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Notre Dame Indoor Percussion

Front Ensemble Technique Packet

By

Ryan Reed
Technique

Body/Arm Placement

THE NUMBER ONE THING TO THINK ABOUT HOW TO HOLD YOURSELF IS TO ALWAYS STAY RELAXED.

You should be standing up straight when behind the keyboard. Make sure your feet are also shoulder width apart. You should be looking up when you are playing in order to be able to interact with and respond to what is going on around you. Tilting your head in slight downward angle to see the keyboard is fine, but burying your head into your chest is not. Doing these two simple things will make you look bigger and more confident as a performer.

To get the correct arm position, follow these simple steps:
  - Drop and let your arms dangle by your side.
  - Bend the arm at the elbow.
  - At this point, you can keep your upper arm next to your body, or slightly in front of your body. The elbows may never be behind your torso as it causes extra unnecessary tension.
  - Make sure the shoulders are dropped and that the arms are relaxed, both with no tension.

Two Mallet Grip/Fulcrum

AGAIN, RELAXATION IS KEY HERE.

Pick the mallet up and make sure all the fingers are wrapped around the mallet shaft. Also, make sure that the thumb is directly across from the index finger. Turn the hand over so that the back of the hand is facing upward, but not completely flat. The “crease” made between the thumb and index finger should be at about a 45 degree angle. About an inch and a half of the shaft should be hanging out of the back of your hand. Now squeeze the mallet as tight as possible. Now relax the hand until there is no tension left. This is how to get the basic two mallet grip that we will be using.

Now to get into more detail of what you should feel in your hand while playing. In theory the pressure should be distributed throughout the hand. However, you probably will not feel the pressure equally throughout the hand. The most pressure you will feel is in your middle and ring fingers. The rest of the fingers then wrap around the mallet to secure the mallet in your hand and keep the mallet from moving side-to-side as you play. You should be able to execute the basic stroke without the thumb, first finger and pinky on the mallet.

Make sure that you do not confuse pressure with squeezing. Pressure is caused by two objects applying equal and opposite force to each other. This means that the hand wrapping around the mallet is applying force to the mallet, and the mallet is applying force back to the hand. The reason to not confuse pressure and squeezing is that we still want the mallet to be able to move around in the hand in an up and down motion. This ability of the mallet to move up and down while in the hand is called letting the mallet “breathe,” or the mallets’ “breathing room.” This “breathing room” allows the mallet to vibrate when it strikes a bar, and this vibration helps to create a full, open tone.
Two Mallet Stroke/"Velocity" Stroke
(Some of you may know this stroke as the “Piston” stroke.)

Since the stroke is called a “velocity” stroke, the amount of velocity is high. In most cases, and especially at the beginning of the year, this amount of velocity will be your personal maximum velocity. This will also help to build the hand strength needed to properly execute the stroke.

The “velocity” stroke always starts in an “up position.” This “up position” is both mallets above the keyboard pulled back by the wrist to the starting height of the exercise.

The “velocity” stroke primary comes from the wrist. The arm does move a little to add weight, but only because it is residual motion. This means that the arm moves because it is connected to the wrist. The arm should not move any more than an inch and should not move at all at lower stick heights.

The “velocity” stroke is really a two-part stroke, the down stroke to the bar and the up stroke to the starting “up position.” Both parts of the stroke require an equal amount of velocity (or energy behind the hands). This means that the mallet returns up to the starting position as fast as it goes down to strike the keyboard. When done properly, there will be a pause at the top of the stroke, which is the turn around point of the stroke. This pause is very noticeable at slower tempo and should be thought of at these slower tempos. At higher tempos, the pause is less noticeable because the mallets will be in more constant motion.

At no time is there a “re-prep” to the stroke. A “re-prep” is when you have the mallet in the up position and then lift it higher to initiation the stroke. The “velocity” stroke starts from the up position, returns to the same up position and then leaves from the same up position.

While using the “velocity” stroke, you should feel an “explosion” of energy to initiate the stroke. This “explosion” is the transfer of energy from your body to the hands in order to get the mallets moving at a high velocity. You should feel the “explosion” of energy from the top of stroke. Feeling the energy there will get the mallet moving right away and allow for an open tone. Feeling the energy at the bottom of the stroke will cause your sound to be sharp and harsh. We do not want this kind of harsh sound. Feeling the transfer of energy at the top of stroke will regulate the energy of the stroke more than feeling it at the bottom, therefore, giving us a full, more open tone.

Bar Placement
There are two areas of the keyboard bar that are acceptable playing areas. These areas are just off center of the bar or the extreme edge of the black notes. The strings are a nodal point in the bar that creates a very focused, lighter sound. For the most part, we do not want to use that sound. The exact center of the bar is also a nodal point, except that it is less noticeable. The main difference between just off center and the exact center is that the “bottom” of the sound tends to drop out when playing in the exact center. That is why we have chosen to use just off center as our optimal playing area.

To determine where this playing area is, look over the top of the keyboard. Looking between the bars you can see the resonators…you can also see the rails on both sides of the resonators. For our intent, we will call the rail farthest from you, the north rail, and the rail closest to you, the south rail. This will apply to the white notes (lower manual) and the black notes (upper manual). On the white notes, the just off center playing area will be along the north rail. On the black notes, the just off center playing area will be along the south rail. The just off center playing area
applies to the entire range of the keyboard except for the top octave to octave-and-a-half. This is
due to the little space between the center and the strings, so the playing area in that part of the
keyboard is the exact center.

The marimba and xylophone can also make use of the second playing area that was mentioned,
the extreme edge of the black notes. This area should only be used for fast passages and four
mallet chord voicings. Vibraphones may make use of this area for the same reasons, but only if
absolutely needed. When using this playing area, the middle of the mallet should strike the very
eauge of the bar. This should look like the mallet is half hanging off the edge of the bar. This area
will create a sound that is much like that of the just off center playing area. In the case that the
vibraphones need to use this area, the entire mallet head strikes the edge of the bar due to the
instrument being flat. Take extra of the precision of mallet placement when using the edges on a
vibraphone because it is very easy to accidently play over the strings.

Four Mallet Grip
All keyboard players will be using Stevens grip.

We will start with the outside mallet. The outside mallet is gripped with the ring and pinky
fingers. Very little, if any, of the mallet shaft should hang out the back of the hand. The mallet
should be angled upward when it is being held by the back two fingers. Make sure that the mallet
is not resting in the back webbing between the middle and ring fingers. The mallet should be
resting just inside the second joint of the middle finger and resting directly over top of the second
joint of the ring finger.

At this point, it is time to add the inside mallet. With the outside mallet still in your hand, take
the inside mallet with your other hand and place it in the middle of your hand.

Now wrap your middle finger around the mallet. Try not to wrap all the way around the mallet
because for larger intervals the inside mallet needs to adjust accordingly. The tip of the finger
should press the tip of the mallet against the palm of your hand, but should not dig the mallet into
the hand. This will keep the mallet in the middle of your hand.

At this point, the index finger wraps around but not completely. The finger should be curved, but
not pulled in all the way. The shaft of the mallet should then rest of the first cuticle of the index
finger. Now the thumb gets placed on top of the inside mallet. The index finger and the thumb
should form a lower case “t” once they are both placed on the mallets. The inside mallet should
be pointing in an upward angle as well, but not as steep as the outside mallet. The heads of the
mallet should be level with one another.

The hand should be turned over so that the back of the hand is facing outward, away from the
body. The thumb should also always be on top of the mallets.

Four Mallet Strokes

There are four basic stroke styles when it comes to four mallets. They are: Double Vertical,
Single Independent, Single Alternating and Double Lateral. The idea of the “velocity” stroke that
was mentioned in the two mallet section of this packet applies to the basic four mallet stroke
styles. Again, all strokes start in the up position with all mallets at the same height.
NOTE-ALL STROKE EXPLAINATIONS WILL BE BROKEN DOWN IN TERMS OF ONE HAND TO START WITH. ALSO, MALLETS ARE NUMBER 1234 FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, WITH THE NUMBER 1 BEING THE LEFT MOST MALLET AND THE NUMBER 4 BEING THE RIGHT MOST MALLET.

Double Vertical Stroke
The double vertical stroke is the most basic of the four mallet strokes. In the double vertical stroke, both mallets come down and strike the bar at the same time. Again with the idea of the “velocity” stroke, the mallets start up, you should feel an “explosion” of energy to initiate the stroke, strike the bars and then have the mallets return with an equal amount of velocity to the starting up position.

IN OUR TWO MALLET STROKE AND DOUBLE VERTICAL STROKE THE WRIST HAS BEEN MOVING IN AND UP AND DOWN MOTION. IN THE NEXT THREE FOUR MALLET STROKES (SINGLE INDEPENDENT, SINGLE ALTERNATING AND DOUBLE LATERAL), HAVE A SIDE TO SIDE TURNING WRIST MOTION, MUCH LIKE TURNING A DOORKNOB OR PLAYING MARCHING BASS DRUM. THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER WHEN WORKING ON THESE THINGS ON YOUR OWN.

Single Independent Stroke
The idea of the single independent stroke is that one mallet in the hand moves, while the other stays completely still. While it is very difficult to get the tacet mallet to not move at all, it is very reasonable and our goal to not have the mallets just flap around. A good way to get about this stroke is to only put mallets in one hand while working on your independent strokes. With your free hand, grab the mallet you are not playing with and hold it while you play with the other mallet. The switch the process and do this for all four mallets. This should allow you to feel what it is like to have one mallet in motion while the other is not. Once this is in your muscle memory, you can than take away the hand that is holding the mallet, however, you must still think about your tacet mallet for a while as it is more free now.

Again, remember that you should feel a side to side wrist rotation when playing this stroke.

Single Alternating Stroke
The single alternating stroke operates in much of the same way as the single independent stroke, with one mallet in motion while the other is not. The difference is instead of being a number of strokes with one mallet, the strokes alternate between the mallets. Examples of this would be:

1-2-1-2-1-2
2-1-2-1-2-1
3-4-3-4-3-4
4-3-4-3-4-3

In all of the previous cases, you are alternating the mallets in the same hand. When doing this it is very important to remember that they are alternating “strokes,” meaning that you should feel yourself making two motions, or strokes, towards the keyboard.

Single alternating strokes may also alternate from hand to hand. Examples of this would be:

1-3-2-4-1-3-2-4
1-4-2-3-1-4-2-3
2-3-1-4-2-3-1-4
With the single alternating stroke, the mallets start up and end up just like the other strokes we have talked about.

It is very easy to try to make one sweeping wrist motion when learning the single alternating stroke. This is another kind of stroke, double lateral, which is covered later in the packet. Feeling the two stroke motions is easier with the addition of some arm motion in an upward and downward direction. This is NOT a big motion. Remember the residual motion talked about in the two-mallet portion of this packet, this motion is a slightly amplified version of that residual motion. This will not only help to control and feel both of the strokes as you are alternating mallets, but it will increase the amount of sound you achieve from the successful use of this stroke type. This stroke also requires the most amount of energy and will wear your arms out the quickest.

**Double Lateral Stroke**
Probably the hardest four mallet stroke to do correctly and achieve a good sound with is the double lateral stroke. The double lateral stroke operates in the same fashion as the single alternating stroke, when it is reduced to work in one hand, with the exception that the double lateral is created with one motion instead of two. This motion should feel like a quick turn, or flick, of the wrist. You can think of the mallets as “following one another.” One mallet makes the motion towards the keyboard, strikes and rebounds. The other mallet does the same thing only a second behind the first. The lateral stroke is used mainly in fast four mallet passages and lateral (ripple) rolls.

**A Few Closing Comments**
This is a lot of information to take in. I know that. Take it in small chunks. There is no need to rush into the double lateral stroke if you are just now learning to play four mallets. Take it piece by piece. This packet is laid out in a manner to best benefit you. If you are a newer player, start at the beginning. If you are more experienced with this technique, skip ahead to a section you don’t know. Don’t be afraid to read the packet more than once. In fact, I encourage you to read it a number of times to make sure that you fully understand the technique.

Don’t be afraid to ask questions. There is no such thing as a stupid question, even if it has been addressed before. The only stupid question is the one not asked. I will do everything in my power to help you and if I can’t, I will find someone who can.

Front Ensemble Instructor

Ryan Reed
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Perform in all major and minor keys

Keys:

- Synth
- Electric Guitar
- Drumset
- Bass Guitar
- Perc 1
- Perc 2
- Perc 3

ad lib. (but tastefully!)
Be able to perform in 1st and 2nd inversion chords as well

Keyboards

Synth

Electric Guitar

Drumset

Bass Guitar

Perc 1

Perc 2

Perc 3

Notre Dame Indoor Percussion Ensemble 2011

Double Verticals

John Max McFarland
Notre Dame Indoor Percussion Ensemble 2011

4-Mallet Independent Permutations

John Max McFarland

Keyboards

Synth

Electric Guitar

Drumset

Bass Guitar

Snare Drum

Temple Blocks

Tom-Tom

Paradiddles, etc.

Paradiddles, etc.
Boards

Syn

Guit

DS

Bass

P1

P2

P3

continue in the same fashion as B2, B3, B4
Dubs
Notre Dame College

Keyboards

Traditional
arr. Matt Zadell
23 and 43
Willoughby South Marching Band
Matt Zadell

Keyboards

\begin{music}
\n\end{music}
Chicago
from the album, "Come On Feel the Illinoise!"

Sufjan Stevens
arr. Matt Zadell

Glockenspiel

Xylophone

Vibraphone 1

Vibraphone 2

Marimba 1

Marimba 2

Marimba 3

Marimba

sus. cym.

A
You had to mind set all things know all things know. You had to mind set all things know all things know.
Glock.

Mar. 3

Mar. 2

Mar. 1

Vib. 2

Vib. 1

Xylo.

16

(Play C-E second time only)

(pause)

16

(Play C-E second time only)

(pause)

16

(pause)

16

(pause)

16

(pause)

16

(pause)
Go Fish
Notre Dame College
Traditional
arr. Matt Zadell

Keyboards

5

9

12
Goals of the Battery Technique Program
- Unify the visual mechanics of how we drum
- Achieve the fullest sound possible from our instrument at all dynamic levels
- Unify our heights and dynamic levels
- Unify our approach to various musical passages

General Technique Guidelines
This portion of the technique packet demonstrates general concepts of how the battery percussion section should approach playing technique and musical interpretation. Supplemental information for each battery instrument will appear later in the technique packet.

The Grip
The stick should be held in the following way:
- An initial fulcrum should be made by placing the stick between the index finger and thumb
- The other three fingers should be wrapped gently around the stick with the stick following the natural curve of the fingers
- In the playing position, the bead of the stick (or head of the mallet) should be as close to the playing surface as possible

The Movable Fulcrum
- The movable fulcrum refers to where the stick’s “pivot point” is in the grip
- As stated earlier, the initial fulcrum is located between the index finger and thumb.
- This fulcrum can be transferred to different areas of the palm by the application of pressure with various digits

Front Fulcrum – The front fulcrum or “initial fulcrum” is located between the index finger and thumb. This is the fulcrum that is employed during the initial gripping process by applying slight pressure between these two digits. However, this type of fulcrum should only be employed during fast roll passages and fast single hand strokes.

Back Fulcrum – The back fulcrum is created by applying slight pressure with the pinky pushing the stick against the palm. This transfers the “pivot point” to the back part of the palm by the pinky. Using the back fulcrum creates a stronger tone and fuller sound because more of the stick is engaged in sound production. Because the back fulcrum creates the fullest tone from our instrument, this should be utilized as much as physically possible to maintain a strong ensemble sound.

Middle Fulcrum – The middle fulcrum is created by applying slight pressure with the middle and ring fingers. In this case, the pivot point is directly in the middle of the palm. The middle
fulcrum is utilized for passages that are too fast to utilize strictly back fulcrum and not quite fast enough to justify using the front fulcrum. The idea is behind the middle fulcrum is to help maintain a full sound at slightly faster tempi.

The Prep Stroke

The prep stroke is the process that takes place during the time that the stick leaves the playing position, moves upward, and finally returns downward to strike the drum. The prep stroke is incredibly important in a sense that it unifies the sound that is produced from each section, unifies the “look” of the ensemble and determines the “feel” of a particular musical passage or phrase. Here are some guidelines on performing a successful prep stroke:

- The initial stroke leads from the bead of the stick and utilizes an equal and cooperative combination of fingers, wrist, and arm motion
- Once the stick/mallet reaches the top of the stroke the performer should use the dead weight of all three of these appendages (fingers, wrist, arm) to allow the stick fall to the head.
- The amount of time it takes to go from the beginning of the prep stroke all the way to the first strike of the drum should remain consistent, regardless of speed or tempo. The duration of the prep stroke will become more consistent the longer the ensemble performs together.

The 4 Stroke Types of the Battery Ensemble

1. High-High
   - This stroke begins in the highest point of the prep stroke
   - Utilizing the natural weight of the arm, wrist, and fingers the performer allows the stick to fall to the drum surface
   - Upon contact with the drum surface, the performer then allows the stick to rebound back up to the top of the stroke

2. Hi-Low
   - Once again, this stroke will begin at the highest point of the prep stroke
   - Utilizing the natural weight of the arm, wrist, and fingers the performer allows the stick to fall to the drum surface
   - This time, instead of following the rebound the performer allows the natural weight of the arm to stop the stick in the low position (approximately 3 inches from the drum surface)
   - It is very important that there be no squeezing or extra pressure used to stop the stroke

3. Low-Low
   - This stroke begins in the low position
   - The stroke is executed much like the high-high stroke
   - The full weight of the arm, wrist, and fingers are utilized to push the stick downward to achieve as full of a sound as possible

4. Low-High
   - This stroke begins in the low position
- All mechanics to perform this stroke are the same as the low-low with the exception that after the stroke is performed, the stick is then thrusted back up to the high position.
Snare Technique Notes:
- Right hand grip:
  a. The grip of the hand should be natural and relaxed.
  b. The butt end of the stick should be able to be seen, and should not be hidden under the forearm.
  c. The Front Fulcrum should maintain in tact and all fingers should be wrapped around the stick (avoiding tension) in a relaxed position.

- Left hand grip:
  a. The natural curvature of the hand should be maintained and the stick placed in that natural curve. Avoid having straight fingers or condensing your hand. Holding the stick in your left hand should look exactly how your hand looks relaxed at your side without the drum stick.
  b. The thumb should connect to the first knuckle of the first finger and should never lose contact with the first finger.
  c. The stick rests on the cuticle of the ring finger.
  d. The middle finger should rest along the stick (but never straight).
  e. The ring and pinky fingers should work in unison to support the bottom of the stick. These fingers should remain together and relaxed all the time.
  f. While playing, the left hand should rotate similar to turning a door knob.

- Set position:
  a. Sticks should be parallel to the rim.
  b. The sticks should be over the rim (without resting your left hand on the rim).

- Playing position:
  a. The sticks should be as close to the head as possible at slightly less than a 90 degree angle.
  b. The stick should be approximately 2 fingers about the rim.
  - The hands should be relaxed without sticking out your elbows (relax your shoulders).
  - For the left hand, there should be some space between your elbow and your side, but you should also not be straining to keep your elbow in.
Bass Drum

Mallet Positions

- When at set position, the mallets will be held near the rim of the drum roughly shoulder height. Your hands should not grab onto the rim.

Pulse 2010

- When at playing position, mallets should be at a 45 degree angle, and tilted slightly in towards the head. The head of the mallet should be in the center of the drum head.

Black Knights 2007
Bass Drum

Playing Technique

- Any stroke under 6" will primarily come from a rotation of the wrist/forearm.
- 6" strokes will incorporate a slight break in the wrist. This allows for proper mallet rotation, and provides additional strength and velocity to the stroke.
- At 9" strokes, we sill start to add arm. Your arm will rotate at the elbow moving away from the drum. This movement is subtle. A vast majority of the stroke is still coming from the combination of forearm rotation and wrist break.
- 12" strokes (and higher) will require the same technique as 9" strokes, but you will use more arm. These strokes are not as common, and are primarily used for impact purposes.
Notre Dame College Drumline 2011

Notation Guide

**Snare Drum**

- regular hit
- regular shot
- crash (buzz press)
- rim
- stick click
- buzz roll

**Tenor Drums**

- "spock" drum 1 (high)
- "spock" drum 2 (low)
- drum 3
- drum 4
- 1 Shot
- Skank
- rim
- crash (buzz press)
- crossover

**Bass Drums**

- drum 1
- drum 2
- drum 3
- drum 4
- Unison
- Unison Run
- Single Run
- Run Shot
- muted

**Dynamics**

- **pp** = 1.5"
- **p** = 3" (parallel to drum surface/0 degrees)
- **mp** = 6"
- **mf** = 9" (45 degree angle)
- **f** = 12" (sub 90 degrees)
- **ff** = 15" (Vertical/90 degrees)
8's Sequence:
- 4 times Unison (ff, f, mf, mp)
- 4 times split (p, mp, mf, f)
(bass drums - 1's, 2's, 3's, 4's)
- 2 times Paris
- 2 times Hilton
(bass drums - 1's, 2's on both exercises)
- 2 times 8's crescendo
- 2 times 8's decrescendo
(everybody - unison on both cresc, and decresc)
- 1 time ritardando
- 1 time accelerando
(everybody - split, basses play 1's)
Scott Idle
arr. John McFarland

Notre Dame College Drumline 2011
Paris/Hilton

PARIS

SnareLine

TenorLine

BassLine

2s split
Notre Dame College Drumline 2011
Jammer-Jams
16th Accents for groovy people

SnareLine

TenorLine

BassLine

3

Snare

Tenors

Bass Dr
Notre Dame College Indoor Percussion Ensemble 2011

The Dub/Trip/Quad

"DUB"

SnareLine

TenorLine

BassLine

5

Snare

Tenors

Bass

9

"TRIP"

Snare

Tenors

Bass

13

Snare

Tenors

Bass

John Max McFarland
Notre Dame College Drumline 2011
Paradiddle Plus

John Max McFarland

Snare Line:

Tenor Line:

Bass Line:

Snare:

Tenors:

Bass Drum:

5

9

ping
Notre Dame College Drumline 2011

Get to the Trikey
Cadence

John Max McFarland

Page dimensions: 612.0x792.0
Notre Dame College Drumline 2011

3-D

J-Rad

SnareLine

TenorLine

BassLine

Cymbal Line

last time
Moose

J-Rad

\( \text{\( q \)} = 132 \)

Hi-Hat

Snare

"buHLLhLhHlLHL."

Tenor

Bass

Cymbals

Hold for snares
Mortal Kombat

\( q = 126 \)

**Notre Dame College Drumline 2011**

### Snare

- \( \frac{4}{4} \)
- \( \text{Hi-Hat} \)
- \( \text{R R R R L R} \)

### Tenor

- \( \frac{4}{4} \)
- \( \text{RL L R L R L} \)
- \( \text{1, 2, 4} \)

### Bass

- \( \frac{4}{4} \)
- \( \text{RL L R R L R R R R} \)

**Hold for Snares**

### Cymbals

- \( \frac{4}{4} \)

---

**Notre Dame College Drumline 2011**

### Snare

- \( \frac{6}{4} \)
- \( \text{3, 5} \)
- \( \text{R R R R L R} \)

### Tenors

- \( \frac{4}{4} \)
- \( \text{RL R R L R L R L} \)
- \( \text{3, 5} \)

### Bass Dr

- \( \frac{4}{4} \)
- \( \text{3, 5} \)
- \( \text{crash} \)

### Cym.L

- \( \frac{4}{4} \)
- \( \text{hi-hat} \)
Neutered

J-Rad

\[ q = 110 \]

\[ \text{Snare} \]

\[ \text{Tenor} \]

\[ \text{Bass} \]

\[ \text{Cymbals} \]

\[ \text{hold for snares} \]
Take It Away

J-Rad

Snare

Tenor

Bass

Cymbals

De fense De fense take that ball a-way

hold for snares

last time

Take that ball away
NDC Cheer

\[ q = 144 \]

Notre Dame College Drumline 2011

\( \text{last time} \)