

VINEETH VINCENT

# BEAT-BOXING

101

## **ABOUT THE SPEAKER**

Vineeth Vincent is a beatboxer, musician, emcee and a performing artist from Bangalore, India. He is considered to be India's biggest beatboxer with over 1250 shows to his credit. He started off as a professional Emcee in Bangalore during May 2007. In 2008, he took a year off from his studies at Christ University to pay more attention to music and beatboxing. He spent a month at Mrinalini Sarabhai's Darpana Academy of Performing Arts in Ahmedabad, where he collaborated with many artists.

He returned to Bangalore to become a professional beatboxer later in 2008. He had performed with 'The Boxettes' in 2010 and with 'Bauchklang', an Austrian beatboxing group, in 2009 among many other artists and bands. In the search for beatboxing talent by the British Council Library (BCL), he was selected as one of the final eight and performed with Voctronica. Vineeth Vincent was given the duty of Cultural Secretary to lead the cultural activities at Christ University during the academic year 2010–11. During that period, two world records were set by him.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. What is BeatBoxing?
2. Forms of Beatboxing.
3. Basics of Beatboxing.
4. Tips & Tricks
5. Vocal Hygiene
6. Is Beatboxing a viable career option?
7. How do you get started as a beatboxer?



01

# What is Beat boxing?

In this lesson, you will be introduced to the world of beatboxing and its origin



## **Introduction to Beatboxing**

Beatboxing is a form of voice percussion, primarily mimicking drum machines and vocal imitation of turntablism, using one's mouth, lips, tongue and voice. Contrary to common belief, beatboxing has grown rapidly from sound effects to full musical performances. Beatboxing is a primal human art form that utilizes the physical body as a versatile instrument.

## **History of Beatboxing**

Beatboxing fundamentally began in New York City along with the birth of the hip-hop subculture on the streets of Harlem. Darren 'Buffy' Robinson, Doug E Fresh and Biz Markie were the first three pioneers of beatboxing in their own respective and innovative ways. However, Beatboxing is believed to have originated in India and is said to be the "Thalam" that is sync with Bharatanatyam, a classical form of dancing. This moved to the different parts of the world and became beatboxing altogether. Beatboxing as we know it today, originated in the streets. People who couldn't afford musical instruments began to use their voice to create music.

**The scenario today**

Today, beatboxing has become a global phenomenon. Battles and jams are held all over the world with the two largest events being the Beatbox Battle World Championship (held every 3 years) and the annual Grand Beatbox Battle hosted by SwissBeatBox. There is a large online community of beatboxers who meet during TeamSpeak. Other popular platforms include Facebook, Whatsapp, and Discord.



02

# Forms of Beatboxing.

In this lesson, you will learn about the various forms of beatboxing.



## **Solo Beatboxing**

In solo beatboxing, a single individual uses human sounds to beatbox. There is a single microphone attached to a sound system in order to amplify the sound. Solo beatboxers develop their personality and unique style through beatboxing. They individually represent themselves as artists in national and international battle circuits. Solo beatboxers compete in events under a time limit. Reeps One, Ball-Zee and Napom are famous solo beatboxers.

## **Duet/Tag Team Beatboxing**

In a duet beatbox, two people perform one single track in two layers. Each beatboxer needs to know the beats of the other person. Their beats should always be in harmony. There needs to be a consistency in structure and timing. They can take part in events and gigs. They can compete in national and international circuits for a span of 1:30 minutes. Duet beatboxers include Mad Twinz, Spider Horse and K- Pom.

## **Group Beatboxing**

It is also known as beatbox acapella. It requires intensive synchronisation between the participants. The number of beatboxers range from 4 to 6. Every individual beatboxer plays one single instrument. Group Beatboxers include BeryWam, The Beatbox House and Beatbox Kollektive. Beatboxing groups open concerts for big musicians. Group beatbox battles are an integral part of national & international championships.





03

# Basics of Beatboxing

There are certain important terms to keep in mind while learning the art of beatboxing. This lesson will introduce you to some of these basic terms.



## Kick

The 'Kick' is the basic sound of beatboxing. It can be done by practising the word "two" in such a way that the focus is on the sound rather than the voice. The other way to do this is to practice word "Bha" in such a way that the focus is on the lips and not the voice. The classic kick (or classic kick drum) is the mimicking of the kick drums on a drum kit or a drum machine. This is one of the easiest sounds and is an important sound that a beatboxer should produce.

The kick drum is a large drum set on the floor that is played by stepping on a pedal that in turn strikes a mallet on the skin of the drum. This is why it is called a 'kick' drum. The deep booming tone comes from the drum's large size.

This is the most common way of producing a kick drum sound in beatboxing. It was a method first used by beatboxers such as Doug E. Fresh and Buffy, from The Fat Boys back in the 1980s.

In phonetics, the Classic Kick Drum is described as a bilabial plosive. This means that the sound is made by completely closing both lips and then releasing them accompanied by a burst of air.



## Hi-Hat

You need to stretch your lips as if you are smiling and make the sound -“sssh”. These are the most simple hi-hat sounds, which replicate a closed hi-hat.

The closed hat is part of the staple kick, hat and snare used as the basis of most beats. It might be worth practicing doing many closed hat sounds in a row to get your speed and accuracy up. These can be done in several ways, coupled with small variants to enhance your beats. Hi-hats are essential to any beat, filling in the space between your kick drums and snares.

Pro tip: Try to vary your hi-hat volume to create a groove and experiment with syncopation!

## Snare

The Snare is third primary sound. It's similar to a click. The inward hollow snare is a slightly twanged snare made by a short vocalized gasp of air. It is also a variant of the cough snare, but done by making a slight vocalizing while breathing in. The inward hollow snare is an inward cough snare.

To mimic the Inward Hollow Snare properly you combine two sounds:



Inward Cough Snare: A sharp vocalized intake of breath - the sound people make in astonishment. A 'sh' or aspirated 'w' sound made by sucking air in through your teeth or with your mouth pursed into an 'o' shape. When you make this sound, you fill your lungs with air and this means you are in effect taking a breath at the same time.

## **Combining Basic Sounds**

You can combine a 'Kick', 'Hi-Hat' and 'Snare' to create a beatbox. You should start practising them at a slow pace and later pace it up to sound like a beatboxer.

Another way of beatboxing is to use the following set of words as a reference:

"BOOT THIS CUT THIS"

You need to emphasise on the word "BOOT". Use your lips to do so.

## **Techno Bass**

You need to squeeze your vocal cords together and build up the pressure on your throat. You should close your mouth and produce sound through your nose. You need to take short breaks while practising techno bass as it can damage your vocal cords.



04

# Tips and tricks

Vineeth shares some of the important tips and tricks to improve your beatboxing skills.



## **Pace Yourself**

Some people learn quickly and some people take a lot of time. A simple sound may even take upto three weeks to learn. Vineeth claims to be a slow learner and therefore recommends pacing yourself. Make sure that you practice over and over again. If you are travelling, make sure that you take two hours off and stick to a routine. You need to practice every day over and over again to be able to master a single sound. If there is a quiet spot at your house, practice there on a regular basis. You need to stick to a particular schedule to be a professional beatboxer.

## **Don't Overdo it**

You may stress your vocal cords and damage your voice. It is recommended not to stress your voice and take your own time and things will eventually fall into place.

## **Learn to be Stupid**

You need to learn how to be stupid. The more stupid you are, the more interesting you'll sound. Try to mimic instrumental sounds and practice until you sound similar.



05

# Vocal hygiene

Learn the importance of maintaining vocal hygiene and some crucial tips to keep in mind to maintain your vocal hygiene.



## **Hydration**

Hydration is the most crucial aspect of beatboxing. Make sure that your throat and lips are hydrated at all times. Make sure to take sips of water while you practice. Avoid smoking and consumption of alcohol as it leads to dehydration.

## **Take Regular Breaks**

You need to take breaks at regular intervals to prevent stressing out the muscles of your vocal cord. If your throat hurts at any point in time, it is an indicator that you need to stop.

## **Do Vocal Exercises**

You can learn vocal exercises by taking up courses online. Doing Yoga for a short duration can also be of help.

## **Have Regular Checks**

You need to go through regular checkups if you're going through a period of stress. Overdoing things can lead to voice damage, and you won't be able to beatbox for a long time. There was a period of time when Vineeth stressed his voice and travelled a lot. He did not keep himself in check and therefore ended up damaging his voice. That issue lasted for 3 long months.





06

# Is beatboxing a viable career option?

Can you be employed as a beatboxer?

Is Beatboxing a legitimate career? This lesson would help you find some answers.





### **Scope of Beatboxing in India**

Vineeth Vincent has been beatboxing for 9 years now. It has been a good ride for him so far. There are two choices at hand. You can beatbox for fun or take it up as a legitimate career. You can beatbox at a College fest or a Family function or any social gathering. Nevertheless, how can you make the transition between beatboxing as a hobby to a profession? There is no fixed number of shows a beatboxer must do to be considered a professional. If you're earning enough money to take care of yourself and be able to pay your bills through beatboxing, you're a professional. When Vineet started his journey, it was a different story altogether. The journey was slow and steady.

He had to start from scratch because there were no other beatboxers making money out of the profession at his time. People were unaware of beatboxing and therefore Vineeth had to educate them about it. He created video and audio packages, typed out a resume and sent it out to event managers. It did not work right away. One event manager truly believed in Vineet and put him up for all the gigs and the rest is history. Everybody needs to start somewhere; starting out is the most important thing. Vineeth knows people who charge from Rs. 2, 000 to 2, 00, 000 per gig. You may not earn any money in first one or two years of your career. However, consistency is the key to success. You need to keep doing gigs and must be in the lime-light both online and offline.



### **Don't Work for Free**

Do not sell your talent for no value. Never do anything for free if you know that you're good at it. Estimate your skills, experience and time and put a price tag on it. Make sure to always charge if you're good enough.

### **How much can you earn?**

When Vineet started his career, he would only make Rs 500 per gig. He would do 20-30 gigs per month. It was however not the best thing to do. The reason he did so many gigs in a month was that he was charging less. He had to draw the line. He started charging Rs 2000 and did around 10 gigs a month. He maintained the same price for a year or two. After a few years, the demand for beatboxing increased exponentially.

Many beatboxers made it into the TV circuit. Seeing this opportunity, Vineeth started charging Rs 5000 per gig. However, the number of gigs went down to 5. The branding was missing altogether. He had to reconsider his decision and revise his old strategies. After a year, he started charging around 10k per gig. It remained consistent for three years and he was averaging between 5-10 gigs a month.

## 06 Is beatboxing a viable career option?



After 9 years, he charges around 15k to 45k per gig. He performs 4-8 gigs per month. Beatboxing can help you make money in different cities of India. Vineeth knows around 5-10 beatboxers who are making a full time career out of it. A beginner can earn around Rs 2000 per gig. After you create a demand for yourself in the market, you can expect to receive around Rs 15,000 to 45,000 per gig. You can do 4-8 gigs per month and earn a decent living out of beatboxing.



07

# How do you get started as a beatboxer?

Now that you know all about beatboxing, learn how to start a career as a beatboxer.



People keep asking Vineeth, 'how one can become a beatboxer?' They keep complaining about their issues but Vineeth believes that they're the issue themselves.

### **Perform at Open Mics**

Many open mic events frequently happen across the metropolitan cities of India. Go online and register yourself on websites that lists events happening around the city.

You need to tap on this opportunity to hone your beatboxing skills and create a name for yourself.

### **College Fests**

If you're still at college, then, you have access to your audience right there. College fests happen across the year in every city. Make sure to get on stage, pick up the mic and beatbox. Make use of this opportunity to beatbox in festivals and fresher parties.

### **Online**

You need to put yourself out on the internet. Create beatboxing videos on Youtube and share it on Facebook and Twitter to reach a broad audience. Make good videos of you beatboxing and put it out on the internet. If the audience like it, you're a good beatboxer. Else, you need to tweak some things. You need to make the transition between beatboxing in a bathroom to beatboxing on stage. You need to be confident about yourself and your art. The only way you can be confident about your craft is by practicing consistently with a microphone. Learn how to use a microphone.



## **Local Malls**

You can visit your nearby mall on the weekend. You can walk up to an Emcee, hosting weekend specials at the mall. You can get 2-5 minutes of on-stage time to showcase your talent to the people.

## **Join Online Communities**

There are numerous online communities dedicated to beatboxing across social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. Network with fellow beatboxers and stay updated on the latest trends and opportunities.



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