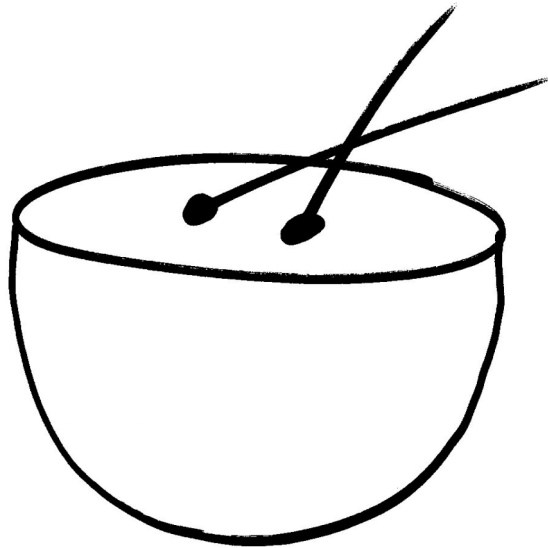


TIMPANI

Basics



MALLETS

Materials

Shaft

- ❖ Bamboo—Light and strong; difficult to match pairs
- ❖ Wood—Easy to match; THIN can vibrate & THICK can be too heavy

Core

- ❖ Wood—bright attack
- ❖ Felt—warm attack
- ❖ Other: Cork; Leather; Masking Tape

Covering

- ❖ Pressed felt—used on most mallets; various harnesses and thicknesses
- ❖ Billiard Cloth—used on hard mallets
- ❖ Chamois or Leather—used on extra hard mallets
- ❖ None

Weight

Overall weight—HEAVY mallets produce a dark/thick sound while LIGHT mallets produce a bright/thin sound. Also, heavy mallets tend to sound softer. Proportional weight—sticks that are evenly balanced produce a lot of contact sound; sticks that hold most of their weight at the striking end produce more drum sound.

Quality Matters!!

It is difficult to produce good sounds with mass produced sticks. (Although this kind of stick can be improved drastically with a better wrapping job) Buy a few pairs of the best quality stick you can afford and take good care of them. (This means: No rim shots! No playing on quads! Keep them in plastic bags or a case when not in use!)

Variety

Suggested strategy for buying timpani sticks—

- 1st General (medium hard)
 - 2nd Hard or Very Hard
 - 3rd Soft or Very soft
 - 4th Hard end of the spectrum (fill a gap)
 - 5th Soft end of the spectrum (fill a gap)
 - 6th Wood (uncovered)
- Then... Fill gaps as needed

STROKES

Grip

German—same as matched snare drum grip; dark sound that emphasizes fundamental pitch.

French—“Thumb on top”; wrist rotates, allowing for a high lift off drum; brighter sound with more harmonics

Lift

Up & Down—“piston stroke”; each stroke begins and ends in same position above the drum, following the natural rebound of the stick off the drum.

Wrist-based—wrists move sticks; arms move wrists to proper location.

Articulation

Legato—Relaxed, NATURAL REBOUND stroke. Strive for this most of the time!!

Staccato—Relaxed, FAST stroke with slightly more finger contact on stick. Use this for staccato, accented, or very fast rhythmic figures.

Rolls

Definition—a sustained tone on a percussion instrument.

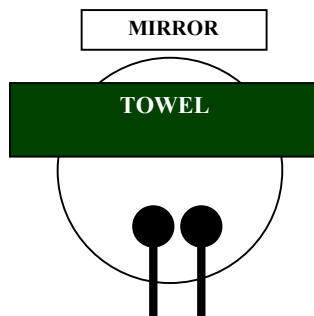
Execution—a succession of quick, even strokes

Practice techniques

Metronome—the most important practice tool you can own! Buy the best one you can afford.

“Timpani Practice Pad” & Mirror:

One drum set-up for a timpano practice pad



MUFFLING and MUTING

MUFFLING

(a.k.a. “dampening”)

Technique

Fingertips—Use as many fingertips as are available; No palms!

Firm—Push the head firmly to stop vibrations quickly.

Rhythm—Muffle on a specific beat or sub-division.

Misc. -Muffle in the playing spot with opposite hand, when possible.

When to use

1.) At the end of a phrase or movement when the entire ensemble also cuts off together:



2.) When playing unison notes with other instruments in the ensemble:



3.) To clarify a diminution in dynamic:



4.) To clarify notes successive notes that are close intervals:



Tricky Situations

Most of the time, timpanists must their judgment, listening skills, and musicianship to decide whether or not to muffle. Timpani sound best when allowed to ring. When in doubt—DO NOT MUFFLE!



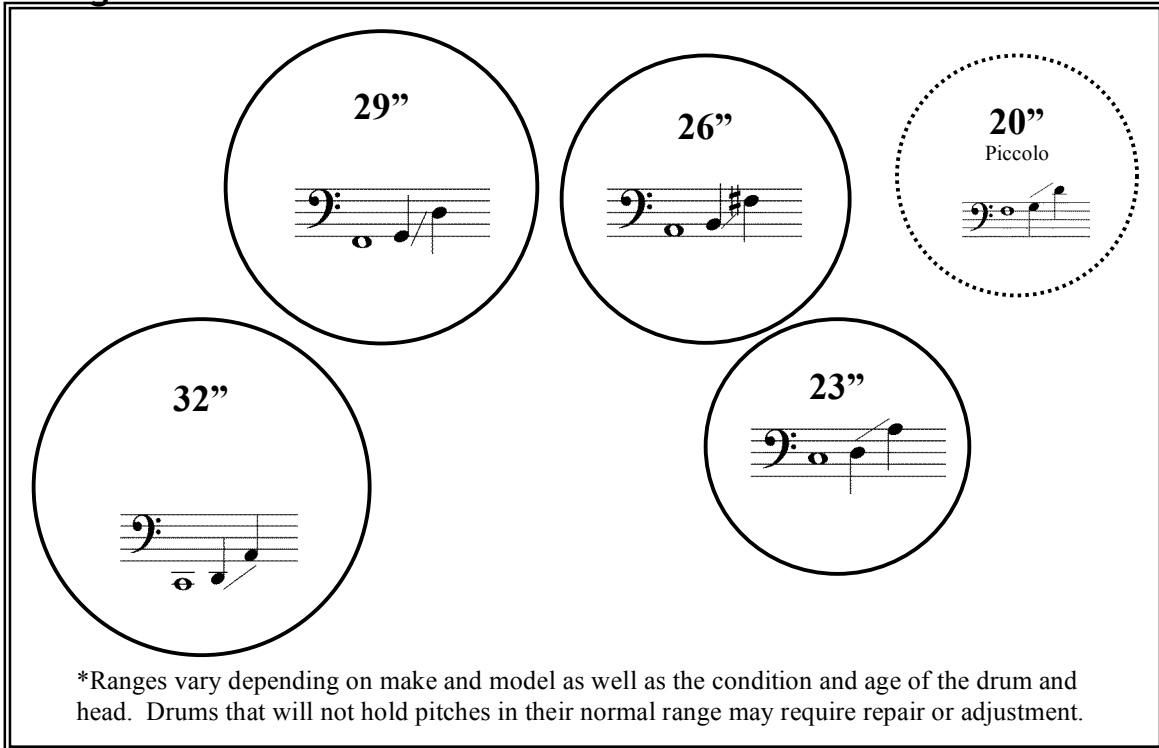
MUTING

(a.k.a. sordino, coperto, covered)

This technique is usually used when it is requested by the composer. It can also be used at the player’s discretion in order to achieve rhythmic clarity.

TUNING SCHEMES and TECHNIQUES

Ranges



29"

26"

20"
Piccolo

32"

23"

*Ranges vary depending on make and model as well as the condition and age of the drum and head. Drums that will not hold pitches in their normal range may require repair or adjustment.

Tuning Schemes

Principles

- ❖ Tune pitches to largest drum available.
- ❖ Choose tuning scheme based on sound quality, not convenience.
- ❖ Mark your tunings clearly

Technique

Process

- ❖ Hear pitch from tuning fork/pitch pipe/vibraphone
- ❖ Tap with finger—not stick
- ❖ Tune up to pitch
- ❖ Listen and fine tune, if necessary
- ❖ Always be willing to adjust!

(Tuning technique continued)

Practice

- ❖ Learn basic intervals
- ❖ Practice singing intervals at keyboard/piano/vibraphone
- ❖ Use intervals to tune timpani and **CHECK YOURSELF** with the vibes!

Gauges

Tuning gauges are a useful and important tool. Like all tools, gauges can be dangerous when used incorrectly! Keep in mind the following ideas:

- ❖ Gauges are only as accurate the ear of the person who sets them.
- ❖ Gauges provide a mechanical reference, not an indication of pitch—be aware of changes in temperature & humidity and other factors such as: adjustments to the head, fine tuner, or the drum being moved around.
- ❖ The person playing the drums is responsible for intonation.

“It is not a sin to play out of tune. It is a sin to continue playing out of tune.”

-Cloyd Duff, timpanist of the Cleveland Orchestra for 39 years.

RESOURCES

Method and Solo Books

Exercises, Etudes, and Solos for Timpani
Etuden fur Timpani, Heft 1
Modern Method for Timpani
The Freise-Lepak Timpani Method
Schalginstrumente—Ein Schulwertk, Teil 2
Trente Etudes pour Timbales (Cahiers 2&3)
Pedal Technique for Timpani

Raynor Carroll
Richard Hochrainer
Saul Goodman
A. Friese & A. Lepak
Eckehardt Keune
Jacques Delecluse
Stanley Leonard

(Batterie Music)
(Verlag-Doblinger)
(Belwin)
(Belwin)
(VEB Deutscher)
(Leduc)
(Ludwig Music)

Repertoire

The Raynor Carroll book contains excerpts, while the Goodman and Freise-Lepak books contain several complete parts to major timpani repertoire. Use your local library to obtain recordings and mini scores of these pieces. Listen to the pieces, study the scores, mark your parts and play along!

Suggested Equipment

Mallets

- ❖ Cloyd Duff Timpani Mallets (by Adams-Pearl)
- ❖ Black Swamp Bamboo Timpani Mallets
- ❖ Pro Mark Performer Series (Bamboo)
- ❖ Chronos (Cherry, Light Mahogany, Maple)
- ❖ Freer Timpani Mallets (Use to fill gaps in your set of sticks)

Mutes

- ❖ Leather—9”x9” leather (suede on both sides) fold twice using a clothes iron and cloth (to protect leather).
- ❖ Felt disc—Inexpensive mutes available from Vic Firth or Adams
- ❖ Soft felt—Rhapsody Percussion (www.rhapsodypercussion.com)

Dealers

Steve Weiss Music
2324 Wyandotte Rd.
Willow Grove, PA 19090
(Ph): 215-659-0100
(Fx): 215-659-1170
www.steveweissmusic.com

The Percussion Source (A Division of West Music)
PO Box 5521 District 0003
1212 5th Street
Coralville, IA 52241-0521
(Ph): 866-849-4387 (Fx): 888-470-3942
www.percussionsource.com