

# Technique

Compiled by Mike Leitzke

## A few tips:

Since a majority of rehearsal time will be spent using a metronome, you should be able to play all of these exercises comfortably with a metronome.

KNOW ALL OF THE MATERIAL! There are very few things more disappointing than someone who is obviously a great player but is unsuccessful at their audition because they did not take the time to prepare all the required material.

If you cannot always practice on a keyboard, use the floor as a sort of practice pad. This can help for strength training especially for four mallets.

Be open to change. There is certainly more than one way to do things, and the technique that we use will be geared to make you guys the best ensemble that you can possibly be.

## 2 Mallet Technique:

The grip we will use will be considered a “rear fulcrum” grip. The mallet is generally held primarily by the rear 2-3 fingers which better facilitates both involving the arm into the stroke and a smooth uninhibited rebound.

There should be no more than 1.5 inches of mallet shaft sticking out behind your hand. The hand should not be flat (palms facing the keyboard) but they should be turned slightly. Do not squeeze at the front of your hand as this will cause unneeded stress. **Everything should feel very relaxed and loose.**

Stroke:

From a resting position about a half inch above the bar, the motion is initiated by the head of the mallet, followed by the wrist and arm in a seamless and fluid course, not from side to side. Upon reaching the top of the stroke, the mallet is brought down by the weight in the back of the hand (where the fulcrum is) as the mallet comes down, the wrist turns to accelerate the mallet head to the bar. The mallet should be completely level when it strikes the exact center of the bar. After contact is made, the looseness of the front of the grip allows the mallet head to immediately rebound, and again, the mallet head is leading the hand and arm on the way up.

The stroke should be 90% wrist and 10% arm.

When playing with two mallets, **NEVER LET THE MALLETS STOP MOVING.** Adjust the speed of your rebound to the speed that you are playing.

## **Four Mallet Technique**

### **Grip:**

We will use the standard Musser-Stevens grip when playing four mallets. For more info consult “Simply 4” by Gifford Howarth or “The Method of Movement” by Leigh Howard Stevens.

**KEEP YOUR PERCHES OUT!** We want to achieve the best sound possible and this means keeping your perches out.

**BE RELAXED!** If you feel some awkward pains, it may be because you are gripping the mallets too hard and hyper extending tendons, so always be as relaxed as possible, and never, ever, “white knuckle” the mallets.

The Stroke will be very similar to that described in the two mallet portion.

## **LESSONS**

A great way to enhance and advance your playing is to get into private lessons, I teach out of the high school and will gladly schedule either half hour or hour long lessons on a weekly basis. Feel free to contact me at anytime.

Email: [MLeitzke@comcast.net](mailto:MLeitzke@comcast.net)

Cell: (615) 574-1382