

# Intermediate Series—Keyboard Percussion

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Mr. Carroll gratefully recognizes the help and mentorship of so many of his past percussion teachers and colleagues.

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The second and third years of band for percussionists are ones that can be boring and uninspiring for the keyboard player, or they can be years when the student truly develops a higher interest in the mallet instruments, and strives even harder for excellence.

Once the keyboard instruction ends in the beginning band year, it is easy for even the most dedicated of band directors to fall into the danger of neglecting the instruction and nourishment of the keyboard players. Due to the incredible number of things to be encountered in every band rehearsal, it is quite easy to let that which was learned in the beginning percussion class fall by the wayside.

This clinic will suggest ways to both maintain (and raise) interest in the student for the keyboard instruments, and also enhance the abilities of the junior high keyboardist. In fact, it is believed that these two facets—enhanced abilities and high interest—go hand-in-hand with each other.

This handout is divided into the following sections: (1) a review of very basic concepts; (2) the idea of more advanced exercises and drills; (3) better ways to use keyboards on a daily basis in band rehearsal; (4) a discussion of ways to improve sightreading abilities of the student; and (5) ideas and resources to further the interest in the student for the instruments.

## I. Review of Very Basic Concepts

### A. Grip

1. Similar to snare drum match-grip
2. Fulcrum between index finger and thumb
3. Palms facing down
4. Don't grip too tightly.
5. Keep all the fingers around the mallet.

### B. Basic Stroke

1. Because keyboard mallets have little rebound, the technique is different from the snare drum. Using the wrists is very important

because that is where most of the energy and movement of the mallets comes from.

2. Basic stroke is a combination of using your wrists, fingers, and arm. The secret is finding the best combination. Most of the stroke is from the wrist.
  3. The stroke is straight up and down—the piston stroke.
  4. I suggest a fairly high and full stroke. The mallet starts in a 70-80 degree position, swings down, strikes the bar, and returns to the beginning position.
  5. Elbows are even with the body.
  6. Wrists are kept low to the keyboard. The knuckles should almost be touching the keys, and the mallets are parallel to them.
- C. Review of the make-up of the instrument itself.
- D. Review of scales. At least half of them should have been learned in beginning band.
- E. Review of a few favorite lines and exercises from the beginning year. It is ideal if the student had been required to prepare something for band camp or for trying out for the middle school advanced band. If so, this can be reviewed with them, since, most likely, they have not played it in a month or so.

## II. Recommendations for the Start of the Intermediate Years

- A. Develop octave exercises--(see attached music).
1. Why practice octaves?
    - a. Double stops become more common in literature as the percussionist advances.
    - b. Develops a better sense of bar width
    - c. Develops a better eye/hand relationship
    - d. Greatly helps prepare the student for "front ensemble" playing (marching season), where octaves are very common due to the need for added volume
- B. Further work on technique drill, such as arpeggios, broken thirds, quintachords, etc. The *TRI* book and the *Fussell* book are excellent for this, as they are for all wind instruments—(see attached example pages from these books).
- Benefits include:
1. A better understanding of the structure of the keys
  2. A better ability of playing music with leaps. Playing adjacent notes is much easier than playing music with leaps. So this is a great help for the intermediate player.
  3. Enhances muscle memory for the different key signatures. (This, of course, would hold true for all band instruments.)
- C. Developing a Good Roll
1. Most rolls are uneven, softer than surrounding non-rolled notes, very "un-full", and, in many cases, too fast.

2. The student should be encouraged in the following areas:
  - a. Evenness is the key—not speed. In fact, speed is not always wanted, depending on size of the bars, dynamics, etc.
  - b. Full strokes with the wrist
  - c. No unwanted accents at the beginnings or ends of rolls
  - d. Obviously, mallet placement is crucial. Avoid the nodes.
3. Introduction of slurred rolls.
  - a. There should be no space between rolls.
  - b. Try this concept: the mallets do not stop moving between one note and the next slurred note. Think this, even when dealing with a large leap.
4. Musically, rolls which are not slurred should still be thought of in legato terms. This is a general thought, and there certainly are exceptions. However, it would be better to err on the side of too legato than too choppy.
5. Two-pitch rolls (double stop rolls)—Begin with the hand that contains the melody note (usually the right hand).

### III. Use of the Mallet Instruments in Band Rehearsal

- A. During warm-ups, have students at an instrument.
- B. Warm-ups and Technique Drills. It is so important that the percussionist is involved in this in some fashion, whether on snare drum or keyboards. Some directors would prefer that all percussionists be on keyboards, for dynamic reasons if nothing else. In any case, please consider the importance of at least some of the players on keyboards during all warm-ups and technique drills. Even if the student simply learns these warm-ups by rote, they are still playing, engaged in technique, and, hopefully, out of trouble.
  1. Remington Exercises. Please realize that any number of exercises can be created by the director, even on the spot if necessary. The important thing is to keep the percussionists involved in an educational way. The two exercises listed here are simply two options of many, many possibilities.
    - a. Triplet exercise (see attached music)
    - b. Roll exercise (see attached music).
  2. Concert F (or Bb). Listen and vocalize.
    - a. Have the students assess a wind player's intonation. Randomly ask a percussionist if a certain player's pitch is flat or sharp.
    - b. Have the percussionists sing the pitch when the rest of the band plays it. (This is best taught as early as possible, with as little fanfare as possible.)

3. "F around the room". Have the students sing their "F" just as every other section plays their note.
  4. Chorale warm-up
    - a. On single octave playing, use alternating sixteenth notes.
    - b. On double-stop playing (octaves), use eighth notes, except for half notes and longer, where rolls would be utilized.
  5. From time to time, single out the mallet players to perform a Remington exercise or chorale. Listen for evenness of strokes, full sounds, and smoothness of rolls.
- C. Mallets during the actual rehearsal of the literature
1. Mallet players, in the absence of enough actual mallet parts, can double already-existing mallet parts. As performance time nears, the director can use discretion in deciding whether or not to allow these parts to actually be performed. However, with soft mallets, the players can feel like they are contributing, not get in the way musically, and still be developing skills. There are very fine bands that have players doing this very thing, even at adjudicated performances.
  2. Mallet players can also play modified mallet parts off of oboe music. Again, it allows the players to stay engaged, feel like they are contributing, and to develop skills.
  3. Often parts are so difficult that they cannot be learned in a reasonable amount of time. On these occasions, the parts can easily be modified, and still allow the player to perform on the instruments without the sense of being totally overwhelmed. Usually, contest music does not fall into this category because there is more time to learn the parts. However, often in band literature, the parts are too difficult to learn in short rehearsal time.

#### IV. Introduction of 4-mallet Playing

- A. Private teacher highly recommended for this
- B. At the beginning, just introduce one grip. However, know there are three basic grips (Please see the attached explanation out of *Musical Studies for the Intermediate Mallet Player* by Garwood Whaley for a simple, concise description of these grips.)
  1. Cross Grip
  2. Musser Grip
  3. Burton Grip
- C. Encourage the student to buy one solo, and work on it.
  1. "Yellow After the Rain"—Peters
  2. "Sea Refractions"—Peters
  3. "The True Lover's Farewell"—Gwin
- D. Introduce three-note chorales.

1. Play in half and whole notes (non-rolled).
  2. Play in quarter notes.
  3. Play as rolls.
- V. Introduce More Reading of Mallet Music.
- A. Method Books
  - B. Church Hymnals
  - C. Simple Violin Duets. These can be played with a percussion teacher, or even with a band director on a wind instrument.
  - D. Sightreading Books. If used in band rehearsal, my suggestion is to have everyone playing mallets, and nobody playing snare.
    1. *101 Rhythmic Rest Patterns* (see attached example page).
    2. *Division of Measure* (see attached example page).
  - E. *Musical Studies for the Intermediate Mallet Player*—Garwood Whaley
    1. Great exercises designed for practicing, but not so hard as to be impractical for reading.
    2. Exercises specifically designed for sightreading
  - F. *Modern School for Xylophone, Marimba, Vibraphone*—Morris Goldenberg
  - G. Always, Always, Always encourage the student to read—SLOWLY—and not to stop and correct mistakes, until, at least, after the first reading.
- VI. Ideal Books for Intermediate Mallet Player
- A. *Modern School for Xylophone, Marimba, Vibraphone*—Morris Goldenberg. This book includes the following:
    1. Short lines involving rolls
    2. Simple exercises in all major and minor keys
    3. Short, readable melodies
    4. Chordal exercises (such as arpeggios)
    5. Chromatic scales studies utilizing both sharps and flats
    6. Double-stop exercises, utilizing thirds, fourths, sixths, and octaves
    7. Short lines of recognizable melodies
    8. Actual orchestral excerpts for keyboard instruments.

Though this book has many advanced studies as well, the first 45 pages or so, as well as some orchestral excerpts in the back, are accessible to the intermediate player.

This book is excellent for both sightreading and for etudes on which to practice.

- B. *Musical Studies for the Intermediate Mallet Player*—Garwood Whaley. This book includes the following:
  1. Technique drill, reading exercises in the most-often used keys. These reading exercises, though quite a bit more difficult than

some of the lines in the Goldenberg book, are very “catchy” melodies. They may not be “readable” by many of the intermediate students, but they are playable after a little work.

2. Double-stop exercises
3. Duets. This is quite fun for two intermediate players.
4. 3- and 4-mallet exercises, including both chordal playing, and single line notes played by all 4 mallets.

C. *Bach for Bars*, Book 1—arr. Faulman

This is a book of duets, most of which are accessible by the aspiring intermediate player.

D. *Masterpieces for Marimba*—arr. McMillan

Though this is a book on the Texas All-State book list, there are a couple of solos at the beginning of the book that can be readily prepared by the intermediate player.

VII. All-City, All-District, All-Region Tryouts and Solo/Ensemble Performances

A. In tryouts such as an all-region tryout, please make certain that your percussionists

1. Are required to play at least some mallet selection(s) for their tryouts.
2. IF your tryout includes some kind of sightreading, please have it include mallets, even over the snare drum.

B. Solo Performances. Some directors require both snare and keyboard solos. Some suggestions:

1. “The 1908 Rag” from *Mallet Solo Collection*—Breuer (piano acc.)—UIL Class 2
2. “Sea Refractions”—Peters (4 mallet—great for a first 4-mallet solo)—UIL Class 2
3. “March Militaire”—Schubert/Quick (piano acc.)—UIL Class 2
4. “City Streets” from *Shazam!*—Pollard—UIL Class 2
5. Anything from *Contest Solos for the Intermediate Mallet Player*—Houllif—UIL Class 3
6. Anything from *More Contest Solos for the Intermediate Mallet Player*—Houllif—UIL Class 3
7. “Chant for Marimba”—Peters—UIL Class 3
8. “Yellow After the Rain”—Peters. This is a 4-mallet solo. It is often thought of as the “definitive” solo for the young 4-mallet player. It involves several types of 4-mallet playing. Though it is a UIL Class 1 solo, it is not nearly as difficult as many of the other Class 1 works.
9. “The True Lovers’ Farewell”—arr. Gwin—UIL Class 1. This is another 4-mallet piece. It is great for both chordal and rolling moving notes, as well as for independent moving 4-mallet work.

C. Ensembles. Ensembles are a great motivating factor for your percussionists for the main reason that they are simply enjoyable to do and have much audience appeal. Some suggestions:

1. "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring"—Bach/Mathieson. This is a trio, and is certainly playable by intermediate players. UIL Class 2
2. "Mo Java"—Davila—Involves keyboards as well as non-mallet instruments. Great for a spring concert. UIL Class 2
3. "Encore in Jazz"—Firth. This also involves non-keyboards. However it has very fun and fast keyboard parts, and these parts can easily be doubled. This used to be on the UIL Class 1 list, but is now Class 2. It would also be great for a spring concert.
4. "The Easy Winner"—Joplin/Freytag. All the parts are keyboard. This is a rag-time piece, and is challenging without being overwhelming. UIL Class 2
5. "Sabre Dance"—Khachaturian/Moore. This is an ideal UIL piece, because it is actually stated in the music to use as many mallet players as possible. Very recognizable, fun, and utilizes double-stop playing. Students really enjoy this selection. UIL Class 2
6. "Chick Corea Children's Songs: Set 1"—arr. Steinquest. This is challenging, but many middle school groups do it. UIL Class 3.
7. "Can-Can"—Offenbach/Crockarell. This is an easy marching percussion ensemble. It has great keyboard parts, and does NOT feature the battery, but rather the keyboards.
8. "Christmas Presence"—arr. Brooks. This is obviously a holiday ensemble, and is not too difficult, but the parts are a little more complex than simply playing familiar melodies.

VIII. Choice of Mallets. A frustrating thing that intermediate players often encounter is not having mallets which sound good on the instruments with the music being played. It is suggested that directors either have their players purchase the following mallets, or that the director have them readily available for use. Ideally, each percussionist should have their own. However, realizing that that is not always possible, it would be in everyone's best interest if they would be available, and then possibly kept in the director's office.

A. Marimba Mallets

1. Soft yarn
2. Medium yarn
3. Hard yarn

B. Vibes Mallets

1. Soft cord
2. Medium cord
3. Hard cord

C. Xylophone Mallets

1. Hard plastic
2. Rubber

D. Bells

1. Hard plastic
2. Hard rubber

### 3. Brass (especially for outdoors)

- IX. Mind-set
  - A. Build mallet playing up in the students' minds.
  - B. As parts are assigned in band selections, pass the mallet parts around.
  - C. What about mallet parts that are simply too hard? Modify them for a feeling of success for the students.
  - D. Feature mallets on concerts occasionally. An ideal piece for this, in my opinion, is "Serenade for a Picket Fence"—Leyden. This is a little challenging, but is very entertaining. The best thing about it is that it features three parts, but can be successfully played with just one or two players playing the featured part.
  
- X. Summary
  - A. Technique must be addressed.
  - B. However, equally important is to make the students desire to play the instruments, and for the students to pursue the keyboards like they would the snare drum. I believe this is done by putting as much enjoyable music in front of them, with good mallets, as is reasonably possible.



# Keyboard Exercises

## Octave Exercise

Two staves of musical notation for an Octave Exercise. The first staff contains two measures of eighth-note octaves, with the second measure starting on a sharp sign. The second staff contains two measures of eighth-note octaves, with the second measure starting on a sharp sign and ending with a double bar line.

## Remington Exercise

Four staves of musical notation for a Remington Exercise. Each staff contains two measures of eighth-note triplets. The first two staves are in C major, and the last two staves are in B-flat major. The exercise concludes with a double bar line.

## Roll Exercise

Three staves of musical notation for a Roll Exercise. Each staff contains two measures of eighth-note triplets. The first two staves are in C major, and the last staff is in B-flat major. The exercise concludes with a double bar line.

*TRI*  
**Broken Thirds for All Treble Clef Instruments**

(Use different articulations)

The image displays a musical score for 12 different treble clef instruments, each with a unique key signature and time signature. The instruments are listed on the left side of each staff:

- 1. Flute 1 (F.C. 1), Flute 2 (F.C. 2)
- 2. Clarinet 2 (C. 2), Clarinet 3 (C. 3), Flute 4 (F. 4)
- 3. Bassoon 1 (B. 1), Bassoon 2 (B. 2)
- 4. Trumpet 4 (T.C. 4), Trumpet 5 (T.C. 5)
- 5. Trumpet 6 (T.C. 6), Trumpet 7 (T.C. 7)
- 6. Trombone 4 (T.C. 4), Trombone 5 (T.C. 5), Trombone 6 (T.C. 6)
- 7. Trombone 7 (T.C. 7), Trombone 8 (T.C. 8)
- 8. Trombone 9 (T.C. 9), Trombone 10 (T.C. 10)
- 9. Trombone 11 (T.C. 11), Trombone 12 (T.C. 12)
- 10. Trumpet 1 (T.C. 1), Trumpet 2 (T.C. 2), Flute 3 (F. 3)

Each staff contains a musical line with notes, rests, and bar lines, demonstrating broken third intervals. The key signatures range from one flat (B-flat) to three sharps (F-sharp), and the time signatures are primarily 2/4 and 3/4.

RUSSELL

SECTION 8

Fourths

The image displays a musical score for seven systems, numbered 1 through 7. Each system consists of two staves joined by a brace on the left. The top staff of each system contains a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The bottom staff contains a bass clef and a common time signature (C). The music is written in a style typical of piano accompaniment for a band, featuring a steady eighth-note bass line and a more melodic treble line. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings. The systems are arranged vertically, with system 1 at the top and system 7 at the bottom.

# "Musical Studies for the Intermediate Mallet Player"

## SECTION 3

### 3 & 4 MALLETS

#### Hand Position

There are three basic methods of holding four mallets.

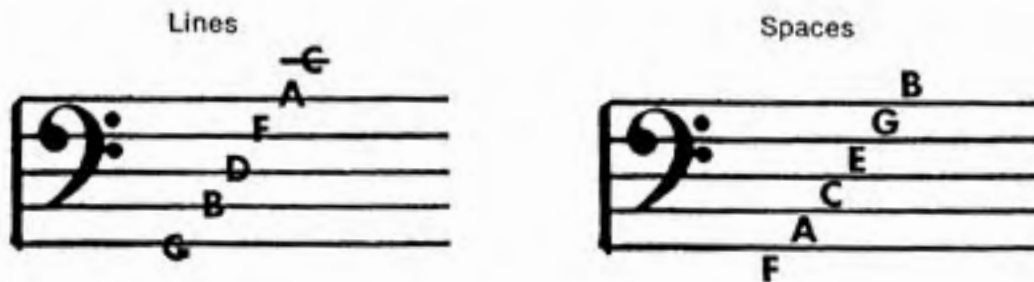
**Cross Grip:** The mallets are held between the thumb and forefinger, and between the forefinger and the third finger. The mallets cross in the palm of the hand. This grip is popular for vibraphone where large "spreads" are not normally required.

**Musser Grip:** The mallets are held between the thumb and forefinger and beneath the fourth and fifth finger. The mallets do not cross. This grip is popular for marimba where large "spreads" and mallet independence are required.

**Burton Grip:** The mallets are held beneath the forefinger and in the palm of the hand, perpendicular to the other mallet. The mallets cross in the palm of the hand. This grip is popular for both vibraphone and marimba. It allows a great deal of power and control in the outside mallets.

#### Bass Clef

The use of the bass clef has become standard in marimba notation. The student should memorize this clef and be able to read fluently in both bass and treble clefs.



#### Mallet Assignment

The Assignment of a specific mallet to a particular note is becoming standard in three and four mallet notation. Mallets are numbered from left to right as follows:



When a number appears above or below a note, the corresponding mallet should be used to strike that note.

# 101 Rhythmic Rest Patterns

## FLUTE

44

45

46

47

48

49

Division of Measure  
C INSTRUMENTS

Slow-strict count      Repeat until perfect      Moderato

*p*      *rit.*      *f*

Keep it slow

*rit.*      *p*      Slower      *rit.*

*long*      *f*      *rit.*

Grandioso—"WEARING OF THE GREEN"

Slow-steady tempo

*p*

*rit.*      *long*      Very slow

Church hymn style—"THE FIRST NOEL"

*rit.*      *mf*