easy to implement with a little research
- A modern sound that students often see and hear in their pop culture

The What

- MIDI = Musical Instrument Digital Interface
 - Communications protocol that connects devices
- MIDI signals carry notation, pitch, velocity, cues, and tempo
 - Tool versus Instrument
- Two ways to utilize controllers
 - Digital Audio Workstation (DAW)
 - DAW-less
- Information flows through one of 16 channels
- MIDI also allows for program and control changes
- Controllerism
 - Push, Turn, Slide
 - Proliferation of pad-style controllers

Advantages of Embracing Controllerism

- Reinforces timing skillset
- A modern approach to music that enhances the percussion curriculum
 - Additional benefit of learning music production
 - Visual creativity is a possible by-product of controllerism
- Tracks created through midi controllers can provide tracks for use with acoustic instruments
- Important to think of a controller as an instrument
- Limitations of learning a new instrument can help with creativity

Finger Drumming Pad Elements

- Drums
 - Bass
 - Snare
 - Hats or time-keeping triggers
- Bass Line
- Leads
- Pads
- Risers
- Effect

The How

- Controllers
 - DJ Tech Tools
 - Midi Fighter Line
 - Novation
 - Launchpad
 - Mini, Mk II, Pro
 - Ableton
 - Push 2
 - Native Instruments
 - Maschine MK3
- Audio Interfaces
 - To power or not to power?
 - Apple – Lightning to USB
 - Novation Audiohub
 - External Sound
 - Headphones
 - Laptop or Tablet
 - Apps or Software

Popular Apps/Software

- AUM – Mixer
- Beatmaker 3 – Fully-featured DAW
- Ampify
 - Groovebox – Fully-featured groovebox after IAP
 - Launchpad
 - Blocs
- Super Pads Lights
- Korg Gadget – Fully-featured DAW (offers IAP for more sounds)
- JamUp – Effects
- Ableton Live

Popular YouTube Channels

- Slice to MIDI
 - Kaskobi
 - M4SONIC
- Sample Based
 - Shawn Wasabi
 - Mad Zach – DJ Tech Tools
- Instrumentalist
 - Jnthn Stein

Mad Zach 16-Pad Layout Suggestion

Mellow Pad #1	Mellow Pad #2	Rhythm #1	Riser
Bass #1	Bass #2	Bass #3	Rhythm #2
Modifier/ White Noise	Shaker	Attn. Grabber #2	Attn. Grabber #1
Kick	Dynamic Melody	Snare	Clap

Shawn Wasabi 64-Pad Layout on Otterpop (find on YouTube)

Piano Chord #1	Piano Chord #2	Piano Chord #3	BD	Piano Chord E	SD	High Trill #2	Flute Melody G
Piano Chord #4	Piano Chord #5	Piano Chord #6	Piano Chord #7	Piano Chord D	Piano Chord F	High Trill #1	Flute Melody E
Sub Bass F	Piano Chord #8	Piano Chord #9	Piano Chord #10	Piano Chord B	Piano Chord E	High Pitch Melody	Flute Melody D
Bass F	Bass G	Bass Note	Timbale Roll	Piano Chord C	Piano Chord D	High Pitch Melody	Flute Melody C
Program Change	Program Change	Bass Note	Timbale Rimshot	Rocket Arp #1	Rocket Arp #2	Rocket Arp #1	Program Change
Rhythm Noise	Riser SD	SD		Bass Note C			"Hey!"
High Rhythm Noise		High Trill	High SD	Piano Chord #1	Piano Chord #2	Piano Chord #3	Piano Chord #4
Bass F / BD	Bass G / BD	High Pitch Drum	Bass C / BD	Piano Chord #5	Piano Chord #6	Piano Chord #7	Piano Chord #8

Isomorphic Layout (in 4ths) of Notes

B	C	Db	D	Eb	E	F	Gb
Gb	G	Ab	A	Bb	B	C	Db
Db	D	Eb	E	F	Gb	G	Ab
Ab	A	Bb	B	C	Db	D	Eb
Eb	E	F	Gb	G	Ab	A	Bb
Bb	B	C	C#	D	Eb	E	F
F	F#	G	G#	A	Bb	B	C
C	C#	D	D#	E	F	F#	G

Isomorphic Layout of a Major Scale

			■		■	■	
			■		■	■	
			■	■		■	
			■	■		■	
		■		■		■	
		■		■		■	

Helpful Websites

- Melodics
- Facebook Groups
- YouTube
- DJ Tech Tools
 - Especially Mad Zach Tutorials
- Splice

Final Thoughts

- It is intimidating knowing where to start. Find the simplest set-up and start anywhere with the learning process. Learning is doing.
- You will make mistakes at first.
- The answer is always yes.
- Your students will know more about this than you do.

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