

PA-2: Percussion Basics



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Drum

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Snare Drum

Snare Drum technique represents a sound basis of grip and technique that transfers easily to most of the percussion family. Click on the buttons below to learn more.

Stance

Grip

Stroke

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Avoid

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Back

Snare Drum Stance

Posture is key on any instrument. Stand at snare drum with feet shoulder-width apart and arms relaxed down at your sides. Relax shoulders and only rely on skeletal structure to hang in balance from your head to your feet. Be sure to stand 4-6 inches behind the drum and adjust the height so that the top of the drum is just below your belt-line.



Back

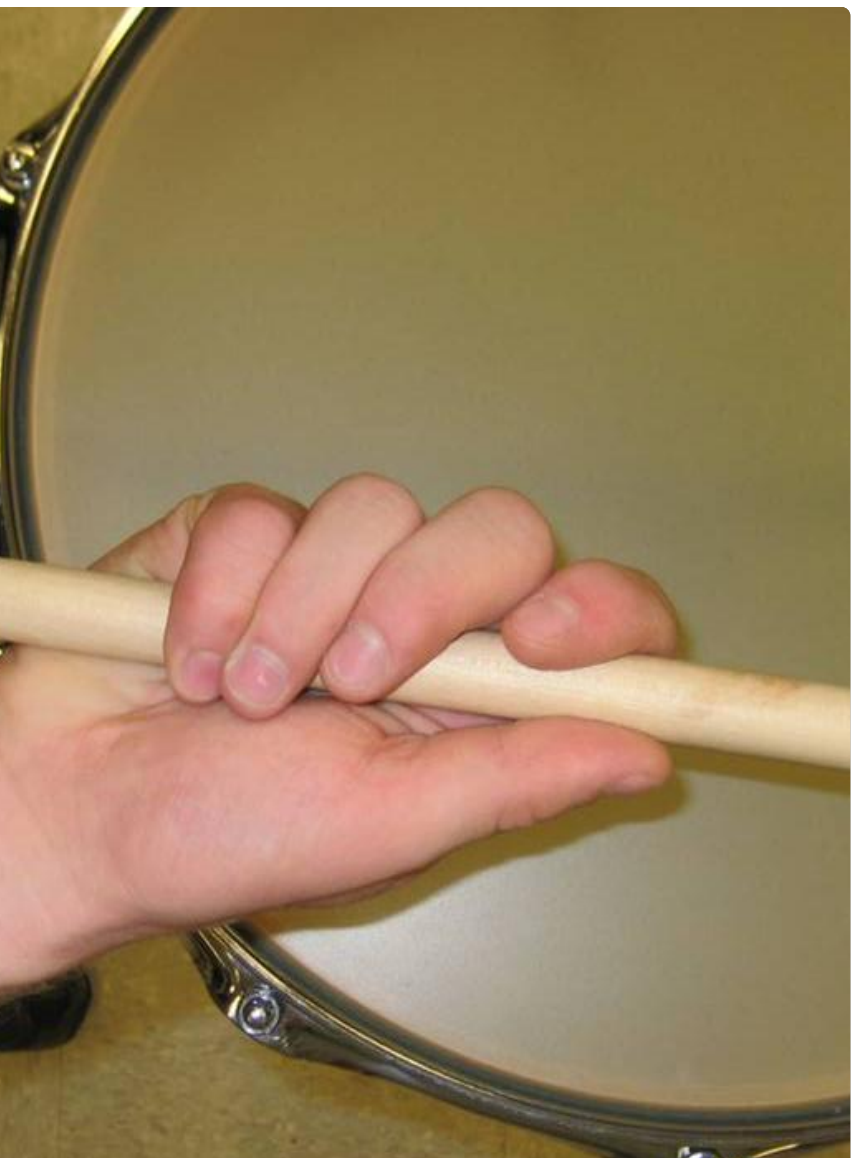
To Grip



To start, lay stick across palm of the dominant hand from base of pointer finger across the crease of palm to the opposite corner of wrist. Vic Firth SD-1 General sticks (shown in picture) are a great starter snare stick and also work well with multi-percussion applications.

Snare Drum Grip

Next



Keeping stick across palm, wrap fingers around stick and place entire thumb print parallel to the stick. Try to get as much of the thumb print touching the stick as possible.

Snare Drum Grip, cont.

Next



Turn at the forearm so the stick is flat and the wrist and palm are exactly parallel to the floor. Check that there is minimal to no gap between thumb and first finger.

Snare Drum Grip, cont.

Next



The fulcrum is the place on the stick that provides maximum bounce with minimal pressure. This is approximately 1/3 of the way from the butt of the stick to the tip. The thumb and side of the forefinger between the top two knuckles is where the fulcrum should be. To test fulcrum, drop the stick freely with only thumb and forefinger and experiment with fulcrum placement until maximum bounce is found.

Snare Drum Grip, cont.

Next



Finally, match the fulcrum and grip found on the dominant hand to the non-dominant hand, and you have achieved "matched" grip. This grip is useful in most other percussion instruments involving sticks or mallets. Sticks should form a 75-90 degree angle and forearms should angle downward towards the floor from the elbow to the wrist. Stick beads should be together and just in front of the center of the drum.

Snare Drum Grip, cont.

Back

To
Stroke



Stroke

Stroke should be natural and free of tension. Be sure stance and grip are correct before moving on.

Next



Start with good matched grip. Be sure palms are flat and forearms are angled downward. If the forearms are parallel, lower drum until a natural, tension-free downward angle occurs. Stick beads should be together and a few inches in front of the center of the drum.

Stroke, cont.

Next



Start with a full stroke. Raise stick to a comfortable, yet stretched height and let the stick naturally bounce back to the same position. Think of pulling the stick back towards the same shoulder. Try to achieve at least a 45 degree angle between drum head and stick at full height. Do not stop stick on head, and do not make any twisting motions with the wrist or arms. Keep arms still and maintain fulcrum. Fingers remain on the stick at all times.

Stroke, cont.

Next



Match the same full stroke with other hand. Always maintain stance, grip, and relaxation. The stick should be in a constant, fluid motion throughout the stroke. Aim at a spot just below the head of the drum to achieve a fuller sound. Do not accelerate the speed of the stick as it approaches the head (also known as whipping the stick).

Stroke, cont.

[Back](#)

[To What to Avoid](#)



Sticks starting too high. Start with sticks less than 1 inch from the head. This is quite common in beginning percussionists.

What to Avoid

Next



Thumbs are not flat. Be sure to place the entire thumb print on the stick. Take note of the tension in the forearms that this creates.

What to Avoid, cont.

Next



Back fingers not on sticks. This is very common when learning to roll. Back fingers aid in controlling the stick and therefore the stroke. The stick does not need to touch the palm at all times; however, the fingers never leave the stick.

What to Avoid, cont.

Next



Wrists turned so palms are not flat. This is more closely related to timpani technique, but not conducive to good snare technique. Note that elbows are too far in – turn elbows out and rotate forearms until palms are flat to the floor.

What to Avoid, cont.

Next



Elbows too high; arms not hanging freely from shoulder. This creates tension in the arms and the performer will tire quickly. This also creates too large of a stick angle.

What to Avoid, cont.

Next



Snare shadow is not centered (note the shadow of the snares running diagonally from the upper right to lower left corner). The throw lever should be directly in front of the performer. Playing off the snares gives a dull sound and a fuzzy response from the snares. Do not adjust drum by where the brand sticker is on the head in front of you; always adjust by placing snare lever by your belt. You can also adjust to soft dynamics by playing towards the rim and still play over the snares.

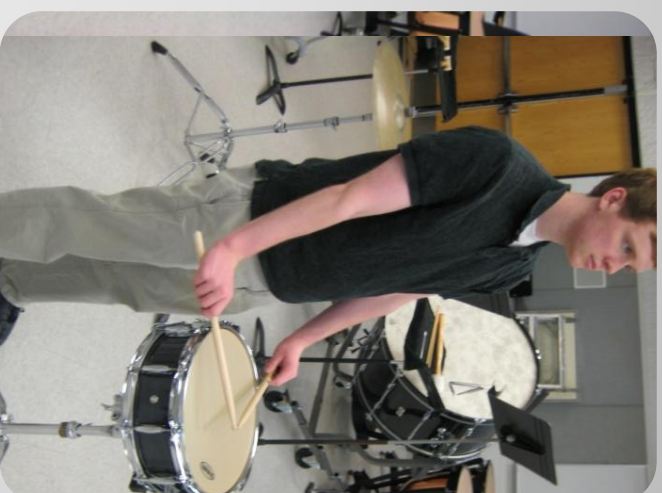
What to Avoid, cont.

Next

Drum too high, too much tension in wrists, forearms not angled downward.



Drum too low, tension in forearms, elbows not bent, forearms angled too far downward.



What to Avoid, cont.

Back

To
Technique

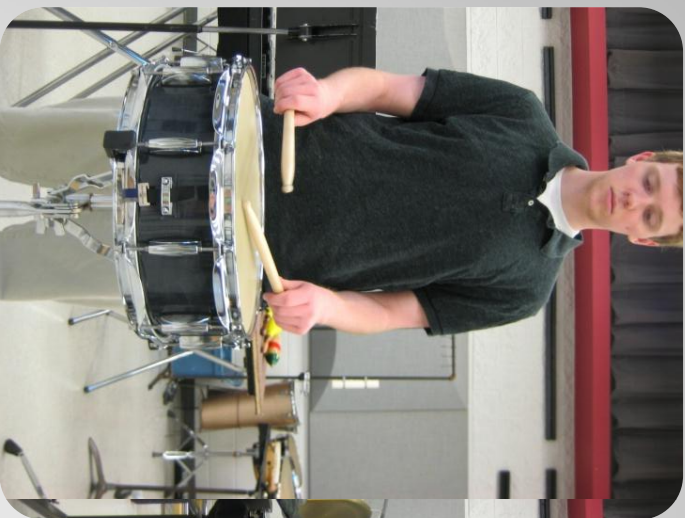


Snare Drum Technique

Now that we have basic stance, grip, and stroke under our belts, it's now time to learn the techniques associated with Snare Drum playing.

Next

Tap: lower stroke, 1-3 inches above the head. Also used in pp-mp dynamics.



Accent: higher stroke, 3-6 inches above the head. Also used in mf-ff dynamics.



Two major strokes

Next



A flam is when one stick is higher than the other and are dropped simultaneously to the head creating two sounds – a soft sound followed immediately by a louder sound. It should sound like it is spoken “fl-AM.” A Right Flam is where the right stick is higher, and the reverse is true for a Left Flam.

Flam

Next



A great place to start learning a buzz roll is the fulcrum test found earlier in this presentation. When you find the spot with the maximum number of bounces, simply place back fingers on the stick and try to take away the first 2-3 wide bounces and get straight to the smaller, quick bounces. The stick will likely drop lower in the hand as it falls away from the palm (remember to keep the back fingers on the stick!).

Multi-stroke (buzz) roll

Next



Once a long, smooth buzz occurs in one hand (sounds like zzzzzz), try to overlap with the other hand so you cannot hear the change of sticking. A good concert snare drum roll at a medium dynamic is a 3-stroke roll (RRR, LLL). Keep the stroke closed and pump arms at elbow to keep the roll speed fast.

Multi-stroke (buzz) roll, cont.

Next



This type of roll is reserved for certain marches, rudimental drumming, and the marching field. The Open Roll or double-stroke roll (RR, LL) is a controlled, single bounce of the stick. In very slow motion, the stick goes through a full stroke, then the hand catches the stick for a stroke using the energy from the full stroke. This is called a Diddle (RR), and is the core of an open roll. Again, pump arms at the elbow to keep roll energy fast and smooth.

Open Roll

Next



Lay the non-dominant stick across the rim and rest the neck of the stick in the center of the drum. Use dominant hand to strike the non-dominant hand to achieve the "shot" sound. Do NOT do a single-stick rim shot in a concert ensemble setting! Single-stick shots should be saved for marching band.

Concert Rim Shot

Next

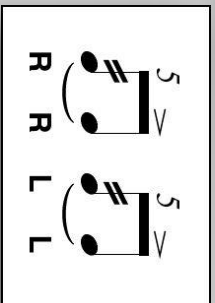


Normally used in swing and Latin jazz drumming, lay the stick across the rim with the butt of the stick just off-center on the head. This gives a full "rim-knock" or "clave" sound. If a piece of music demands a rim click, experiment with this technique to give a fuller sound that has more projection. Ask the conductor what his or her preferred sound is.

"Clave"

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To
Rudiments



Snare Drum Rudiments

Use this menu to navigate through the 40 Percussive Arts
Society International Drum Rudiments

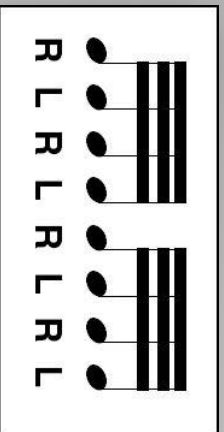
Roll
Rudiments

Diddle
Rudiments

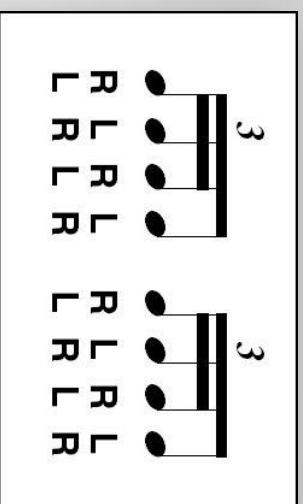
Flam
Rudiments

Drag
Rudiments

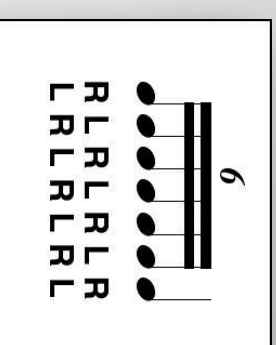
Back



Single Stroke Roll



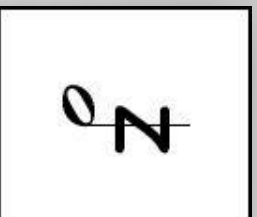
Single Stroke Four



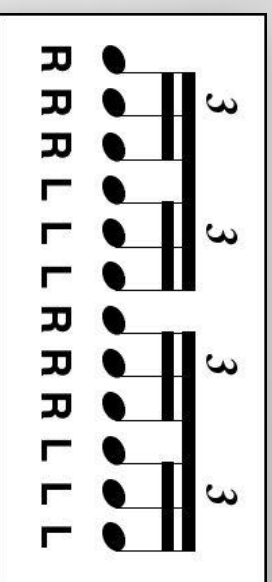
Single Stroke Seven

A. Single Stroke Roll Rudiments

Next



Multiple Bounce Roll



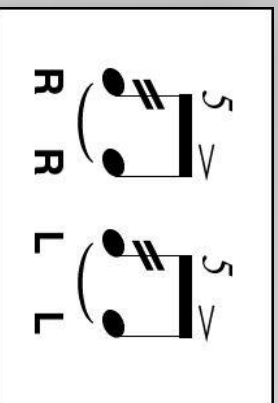
Triple Stroke Roll

B. Multiple Bounce Roll Rudiments

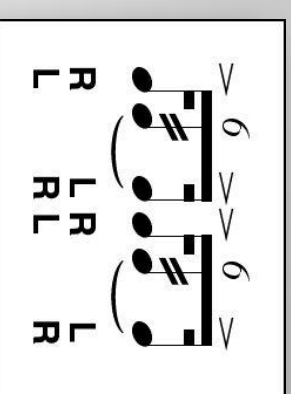
Next



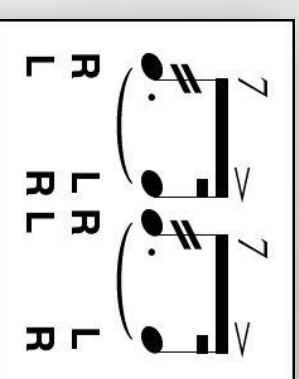
Double Stroke Open Roll



Five Stroke Roll



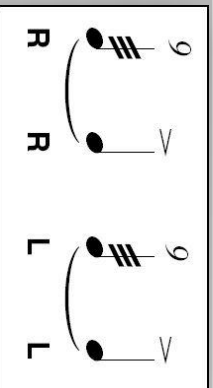
Six Stroke Roll



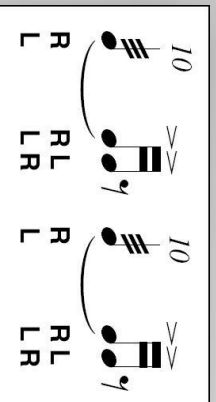
Seven Stroke Roll

C. Double Stroke Open Roll Rudiments

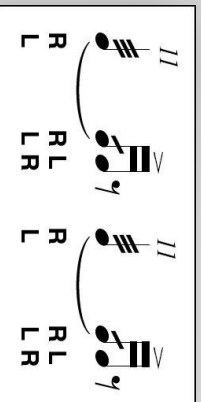
Next



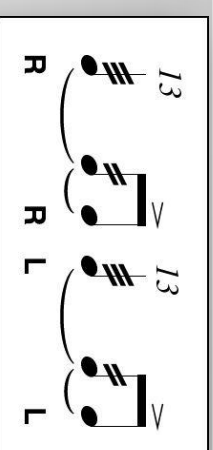
Nine Stroke Roll



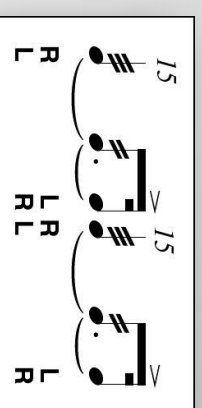
Ten Stroke Roll



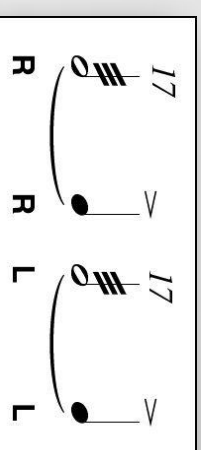
Eleven Stroke Roll



Thirteen Stroke Roll



Fifteen Stroke Roll

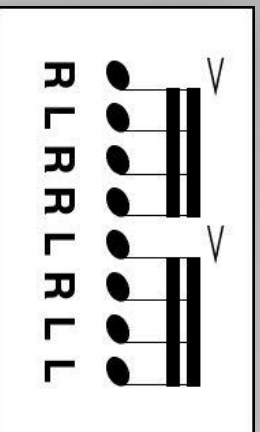


Seventeen Stroke Roll

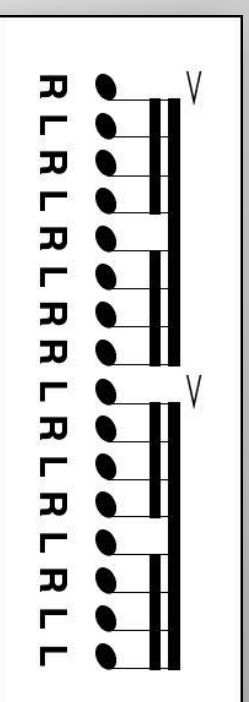
Double Stroke Open Roll Rudiments, cont.

Back

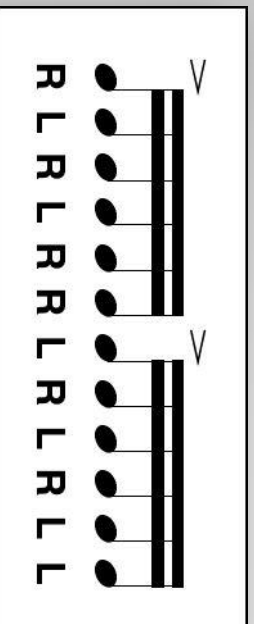
To Diddle
Rudiments



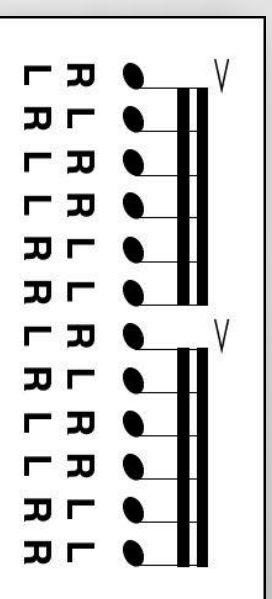
Single Paradiddle



Triple Paradiddle



Double Paradiddle

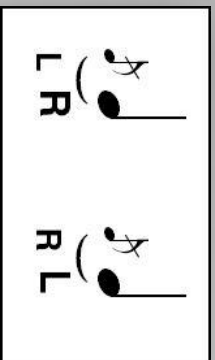


Single Paradiddle-diddle

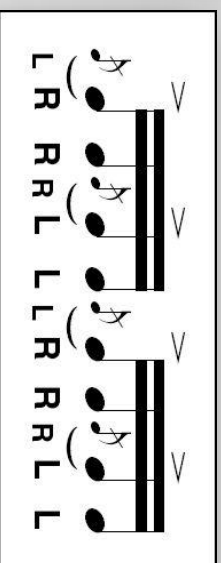
Diddle Rudiments

Back

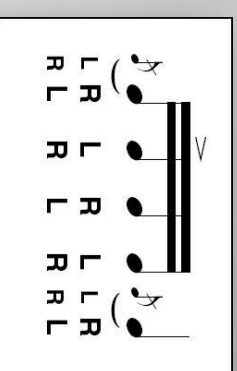
To Flam
Rudiments



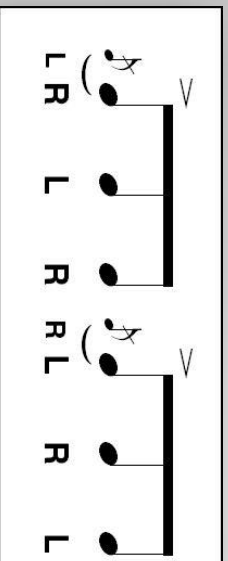
Flam



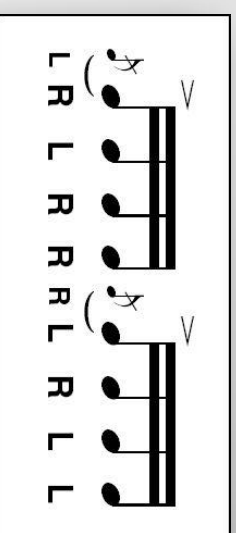
Flam Tap



Flamacue



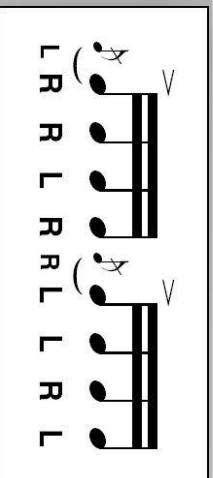
Flam Accent



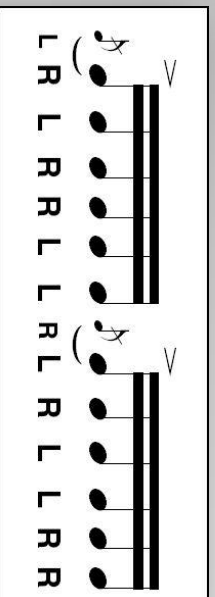
Flam Paradiddle

Flam Rudiments

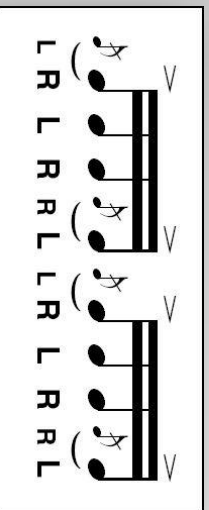
Next



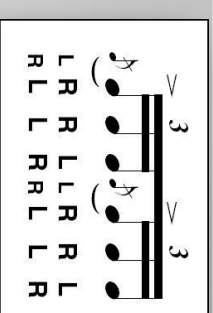
Single Flammed Mill



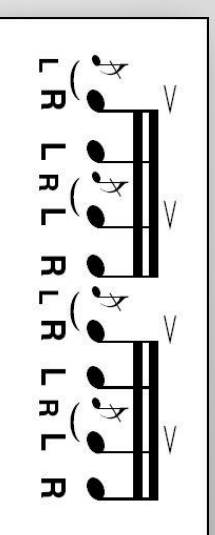
Flam Paradiddle-diddle



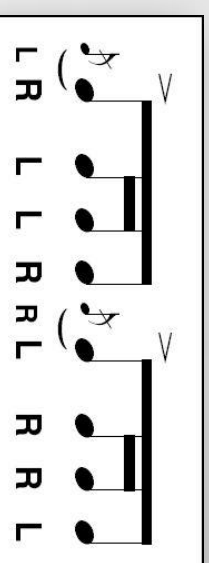
Pataflalfa



Swiss Army Triplet



Inverted Flam Tap

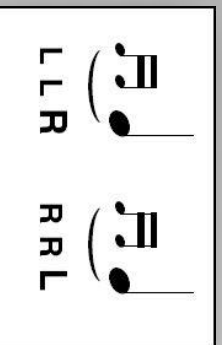


Flam Drag

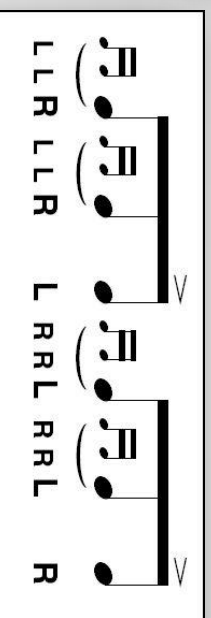
Flam Rudiments, cont.

Back

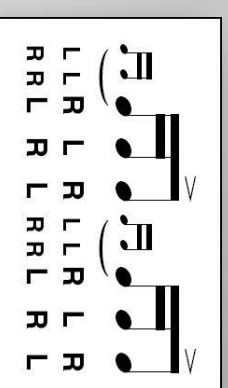
To Drag
Rudiments



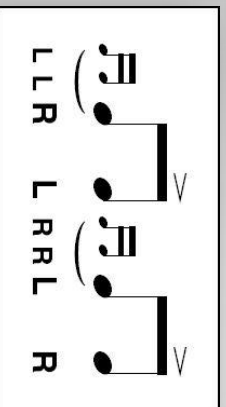
Drag (Ruff)



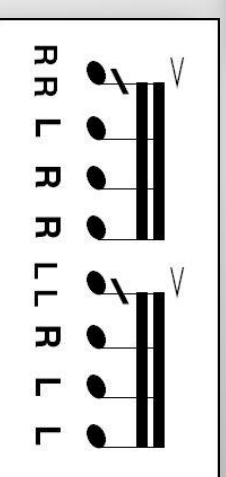
Double Drag Tap



Lesson 25



Single Drag Tap



Single Dragadiddle

Drag Rudiments

Next

Drag Paradiddle #1

Handwritten musical notation for Drag Paradiddle #1. The notation consists of a single staff with a treble clef. It features a sequence of eighth notes: R, L, L, R, L, R, L, R, L, L. The first and last notes (R and L) are accented with a wedge (^). The notation is written in a stylized, handwritten font.

Drag Paradiddle #1

Single Ratamacue

Handwritten musical notation for Single Ratamacue. The notation consists of a single staff with a treble clef. It features a sequence of eighth notes: L, L, R, L, R, L, R, L, R. The first and last notes (L and R) are accented with a wedge (^). The notation is written in a stylized, handwritten font.

Single Ratamacue

Double Ratamacue

Handwritten musical notation for Double Ratamacue. The notation consists of a single staff with a treble clef. It features a sequence of eighth notes: L, L, R, L, L, R, L, L, R, L, R, L, R. The first and last notes (L and R) are accented with a wedge (^). The notation is written in a stylized, handwritten font.

Double Ratamacue

Drag Paradiddle #2

Handwritten musical notation for Drag Paradiddle #2. The notation consists of a single staff with a treble clef. It features a sequence of eighth notes: R, L, L, R, L, L, R, L, L, R, L, L. The first and last notes (R and L) are accented with a wedge (^). The notation is written in a stylized, handwritten font.

Drag Paradiddle #2

Triple Ratamacue

Handwritten musical notation for Triple Ratamacue. The notation consists of a single staff with a treble clef. It features a sequence of eighth notes: L, L, R, L, L, R, L, L, R, L, L, R, L, L, R. The first and last notes (L and R) are accented with a wedge (^). The notation is written in a stylized, handwritten font.

Triple Ratamacue

Drag Rudiments

Back

To
Timpani



Timpani Technique

Timpani technique shares some similarities to Snare Drum technique as well as a few differences. Click on a button to learn more.

Grips

Stroke

Mallets

Tuning

Ranges

Sticking

Back



German



French



American

Timpani Grips

Back



German Grip is exactly like matched grip on snare drum. This is easiest to teach a beginning timpanist and will give a good, basic sound. The grip tends to be heavy and boomy due to the physical tendency to play a downstroke from this position.

German Grip

To
French
Grip



French Grip is when the forearm and wrist are rotated so the thumb faces towards the ceiling. The grip and fulcrum are similar to snare grip, only with the arm turned 90 degrees. This can be used as an alternative to German (matched) grip and creates a lighter sound. Teaching the snap motion is considerably easier using French Grip, but the use of the wrist is quite a bit different from matched grip.

French Grip

To
American
Grip



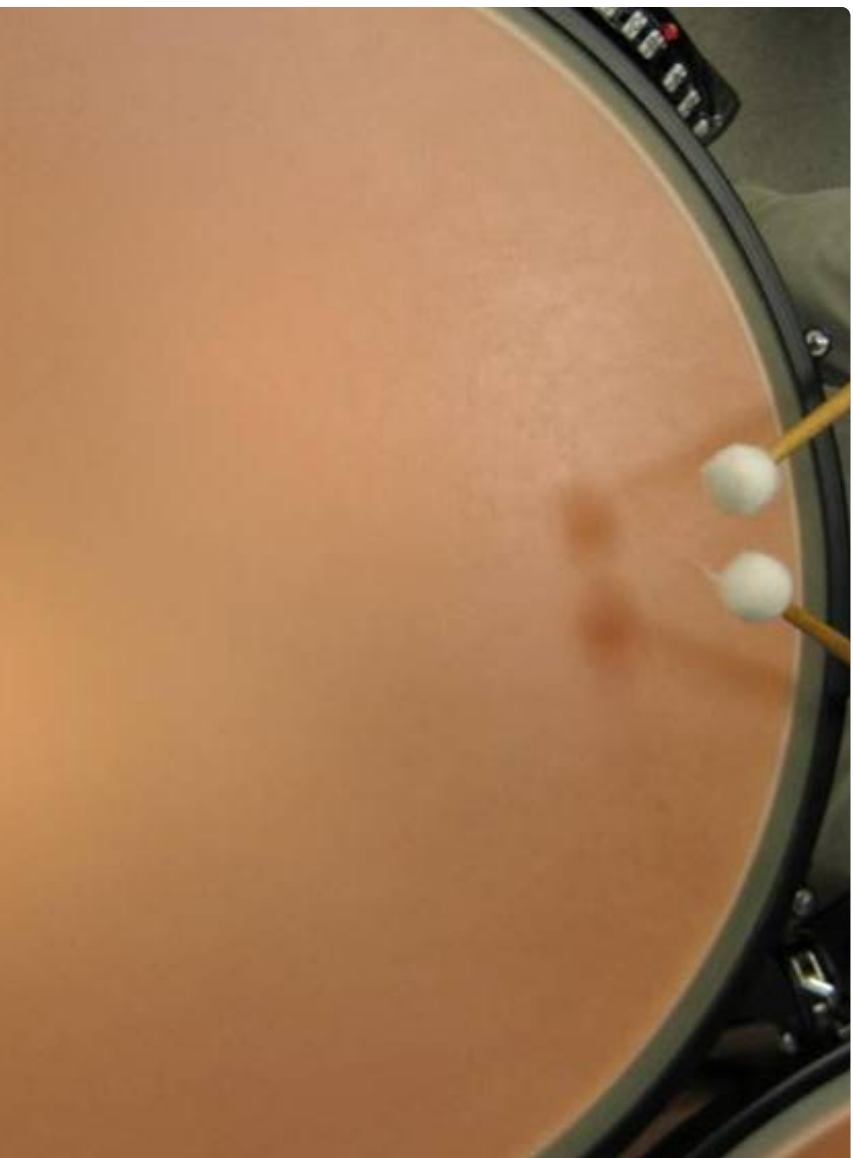
American Grip

American Grip is a hybrid of French and German grips. Begin with basic snare grip and fulcrum, then rotate the wrist so the thumbs are angled upward at about 45 degrees. This grip is similar to that of playing a ride cymbal in a jazz ensemble. It utilizes the wrist motion of German grip with the light snap motion of French grip.



Back

To
Stroke



Start with sticks between $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{5}$ th of the way from the rim to the center of the head. The striking place changes proportionately to the different sized drums, and should give maximum vibration. Sticks should be between tension rods, not in front of one. Turn body squarely towards the drum that will be played. Never strike timpani in the center of the head.

Timpani Stroke

Next



From original position, raise sticks to a comfortable, yet stretched position. Generally, playing should start from this position before the note, and end in this position after striking the drum. The motion should be a quick, fluid snap of the wrist, aiming about 1 inch below the head of the drum. Shoulders should stay relaxed, and arms should hang freely. Use a stool to lower body and reduce tension in arms.

Timpani Stroke, cont.

Next



A good exercise that works on achieving the snap motion in the technique is to turn the sticks backwards and use the wrist and back fingers to flick the stick heads into the forearms. Turn the stick back around and use the same motion to strike the drum.

Timpani Stroke, cont.

Back

To
Timpani
Mallets



It is best to have a wide variety of mallets to suit the demands of the music you will perform. Each beginning student should purchase a pair of Vic Firth T3 Staccato mallets and expand their bag each year until they own a pair of medium soft, medium, staccato or medium hard and wood mallets. Avoid cartwheel mallets due to the stitching that could be accidentally played on. Always use a tray stand with a towel or covering for sticks not in use.

Timpani Mallets

Next



An advanced percussionist looking at majoring in music should consider a stick case or a brief case for their timpani mallets. To save the felts, wrap the mallet heads in a sandwich baggie and twist sticks to store between uses.

Timpani Mallets

[Back](#)

[To
Tuning](#)



Store timpani with pedals up to maintain the life of the cables, hoops and the heads. ALWAYS cover timpani with quality covers and NEVER allow anyone to store equipment, books or music on top of any percussion instrument. When moving or lifting the timpani, always lift by the struts (long pieces of metal running perpendicular to the floor) and never by the hoop.

Timpani Tuning

Next



All percussionists should own their own tuning fork. A tuner should only be used to tune gauges or tuning the heads. Do NOT allow student to use bells or other pitched instruments to tune the timpani. Teach your percussionists intervals through ear-training exercises to use the A as a reference pitch and basis for all 12 notes of the chromatic scale.

Timpani Tuning, cont.

Next



Starting with the pedal down, set tuning fork into vibration, place on skull at the base of the jaw directly in front of ear, sing the desired pitch off of the reference A, and lightly tap head while pushing the pedal to the desired pitch. Sing the desired pitch into the head of the timpani to be sure the drum is in tune with the note that is in your head.

Timpani Tuning, cont.

Next

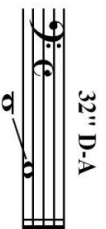
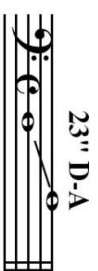
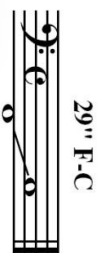


Gauges are a great reference tool for fast tuning changes and novice players (non-percussionists sitting in a percussion ensemble that don't have a lot of time to be trained); however, they should not be used in place of proper ear training and a tuning fork. Periodically tune gauges, especially when temperature and humidity change.

Timpani Tuning, cont.

Back

To
Ranges



Timpani Ranges

The common playing ranges of a standard 4-drum set of timpani are:

32" D-A
29" F-C
26" Bb-F
23" D-A



Keep in mind that the drums and heads are designed to sound their best in the middle part of each range. Stretching to the bottom or top of the range will effect the sound and should only be used in tuning situations that cannot be done otherwise.

Back

To
Sticking



When considering sticking (phrasing), you should always alternate-stick (RL or LR) and avoid crossing over a hand (seen in photo). If you move up one drum, lead with the hand that allows the right hand to strike the higher drum. The reverse is true when moving to a lower drum. Only use a cross-over if the music is too fast to double-stroke (RR, LL).

Timpani Sticking

Next

A

L R L R L R L R L L L R R L R R L

B

L R L R L R L R L L R L R L R L R

C

L R L R R R R L L R L L L R R L L L R

D

L R L R L R L R L L R L R L R L R L

Timpani Sticking, cont.

The best sticking in this last example is B. Example A has a lot unnecessary double-strokes. Example C is an extreme of example A with double-strokes. Example D has an unnecessary paradiddle and a few double-strokes that could be changed into left-hand led phrasing in bar 3.

Next

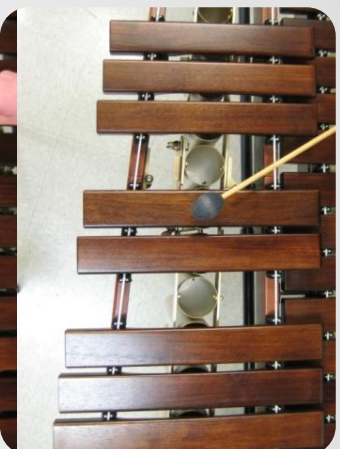


Timpani Sticking: Rolls

When rolling on timpani, use fast single-strokes (RLRL). The speed of the roll will be determined by the drum (slower for 32 and progressively faster as you go up), and by range within a single drum (slower in lower range, faster in higher range). Keep arms and shoulders relaxed, and roll more on the tops of the mallets to give the illusion of sustained sound. Mute timpani on a rest with a small, sweeping motion from pinky to ring finger.

Back

To
Keyboard
Technique



Keyboard Technique

Keyboard technique also shares some similarities to Snare Drum technique. Click on a button to learn more.

Stance

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Technique

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Keyboard Stance

Keyboard stance should be similar to that of snare drum.

Stand with feet shoulder-width apart. Arms should be relaxed and hanging freely from shoulders. Palms are flat to the floor and you should stand 4-6 inches behind the instrument. Forearms should angle comfortably downward. Raise or lower the instrument to achieve proper height.



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To Grip



Two-
Mallet



Four-
Mallet

Keyboard Grip

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Two-Mallet keyboard grip is very similar to matched snare grip. Palms are flat, forearms are angled downward, the fulcrum is about 1/3 from the butt to the head of the mallet, and back fingers remain on the stick. You can also slide the index finger slightly higher on the stick creating a 3-point fulcrum between the thumb and the side of the index and middle fingers. Do not point the index finger by placing tip of finger on the stick.

Two-Mallet Grip

To Four-Mallet



This photo shows Musser/Stevens grip. This is the more commonly used grip for four-mallet technique. Start with wrapping one mallet in the ring and pinky fingers, then use thumb and index finger to grab the very end of the second mallet. This grip gives a wider interval than cross-grip and allows the mallets to be independently controlled.

Four-Mallet Grip - Stevens

Next



This photo shows traditional cross-grip. This is the easiest four-mallet grip to learn as a beginner, but interval changes are slow, you cannot stretch the interval as wide as Stevens, and the added mallet is hard to work independently of the primary mallet. Simply hold the first mallet as you normally would, then insert the second mallet in front of the first and place between index and middle finger so the sticks cross at the bottom of the palm.

Four-Mallet Grip - Cross

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To
Technique



Strike in the center of the bar, directly over the resonators. The only two exceptions to this are striking the bottom of the accidental bars for fast passages, and the low range of a large marimba. In lower-range marimba, strike just above or below center to avoid cracking the bar. Use full strokes to pull sound out of bar.

Keyboard Technique

Next



Rolls on keyboards involve placing one mallet head in front of the other, centered over the resonator. Roll speed can vary based on dynamic, phrasing, mallet strength and range; however, the roll should never be faster than the fullest resonance of the bar nor slow enough to hear individual beating. Roll slower in soft and/or low passages, and roll faster in louder and/or higher passages. Accidental bars should be rolled over the resonator.

Keyboard Technique, cont.

Next



Always stand directly behind the general playing area. Move feet side to side naturally to keep mallets in front of you. Like timpani, sticking or phrasing is determined by the direction of the musical line. When ascending, lead with the right hand. For descending lines, lead with the left. Always alternate stick (RL) and avoid cross-overs unless the passage is too fast to do a double-stroke (RR, LL).

Keyboard Technique, cont.

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[To What to Avoid](#)



Avoid striking over where the bar makes contact with the instrument. This is most common with the accidental bars because the students do not want to stretch their arms out in front of them to strike over resonator. The sound is dull and does not ring for very long. When looking at a keyboard instrument with resonators, take note that the center of the bar (beating point) moves on a slight diagonal, not horizontal.

What to Avoid

Next



Avoid twisting the torso to reach the bars. Move the feet naturally with the line of the musical phrase. Movement will be greater as you move to the lower register on a marimba. Movement will also be greater on marimba than on vibraphone or xylophone because of the width of the bars.

What to Avoid, cont.

Back

To
Mallets

Mallets

Every percussionist should own a quality stick bag. These range from being inexpensive, to more depending on the level and intention of the student. Start with a pair of medium-hard rubber xylo mallets, acrylic or hard plastic bell mallets and medium yarn mallets. Expand each year to include harder rubber and yarn mallets, brass bell mallets, and medium-hard vibe mallets. The strength of the mallet is not just a dynamic consideration – it also has to do with the style and tone quality desired.



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[To Bass
Drum](#)

Bass Drum

Bass Drum is a simple technique to learn. Start with a good-quality mallet (Tom Gauger shown), and a pair of rollers. Stand behind the instrument and place music stand in line with the conductor. The amount of muffling from the non-playing hand is dependent on the demands of the music. Let the drum ring as freely as possible and add more muffling as needed. Be sure heads are tuned and are not too loose.



Next

Bass Drum, cont.

Strike the drum just below a line of symmetry that crosses diagonally across the drum (where the backbone of a calf-skin head would be located).

The motion of continuous playing should be slightly elliptical to pull the sound out and avoid playing too "thuddy." A towel may be used as shown in the picture if there is a need to dampen the back head quickly or create a very dry attack.

Avoid using the knee by propping leg on a foot rest or stool. This was used back when one person played the bass drum and attached cymbal simultaneously and isn't necessary. Avoid striking the center of the bass drum head.



Next

Bass Drum, cont.

All percussion sections should have a pair of good rollers. Rolls should be played either on the outer edge or closer to the performer. Many

professionals prefer to use traditional grip to ease tension in the left hand. Play closer to the center of the head as you get louder, and closer to the edge as you get softer. Avoid using a towel when rolling so the head can ring and there is an illusion of sustained sound. As with timpani, you can also roll more on the tops of the mallets for softer articulation. Use a tray stand and towel for mallet changes.



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[To
Tambourine](#)

Tambourine

Tambourine is a fun instrument to play and has a wide variety of techniques. Start with a good instrument with a membrane head. Do not use a jingle-only tambourine used in rock bands. It is recommended to have an 8-10" double-row tambourine. Pictured is a Grover Phosphor-Bronze 10" double-row tambourine. Different types of metal give brighter/darker, and dryer/wetter sounds.



Next

Tambourine, cont.

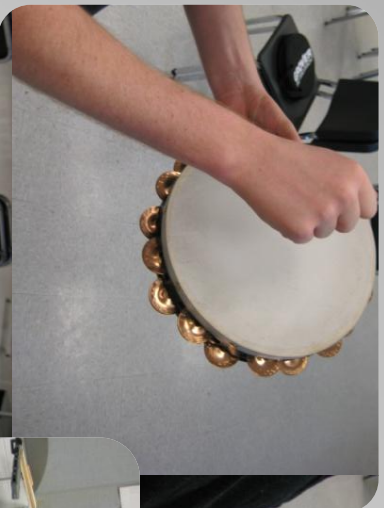
A good starter technique is to simply draw all fingers to a single point and strike the rim across from the part you are holding (do not put a finger through the hole – this is used for mounting purposes). Hold the instrument mostly flat at chest-level. Use the wrist and tap like a bird's beak. This gives a good dry, staccato sound that has a clear articulation.



Next

Tambourine, cont.

For louder playing, accents or to start a strong roll, make a fist and hit the center of the head with the knuckles. For a technical passage that is at a fuller dynamic, prop leg up on a box or stool and strike tambourine with knuckles on the inside of the head; alternating between the fist and the knee. For soft, technical passages, prop leg and play tambourine with the finger tips.



Next

Tambourine, cont.



There are two kinds of rolls on tambourine – thumb and shake. The thumb roll takes lots of practice and should be used for medium and soft dynamic levels. Practice getting the thumb to vibrate on smoother surfaces such as tables, shiny metal, counter tops, etc. Beeswax and other products may be applied to the outer edge of the head to create more friction. Shake rolls should be used at louder dynamics. Shake the tambourine with forearm straight up and mix rotating wrist with “knocking on a door” randomly for a full wash of sound.

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To
Cymbals



Crash Cymbals

Begin with stance similar to snare drum and keyboards. With the entire strap in each hand, hold the cymbals at about a 45 degree angle just a few inches apart with dominant hand on top. Do not put hands through the straps as this will muffle the sound. Be sure to hold the cymbals off-set by about 1 inch to avoid the "air pocket" sound.

Next

Crash Cymbal, cont.

Starting in the previous position (1), bring plates apart (2), and make contact with the bottom of the cymbals first (3) followed by the top of the cymbals (4). Keep both plates in motion. The sound should be similar to a flam on a snare drum (two sounds close together). Avoid crashing the cymbals flat together or with the plates centered edge-to-edge. Follow through by continuing the motion of each plate and try to make as little contact with the hands and clothing as possible. Do not hold cymbals in the air facing the audience – this changes the sound because the cymbals ring outward away from the edges, not from the center.



1.



2.



3.



4.

Next

Suspended Cymbal



Use a large, thick cymbal with a wash of sound. Thinner drum set cymbals and crash cymbals will be too thin and bright. Use medium to medium-soft yarn mallets placed directly in line with one another on either side of the cymbal bell. Roll within the last inch of the plate using fast single-strokes. Speed up the roll through the crescendo and end with the sticks moving outward from the edge. Never use timpani, snare, or rubber mallets for suspended cymbal rolls. For coin scrapes, use a quarter or triangle beater.

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Accessories](#)

Triangle

The better quality instrument, the better the sound of the triangle. The picture shows a brass triangle that has many overtones and a shimmering ring. Set hand like you're holding a can of Coke, and support the clip on thumb and index finger. Do not touch the triangle with other fingers. Strike the bottom bar near the closed end. This gives a quality sound and is also close to the side bar for rolls. Use quality beaters, not the first piece of metal found in the cabinet such as bolts, screws or pieces of drum stands.



Next

Claves

Make a loose fist with non-dominant hand. Rest one clave in the valley between fingers and thumb making minimal contact and pressure. Strike with the other clave in the center of the one resting on hand. Experiment with which one is the best resonating or striking clave.



Next

Woodblock

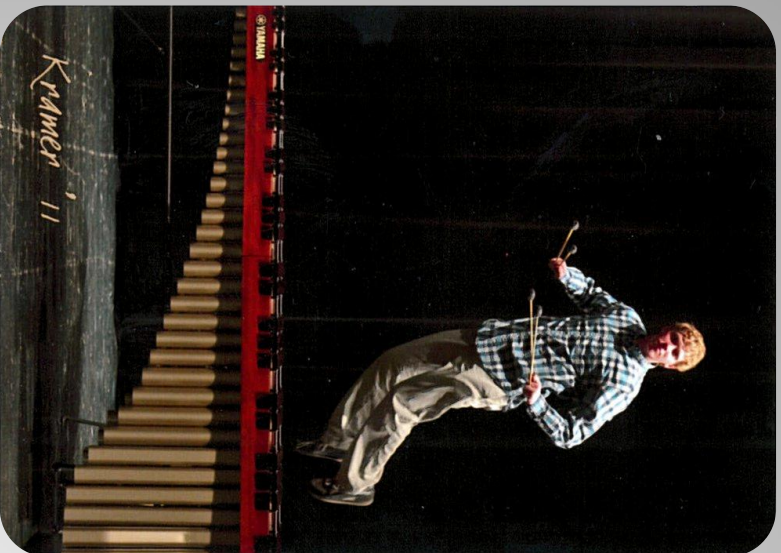
Using a medium rubber mallet, strike woodblock on the lip of the thin side with the opening facing the audience. Set woodblock on a tray table. Use a medium or large woodblock as an all-in-one instrument. Pictured are Black Swamp woodblocks made from rock maple and have a very high-quality sound at a very reasonable price.



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[To Bio's](#)

Kramer Milan



Kramer Milan is a graduate of Big Rapids High School. He studies under the direction and guidance of Gwen Thrasher, Assistant Percussion Professor of MSU and William Vits, Principal Percussionist of the Grand Rapids Symphony. Kramer was a member of the Grand Rapids Youth Symphony Orchestra, Ferris State University Pep Band, and the Con Brio Voce Brass Band. He has made three appearances at the Michigan Music Conference as part of the All State band, and twice in the All State Orchestra.

He also is a Michigan Youth Arts Distinguished Scholar, participating in the Michigan Youth Arts Festival Honors Band (2011). He has taken part in summer festivals such as the Blue Lake Fine Arts Camps International Northern Winds Band (2008), Interlochen All-State Orchestra (2009), and the World Youth Symphony Orchestra Interlochen (2010). His numerous accomplishments include: Winner of the Grand Rapids Symphonic Band Youth Soloist Competition, Michigan Youth Arts Festival Concerto Finalist (2010), Winner of the Mich. Federation of Music Clubs Percussion competition (2010), the John Philip Sousa and Patrick S. Gilmore Band Award, many "1" ratings at MSBOA solo and ensemble festivals, and 3 class Citizenship Awards (2008-2010). Kramer also teaches private percussion lessons and volunteers his time directing the Big Rapids Middle School percussion ensemble, which he founded. Kramer is a member of the the National Thespian Society, Percussive Arts Society, and National Honors Society. Kramer plans to continue his studies next fall at the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University majoring in Percussion Performance.

Next

My Bio

This project is completed in partial fulfillment of the Master's of Conducting Degree of the American Band College of Sam Houston State University. Brian L.

Balch is Director of Bands at Big Rapids High School in Big Rapids, Michigan, where he has been for 4 of his 6 years teaching. He received his Bachelor's Degree from Grand Valley State University and is in his 2nd year of study at the American Band College of Sam Houston State University. His program is successful and his percussion ensemble was invited to perform at the 2010 Michigan Youth Arts Festival, a state-wide talent search that is the only of its kind in the US. He marched 3 summers in the 7-time DCI World Champion Cavaliers Drum & Bugle Corps from Rosemont, Illinois and lives at home with his wife Kathy, 2 ½ year old Emily and cat Nicky.



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